

27th July 2020

Active Travel Design Principles and Emergency Active Travel Funding

Purpose of Report

To set out the Design Principles for Active Travel Infrastructure to be adopted in SCR investment and to set out arrangements for the delivery of the DfT's Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 in Sheffield City Region.

Thematic Priority

Secure investment in infrastructure where it will do most to support growth.

Freedom of Information

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme.

Recommendations

That members of the MCA Board

- agree the design principles and the approach to creating inclusive active travel infrastructure for adoption in SCR infrastructure investment.
- Approve the submission of proposals to DfT under the Emergency Active Travel Fund Phase 2 of c.£7m by Friday 7th August
- approve the acceptance of the Emergency Active Travel Fund Phase 2 grant from the DfT subject to its award and terms and conditions
- agree delegated authority to be given to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the s73 and Monitoring Officer to enter into legal agreements with the four Local Authorities for their respective schemes for Phase 2 schemes.

1. Introduction

1.1 The SCR Transport Board agreed to create a set of minimum standards for active travel infrastructure at their July 2019 meeting. These were proposed to include:

1. Continuous minimum widths for cycle tracks to include 3 and 4-wheel cycles and for footways to include wheelchairs.
2. Separation of footways and cycle tracks from high volumes of traffic, high vehicle speeds (above 30mph) or significant amounts of large vehicles.
3. Separation of highway footways from cycle tracks for significant distances. Shared use only to be used for placemaking and some off-road routes.
4. Clear priority for active travel routes at junctions, continuing cycle tracks and footways straight across side roads and reducing crossing times.

- 1.2 On June 1st 2020 The MCA Board agreed to adopt the Active Travel Implementation Plan (ATIP) which sets out the overall approach to inclusive design. The ATIP specifically requires the development of a set of design principles for the SCR Active Travel Programme and to assist the work of the SCR Active Travel Programme and Advisory Boards. The Active Travel Programme Board has representatives from all the partner local authorities and oversees the work of the programme. The Commissioner has an Advisory Board which mainly comprises regional representatives from national active travel organisations. The chair of the Advisory Board also sits on the Programme Board.
- 1.3 The proposal is for the MCA to adopt high level Design Principles. We are awaiting detailed national infrastructure design advice from the DfT which will be issued this summer. It is proposed that the SCR standards meet or exceed those from DfT as schemes are funded mainly through Government funding, including the Transforming Cities Fund, which must meet their minimum criteria. The SCR Transport Board endorsed this report at its meeting on the 3rd July.
- 1.4 This report also sets out the details of the Government's next round of funding for emergency active travel measures and recommends arrangements for its delivery in SCR.

2. Proposal and justification

2.1 Design Principles

It is proposed that the Active Travel Design Principles apply to all infrastructure that is funded through the Sheffield City Region. The proposed standards are attached in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 The intention is that the MCA only adopt high level Design Principles, as detailed design will be guided by statutory guidance and any adopted local detailed design advice (providing it does not contradict the above). At this stage there is no intention to commission detailed design standards as they would need constant updating, and national guidance will be released soon (1.4).
- 2.3 The Design Principles all contain proposed standards and details of allowable exceptions. Where proposed infrastructure does not meet the standards and it is beyond an allowable exception it will be referred to the SCR Active Travel Programme Board to resolve the matter and recommend a solution.
- 2.4 There are proposed to be four standards:
- 2.5 Standard 1 covers when active travel infrastructure should be segregated from vehicular traffic, and where the footway should be separated from other active travellers. The basis for segregation is homogeneity of speed where a large volume of users is expected, so that:
 - Footways are reserved for pedestrians, slower mobility aids and joggers.
 - Active travel lanes are for cyclists, scooter users and electric powered wheelchairs, bikes and scooters.
 - The roadway is for any vehicle, including those cyclists that choose to use it, unless explicitly prohibited
- 2.6 Standard 2 covers lane widths and is to make sure that all the infrastructure planned is fully accessible for the whole length of the route. It also covers the use of constrictions and barriers to deter illegal use, which often stop legitimate users gaining access, or continuing their journey.

- 2.7** Standard 3 covers active travel route surface and continuity. In order to make active travel routes attractive and desirable, routes should minimise delay and diversion. In most settings the surface should be tarmac, or another sealed surface that is well drained and smooth. Guard railing will not be routinely used at junctions.
- 2.8** Standard 4 deals with crossings and how signals respond to active travellers. We would welcome more crossings with little or no wait times, especially on popular running routes. Elsewhere we would routinely expect simple junctions to have a wait time of 30 seconds or less. We also would like to see the end to pedestrian islands in the middle of a road, with virtually all crossing movements to cross a road in a single phase. For more complex and busy junctions, we would like crossings to be simplified, and if traffic volumes are so high that this is impossible, grade separation should be presented as an option.
- 2.9** These design principles mark an important point for the city region in creating high quality consistent active travel infrastructure and the network envisaged in the Active Travel Implementation Plan. Our approach has already led to us leveraging more funding from the government to realise the plan.

2.10 Emergency Active Travel Fund Phase 2

Implementation of the Emergency Active Travel Fund Phase 1 programme is underway and the MCA has now been invited to submit a bid for the second phase of funding, the guidance for which was issued by DfT on July 10th. This second phase is seeking more permanent proposals, the notional allocation the MCA has been invited to bid for is much larger than phase 1 at £5.7m but also requires a more substantial application process to be completed. The deadline for submission to DfT is August 7th. The pressure of this deadline is eased slightly through DfT advising that the full value for money assessment can be completed post submission. This has a return date of September 11th.

- 2.11** Following discussion with DfT representatives and Local Authority colleagues it is proposed that the SCR submission exceed the notional allocation and we are considering a total ask of approximately £7m reflecting our ambitious plans. In their response to Phase 1, DfT granted values over the notional allocation for authorities whose submission showed greater ambition and the advice received is that this could also be an option for Phase 2.
- 2.12** The submission will be consistent with, and help to deliver, our agreed SCR Active Travel Implementation Plan and Local Authorities have been asked to focus their proposals on three key themes: substantial active travel routes (superhighways); low traffic neighbourhoods; and school streets. Taking the experiences gained from the Phase 1 programme authority officers will be working with elected members and local communities to identify and agree these proposals.
- 2.13** Therefore, this report is seeking
- approval to submit proposals to DfT under the Emergency Active Travel Fund Phase 2 of c£7m by Friday 7th August.
 - approval to accept the grant from the DfT subject to award and terms and conditions
 - seeks delegated authority be given to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the s73 and Monitoring Officer to enter into legal agreements with the four Local Authorities for their respective schemes for Phase 2 schemes.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1** When the active travel programme started there were no accepted standards across the region although some Authorities were already applying excellent practice. The absence of agreed standards was resulting in very different approaches to infrastructure, and in a few cases not meeting the standards has added financial risk to programmes.
- 3.2** The standards detailed in this report have been already applied to some Transforming Cities Fund programme infrastructure, some of which has already been built. We recognise the considerable efforts of the local authority partners in changing programmed schemes, and the approach of some to set up design panels that include MCA programme staff.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

The adoption of standards may increase material capital scheme costs, but so far have shown to reduce design costs, by reducing iterations in the design. They also reduce the cost of not meeting the yet to be published national design standards for DfT funded projects.

The higher standards will also increase the benefits, and the lifespan of the asset and therefore the whole-life cost benefits.

Phase 2 Emergency Active Travel funding for SCR is a notional allocation of c£5.7. The report proposes that the SCR submission might be closer to £7m to reflect our plans.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal implications in relation to the Active Travel Design Standards.

We await the DfT's Terms and Conditions in relation to this funding. The SCR will enter into appropriate grant agreements with the Local Authorities for this funding.

4.3 Risk Management

Adopting SCR Design Principles and standards lowers the already identified risk of additional iterations when schemes do not meet expected standards.

In relation to the Emergency Active Travel Fund there are risks of non-delivery of these funds due to resourcing constraints or shortages of required materials. Reallocation of resources to these schemes could risk slowing down progress on the development of other transport programmes.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The standards presented are aimed to make the infrastructure far more inclusive to those with impairment across all strands of society.

Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion will be actively considered in the design of emergency active travel schemes.

5. Communications

- 5.1** Many stakeholders have been demanding higher standards, and the publication of these standards is a key milestone in the ATIP.

Engagement with elected members and communities has been identified as critical to the success of the emergency active travel measures.

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 Appendix 1 - Draft standards paper.

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: n/a