

FAQs for Cycling in National Parks Grant funding

Funding

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| Q | Who can be a grant recipient? |
| A | There are already well established systems in place to deliver funding to Local Authorities which, should a bid be successful, enable the grant award to be delivered sooner. It is possible for National Park Authorities and other organisations to be a grant recipient; however, there may be greater risks in agreeing and establishing the grant award. |
| Q | Do the bids need to cover infrastructure and soft measures? |
| A | The bids should have an element of hard, infrastructure/capital measures along with soft, revenue items. However the DfT funding will only cover capital costs and any revenue will need to be covered by the local contribution. |
| Q | Can the local contribution be revenue? |
| A | Yes. |
| Q | Is there a deadline for when the local contribution must be spent? |
| A | No, there is no deadline; although you should clearly set out an indicative profile for the local contribution The DfT funding must be claimed before the end of March 2015. Consideration should be given to how the maintenance and marketing of any capital scheme will continue post March 2015, this is an area where local contribution will be important. |
| Q | Can we use officer time charges as local contribution? |
| A | Officer time can be considered as local contribution.[DN: I am not convinced this is a good idea. The idea that the local contribution could go towards civil service salaries could be controversial. I suggest that if officer time is included, it should be clearly separated out in the profile of local contribution] |
| Q | Are smaller fund bids allowed? |
| A | Whilst there is no lower or upper limit in the guidance for National Parks, the DfT are encouraging bids to be ambitious. A strong bid would show an ambition and long term strategy to deliver more cycling, along with collaborative working, vision, linking centres of population to and within National Parks and creating infrastructure in National Parks that are considered 'world class.' |
| Q | Can schemes that have already had costs associated to them through development be eligible for the local contribution? |
| A | It is feasible to include these as a contribution; however it will be preferable to have schemes which are new and/or deliver additional benefits to cycling, in line with the stated aims of the grant. |
| Q | How big can a bid be? |
| A | It is suggested that bids should aim to be between £1m and £5m. |
| Q | Can the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) be used as local contribution? |
| A | No, specific pre-allocated grants, such as the LSTF and Pinch Points must not be used as the local contribution; however un-ring fenced formula grants, such as the Integrated Transport Block, may be used provided it does not |

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| | include items that are already committed and are being delivered through an existing programme of works. The DfT are looking for new contributions; for example public health, highways, train operators etc. It is a competitive process, so bidders should look to bring in as much new local contribution as possible. |
| Q | Will there be continued funding beyond 2015 for National Parks from the DfT? |
| A | It is impossible to say at this stage; however a bid that includes a long term vision and ambition to grow cycling beyond 2015 will be viewed positively. |
| Q | Can Phase 1 resource/design work be included as local contribution? |
| A | No, this is already money being spent. |
| Q | Does the majority of the capital have to be spent on collaborating with businesses and on cycle lanes? |
| A | The grants are for capital only; this can include a wide range of different measures and is not limited to any one area of spend. Your application should distinguish what capital elements the grant will be used for. |
| Q | Is investing in getting bikes on buses in rural areas acceptable for both capital and revenue funding? |
| A | Yes, providing the revenue funding is sourced from the local contribution. |
| Q | Can you use monitoring costs as local contribution? |
| A | Yes, as long as they relate to the application. |
| Q | Can feasibility study work for a previous project be used as local contribution? |
| A | Yes, if it is for the forthcoming year, but you cannot use previous years. |
| Q | Does local contribution have to be a minimum of 30% |
| A | 30% is a guide to the level of contribution the Department is seeking, it is not a requirement. The grant from the Department is for capital only and must be claimed in full by the end of March 2015. Local contribution is important in delivering any revenue towards the schemes proposed and for funding maintenance, marketing and evaluation post March 2015. |
| Q | Is there any guidance on using funding to support private sector industries? |
| A | All bids should ensure they are compliant with Public Contracts Regulations as well as the European Union State Aid rules. Applicants should ensure that they follow the guidance of their internal procurement teams. The Department is looking for schemes that will bring additional benefits, rather than replacing existing schemes/businesses already providing benefits in the area. |
| Design | |
| Q | Would traffic calming on rural roads generally be 20 mph zones? |
| A | In general they would be 20 mph; however it does depend on traffic volumes. There are NCN guidelines on the Sustrans website that may be helpful: http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/guidelines/traffic%20calming.pdf |
| Q | Some horse-riders do not like tarmac. Are there any alternatives? |
| A | The detail design stage may occur after the bid has been submitted and should be in consultation with user groups. However there are alternatives to providing a horse-riding path separate to walkers and cyclist by using different grades of aggregate. |
| Q | How far through the design stage do the authorities need to be when submitting their bid? For example, do we need to have detailed approval for |

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| | a toucan crossing? |
| A | The grant should be spent in full and claimed by the end of March 2015 and deliverability is a consideration in the assessment of bids. Therefore designs should be submitted that have a good chance of being constructed within that timeframe. Where appropriate consult with highways, planning and other departments within your local authority for the best advice for your area and schemes. |
| Q | What is the minimum width of a cycle path? And what details need to be submitted? |
| A | For comprehensive design advice please visit www.sustrans.org.uk and look under Resources. In your application the more information the better; however detailed design is not necessarily needed; basic information such as proposal width, surfaces, access controls, signage are advisable. |
| Strategy | |
| Q | Are you expecting us to work with health departments as they have been difficult to get a response from and collaborate with? |
| A | As of April 2013, public health is being administered by local authorities; this will make it easier to work more closely with them. A stronger bid will demonstrate more collaboration and cross departmental working, particularly with health. |
| Q | What is the definition of a 'rural partnership'? What organisations can be included in this definition? |
| A | The definition can be considered quite broad and include Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local authorities, County Councils, community groups and other stakeholders in National Parks. |
| Q | Can DfT money be used outside of the National Park area? |
| A | Yes, providing there is a clear connection to the National Park and demonstrates a clear benefit to the National Park. If some of the grant is spent in this way there should be a good balance between this and investment within the National Park. |
| Q | Does the bid have to be a part of an NCN proposed route? |
| A | No, this will not be necessary. |
| Location and scale | |
| Q | Is it just National Parks who can receive the funding, or can it include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty? |
| A | It is only National Parks, looking at cycling to, from, in and around the National Park. |
| Q | Can one bid encompass two National Parks? |
| A | The DfT will not look favourably on this; however if this route is taken it would need to be of the highest level of ambition and have a 15-20 year vision and get backing from other organisations, e.g. Public Health, Canal and Rivers Trust etc. |
| Assessment | |
| Q | How accurate do predictions have to be? |
| A | Predictions should be based on evidence, but it is understood that they cannot be 100% accurate. You can use WebTAG, along with Sustrans |

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| | assistance, to ensure they are developed appropriately. |
| Q | How can we capture the 'economic' benefits of schemes focused on tourism? |
| A | The Department's guidance on how to complete the economic case is clearly explained in WebTAG but does not provide a strong mechanism for demonstrating an impact on tourism. As such, this is best covered in the strategic case in line with the guidance issued in February. |
| Q | How much weight should be put on the economic health benefits for communities walking and cycling compared to rural tourism? |
| A | Explaining any health benefits in the economic case is likely to improve the cost benefit ratio, whether these benefits are revealed in the local community or visitors; a stronger bid would be likely to demonstrate benefits from both. |
| Q | If you have reports/feasibility studies that could support the bid, should these be included? |
| A | It may be best to have a brief summary in the main report with full details in the appendices. If you include appendices, please summarise the details in the main body of the bid. |
| Q | Do I need to do the full calculation of value for money? |
| A | No, bidders will need to provide the information on the pro-forma that will allow the Department to calculate this. For full details please read WebTAG 3.14, this is only approximately 20 pages and provides accessible understanding of how cycling brings benefits to health, absenteeism, journey quality, congestion reduction etc. In addition HEAT (see below) also gives information on the benefits of cycling on health. |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | |
| Q | Paragraph 25 states "Schemes must include in their bid documentation a framework to evaluate impacts and share these with other rural areas to maximise the benefits." What do you want in a framework to evaluate impacts? |
| A | The framework should be proportionate to the size and scale of the bid. Please write the key elements of your framework, see paragraph 49 in the guidance. Successful applicants will be expected to provide a full framework shortly after the funding announcement. |
| Q | Are there specific indicators you would like the local authorities to measure? |
| A | Projects should identify those indicators most specific and appropriate to the schemes they are delivering; however it may be advisable to measure cycling levels along with people new to cycling and new cycle trips. Paragraphs 60 to 63 of the guidance gives more detail. |
| Q | Is there any guidance on a framework for monitoring and evaluation? |
| A | Sustrans will upload two examples of economic appraisals onto their Fileshare. The Department realises time is limited and bids may focus on the main area rather than the whole National Park. |
| Q | March 2015 is quite a tight timescale, therefore monitoring and evaluation might not occur in this timeframe, is this ok? |
| A | Yes, however the application should stipulate when the monitoring and evaluation will be completed by. Any monitoring and evaluation occurring after March 2015 will need to be paid for out of the local contribution. |
| Q | How are we expected to do evaluation if there is a limit on the amount of |

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| | funding available from the DfT? |
| A | Your bid should make allowance for evaluation and local contribution should also be sought to deliver any evaluation post March 2015. |
| General Questions | |
| Q | What is HEAT? |
| A | HEAT is defined as the Health Economic Assessment Tool. HEAT is an online resource to estimate the economic savings resulting from reductions in mortality as a consequence of regular cycling and/or walking. It is based on best available evidence, with parameters that can be adapted to fit specific situations. For more information visit http://www.heatwalkingcycling.org/ |
| Q | How often will you be able to make a claim? |
| A | It will be an interim claim basis, either every 6 months or annually. |
| Q | There may be difficulties in getting this approved through Cabinet/Committee meetings? |
| A | Whilst we would expect political approval from the local authority, we are mindful of the restrictions and timings that may conflict with the deadline. We would encourage that all applicants try the appropriate mechanisms to gain approval; and if this is not possible, include the details of the approval process the documentation will go through should this occur after the deadline along with letters of support. |
| Q | How many pages should a bid be? |
| A | The bids should answer all the requirements in the guidance and application form; it is usual for bids to be around 25 to 30 pages; please include supporting evidence and maps will help to assessors to understand the locality. |
| Q | Does a feasibility study need to be in depth? |
| A | If it is a long study, summarise it in the main bid document and put the full details in an appendix. |
| Q | Are appendices allowed? |
| A | Yes, but please summarise the information in the main body of the bid. |
| Q | Can spending be broken down to how it is spent in each year? |
| A | It can be, the application form requires spending to be broken down by scheme element and by delivery year. |
| Q | What are Chatham House rules? |
| A | Chatham House rules is a core principle that governs the confidentiality of the source information received at a meeting. |