

Report to the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)

Date: 11 November 2014

Subject: Provision of highway access measures to benefit disabled residents
Capital Scheme Number: 16290

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

- 1 The purpose of the report is to enable Leeds City Council to continue to provide disabled parking bays, dropped kerbs and other access measures as requested by disabled residents in Leeds, and to make small scale improvements that benefit all pedestrians.
- 2 The implementation of measures will be demand responsive and builds on similar successful projects funded and implemented over the last five years.
- 3 The measures to assist disabled people and pedestrians in general help fulfil Leeds' ambition to be the best city for communities by directly improving the quality of life of some of its most vulnerable residents.
- 4 Costs will be kept to a minimum by closer integration with Highways Maintenance and by keeping the alterations to the highway infrastructure to the minimum required for access.

Recommendations

- 5 The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to :
 - i) give approval to these proposals to enable the installation of minor access/ pedestrian measures; and
 - ii) give authority to incur expenditure of £100,000 (being £30,000 in 2014/15 and £70,000 in 2015/16) funded from the LTP Transport Policy Capital Programme.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for funding of the annual programme for the provision of access measures which assist disabled people in using the public highway, and provide small scale pedestrian improvements where justified. These comprise infrastructure measures such as dropped kerbs, steps, ramped access, less restrictive access barriers, handrails, tactile paving and provision of advisory designated disabled parking spaces (disabled bays).

2 Background information

- 2.1 It is estimated that approximately 18% of residents of Leeds have some form of disability – this would affect approximately 149,000 people, many of whom would benefit from these type of improvements to accessibility of highway infrastructure.
- 2.2 Mobility scooters have become increasingly popular among older people as a mobility aid, resulting in greater independence and reduced reliance on car transport. The number of mobility scooters purchased annually in the UK is growing by approximately 25% per year.¹ This indicates a fast growing trend which will increase demand for accessible footways.
- 2.3 The above figures indicate a growing demand for accessible highway infrastructure. Transport Policy on average receives over 300 access related enquires per year. This results in around 100 applications for disabled parking bays. Other requests concern improving access for disabled pedestrians along the public highway, where footways are currently lacking appropriate access measures (e.g. dropped kerbs, access over grass verges, provision of handrails on existing steps and ramps).
- 2.4 Requests are also received for provision or widening of footways where safe and accessible facilities are currently lacking. Public Health are at this time undertaking promotional work encouraging the use of active travel modes in some of the most deprived communities. This involves community street audits, which are likely to generate requests for improvements of pedestrian facilities.
- 2.5 Increasingly, access to greenspace and traffic free infrastructure (greenways, off road cycle routes and ginnels) is also important for people with a mobility impairment, but often restricted through outdated/ inappropriate access barriers. Mobility devices are also getting progressively larger which in turn has implications for the provision of access barriers.
- 2.6 Leeds City Council has in the past implemented a substantial programme of provision of disabled access measures on the highway in places where there was demand, funded from the Integrated Transport Package. In the last five years, Highways and Transportation have improved and enabled access to the following:

¹ Research estimates that there are approximately 90,000 powered wheelchair and mobility scooter users in the UK – this is likely to be a conservative estimate as it does not record second-hand sales. The market for mobility scooters in the UK is estimated to be 25,000 per year.

	Type of facility							
	Single dropped kerb for access to transport	Shopping parade	Community facility	School	Surgery	Sheltered housing area	Parks and green space	Accessible neighbourhood
No of locations	60	35	17	13	10	5	9	17

- 2.7 This programme has been successful, directly benefiting many disabled people and generating positive publicity; however this has not yet satisfied the demand and many locations in the city remain inaccessible. Whenever possible, efficiencies are being achieved by keeping provision in-house, and by limiting the number of dropped kerbs provided outside of planned maintenance to the bare minimum to satisfy the most pressing needs.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Planned maintenance addresses access requirements when full street refurbishment is undertaken. However, disabled people cannot wait for the, sometimes, many years until highways are completely reconstructed and the required flush kerbs etc are installed as part of those works. Access issues are not always routinely addressed as part of lesser maintenance works, such as footway resurfacing. This will leave a highway network that is not entirely accessible for many years to come and a consequent demand for particular locations to be remedied at the request of disabled people.
- 3.2 Disabled parking facilities are provided on the highway in areas of high demand to enable disabled people to access services. However, the ability of a disabled person to travel is also limited by their ability to park close to their home when they return, and feedback received from residents and carers indicates that some disabled people are reluctant to leave their home for the fear of not being able to access it on their return.
- 3.3 Requests for access improvements are assessed by the Access and Mobility officer and implemented throughout the year. It is therefore crucial that there is a funding package in place to facilitate the delivery of small scale access works.
- 3.4 Recent developments in the provision of infrastructure, such as the City Connect Cycle Superhighway and the Core Cycle Network with their traffic free sections result in improved cycling and walking facilities free from traffic. These could benefit more disabled people, both users of adapted bikes and mobility scooter users, if the less restrictive access barriers could be provided.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Highways and Transportation has adopted a grassroots approach to the provision of access improvements. Disabled residents are directly involved in identification and development of schemes, resulting in high public participation in the development of proposals. This in turn ensures that measures are prioritised in the areas of high existing demand, as identified by disabled people.
- 4.1.2 Local residents are consulted in writing on the proposed provision of disabled parking bays. Dropped kerbs and other minor access measures do not require detailed consultations in all but exceptional cases, as these are a form of a minor adjustment to the existing infrastructure and in most cases have no adverse impact on residents. Local ward members are notified of works proposed in their areas. Members have consistently expressed strong support for the small schemes that benefit disabled people and a number of requests received originate from members.
- 4.1.3 Traffic and road safety issues are taken into consideration in the design of the schemes and relevant sections are consulted on individual schemes as required. NRASWA notices for schemes other than white lining are circulated internally.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The provision of access measures directly benefits several of the equality strands. Dropped kerbs in particular have a positive impact on disabled people, older people, carers and children by creating highway infrastructure that is accessible to wheelchair, mobility scooters, other walking aids and people with a mobility impairment, as well as to pushchairs, buggies, very young children and children's scooters by removing a barrier that is a high kerb. Impact on blind and partially sighted people in areas of high demand and potential conflict is minimised by the provision of tactile paving.
- 4.2.2 The provision of disabled parking bays has positive impact on disabled people and older people as well as parents and carers of children with disabilities including behavioural disabilities such as Aspergers, but can, potentially, have a negative impact on other equality characteristics, such as parents and carers. These impacts are minimised through careful consultations on schemes before a decision on implementation is reached.
- 4.2.3 An Equality Impact Assessments have been prepared for the provision of highway infrastructure measures given reduced availability of funding and for the provision of disabled parking, where the above benefits and disbenefits have been recognised and mitigation through consultations recommended.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The delivery of demand-responsive access measures directly contributes to meeting a number of the Best Council objectives:
- **ensuring high quality public services** through improved customer satisfaction and increasing the number of service requests fulfilled at the first point of contact.

- **delivery of Better Lives programme** by allowing people to remain independent for longer and reduce their reliance on care delivery

4.3.2 The provision of the small access measures has the potential to contribute directly to achieving the objective of **Enhancing Quality of Life** in the third Local Transport Plan, and indirectly towards the Low Carbon objective. It will also contribute to the three of the four Themes of the LTP3:

4.3.3 **Travel Choices** enabling customers to make the most sustainable choices about when and how they travel

4.3.4 **Connectivity** ensuring people can make integrated and safe journeys using transport networks on which they can rely.

4.3.5 **Enhancements** improving the overall network to make it more fit for journeys in the future

4.3.5 The schemes will comply with Article 1 of the Council's Constitution through:

- design, securing and delivery of services which put the needs of the public first,
- are non-discriminatory and are appropriate to the different needs within the community;
- prioritisation of services and targeting resources to communities and individuals in greatest need;
- provision of an opportunity for citizens to get involved and make their views heard;
- Consideration of the impact of decisions upon the City's diverse and disadvantaged communities and the positive promotion of equality of opportunity.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 **Full scheme estimate:** The total approval sought from this report is £100,000

4.4.2 **Capital Funding and Cash Flow:** Met from the Integrated Transport Scheme 99609 within the approved Capital Programme and is eligible for 100% Government funding. It is envisaged that £100,000 overall will form the budget for access and other pedestrian improvements to be installed during the remainder of this financial year (£30,000) and the year 2015-16 (£70,000), with the option of being accelerated depending on the programme.

4.4.3 In accommodating requests for disabled access measures residents are given a direct say in what facilities are installed and which locations are prioritised. The resources are automatically focused at areas where proven demand exists

Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2011 £000's	FORECAST				
			2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	0.0						
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0						
OTHER COSTS (7)	0.0						
TOTALS	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2011 £000's	FORECAST				
			2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	55.0		25.0	30.0			
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0						
DESIGN FEES (6)	20.0		15.0	5.0			
OTHER COSTS (7)	0.0						
TOTALS	75.0	0.0	40.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2011 £000's	FORECAST				
			2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015 on £000's
LCC Supported Borrowing	0.0						
Revenue Contribution	0.0						
Capital Receipt	0.0						
Insurance Receipt	0.0						
Lottery	0.0						
Gifts / Bequests / Trusts	0.0						
European Grant	0.0						
Health Authority	0.0						
School Fundraising	0.0						
Private Sector	0.0						
Section 106 / 278	0.0						
Government Grant	75.0		40.0	35.0			
SCE (C)	0.0						
SCE (R)	0.0						
Departmental USB	0.0						
Corporate USB	0.0						
Any Other Income (Specify)	0.0						
Total Funding	75.0	0.0	40.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance / Shortfall =	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Parent Scheme Number : 99609

Title : Integrated Transport Scheme

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no implications under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for the proposed work. The schemes have a potential to contribute to the safety and well-being of residents by providing appropriate facilities addressing the existing access barriers.

- 4.5.2 Details of disabled applicants and any consultees are confidential and are subject to the Data Protection Act. Details of specific schemes are available to ward members and members of the public.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 If the programme of provision of small access measures cannot be continued, there is a very real risk that the authority will be found at fault in failing to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to use the highway safely, contrary to the Equality Act. This may result in cases being submitted to the Local Authority Ombudsman or a direct legal challenge. It could also compromise the Authority's Excellence standard achieved for its approach to equality and diversity and lead to negative publicity.
- 4.6.2 Infrastructure works are subject to New Road and Street Works Act (NRASWA) and Traffic Management Act procedures. These minimise the impact and risk of damage and disruption to highways

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Small access measures are an important element in enhancing the wellbeing and safety of disabled people by assisting their participation in public life and improving their independence and therefore potentially reducing burdens on LCC and other public services. The funding sought in this report will enable the service to continue and to address the most pressing requests, which would not be otherwise met through planned maintenance in the near future

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to :
- i) give approval to these proposals to enable the installation of minor access/ pedestrian measures; and
 - ii) give authority to incur expenditure of £100,000 (being £30,000 in 2014/15 and £70,000 in 2015/16) funded from the LTP Transport Policy Capital Programme.

7 Background documents²

- 7.1 Policy Note on the provision of disabled parking bays – In Appendix 1.

² The background documents listed in this section are available for download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.