



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

Thursday 13 June 2024

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Acceptance and Usage of a Department for Transport Grant to Improve Traffic Signal Timings and Refurbish Obsolescent Signal Equipment
(Cabinet Member for Highways, Assets and Transport)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or savings which are significant having regard to the budget for the service or function concerned (this is currently defined as £500,000) and it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the County.

3. Purpose

3.1 To seek Cabinet approval to accept a Department for Transport Grant of £641,217.87 which will be allocated to the improvement of Traffic Signal Timings and Refurbish Obsolescent Signal Equipment at appropriate sites throughout Derbyshire with work to commence June 2024, at the latest.

4. Information and Analysis

- 4.1 In December 2023, the Department for Transport (DfT) invited all English local authorities outside London to bid for £500,000 for improving traffic signal timings termed a Green Light Fund (GLF). Also, within the same grant funding initiative, the DfT would be offering monies from the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant (TSOG) fund based on existing formula for allocation. The Council's traffic signal specialists submitted an application to the GLF to meet the required deadline.
- 4.2 In March 2024, the Council was formally notified that the bid had been accepted and was successful under the Green Light Fund (GLF), and that in addition to the £500,000 for improving signal timings, a further £141,217.87 had been awarded via the TSOG under the existing formula allocation. All monies were transferred to the County Council by the DfT in late April 2024, in advance of any request being made by the Council. Instructions contained within the grant conditions specified that detailed plans for expenditure must be submitted to the DfT by 30 April 2024 (subsequently extended to 31 May 2024). Derbyshire's submission was made on 30 April 2024. GLF and TSOG monies must be spent in entirety by 31 March 2026. Should Cabinet decide not to proceed with the GLF and TSOG work, the monies will need to be returned to the DfT.
- 4.3 The initial proposals submitted to the DfT on 30 April 2024 note that, prior to commencement of work on site, a detailed investigation will be conducted to analyse where predictable and pseudo random congestion takes place, which will be analysed in tandem with an assessment of where the grant can be most beneficially applied. This will also be prioritised towards the Council's wider highways capital programme, to support these planned projects where necessary and relevant. It is expected that this work will result in significant improvements, in a short timescale, at many traffic signal junctions throughout Derbyshire.
- 4.4 An important element of the GLF work is the active assessment of the benefit of the work, so as to allow application elsewhere in Derbyshire (should suitable additional funding be available) and also disseminate findings to the DfT for the benefit of other local transport authorities.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 No consultation is planned as any works or measures will not require substantial works and will be incorporated into the Council's existing highways capital programme plans. In the instance that traffic

management measures are necessary, normal procedures for such works will be carried out.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Option 1: Do Nothing – This would involve refusing the grant and reimbursing the DfT with the monies that have already been transferred to the County Council. Taking this option would have substantial reputational damage and would most likely reduce the likelihood of success when bidding for future monies. Most importantly, taking the “do nothing” approach would lose the opportunity for improving signal timings and reducing delays in normal and abnormal circumstances, as well as delivering an improvement to Derbyshire Highways’ signal infrastructure asset. This option is not recommended.
- 6.2 Option 2: Accept the grant and use for other purposes – This would contravene the grant conditions and is therefore not recommended.
- 6.3 Option 3: Accept the grant and use for the purposes intended – As this will benefit the road users in Derbyshire and as the work is 100% funded by the grant, this is the recommended option.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Letter of Grant and conditions.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

10. Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- a) Approves the acceptance of a Department for Transport Grant of £641,217.87 which will be allocated to the improvement of Traffic Signal Timings and Refurbish Obsolescent Signal Equipment at appropriate sites throughout Derbyshire with work to commence June 2024, at the latest.

11. Reasons for Recommendation

- 11.1 The DfT grant is in addition to other programmes of work and offers the opportunity to make significant positive improvements to road conditions and the traffic signal asset. The necessary specialist staff are already available due to current engagement on the DfT funded Bus Service Improvement Fund work.
- 11.2 It is known that the DfT is about to offer a £2 million grant for additional traffic signal work and, therefore, Derbyshire needs to continue to show that the DfT's grant monies are used beneficially for the purpose intended, which will maximise the likelihood of being successful with future grant applications.

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- 12.1 No.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Fully funded by the DfT so no call on existing or future Council funding is necessary.

Legal

- 2.1 None associated with this report.

Human Resources

- 3.1 All the necessary specialist designers are in place and will be available to the timescale of the grant.

Information Technology

- 4.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 No implications on equalities.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The planned work funded by the DfT grant is in accordance with the Council's policies to minimise delays on the highway network in any given circumstance.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 No other specific implications are present, but the delivery of project work will be managed in accordance with normal procedures where risks and mitigations will be catalogued and applied as work progresses.