

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet Member for Transport

19 February 2024



**Subject:** **ACCEPTANCE OF BIKEABILITY GRANT – APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024**

**Report of:** **Strategic Director of Place, Prosperity and Sustainability**

**Relevant Cabinet Member:** **Councillor Liz Clements – Transport**

**Relevant O & S Chair:** **Councillor Lee Marsham – Sustainability and Transport**

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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Bikeability is the Government’s national standards cycle training programme, part funded by the Department for Transport (DfT). The Bikeability Trust manages the distribution of Bikeability funding across England (excluding London).
- 1.2 On 21 March 2023 the Cabinet approved a report entitled “Transportation & Highways Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2028/29 – Annual Programme Update”. Recommendation 2.8 therein “Delegates authority to bid for and accept external capital and revenue resources in line with City Council priorities and consistent with the policies and objectives of the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, Birmingham Development Plan, and Birmingham Transport Plan to the Strategic Director of Place, Prosperity & Sustainability, in conjunction with the Director of Council Management, and in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, up to a maximum value of £2.000m.” This report utilises this delegation.

- 1.3 From 2023/24 it was determined (by Active Travel England) that all Bikeability funding was to be distributed and managed by local highway authorities in future. Birmingham City Council (BCC) received notification of its 2023/24 Bikeability grant award of £585,847 on 5 June 2023.
- 1.4 This report seeks authority to accept the funding.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Approve the acceptance of a grant for Bikeability cycle training in 2023/24 from Active Travel England for the value of £585,847.
- 2.2 Authorise the City Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (or their delegate) to negotiate, execute, seal and complete all the necessary documentation to give effect to the above recommendations.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 Bikeability is the Government's national standards cycle training programme which helps people learn practical skills and understand how to cycle on today's roads. Training is split into three progressive levels: cycle handling skills in traffic-free environments (Level 1), cycling with moderate motor traffic flows (Level 2) and busier roads and complex junctions (Level 3). There are also additional Plus training modules designed to complement and support this core training.
- 3.2 The Department for Transport provides funding towards the delivery of Bikeability training for children and young people, which is predominantly delivered through schools but also to families in community settings.
- 3.3 The Bikeability Trust manages the distribution of Bikeability funding across England (excluding London) of behalf of the Government. From 2023/24 it was determined (by Active Travel England) that all Bikeability funding was to be distributed and managed by local highway authorities in future. They could then run Bikeability training themselves or appoint registered and accredited training providers to deliver this on their behalf.
- 3.4 Birmingham City Council (BCC) received notification of its 2023/24 Bikeability grant award of £585,847 on 5 June 2023 for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This funding must be spent on the following training levels: no less than 80% on Level 2 (or Level 1 & 2 combined), no more than 10% on Levels 1 and 3, and no more than 10% on Plus modules.
- 3.5 Historically in Birmingham, delivery of Bikeability training was managed by the Road Safety Team and then the Active Wellbeing Service. When the Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS) was established as a community benefit society in 2017 it was agreed that they would continue to deliver Bikeability training and act as the grant recipient for Birmingham. This was detailed at the time in the Service Level Agreement between BCC and TAWS.

- 3.6 Given the late notification of the Bikeability grant award for 2023/24, it was agreed with The Bikeability Trust that transitional arrangements could be put in place for this year whereby existing training providers continued to deliver as previously. Therefore BCC will fund TAWS to deliver Bikeability cycle training on behalf of the Council in 2023/24 under the existing Service Level Agreement.
- 3.7 There will be separate approval arrangements for Bikeability grant acceptance in future years. It is likely that delivery arrangements from April 2024 will be subject to a procurement exercise with new grant agreements being put in place with selected providers.

## **4 Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

- 4.1 **Option 1 – Do nothing and not accept the grant:** This would hamper the Council's ambition to increase cycling as a safe and healthy mode of travel as set out in the Birmingham Transport Plan
- 4.2 **Option 2 – To accept the Bikeability Grant:** This would help to provide children and families with the skills and confidence for cycling in Birmingham. This will aid the city's ambition to increase cycling as a safe and healthy mode of travel as set out in the Birmingham Transport Plan. It is therefore recommended to proceed with this option.

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The approach to be used for the delivery of Bikeability cycle training for 2023/24 in Birmingham has been discussed and agreed with The Bikeability Trust.

## **6 Risk Management**

- 6.1 A risk management assessment has been carried out in accordance with BCC's framework and this is included at Appendix B. All risks identified have been rated as tolerable, with risk mitigation measures in place. This will continue to be reviewed throughout delivery.

## **7 Compliance Issues**

- 7.1 **How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

- 7.1.1 The recommendations in this report supports the policy objectives outlined in the City Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026. This creates a vision to build 'a Bolder Brighter Birmingham' with outcomes of 'increased levels of walking and cycling' and 'improved transport infrastructure', including priorities to:

- Support inclusive economic growth
- Make the city safer
- Encourage and enable physical activity and healthy living
- Improve air quality

- Continue the Route to Net Zero

7.1.2 The recommendations fully support and align with the aspirations of the Birmingham Transport Plan, in particular in relation to 'prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods'.

7.1.3 The recommendations support the objectives of Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) 2031 including:

- 'To provide high quality connections throughout the city and with other places including encouraging the increased use of public transport, walking and cycling'.
- 'To create a more sustainable city that minimises its carbon footprint'.
- 'To encourage better health and wellbeing'.

7.1.4 The recommendations also support the following:

- Our Future City Central Birmingham Framework
- Big City Plan (BCP)
- Route Zero Carbon Action Plan
- Birmingham Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

## 7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 BCC has indicated willingness to accept the grant, but formal acceptance will require the signing of a financial information template by an authorised officer. Legal services will review the grant conditions ahead of this.

## 7.3 Financial Implications

**This is permitted spend under the Mandatory Spend Controls Category H (Expenditure funded through ring-fenced grants) permitted under the mandatory spending restrictions and authorisation has been received from the Place, Prosperity and Sustainability Spend Control Board on 10 October 2023 and at S151 Spend Control Board on 16 October 2023.**

### *Revenue Costs*

7.3.1 Revenue funding of £585,847 has been awarded to the City Council by Active Travel England which covers the full cost of delivering this proposal.

7.3.2 The grant allocation is a maximum figure to be awarded to BCC. Grant claims are submitted each quarter and paid in arrears for actual delivery based on fixed costs per head.

### *Revenue Implications*

7.3.3 There are no direct revenue implications from the acceptance of this funding.

## 7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

7.4.1 There is an existing Service Level Agreement in place between BCC and TAWS which covers the ongoing delivery of Bikeability cycle training, therefore there are no further procurement implications for the recommendations in this report.

**7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)**

- 7.5.1 The grant will be managed by the Travel Demand Management team within current resources.

**7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 7.6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. This has identified that this project will have a net Positive or net Neutral impact on all protected characteristics with no negative impacts on any protected groups.

**8 Appendices**

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Risk Register

**9 Background Documents**

- 9.1 Report to Cabinet, 21 March 2023, Transportation & Highways Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2028/29 – Annual Programme Update.