

Report of the Director of Place

External Funding Panel – 6 September 2017

LOCAL TRANSPORT NETWORK FUND BID 2017/18

Purpose:	To approve the funding application for the Local Transport Network Fund 2017/18
Policy Framework:	Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015 – 2020)
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that the External Funding Panel retrospectively approve the Local Transport Network Fund 2017/18 application.
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Finance Officer:	Jayne James
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A funding bid for the Local Transport Network Fund (LTF) was submitted to the Welsh Government on 10th August 2017 in accordance with guidance from the Welsh Government. The guidance stated that there was a total funding pot of £3million and this would be allocated to schemes across Wales. The Welsh Government elected not to set a maximum value for the 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.
- 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 Member Approval was however sought and granted prior to the completion of the bids.

2. Submitted Bids

- 2.1 The City & County of Swansea submitted a bid for £1million for the delivery of a range of enhancements to Bus Corridors in Swansea in 2017/18.
- 2.2 The bid and final award does not include match funding from the City & County of Swansea.

3. Details of the Proposed Schemes

- 3.1 The bid for Local Transport Network Funding 2017/18 will deliver a series of enhancements to improve highway network efficiency for areas that are often congested by peak hour traffic. These measures will serve to improve journey time reliability for bus public transport journeys and support the bus hubs concept. The hubs will promote improved integration between modes, and signifies the first steps in drawing together a network of transport options to begin formulating and realising an integrated transport system for Swansea and South West Wales; as established by the First Minister in plenary in December 2016.
- 3.2 The scheme is best described as two principal investments:
- 3.3 ***BUS INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS:*** These improvements will upgrade bus shelters at identified locations, and will also install electronic passenger information facilities at these points of interchange. These improvements will be made at nine locations and are summarised in the plan included in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 ***TELEMATICS IMPROVEMENTS:*** The bid will also make improvements to traffic signals at junctions across Swansea. A total of twenty junctions will be upgraded to provide wireless communication between adjacent traffic signals and the control centre in Civic Centre. The wireless link and associated improvements will enable the telematics equipment to dynamically manage demand at these junctions.
- 3.5 A second strand to this project is being developed in partnership with First Cymru to provide bus priority for public transport vehicles. This part of the project is commonly referred to as 'Late Bus' as the improvement will enable the traffic signals to provide priority to buses through the junction when they are known to be running late.

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 wholly upon the Local Transport Network Fund grant of £1million to secure their delivery.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 When delivering Transport Schemes, compliance will be required with the relevant Highways and Transport Act measure and guidelines.
- 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.
- 6.5 Planning Consents may be required. The vast majority of the scheme involves changes to the highway network and as such would fall under permitted development and would not therefore 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.
- 6.6 Separate legal advice will need to be sought regarding any contract and procurement issues relevant to the schemes.

Background Papers: Local Transport Network Fund 2017-18 Bids

Appendices:

Appendix A Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix B Strategic Plan of the Strategic Bus Corridor Project Elements