

Active Travel Committee: Budget Proposals for 2022/23

Internal Budgets available and External Funding Opportunities

The Active Travel committee has a budget of £28,000 for this year, but has also built up an earmarked reserve of £47,817. KCC had also promised a contribution of £30,000 from their Highways Fund towards the cost of physical interventions to increase compliance with the 20mph scheme and it needs to be established whether this funding is still available.

The 20s Plenty Committee didn't apply all its budget and reserves last year because we were waiting to hear whether we KCC had been successful with a bid into Tranche 3 of the DfT Active Travel Fund for interventions to help pedestrians cross our streets more easily and slow traffic further so that cyclists feel safer. Unfortunately KCC only succeeded in getting funding for two projects in Herne Bay and Sevenoaks. The next round of the Active Travel Fund could launch as soon as August and the funding is significantly larger this time, so the chance of getting additional external funding is still very much there.

Options for Project Spend

1. LCWIP Interventions

The Town Council now has a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan in place including a prioritised list of 69 potential interventions to make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists. This has been signed off by the Swale JTB and adopted by KCC and Swale BC and there will be a strong logic in applying a significant amount of this year's budget to interventions that are high up the priority list and which are not due to be funded through other sources.

2. Preliminary Design work to support application to DfT Active Travel Fund Tranche 4

Informal feedback we have received from Berendt Consulting and Adrian Oliver, SBC's Active Travel Officer, suggests that the DfT are keen on funding ambitious projects which take space away from motorised vehicles and provide separation of pedestrians and cyclists. Much of their focus appears to be on encouraging cycling rather than doing more for pedestrians and there is a risk that the model we have developed for the LCWIP, which is highly logical for a historical town with narrow streets, may not attract DfT funding. In this case we may need to bring forward some of our more ambitious proposals including traffic free neighbourhoods, improvements to the Bysing Wood Road Cycle lane and even a new long bridge with separated space for cyclists and pedestrians. If we do this there will be a benefit in paying for some initial design work.

3. Promoting attitudinal change

In the evaluation of the 20 mph experimental scheme commissioned by KCC the importance of promoting attitudinal change to cycling through publicity, education and training was emphasised and this was then picked up in KCC's proposal that the scheme be made permanent.

The Town Council has already run webinars promoting cycling and is due to run a Cycle Fest in July with a range of activities. It has also been funded by SBC to run pilots for a cycle hire scheme and a secure bike storage scheme.

A number of other suggestions for promoting cycling have also been made in the past including organising family rides, promoting local safe routes, providing training. Running events will help maintain the profile of active travel and it would be sensible to allocate some funding to this, if our staff have the resources to organise.

Conclusions and Proposals

Detailed discussions will need to take place with KCC to establish which top priority interventions from our LCWIP they will support and be able to implement in the next period. The time lag between them agreeing to carry out work and actually delivering can be over 12 months, so even at this stage it can be safely predicted that expenditure will not be incurred during this financial year.

Detailed discussions will also need to take place with KCC and SBC to agree what proposals from Faversham should be carried forward into KCC's Tranche 4 DfT Active Travel bid and whether they will need initial design work carried out.

In the meantime it is proposed that the Committee agree a provisional budget allocation for this year as follows:

1. Physical works to promote compliance with the 20mph scheme up to £55,000
2. Further design work to support application for DfT funds up to £15,000
3. Activities, Events and Publicity to promote active travel up to £5,000