

BIKEABILITY CYCLE TRAINING

To: Economy and Environment Committee

Meeting Date: 12th July 2018

From: Graham Hughes, Executive Director – Place and Economy

Electoral division: All

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

Purpose: To update the Committee on the situation regarding funding for Bikeability cycle training.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the update on the funding situation, and the approaches taken by other neighbouring local authorities; and,
- b) Agree the strategy outlined in 3.2 below that no additional funding is allocated to the Bikeability scheme and to match the number of training places to the DfT funding available and for officers to continue to pursue sponsorship opportunities and to continue to engage with the DfT to address the national funding shortfall.

<i>Officer contact:</i>	<i>Member contacts:</i>
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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 which incurs very minimal amounts of staff costs, contrasting with the previous model which required a number of posts devoted solely to the scheme. In essence there is no budget for staff time. All funding received is used directly to fund delivery.
- 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. A new contract for a further two years has just been signed following a procurement process.
- 1.4 Each year an estimate of training places is made, and submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) as a bid. Up until 2016/17, DfT had always met the number of required places, but increasing demand for a funding pot that has remained at the same level now means that demand cannot be fully met. There was a funding shortfall for Cambridgeshire in 2016/17 of £9,000, and in 2017/18 of £38,000.
- 1.5 In recent years the numbers trained have been increasing steadily, and currently the number trained per year exceeds 6,000. Outspoken consider that if there is further demand from schools, they will have capacity to deliver more training if funding is available. If funding was not a constraint they consider that numbers trained could be extended even further. To address future shortfalls, it is estimated that an additional £50,000 would be needed.

2. DISCUSSIONS AT COMMITTEE TO DATE

- 2.1 At the Economy and Environment Committee in March 2017, a proposal to charge schools for Bikeability was discussed, and the proposal was not favoured. It was unanimously resolved to request that officers seek alternative funding for the scheme through sponsorship or other funding streams.
- 2.2 A further report was discussed in July 2017 after officers had undertaken some initial work to engage potential sponsors. The findings from this work were that exposure and coverage are key considerations for sponsors, and that given the many other channels for marketing and promotion, new sponsors are likely to want to sign up for very short term deals initially, to test the market. Officers reported that it was difficult therefore to secure sponsorship that ties sponsors to lengthy commitments, with sponsors preferring a short term arrangement. Committee resolved to address any immediate shortfalls in funding through any Place and Economy underspends, and this is how the 2017/18 shortfall of £38,000 was addressed.
- 2.3 At the Economy and Environment Committee in March 2018 in general discussion, members were very forthright in their support for Bikeability. The point was made that as the Council was delivering lots of new cycling infrastructure it should continue to invest in

training for young cyclists aimed at helping them with the skills to keep them safe and to encourage the right behaviours to make them responsible, model cyclists of the future.

- 2.4 Recently officers along with Councillors Jones and Kavanagh have met a large local business which has indicated some interest in sponsorship. Officers are providing information and narrative to help with the production of a business case to enable the business's senior management to consider a proposal further.
- 2.5 Nationally all local authorities face the same situation as Cambridgeshire. In terms of neighbouring counties, some are now levying a charge to parents/schools for the service. Hertfordshire have always asked parents for a contribution towards training. At present they charge £20 per head for schools/parents. Northamptonshire has recently begun asking schools for a contribution towards training. They ask schools for a contribution of £172 per group of up to 12 pupils. Suffolk has also decided to implement a contribution from schools towards training at a rate of £180 per group of up to 12 pupils. Evidence so far from Suffolk is that numbers taking part in training have not reduced. In Peterborough however charging is not in place as they have been able to juggle cycling related budgets to address the funding shortfall.
- 2.6 The Department for Transport recognise the issue. The Committee Chairman wrote to the Local Government Association (LGA) to highlight the issue, and the LGA responded positively to say that they intend to lobby central government, given the wider benefits for children in terms of health, and road safety.
- 2.7 DfT have very limited resources themselves, but have given consideration to a number of avenues including trying to find a national sponsor and procuring a charitable trust to administer the scheme and grants, rather than using a large national consultancy.
- 2.8 To date though the DfT have not offered any additional funding or explored an alternative delivery model to free up funds. If the County Council wishes to maximise the amount of training then further funding needs to be found.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Given that staff time is rechargeable back to projects, and any time spent seeking sponsorship has to be weighed up against what appears to be a low likelihood of finding a sponsor, the immediate options for funding are to either keep training at a level to match the DfT funding, or to consider the use of Council funding from other budgets, though these are under significant pressure.
- 3.2 From discussions previously at Committee, the favoured approach is to maximise the numbers of children being trained, though given budget pressures the only realistic strategy is to keep training levels within the budget available, pursue sponsorship where opportunities look to be particularly hopeful, and to continue to engage with the DfT in the hope that they address the national funding problem. It is therefore proposed that no additional funding is allocated to the Bikeability scheme and therefore the number of training places will be matched to the funding available from DfT.

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 across the County irrespective of geography or school size. A long term solution to sustained funding is being sought.

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

The Resource implications are contained within the body of the report.

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 and some potential sponsors, 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 Chairs and Vice Chairs briefing, and at the Committee itself.

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.

Source Documents	Location
Previous Committee reports and Minutes from the March and July 2017 and March 2018 meetings	www.tinyurl.com/y78pzcsy

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: S Heywood
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Paul White
Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: D Carter-Hughes
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: T Oviatt-Ham
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Joanne Shilton
Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer T Oviatt-Ham
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: S Keeble