

Report to	Resources and Performance Committee
Date	20 June 2013
By	Director of Strategy & Partnerships
Title of Report	Transforming Cycling in the South Downs: Department for Transport (DfT) Linking Communities Bid, South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Delivery
Purpose of Report	To seek formal approval for SDNPA bid to DfT's Linking Communities fund for cycling in National Parks, in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1) approve the South Downs National Park Authority's (SDNPA) participation in Transforming Cycling in the South Downs, a bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) Linking Communities fund.**
 - 2) approve the SDNPA element of the proposed budget as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report**
 - 3) agree that the SDNPA as lead authority will if the bid is successful becomes the accountable body to DfT for this programme of works**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek formal approval for the South Downs National Park Authority's (SDNPA) bid to Department for Transport (DfT) Linking Communities fund: *Transforming Cycling in the South Downs*; and subject to the bid's success with DfT, to approve the SDNPA planned expenditure of £691,000 under this programme.

2. Information

- 2.1 On 18 March 2013, Strategic Management Team (SMT) agreed a proposal to submit a bid to the DfT's newly announced Linking Communities fund for cycling in National Parks. The minutes from that SMT meeting are quoted below:
- "SMT noted that the emerging guidance on the fund's criteria is unclear. SMT agreed to provide funding for external expertise to develop SDNPA's bid. It was agreed that the bid should be sent to the Chief Finance Officer and a report taken to Resources and Performance Committee for information. It was noted that SDNPA must strive to submit a bid; a lack of participation may result in a removal of future potential funding sources for rural infrastructure schemes."*
- 2.2 Accordingly, in April 2013, the SDNPA submitted a partnership bid for £3.810 million to the Fund. The SDNPA is the lead authority in the partnership, supported by the highways authorities of Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, Hampshire and West Sussex. The DfT will announce successful bids in June and successful applications will then be subject to further development to agree exact details of the funding award.
- 2.3 The SDNPA bid comprises a range of schemes aimed at fostering greater cycle use and enabling progress towards the realisation of a longer term vision for a step change in cycling throughout the South Downs National Park. The schemes included are designed to provide

a high quality cycling experience for cyclists of all abilities, and to complement and give access to the existing network of advisory and off-road routes. As well as connecting visitors to countryside sites and attractions, the schemes enable commuting and utility journeys, connecting villages with towns for employment and education. The full bid can be found on the Authority's website here: <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoying/transforming-cycling-in-the-south-downs-national-park>

- 2.4 Should the bid be successful, the SDNPA as lead authority will undertake the co-ordinating role liaising directly with DfT and drawing down funding for projects on behalf of all the partners. The details of this arrangement will be set out in a formal legal agreement, based on the existing 2Parks Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) agreement, to be signed by the partner authorities. It should be noted that the DfT funding will only be available until March 2015.

3. Project Finance

- 3.1 The overall value of the *Transforming Cycling in the South Downs* package is £5.106 million, of which the DfT contribution sought is £3.81 million. Match funding for the package totals £1.296m (34% of total value). This match consists of unspent and unallocated s.106 developer contributions, private land, Local Authority capital spending in the South Downs, other Local Authority revenue programmes (e.g. cycle training, forthcoming feasibility studies, maintenance and marketing of capital schemes, including beyond March 2015), SDNPA funding and SDNPA support in kind (e.g. interpretation/ranger support/volunteer training to promote/support cycling) - Table A below sets out the funding profile.

Table A: Funding profile

£000s	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
DfT funding sought	280	3,530		3,810
Local Authority contribution	654	426	50	1,130
Third Party contribution	148	18		166
TOTAL VALUE OF PACKAGE	1,082	3,974	50	5,106

4. Programme leadership and Governance

- 4.1 If successful, it is vitally important that the SDNPA is able to commit expenditure and start delivering projects on the ground soon after the programme is approved. The Director of Strategy and Partnerships will have responsibility for delivery of the programme of work. It is proposed that a Programme Board be established to be responsible for monitoring project costs, risks, communications and management of the consultation, design and construction programme, ensuring effective implementation and governance. This can be based on the existing 2Parks LSTF membership - which already includes senior officers from all partner authorities. An overall programme co-ordinator, to be based in the SDNPA, will be recruited funded from the programme. It is envisaged that specific projects will be delivered through Project Managers in the relevant lead authorities.

5. SDNPA Delivery role

- 5.1 The SDNPA is likely to lead on the delivery of just 2 projects under the programme: the extension of the Centurion Way and the bespoke cycle parking in towns and villages.
- 5.2 The proposed budget for these projects for 2013/14 to 2014/15 is set out in **Appendix I** below. However, Members should be aware that this budget may be subject to change as each stage is likely to be subject to a gateway approvals process managed by Sustrans, on behalf of DfT, and therefore precise allocation of funding for individual schemes is not known at this time.
- 5.3 The programme as submitted in the bid involves the SDNPA committing funding of £130,000

held in existing budget lines approved by the SDNPA to the Centurion Way feasibility study, sustainable travel measures as part of the South Downs Centre and supporting the implementation of other projects.

6. Procurement

- 6.1 The procurement of any consultants or suppliers for the delivery of any of the SDNPA's elements of the *Transforming Cycling* programme will be in accordance with SDNPA contract standing orders.

7. Resources

- 7.1 The anticipated budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 for the SDNPA's element of the programme is set out in **Appendix I** and includes a funding request for up to £100,000 from the Major Partnerships Fund for the period covered by the programme and £30,000 from within existing projects budgets within Strategy & Partnerships and the South Downs Centre.
- 7.2 The SDNPA's contribution to the bid also includes in-kind match of £50,000 per annum over the three year period 2013/14 to 2015/16. This covers a proportion of time spent by a number of existing officers within Strategy & Partnerships and Operations the costs of which are already included within the Authority's approved budget.

8. Risk management

- 8.1 The key risks of the programme are mainly in terms of permissions - planning, rights of way, highways, including Traffic Regulation Orders. There are also land permissions to be finalised including dealing with large estate owners, and national bodies. This process has been started but will be completed once the funding position is clear.
- 8.2 Feasibility studies are still underway on for example, the extension of the Centurion Way, the Egret's Way, and the A3 section of the Shipwright's Way, so costs for some schemes are initial capital estimates. A contingency allowance has been built in to take account of this cost uncertainty and, furthermore, a list of reserve schemes that can be implemented at short notice has been drawn up by the partners
- 8.3 As Accountable Body the SDNPA would take financial responsibility for the administration of the total DfT grant of £3.810 million. Officers will develop grant claims and monitoring procedures to all partners to ensure that all grant payments terms are adhered to as is already the case with the Nature Improvement Area and the LSTF programme.
- 8.4 The ongoing financial monitoring and evaluation and progress reports throughout the term of the *Transforming Cycling* programme will enable early identification of any funding issues and allow partners and the SDNPA to take all necessary actions to minimise any impact this may have.
- 8.5 The SDNPA will need to closely monitor the in-kind funding in future years to ensure that the future budget strategies do not reduce the level of matched funding available against which DfT money can be drawn down. Care must be taken to ensure that no long term commitments or contractual arrangements are entered into (such as employment contracts) that would commit the SDNPA to extra expenditure after funding ceases.
- 8.6 A full risk management strategy has been prepared and included within the full bid submission.

9. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

- 9.1 All contracts will be procured in accordance with the South Downs National Park Authority's Equalities and Health and Safety policies.

10. Sustainability

- 10.1 The *Transforming cycling* bid has been assessed against the 5 Sustainability Strategy principles as follows: By promoting and enabling more cycle journeys the bid supports the principles of *living within environmental limits* and ensuring a *strong healthy and just society* as more opportunities for physical activity are created. Enabling more cycling by visitors and

communities will also contribute to a *sustainable economy* as it is recognised that people travelling by sustainable modes tend to spend more money locally. *Active participation* has been encouraged through partnership working with local authorities and by the involvement of many stakeholder groups. The prioritisation of schemes was supported by a strong *evidence base* taking into account the potential environmental risks. An *Equalities Impact Analysis* was also completed as part of the bid process.

11. External Consultees

- 11.1 A wide range of organisations were consulted as part of the development of this bid and letters of support gained from more than 15 organisations including: Local enterprise partnerships, private landowners, local and national cycling organisations and transport operators. Some of these organisations will be working with us during the life of the *Transforming Cycling* programme either through direct involvement in the delivery of projects or as consultees.

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Appendix I. - SDNPA – Transforming Cycling in the South Downs Provisional Budget 2013 - 2015

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Director of Operations, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Legal Services,

SDNPA – Transforming Cycling in the South Downs Provisional Budget 2013 - 2015

	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	Total £
INCOME			
DfT Grant	126,500	434,500	561,000
Total Income	126,500	434,500	561,000
EXPENDITURE			
Employee Costs	22,000	45,000	67,000
Transport/travel	1,000	2,000	3,000
Supplies and services (feasibility, design and implementation)	183,500	437,500	621,000
Total Expenditure	206,500	484,500	691,000
Net Total SDNPA Funding –	80,000	50,000	130,000
Funded from:			
Strategy & Partnerships Budget	20,000		20,000
South Downs Centre Budget	10,000		10,000
Major Partnerships contribution	50,000	50,000	100,000