

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 January 2020

Report of the Head of Service - Policy Information and Commissioning (Live Well and Age Well)

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Rossendale South;

Proposed Submission to the Department for Transport's Local Pinch Point Fund

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This report requests approval to submit an Expression of Interest to the Department for Transport's Local Pinch Point Fund for funding to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of St Mary's Way including the gyratory in Rawtenstall. The report also requests approval of a local contribution, which is anticipated to be between £1.5m and £2m, depending on the final design, should the submission be successful.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve that a bid be submitted to the Department for Transport's Local Pinch Point Fund totalling circa £9.250m to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of St Mary's Way including the gyratory in Rawtenstall.
- (ii) Subject to the success of the above, approve, in principle a contribution from the local authority which will be determined in line with financial issues raised in this report.

Background and Advice

On 24 July 2019, the Department for Transport announced the Local Pinch Point Fund which is a competitive fund in to which local authorities can bid for high-impact schemes to help address congestion pinch points and to reduce congestion on local

roads. The fund is £150m in total, with £75m in each financial year 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023. The Fund is intended to boost economic growth through measures to ease congestion, and improve journey times through small scale improvements, including road widening, junction improvements and measures to improve traffic flow. Bids will not be accepted that are related to the Department for Transport's Major Road Network.

Local authorities have been asked to submit brief expressions of interest by 31 January 2020. These will be assessed and a decision made on a shortlist. Shortlisted schemes will require submission of a more detailed business case. There is no guarantee of further investment funding to shortlisted authorities.

An exercise has been undertaken to identify locations that meet the criteria of the Fund and, as a result of this exercise, St Mary's Way including the gyratory in Rawtenstall town centre has been identified as the priority submission.

Rawtenstall is located in the south east of Lancashire and within close proximity to Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire in geographical terms. Historically, east Lancashire generally has seen significant economic decline over a sustained period of time and the decline of industry and the resultant erosion of the local economic base has led to significant economic and social deprivation, higher levels of unemployment (when compared to other parts of Lancashire and Greater Manchester) and a relatively poor skills base. The overarching purpose of the Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan is to re-establish Lancashire as an economic powerhouse. The Strategic Economic Plan recognises that places such as Rawtenstall are capable of taking advantage of their proximity to growth opportunities in neighbouring city-regions.

Rawtenstall lies in a prominent location close to the A56 trunk road corridor accessing Greater Manchester but is also the gateway to the Rossendale Valley. However, the current configuration of the gyratory together with high traffic flows limits its operational effectiveness for all modes and the local emergency services, causing significant congestion and limits connectivity across Rossendale borough and with neighbouring areas. It also results in unreliable journey times for buses, including the X43 'Witchway' express coach service that links Rawtenstall town centre directly with Manchester city centre and severance issues for pedestrians and cyclists. The location also has been declared an Air Quality Management Area. In addition, the central island of the gyratory is where the local Fire Station is located.

Investment in the gyratory will be aimed at alleviating current congestion, improving journey times and ensuring that additional capacity is provided, whilst also providing additional benefits to emergency services vehicles. It will also be aimed at improving road safety and improving facilities to enable active travel including traffic signal priority for public transport. The improvements will also be aimed at reducing harmful emissions to be able to remove the Air Quality Management Area status. The proposals will support an increase in the level of development that can be accommodated in line with Rossendale's Local Plan aspirations, which are likely to increase traffic demand at this constrained location. Securing private sector financial contributions to infrastructure improvements in east Lancashire is extremely

challenging. Therefore, investment in the proposed location is unlikely to be realised without public sector funds.

Based on concept developmental work the total cost of the scheme is estimated to be between £7.5m and £10m. Local authorities (in this case the county council and Rossendale Borough Council) are expected to fund a proportion of the total scheme cost (the local contribution) although that proportion is not specified and can include third party funding. Previous experience of successful bids to other Government funding programmes indicates that a local contribution of circa 20% of total scheme cost would be advantageous and therefore to support this proposal a local contribution of approximately £1.5m to £2m (20%) is recommended, to be funded from additional prudential borrowing. There is a verbal commitment from Rossendale Borough Council to make a financial contribution; its level will be determined as the process gains momentum and detail is determined. In addition, both the county council and Rossendale Borough Council will also seek other opportunities for local contributions, including from the private sector (development) to reduce the burden on the authorities.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

In the event that the county council does not make a submission to the Local Pinch Point Fund it would forego the opportunity to secure additional Department for Transport funding ranging from £7.5m - £10m. This would result in continued operational inefficiencies at St Mary's Way and the gyratory including significant congestion, constrained connectivity within the borough and with neighbouring areas, unattractive journey times for buses and severance issues for pedestrians and cyclists. The current configuration would also continue to negatively impact on Rossendale's Local Plan aspirations.

Financial

The initial provisional estimate for this project ranges from £7.5m to £10m and experience from previously successful bids suggests that a match funding of 10 - 20% will be required in order for it to be seriously considered. There is no provision within the existing capital programme for this so additional borrowing will be needed should the bid be successful.

A number of factors need to be confirmed prior to any funding decision being submitted including:

- Formal confirmation of the Rossendale Borough Council contribution to this scheme.

- What additional third party contributions can be secured from partners (for example the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority) who will directly benefit from this project.
- How the new proposed local authority capital strategy (subject to a forthcoming Cabinet report) will impact on the ability of the local authority to support match funding activity compared with other asset and highway maintenance priorities.

These issues can be finalised whilst the Expression of Interest is being considered.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A