

Report of the Director of City Strategy

## **CYCLING CITY STRATEGY**

### **Summary**

1. The Council has been successful with its submission to Cycling England for cycling city status and grant funding of £3.68million over two and a half years to end March 2011. The successful bid included a detailed strategy and delivery plan setting out the Council's ambitions and mechanisms for achieving them. The award of match funding is specifically aimed at increasing the numbers of cyclists in the city and is divided between capital and revenue schemes.
2. The project requires Cycling England to agree a strategy and action plan with the Council before any grant claims can be submitted. The Council has indicated that it will provide the strategy and detailed action plan for the first year and outline for years two and three, to Cycling England in September 2008.

### **Background**

3. Cycling England announced in January 2008 that it had funding available to support the development of one cycling city and 11 cycling towns (York was considered as a town for the purposes of the bid on the basis of population size). Cycling England set out a list of criteria the bid was expected to address.
4. The bid that was submitted to and accepted by Cycling England on 19<sup>th</sup> June contains a set of aims, objectives and targets, developed with input from cyclists, officers across the council and stakeholders. The bid is based on partnership working with stakeholders to deliver these targets and is an essential element of the bid.
5. The other successful bids are from Bristol (cycling city project), Blackpool, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Leighton–Linslade, Shrewsbury, Southend, Southport and Ainsdale, Stoke–on-Trent and Woking (all cycling towns).
6. The bid was based on a set of criteria from Cycling England that requested details of ambitions, objectives, identified problems and how they could be

overcome as well as successful initiatives that had already been introduced. A significant amount of consultation was undertaken to understand how and where stakeholders could contribute to the development and delivery of the project. The stakeholders have therefore signed up to the proposals within the bid and are fully supportive of the ambitions and aims contained within it. A detailed summary of the bid document will be placed in the Members library.

7. A detailed action plan was also submitted with the bid that set out the proposals for delivering schemes and initiatives in each year, the breakdown between capital and revenue and from where it is proposed the contribution will come. The bid was accepted on the basis of the action plan, however Cycling England recognise that there will need to be some flexibility in the programme as schemes are delayed and others that fit the strategy are brought forward.
8. The funding allocated to York amounts to £20 per head of population and totals £3.68million over the two and a half year period. The allocation is made on the basis of match funding by the Council and stakeholders, which needs to be demonstrated to Cycling England and DfT over the life of the project. This equates to £500,000 in year one and £1,590,000 in years two and three.
9. The next step in progressing the project is to submit a strategy and detailed action plan for year one, outline for years two and three, to Cycling England during September 2008. These documents need to take into account progress since the announcement, the DfT funding allocation and comments from Cycling England as part of their visit to York in August 2008. Cycling England will need to agree to the strategy and action plan prior to any grant claims being submitted. Cycling England has indicated that it hopes to be able to provide approval within a few weeks of submission.

## **Cycling England Visit**

10. As part of the development of the project Cycling England visited York on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008. On the 20<sup>th</sup> August a meeting took place with the cycle champion and Members, officers and key stakeholders to enable Cycling England to understand the key issues for stakeholders and what they will be contributing to the delivery of the project. On the 21<sup>st</sup> August they met with officers and undertook a site visit around York to look at parts of the network that require alterations and consider current improvement proposals as well as look at areas where significant improvements have already been made.
11. As a result of the discussions and the site visit several key points emerged from Cycling England.
  - Be prepared to reallocate road space to cyclists, including the removal of traffic lanes.
  - Consistency and continuity of routes is important.

- Be prepared to allocate priority to cyclists at junctions particularly where cycle routes cross side roads.
  - Allocate an element of funding to refreshing and improving existing cycling routes.
  - Be ready to deliver quick wins, including having something ready to promote as part of the media opportunity when the strategy is agreed.
  - Consider overspending in year one.
  - Consider improvements to Scarborough Bridge as well as the station access.
12. If we are to achieve the outcomes in terms of increasing the number and length of journeys by cycle then there will need to be a step change in the provision of cycling facilities and bold decisions made to prioritise these facilities above those of motor vehicles.
13. Cycling England has indicated that some priority should be given to improving access to the station, particularly as the bridge linking the city centre with York Central will not be delivered within the timescale of the cycling city project. Officers have recognised the need to provide additional facilities and an officer working group will be established to consider the options for a) a new bridge b) enhancements to the existing Scarborough bridge to determine the most appropriate means of developing improved access.
14. It is crucial that the York project is able to learn from the existing cycle demonstration town projects. It is the intention to visit either Derby or Darlington (as the nearest cycle demonstration towns) to understand from them examples of best practice. The possibility of visiting Munster (twinned with York and providing a good example of what cycling facilities can be delivered) is also being considered.

### **Links to Transport Policy**

15. Given the comments made by Cycling England it is important to note that the policy issues raised by them are in accordance with the Local Transport Plan (LTP2). The hierarchy of road users places pedestrians and cyclists above motor vehicles. It seeks to encourage journeys by more sustainable modes which requires some priority to be afforded to them to provide a safe, comfortable and convenient journey and aims to reduce levels of traffic congestion by providing alternative choices for travel. In particular it will be pertinent to promote high quality cycle facilities that acknowledge the priority afforded to cyclists, on the key routes being promoted through the cycling city project.
16. The cycling strategy contained in LTP2 and included as part of the bid document adopted the recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee during 2004 as part of its review of cycling. The recommendations are contained as Annex 1.
17. The Council is looking to be an exemplar for cycling in England rather than continental cities providing examples of best practice. The Council is

committed to being a cycling city, improving cycling facilities and increasing the number of cyclists and it will need to engage with this opportunity to make some bold delivery decisions which accord with agreed current transport policy in terms of promotion of sustainable modes.

18. Schemes to be delivered through the capital programme will be brought to Members for consideration through EMAP. Where there are changes in policy, for example priority to cyclists at side roads, the individual schemes will be brought to Members for approval.
19. There is a close fit for this project with the LTP2 strategy, particularly with regard to increasing and promoting sustainable travel, reducing congestion by improving sustainable transport modes and providing travel choice options, better air quality and health. Delivery of the cycling city project will support in delivery in these other areas.

### **Documents for submission**

20. Cycling England provided guidance on how it wanted the strategy setting out. Officers have been refining the strategy submitted as part of the bid, attached as Annex 2 and the work is still ongoing until the end of September. Further updates to the strategy will be presented at the meeting.
21. Key elements of the strategy include the vision of what step changes will have taken place at the end of the project and what difference that will make; the aims and objectives of the project; key targets on what we are going to achieve and how that will be measured, a proposed governance structure; an initial consideration of the main barriers to cycling and the possible interventions required to overcome them as well as a delivery strategy and how that relates to previous and ongoing work.
22. A simplified version of the action plan is attached as Annex 3. The plan needs further revision in light of the recent documentation from the DfT setting out the allocation available for each year and comments made by Cycling England as part of their site visit to York on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008. It has been scaled back slightly (primarily the removal of the bridge into the York Central development, allocated funding £1.1m) in light of the reduction in the funding now available to CYC. The exact composition of the action plans is still to be finalised but it is not expected that there will be significant alterations to the action plan submitted as part of the bid. Work is ongoing until the end of September to finalise the action plan and an update of the proposed action plan will be presented at the meeting.

### **Consultation**

23. A significant amount of consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the cycling town bid, which has helped inform the strategy and its development as well as the scheme elements that form the action

plan. We consulted with both the general public and local stakeholders in York to identify the challenges and problems and consider what needs to be done to address them. 300 questionnaires were sent out through a variety of routes and 60 of these returned completed, a 20% return rate. An open meeting for stakeholders in cycling was held on 11 March 2008, where 26 people attended, including representatives from Sustrans, CTC, local cycling clubs and the voluntary sector.

24. Consultation with stakeholders will continue as the project progresses and it is intended to hold further partner and stakeholder meetings in September/October to progress the governance structure and delivery groups.
25. A key part in the development of the strategy is to identify from cyclists and non-cyclists in the city what would encourage them to start cycling or to cycle more. To develop this we will be taking information from other cycling cities and Cycling England. In addition we have prepared a questionnaire to be available city wide and included on the Council website. We are currently considering distribution to all residents in York as well as inclusion in local newspapers and other publications. We will then use these responses to inform the future action plan.
26. Making a step change is critical to the success of the project. The data collected from the questionnaire will inform the content of the action plan for years two and three which will ensure the most appropriate measures and initiatives to be targeted. In addition consultation will be undertaken as part of the delivery of individual elements of the project to identify how best to encourage more people to cycle.

## **Corporate Objectives**

27. The project, if successful, would contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:
  - Reduce the environmental impact of council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same. *There is considerable scope for encouraging a shift from car use to cycle use for people throughout the city.*
  - Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport. *The proposals will make cycling into the city centre more attractive for current and potential cyclists and have the potential to increase levels of cycling.*
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest. *The scheme will encourage more people to cycle with the added benefits of improved health. Cycling is also an ideal mode of transport for people on low-incomes whose health may be poorer.*

- Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services. *These proposals would help cater for all types of cycles and cyclists as they focus on children and a number of heard to reach groups as well as providing general improvements in cycling facilities.*
  - Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York. *The potential cycle park at the former Lendal Sub Station will be achieved by partnership working between the public and private sectors. The project delivery groups will provide the means for officers and stakeholders to work together.*
28. Local Transport Plan (LTP): The scheme would contribute to several of the aims of the LTP, namely:
- To reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and encourage essential journeys to be undertaken by more sustainable modes;
  - To improve economic performance in a sustainable manner;
  - To reduce the levels of actual and perceived safety problems;
  - To enhance opportunities for all community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society;
  - To improve the health of those who live or work in, or visit, York;
  - To reduce the impact of traffic and travel on the environment, including air quality, noise and the use of non-renewable resources.

## Implications

29. This report has the following implications:
- **Financial** – In order to submit claims to the Department for Transport for grant funding the strategy and action plan must be approved by Cycling England. The grant claims are submitted on a quarterly basis in arrears on an accruals basis. The grant funding must be match funded and we must ensure that CYC and partner funding is able to match what is claimed against DfT monies. This means that there will be a knock on effect for funding other schemes, particularly in the capital programme.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** – There is provision made within the project bid for a project manager. It is proposed that the manager will be employed on a fixed term contract until March 2011. It is anticipated that the total cost of the post will be in the region of £45,000 including on-costs however the job description will be evaluated in line with the CYC job evaluation scheme. The salary is covered by funding from Cycling England rather than the Council. It is unlikely that the post will be filled this calendar year and temporary arrangements will need to be made to

employ a project manager on a temporary basis from an agency, again the cost will be funded by Cycling England through the match funding.

- **Equalities** – The project will deliver a range of improvements to facilities and training that will provide residents and visitors to York with travel options to reach key services around the city.
- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no implications at present
- **Property** – There are no implications envisaged.
- **Legal** – The grant from the DfT is made under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Council is required to enter into a funding arrangement with the DfT in order to be able to access the grant.
- **Information Technology** – There are no implications.

## **Risk Management**

30. In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy the main risk that has been identified in this report could lead to the inability to meet the council's objectives (Strategic).
31. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for the recommendation is less than 16 and thus at this point the risks need only to be monitored, as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

## **Recommendations**

32. That the Executive:
  - i. Approve the submission to Cycling England of the strategy and action plan contained within the report and updated at the meeting.

Reason: To ensure the project is formally agreed and enable the grant funding to be accessed thus allowing progress to continue on the project.

## Contact Details

### Author:

Ruth Egan  
Head of Transport Planning  
Directorate of City Strategy  
01904 551372

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Damon Copperthwaite  
Assistant Director of City Strategy

Report Approved



Date 11.09.08

### Specialist Implications Officer(s)

HR	Financial
Sue Foley	Patrick Looker
HR advisor	Finance Manager
Ext 1609	Ext 1633

Wards Affected: All

All  Y

For further information please contact the author of the report

### Background Papers:

***All relevant background papers must be listed here.***

Letter from DfT 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008 – Funding arrangements for the Cycling Cities and Towns project.

Scrutiny Committee Report on cycling 2004

Annex 1 – Scrutiny Committee recommendations

Annex 2 – Draft Cycling city strategy

Annex 3 – Draft cycling city action plan