

**BIKEABILITY CYCLE TRAINING**

*To:* **Economy and Environment Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **9<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

*From:* **Graham Hughes, Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**

*Electoral division:* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable**      *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To report changes associated with funding for Bikeability cycle training, and to consider a way forward.**

*Recommendation:* **Committee are asked to:**

- a) Support the proposal to introduce a charge for Bikeability; and,**
- b) Agree to receive a further report detailing take up levels and any other issues resulting from charge introduction.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Free cycle training in primary schools has been offered in Cambridgeshire since the 1970s. In 2009 the County Council moved from volunteer led cycle training managed by the Road Safety Team, to Bikeability training, promoted by Cycling England, and delivered in accordance with national standards, and managed by the Cycling Projects Team.
- 1.2 The delivery model is an outsourced one for which very minimal amounts of staff costs are incurred, contrasting with the previous model which required a number of posts devoted solely to the scheme.
- 1.3 The current training provider Outspoken, have proved to be an enthusiastic and reliable supplier, which has enabled a very hands off approach from County staff to ensure costs can be focussed wholly on training provision.
- 1.4 Each year an estimate of training places is made, and submitted to The Department for Transport (DfT) as a bid. Up until this year DfT has always met the number of required places. Outspoken charge £45 per child trained, and the DfT pay £45.
- 1.5 In recent years the numbers trained have been increasing steadily and currently numbers trained per year exceed 6,000.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 The DfT has decided to top slice the Bikeability budget to provide another initiative called Bikeability Plus which seeks to complement training with other activities such as bike rides and bike maintenance. Cambridgeshire is one of the recipients of Bikeability Plus funding. Demand for the remaining pot of Bikeability has risen year on year, and so DfT cannot now give every local authority their desired level of funding. Priority has been given to new schemes, rather than established ones like our own.
- 2.2 Although there will still be DfT funding, it may not now cover all of our costs. For each £45 training place, the shortfall is likely to be around £20, but this is likely to vary year to year.

## **3. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

- 3.1 Cycle training is an established part of the school programme in primary schools, and given that the DfT have made a long term commitment to some level of funding, it would seem almost unthinkable to consider ceasing the training programme.
- 3.2 In discussion with our provider and with our contacts from The Association of Bikeability Schemes (TABS), it seems clear that the best solution is to seek to charge schools in part for the training.
- 3.3 The mechanics of charging would still require minimal staff time, as Outspoken have agreed to contact schools and to seek payment direct from them. They would then invoice the County Council (as they do now), for the remaining costs. This new process would place more requirements on Outspoken, and would require schools to seek payments from children, but would not result in any additional staff time for County Council staff.

- 3.4 Schools would have the discretion to charge all pupils, or could perhaps decide to waive charges for those entitled to free school meals. Schools could also seek out local sponsorship opportunities.
- 3.5 Some other neighbouring local authorities have been charging parents for Bikeability for some time such as in Hertfordshire. The view in Hertfordshire is that if people pay for the training then they are more likely to take it seriously and cycle more often.
- 3.6 Peterborough and Northamptonshire are in the same position as Cambridgeshire, having offered the service free, but are now considering levying a charge as per this proposal.
- 3.7 It is hard to gauge the impact on road safety in terms of introducing a charge for training. If less people take the training it might suggest less safe road users on the network, but equally by charging there is an argument that children may be more committed to constructively taking part, feeding back to their families about the training, and putting into practice what they have learned.
- 3.8 The proposal therefore is to introduce charging from September 2017 but only if this is necessary based on DfT allocations of funding at the time. This will give plenty of time to contact schools to inform them of the charging and the reasons why this is necessary. It allows them some time to consider their position.
- 3.9 Levels of take up of training are continually monitored as a requirement of funding. It is proposed to bring a further report back to Committee after the first six months of the charging regime, so that members can further consider the impact of charging.

#### **4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

##### **4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

More people cycling contributes to a healthier population, improved productivity, reduced traffic congestion, reliability of journey times and adds capacity into an already constrained road network, all of which contributes to economic wellbeing.

##### **4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

Currently many people feel unsafe cycling, although cycling is potentially a form of economic, reliable transport that allows them to access employment or training and hence independence, and the opportunity to incorporate active travel into their lives.

##### **4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

It is proposed that Bikeability cycle training would still be offered to all schools, but it may be necessary to seek part payment to deliver the service.

#### **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Resource Implications**

There are no implications for staffing.

## **5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

## **5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

## **5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

There has been discussions with our supplier Outspoken but no engagement with schools.

## **5.5 Localism and local member engagement**

All divisions would be impacted by these proposals. To date the Member involvement has been confined to discussions at Spokes.

## **5.6 Public Health Implications**

The Transport and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (T&HJSNA) references the importance of providing free opportunities for people in areas of high deprivation to be physically active.

The decision as to whether to subsidise those pupils on free school meals or not would be one for schools to decide.

It is possible that in some cases, those already least physically active could not take part in the cycle training.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Officer Clearance</b>
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Financial Officer: D Parcell
<b>Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b>	Yes Name of Legal Officer: F McMillan
<b>Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?</b>	No Name of Officer: T Oviatt-Ham
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: M Miller
<b>Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?</b>	Yes Name of Officer T Oviatt-Ham
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: T Campbell