

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: COMMUNITY LINKS AND SMARTER MEASURES
FUNDING APPLICATIONS**
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 MARCH 2015
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report concerns three funding streams to which the Council has been invited to bid at relatively short notice. The sustainable transport charity, Sustrans, invited local authorities to bid into their *Community Links* funding stream to provide funding for path enhancements in financial year 2015/16. The application process opened mid January 2015 and the closing date for online applications was 13 February 2015.
- 1.2 Officers were asked to submit bids and expressions of interest to a number of funding streams, relating to active travel, that became available between 24 November 2014 and 23 February 2015.
- 1.3 In addition to applications to progress path enhancements via Sustrans, the Council was invited to express interest in receiving funding for 'smarter measures' (measures which promote and encourage active and sustainable travel) from Transport Scotland and the cycling charity Cycling Scotland. Expressions of interest to receive a block grant from Transport Scotland were to be submitted between 24 November 2014 and 30 January 2015. Cycling Scotland invited expressions of interest between early January 2015 and 23 February 2015.
- 1.4 Following consultation with portfolio holders Councillor Dr Craig R Martin (Environment) and Councillor Adrian Mahoney (Culture, Leisure and Tourism) the applications were submitted by the deadline. The projects that were submitted for progression are outlined in Section 2 and Section 4. This report seeks permission to continue the bid process and approval to seek match funding, including applications to other funding bodies. If all the bids are successful, the total expenditure would be £862,530, including a contribution of £192,360 from the Council.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on applications submitted to Sustrans for path enhancements in 2014/15, which were set out in a report to the Executive on 18 March 2014.

2 PROPOSED BIDS TO SUSTRANS 2015/16

- 2.1 The projects which are proposed to be taken forward in 2015/16 are primarily missing or sub-standard links, which have been identified through Falkirk Council's Core Path Plan and Local Transport Strategy. The paths to be progressed are as follows:

2.2 **Bo'ness to Blackness, Phase 3 (Fisheries to Carriden)**

Total Capital Cost £252,423

- Sustrans Community Links Fund £126,211 (Application Pending)
- Sport Scotland-Legacy Programme £100,000 (Application Pending)
- Falkirk Environment Trust £26,212 (Funding Secured)

Land Issues

- Negotiations are still to take place regarding access arrangements.

Carronshore Bridge (Glensburgh to Abbotshaugh)

Total Capital Cost £455,500

- Sustrans Community Links Fund £227,750 (Application Pending)
- SNH-Green Infrastructure £125,750 (Application Pending)
- Falkirk Environment Trust £50,000 (Application Pending)
- Falkirk Council (Capital) £52,000 (Secured)

Land Issues

- Access arrangements and accommodation works outwith Council land are required for construction. Initial discussions with landowners have been positive.

Victoria Park-Middlefield, Falkirk

Total Capital Cost-£213,670

- Sustrans Community Links Fund £106,835 (Application Pending)
- Walking, Cycling, Safer, Streets Fund £106,835 (Awaiting Confirmation of budget for 2015/16)

Land Issues

- A section of land is required from a private landowner. The landowner has been approached and is receptive to gifting a section of land if accommodation works take place in the form of boundary fencing.

Howburn Path-Russell Park, Stenhousemuir

Total Capital Cost-£118,715

- Sustrans Community Links Fund £59,357 (Application Pending)
- Falkirk Environment Trust £25,000 (Application Pending)
- Falkirk Council (Revenue) £34,358 (Secured)

Land Issues

- No land issues for this proposal.

2.3 Most of the land required for these projects is already owned by the Council or is under its control. Some additional land or access arrangements will be required (as outlined in Section 2.2). Irrespective of the outcome of the bids to Sustrans, it is proposed to continue with the acquisition of this land, so that these projects can proceed sooner or later, provided the Chief Finance Officer is satisfied that adequate funds are available.

2.4 Sustrans expects to announce its decisions in April 2015.

2.5 In addition to the above, the projects listed below were going forward with the 2015/16 applications to Sustrans. However, a site visit with a Sustrans representative, week beginning 9 February 2015, has confirmed that they are able to fund the projects for delivery in 2014/15 through an under spend in their funding programme.

- 2.6 These two projects have now been added to Falkirk Council's Small Works Team programme for delivery by the end of the current financial year.

Carmuir, Camelon-Link to Forth & Clyde Canal

Total Capital Cost- £ 89,659

Sustrans Community Links Fund-£76,387

Falkirk Council (Capital)-£13,272

Dennyloanhead to Denny Paths

Total Capital Cost-£84,988

Sustrans Community Links Fund-£34,988

Developer Contribution (P/05/0893/FUL- PG042)-£50,000

3 UPDATE ON APPROVED BIDS FROM SUSTRANS 2014/15

- 3.1 The programme of projects which was approved by the various funding partners early in financial year 2014/15 and reported to the Executive in March 2014, for delivery in the current financial year, is progressing well and when complete will add significant value to the path network across the Falkirk Council area.

- 3.2 These projects are:

- Bo'ness to Blackness, Phase 1 & 2 (John Muir Way/National Cycle Network);
- Little Kerse Community Path Link Grangemouth to Polmont, Station Road to Union Canal Polmont (John Muir Way/ National Cycle Network);
- Dorrator Bridge to Mill Lade in Larbert;
- Maddiston to Blackbraes, Maddiston to Standburn (Phase1);
- Glen Village to Cleuch (John Muir Way) and;
- shortly going to site is the Helix North to Kelpies path upgrade (New Carron Bridge to Forth & Clyde Canal Basin) which will complete the connections to the Helix project.

4 SMARTER MEASURES FUNDING

- 4.1 Transport Scotland invited Local Authorities in November 2014 to apply for a block grant to deliver 'smarter measures' that could encourage people to travel more actively and sustainably. Measures could include promotion of new path infrastructure, business and school travel planning, cycle training and general marketing of the benefits of active and sustainable travel. Falkirk Council was allocated, on a population basis, £145,017 subject to demonstrating how the funds would be used. Officers responded to Transport Scotland in January 2015 stating that the Council would be happy to accept the grant to deliver 'smarter measures' for the Falkirk area. Confirmation of the grant should be sent to Councils in early March 2015.

- 4.2 In addition to the 'smarter measures' allocation, Falkirk Council was invited to bid for services from the cycling charity, Cycling Scotland. Falkirk Council must submit £2,000 of funding (being met through Falkirk Council funding in 2014/15) and for that we receive a package of measures, entitled 'Give Me Cycle Space', to be delivered in 2015/16 by Cycling Scotland to encourage cycling in schools through education, training and marketing programmes. Falkirk Council submitted a bid 20 February 2015 and we now have confirmation that this has been awarded to the Council.

5 POLICY, LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Policy** - The projects listed above are in accordance with a number of Council policies. The relevant policies include: Falkirk Council Local Plan (2010), Local Transport Strategy (2014) and Falkirk Council Core Paths Plan (2010).
- 5.2 **Legal Implications** - There are land issues arising from the continuing development of individual projects. Access agreements will have to be concluded for Carronshore Bridge, Bo'ness to Blackness Phase 3 and Victoria Park.
- 5.3 **Financial Implications** - Confirmation and the further securing of additional match funding from other sources may result in some of the projects having to be delayed until other funding opportunities arise.
- 5.4 **Personnel Implications** – none.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended:

- a) that the Executive approve bids and acceptance of grants from the bodies listed within this report and, following notification of successful applications, authorise officers to seek match funding from appropriate sources;
- b) that, if any of the bids to Sustrans are unsuccessful, officers be authorised to continue with these projects, as approved resources allow, including seeking match funding;
- c) that, subject to the Chief Finance Officer being satisfied that funds for acquisition are available, the Director of Development Services and the Chief Governance Officer be authorised to enter into negotiations and thereafter conclude a bargain for the acquisition of land or rights of access necessary for the projects listed in the report (irrespective of success in the current round of bidding), with each of the transactions being at a purchase price considered satisfactory to the Director of Development Services; and

- d) that, the Executive approve, in principle, the outcome of negotiations for access agreements which are to be concluded for Carronshore Bridge, Bo'ness to Blackness Phase 3 and Victoria Park.

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Director of Development Services

Date: 25 February 2015

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File Ref.: TP04

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Executive Committee Paper '*Sustrans Community Links Funding*' (18 March 2015)
2. '*Community Links*' Guidance 2015
3. Transport Scotland '*Smarter Choices, Smarter Places*' Guidance
4. Cycling Scotland '*Give Me Cycle Space*' application guidance

Background papers are available on request from Lynn Slavin, Tel: 01324 504818