



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Date:	17 April 2012
Subject:	DRD Active Travel Projects
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	As reported at the March committee, 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 budget is approximately £3 million available for bids from all councils, over the next three years (2012 to 2015) to support between three and six projects. Eligible projects should demonstrate innovation in sustainable travel through the implementation of a programme of measures to increase active travel.
1.2	It was agreed to progress two potential projects as bids: North and West Belfast Active Travel routes and the Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme (infrastructure costs). The DRD deadline for the submission of applications is the 18 th May 2012

2.	Key Issues
2.1	BID 1- North and West Belfast Active Travel routes It is proposed to seek funding to develop cycle/walking infrastructure in North and West Belfast using Council parks, quieter residential streets and linking to existing cycle path infrastructure. 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. A map indicating the proposed routes is attached in Appendix 1.
2.2	The North Belfast proposal is to link the Waterworks Park with Alexandra Park and then connect 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.

2.3	<p>The physical works proposed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - upgrade of the pedestrian crossing at the Cavehill Rd/Antrim Rd/Limestone Rd junction; - new signage and monitoring stations within Council parks and along the proposed route; - upgrades to entrances of Council parks to facilitate pedestrian and cycle access; - new cycle path provision linking from Alexandra Park at Deacon Street to the National Cycle Network; - alterations to the pedestrian crossing at Limestone Rd/North Queen St junction; - additional cycle lane provision on lower Limestone Rd and a section of York St; and - new cycle/pedestrian crossing at Whitla Street.
2.4	<p>The West Belfast proposal will seek to link the Falls Park area through the Bog Meadows, then along the existing shared path beside the Westlink to the city centre (using the proposed dedicated cycleway as part of 'Belfast on the Move' on the Grosvenor Road).</p>
2.5	<p>The physical works proposed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new cycle path provision linking the Falls Parks to the Upper Springfield Rd existing cycle path; - relocation of pedestrian crossing on the Falls Road at Falls Park; - additional cycle/pedestrian provision linking Milltown Row/ Bog Meadows to the Westlink existing shared path; and - additional signage and new monitoring stations.
2.6	<p>Site visits and meetings have taken place with representatives from Sustrans and Road Service to assess the potential of the proposed routes and the feedback from these consultations has been positive. The cost for the physical works in Bid 1 is estimated at £650,000. Further assessment of the costs will be carried out with Parks Department and the Roads Service prior to the submission of the bid.</p>
2.7	<p>BID 2 - Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme</p> <p>The Public Bike Hire scheme is included in the Draft Investment Programme. This submission builds on work commissioned by the Strategic Investment Board. The Outline Business Case suggests that a public bike hire scheme could be viable for Belfast based on experiences in other cities.</p>
2.8	<p>A bid to DRD under Active Travel could meet the infrastructure costs thereby reducing the financial commitment for any public bike hire project to the annual running costs. The infrastructure bid would however need to be linked to an agreement or commitment to meet ongoing revenue costs.</p>
2.9	<p>A crucial element of a bid for the infrastructure, would be the ability for the Council to reassure DRD that it would be able to deliver the Public Bike Hire Scheme through the development of the infrastructure; engagement of an operator and provision to cover ongoing revenues costs.</p>
2.10	<p>The approach to ongoing management; the costs for operating the scheme and procurement of an operator are the subject of further study. The consultants who carried out the Outline Business Case are in the process of carrying out further work on these issues.</p>

2.11	<p>The outline business case provided estimates of the infrastructure cost for the scheme as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure cost for 30 docking stations and 300 bikes - £628,500 - Infrastructure cost for 50 docking stations and 500 bikes - £1m <p>The application for Bid 2 will reflect the costs outlined in the Business Case however further assessment is needed on the appropriate scale of the scheme.</p>
2.12	<p>It should be noted that the opportunities to link the cycle path development and the bike hire project with nearby schools and communities will be developed as part of the proposal. The additional consultancy work will seek to identify opportunities for funding or other resources towards the ongoing costs of the projects. The work to develop the route options for West and North has sought to ensure maintenance and future operational costs are incorporated within existing management arrangements.</p>

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 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	

8.	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 North & West Belfast proposed routes	