

SUBJECT: ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRESS AND FUNDING OVERVIEW

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 2nd MARCH 2022

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the Active Travel progress and whole funding overview.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To seek endorsement from Cabinet on active travel progress. To acknowledge the Council's ambition in recognising the importance in helping to address key longer term commitments on reducing carbon levels and health and wellbeing improvements.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Under the 'Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013', there is a requirement for authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists. The overall objective is to create a modal shift away from the car for shorter journeys. The production of Active Travel Network Maps which identify existing and potential future routes is a key legal requirement of the Act, as is for any new road schemes or developments to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage. Active Travel has an important part to play in a number of existing policies adopted by Monmouthshire County Council.

- 3.2 Each financial year Welsh Government invites local authorities to bid for funding to deliver Active Travel capital infrastructure projects, as well as providing core funding to support actions in line with the act. For the last 3 financial years Monmouthshire County Council has achieved the following:

2019/20: £50,000 was awarded for one scheme – Llanfoist Active Travel bridge. Additional in year allocations 2019/20 was awarded for Abergavenny town centre active travel improvements at the sum of £300,000. £165,000 core funding was also allocated. Total grant funding of **£515,000**.

2020/21: £1,542,000 was awarded for two package schemes – 4 projects in Caldicot and 5 projects in Monmouth. £280,000 core funding was also allocated. Total funding grant of **£1,822,000**.

2021/22: £2,665,773 was awarded for three package schemes – 4 projects in Caldicot, 6 projects in Monmouth and 3 projects in Abergavenny. £370,000 core funding was also allocated. Total grant funding of **£3,035,773**.

2022/23: Officers have submitted a funding application totalling a request for **£7,916,142** grant funding to continue the existing package schemes in Abergavenny, Caldicot and Monmouth. An allocation of £500k is expected for the core funding to support county wide initiatives. Outcome of the bid is expected in March 2022. Total requested grant funding of **£8,416,142**, it is expected that the allocated amount in March will be less than requested, with additional funding secured in year once project milestones are hit.

- 3.3 Relating to 3.2, Monmouthshire has seen a significant increase in funding allocated through the national Active Travel Fund. This has been supported internally by a robust governance structure with project managers and project sponsors allocated to each project to support implementation.
- 3.4 A strategic focus has been set for Active Travel to provide clarity on our key priorities for route development. This was agreed by members as part of our Active Travel Network Map consultation and is focused on the following 'to develop routes up to 3.0 miles where the key destinations focus on travel to schools; town centres, key employment sites, bus and train stations'.
- 3.5 Throughout the past two years Active Travel has been embedded as a whole authority approach with key relationships established with statutory services, such as Education, to ensure collectively we are all playing our part.
- 3.6 Active Travel is aligned with a number of key policies such as our future generations and wellbeing objectives, Gwent PSB and decarbonisation plans. Active Travel is a key component of our collective response to climate change and providing a sustainable environment for our future generations.
- 3.7 In December 2021 officers submitted the Active Travel Network Maps to Welsh Government following an 18 month consultation period. During this process in excess of 5,000 individual responses were received, 65,844 social media impressions, 100% of Monmouthshire Schools engaged and significant support for our proposed future network. Since 2016 when the process was last undertaken, in line with the act, we have seen an increase of 73 routes added to our existing network and deemed compliant with the national design guidance. This total now stands at 100 routes and plans submitted to Welsh Government have identified our short, medium and long term prioritisation of routes to develop over the next 15 year period. Officers are awaiting feedback and approval of the proposed network.
- 3.8 Over the past two years a data led approach has been made to decision making around Active Travel. Sector leading work with Sustrans, Cardiff and Leeds Universities has provided modelling for all four of our secondary schools. Cameras and counters have been installed around the county to focus on baseline data and to inform project design. Officers are currently exploring a more digital approach to counter data, through automatic uploads and web-based data dashboards.

- 3.9 Examples of data collection and continued progress can be seen in **Appendix B** (2019/20 Annual Report), **Appendix C** (2020/21 Annual Report) and **Appendix D** (Levels of Use Report as part of our Active Travel Network Map Consultation submission).
- 3.10 Whilst the focus of our strategic bids has been on Abergavenny, Caldicot and Monmouth (due to limitations in the national bidding criteria) Active Travel progress has been made on a number of county wide initiatives, including but not limited to;
- The Chepstow Transport Study
 - Town Centre Cycling Infrastructure
 - Primary School Cycling Infrastructure
 - Primary School Active Travel Digital Monitoring
 - Gilwern Whole Settlement Transport Assessment
 - Seven Tunnel Junction Access / Burns Report Recommendations.
 - The Covid Response has seen an increase of infrastructure for 163 bikes in and around our town centres and installation of 13 public bike pumps.
- 3.11 Officers continue to work towards maximising Active Travel opportunities right across Monmouthshire. The current focus is on increasing connectivity within our 7 main settlement boundaries, as this is where there is greater opportunity for modal shift (an increase in walking and cycling) in line with our Active Travel strategic focus. There is a longer term ambition to connect communities based on the rurality of Monmouthshire, so long as it fits within the grant funding criteria.
- 3.12 Officers will continue to support a county wide approach to Active Travel through the promotion of schemes such as the Cycle to Work scheme and providing increased incentives for people to choose active modes of transport. Alignment with policy change and adapting to new opportunities for education, such as the curriculum reform, will play an important part in education to match improved infrastructure. An additional resource has been proposed within the Enterprise budget, through Safe Routes to Schools, to appoint a designated officer to support our educational settings with school travel plans. It is expected the designated post, as we have seen with Active Travel, will provide a targeted approach for continued process and to support future opportunities for growth. Work will continue to ensure a whole authority approach is adopted to these developments to provide an integrated Monmouthshire wide offer.
- 3.13 Officers will continue to work with key colleagues, such as planning, to maximise the potential of new developments to support the growth of our Active Travel Network. The data captured through our recent ATNM consultation will be important to this to provide detailed solutions and opportunities at pre planning stage.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

- 4.1. A completed Integrated Impact Assessment accompanies this report (**Appendix A**).

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Endorsement of the work undertaken will enable officers to continue to progress existing plans and workstreams. Failure to endorse could have an impact on existing projects, future identified schemes and subsequent grant funding to support implementation.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Progress continues to be monitored against the Active Travel Delivery Plan, MonLife Service Plan and Welsh Government / Transport for Wales Quarterly returns. Robust monitoring and evaluation arrangements are in place to track progress against grant objectives, overseen by the Active Travel Governance Board.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure officers are aligned with the focus of the Cabinet in developing this important agenda towards our collective response to climate change.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Existing bids have seen a level of match funding secured from the Council's own capital match funding budget to support grant funding applications, with a summary table shown below of the 22/23 ATF submission (*fig 1.0*). The match funding secured to date has been vital in demonstrating MCC's commitment to these schemes and in gearing up the amount of external funding provided.
- 8.2 As projects progress, officers will continue to liaise with finance colleagues to ensure continued match funding applications are maintained at a sustainable level and in line with MCC section 151 officer approvals. As outlined in 3.2 it is expected that the allocated amount from the total bids in March will be less than requested and this will have a consequential impact on the amounts of match funding required overall.

Fig 1.0 – Financial Summary of 22/23 ATF Submission

	Package 1 Abergavenny		Package 2 Monmouth		Package 3 Caldicot 1		Package 4 Caldicot 2		
	Castle Meadows	£2,364,000	WFL Phase 3	£420,000	Church Road Phase 2	£1,113,171	Caldicot Links	£ 2,038,033	
	Llanfoist Bridge	£1,396,999	WFL Links	£380,000	Newport Road	£ 222,000	Multi User Route	£ 83,256	
	Llanfoist Links	£ 247,500	Monnow St	£120,000	Education & Leisure	£ 210,000			
TOTAL		£4,008,499		£920,000		£1,545,171		£ 2,121,289	£ 8,594,959
Match Funding	MCC (1%)	£ 40,085	MCC (1%)	£ 9,200	MCC (23%)	£ 354,000	MCC (1%)	£ 21,212	£ 424,497 (5%)
					WG TT (16%)	£ 254,320			£ 254,320 (3%)
									£ 678,817 (8%)
TOTAL ATF ASK		£3,968,414		£910,800		£ 936,851		£ 2,100,077	£ 7,916,142

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix A – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix B – Active Travel Annual Report 2019/20
Appendix C – Active Travel Annual Report 2020/21
Appendix D – Active Travel Levels of Use ATNM Report
Appendix E – Active Travel Members Seminar Presentation

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