

Active Travel Funding Update

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper is to update Chief Officers on active travel developments and to raise the discussion on utilising funding opportunities.

2. SUSTRANS SCOTLAND FUNDING

- 2.1 Sustrans is the sole body for delivering funds for infrastructure projects associated with placemaking, walking and cycling routes, and safer routes to school. The Scottish government's 2018/19 programme doubled the committed funding for active travel projects to £80M, the largest proportion of this being directed to Sustrans. Sustrans funding operated on a 50% match funding basis for all projects, while the new programme for 2018/19 was provided on a 100% funding basis for feasibility and design studies.
- 2.2 SEStran has been awarded a parallel fund from Sustrans to utilise on the development of the regional cycle network with a particular focus on cross-boundary routes. This funding has been available to other RTPs to use in this way since 2014.

3. ONGOING CHALLENGES

- 3.1 SEStran understands that it has been increasingly difficult for local authorities to find match funding for these projects with an emerging risk of no resource to add new routes to existing maintenance schedules.
- 3.2 SEStran in turn has faced difficulties in implementing routes that are strictly cross-boundary, whether this is due to limited resource from authorities or the fact that local strategies do not cater for these routes.

4. SCOTS ACTIVE TRAVEL GROUP

- 4.1 In January 2019, SEStran was represented at a meeting of the SCOTS Active Travel working group to discuss concerns arising from the Sustrans funding. This followed themes on match funding, design criteria, staff resourcing, with representation from Transport Scotland and Sustrans.
- 4.2 Discussions revealed that Transport Scotland is seeking to rationalise funding streams within the sector having identified a range of 21 available streams. Transport Scotland stated that there have been delays in refreshing Cycling by Design, with no date on publication. In the interim, Sustrans is going to produce an accepted design guide to update the previous guidance from 2014.

- 4.3 A number of authorities raised concerns about staff resource availability relative to the time required to apply for Sustrans funding. While Sustrans have offered to assist, a further resource commitment is often required.
- 4.4 A point to note is that from April 2019 onwards, three Sustrans funds will be combined (Community Links, Community Links Plus, & Safer Routes to School). This will increase the funding pot but also make the funding more competitive with more school estates, hospital trusts, and community development trusts eligible to apply for funding.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The report asks the Chief Officers to note and discuss the content of the report.

Peter Jackson
Active Travel Officer
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Policy Implications	Funding has implications on RTS.
Financial Implications	New competitive market could reduce awards to Local Authorities.
Equalities Implications	
Climate Change Implications	Projects seek to promote innovative actions to increase use of sustainable mobility.