

Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension and Capability Fund 2024 – Approval for injection of funding

Date: 24th July 2024

Report of: Safe and Sustainable Travel Team Leader

Report to: Highways and Transportation Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Chief Officer for the injection of funding into Leeds City Council from the Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension and Capability Fund 2024, and the relevant signing of a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) with West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) for:

- Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension: Network Development (£167,340) and Behaviour Change (£111,560), totalling £278,900.
- Capability Fund 2024: Network Development (£359,640) and Behaviour Change (£239,760), totalling £599,400.
- The overall funding allocation totals £878,300.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to:

- a) Note the contents of the report
- b) Give authority to inject £526,980 (£167,340 from the Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension + £359,640 from the Capability Fund 2024) into the Transport Policy account for active travel Network Development activities and £351,320 (£111,560 from the Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension + £239,760 from the Capability Fund 2024) into the Influencing Travel Behaviour account for active travel Behaviour Change activities.
- c) Give authority to sign and seal the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) for the Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension (£278,900) and the Capability Fund 2024 (£599,400) – £878,300 in total to be fully committed or spent by the end of September 2025.

If additional funding through these allocations is made available, they will be considered by the Head of Transport Planning through the delegated decision process.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report is about Leeds City Council's allocation of Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension and Capability Fund 2024. West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) submitted a bid to Active Travel England (ATE) for these funding allocations.
- 2 On the 23rd March 2024, the successful bids were announced. WYCA was awarded £1,265,484 Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension and £2,518,865 Capability Fund 2024 which includes an overall total of £878,300 from both funds for Leeds City Council, as detailed in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension and Capability Fund 2024 Breakdown

Programme	2023-24 CF Extension	2024 CF	Total
Network Development	£167,340	£359,640	£526,980
Behaviour Change	£111,560	£239,760	£351,320
Total	£278,900	£599,400	£878,300

- 3 This report seeks approval for the injection of this funding into Leeds City Council, and to give authority to sign and seal the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) for these funding allocations - 878,300 in total to be fully committed or spent by the end of September 2025.
- 4 These funding allocations are a continuation of the Capability Fund 2022-23, of which £600,000 (£480k Network Development/Transport Policy and £120k Behaviour Change/Influencing Travel Behaviour) was allocated to Leeds City Council and had to be fully spent by the end of March 2024. Approval was given for this injection of funding in a Delegated Decision Noticed dated 23rd November 2023.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 The Active Travel Capability Funds support resources to develop infrastructure plans and deliver community engagement and behaviour change initiatives. These revenue grants will enable Leeds City Council to facilitate walking, wheeling and cycling by:
 - Developing infrastructure plans and designs, feasibility work, public consultation and evidence collection (the fund does not provide for the physical implementation / construction of schemes)
 - Carrying out behaviour change interventions including community engagement activities, such as travel planning programmes, cycle training and promotional activities.
- 6 The Capability Fund supports delivery of objectives set out in the second cycling and walking investment strategy. Since 2022, funding levels have been informed by the local authority active travel capability ratings. West Yorkshire Combined Authorities are one of five Local Authority areas rated 3 out of 4 "*Very strong local leadership, comprehensive plans, and a significant network in place with a growing number of people choosing to walk, wheel and cycle.*" No level 4 ratings have been given yet.
- 7 The Capability Fund grant replaced the Access Fund, which ran between 2017 to 2021 and supports commitments of the Cycling and walking plan for England. The focus of the funding is therefore to build the skills and capacity within Local Authority Districts to be able to deliver effective schemes that enable walking, cycling and wheeling journeys.
- 8 Leeds City Council has submitted proposals to WYCA for how the funding will be spent before December 2024 for the Capability 2023-24 Fund Extension and by September 2025 for the Capability Fund 2024.
- 9 The fund will enable the following specific projects and activities to be delivered up until the end of September 2025:

Network Development (£526,980)

- Development of LCWIPs
- Network design
- Scheme planning and design
- Public engagement/ consultation
- Data and evidence collection
- Bespoke training for LA officers and members
- Other

Behaviour Change (£351,320)

- Organisational travel planning and engagement
- Cycle training
- Cycle loan and share schemes
- Cycle maintenance training
- Cycle security measures
- Active travel comms/marketing
- Street audits

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 10 The Best Council Plan outlines Leeds City Council's positive and distinctive vision for the future of the city that is inclusive and healthy. This package of measures will be extending the provision of walking, wheeling and cycling facilities and help to deliver the Best Council Plan Priorities as detailed below.
- 11 By minimising the negative effects of traffic, the scheme will support Health and Wellbeing, Child Friendly City and Age Friendly Leeds aims by extending opportunities for healthy and physically active lifestyles, enhancing the city for future generations, alongside supporting independence and increasing the safety of vulnerable road users.
- 12 This programme also aligns itself with Leeds Transport Strategy and Vision Zero in helping to develop safe, quality environments for walking, wheeling and cycling and building the skills, capacity and feasibility of transport infrastructure schemes which will link areas of social deprivation to jobs and opportunities of a prosperous city centre.
- 13 The programme also reflects the aims of regional and national strategies. The West Yorkshire Transport Strategy seeks to increase active travel and improve the transport network for vulnerable road users. It will also help to deliver Active Travel England's objective for 50% of trips in England's towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030.
- 14 In 2017 the Government published its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (The Strategy). The Strategy sets out the Government's ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey. The Strategy supports the transformation of local areas: change which will tackle congestion, change which will extend opportunity to improve physical and mental health, and change which will support local economies. The Strategy's objectives are to:
- increase cycling activity, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made
 - increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person
 - reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled
 - increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 15 To date, the proposed activities and projects have been scoped with input from the relevant officers within the Highway and Transportation service disciplines, but as the works programme develops, consultation on individual projects will be carried out as appropriate.
- 16 The Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Sustainable Development has been consulted on the Capability Fund proposals detailed herein.
- 17 Subject to approval, individual infrastructure schemes that are identified through the network development activities will be subject to full consultation with Ward Members, Parish/Town Councils, local residents and businesses as appropriate prior to final detailed scheme being progressed. This will include any relevant statutory process, such as for Traffic Regulation Orders, where any objections received will be formally reported to the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation).

What are the resource implications?

- 18 The approval of the GFAs will provide the release of financial resources from WYCA to fund the Capability Fund's Network Development and Behaviour Change work.
- 19 The programme will use existing resources in the Highways and Transportation team, as well as the Projects and Programme team, to manage the GFAs.
- 20 Injection of these funds will enable the Council to grow Active Travel capabilities and delivery without drawing further on limited base revenue budgets.
- 21 Where activities and services cannot be delivered in-house, existing partners and providers have been identified (e.g., Cycle North for expansion of cycle training in schools). The appointment of any further providers will follow relevant procurement policy and guidelines.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 22 The implementation of Capability Fund workstreams and activities has several challenges and risks, most notably the timescales for delivery. Leeds City Council will work with funding partners to overcome these challenges. Delay of signing the GFAs further exacerbates the programme timeline and means that work is currently being undertaken with no ability to reclaim officer time and direct costs.
- 23 Not approving the GFAs may result in Leeds City Council being unable to deliver Behaviour Change interventions and future Active Travel Fund projects and possible financial clawback from DfT/WYCA.

What are the legal implications?

- 24 The GFAs have been checked by Legal. These are standard agreements and no concerns have been expressed.
- 25 An EDCI screening has been carried out in relation to the recommendations detailed in the report, see Appendix B. Scheme specific screening will be carried out as part of the design process and any future decision that are required.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 26 The three options are listed below;
 - Approve the injection of funds and associated GFAs (Preferred)
 - Negotiate changes to the GFAs
 - Do not sign up to the agreement – resulting in the loss of schemes and associated funding.

How will success be measured?

- 27 The programme success would be delivering the Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension and Capability Fund 2024 programme outputs within the timescales detailed in the GFAs.
- 28 Monitoring and evaluation surveys are required by ATE (via WYCA), including Pulse Surveys, as well as progress reporting via WYCA's Project Information Management System (PIMs).
- 29 Metrics will be agreed with WYCA but to date, for each activity have included; target audience, demographic grouping and number of participants.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

30 The GFAs stipulate two key milestones:

- Capability Fund 2023-24 Extension to be fully committed* or spent by the end of December 2024.
- Capability Fund 2024 to be fully committed* or spent by the end of September 2025.

**A commitment could consist of a contract for design and construction, or a business case approving delivery of a scheme agreed with Council executives.*

Appendices

- Appendix: EDCI Screening

Background papers

- N/A