

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 23 APRIL 2008

SMARTER CHOICES, SMARTER PLACES

Report by Executive Director Of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's approval to make funding applications to the Scottish Government's 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' project in respect of Kilmarnock and Cumnock.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Government and COSLA have launched the 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' project. It is a partnership project with Local Authorities to reduce car dependence; increase physical activity; reduce emissions and congestion; and promote sustainable places.

- 2.2 Up to £15m over the next three years is available to local authorities to bid for. The Scottish Government will fully fund successful projects in the first year but would expect match funding on a 50:50 basis during the second and third years.

- 2.3 The objectives of the project are: -

- to achieve a sustained change in travel behaviour in the participating authorities: including increased proportions of active travel and public transport use and decreased proportion of car use
- to provide an opportunity for willing Local Authorities to undertake intense activity on sustainable travel and related physical activity interventions through match funding
- to test the effectiveness of sustainable travel and other interventions against national and local outcomes per the National Performance Framework
- to share lessons learnt across disciplines and geographical boundaries
- to provide practical experience over time to mainstream these activities in Scotland where they have proven effective.

3. BID SELECTION PROCESS

- 3.1 The selection process for projects is a competitive 2-stage selection process. Stage 1 seeks outline bids from Local Authorities. Shortlisted authorities will then be invited to provide a more in depth and detailed bid at Stage 2. Stage 1 bids are due to the Scottish Government by 30 April 2008.

3.2 The five criteria against which all Stage 1 bids will be assessed against are: -

- (i) The proposal must relate to a self contained town, city or groups of villages with a population between 8,000 and 100,000;
- (ii) Local Authority must be able to demonstrate political commitment to the programme at the highest level;
- (iii) Local Authority must be able to demonstrate the appropriateness and the potential effectiveness of the proposed package of measures in relation to the aim of the project;
- (iv) Local Authority must be able to demonstrate that the commitment of local partners has been secured;
- (v) Local Authority must be able to explain how it will engage with the wider local community when designing and taking package of measures forward.

3.3 Stage 1 bids must address the following: -

- a) Details of LA, community / location and background information
- b) Political commitment
- c) Outline of package of measures – in relation to project aims
- d) Local Partners
- e) Engaging with local community
- f) Match funding
- g) Indicative range of costs

4. CURRENT EAST AYRSHIRE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ACTIVITIES

4.1 East Ayrshire Council has already instituted traffic and land use policies that will influence travel behaviour and encourage the use of sustainable travel modes. A smarter choices programme would form an integral part of the transport strategy to enhance the work that is already being done to further reduce congestion, give people travel choices and contribute to other priorities such as improving accessibility and social inclusion, encourage regeneration, reduce pollution and increase the levels of physical activity. The work that is already in hand includes:-

School Travel Planning

4.2 The Council presently employs, through temporary funding, a School Travel Coordinator to develop Travel Plans for schools in East Ayrshire. The School Travel Plan Coordinator assists schools by establishing a School Travel Team and helping the travel teams to complete a School Travel Plan. The Co-ordinator also supports best practice and opportunities for partnership working to promote and encourage acceptable alternatives to the private car for the journey to school and promote safe, sustainable and healthy travel for school children.

Council Travel Plan

- 4.3** The Roads & Transportation Division is currently working with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to develop a Travel Plan for East Ayrshire Council. A two-stage approach is being undertaken. The first stage involves the development of an overarching Travel Plan with the second phase comprising site-specific travel plans for the larger Council premises. East Ayrshire, in conjunction with SPT and the Energy Savings Trust is producing the overarching Travel Plan framework for the Council which will set out broad policies, initiatives and targets. A travel survey of council staff has been undertaken through a payroll questionnaire. The travel survey has been analysed and will contribute to the development of the Travel Plan.
- 4.4** Following completion of the overarching plan, it is proposed that more detailed, site-specific plans will be prepared for the larger Council premises. Site audits and assessments of Council buildings are required to identify present facilities at the site to support sustainable travel and identify barriers to non-car use. Travel plan targets should be measurable against the baseline data obtained from the staff travel survey.
- 4.5** A Transport Officer from the Roads Division has been liaising with SPT and the Energy Savings Trust for the development of an overarching Travel Plan for the Council but the Council does not at present have a dedicated Travel Plan Officer. The current support from SPT and the Energy Savings Trust will end shortly. It will not be possible to develop site specific travel plans for all Council premises and monitor the performance of the plan without a dedicated travel plan officer.

Infrastructure Provision

- 4.6** East Ayrshire Council has implemented the following measures that encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and would be complemented by an integrated Smarter Choices programme:-
- Cycling provision – Approximately 41 kilometres of cycle route have been introduced in East Ayrshire consisting of off-road, on-road and shared surface footway/cycleways. The Roads Division will continue to extend routes and links to other authority areas as funding becomes available;
 - Bus station upgrades – Kilmarnock and Cumnock, the two largest towns in East Ayrshire, have had their main bus stations upgraded. The improvements include new covered waiting areas, new pedestrian surfaces and electronic information boards;
 - Quality bus corridor works – have been introduced in the main bus corridors i.e. A71, A76, B7081, Kilmarnock and Cumnock comprising

new bus stops, raised kerbs, timetable information and improved lighting and pedestrian links where needed;

- Parking controls, including charges in Kilmarnock;
- Enhanced pedestrian access in Kilmarnock town centre including additional controlled pedestrian crossings, increased space for pedestrians reduced delays for pedestrians. Particular attention has been given to the provision of dropped crossings, tactile paving, audible and tactile signals and the positioning of street furniture to meeting the needs of disabled and vulnerable road users.

Land Use Policies

- 4.7** Town Centre Regeneration - East Ayrshire Council is developing regeneration policies for both Kilmarnock and Cumnock Town Centres that will have the potential to stimulate economic activity, take advantage of the good public transport services to both towns and reduce car dependency.
- 4.8** Housing Developments – Future larger housing releases will be situated to take advantage of existing public transport corridors, where possible, to reduce car dependency.

5. BID PROPOSALS

- 5.1** It is proposed that bids are made to ‘Smarter Choices, Smarter Places’ for resources to employ Travel Planning Officers and to implement a range of ‘smarter choices’ initiatives. Separate bids will be made for funding which will target the two main communities, Kilmarnock and Cumnock, and each will consist of:
- (i) Developing site specific Travel Plans for the East Ayrshire Council premises in the towns
- (ii) Working closely with major employers in the two towns to develop Travel Plans and promote “Travelwise” initiatives such as:-
- Providing better information about travel options;
 - Travel awareness campaigns and marketing sustainable travel options more effectively in conjunction with the bus and rail operators and SPT;
 - Partnership working with operators to encourage improvements in the way services are organised so they better meet the needs of a group of people;
 - Encouraging the provision of new transport services which are closely focussed on a particular target market such as a workplace or residential area;

- Promoting new initiatives that reduce the need to travel, such as tele-working;
- Discounted cycle purchase schemes;
- Discounted travel cards;
- Further infrastructure programmes of cycle tracks, pedestrian crossings, speed management measures and public transport facilities;
- In partnership with SPT evaluate a series of smaller projects, such as car clubs and promoting home shopping.

(iii) Working closely with Community Partners including Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, to identify cycle route options to provide links which connect to communities and other strategic cycle routes.

6. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The objectives for the funding bid are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Community Plan in terms reducing multiple deprivation, reducing congestion, environmental impact and improving social inclusion.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None at this stage. If the bid is selected by the Scottish Government for the stage 2 process then full details of the bid will be submitted to Cabinet. Any legal implications identified will be stated at that time.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Detailed work on the stage 1 bid is still to be carried out. However, it is anticipated that the total value of the bid for both communities will be in the order of £800,000 per year.

8.2 In the first year the costs would be met by the Scottish Government. In years two and three, half of this cost would require to be met by the Council and provision will be made within the Roads and Transportation capital budget if necessary.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Agrees to the development of the EAC Travel Plans as set out in 4. above;
- b) Welcomes the Scottish Government & COSLA initiative to set up the 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' initiative

- c) Agrees that funding bids shall be made to the Scottish Government's 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' project in respect of Kilmarnock and Cumnock; and
- d) Agrees that EAC will match fund the project in the second and third years, if the bid is successful.

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WS/JB

10TH April 2008

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Proposal for the Development and Implementation of Travel Plans for Council Offices

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