

Request for Delegated Authority Approval (Emergency Powers – 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic)

Completed form should be emailed to the Chief Executive

Directorate:	Place
Service:	Economic Development and Regeneration
Subject:	Accessible Ayr Sustrans Bid
Author:	Donald Gillies
Date of Request:	15 June 2020
Background:	<p>The Council last year submitted a bid for Sustrans for funding to undertake significant work in Ayr Town centre. The bid for funding was unsuccessful, however a small funding allocation was awarded to allow a scheme to be worked up that would allow a further submission in Jul 2020.</p> <p>This has now been undertaken with wide stakeholder consultation on high level proposals and an online members briefing to update.</p>
Approval Sought For:	<p>The attached draft Leadership Panel Report details the work that has been undertaken and how it is proposed that the scheme is taken forward.</p> <p>The first step however will be to submit the revised bid to Sustrans and delegated authority is sought to submit this bid prior to the closing date in July.</p> <p>The outcome of this bid will be the subject of further reports that will also detail the financial implications which are largely unknown at this time.</p>
Additional Information:	<p>As per attached draft report.</p> <p>Information provided by Donald in response to query by Councillor Henderson:</p> <p><i>The high level estimated costs for this project are circa £15m as noted in the report.</i></p> <p><i>This would mean that the Council could have to find up to 50 % of or £7.5.</i></p> <p><i>It is noted that problem junctions would attract higher levels of funding so Council contribution would reduce.</i></p>

	<p><i>If the scheme is delivered over 5 years then this would cost £1.5m a year. The programme could be delivered over a longer period however with a 7-8 year delivery programme reducing to around £1m a year.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, it is not necessarily all Council capital funds that would require to be used as other funding sources could be sought and contributions in kind are also able to be taken in account.</i></p> <p><i>Also, in submitting the bid just now, there is no firm commitment to the project or financially at this stage.</i></p> <p><i>This means that we can wait to see what award and profile is and then seek to tailor our final programme and project requirements and match funding accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>The outcome of the bid and actual proposals will require to be the subject of a further report in September as advised in the report narrative.</i></p>
Legal Implications:	Nil at this time
Procurement Implications:	n/a
Financial Implications:	Not known until outcome of bid is known and further report will be required at that point.

Chief Executive's Office use only:

Name(s) of Elected Member(s) consulted:	Douglas Campbell, Brian McGinley, Martin Dowey, Alec Clark, Ian Cochrane, Peter Henderson
Elected Member Feedback:	
Decision:	Approved

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director - Place
to Leadership Panel
of TBC**

Subject: Accessible Ayr – Funding Application to Sustrans

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the Accessible Ayr project, which is seeking to make ambitious improvements to the active travel infrastructure and public realm in Ayr Town Centre and key surrounding areas.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

- 2.1.1 Notes the current position in the development of the Accessible Ayr project;**
- 2.1.2 Approves the submission of the application to the Sustrans Places for Everyone fund before the deadline in July 2020;**
- 2.1.3 Requests that the Director – Place reports back to Leadership Panel in September 2020 with an update on the application, next steps and to confirm budget and funding options.**

3. Background

- 3.1 South Ayrshire Council published its Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy in April 2019. The strategy sets out to promote sustainable development, mitigate climate changing emissions, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The overall goal of the strategy is:
“People in South Ayrshire enjoy a good quality of life now and in the future – with a thriving economy, just society and healthy environment – while working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst effects of climate change and build resilience to adapt to its impacts.”
- 3.2 The strategy supports the Scottish Government commitment to becoming a net zero emissions society by 2045. It also recognises that, whilst there are significant challenges, there are also opportunities including supporting healthier lifestyles and making our communities more resilient. Active travel has an important role in achieving the ambitious goals identified in the councils Climate Change Strategy.
- 3.3 As well as the climate change imperative, it is also relevant to note the increasing evidence that is emerging of the importance of place on our health and wellbeing. How places are designed, how they evolve and how they are maintained is vital to the health of the people and communities within them.

- 3.4 The Council Plan; Our People Our Place, highlights the importance of climate change and place. The plan identifies making South Ayrshire “a better place to live” as a strategic priority, and that this will be achieved through the ambition statement, “we will create a greener, healthier South Ayrshire and enhance it for future generations”.
- 3.5 The Ayr Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan, recognises the importance of good public realm and wayfinding for a successful town centre, identifying its improvement in Ayr Town Centre as a Strategic Initiative. The current public realm is of poor quality with degradation over the years causing a patchwork of surfaces, giving a poor impression of the town centre and difficulties for maintenance and disability access.
- 3.5 With the above strategic objectives in mind the Accessible Ayr project has been developed by officers to improve active travel infrastructure in the centre of Ayr, and to improve the public spaces for those who live, work and visit the town centre.
- 3.6 In May 2019 a submission for the Accessible Ayr project was made to the Sustrans Places for Everyone fund. The application consisted of significant public realm and active travel improvements to the key streets in the town centre.
- 3.7 The Sustrans Places for Everyone fund aims to create safe, attractive, healthier places by increasing the number of trips made by walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys. It funds 100% of project development costs, capped at 10% of total project capital cost, and a 50% base funding contribution to capital implementation costs. This base funding contribution increases to 70% where works relate to problem junctions.
- 3.8 The 2019 submission was supported by several public consultation events, held in Ayr Central in Spring 2019 and broad stakeholder engagement with town centre users and active travel groups. The physical interventions proposed included wholesale public realm renewal on High Street and Sandgate, and reallocation of road space where possible for improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. The application also identified projects, to be developed in association with the Ayr Active Travel Hub, to encourage behaviour change towards walking and cycling.
- 3.9 The 2019 application was unsuccessful in obtaining capital funding for the delivery of the project. Whilst recognising the significant ambition showed in the application, Sustrans recommended further work be undertaken to improve links from the Town Centre to a number of key destinations. These were:
- (i) North Ayr, encouraged by Sustrans as a high priority area given its position on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation;
 - (ii) Craigie education and sports campus, where there is already significant footfall to and from the Town Centre along poor pedestrian routes.
- 3.10 In addition, Sustrans has requested that further thought be given to potential improvements to Burns Statue Square for pedestrians and cyclists. Given the strategic importance of Burns Statue Square, and the complications caused by the presence of vacant and derelict property, proposals here will be temporary in nature and used to trial potential works that could be implemented as part of a separate project at a later date.
- 3.11 Sustrans has agreed to fund 100% of the development costs incurred in the preparation of the new application covering the expanded scope of the project.

Covid 19

- 3.12 It is important to recognise the increased importance of active travel and public health given the current health crisis. Levels of walking and cycling have increased dramatically

during the lockdown. These modes are expected to play an essential role in the coming months as more people begin travelling to work again and there is an easing of restrictions on movement more generally. Evidence indicates a significant link between Covid-19 recovery and physical fitness, the health benefits of choosing more active travel options are more important than ever, as are the reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality it also brings. The Scottish Government, through Sustrans, has made available significant additional funding for projects required as a consequence of Covid 19, underlining the increasing importance of active travel.

3.13 Many of the interventions to facilitate social distancing will be short term temporary projects, however as we seek to build a healthier and fairer society that is better prepared for crises like that of Covid19 a longer term approach is required. Sustrans has emphasised the need to think beyond the immediate situation, pointing out that if the shift to walking and cycling is to be maintained in the longer-term then local authorities should seek to bring forward existing plans for walking and cycling such as the Accessible Ayr project.

4. Proposals

4.1 Work is currently underway to prepare a submission to the Sustrans Places for Everyone fund before the deadline in July 2020, addressing the three main areas raised by Sustrans as part of its feedback to the 2019 application. Having consulted widely with stakeholders officers are seeking members support to proceed with the submission.

4.2 The Accessible Ayr project has been developed to improve the active travel infrastructure available to the communities accessing Ayr Town Centre, whilst improving the quality of place for all users through public realm renewal.

4.3 The Accessible Ayr project will deliver the following benefits:

- Improved access to active travel, playing an important role in moving towards a net zero emissions society and delivering the commitments set out in the Councils Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy;
- Encourages walking and cycling and a more active lifestyle, bringing public health benefits;
- will improve the physical backdrop and links between key Council investments at Riverside, Craigie Education and Sports Campus and the proposed leisure centre;
- renewed public realm in the town centre creating a welcoming place for residents and visitors, including at night;
- improved town centre accessibility and environment benefits high street businesses, visitor economy and the evening economy;
- will improve accessibility for those with disabilities through surface renewal and improved crossing points;
- will bring about improvements to air quality through reduced reliance on car travel and increased planting;
- provides an opportunity to review servicing arrangements on the High Street;
- encourages private sector investment into the town centre.

4.4 The main barriers to pedestrian and cyclist movement from the town centre towards Ayr North and Craigie have been reviewed, and the broad areas for focus and potential interventions considered. Concept plans are currently being developed that will help to inform the application, and allow for estimated costs to be prepared.

- 4.5 Stakeholder and public engagement has been undertaken, with one public event being held in March 2020 in addition to those that informed the previous submission. Online consultation is currently underway and will be further publicised in the lead up to submission.
- 4.6 It is essential that as part of the submission the Council reaffirms the commitment to active travel and improved places that it gave as part of the 2019 submission, giving Sustrans confidence in the project as it progresses to the next stage.
- 4.7 Following submission in July, officers will be required to present to the Sustrans Places for Everyone panel in August 2020, following which the final decision will be made.
- 4.8 If the application is successful in obtaining a commitment from Sustrans to provide capital funding, a period of negotiation will commence in the lead up to a grant funding agreement being entered into between Sustrans and the Council. A paper will be taken to Panel at this point updating members on progress, next steps and funding options.
- 4.9 Following a successful outcome of the application officers will negotiate the Grant Funding Agreement on behalf of the Council. A period of detailed design would then begin, building on the principles contained in the funding submission. Further community engagement and stakeholder consultation would form an important part of the detailed design phase. It is anticipated that the first phase of works would commence in the first half of 2021. Given the scale and ambition of the project it is likely that works will be completed over 5 years.

Submission to Places for Everyone Fund	July 2020
Presentation to Places for Everyone Panel	August 2020
Update Paper to Leadership Panel	September 2020
Grant Funding Agreement Negotiation and Exchange	September 2020
Detailed Design Commences	October 2020
Works Commence	Q2 2021

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council will be expected to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with Sustrans if the application is successful.
- 5.2 The design team will be procured through existing framework arrangements with support from the Procurement Service.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Sustrans is 100% funding the current work up to submission of the application.
- 6.2 If the application is successful Sustrans will continue to fund 100% of project development costs, capped at 10% of total project capital cost, and a 50% base funding contribution to capital implementation costs. This base funding contribution increases to 70% where works relate to problem junctions.

6.3 The Council will need to provide match funding for the balance of the capital costs. Detailed costs will be determined during the detailed design phase, however estimates based on the concept design show a total capital cost for the project in the region of £15 million spread over 5 years.

6.4 Further details of funding implications and sources for match funding will be set out in the update paper that will be presented to Leadership Panel once the outcome of the application is known.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 The risk associated with adopting the recommendations is that a successful outcome of the submission for funding may increase the capital programme of the Council.

8.1.2 A risk register will be prepared and maintained by the project team once detailed designs have been agreed.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 The risk associated with rejecting the recommendations is the missed opportunity to obtain substantial external funding to deliver the benefits set out in 4.3 above.

8.2.2 Rejecting the recommendations may impact on the reputation of the Council as a trusted partner of Sustrans.

9. Equalities

9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is being prepared as part of the submission, based on concept design proposals.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** – The Scottish Government Gateway will be contacted during the detailed design phases, at which point potential environmental impacts can be properly quantified and requirement for SEA considered.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report. [Details are contained in Appendix 1].

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council strategic objective of ‘South Ayrshire Works’ and within that to the ambition statements:

- ‘We will make South Ayrshire an attractive place for inward investment’; and
- ‘we will be ambitious when transforming our town centres, making them appealing places, with enhanced social and cultural events’.

12.2 It also contributes to the Council strategic objective of ‘Stand up for South Ayrshire’ and within that the ambition statements:

- ‘We will develop meaningful communication and engagement with organisations, residents, visitors and employees to identify their needs and views while promoting the area and achievements of the Council’;
- ‘we will work with partners and communities to develop thriving places that are positive, proud and ambitious’;
- ‘we will promote South Ayrshire as a place to live, work and learn’; and
- ‘We will promote South Ayrshire as a visitor destination’.

12.3 Finally, it contributes to the Council strategic objective of ‘A better place to live’ and within that the ambition statement:

- ‘We will create a greener, healthier South Ayrshire and enhance it for future generations.’

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 Consultation with the public and other stakeholders is a key requirement of Sustrans, and as a result the project has undergone several stages of consultation. Four days of public events were held in 2019 to inform the original application, and an additional day held in 2020 as part of the forthcoming application. Feedback from these days has been used to inform the concept design proposals. An online platform was established where the public was encouraged to share views relating to the project.

13.2 Several subject specific stakeholder groups have been established, including one for active travel bodies, and another for disability groups. Public and stakeholder consultation will continue throughout the detailed design phase so visibility is maximised prior to construction.

13.3 Consultation has taken place with Local Members through the member briefing of 13th May 2020 and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

13.4 Councillor Brian McGinley as portfolio holder for Economy and Culture and Councillor Ian Cochrane as portfolio holder for the Environment, have been consulted and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director - Place will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the ‘Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log’ at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Submit application for Sustrans Place for Everyone funding.	July 2020	Service Lead – Economic and Regeneration

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Report to Leadership Panel on outcome of funding application including detail of funding arrangements.	September 2020	Director - Place

Background Papers **None**

Person to Contact **Theo Leijser, Service Lead – Economic and Regeneration**
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Date: 08 June 2020

Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal

Option	Outcome
<p>Do nothing – proposals are not taken forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public realm remains unchanged and continues to degrade resulting in an increasingly run down town centre; • facilities for active travel stay at baseline, hindering any increase in movement by cycle and foot; • none of the benefits identified for the full proposal would be realised.
<p>Reduce Scope – reduction in the extent of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustrans requested additional scope following 2019 application. A reduction in the scope at this stage would likely result in the application being unsuccessful; • the reduced scope would mean a corresponding reduction in the benefits that would be realised from the full proposal.
<p>Fully Developed Project – the full extent of the Accessible Ayr project is developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to active travel, playing an important role in moving towards a net zero emissions society and delivering the commitments set out in the Councils Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy; • increased walking and cycling and a more active lifestyle, bringing public health benefits; • improved public realm in the town centre creating a welcoming place for residents and visitors, including at night; • improved town centre accessibility and environment benefits high street businesses, visitor economy and the evening economy; • improved accessibility for those with disabilities through surface renewal and improved crossing points; • improvements to air quality through reduced reliance on car travel and increased planting; • improved servicing arrangements on the High Street.