

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR , HIGHWAYS

Local Pinch Point Fund

Purpose of the Report

1. The County Council's Highway Capital Programme continues to invest in improvements to improve safety and reduce congestion on the County's roads. Recent projects include the new £480,000 signal junction at Forest Lane / A60 and the new £430,000 signal junction at Rose Cottage on the A614.
2. The purpose of this report is to inform Transport and Highways Committee of the £170 million Local Pinch Point Fund as announced in the Government's 2012 Autumn Statement. The fund has been created to remove bottlenecks on the local highway network which are impeding growth.
3. To seek approval to submit local bids as detailed in paragraph 11 of this report.

Background

4. The Department for Transport (DfT) has published guidance on how local authorities can bid for a share of the Local Pinch Point Fund. This additional funding reflects the Government's commitment to supporting economic growth by tackling barriers on the local highway network. It is to secure immediate impacts on growth and is for schemes that can be delivered quickly, with the Department's funding only available in 2013/14 and 2014/15.
5. Eligible schemes will require a minimum of £1million DfT funding, as well as at least 30% promoter contribution to ensure strong local commitment. Bids require to be submitted by 21st February 2013 and the Department for Transport have provided a detailed application form (bids are expected to be between 25 and 35 pages) for all individual bids.

DfT Funding Available

6. Decisions on the amount of funding for any specific scheme will be made following an appraisal of the bids received. However, DfT has set the following funding aside over the next two years:
 - 2013/14 £70million capital
 - 2014/15 £100million capital
7. It is anticipated that up to £10million of the £170million will be for projects in London.

8. The funding is 100% capital and therefore can be used for scheme construction costs and land acquisition, but not preparatory costs, sunk costs or Part 1 Claims under the Land and Compensation Act 1973. There will be no facilities for the Department's funding to slip beyond the end of March 2015 and any additional costs over the agreed maximum will be the responsibility of the promoter.

Assessment Criteria

9. The Department's assessment of the bids will be consistent with the Transport Business Case process covering strategic, financial, economic, commercial and management cases. All bids need to demonstrate a clear link to growth with an estimate of the Gross Value Added (GVA) impact. Value for money is a key consideration in the assessment process and the scheme proposed in the bid needs to maximise the overall benefits and seek to identify all the positive and negative impacts. Promoters will have to demonstrate a strong level of local commitment to the scheme, both in terms of the priority afforded to it for growth and the commitment to ensure delivery as soon as possible.
10. Bids will be expected to provide a description of the impacts of the scheme, along with a description of the key risks and the modelling approach. An Appraisal Summary Table is required for each bid to demonstrate that the full range of impacts has been considered.

Local Position

11. Nottinghamshire County Council does though have a number of smaller schemes that should be deliverable in the relevant timeframe that can be evidenced as meeting the objectives of this fund. These schemes have been identified from transport studies linked to individual district local planning processes. It should be noted that these schemes would need to be packaged together to generate a larger scheme to meet the £1million minimum threshold and would still not have the detailed modelling outputs to enable most of the application form to be completed.

Conclusions

12. A number of bids are generated to provide as much detail as is feasible by the deadline. These are likely to include a bid for junction improvements around Newark and a second bid for junctions in Bassetlaw around Worksop / Retford. A third bid for junctions around Mansfield will be considered but is less likely at this current time due to the timings of that local plan process. These bids are unlikely to achieve sufficient detail as suggested in the application form process and will therefore be dependent on the DfT reducing their minimum criteria or extending their deadlines for completing the information process.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

15. It is recommended that Committee approve a bid as detailed in paragraph 13, noting what can reasonably be achieved within the DfT's very short timescale.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments [SHB.16/1/13]

16. Committee have power to decide the Recommendation.

Financial Comments [TMR 15/1/13]

17. There are no immediate financial implications in this report.

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All