

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 21 September 2017

Decision No: 17/00087

Subject: DfT Safer Roads Fund

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All in Ashford and Canterbury

Summary: This paper is seeking approval to submit a bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) under the Safer Roads Fund application process. It also seeks approval to proceed to the next stages of implementing the associated interventions should the submitted bid be successful.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste on the proposed decision (appendix A), as follows:

- 1) give approval to the principle of the bid submission for the two routes identified by the DfT and the Road Safety Foundation and
- 2) give delegated authority to the Director of Highways Transportation and Waste to spend the funding should the bid be successful.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Central Government allocated £1.3 billion of new roads funding to Councils to improve safety and cut congestion between 2017 and 2021. Of this funding, the new Safer Roads Fund of £175m, is being made available to local highway authorities for 2017/18, with the subsequent £150m being allocated in the subsequent three financial years. The Department for Transport (DfT) has invited proposals from eligible local highway authorities to improve the safety of 50 specific sections of local “A” roads, where the risk of fatal and serious collisions is highest, based on the analysis by the Road Safety Foundation between 2012 - 2014.

1.2 The eligible roads within Kent are:

- A252 between Charing and Chilham – 14.1 km in length
- A290 between Canterbury and Whitstable - 8.6km in length

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The bid will seek funding for approximately £3.5m of capital funding for the two routes combined. There is no revenue implication, however there may be some additional features which will need to be adopted for maintenance such as short sections of crash barriers in some locations.

3. Policy Framework

3.1 Investing in safer roads will help reduce disruption from congestion thereby benefiting the economy and supporting KCC's Strategic Statement outcome 2 that Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth. The Safer Roads fund submission also supports Kent County Council's Casualty Reduction Strategy.

4. The Report

4.1 The DfT's Safer Roads Fund programme aims to reduce death and serious injury through a systematic assessment of risk and identifying the major shortcomings that can be addressed by practical road improvement measures. It aims to ensure that assessment of risk lies at the heart of strategic decisions on route improvements, crash protection and standards of route management.

4.2 In simple terms the programme is seeking to make roads 'more forgiving' rather than necessarily reducing the number of accidents occurring as this is often caused by driver error

4.3 Using the EuroRap risk mapping approach, roads have been video surveyed and then coded, in 100m sections, using more than 50 road features known to influence crash likelihood and severity. The coding work was undertaken in March 2017 by the Road Safety Foundation at no cost to KCC. Roads are then star rated for risk from 1 to 5 stars. The aim is to improve star ratings up to (ideally) 5 stars. Both roads at present are predominately 1-2 star rated.

4.4 This method allows Highway Authorities to take a proactive risk assessment approach to identify potential treatments to reduce risk on existing roads rather than focus on historical crash cluster sites. Real risks that may not yet have resulted in crashes are identified in a proactive way. This represents a step change in our approach to Crash Remedial Programme and offers a significant opportunity for Kent County Council.

4.5 The application process depends on refining the Safer Road Investment Plan, whereby the DfT offer a selection of proposals to make the routes safer. At present officers are refining the bid details but the schemes will involve a variety of interventions along each route including, but not limited to:

- Improved delineation
- Shoulder sealing (increased run-off spaces)

- Rumble strip edge of carriageway markings
- Refreshing of lines and cat eyes
- Sections of crash barriers, generally in areas of dramatic level change
- Central hatching
- Converting signs to passively safe posts
- Measures to improve visibility
- Skid resistant surfacing
- Street lighting at junction intersections

4.6 The bid must be submitted by 29 September 2017 and a decision is expected in the Autumn.

5. Conclusions

5.1 This is an important opportunity to gain additional capital funding to improve the highway and reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on two of Kent's key routes. The schemes have been developed through support from the Road Safety Foundation and we are confident that a strong bid will be submitted although we will need to await a decision in the Autumn. By giving the Director of Highways Transportation and Waste delegated authority to proceed with the bid and the implementation of the scheme, officers will be in a position to commence work on the schemes as soon as funds are available, as with many funding opportunities from the DfT there will be a limited window in which the funds can be spent. The programme of works has been developed and some preliminary work has already been done in order to submit the bid and there is confidence the scheme could start early in 2018 if the funding is agreed.

6. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste on the proposed decision (appendix A) as follows

- i) give approval to submit the bid for the A252 and the A290 safer roads scheme and
- ii) give delegated authority to the Director of Highways to spend the funding should the bid be successful, utilising the existing Highways Term Maintenance contract in order to construct the works

7. Background Documents

- Appendix A Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B Scheme Extents Plans - <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD5228&ID=5228&RPID=16992019>

8. Contact details

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