

**From:** Michael Payne, Cabinet Member for Planning, Environment, Transportation and Waste

**To:** Scrutiny Committee (23.06.2020)

**Subject:** DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Summary:** This paper provides an update on the DfT's Emergency Active Travel Fund.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Scrutinee Committee is asked to note the content of the report.

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 On the 9th May 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Government would be providing funding to enable Local Highway Authorities to implement Active Travel schemes to make roadspace safer and more accommodating for pedestrians and cyclists as the UK emerges from lockdown. The funding announcement (a press release) on 27th May indicated that Kent could be allocated a total of up to £8.1million.
- 1.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) are operating in a very challenging environment. On 28<sup>th</sup> May officers were advised this funding would be allocated in two 'tranches' and would require the submission of a pro-forma. The detail of the requirements and expectations for the second tranche is still unknown. DfT also advised all Authorities that they must submit a proforma for the first tranche (£1.6m) within 6 working days by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Only upon the success of this would the tranche 1 funds be allocated. To date we still have had no response from DfT, although they expect the funding to be made available by the end of June.
- 1.3 DfT have made it clear that if 'works' are not started within 4 weeks of receipt of funding, or have not been completed within 8 weeks of starting, the Department reserve the right to claw back the funding by adjusting downwards any future tranche 2 funding, or remove it altogether.

## **2 The Report**

- 2.1 Officers have had to respond very quickly in order to make a formal submission to the DfT. They have reviewed the database compiled over many years of scheme suggestions from various sources including Member requests, suggestions from the public, local transport strategies, customer enquiries and district and borough walking and cycling plans. With the DfT requirements in mind they have highlighted the type of proposals which can be implemented with temporary measures and within 8 weeks of the funding arriving, such as improvements to Public Rights of Way and school travel plans.
- 2.2 To enable flexibility of delivery the submission put forward to DfT for the £1.6m is not a 'list' of schemes or locations laid out in detail, it is a financial allocation against the following 5 categories in line with the DfT focus:

1. Carriageway repurposing for cycling and pedestrian capacity
2. Safer journeys to school programme
3. Town wide 20mph zones
4. Modal Filters and Liveable neighbourhoods
5. Recreational cycle and walking schemes including Public Rights Of Way

2.3 This whole collection of historic schemes on the database exceeds well over £10m in value. When the DfT provide feedback officers will quickly review the large list of ideas and establish what can be delivered in the timescales and constraints given. Considerations such as road space availability, utility works and Traffic Regulation Orders are key constraints to note. Relevant County Members will then be informed of any work proposed in their areas.

2.4 A commitment has been made by the Cabinet Member, which remains, to allow Members to submit further ideas which can help formulate an expansive list for Tranche 2. Officers will contact all County Members between now and the end of June to discuss proposals in their area that are listed and invite additional suggestions. It should be noted that to take forward concepts and ideas a certain level of detail around deliverability and cost is needed. In the meantime officers will continue to respond to enquiries from Town, Parish and District Councils who have been formulating and reviewing ideas to support their High Streets Fund - a completely different set of funds held and controlled by the Districts available now.

### **3 Next Steps**

3.1 Subject to successful delivery of the tranche 1 works, we hope to be in a position to secure the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of funding from the DfT of up to £6.4 million. Until a response is received from the DfT we cannot indicate the timescales for commencement of works for tranche 1 or 2 works. Officers are not in a position to be able to prioritise or apply any sort of criteria to the database of schemes to guide Members until the DfT give guidance on how tranche 2 will be allocated. We have been advised that tranche 2 is likely to be subject to a “proportionate” business case submission. Once this process becomes clearer Cabinet will be consulted and a paper submitted to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee for consideration where a decision can be made. When we receive further updates from the DfT regarding the timescales for a tranche 2 submission if this affects anything set out in this paper members will be updated.

### **4 Recommendation(s)**

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the content of the report.
--

### **Contact details**

Report Author:

- Lead officer: Nikola Floodgate
- Job title: Schemes Planning & Delivery Manager
- Phone number: 03000 416239
- E-mail: nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Lead Director: Simon Jones
- Job title: Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET

- Phone number: 03000 411683
- E-mail: [simon.jones@kent.gov.uk](mailto:simon.jones@kent.gov.uk)