Viaduct Estate S278 Cycle Link – Funding Options

1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report has been prepared to advise the Local Committee of a grant made by the Department for Transport to part fund cycle improvement works on the Viaduct Estate Road. The report details the implications of the grant and work that would be required to be carried out to enable progress with the scheme.

2. Strategic Planning and Equality Implications

2.1. The proposals in this report support the delivery of Community Strategy and Cumbria Agreement outcomes and Council Plan priorities, which are

- challenging poverty in all its forms;
- ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need; and
- improving the chances in life of the most disadvantaged in Cumbria.

The proposals aim to achieve these by contributing to achieving the County Council’s aspirations for Cumbria. In particular for the environment by providing options for sustainable and economical alternative forms of transport into and across the city centre, and by helping to encourage people to have an independent and healthy life. Providing economical forms of transport into the city centre also contributes to the County Council’s aspiration for Cumbria to have a thriving economy.

In addition to the above the scheme also aids the County Council to achieve aims of the Local Transport Plan LTP3. By providing improvement to Cycling and Walking links the scheme will provide the opportunity for increased use of these more sustainable forms of
transport thus helping to reduce congestion, and improving air quality. It should however be noted that the gains from this scheme are only likely to be small.

2.2. No specific equality impact assessment has been carried out for this scheme. The scheme addresses access issues that have been highlighted. Improvements to the existing narrow footway to the North end of Viaduct Estate will improve access to the estate for all people.

3. **RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 That the Local Committee resolves to apply for the grant of £40,000 to contribute to this scheme and agrees to progress the scheme to completion by March 2014.

3.2 That the Local Committee resolves to commence formal consultation to make the necessary changes to the existing one way traffic regulation order to provide an exemption for cyclists travelling in a northerly direction.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1. As part of the Connect 2 Bid some years ago Carlisle City Council submitted a number of schemes to Sustrans for funding. These included connecting the Caldew Cycleway to Castleway via the Viaduct Estate Ramp.

4.2. The Local Committee will be aware that a report advising on the development of this scheme was considered at its meeting on 12th December 2012. At the recommendation of the Highways Working Group a decision to progress the scheme was deferred pending a review on completion of the new cycle ramp to the north side of Castleway which will be funded from the S106 monies from the Sainsbury’s Development.

4.3. The DfT recently announced a £62 million government investment to make Cycling more attractive for people in England. £15 million of that funding was available to boost the Community Linking Places Fund that supports schemes that in part encourage community cycling. It appears that Sustrans who are the awarding body for this funding submitted the Viaduct Estate Ramp Improvement scheme as part of a package of schemes for funding in Cumbria. The overall value of the grant is in excess of £340,000. £40,000 is for the Viaduct Estate Ramp scheme.

4.4. The conditions of the grant are:

4.4.1 That the scheme must be complete by the end of March 2014.

4.4.2 That the scheme must be match funded at a minimum level of 30% of the DfT Grant. In this case that sum would need to be a minimum of £12,000. Initial assessment of the scheme indicates that the work on Castleway proposed by The City Council which includes enhancements to the planters adjacent to the top of the ramp, enabling an improvement in visibility, would justify a contribution at this level.
4.5. An outline design for the scheme has been completed and its detail is shown on the plan contained in Appendix 1.

4.6. A Road Safety note has been prepared for the scheme. The issue of inter-visibility between pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the ramp has been raised. This cannot be designed to meet current standards without very significant expense but Members are advised the proposed scheme would significantly improve the present situation. There are no issues raised in the note that cannot be addressed during the detail design stage of the scheme.

4.7. Two areas of risk have been identified with the scheme. These are that a small strip of land currently owned by Network Rail is required to complete the crossing point at the south end of the scheme. Enquiries have been made to Network Rail who owns the land. The intention is to request that an agreement is entered into with Network Rail to dedicate a strip of land as highway to facilitate the scheme. The second is that in order for cyclists to ride up the ramp it will be necessary to change the existing one way traffic order. It will require early consultation to achieve this within the required time scales.

4.8. Members are also advised that there are proposals to carry out public realm improvements in the area as a result of planning conditions placed upon the new Sainsbury store in Caldewgate. Discussions with City Council officers suggest that elements of the scheme could be incorporated within these proposals and as such it is felt that it would be appropriate to use contributions from the funding for the S106 Public Realm works to support the implementation of this scheme.

4.9. It is also noted that there has been a request through the Castle Neighbourhood Forum for improvements for pedestrians between the Viaduct Estate and Castleway. The scheme shown on the plan in Appendix 1 will address the issues that were raised.

5. **Options**

5.1. The Local Committee can resolve to apply for the grant and progress the scheme to completion by March 2014.

5.2. The Local Committee may resolve to take no further action on this matter relying on the previous decision to allow the ramp to the North side of Castleway to be constructed and to monitor the effects of this before proceeding further. It should be noted that it is possible that funding for the Viaduct Estate ramp is unlikely to be available in the future.

6. **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

6.1. An outline estimate has been prepared for this scheme. Based on outline design work the suggested scheme cost is in the region of £50,000.

6.2. Proposed funding for the scheme comprises:

   6.2.1. Grant from DfT Community Linking Spaces Fund £40,000 max.
6.2.2. Contribution from Sainsbury’s S106 Public Realm Enhancement funding £12,000

6.3. Total contribution £52,000 max.

6.4. The funding mechanism for the grant is such that payment of the funding will be made on completion of the scheme. Failure to complete the scheme within the time constraints will result in no payment being made. Any costs incurred at that time would have to be met by the County Council.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this Report.

8. **CONCLUSION**

8.1. At present there is no requirement from the Conditions of the Planning Consent for Tesco for the County Council to carry out the outstanding works detailed in the S278 Agreement.

8.2. It is understood that the scheme for a ramp under Caldew Bridges to the North side of Castleway will in part address the continuity of the Cycleway but it does not help pedestrians and cyclists wishing to access the city centre.

8.3. The scheme for the Viaduct Estate ramp will address all the outstanding issues and allow the completion of a link for pedestrians and cyclists between the south west side of the city and the city centre.

Andrew Moss
Assistant Director – Highways and Transport

March 2013

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**APPENDICES**

*Appendix 1 Viaduct Estate Improvements – General Arrangement Plan*

Electoral Divisions: Castle

| Executive Decision | Yes |  |
| Key Decision       | No  |  |
| If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan? | N/A |  |
| Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency? | No |  |
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?  

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?  
If so, give details below.

Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?

Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?

N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS  
[including Local Committees]

Minute 52 Carlisle Local Committee February 2009  
Minute 95(3) Carlisle Local Committee December 2012

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

REPORT AUTHOR

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