

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NEW FOREST FAMILY CYCLING EXPERIENCES PROGRAMME TASK & FINISH GROUP UPDATE

Report by: Mark Holroyd, Transport & Tourism Manager

Summary:

Following the decision not to proceed with the New Forest Public Bike System at August's Extraordinary Authority Meeting, it was agreed by Members that the Task & Finish group's terms of reference would be extended to consider any other issues arising from projects funded by the Department for Transport grant awarded in August 2013. This group met on 11 September to discuss options for spending an estimated £2million of funding.

This paper summarises the outcomes of this meeting and updates members on more recent progress with the programme.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report.

Recommendations:

To note the report and reiterate the Authority's support for the revised proposals for using the DfT grant.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the decision not to proceed with the New Forest Public Bike System at August's Extraordinary Authority Meeting, it was agreed by Members that the Task & Finish group's terms of reference would be extended to consider any other issues arising from projects funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) grant awarded in August 2013.
- 1.2 An estimated £2million of funding from the New Forest Family Cycling Experiences (NFFCE) programme is currently unallocated.

2 New Projects

- 2.1 Officers have met with local partners and have been able to develop possible new projects which meet the objectives of the programme. Through quadrant meetings and the New Forest Consultative Panel, we have also invited parish councils to tell us about their ideas for improving safety and facilities for cyclists in their parishes. Although many of these ideas may be aspirational and outside of the timescales of this programme of funding, we will work with Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council to add feasible schemes to the New Forest Transport Statement for future development.
- 2.2 The Task & Finish Group met on 11 September and gave their unanimous support for the new infrastructure projects listed in Annex 1 and gave flexibility to officers and the NFFCE programme board to finalise costings to fit within the available budget. Costings in Annex 1 are our best estimate at this stage; these were presented to the DfT on 17 September by the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Transport & Tourism Manager and a representative from Hampshire County Council. No decisions have yet been made by the department and the final proposed programme will require re-assessment and approval by Ministers.

3 Other projects

- 3.1 The NFFCE programme is currently delivering projects under the following three headings. These all already have consent from DfT.
- 1) **Infrastructure** These schemes have been developed by Hampshire County Council with consultation with their local members. The schemes in Brockenhurst have been developed in consultation with representatives from the parish council. Once detailed designs have been completed there will be further consultation with local members before construction is scheduled.

A35 Lyndhurst to Ashurst cycle route upgrade of surface	£130,000.00
Cycle route improvements adjacent to A35 at Totton (e.g surfacing, width, signage)	£170,000.00
Lymington Road A337 junction with Church Lane to Tilebarn Lane to improve as a cycle crossing point	£ 40,000.00

Lymington Road A337 Setley crossing near Filly Inn junction improvements to assist cyclist crossing here.	£ 30,000.00
Brockenhurst Railway Station Access Improvements to Avenue Road	£ 3,000.00
Brockenhurst Railway Station Access Improvements to Brookley Road	£ 6,000.00
Hollands Wood Campsite Right Turn Pocket to assist cycle access off A337	£ 15,000.00
Junction improvements at Long Lane / Staplewood Lane / Tavel Lane where 6 accidents have been recorded since March 2010 which involve cyclists	£ 11,500.00
Crow Hill Ringwood - signage and road markings will be implemented to raise awareness of equestrians and cyclists.	£ 6,000.00
Tilebarn Lane Brockenhurst improvements to road layout with cyclists in mind as Prohibition of Driving (POD) order now in place	£ 5,000.00

2) **Grants** The grants scheme has supported many local projects including providing more inclusive cycling at Avon Tyrell, better cycle storage at Ferny Crofts, better facilities for cyclists at Calshot Activities Centre, more children's bikes for hire at New Forest Activities, support for existing cycle hire businesses and a new cycle hire business at Ashurst station. £381k has been awarded by this fund to date and around £100k is still available for community groups and businesses to apply for.

3) **Signage** In partnership with Wiltshire Council and Sustrans, we are funding a project to connect Salisbury with Nomansland via a safety audited route. A signage audit was requested in Ashurst & Colbury to remove confusing signage in the village, this will be delivered and implemented by NFDC.

4 Recent progress

4.1 Since the meeting with the DfT, officers have been preparing a business case for the revised (Annex 1) proposals to be submitted before the end of September. These proposals will be assessed against the original fund guidance and presented to DfT ministers for approval. A decision is expected in early November. There is no guarantee that these proposals will be successful.

Recommendation

To note the report and reiterate the Authority's support for the revised proposals for using the DfT grant.

Annex 1 – New schemes for the New Forest Family Cycling Experiences Programme

Scheme	Delivery partner	Estimated cost	Delivered by	Description
Installation of new off-road cycle route within Ringwood which links Castleman Way/ New Street to Hightown Road.	Hampshire County Council / New Forest District Council	43,000	End of March 2015	This is a section of route immediately outside of the National Park, but is an important link into and out of the park for cyclists using the well-used off-road Castleman trail which links Poole with the New Forest. The scheme also provides safe access to a local primary school.
Community Routes Initiatives - major bridleway improvements to enable safe and comfortable access for cyclists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fawley Bridleway 27/31 near Holbury manor Minstead Bridleway 10 (near Brook) Minstead/Lyndhurst Bridleway 1 link in Emery Down 	Hampshire County Council / NFNPA	168,639	End of March 2015	Originally planned for delivery as part of the Two National Parks Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme, they are sufficiently cycling focussed to be transferred into this programme enabling funds to be freed up to support LSTF schemes in the South Downs National Park. These schemes are already in progress.
Off-road cycle route upgrades to existing network of cycle routes within the centre of the National Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Weirs Eyeworth to Howan Bottom Abbots Well Parkhill - Tilery to Standing Hat car park Poundhill Dames Slough Burley Brownhill to Wootton Inclosure This includes the installation of new cycle counter sites across the network.	Forestry Commission	140,000	End of March 2015	Based on feedback from visitors and residents, the Forestry Commission will upgrade the surface of 16 miles of route from loose gravel to a more compacted path gravel surface. Permissions and consents for this work are in place.
Marchwood cycle route improvements	Hampshire County Council	185,000	End of September 2015	Create a new off-road cycle route linking the communities of Marchwood and Eling and connecting those residents with the National Park and Southampton, via Totton.

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Rhinefield Drive / Ornamental Drive on-road cycling upgrades	Hampshire County Council	1,275,000	End of September (although cyclist crossing will most likely be delivered by September)	This scheme will look to 'cycle proof' an important on-road route through the centre of the National Park. Upgrade road edges on both sides (without road widening), creating a consistent, high quality surface for cyclists to access this key scenic route through the heart of the National Park. Route is already coherent, direct and attractive, our funding would improve its safety and comfort for cyclists. Improvements will also include provision of a new cycling crossing, quiet lanes signage and cycle way marking and provision of appropriate road markings. This 6 mile route is already a well-used route by cyclists with 139 cyclists per day on average, compared to 1562 cars.
Moors Valley Country Park – Family Cycling Centre development	Forestry Commission	300,000	End of September 2015	Moors Valley Country Park receives an estimated 1 million visitors per year. This investment would provide higher quality experiences for a wide range of cyclists. Moors Valley intend to upgrade and expand their on-site cycle centre; improve their range of specialised routes for mountain bikers of all abilities; expand their inclusive cycling offer; and increase cycling education/taster opportunities for children and novices. While this is not within the National Park it is immediately adjacent and has good cycling and public transport links.