

SEStran Funding Opportunities 2018/19

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report describes funding opportunities to encourage the promotion of sustainable transport projects offered by SEStran, across the region. It also highlights how SEStran can offer staff resources to partner authorities to assist in specific projects.
- 1.2 SEStran offers two types of grant for sustainable and active travel, the newly introduced FAST Grant and the Sustrans funded Regional Cycle Network Grant Scheme (RCNGS). These grants are available to local authorities and organisations throughout the region.
As well as offering grant, SEStran applies for and receives funding from various sources, particularly European funds, and is continuously looking for new funding opportunities.

2. FAST GRANT

- 2.1 In summer 2017, SEStran launched the Forth Active and Sustainable Travel (FAST) Grant to local authorities and organisations across the South East of Scotland. The FAST Grant signified an increased commitment from SEStran in 2017/2018, to deliver active and sustainable transport projects as the allocation doubled from £100,000, in previous years, to £200,000. Further commitments in this respect will, of course, depend on available funding.
- 2.2 36 expressions of interest were submitted to the FAST Grant from a range of various organisations. However, there was a common theme across the applications of electric bikes. SEStran decided to develop a regional electric bike scheme titled GO E-Bike and appointed Bikeplus to deliver the project.
- 2.3 Following the success of the FAST Grant and the development of the GO E-Bike project, SEStran is keen to commit further active travel budget towards the development and expansion of the scheme but will be constrained by budget settlements.

3. GO E-BIKE

- 3.1 As identified in the Scottish Government's *Programme for Government*, there is a need to increase 'promotion of the use of electric bicycles to ensure as many people as possible can benefit from active travel'. SEStran is addressing this through GO E-Bike scheme. The project is being rolled out in 4 locations this financial year: West Lothian, Forth Valley and Fife (Buckhaven and St Andrews). The aim of the project is primarily to introduce e-bike sharing schemes to communities, particularly those affected by transport poverty and disadvantage. The project is being managed and delivered with Bikeplus who have a raft of knowledge when it comes to delivering bike-

sharing projects. The schemes will aim to complement existing and planned schemes throughout the region such as Falkirk's active travel hub and Edinburgh's proposed bike sharing scheme.

- 3.2 In January 2018, SEStran applied to Transport Scotland's 'Low Carbon Travel & Transport Challenge Fund' (LCTT) to receive a grant of £400,000, with a commitment of £200,000 from SEStran to expand the GO E-Bike project by introducing a further 12 e-bike hubs in each local authority in the region. Although several project partners have been identified, SEStran invites the suggestion or offer of further partnerships to join the scheme. Regardless of the LCTT funding being awarded, it is hoped the project will continue into the new financial year through SEStran funding but on a significantly smaller scale.

4. SUSTRANS SCOTLAND FUNDING

- 4.1 As part of SEStran's partnership working with Sustrans Scotland, we have received £100,000 per annum from their Community Links Programme to spend on cycling infrastructure projects across the region, each year since 2014. Primarily there has been a focus on guiding and delivering the cross-boundary network where there can be gaps in provision across local authority boundaries.
- 4.2 In continuing its partnership with Sustrans Scotland, both organisations have been in discussion to potentially increase this funding, following approval from Transport Scotland, in order to continue to deliver projects of strategic importance at a regional level to support the delivery and development of a regional cycle network.
- 4.4 Subject to approval from Transport Scotland, this funding will be available from April 2018, to be spent by March 2019. SEStran invites and encourages its partnering authorities to propose projects that will make best use of the funding and note that SEStran can also provide staff resource to ensure delivery

5. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

- 5.1 Although funding is limited, SEStran is keen to continue to identify further funding sources, such as the LCTT and further European projects, to improve sustainable and active travel across the region. SEStran can also provide resource to advise and support applications to its partnering authorities.
- 5.2 Through a partnership with Cycling Scotland, SEStran's Regional Cycling Development Officer who can help advise on schemes such as Cycle Friendly Employer and Schools as well as providing training opportunities. Additionally, there will be support to access Cycling Scotland's various streams of funding.

6. STAFF RESOURCE

6.1 As well as offering funding and applying for funding, SEStran is keen to share its resource, to a limited extent, to assist partner authorities with specific projects, particularly in respect of active travel. A recent example comes from the work SEStran did in helping East Lothian Council write their active travel strategy.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The report asks the Chief Officers to note that they can approach SEStran officers with any proposed cross-boundary active travel improvements or projects that they require assistance with.

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Policy Implications	Increased spending on sustainable travel projects will increase clarity of policy
Financial Implications	Contained in existing budget and will deliver significant increase in active travel projects.
Equalities Implications	Targeting areas of disadvantage will improve social inclusion
Climate Change Implications	Increased spending on low carbon transport will encourage modal shift to more environmentally friendly modes