



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Date:	20 March 2012
Subject:	DRD Active Travel Demonstration Projects
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Keith Sutherland, Planning and Transport Policy Manager, ext 3578

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Regional Development (DRD) have invited applications from Councils in Northern Ireland to bid for capital resources to implement active travel (cycling/walking) demonstration projects in their area. The Department has indicated that a budget of approximately £3 million will be available over three years (2012 to 2015) to support between three and six projects. To be eligible the projects should demonstrate innovation in sustainable travel through the implementation of a programme of measures to increase active travel.
1.2	Councils can submit one or more bids and the funding is for capital works and cannot be used for revenue or support costs. Within the Council a cross departmental internal steering group has been established to consider possible bids which could meet the criteria outlined by DRD in their Project Guidance document.

2.	Key Issues
2.1	The aim of the demonstration projects is to support active travel and highlight how it can benefit people and communities through improvements to well being, quality of life, the environment and the economy. DRD have outlined the following criteria to assist in the selection of potential active travel demonstration projects in Northern Ireland.
2.2	The projects should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- demonstrate political and senior officer commitment to the programme;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify key high level measures that will be included in the demonstration project (such as length of cycle/ walking infrastructure or number of workplace/ school travel plans targeted, number of people to benefit); - indicate how the project will improve the quality of life and well being of the community and how it promotes modal shift; - show commitment to monitor and measure outcomes and set out the mechanism by which the success of the investment will be evaluated; - demonstrate an understanding of local travel behaviour, barriers to modal shift and how the project will overcome these; - demonstrate how you have engaged with the local community/stakeholders, when designing the project and how the project will benefit local communities in its implementation; and - set out indicative costs for the scheme. <p>2.3 Local councils should also identify whether they will provide or source funding or other resources towards the cost of the project. Work has been carried out within the internal steering group and with Chief Officers to identify potential projects to match the criteria and submit possible bids.</p> <p>2.4 Two proposals have been selected as potential bids: <u>1. Community Active Travel Green routes</u> Developing cycle/walking infrastructure in North and West Belfast using Council parks, existing cycle infrastructure and quieter residential streets. The aim of the project is to focus on the areas of Belfast where cycle provision is currently poor and develop new continuous routes linking parks, communities, schools and the city centre.</p> <p>2.5 The proposed route in West Belfast will link the Falls Park to the Bog Meadows, then utilise the existing cycle path along the Westlink and link to the city centre using the proposed dedicated cycleway (as part of 'Belfast on the Move') on the Grosvenor Road.</p> <p>2.6 The second scheme proposed is for the north of the city linking the Waterworks Park with Alexandra Park then linking to the National Cycle network at Clarendon Docks using quieter residential streets in inner north Belfast. The existing national cycle route will link to the city centre along the River Lagan.</p> <p>2.7 An initial site visit has taken place with representatives from Sustran to assess the potential of the proposed routes and feedback has been positive. Opportunities to link the cycle path development with nearby schools and communities will be developed as part of the proposal.</p> <p><u>2. Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme</u></p> <p>2.8 A notice of motion regarding the introduction of a bike hire scheme in Belfast was outlined at the October 2009 Development Committee and Officers were requested to discuss the matter with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) with a view to providing a future update. Since then an Outline Business Case has been completed which states that a public bike hire scheme could be viable for Belfast and the business case outlines infrastructure and running costs for the scheme.</p> <p>2.9 The Council could make a potential bid to DRD to cover the capital infrastructure costs thereby reducing the overall public bike hire project cost.</p>
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2.10	The capital infrastructure bid process would need to be linked to an exercise to identify how an operator could be sought to run the scheme and cover ongoing revenue costs. The Public Bike hire scheme for Belfast is included in the Council's Draft Investment Programme
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3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

4.	Recommendations
4.1	It is recommended that Members consider the two proposed Active Travel project bids and if appropriate agree for further development of the projects prior to submission to the DRD Active Travel Demonstration projects fund.

6.	Decision Tracking
Submit bid to DRD by May 2012	
Timeframe: May 2012	Reporting Officer: Keith Sutherland

7.	Key to Abbreviations
DRD - Department for Regional Development	