

# Cheshire East Council

## Portfolio Holder Decision Paper

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**Date of Meeting:** 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Report of:** Frank Jordon – Executive Director for Place

**Subject/Title:** Allocation of Business Travel Planning Grants funded through the Sustainable Travel Transition Year Programme

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr David Brown – Highways & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. In June 2016, Cheshire East Council was successful with a bid for funding for £350,000 from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund (STTY), which is available for delivery up to March 2017 in the Crewe and Nantwich area.
- 1.2. The Council's bid document for STTY outlined the programme of delivery which included the allocation of Business Travel Grants - with £32,000 from the STTY grant being allocated towards this element of the programme.
- 1.3. The 'Policy for the Allocation of Business Travel Planning Grants' was approved by Cabinet in December 2016. The Council then launched a campaign to raise awareness that local organisations in the Crewe & Nantwich area could apply for Business Travel Grants of up to £4,999. The campaign was promoted in local media, social media, through the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, the Skills & Growth Company networks and on the Cheshire East website. Eight organisations applied for funding.
- 1.4. The purpose of the grants is to support local businesses to develop measures which provide accessibility by sustainable modes of travel to their site. It is recognised that local businesses are often best placed to identify their own transport and accessibility needs and these grants will enable the successful organisations the capacity to develop local solutions.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. In accordance with the Constitution and paragraph 1.21 of the Scheme of Delegation that the decision for awarding the grants is approved by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Infrastructure.

2.2. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder of Highways & Infrastructure approves the allocation of grants to:

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
STTY 1	Joseph Heler Cheese Ltd	Award £4,157.00
STTY 2	Bentley Motors – Legends	Award £4,962.50
STTY 3	Alliance Disposables Ltd	Award £2,000.00
STTY 4	Jones Sheridan Financial Consulting Ltd	Award £2,325.00
STTY 5	MCHFT – Leighton Hospital	Award £4,165.00
STTY 6	The County Group	Award £4,999.00
STTY 7	Assurant	Award £4,999.00
STTY 8	South Cheshire College	Award £4,165.00

### 3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. This project is externally funded by DfT and was allocated via a competitive bidding process. A copy of the bid document is available at: [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport/transport\\_strategies.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx). It contains full details of the bid, the targets we have agreed to achieve, and the costs and benefits. All projects are outlined within the bidding document and need to be in line with the objectives listed.
- 3.2. The Northern Development Gateway Zone was targeted since the area has the highest potential for growth and the highest levels of economic inactivity, with barriers to growth and employment caused partly by transport issues. Other areas in Cheshire East were unlikely to be successful in the bidding process because of the requirement for transition funding from previous Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) work.
- 3.3. The option of not offering the grants to local businesses was considered, but it was felt that as the programme had previously been so successful through the LSTF project that local businesses would, once again, welcome the opportunity of being able to apply for this funding.

### 4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The assessment for the applications has been based on the criteria outlined in the 'Policy for the Allocation of Business Travel Planning Grants', which mirrors the STTY objectives, these being;

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
Modal Shift	The measure / scheme/ initiative must promote and encourage employees to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share for their journey to and from work, as well as business travel.
Evidence & Monitoring	Applications should include a process for monitoring the effectiveness of the initiative in addressing the transport issues and achieving the desired outcome.
Match Funding	Have funding contribution (financial or time resources) from the organisation's own funds and / or funding support from

	other bodies in place or allocated.
Financial Sustainability	Applications should consider the sustainability of any measures (particularly revenue funded) beyond the grant funding and demonstrate the potential to sustain measures in the future.

4.2 A summary of the bid assessment is listed in the table below.

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Details of organisation</b>	<b>Details of bid</b>	<b>Reason for recommendation</b>	<b>Grant awarded</b>
Joseph Heler cheese Ltd	A cheese manufacturer based in Nantwich, employing over 150 staff that commute from nearby areas of Crewe, Audlem, Hatherton, Wymbunbury and Shavington.	Provision of secure covered cycle rack for 15 cycles to encourage more employees to cycle to work.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£4,157.00
Bentley Motors – Legends	A leisure and conferencing suite, supporting the wider Bentleys site. It runs a 'BeFit' initiative to promote physical activity of Bentley staff.	Provision of six secure cycle lockers, supported by a range of promotional activities. This will link with other smarter and active travel options offered by the company.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£4,962.50
Alliance Disposables Ltd	A provider of non-food products to the health and leisure sector.	Establishment of a new car share scheme to supplement other active travel initiatives. It will include new car park signage, promotion and incentives.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£2,000.00

Jones Sheridan Financial Consulting Ltd	Jones Sheridan is a retail and corporate financial advice service provider, based at Crewe Business Park.	Installation of shower facilities for all tenants of the building, encouraging them to cycle to work.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£2,325.00
MCHFT – Leighton Hospital	Leighton Hospital is the healthcare provider for the local community of Crewe and surrounding areas, employing over 4,000 staff.	Installation of fit for purpose shower facilities to encourage more employees to cycle to work.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£4,165.00
The County Group	A provider of personal and business insurance and financial services, based at Crewe Business Park.	Installation of secure cycle storage for 13 bikes to encourage more employees to cycle to work.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£4,999.00
Assurant	A provider of lifestyle ad mobile device protection, based on Crewe Business Park. It employs over 1,000 staff.	Installation of secure cycle storage to encourage more employees to cycle to work.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£4,999.00
South Cheshire College	A post-16 education provider, located on a single campus in a residential area about one and a half miles from Crewe town centre. Students travel from both nearby areas and much further afield.	Promotional events and activities to support existing active travel measures to new cohorts of students.	The application meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the Business Travel Planning policy.	£4,165.00

## 5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council has been successful in winning two of the Department of Transport (DfT) funding rounds for grants to support economic growth through sustainable travel and transport. The previous grant entitled Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which ended March 2015, enabled the Council to award grants to local businesses. These grants have been monitored and have shown to be successful with bringing benefits to the local businesses.

## **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

- 6.1. Crewe South, Crewe East, Crewe St Barnabus, Crewe Central, Leighton, Crewe North, Nantwich North & West and Nantwich South & Stapeley.

## **7. Implications of Recommendation**

### **7.1. Policy Implications**

- 7.1.1. The 'Policy for the Allocation of Business Travel Planning Grants' is shown in Appendix 1. The scheme supports local businesses in encouraging their employees to travel sustainably with associated environmental and health benefits.

### **7.2. Legal Implications**

- 7.2.1. The STTY grant is awarded from the DfT on the understanding that the authority will deliver the objectives as set out in the original bid. The 'Policy for the Allocation of Business Travel Planning Grants' was approved by Cabinet in December 2016.
- 7.2.2. The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making any decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably. A grant policy is a clear statement of the criteria that the Council is applying and is essential if the Council is to defend any challenge to its decision making process.
- 7.2.3. In accordance with the Constitution and paragraph 1.20 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers the making of grants to voluntary and community organisations is not delegated to Officers. Grants up to £50,000 shall be for the decision of the relevant Portfolio Holder and grants over £50,000 shall be approved by Cabinet
- 7.2.4. The assessment criteria outlined in the policy provide a fair and equitable way to assess applications and award grants. The value of the grants to be issued under this policy (up to £4,999) does not necessarily

require a formal Grant Agreement. However, the policy sets out a monitoring process to ensure that grants are used appropriately in line with the application and conditions for funding.

7.2.5. As part of the application form, organisations are required to disclose any other sources of funding to assess and guard against any potential state aid issues. It is unlikely that organisations have been or will be allocated grant funding in excess of the current de minimis levels applicable to state aid but it is prudent to monitor any potential state aid.

### **7.3. Financial Implications**

7.3.1. The STTY programme is fully funded by a grant from the Department of Transport (DfT). The policy seeks to award grants of up to £4,999 to businesses located in Crewe and Nantwich. All funds which are awarded will be claimed in full from the DfT, in line with the Grant Agreement between the Council and the DfT. For the STTY programme, £32,000 has been allocated for this funding period

### **7.4. Equality Implications**

7.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment was written for the Sustainable Travel Transition Year bid and posted on the Cheshire East Website [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport/transport\\_strategies.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx)

### **7.5. Rural Community Implications**

7.5.1. Grants are available to businesses located within the Northern Gateway Development Zone. This zone was identified by the Cheshire East Council bid for funding to the DfT.

### **7.6. Human Resources Implications**

7.6.1. There are no human resource implications.

### **7.7. Public Health Implications**

7.7.1. There are health benefits from promoting walking and cycling and an increase in the uptake of active travel.

### **7.8. Implications for Children and Young People**

7.8.1. Young people attending South Cheshire College would benefit through improved accessibility with their grant recommended for approval.

### **7.9. Other Implications (Please Specify)**

7.9.1. There are no other implications.

## **8. Risk Management**

- 8.1. The policy makes clear that grants are awarded specifically for the purpose stated in the application and that should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may become liable to return the monies paid.
- 8.2. To ensure expenditure in line with the approved grant application and compliance with funding conditions, the policy sets out a monitoring process providing suitable safeguards to ensure that grants are spent appropriately and deliver value for money (etc). Failure to provide monitoring information within the timescale may result in the Council recovering the grant paid.
- 8.3. By launching and implementing the policies identified above, there is an opportunity to support local businesses, as well as supporting sustainable travel to help unlock the growth potential of Crewe. Failure to implement the policy will delay such initiatives.
- 8.4. Before the grant is awarded, successful applicants must sign a copy of a grant award acceptance form and agree to accept the terms and conditions of the grant as set out in the 'Policy for the Allocation of Business Travel Planning Grants'.

## **9. Access to Information/Bibliography**

- 9.1.1. A copy of the STTY bid can be found at:  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport/transport\\_strategies.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx).

## **10. Contact Information**

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