

## Report of the Director of Place

### External Funding Panel – 5 April 2017

#### LOCAL TRANSPORT FUND BID 2017/18

<b>Purpose:</b>	To approve the funding application for the Local Transport Fund 2017/18
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015 – 2020)
<b>Consultation:</b>	Finance, Legal & Access to Services
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) The External Funding Panel approve the Local Transport Fund 2017/18 application.
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<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Jayne James
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Sandie Richards
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Phil Couch

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 A funding bid for the Local Transport Fund (LTF) was submitted to the Welsh Government on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in accordance with guidance from the Welsh Government. The guidance stated that there was a total funding pot of £20million and this would be allocated to schemes across Wales. The Welsh Government elected not to set a maximum value for the each scheme, but rather suggested that bids in excess of £1.5million would be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Whilst match funding is not a requirement of the funding bids, it was made clear that those schemes which benefited from match funding, would be more likely to receive an LTF allocation. Existing multi-year schemes, approved in 2016-17, were required to submit an updated application and for new capital schemes up to two new applications per local authority were permitted.
- 1.2 This report seeks the retrospective approval of the External Funding Panel.

- 1.3 It was not possible to seek approval from the External Funding Panel prior to the submission of the bid because of the limited time granted by the Welsh Government between the invitation and the actual submission date. Cabinet Approval was however sought and granted prior to the completion of the bids.

## 2. Submitted Bids

- 2.1. The City & County of Swansea submitted four bids totalling £4.312million and is now awaiting a formal announcement from the Welsh Government as to which of the schemes will be awarded funding in whole or part. The schemes and their bid amounts are shown in the table below:

Scheme	Total LTF (£k)	Match Funding (£k)	Total Project Costs (£k)
Fabian Way - Baldwins Bridge	1,541	0	1541
Links to National Cycle Network	1,266	0	1,266
Strategic Bus Corridor Improvements	1,432	110	1542
Kingsbridge Link	73	0	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>4312</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>4422</b>

- 2.2. The match funding requirements for these schemes will come from existing corporate funds.
- 2.3. In addition to the schemes for which the City & County of Swansea submitted a bid, the Welsh Government have made an indicative allocation of £18k in support of the work required to conform to the statutory duties of the Active Travel (Wales) Act. All Welsh Local Authorities are required to prepare an Integrated Network Map for walking and cycling routes by November 2017. These funds will be used to offset the cost of staff time, consultation and the preparation and printing of the maps.

## 3. Details of the Proposed Schemes

- 3.1 The projects included in the bids for Local Transport Funding 2017/18 are summarised below.
- 3.2 Fabian Way – Baldwins Bridge Interchange: The wider Fabian Way Corridor was subject to a Strategic Outline Business Case in 2016/17. The business case appraised the infrastructure needs of the Corridor over the next twenty years; Baldwins Bridge was identified as the most significant infrastructure investment needed for the Corridor. A bid of £1,541,000 was submitted to support the ongoing development of a new junction to replace the Baldwins Bridge junction on Fabian Way.

- 3.3 The existing junction is considered to be in need of extensive works to extend the life of the bridge for the coming decades. Aside from its deteriorating condition, the current structure is preventing the development of adjacent plots of land as it is presently not possible to provide appropriate access to this new junction due to its layout. The improvement of this junction would have a particular bearing upon the further development and expansion of the Swansea University Bay Campus, as well as the Tidal Lagoon development.
- 3.4 The recommended option for this scheme is estimated to cost £23million. It is readily recognised that this is beyond the financial means of the Council at present, and Council Officers have therefore been working in close partnership with Neath Port Talbot CBC, the Welsh Government and the South Wales Trunk Road Agency in order to find a combined funding solution to this important infrastructure improvement. This combined group has therefore concluded that a detailed business case and detailed design will be completed during 2017/18, with a view to identifying funding streams to support the delivery of the junction improvements from 2018/19 onwards.
- 3.5 The cost breakdown of this bid allocates £541,000 for design and project management fees and £1,000,000 for land purchase.
- 3.6 Links to NCN: This project is a continuation of iterations which have preceded it in previous years. The Links to NCN is a project which seeks to build on the established walking and cycling network within the City & County of Swansea, by delivering new infrastructure to link this network with residential areas.
- 3.7 The bid totals £1,266,500 and includes six individual projects under this single title. These projects are summarised below:
- 3.8 *On-street Infrastructure Feasibility Study*: This general study will consider whether there are areas of the City & County which would benefit from on-road infrastructure. The study would conclude by providing a schedule of routes for delivery in future years.
- 3.9 *Orchard Street Shared Use Path*: This 0.5km shared use path will link the current provisions for cycling, which terminate at Kingsway Circle, with Swansea Railway Station. This will allow seamless off-road cycling between the railway station and the city centre, as well as the wider national cycle network.
- 3.10 *Cwm Level Shared Use Path*: A 1.1km route linking Liberty Stadium and NCN43 to existing provision at Brynhyfryd Square and Eaton Road.
- 3.11 *Ynystawe Link*: This improvement would enhance the linkages between Ynystawe, Ynysforgan and Clydach to NCN43, through a mixture of route improvement and wholly new sections of shared use path.

- 3.12 *Morrison Riverside Links*: This element of the project would deliver a small enhancement to existing pedestrian and cycle routes within Morrison, as well as providing a new link from M4 Junction 45 into National Cycle Network Route 43.
- 3.13 *Llansamlet Link*: This project will link with off-road provisions for pedestrians and cyclists that were completed in 2016/17 by Neath Port Talbot CBC. A new section of shared use path would provide new access to Llansamlet Railway Station and Swansea Vale from Birchgrove and Skewen.
- 3.14 Strategic Bus Corridor Improvements: This bid delivers a suite of improvements, principally to two arterial bus corridors, although there are some wider benefits to satellite centres of bus interchange. The bid is split into three constituent parts; these are summarised below:
- 3.15 *Bus Hub Interchanges*: These improvements are spread across ten sites, and deliver a range improvements including upgraded passenger waiting facilities at bus stops, as well as passenger information facilities.
- 3.16 *Carmarthen Road & Cockett Road Bus Corridors*: The general improvements to these corridors are underpinned by the UTrack system, which is currently being developed by First Cymru Bus and a third party company. The UTrack system will provide real-time tracking of First Cymru Buses, which will enable the following improvements:
- Real-time bus information; which will not only advise passengers of how long they will wait for the next bus service, but will also show in real-time, the geographical location of the bus.
  - Monitoring of Network Performance; this will allow First Cymru to identify with high degree of accuracy the areas of bus routes which are most susceptible to unreliable journey times. This information will also allow the Council to identify and remedy the worst areas of traffic congestion.
  - Late Bus Technology: A by-product of the UTrack technology is that its data can be relayed to the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) which is used to inform and operate the County's traffic light systems to moderate and manage demand across the highway network. Adding intelligence about bus movements to the UTC allows bus priority to be given at junctions, where the system can see that particular bus services are running behind their scheduled times. Conversely this approach allows for general traffic to be afforded usual levels of priority when the bus services are running to time, leading to a much more equitable and efficient approach to bus priority. This means that bus priority can be given at junctions which are otherwise devoid of the conventional means of bus priority and use of road space. The funding would be used to provide wireless communications links at the signalised junctions identified in the

attached plan, to allow them to respond to the information provided by the Late Bus Technology. An adapter is required in order to make the connection to the UTrack System, the cost of this and the associated license fee will be borne by the City & County of Swansea as a match fund contribution.

- 3.17 *South West Wales Metro*: These investments are considered to be a precursor to the establishment of a Metro System for Swansea Bay and South West Wales. This proposed scheme would also provide a means to enable consultancy resource to be employed to develop an outline concept for 'Metro for South West Wales'. This report will be prepared in partnership with the other Local Authorities in South West Wales, Carmarthenshire County Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Pembrokeshire County Council. The four Councils have an excellent track record for regional collaboration on transport planning matters and would be keen to develop this concept under the banner of the Swansea Bay City Region.
- 3.18 Kingsbridge Link: This is a scheme which has been developed over a number of years. Its delivery is complex because of the number of landowners involved, common land designations and a number of legal matters which had been left unresolved by the Council for many years.
- 3.19 The scheme would deliver a 1.4km shared use path, crossing Stafford Common and linking the communities of Kingsbridge, Gorseinon and Grovesend to Gowerton and the National Cycle Network Route 4. A bid of £73,000 was submitted for 2017/18.
- 3.20 Land negotiations and applications to appropriately accommodate the Common Land will continue throughout 2017/18, but it is expected that a first phase of the Kingsbridge Link will be able to be constructed between Gowerton Station and Fairwood Terrace.

#### **4. Equality and Engagement Implications**

- 4.1 The implications of these schemes will not adversely impact any individuals as identified by the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act (2010). The projects described in this report will provide enhanced public amenity in the areas in which they are delivered, and will result in improved connectivity and accessibility for all.
- 4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening has been completed in order to account for the potential impacts of these projects. Whilst the projects will be delivered in accordance with equality legislation, Council Officers are mindful that there will be the need for ongoing consultation throughout the development of these projects in order to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and safeguarded in the delivery of the projects.

- 4.3 The Council's Highways and Transportation Service has an excellent record of engaging with affected groups, particularly with the Disability and Access Groups, the needs of which have been ably accommodated through proactive and early engagement to understand the particular needs of those represented by these groups.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The schemes described in this report, rely upon the Local Transport Fund grant to secure their delivery.
- 5.2 A match fund contribution of £110,000 has been identified to support the delivery of the Strategic Bus Corridor improvements. This funding is from a contribution from Revenue in 2016/17. This funding is revenue underspends from 2016/17 which has been capitalised to support the delivery of these capital assets in 2017/18.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 When delivering Transport Schemes, compliance will be required with the relevant Highways and Transport Act measure and guidelines. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 puts an obligation on local authorities to provide walking and cycling infrastructure.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to ensure that all terms and conditions attached to external grant funding are complied with and that the Council's Financial Procedure Rules Regarding Grant Applications and Acceptances are followed.
- 6.3 Any joint bid by regional partners should also be recorded and governance issues clarified in terms of legal responsibility and decision making.
- 6.4 The projects described in this report will be constructed on land which is in the Council's ownership, with the exception of the Kingsbridge Link where land negotiations are ongoing to secure this land for the purposes described above. Land agreements whether by purchase or lease will be in place prior to the commencement of scheme construction and delivery.
- 6.5 Planning Consents may be required for the following schemes:
- a. Baldwins Bridge: Planning Consent will be required to ultimately facilitate the delivery of this project. Whether such an application will be sought in 2017/18 will be subject to the progress that is made on this scheme in the coming months.
  - b. Links to NCN: works to deliver the NCN Links schemes, where the works fall outside of the permitted development regulations.
  - c. Strategic Bus Corridors: The vast majority of this scheme involves changes to the highway network and as such would fall under permitted development and would not therefor require a planning application. The scheme may however require planning

applications where new bus shelters are installed, particularly those which will host advertising boards. Planning Permission will therefore be sought as appropriate.

d. Kingsbridge Link: will require a planning application to support its delivery. A Planning Application was submitted in March 2017.

6.6 Kingsbridge Link: Steps will be needed to ensure that any common land needed to implement the scheme is de-registered.

6.7 Separate legal advice will need to be sought regarding any contract and procurement issues relevant to the schemes.

**Background Papers:** Local Transport Fund 2017-18 Bids

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A** Equality Impact Assessment Screening