

Shropshire Sustainable Transport Package - Briefing Note

Summary

The Shropshire Sustainable Transport Package is £5M grant funded project that will run over the next 3 years. The funding will be made available on delivery of a specific package of measures designed to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour whilst supporting the local economy and cutting carbon emissions.

Many of the measures funded by the package will benefit the whole of Shropshire, however there is a particular focus on encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour in three focus towns of Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Ludlow, which were seen to have particular scope to achieve a shift to more sustainable travel patterns due to high levels of self containment. Some of the measures are also cross-boundary; working in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council.

Initiatives that will be funded include targeted bus and community transport improvements, Wheels to Work, town junction improvements, car clubs, car sharing, a new travel website, cycling & walking promotion and infrastructure improvements, school travel plans and cycle and pedestrian training.

Background

In July 2011 Shropshire Council was awarded £4.99million by the Department for Transport (DfT) for the Shropshire Sustainable Transport Package. This was as a result of a successful bid to the DfT's new Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). Shropshire was one of just 34 authorities (out of 73 bidders) to be awarded the maximum level of available funding.

The package of measures Shropshire put forward in its bid was designed to meet the key criteria for the funding, which were for a package of measures which would encourage more sustainable travel behaviour whilst supporting the local economy and cutting carbon emissions.

The package of measures are to be delivered over a period July 2011- March 2015 in line with the funding profile.

A key requirement of the DfT is that the grant funding is used for new and innovative measures expected to lead to a lasting benefit and have long term sustainability.. The department have made it clear that using the funding to temporarily support bus services that were previously subsidised, and which will not be affordable beyond the grant funding period is not appropriate.

The Department for Transport have encouraged a high level of community participation in both decision-making and delivery of the project, as well as the exploitation of partnership funding opportunities.

Shropshire's bid was able to demonstrate a high level of match funding for the project, including existing committed council expenditure, expenditure by other public sector bodies such and the PCT and anticipated developer contributions.

Shropshire Sustainable Transport Project Overview

Oswestry:

- Access to Work Bus improvements
- Junction Improvements & Town Centre Study
- Cambrian Railway Walking & Cycling “Greenway”
- Cycle Oswestry
- Walking Promotion
- Schools ‘Bike It’

Countywide:

- Access to Work Bus Improvements
- Wheels to Work
- Promoting use of Transport Services by Tourists

Countywide:

- Travel Plans
- Car share scheme
- Eco-driving promotion
- Car clubs

Shrewsbury:

- Shrewsbury Business Park New Bus Service
- Park & Ride Promotion
- Town Centre/Northern Corridor junction enhancements
- Cycle Network Development
- Shrewsbury Car Club
- Cycle Shrewsbury
- Walking promotion
- Schools ‘Bike It’

Church Stretton/ Much Wenlock/ Ironbridge

- New Tourism Shuttle Bus services

Countywide

- Travel Shropshire Website
- Walking for Health
- School Travel Plans
- Pedestrian & Cycle Training

Ludlow:

- Access to Work Bus Improvements
- Community Transport scheme
- Town Centre Traffic Signing
- Park & Ride promotion
- Ludlow Car Club
- Hydrogen Car Trial
- Events
- Cycle Ludlow
- Walking Promotion
- Walking and cycle infrastructure
- Schools ‘Bike It’

Outlines of Measures

Improving Access to Work, Training and Education

- **Access to Work Bus Improvements:** Funding will be used to make alterations and additions to supported bus services that are targeted to improve access to work opportunities. We will only fund improvements expected to bring sufficient additional patronage that services will become affordable in the longer term.
- **Wheels to Work (W2W):** This scheme supports individuals to overcome transport barriers which prevent them from accessing or maintaining employment. Clients receive bespoke travel plans; and where appropriate benefit from a short term moped or bicycle loan, or small grant for minor vehicle repairs. W2W is particularly beneficial in isolated rural locations where there is limited public transport, or to help clients access jobs or training opportunities involving shift work or requiring the use of a vehicle. The scheme will be run through a joint contract with Telford & Wrekin Council to increase economies of scale.
- **Ludlow Community Transport Scheme:** We will support the development of a new Community Transport Scheme based around Ludlow to help improve for less mobile people and those from outlying rural communities. There is currently no such scheme covering this area, where there is a significant elderly population. The scheme may also help improve access to the relocated GP's and hospital being developed at the eco-park.
- **Shrewsbury Business Park New Bus Service:** The Shrewsbury Business Park is an expanding business location which currently has no bus service. Funding will be used to help establish a new frequent bus service serving the site, this will also help to improve access to other nearby locations.

Improving Town Centre Access and Reducing Congestion

- **Shrewsbury Town Centre/ Northern Corridor Junction Enhancements:** A number of key junction enhancements will be made in in Shrewsbury which will help to tackle congestion problems, by improving traffic flows, whilst also enhancing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. In Shrewsbury all traffic signal upgrades will ensure readiness for a future Urban Traffic Management and Control system that will further enhance network efficiency. Improvements will include the following junctions:
 - Smithfield Road/ Raven Meadows (complete 2011)
 - Smithfield Road/ Chester Street/ Castle Foregate (planned 2012)
 - Ditherington Road/ Mount Pleasant Road (complete 2011)
 - Whitchurch Road/ Asda Entrance
 - Shrewsbury bypass (A49)/ Sundorne Road roundabout (complete 2011)
- **Oswestry Junction Improvements & Town Centre study:** In Oswestry the completed upgrade of the traffic signals and improved pedestrian facilities at Brook Street junction were grant funded. A study will also be undertaken of the southern part of the town centre to look at possible improvements to traffic circulation; and enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities.

- **Ludlow Town Centre Traffic Signing:** In Ludlow we will undertake a review of directional signing, including car park signing, to discourage unnecessary journeys into the historic core of the town.
- **Park and Ride:** We will further enhance the successful Shrewsbury Park and Ride scheme with investment in enhanced signing, information and waiting facilities at the car parks to enhance the user experience and better cater for new visitors. We will also seek to further increase the use of the park and ride in Shrewsbury and Ludlow by town centre businesses and commuters through marketing initiatives, including provision of trial tickets. The package also includes the provision and promotion of a brand new park and ride facility for Oswestry, linked to a new edge of town supermarket development (developer funded).

Supporting Sustainable Tourism

- **New Tourism Shuttle Bus services:** To build on and help accommodate the expected tourism boost to Much Wenlock due to the Olympic connection we plan to kick-start two new tourist shuttle bus services. One will be an extension of the 'Ironbridge Connect' service that Telford and Wrekin Council are expanding with their DfT grant funding. This will link from a new park & ride site into the Ironbridge Gorge and onto Much Wenlock. The second will be the new 'Wenlock Wonderer' shuttle service from Much Wenlock to Church Stretton, via key visitor attractions. This service will link to the existing Shropshire Shuttles service at the Carding Mill Valley. The grant will also fund additional promotion of this service in order to further enhance its long term sustainability.
- **Promoting use of transport services by tourists:** We will look at other opportunities to enhance and better market existing bus, Shropshire Link and community transport services to enhance their suitability and attractiveness to tourists. We will also build on our successful series of leaflets and websites promoting walking and cycling opportunities around Shropshire, particularly focusing on routes that will bring benefits to local business.

Travel Plans & Teleworking

- **Travel plans:** We will provide support for employers to develop effective travel plans enabling them to reduce their transport related costs, improve accessibility for workers, tackle local congestion and parking issues and reduce carbon emissions. Emphasis will be placed on working more intensively with a relatively small number of larger, committed organisations and business park locations where efforts can yield tangible modal shift results.
- **Car Share Scheme:** A new cross boundary web based car share scheme is being procured in conjunction with Telford and Wrekin Council. This will be open to both individuals and employers. We will also actively promote locations for 'park and share'; helping to reduce commuters travel costs and carbon emissions.
- **Eco- driver training:** We will offer discounted practical advanced driver training courses covering driving techniques to improve driver safety and fuel efficiency; helping business to reduce employee risk, costs and carbon footprint.

Community Car Clubs

- **Car Clubs:** Grant funding will be used to help kick-start the first community car clubs in Shropshire, with an aim of having self-financing schemes operating in Shrewsbury and Ludlow and possibly two other towns; by the end of the project period. Car clubs offer flexible short-term car hire on a membership basis. They are proven to reduce overall car use and car ownership and associated costs. A car club car typically replaces around seven individually owned vehicles. This can help to relieve parking pressure in areas with high levels of on-street parking.
- **Hydrogen Car Trial:** We will work in partnership with Riversimple, a Ludlow based innovative hydrogen car developer to assist with a rural trial of their new hydrogen powered car.

Promotion and Marketing

- **'Travel Shropshire' Website:** We are developing a high quality 'one stop shop' travel website for Shropshire. This will be a high profile site providing for all transport information needs through links to existing websites and new bespoke pages. The site will use the latest mapping to convey information, be accessible via mobile phones and have links to social media sites to help reach wider audiences. We will encourage users to register and subscribe to receive regular e-updates. Emphasis will be placed on the website being fully accessible, easy to use, engaging, comprehensive and trustworthy. It will become an essential tool for both residents and visitors to Shropshire.
- **Promotional Events:** We will help to raise awareness of sustainable transport and provide personalised travel information through a high profile presence at a wide variety of local events. This will include hosting dedicated events in each town such as the established annual Shrewsbury BikeFest; as well as exhibiting at a wide range of community events. We will also provide support to communities, schools and employers wishing to undertake their own promotional activities for example through provision of materials and hire of the 'Smoothie bike'.

Cycling Promotion

- **Cycle Shrewsbury, Cycle Oswestry & Cycle Ludlow:** Our cycle promotion element will continue the success of 'Cycle Shrewsbury' in unlocking the significant potential for more cycling in Shrewsbury, and expand this approach to Oswestry and Ludlow. A range of low cost promotional initiatives will help to provide a pathway into cycling; including:
 - Bike and electric bike loan scheme
 - Cycle tryouts at events
 - Local bike recycling scheme
 - Adult cycle training programme
 - Dr Bike' sessions at workplaces and community events
 - Cycle maintenance classes,
 - Online cycle journey planner
 - New walking and cycling maps for Oswestry and Ludlow
 - Led ride programme - including rides from GP surgeries

- Support for employers through our travel plan programme - cycle parking, workplace cycle challenge and promote the Cycle to Work bike purchase scheme
- Harnessing the energies of local cycle champions

Walking Promotion

- **Walking for Health:** we will continue the successful Walking for Health programme which encourages Healthy Lifestyles through participation in regular led walks, utilising volunteer walk leaders. The scheme will continue to operate throughout Shropshire.
- **Walking Promotion:** In the focus towns we will build on the success of Walking for Health and take this project further, providing encouragement and support for people to increase their walking for everyday journeys. We will deliver a package of measures to encourage more people to utilise walking as a form of sustainable travel, including:
 - Identification and promotion of short circular walks,
 - Led health walk programmes;
 - Recruitment and training of local walk champions and walk leaders;
 - Community and Workplace walking challenges;
 - Walking events;
 - Improvements to local walking information and signage
 - Identification of minor improvements to improve the walking offer.

Active Travel to Education

- We will deliver an integrated package of measures to encourage and support sustainable travel to schools, colleges and early year's settings, helping to tackle peak hour congestion and establishing sustainable travel habits early in life. We will provide 'light touch' levels of support across Shropshire and more focused interventions in Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Ludlow.
- **School Travel Plans:** All schools in Shropshire have an existing travel plan, schools will be supported to review their plans and reinvigorate their efforts to deliver further interventions. Active schools will be rewarded through the Shropshire School Travel Plan Award Scheme which has bronze, silver and gold accreditation; with a small £250 grant payable on attainment of the next level. We will also offer support to further education colleges and early years settings in focus towns to help them develop new travel plans.
- **Schools 'Bike It':** We will continue and expand the very successful schools 'Bike It' offer. We aim to work with all schools and colleges within the three focus towns. The tailored programme is designed to give children and their parents the skills, confidence and motivation to travel by bike. Activities include playground skills, classroom sessions, incentive schemes, events and rides. The programme has a particular focus on enthusing and training school staff to deliver sessions, to ensure future sustainability.
- **Pedestrian and Cyclist Training:** Promotional work directly with schools, children and parents will aim to increase take up of Bikeability. Route planning

and secondary age Level 3 cycle training will be provided. The popular 'Stepping Out' pedestrian training programme will also be offered.

Walking and Cycling Route Improvements

- **Oswestry Walking & Cycling 'Greenway'** - We will develop the first phase of a traffic free cycle and pedestrian route alongside the disused Cambrian railway line. The scheme will include construction of accessible access points and links across 'Shelf Bank' to eastern Oswestry. The greenway will improve access to the town centre and the industrial park to the south. Phase 1 will be completion of the route within the town. We will also continue to identify development and funding opportunities in order to also achieve phase 2, which would be completion of the route to Gobowen- providing a 3 mile traffic free link to the rail station and hospital.
- **Shrewsbury Cycle Network Developments:** We will continue to further develop the network of safe and convenient cycle facilities in Shrewsbury, including:
 - 'Connect 2' route completion - Town centre – North Shrewsbury
 - London Road
 - Mytton Oak Road
 - Contra flows
- **Ludlow Infrastructure** - In Ludlow we will upgrade and better sign existing cycle and pedestrian routes and improve the routes between the town and the expanding eco- park location.

Package Funding

The breakdown of grant expenditure on the different elements of the package as agreed by the DfT is as set out below:

C2. Package costs						
Scheme Elements	£K	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
Improving access to work, training and education	Revenue	66	259	260	250	835
	Capital	5	94	0	0	99
Improving town centre access and reducing congestion	Revenue	20	10	10	10	56
	Capital	245	150	50	100	545
Supporting Sustainable Tourism	Revenue	9	42	50	11	112
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Travel plans and tele-working	Revenue	17	57	57	82	213
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Community Car clubs	Revenue	5	20	20	17	62
	Capital	0	63	63	64	190
Promotion and Marketing	Revenue	115	82	48	69	314
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Cycling Promotion	Revenue	47	75	78	77	275
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Walking promotion	Revenue	8	64	88	85	243
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Active Travel to Education	Revenue	93	192	198	201	682
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Walking and cycling route improvements	Revenue	30	40	40	40	150
	Capital	0	50	423	550	1023
Programme management and monitoring	Revenue	35	52	50	51	188
	Capital	18	0	0	0	18
Total		713	1250	1429	1607	4999