

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 23rd MARCH 2009

PCT FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL PROJECTS

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR: ENVIRONMENT & REGENERATION

1.0 PURPOSE

To inform members of the offer of £515k of PCT funding to support sustainable travel projects in the borough over the next two financial years and to approve delegated authority for the Corporate Director for Environment and Regeneration to authorise the funding agreements on behalf of the Council

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 notes the offer of funding from the PCT and RECOMMENDS its acceptance to full Council to support three sustainable travel projects in the Borough;**
- 2.2 notes the payment of £6,500 from the Department for Transport to support walking initiatives at seven schools in the Borough;**
- 2.3 grants delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Environment and Regeneration to enter into funding agreements between the PCT and the Council in consultation with the Head of Legal Services; and**
- 2.4 grants authority to the Head of legal Services to affix the Council's seal to such funding agreements as appropriate under Article 14.06 of the Council's Constitution.**

3.0 SUMMARY

This report summarises the offer of one off funding by Telford and Wrekin Primary Care Trust (PCT) to support three sustainable travel projects in the borough during 2009/10 and 2010/11. The report seeks delegated approval to the Corporate Director for Environment and Regeneration to sign the agreements on behalf of the Council to secure the funding.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

5.0 INFORMATION

In summer 2009 the Council and the PCT jointly worked on a bid for central government funding to become a Healthy Town; as part of this work a number of sustainable travel projects were identified that both support encouraging active and healthy lifestyles and managing the growth of road traffic. Unfortunately, the Healthy Towns funding bid was unsuccessful but the PCT have identified an amount of one-off funding that they would like to award to the Council to support three specific sustainable travel projects.

The detail of the three projects is included in Appendix 1 for information, but in outline they are: -

Project 1 – Active Travel for Life

This project aims to provide £225k of support over the next two years to promote walking and cycling routes between three of the borough's industrial areas and nearby residential areas with higher than normal levels of unemployment and health inequality.

Project 2 – Child Pedestrian Training

This project aims to provide training in road safety and pedestrian skills to pupils in years 3 and 4 at up to 50 schools in the borough. The aim is also to establish more than 20 walking buses (supervised walking groups) to schools which will both promote healthy and active lifestyles for children and also support joint work the Council is leading to tackle issues of school gate congestion. The project budget will be £175k over the next two years to March 2011.

Project 3 – SmartCatz Sustainable School Travel Programme

This project aims to roll out the existing SmartCatz reward scheme that the Council operates, to all secondary schools in the borough. The scheme operates in a similar way to national schemes offered by retailers providing rewards for loyalty. The SmartCatz project will be targeted at Year 7 pupils as they start their new schools and the respective feeder primary schools. The aim of the project is to promote and encourage sustainable travel to and from schools, but to influence travel behaviour at a key time, which is the transition from primary to secondary school. The scheme will complement existing work that the Council is doing through the Safer Routes to School Programme and many of the recommendations of the recent School Travel Scrutiny Review.

The PCT funding available to support these projects is through a non-recurrent funding stream which is only available to be offered to the Council prior to the end of the 2008/9 financial year. An evaluation framework will be established for each project to assess their success and to consider how the

services provided could be continued beyond the end of the funding in March 2011. It is proposed that the projects will be managed and reported through the Physical Activity and Sports Board.

In addition to the offer of PCT funding the Department for Transport will also be paying a total of £6,500 in financial year 2009/10, as a specific grant to support existing walking initiatives in seven schools in the borough. The funding is part of a national programme and will be paid to the following schools: -

- Church Aston Primary School (£1000)
- Holmer Lake Primary School (£1000)
- Priorslee Primary School (£1000)
- Redhill Primary School (£1000)
- St Peter's Primary School (£1000)
- St Patrick's Catholic Primary School (£1000)
- Moorfield Foundation Primary School (£1000)

The funding is available to schools who have met specific targets in implementing a walking initiative, such as a Walking Bus for their school, and reducing the number of car trips to the school site.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The projects are aimed at promoting active and healthy lifestyles to children and adults living and working in areas with levels of high unemployment and health inequality. The scheme seeks to address issues, such as childhood obesity, that can more significantly affect less advantaged sectors of the community. The access of services will be monitored and reviewed for all three projects as part of a wider project evaluation framework. Progress and evaluation of the project will be reported through the recently established Physical Activity and Sports Board. Each project will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment as they are developed and implemented.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The projects will significantly contribute to the work that the Council is doing to promote sustainability and manage the impacts of climate change. Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions from transport make up a significant proportion of overall (CO₂) emissions. In addition by targeting schools with two of the projects the aim is to promote both healthy and sustainable behaviour which children will retain as they move into adulthood. The project will also contribute to the localised environmental impact of school gate congestion, by providing significant support for schools to introduce sustainable travel alternatives such as walking buses.

8.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

The projects are considered to be relatively low risk. The funding available is ring-fenced for the specific projects and is the maximum funding available; as such projects will have to be managed within budget limits. All projects will be reported to the Physical Activity and Sports Board, which will receive regular updates on project progress. Project finances will be monitored monthly and regular progress meetings will also be held with colleagues from the PCT who will be supporting delivery of all three projects. Specific risks such as the safety of children using walking buses or pedestrian crossings will be managed through the existing Risk Assessment and Road Safety Audits. All staff working in schools with children or with vulnerable adults will be required to have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before undertaking any work.

9.0 LEGAL COMMENT

The Primary Care Trust offers this funding pursuant to its powers under the national health Services Act 2006 and legal Services will advise on the Funding Agreements. The agreements will not be executed until the approval of full Council has been obtained.

10.0 FINANCIAL COMMENT

The PCT are offering total project funding of £515k which will be formalised through a Section 256 funding transfer agreement. The scheme will be fully funded through the PCT and no match funding is required. This funding has not previously been included in the budget strategy 2009/10 – 2011/12. The funding offered by the PCT is ring-fenced for the specific projects and the projects will be providing services that are additional to those currently offered by the Council.

The project finances will be monitored on a monthly basis, in the same manner as expenditure on Council revenue and capital budgets is monitored. The funding and project period is limited to two years or until the funding is fully expended. If there is an intention to continue the projects beyond March 2011 consideration of how they will be funded will need to be included as part of the budget strategy process for March 2011 and beyond.

The DfT funding of £6,500 will be paid under Section 31 of the Local Government Act (2003) and will be paid as a specific 'Walking to Schools Initiative Grant' which should then be passed on to the respective schools.

11.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The services provided through the three projects will be available to residents and school pupils across the borough, but will be targeted where appropriate to wards with higher levels of unemployment or health deprivation.

12.0 LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The implementation of the recommendations will contribute to the Environment and Economy Priority Plans.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Project Outlines.

Report prepared by Stuart Freeman, Business Manager, Network Management and Policy