

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

**DECISION OF: CLLR JAMES TONKIN THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR
PLANNING, BUILDING CONTROL, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**



WITH ADVICE FROM: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISION NO: 19/20 DE 04

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL CAPITAL SCHEMES EXPENDITURE 18/19 AND
19/20 (RETROSPECTIVE)**

KEY DECISION: YES

REASONS: The value of the decision is over £500,000

BACKGROUND:

Along with the other West of England authorities, North Somerset Council applied to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Local Growth Fund (LGF3) capital to be made available to them through the Department for Transport (DfT). This was successful and this decision notice will act as retrospective approval to mobilise and complete the works outlined below.

The maximum available funds for North Somerset Council through LGF in 2017/18 was £510,000 in total for walking, cycling, public realm and public transport improvements. It was agreed LGF funding would be split over two main schemes, South Parade (Phase 1) public realm works (£500,000) with some further preparatory work for Uphill Road North shared use route (£10,000), which is part of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route. Match for these two schemes is £230,500.

These schemes will see new pedestrian and cycle improvements, including through 'road reallocation'. The main location for improvement is South Parade (Phase 1) in Weston-super-Mare, which will support and facilitate the 'Weston Town Centre Regeneration' project. This scheme is the first phase of providing wider footways and increased pedestrian space and a more cycle friendly environment between the Italian Gardens and Weston Seafront, and in particular improving access by active modes to Weston College.

For the second element of the award it was proposed to take forward a route providing a shared use path along Uphill Road North. This will connect Uphill to Weston-super-Mare and the Somerset boundary in Brean. This project requires land acquisition, detailed design, a planning application and some survey work (these stages are now all completed) to be ready for construction in 2019/20 or 2020/21 (final costs have now been obtained and further funding secured / under discussion and subject to a further decision notice). The long-term aspiration through a phased approach 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.

This will build on momentum from 2017 when officers upgraded the shared use route through Walborough Nature Reserve and also between Wayacre Drove and Brean Cross Sluice (the Somerset boundary) where a voluntary 'work camp' constructed a 'stone to dust' link. This saw 2.5km of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route delivered within just one year. The Somerset side is also completed and it is now possible to cycle over the sluices and onwards to Brean Down.

DECISION:

To retrospectively add £410,968 to the capital programme for the LGF 3 scheme in 2019/20 and to retrospectively approve £246,018 of spend incurred in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

REASONS:

To ensure we have retrospective signed approval for delivery in 2019/20 and can spend LGF3 and LTP match as agreed at IIB and through Executive Member for Transport briefing.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

North Somerset Council wished to take advantage of grant funding through LGF3, after a successful bid and add it to the LTP and MTFP programme.

The Weston Town Centre Regeneration proposals are moving forward quickly and the South Parade (Phase 1) scheme has now been completed. The Masterplan sets out which infrastructure requirements are necessary to unlock economic development within the town. Station Road approach was strongly considered for improvements to assist the Walliscote Place redevelopment. But at the time it was considered that further funding would be required to enable the scheme and this would total more than was available in the LGF3 funding allocation (funding has since been made available under LGF4 and this scheme is now underway). South Parade is more deliverable in the short term and has wider benefits to cyclists and pedestrians, with improved access to bus stops.

Various other sections of the Strawberry Line and three main sections of the Coastal Towns Cycle Route were also considered for delivery or preparatory work over this period, however various permissions were still required, so it was concluded that these would be better delivered in future years. Therefore Uphill Road North permissions and preparatory work was the preferred option, as once completed the scheme would be ready for delivery.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

All financial implications are positive by adding the above sums to the LGF3 programme. If consent is not given, North Somerset Council would have to find the funding internally and refund the LGF3 and LTP funds spent to date.

South Parade Phase 1 is an LGF3 funded scheme for which £500,000 was successfully bid for and LTP £200,000 match funding was agreed at the time of the bid. £205,000 LTP was made available. The approved sum of £31,151.69 was spent in 17/18 and £45,377.77 in 18/19. The unapproved spend for 18/19 was £154,622.23 and for 19/20 it will be £476,862.25.

South Parade/Knightstone Road has gone through a series of highlight report updates and change requests. All permissions are now complete and the tender work is proceeding with contractors.

Uphill Road North now has all relevant permissions including planning and badger license. Tree removal works are complete. A further Decision Notice will be required for the full delivery of this scheme.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

All schemes will have an advantage for vulnerable users, including disabled users and people with mobility issues. Equality implications are seen as only positive for all protected characteristic groups.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None other than non approval.

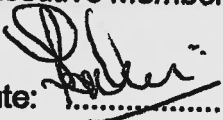
BACKGROUND PAPERS

LGF Full Business Case Sustainable Transport Package 17/18

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Executive Member for Planning, Building Control, Highways and Transport

Date:  10/12/19

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:  Director of Development and Environment

Date: 28/11/19

Uphill Road North (Brean Down Way) had an agreed LGF3 budget of £10,000. The approved sum of £6,985.56 was spent in 17/18 and a balance spent of £3014.44 needs to be approved for 18/19. The next stage of the funding for delivery of this scheme consist of £450,000 LGF4 and associated £150,000 LTP match (£600,00 in total) which was rolled over as agreed internally and with The West of England/LEP for delivery in 18/19 (this may need a to be rolled over to 2020/21).

The total cost of the scheme and its sources of financing are as follows:

	LGF	LTP	Total
South Parade	500,000	208,000	708,000
Uphill Rd	10,000	22,500	32,500
Total LGF 17/18 Scheme	510,000	230,500	740,500
Spend to date	305,319	24,213	329,532
Remaining approval	204,681	206,287	410,968

Some spend against the project has already been approved amounting to £83k, although unapproved spend of £246k has already been incurred in 2018/19. An additional £411k is recommended for approval onto the capital programme for 2019/20 and retrospective approval for the spend of £246k in 2018/19

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

A collaboration agreement was signed off by Head of Transport. Legal assisted in the drafting of this agreement. There are no further Legal implications.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The South Parade scheme has been explicitly designed to encourage more and safer walking and cycling. It is part of a wider long-term scheme for improved connectivity of walking and cycling routes in Weston Town Centre, as per the WTC SPD. Although not explicitly designed as a drainage scheme, drainage has been renewed and improved over the works area, helping mitigate against both sea and heavy rain flooding.

The Uphill Road North Scheme has also been explicitly designed to encourage more and safer walking and cycling, and is the missing link of the Brean Down Way, connecting Brean and Weston-super-Mare.

CONSULTATION

The South Parade scheme at Knightstone Road was consulted on in December 2018. This was through a leaflet drop and more specific consultation with the College and the Royal Hotel.

Consultation for Uphill Road North took place in September 2018 via a letter drop regarding the tree works, which have now taken place. Prior to this we received planning permission and consulted formally through this process for the full proposal. The planning portal received 21 replies and few objections.

RISK MANAGEMENT