

To: Chair and Members of the
Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14 December 2020

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Dear Councillor

I refer to this agenda for the meeting of the **PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2020** in **BY VIDEO CONFERENCE** an additional paper relating to the following report(s).

**Agenda Item
No**

6 COVID-19 ACTIVE TRAVEL PLAN SCHEMES (Pages 3 - 12)

To receive a report by the Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager (copy attached) to examine the purpose of the Welsh Government (WG) scheme, the rationale behind the schemes drawn up in Denbighshire to benefit from the funding, and the effectiveness of the initial implementation of the schemes across the county.

10:45– 11:30am

Yours sincerely

G Williams
Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Joan Butterfield
Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones
Gareth Davies
Hugh Irving
Pat Jones
Christine Marston

Melvyn Mile
Peter Scott
Rhys Thomas
David Williams
Emrys Wynne

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Local Authority Sustainable Transport Measures in response to Covid-19 **Funding** **Evidence Paper**

Background

1. On 7 May 2020, the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport wrote to all local authorities inviting them to submit expressions of interest for sustainable transport measures in response to Covid-19. A copy of the letter can be found Appendix A along with the Expression of Interest form at Appendix B.

Submission of applications

2. Local authorities were given two weeks to submit their expressions of interest and the closing date was 21 May 2020.
3. A total of 209 expressions of interest for individual measures or bundles of measures were received, with a total value of £45,651,459. All local authorities submitted expressions of interest.

Allocation of funding

4. The Welsh Government allocated £16,205,917¹ for 141 measures or packages of measures to 21 local authorities. The allocation covered all the measures submitted that were deemed to have sufficient merit within the context of the call for expressions of interest.
5. The following letter from the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport was issued with the grant offer letters (see Appendix C).
6. The funding was announced by the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport on 19 June. A full list of allocations, by local authority, can be found here: <https://gov.wales/local-council-sustainable-transport-measures-allocation-funds>

¹ The Written Statement issued by the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport on 19 June allocated funding of £15.4 million. The funding was increased to £16.2 million when officials were notified there was an error when taking figures from the applications spreadsheet which resulted in a scheme initially being underfunded

7. Due to the quick turnaround time and the temporary nature of these measures, the Welsh Government informed local authorities that some of their normal planning and appraisal processes would need to be undertaken more quickly and concisely than usual. However, the Welsh Government did state that it was essential that these measures don't have an adverse impact on people with protected characteristics and that local authorities must carry out Equality Impact Assessments and engage with users constructively.

Position at end of Quarter 2

8. The total claimed by local authorities at the end of Quarter 2 is £1,495,974.86, which equates to 9% of the allocation.
9. At the end of Quarter 2 local authorities are forecasting spend of £15,800,917. This figure does not include forecasting of one local authority which officials are discussing with them.
10. To date, two local authorities, Cardiff Council and Monmouthshire Council have requested additional funding on top of their allocations. Once officials have received finalised figures from the remaining local authority officials will advise Ministers if additional funding could be allocated to local authorities requesting it.
11. Annex 1 includes some examples of schemes which have already been undertaken.

Denbighshire County Council

12. Denbighshire Council were awarded £981,000 for the following schemes:
 - Public Transport Measures, Improvements and Cleaning
 - Suspension of sections of on-street parking in Rhyl and Llangollen Town Centres
 - Improved active travel facilities in Ruthin Town Centre and Denbigh
 - Road closures outside schools to facilitate a safe environment at pick up and drop off times
 - The introduction of parklets at various locations
13. Denbighshire Council submitted a Nil Claim for Quarter 1.
14. The Deputy Minister met with Ann Jones MS on 27 August to discuss the Denbigh scheme.
15. For Quarter 2, Denbighshire Council submitted a claim of £221,150.
16. Denbighshire Council have forecasted a total spend of £771,000 of their £981,000 allocation and have formally declared underspend of £210,000.
17. A revised Grant offer letter was issued to Denbighshire Council on 4 December 2020.
18. Welsh Government officials have been kept informed of progress within Denbighshire, in particular, the decision not to proceed with the Denbigh scheme due to negative feedback during the consultation. The decision not to progress the Denbigh scheme is the reason for the declared underspend.

Local Authority Sustainable Transport Measures in response to Covid-19 Funding Examples

Example 1

Pembrokeshire – total funding: £560,000

Pembrokeshire have introduced a temporary one way traffic scheme through the centre of St Davids combined with a new 20mph speed limit. This has allowed the re-allocation of road space for pedestrian use thereby supporting active travel and encouraging social distancing. The scheme has been well received by the local community and by the high numbers of visitors to the area. Improvements have also been introduced in Tenby, Saundersfoot and Narberth with work continuing in those and other communities to further develop and introduce sustainable transport measures in response to the COVID situation.

Example 2

Carmarthenshire – total funding: £1,732,000

Carmarthenshire has successfully implemented a pilot pedestrianisation of King Street in Carmarthen town centre; this has proved to be very successful with large numbers of visitors returning to the area and businesses taking the opportunity to use the streetspace for trading and dining.

Example 3

Monmouthshire – total funding: £438,500

Monmouthshire was awarded funding for a range of measures to improve pedestrian and cyclist movement in each of their town centres. The varied nature of the settlements has required a different approach in each of the 9 high streets. The measures were implemented using emergency legislation followed by temporary traffic regulation orders. The projects are live schemes and are being amended in response to feedback. Leaflets have been emailed and hand delivered to businesses in towns where the greatest changes have been made – Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth. Monmouthshire Council is working collaboratively with other initiatives such as business grants, the new Active Travel INM consultation, and licencing to support local businesses and add to street vibrancy such as with street cafés. Overall the measures have been really successful and footfall has increased.

Lee Waters AC/AM
Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MA-LW-1453-20

Local Authority Leader

7 May 2020

Dear Colleague,

Expressions of Interest for local sustainable transport measures in response to Covid19

We are currently experiencing unprecedented changes that affect all aspects of our lives, and transport, across all modes, is particularly affected. With the restrictions imposed, we have seen large reductions in motorised traffic on all parts of the road network, much reduced patronage of buses and trains, high levels of home working and, so far anecdotally, higher rates of walking and cycling, both for essential journeys and for daily exercise. For the sake of the air we all breathe and the world's climate and public health we need to try and lock in this mode shift to active travel modes and reduction in car use that we are currently experiencing.

You will have seen examples from towns and cities across the globe, such as Milan, Berlin, Paris and Brussels and the action they have taken to achieve this. I am writing to you to seek expressions of interest from local authorities across Wales to introduce similar measures to ensure the safety and reliability of sustainable transport modes during and following the Covid 19 crisis. These should not be limited to larger urban areas, as the same principles apply in smaller towns in rural areas. We are looking for low cost high impact imaginative measures that can be introduced rapidly as well as schemes that will promote sustainable forms of travel. They can be experimental and can be tweaked if they are not quite right from the start. In situations like these, it is important not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

There are two main reasons why we want you to seriously consider which measures could be taken in your areas to benefit public transport and active travel modes.

Firstly, we want to protect public health and safety. There is an expectation i social distancing will need to be observed for many months to come. The space available on footways and shared use paths is often wholly insufficient to allow safe passing distances, with additional pressure on the available space from queues outside shops and at bus stops. As a result, pedestrians and cyclists are frequently forced to step or ride into the

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

carriageway to avoid close passing. Whilst this is largely possible with current traffic volumes, it is already problematic for many. For example, it will become extremely unsafe when traffic volumes increase for those with reduced mobility or young children.

Secondly, we want to address potential increases in car use. There is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the public's willingness to use public transport modes once restrictions are eased. There is already evidence from China which showed much reduced public transport use and significant increases in car use. There is therefore a high risk that, if no action is taken, we will see even greater percentages of journeys being undertaken by car in Wales in the future. This would clearly go against the policy direction we want to achieve across Government and lead to negative impacts for people, society and the environment. We therefore need to use the current reduction in volumes proactively to create conditions that make non-car modes safe and convenient.

The Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, and I therefore invite initial expressions of interest for funding for 'pop-up' measures in your area. In the first instance this will include temporary low-cost solutions to reallocate road space in favour of sustainable forms of transport. These can include, but are not limited to initially temporary measures such as the following:

- Footway widening, by using carriageway width
- Road closures, with modal filters for cyclists
- Lane closures, or one-way systems with counter flow for cyclists
- Temporary parking removal or restrictions, including loading bays
- Cycle lanes and tracks - using segregation or soft segregation
- Decluttering of footways, e.g. by consolidating signs; removal of guard rails.
- Temporary new crossing facilities
- Bus lanes, bus gates and bus only roads
- Bus based Park and Ride facilities, as well as Park & Share and car sharing lanes (with car sharing to be used once social distancing measures allow)
- Enhanced waiting facilities at key stops and bus stations, including facilitation of social distancing
- Real time information systems, including occupancy levels
- Infrastructure to enable enhanced cleaning regimes on public transport
- Parking enforcement, in particular on active travel routes
- Measures to reduce traffic speeds,
- 20mph limits, trialling the exception methodology for the planned introduction of default 20mph speed limits

For measures aimed at improving walking and cycling, you should prioritise routes that are part of your existing or planned active travel route network, in particular routes to schools. We envisage that a package approach combining different measures is likely to be most effective. Whilst we expect many measures to be temporary or experimental initially, the expectation is that where they are effective, these will be introduced on a permanent basis.

A template for the initial expressions of interest with anticipated costings is attached to this letter and needs to be returned to transportplanning@gov.wales by 21 May 2020 to allow us to gauge the overall funding requirement. We are not expecting detailed proposals about schemes at this stage but will require an explanation on the type of interventions to be introduced. We will then seek additional information as required before considering the proposals further. We are aiming for a swift turnaround with confirming if funding is available and envisage measures to be introduced in early summer.

I appreciate that you are still awaiting the outcome of some of the regular local transport grant funding rounds for 2020/21, which have been held up due to the Covid emergency response. We will inform you of the outcome as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', with a long vertical stroke extending upwards from the top of the 'L'.

Lee Waters AM

Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport

Welsh Government

Local Sustainable Transport Covid Response Fund 2020-21 Expression of Interest

Local Authority	
Total No. of Schemes	
Total Cost (of all schemes)	

Please complete the information below for each individual scheme or coherent package of schemes:

Scheme Name	
Project Manager Name: Email:	
What is the funding required for: (select one)	Reallocation of road space / Bus Infrastructure / Other
Type of Activity (brief description of scheme)	
Location (geographical location of measures, including active travel route reference, where applicable)	
Potential risks to delivery (e.g. permissions, procedures, land availability / ownership)	
Longevity (are measures short term to address covid-19 related issues only or could they be made permanent to provide long term benefits).	Temporary / Permanent (and rationale)
Expected Timescale for completion	

Lee Waters AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MA-LW-1808-20

Local Authority Leader

19 June 2020

Dear Colleague,

Funding for local sustainable transport measures in response to Covid19

I wrote to you a month ago to invite expressions of interest to introduce a range of measures to improve the safety and comfort of sustainable transport modes during the current crisis to encourage more people to make walking and cycling journeys now and in the future.

I was extremely pleased to see that local authorities across Wales rose to the challenge and submitted a large number of proposals for our consideration. In order to allow authorities to take forward all the schemes that are clearly within the scope of our call, the funding initially identified had to be increased and I am pleased to be able to allocate over £15m in total to these initiatives, which I hope will have a direct positive impact on the everyday lives of people across Wales. Due to other work taking place specifically with the bus sector, we are only funding bus measures under this allocation that relate to modifying the physical environment at bus stops and stations to allow and encourage social distancing. This funding was not intended to fund 'routine' active travel schemes and we have excluded those from considerations.

I am conscious that the window for expressions of interest was narrow and that there may be a need for a further round. In collaboration with the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, it is our intention to follow up this first tranche and make further funding available, where it is needed. We will work proactively with local authorities to develop further, ambitious interventions as part of the Transforming Towns programme.

This allocation is not a blank cheque: Due to the short timescale, there is necessarily a lack of detail for many schemes and a wide range of different measures, not all equally time critical. I expect that you clearly prioritise delivering those schemes that make improvements to walking and cycling conditions on active travel routes in areas with highest user numbers, or enable social distancing at bus stations and stops, and can be delivered in the next three months.

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During the lockdown period there were large increases in walking and cycling among individuals and families, both for exercise and to make necessary journeys. We now need to act to maintain these healthy and climate friendly travel behaviours and prevent a return to heavily car-dependent travel choices.

We understand that the detail of your plans is still under development. This is a good opportunity to review your plans and discuss these further with my officials. There may be opportunities for quicker and cheaper solutions than originally envisaged, for example use of point closures with modal filters, with exceptions for buses, access and disabled people, and with other main roads kept free for through motor traffic. Pop-up segregated cycle lanes must use full or light segregation; they cannot just be signed and lined and they should not have a negative effect on pedestrian provision. The measures put in place need to physically change the walking and cycling environment; therefore, where you have submitted a proposal for 20mph speed limits, we want these complemented by supporting measures.

Due to the urgent and temporary nature of these measures some of your normal planning and appraisal processes will need to be undertaken more quickly and concisely than usual. It is however essential that these measures don't have an adverse impact on people with protected characteristics and you must carry out Equality Impact Assessments and engage with users constructively.

Where there are known air quality issues and you are introducing measures that have the potential to worsen air quality, you need to ensure effective air quality monitoring is undertaken to assess the impact of the intervention. We also need to ensure that there are no adverse biodiversity or wider environmental impacts. Permanent removal or loss of habitat, vegetation or vegetated land cannot be justified in order to meet the 2m distancing requirement or other temporary issues. Such permanent negative impacts would need to be subject to an assessment of long term requirement and consideration of mitigation and/or compensation.

As part of your allocation, you can use up to 5% of the total for the purposes of promotion & communication of these measures and for monitoring and evaluation and we will expect to see these areas reported on.

There are huge demands on our funding. It is each local authority's responsibility to provide accurate progress reports and to notify my officials as soon as possible when it becomes clear that you will not require your full allocation so that it can be freed up for other projects that will aid recovery from Covid.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', written in a cursive style.

Lee Waters MS

Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport