

Department for Transport Funding for Cycling in National Parks

Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer and
Head of Strategy and Projects

Summary: This report provides members with a summary of the recently published Department for Transport proposals for the funding of cycling improvements in National Parks.

Recommendation: That members note the contents of the report.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) is inviting Local Authorities, in partnership with National Parks, to bid for a cycle grant to support improvements in cycling infrastructure to enable people to cycle in and around National Parks.
- 1.2 The grant covers the period 2013-2015 and will be distributed through the linking communities programme which is administered by the transport charity Sustrans. The Government feels that Sustrans is best placed to administer the scheme and evaluate applications from Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The Government's underlying approach to the provision of the cycle grant is informed by three key principles:
 - (a) Putting Local Authorities in the driving seat;
 - (b) Working across boundaries, sectors and professions;
 - (c) Cycling should be an option as part of longer door to door journeys to reach a national park.

2 The Scope of the Grant

- 2.1 The grant aims to fund schemes that:
 - encourage and enable recreational visits to, from and around National Parks by cycle;
 - encourage and enable people living or working in and around National Parks to travel for day-to-day journeys by cycle.
- 2.2 Schemes will have to demonstrate that they have collaborative support from National Parks, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnership, rural economic, health and tourism partnerships.

3 Funding and Application Timetable

- 3.1 The DfT will allocate £42m over the period 2013-2015 comprising an urban and a rural element. For the rural element it is likely that there will be a maximum of three grants to support cycling in National Parks and only Local Authorities acting in partnership with National Parks will be able to bid for these. Successful applicants are likely to receive funding of up to £5m over the next two years; however they will need to commit to match funding of at least 30% of costs. The funding is only available for capital items with any revenue funding coming from local resources.
- 3.2 The deadline for applications is 30 April 2013 which will be followed by an assessment of applications with recommendations being made to Ministers during May 2013 and the announcement of schemes in May or June 2013.

4 Opportunities for the Broads

- 4.1 As it is considered that only existing ideas have any realistic chance of being turned into a bid within the time scales. The Authority is working with Norfolk County Council to look at the proposals in the Three Rivers Way (3RW) project and particularly the elements of the scheme that link Hoveton with Horning and just possibly Horning with Ludham Bridge.
- 4.2 Officers consider that the 3RW meets the aims of the Integrated Access Strategy as it provides links between public transport facilities (Wroxham Station and various bus stops), cycle hire facilities at Horning and a range of destinations and facilities that visitors to the Broads value. The scheme would also improve safety for travel to school and to local facilities and provide improved opportunities for boaters to access the villages in the area from existing moorings. The scheme is however considerably smaller than the £4million being hinted at.
- 4.3 Norfolk County Council is considering what it can offer in terms of match funding by way of offering land as well as a contribution from existing budgets over two years. It is likely that if a viable scheme is designed the Council would look for additional contribution from the Broads Authority.
- 4.4 It should be noted that competition for funding will be high and the timescale for putting together bids for funding including demonstrating that match funding is available is quite tight. Additionally there are further factors that will be considered by the DfT when applications are determined. These include detailed consideration of the strategic, economic, financial, economic and deliverability cases put forward by scheme applicants. A Sustrans run seminar in March will help explain likely judging criteria.

Background papers: Nil
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Broads Plan Objectives: TR1, TR2
Appendices: None