

Notice of:	Deputy Leader of the Council
Decision Number:	PH72/2016
Relevant Officer:	Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gillian Campbell, Deputy Leader of the Council
Date of Decision:	November 2016

ACCESS FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL 2017 - 2020

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 This report provides details about the Department of Transport Access Fund for sustainable travel.

The report is to request a dispensation from the Contracts Procedure Rules to directly award a contract to Living Streets to act as delivery partner if the funding application to the Department for Transport Access Fund is successful.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To agree that Blackpool Council becomes the lead authority for Department of Transport Access Fund for sustainable travel.
- 2.2 To agree to the dispensation from Contracts Procedure to enable the direct award of a contract to Living Streets to act as delivery partner.
- 2.3 That subject to approval of 2.2 above and a successful funding application, that the Director of Public Health be delegated authority to complete the contract with Living Streets.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 Blackpool Council has been working in partnership with Living Streets since 2012 delivering the “Walk to” school project, which has proved popular and successful with the Primary Schools. Over the last couple of years the project has expanded to include secondary schools and work places to improve active travel. There is a strong relationship with Living Streets which has been established over a long period of time and their involvement is integral to delivery of the “Walk to” project.

Blackpool Council is acting as the lead partner on behalf of 10 local authorities’.

Living Streets is already engaged as delivery partner on a current “Walk to” project. There is no appetite across the local authorities to engage in the process to appoint an alternative delivery partner. Living Streets has been central to pulling together the funding application on behalf of the local authorities.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Not to agree to become the lead authority nor to the dispensation from Contracts Procedure Rules which could cause the scheme to cease.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Blackpool Council has been working in partnership with Living Streets since 2012. The initial project was about encouraging primary school children to walk to school. The project has evolved and now includes “Walk to...” which is about working with secondary schools, communities and workplaces to increase the number of people walking. The project was initially co-located with the Transport and Highways team and in 2014 transitioned into the Public Health Team, where partnership across the Council departments has been strengthened.

5.2 Living Streets was successful in obtaining Local Sustainable Transport Fund funding for 2016/17 to continue to deliver the “Walk to...” project and Blackpool was one of 15 local authorities involved in the bid process and currently receives a proportion of the £2.48 million grant.

5.3 The Department of Transport launched the Access fund on the 5 July 2016. With the deadline for submission by the 9 September 2016. There is £60 million in revenue funding available for sustainable travel projects from 2017 through to 2019/2020 with a request for additional funding of 10% match from the local authorities. The contribution can be either capital or revenue and can be sourced from Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Integrated Transport Block.

5.4 The primary objectives are:-

- To support the local economy by supporting access to new and existing employment, education and training; and
- To actively promote increased levels of physical activity through walking and cycling

5.5 The current Lead partner is Birmingham City Council. However Birmingham is likely to be involved with an Access Fund application as part of a consortium of Local Authorities within the West Midlands Transport Authority, therefore they can no longer be the lead for the Walk-to Consortium. Blackpool has been approached by Living Streets to establish whether the Council would be willing to act as lead partner.

5.6 The key roles and responsibilities are detailed below:

Living Streets - Delivery partner

Living Streets would be the key delivery partner for the project. They will lead on all aspects of delivery and project management including:

- Writing the funding bid
- Managing the consortium of local authority partners
- All project management including: staff recruitment, HR, training and management; project monitoring; related press and publicity work; and preparing financial claims and project progress reports for the Department for Transport
- Governance - managing and administering all aspects of the project steering group.

Lead partner – Blackpool Council

The lead partner for a consortium bid leads on liaison and financial arrangements with the Department for Transport, either on their own or with Living Streets depending on the nature of the communication. Key elements of the role are expected to include:

- Final sign off and submission of the bid on completion (NB this will require sign off from the Council's Statutory Finance Officer)
- Acting as the accountable body with the Department for Transport, including submitting financial claims and progress reports, as prepared by Living Streets.
- Speedy financial management: To ensure there is no significant impact on cash flow for Living Streets. Administrative arrangements to pass on grant payments on a monthly basis, within ten days will be established between the lead partner

and the delivery partner.

The project will be developed in agreement with all local authority partners. It is anticipated the project will seek to build on the successful approach with schools and workplaces, consolidating the work with existing partners and extending the reach to new locations and focus on walking to access education, skills, training and work. The project will target areas where encouraging people to walk instead of drive (some or all of the journey) will relieve peak time congestion and facilitate affordable and efficient access to jobs, or may do so in future as a result of new developments (e.g. new employment sites, new education sites). It will also target locations where improvements to public transport and the public realm offer an opportunity to increase walking (e.g. transport gateway improvements).

Local Authority Partners

Detailed below are the local authorities currently involved in the project and named within the funding application made to the DFT in September 2016.

Blackpool Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Hampshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Leicester City Council
North East Combined Authority
North Lincolnshire Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Surrey County Council
West Sussex County Council

5.7 **Does the information submitted include any exempt information?** No

5.8 **List of Appendices:**

None

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 It will be necessary to have a legal partnership agreement in place signed by all participating authorities.

7.0 **Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 It would be necessary to have a contact within the Council to deal with the Department of Transport liaison and manage any issues related to the project across

the partnership.

- 7.2 This would be an additional responsibility for the Council; however the Council would be able to negotiate with Living Streets some costs for covering the administrative aspects of this role.
- 7.3 To have an officer from the Council who manages the day to day aspects of the project for the Council, including working with the Living Streets Co-ordinator. This would help maintain a suitable distance between the project delivery and overall project management.
- 7.4 This function is currently managed by an officer within the Public Health Team at no additional cost to the council.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 As detailed within the Healthy Weight Strategy 72% of the Blackpool population are overweight/obese. Obesity is a significant contributor to health inequalities in the town and reducing the inequalities is a fundamental part of the strategy. This project particularly focuses on considering how to support individuals to become more physically active through every day activities such as travelling to school, education and work.

9.0 Financial considerations:

- 9.1 It is the intention of Living Streets to submit the maximum level of bid of £7.5 million over 3 years.
- 9.2 A financial reward of 1% has been agreed with Living Streets so Blackpool Council is able to support the administrative costs of being the Lead Partner.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

- 10.1 There could be a potential risk to the Council if the current Living Street Co-ordinator left the post in the short term until the post was replaced. However, it would be anticipated that Living Streets would be required to give support whilst the post was being recruited to.
- 10.2 There is a potential risk of the delivery partner failing, but this risk is considered to be low due to the organisation being in existence since 1929 and their reputation of being a beacon for walking for the past 89 years. They have very strong links with the Department of Transport.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 There are no ethical considerations

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 There have been discussions across departments who would have active involvement in the bid submission, who are all supportive of the work of Living Streets continuing in Blackpool.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 Department for Blackpool – Access Fund for Sustainable Travel Guidance on Bidding, May 2016

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1 Is this a key decision? No

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1 None

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1 The Deputy Leader of the Council agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:

1. To agree that Blackpool Council becomes the lead authority for Department of Transport Access Fund for sustainable travel.
2. To agree to the dispensation from Contracts Procedure to enable the direct award of a contract to Living Streets to act as delivery partner.
3. That subject to approval of 2 above and a successful funding application, that the Director of Public Health be delegated authority to complete the contract with Living Streets.

18.2 Date of Decision:

17 November 2016

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

Blackpool Council has been working in partnership with Living Streets since 2012 delivering the “Walk to” school project, which has proved popular and successful with the Primary Schools. Over the last couple of years the project has expanded to include secondary schools and work places to improve active travel. There is a strong relationship with Living Streets which has been established over a long period of time and their involvement is integral to delivery of the “Walk to” project.

Blackpool Council is acting as the lead partner on behalf of 10 local authorities’. Living Streets is already engaged as delivery partner on a current “Walk to” project. There is no appetite across the local authorities to engage in the process to appoint an alternative delivery partner. Living Streets has been central to pulling together the funding application on behalf of the local authorities.

19.1 Date Decision published:

17 November 2016

20.0 Executive Members present:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes :

22.1