NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

DECISION OF: COUNCILLOR ELFAN AP REES. THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING, HIGHWAYS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING.

WITH ADVICE FROM: THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND S151 OFFICER.

DECISION NO: ~~18/19~~ 17/18 DE ~~230~~ 300.

SUBJECT: Local Growth Fund bid - approval to bid for £1.75m (2018-2021)

KEY DECISION: No

DECISION:

To approve the bid for £1.75m external grant funding to be made available through the Local Growth Fund (LGF) for sustainable transport schemes and to support scheme development and match funding for further future schemes, which are within the proposed North Somerset Council Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018-21.

BACKGROUND:

North Somerset Council is applying to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Local Growth Fund (LGF) capital funding, which has been made available to them through the Department for Transport (DfT). If successful, this will realise North Somerset Council ambitions sooner than previously expected using only Local Transport Plan funding sources. There are no revenue implications as all match funding identified is from existing Local Transport Plan allocations, which has been signed off by Executive Member for Highways & Transport.

The maximum available funds for North Somerset Council through LGF between 2018/21 is £1.75m for walking, cycling, public realm and public transport improvements. These funds will assist the delivery of corporate priorities, such as Weston Town Centre regeneration and the Coastal Towns Cycle Route, as outlined in the Director Annual Statement for Development & Environment (D&E). It is proposed funding is split over three years for schemes related to Weston-super-Mare regeneration, these include South Parade and Regent Street public realm and bus improvements (£1.25m respectively, plus match funding) and Uphill Road North shared use route (£375,000 plus match funding), which is part of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route.

The South Parade improvements are within Weston-super-Mare town centre adjacent to the recently completed Town Square public realm scheme. This scheme was originally earmarked for delivery in 2017/18, however, land negotiation has meant we are delivering Knightstone Road, a continuation of the South Parade scheme on the 'Boulevard corridor'.

South Parade improvements include better pedestrian and cycling provision, realigning the existing road layout and bus stop improvements. Regent Street is a similar corridor improvement scheme and will see higher quality public realm and improvements in bus journey times, along with more consistent provision for walking and cycling.

With a view to realising North Somerset Council's longer term aspirations, £150,000 will be allocated to future phases of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route between Weston and Clevedon and the Strawberry Line Extension. These funds will be used for surveys, permissions and feasibility and used to support further bids to DEFRA (who are supportive of our Tutshill Sluice proposals) and Highways England (to utilise a culvert under the M5 which currently bisects the Strawberry Line extension, again who are being very supportive). They will also be used in tandem with existing Section 106 funding for the Strawberry Line Extension. This funding is identified as capital work due to already having completed the options appraisal stage and Highways & Transport allocating these funds to a specific capital project, as outlined by North Somerset Council finance team and the capital programme.

Local Growth Fund will enable continued phased improvements to the Coastal Towns Cycle Route connecting Weston-super-Mare to other North Somerset towns and villages. The next deliverable phase is along Uphill Road North, connecting Weston-super-Mare to Uphill village. It also encompasses improvements to Marine Parade to the North, where it connects to the Promenade and Uphill Road South to the South of Weston Golf Course. This project received £10,000 for feasibility from LGF in 2017/18 and now has detailed design, agreement of the landowner, a submitted planning application and the necessary survey work to be ready for construction from 2018 onwards.

The long term aspiration is to connect the coastal towns of North Somerset (Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead) to Brean in the South and Bristol to the North. This will create a long distance mainly off-road and quiet road trail, connecting the towns. This will have benefits for commuting, congestion reduction, as well as tourism and business locally. We have chosen to take forward a route providing shared use adjacent to Uphill Road North. This will be the final section for improvement along the 8 mile section of the recently opened Brean Down Way from Weston Pier to the National Trust Brean Down fort, which is a regional attraction and a listed monument.

This will build on momentum from last financial year where officers upgraded the section of path to the River Axe Sluice and opened the sluice itself to the Somerset boundary. The sluice had previously been shut to the public for 40 years and formed a physical barrier to Brean. In addition to this, officers worked collaboratively with the charity Greenways and Cycleways Ltd and Somerset County Council to deliver a route all the way to Brean beach and enable cycling to the fort on Brean Down, ensuring connectivity does not finish at the North Somerset boundary.

REASONS:

To enable better pedestrian, cycle and public transport access through the Weston-super-Mare town centre. This will benefit visitors to the town as well as local residents. The Boulevard and Regent Street corridors are two of three main transport corridors as outlined in the Weston-super-Mare Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Coastal Towns Cycle Route is a corporate priority and will create a commuter route and sustainable tourist attraction between the coastal towns within North Somerset. North Somerset Council are also

developing a proposal for cycle hire, which will take advantage of this new attraction and provide jobs and growth. The following policies justify the inclusion of these projects:

The Council's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2026 sets out our policy for contributing to better safety, security and health and improving quality of life. The Joint Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 (JLTP3) sets out our policy for improving health and wellbeing and ensuring safer communities.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The Weston Town Centre Regeneration proposals are moving forward quickly and much of the preparatory work on site is already undertaken. Through the masterplan we have an excellent idea of which infrastructure requirements are required to unlock economic development within the town. The Station Boulevard corridor has recently been successful in bidding for National Productivity and Investment Fund (NPIF) funding. This scheme would have also have been considered if it wasn't for the successful NPIF bid.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

In summary, these projects within the programme will kick start the initial infrastructure requirements for the Weston Town Centre Regeneration masterplan, whilst also realising high value for money sections of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route. This will see these aspirations realised far quicker than previously envisaged.

Costs
There are no revenue implications due to all schemes already being part of the existing adopted highway.

Funding
The proposals will be fully funded by the LGF allocation, and by Local Transport Plan funding which has been ring fenced for these schemes through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Figure 1.

Scheme	LGF allocation Over 3 years (18/21)	LTP Match (Capital) over 3 years 18/21	Total
W-s-M Regen e.g. South Parade/Regent St	£1.25m	£330,000 (incl. W-s-M regen LGF match	£1.55m
Uphill Rd North	£375,000	£75,000	£450,000
Coastal Towns Cycle Route and Strawberry Line Extension	£150,000	£65,000	£215,000
Total	£1.75m	£470,000	£2.22m

*Existing S106 could be allocated to increase match requirements, for instance £129,000 for the Strawberry Line as agreed by Exec Member within MTFP/LTP

Figure 2.

Scheme profiling	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Total	**£480,000**	**£1.145m**	**£595,000**	**£2.22m**

Maintenance of schemes which are already a part of the existing adopted highway ensures there are no revenue implications. This is due to North Somerset Council being responsible for Weston-super-Mare town centre and the chosen phase of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route, Uphill Road North. The new improvements will provide attractive alternatives to using the car, limiting congestion and providing high quality public realm for residents and visitors to Weston-super-Mare.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

South Parade will require a 'land swap' legal agreement with the Royal Hotel. Discussions with the hotel are ongoing but no risks are foreseen.

The Uphill Road North scheme will require purchase of a 2 metre strip of land adjacent to the existing footway. This will be incorporated into the new shared-use path and adopted as public highway.

CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation was carried out for the Weston Town Centre 'SPD', which included a 'Master Plan' identifying Regent Street as a pedestrian priority area and Regent St and South Parade were both prioritised for pedestrian and cycle movement.

Detailed consultation on the design for South Parade is ongoing with the Royal Hotel, Weston College and other adjacent businesses.

North Somerset Council is currently engaged in developing its Active Travel Strategy, which is now being supported by LCWIP (Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans) - a DfT initiative which uses extensive data gathering to identify where investment in local walking an cycling networks will be most effective. Local consultation with a wide range of stakeholders is planned for late spring / early summer 2018, when the routes covered by this funding bid are expected to be included in those consulted upon (at a high level). Individual scheme consultation will follow in due course.

RISK MANAGEMENT

South Parade: The complete scheme is currently being investigated and designed using existing funding. This work is due to be completed by spring 2018 - no risks have so far been identified that would cause the scheme to become over budget or undeliverable.

Regent Street: Full investigatory works have yet to be carried out for this scheme, yet it is considered low risk due to the only permissions required being a Traffic Regulation Order.

Coastal Towns Cycle Route: The Uphill Road North scheme has been designed in detail in consultation with Development Management, Weston Golf Club, and the landowner. Planning Permission has been applied for - subject to this no other risks have been identified.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No

This is a three-year bid - an EIA will be carried out for LGF bid as whole, plus individual EIAs for each scheme as they are progressed.

Equalities implications are anticipated to be generally only positive such as enabling better access, applicable to a broad range of people within our communities, schools, colleges, and businesses, and also to visitors to the area.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The South Parade and Regent Street schemes will both make a significant contribution to the regeneration of Weston Town Centre, both encouraging more foot and cycle movements between the seafront and the retail areas. The South Parade scheme will extend the benefits of the Town Square area through to the College and to the seafront.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

LGF decision paper 17/18
B:\D&E\Highways & Transport\Sustainable Travel & Road Safety\LGF 17 18\ LGF EXEC MEMBER DECISION TEMPLATE 2017 18 bid and v4

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: ..... Executive Member for Strategic Planning, Highways, Economic Development and Housing

Date: 23/4/18

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed: ..... Director of Development & Environment

Date: 23/4/2018

Signed: .....S151 Officer

Date: 23/4/2018