

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>LSTF Joint Bid – Sustainable Transport Solutions for England’s two newest National Parks.</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> February 2013</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director Place</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tracy Beverley</b>	<b>Tel: 293813</b>
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<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 In 2010 the Government announced the creation of a Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) as part of its Local Transport White Paper. The £560 million fund was made available to Local Transport Authorities through a bidding application process. The purpose of the fund was to enable Transport Authorities to deliver sustainable transport solutions that support economic growth while reducing carbon emissions.
- 1.2 Under tranche 1 of the bidding process, in July 2011, Brighton & Hove City Council was awarded £4.2m funding for its successful Lewes Road Corridor bid with a total project value of £6.45 million. The bid focuses on implementing infrastructure and educational measures on Lewes Road and surrounding residential areas to encourage sustainable travel, including improving links from Lewes Road Corridor to the South Downs National Park to improve sustainable access.
- 1.3 Under Tranche 2 of the LSTF bid Brighton & Hove City Council committed to a second Joint LSTF bid titled 'Sustainable Transport Solutions for England’s Two Newest National Parks'. This bid was led by Hampshire Council and supported by the South Downs, New Forest National Parks and neighbouring transport authorities. In June 2012 the success of the Sustainable Transport Solutions for England’s Two Newest National Parks bid was announced. The Department for Transport awarded £3.81 million towards the overall project total of £5.7 million
- 1.4 The bid was developed inline with the New Forest National Park Management Plan and the South Downs State of the Park report 2012. This bid further enhances the initial Lewes Road Corridor bid in developing further initiatives to improve sustainable access to the National Parks.

- 1.5 This report provides a summary of the Sustainable Transport Solutions for England's Two Newest National Parks project and makes recommendations in order to take this project forward.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee:

- (a) Notes the success of the Sustainable Transport Solutions for England's Two Newest National Parks bid and support its continued development.

- 2.2 Agrees:

- (a) That the Council should continue to work in partnership with Hampshire County Council and six other partner authorities: East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Surrey County Council, Wiltshire County Council and the New Forest & South Downs National Park Authority to deliver the objectives outlined in the bid;
- (b) Authorises the Strategic Director of Place to sign a formal partnership Joint Working Agreement with the other authorities confirming the detail of the joint working arrangements. A copy of the proposed partnership agreement is appended to this report (Appendix 3).

## **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

### **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**

- 3.1 On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010, the Coalition Government announced plans for the creation of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF), for which £560 million has been set aside in the 4-year period to 2014-15. The establishment of the LSTF reflects the importance the Government attaches to revitalising local economies and tackling climate change and the commitment made in the Coalition Agreement to promoting sustainable travel initiatives. Applications demonstrating a partnership with National Parks were encouraged.
- 3.2 Brighton & Hove City Council joined a partnership with Hampshire County Council, the New Forest National Park, South Downs National Park and four other partner authorities: East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Surrey County Council and Wiltshire County Council. This partnership joined forces to reduce the negative impacts transport was having on the National Parks while trying to maintain economic vitality. A bid was prepared and submitted for consideration for the second tranche of LSTF funding in February 2012. Successful bids were announced in June 2012. The Sustainable Transport Solutions for England's Two Newest National Parks bid was one of those successful bids. Following this bid's success a formal partnership agreement was drawn up by Hampshire County Council for all partnership authorities to sign up to.

- 3.3 Successful proposals were those judged to perform well against the objectives of supporting the local economy and facilitating economic development, reducing carbon emissions and ability to deliver wider social and economic benefits. Furthermore bids were judged on their ability to improve safety, to bring about improvements to air quality or to promote increased levels of physical activity, In addition to meeting common objectives set out by the National Parks.

### **The Bid in more detail**

- 3.4 The Bid proposals outlined in this report will contribute to the two key Department for Transport (DfT) policy objectives of “supporting local economy” and “reducing carbon emissions.” The project will also meet joint objectives set out in the National Park Management Plans. The project will achieve this by significantly improving sustainable access to and within both National Parks, targeting visitors and encouraging them to travel by sustainable transport modes. By supporting knowledge sharing between parks and across authority boundaries we will enable sustainable access and movement around the parks, helping to create more tourism-related employment and reducing carbon emissions.
- 3.5 The project’s headline objective is to;

*‘Develop and promote sustainable access to and within the two National Parks in ways that protect and enhance the parks’ natural beauty, cultural heritage and wildlife, to provide opportunities for understanding and enjoyment and wherever possible to support social and economic well-being for all.’*

In order to achieve this headline objective the project has four key objectives:

- To improve key public transport gateways into the two National Parks
- Make it easier to reach key attractions within the two National Parks
- Promote sustainable travel packages to visitors of the National Parks before they arrive and while they are in the National Parks
- Manage traffic effectively within the Parks so that it does not detract from visitors’ experience

### **Local Opportunities**

- 3.6 The bid covers a wide area over 2,196 square kilometres. Approximately 65,500 people are employed within the National Parks. However, the majority of National Park residents earn more than those employed in the National Parks and therefore there is a significant level of out-commuting. Of the population living in the South Downs 36% travel to work by car with an average 19.6km journey representing 7.76 million car trips. One of the challenges is to provide better sustainable access to higher-paid local jobs.
- 3.7 Of the 13.5 million visitor days spent in the New Forest 60% of these are day visitors. In the South Downs National Park of the 39million visitor days only 4 % stay in the Park. Between 71%-96% of these visitors arrive by car. In both cases those visitors who stay spend seven times more than day visitors. Tourism in the South Downs alone generates over £330 million each year supporting over 4000 FTE jobs. The challenge is to encourage smarter sustainable access to the

National Parks, encourage existing visitors to stay longer and spend more to grow the economy and value of tourism.

- 3.8 Protecting the diverse ecologically important environment within the National park presents a further challenge. Over 65% of the New Forest National Park is important lowland habitat of international importance. There is over 56km of coastline habitat, over 600 scheduled ancient monuments and 183 conservation areas across the bid area. A key challenge is protecting the habitats and ecosystems by reducing traffic related impacts such as emissions, noise and runoff.

### **Project initiatives**

- 3.9 The main initiatives of the project directly relate to the four key objectives and are proposed to address the transport challenges identified. This section identifies the type of transport solutions that will be put in place to help achieve the project objectives.
- 3.10 For the first project objective 'Improving Key Public Transport Gateways into the National Park' we will be exploring opportunities to improve and enhance key rail stations following a systematic audit of rail stations within and serving the Park. Key outputs as a result of this audit will include improving walking and cycling routes from stations making it easier to combine foot, cycle and rail travel. Improving signage, information, minor walking and cycling infrastructure, and cycle parking. Other initiatives will include improving interchange between bus and train travel. This will include the provision of better information on services and facilities and further development of integrated bus/rail ticketing while developing and enhancing community partnerships at stations.
- 3.11 In order to make it easier to reach key attractions within the two National Parks project actions will include improving access to the most popular visitor attractions. This may be done by improving existing bus routes or providing new routes and making public transport services easier to understand and access--for example, through smartphone applications and simplified mapping and timetables. There will also be wider promotion and information available as well as some branding of bus services. Walking and cycling routes will also link to key attractions and destinations within the National Park to make it safer and easier to walk and cycle to destinations.
- 3.12 The third objective is to promote sustainable access to visitors before they arrive and while they are at the Parks. The marketing and promotion strategy underpins the whole project. The project will be working closely with visitor attractions and accommodation providers to help circulate and encourage sustainable transport information and usage. A travel awareness campaign will engage visitors and help them to appreciate and understand the sustainable transport options available to them. Discounts at visitor attractions and other incentives will be offered by business partners to further enhance this campaign.
- 3.13 Finally in order to manage traffic effectively within the Parks actions will include supporting local residents to run local sustainable transport initiatives, including Community Speedwatch areas.

## Proposed Next Steps

- 3.14 The next steps for the project include confirming funding allocations for each individual element of the bid and developing projects further. Brighton & Hove alongside other authorities will receive limited funding for localised projects, while simultaneously working as a project group tackling area-wide transport issues which affect all partner Authorities. Appendix 1 lists the local schemes within the South Downs National Park for which partners have requested funding including Brighton & Hove. This funding allocation and allocation of funding for the New Forest National Park is still to be confirmed at the time of writing this report.

## 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 In line with the requirements of the bidding process, a number of local organisations and stakeholders indicated their willingness to work in partnership with the city council in delivering elements of the bid. Furthermore, a number of organisations across the bid area will be contributing funding specifically towards delivery of specific elements within the LSTF project.
- 4.1 Stakeholder events will be carried out through out the duration of the project to keep people informed of the project progress. At the time of writing the first working stakeholder event is being planned.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The Department for Transport has awarded £3.81 million to the joint project, over a period of three years to 2014/15. The funding will be used to benefit the wider areas of both Parks, and also for specific local schemes. The measures specifically included for Brighton & Hove City Council will require a capital budget of £0.160 million and a revenue budget of £0.032 million from the LSTF funding. As one of the bidding partners, Brighton and Hove City Council was able to identify £0.880 million match funding for the joint project, comprising £0.095 million from Local Transport Plan capital in 2012/13, £0.065 million from revenue budgets in 2012/13 and the balance of £0.845 million over the next two years. This includes indicative allocations from future years LTP budgets.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw Date: 17/01/2013*

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Hampshire as the lead partner has drawn up a formal Joint Working Agreement defining the working arrangements between the funding partners for delivering the objects of the project. This is to be signed by all partners involved in this project. This is attached in Appendix 3.

The Council must take the Human Rights Act into account in respect of its actions but it is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights would be adversely affected by the recommendations in this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Jill Whittaker 17th January 2013*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no Equalities Implications arising directly as a result of this report

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The measures outlined in this report will promote and encourage greater use of sustainable transport, and particularly overcome current barriers to walking, cycling and bus use. It is predicted that significant reductions in travel by private car would result from implementation of the schemes, with people instead choosing to travel by walking, cycling or bus due to their increased attractiveness and convenience made possible through the improvements identified. It is anticipated that these measures will also enhance health by encouraging active travel amongst local people and visitors.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no Crime & Disorder implications arising directly as a result of this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The main risks include the potential for the project costs to exceed the available budget and the risk of any identified enhancements having unforeseen negative consequences when implemented. The risks will be mitigated by a careful design process in the first instance and thorough consultation with end users.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Increasing the number of pedestrians and cyclists and encouraging greater use of public transport will directly lead to improved public health through increasing the amount of exercise undertaken by local people. Reducing the number of people travelling by private vehicle will also lead to an improvement in air quality which in turn will improve public health.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 None

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The proposed package of measures identified in this report is a result of lengthy discussions with partners and stakeholders using research available. The partnership believes this package of measures will address the problems and issues identified through this process, allowing people to travel more sustainably and reducing the impact of travel on the environment.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 This report does not make recommendations but does inform members of the on-going project and its underlying principles in order to gain support from members.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. Local schemes within the South Downs National Park for which partners have requested funding
2. Brighton & Hove's match funding allocations
3. Joint Working Agreement

#### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

#### **Background Documents**

1. None

