



AGENDA ITEM: 5(b)

CABINET: 12 November 2013

Report of: Assistant Director Planning

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Forshaw

**Contact for further information: Dominic Carr (Extn. 5194)
(E-mail: dominic.carr@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: USE OF SECTION 106 MONIES IN SKELMERSDALE

Wards affected: Skelmersdale/Up Holland Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the progress made into looking to provide a cycle to work scheme providing job seekers with a grant to purchase a bicycle.
- 1.2 To seek authorisation to proceed with a pilot scheme funded through S106 commuted sums.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That delegated power be granted to the Assistant Director Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development to take all necessary action to set up and run a pilot 'cycle to work' scheme ("the Scheme") for a period of 9 months and to agree with possible partners, the most cost effective mechanism for administering the Scheme.
 - 2.2 That the S106 contribution from the Pepsico Walkers (Pimbo) development be used to develop and run the Scheme.
-

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In order to help improve connectivity and help those seeking employment in Skelmersdale access work, the Borough Council has been developing a range of options to help link residential and employment areas, utilising available S106 funds. To date, these options have included the provision of new and the enhancement of existing cycle/footpaths and the setting up of a pilot Demand Responsive Transport Service (DRTS). However, in order to offer a more comprehensive range of options and to provide a level of choice, officers have been investigating the possibility of setting up a cycle to work scheme, in which job seekers, will receive a grant to assist them purchase a bike from a nominated supplier.
- 3.2 Similar cycle to work schemes have been set up by other authorities seeking to provide transport choices to job seekers, and feedback has generally been positive with many schemes reporting that they have proved popular and helped a number of people into work. There have also been secondary benefits of such schemes with health and environmental benefits being seen. Officers have met with colleagues at LCC and Merseytravel to investigate how a scheme could work in West Lancashire and look at potential benefits.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Officers have investigated a range of providers of bikes, to work with, to deliver this service from small local companies to larger organisations that may be able to provide the bikes required.
- 4.2 However, after evaluating the different services available, including the cost and given the relatively short distances involved (which should be no more than a 30 minute bike ride from any given location) it's considered that the most cost effective solution of providing such assistance to job seekers would be through the provision of a grant of £50 to purchase a reconditioned bike.
- 4.3 We are aware that there are companies who provide reclaimed bikes in and around West Lancashire and that the cost of these reclaimed bikes is normally below £50.
- 4.4 Although these bikes are reclaimed they will conform to the relevant British Standards and will be guaranteed by the company selling them. It is believed that these bikes will be more than capable of travelling the distances between Skelmersdale/ Up Holland and employment areas in Skelmersdale.
- 4.5 The introduction of the proposed one of grant to purchase a reconditioned bike would not only provide assistance to people accessing the job market it will also be supporting existing enterprises involved in the recycling of bikes thereby helping to maintain existing jobs.

- 4.6 Members of the public who use the Scheme will be strongly advised to purchase and use safety equipment such as helmets, however the decision on the use of safety equipment will ultimately be up to the individual (whilst wearing helmets is advised they are not required by law). As we are simply providing job seekers with a grant to assist them purchase a bike, there should not be any liability issues such as requiring additional insurance that needs to be considered.
- 4.7 Although officers originally considered operating a service where bikes were lent or allocated to job seekers and collected when their employment ceased, the management aspect proved to difficult to implement with particular issues over collection of bikes/storage/insurance etc. As such, it was decided that the easiest and most cost effective manner of providing a cycle scheme would be through the operation of the proposed grant scheme. The proposed grant could only be redeemed at named suppliers. The bikes would be the property of the job seeker and they would be responsible for maintenance/upkeep and security. There would be no additional grants for bikes that become damaged/are stolen.
- 4.8 In order to ensure that grants are targeted at those with genuine need, there will be a strict criteria for eligibility. This will very much reflect the criteria used in determining eligibility to access the current DRTS scheme. This criteria will include;
- Applicants cannot make the journey reasonably on the existing public transport network.
 - Applicants live within either Skelmersdale or Up Holland as defined within Map A (Appendix A)
 - Applicants require the bike in order to access employment on the Pimbo Industrial Estate.
 - Applicants gross income shall not exceed £17,500.
 - The grant can only be used for the purchase of a bike/associated H&S equipment and cannot be used for any other purpose.
 - The grant cannot be sold to any other individual.
 - The grant will be available to persons leaving the DRTS.

And also:

- Applicants have been referred to this service by Job Centre Plus or a private employment/recruitment company as somebody whom transport has presented an obstacle to entering work
- Only one grant is available to purchase a bike (enforced through the requirement of photo identification).

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHEME

- 5.1 Users of this scheme would have to meet the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 4.9. Officers at LCC have indicated that they could not assist with the management of this scheme and as such checking that members are eligible

and the issuing of the grants and paying grants to the nominated company would have to be done by officers at WLBC.

- 5.2 In order to ensure that the grant was being used by the individual recommended by the job centre/HR company, the applicant would have to produce photo ID at the shop providing the bikes.

6.0 ESTIMATED COSTS OF THE SERVICE

- 6.1 Given that this is a new service it is difficult to estimate how many people would take up the offer of the grant. However, as an example, costs have been calculated assuming that the take up levels will be the same as the DRTS which offers an alternative means of transport to job seekers.
- 6.2 The DRTS currently has 248 members and has been operating for over 15 months. If we assume that we had the same level of demand for the cycle to work scheme, the cost of the service would be £12,400. However, if we look at this as an annual figure the running cost would be £9,920. Although this estimated cost is far lower than the cost of the DRTS I believe that in reality the take up levels would be far lower (as cycling may not appeal to some people and in the winter months cycle usage and sales generally reduce).
- 6.3 The management of this scheme will involve checking criteria of members, issuing of grants and paying invoices. Officers will agree with possible partners, the most cost effective mechanism for administering the Scheme.

7.0 PROCURING THE SERVICE

- 7.1 Officers will contact local enterprises who they are aware provide recycled bikes and also seek further expressions of interest through newspaper advertising.

8.0 FUNDING THE SERVICE

- 8.1 The Council currently has S106 contributions from the Pimbo industrial estate and Whitemoss, which can be used to support this service. From the Walkers development we have £84,407 and from Maple View we have £12,505.
- 8.2 However, given that we are looking to operate an initial pilot scheme and Pimbo is the larger employment area it is suggested that we use developer contributions from Pimbo, and as such, the service would be limited to job seekers securing work on the Pimbo industrial estate.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Clearly, this scheme has the potential to provide some real benefits to the local community, by providing an affordable and sustainable alternative transport

solution; allowing local residents who are most in need to access the local jobs market. This service also has potential to provide social and environmental benefits

9.2 However, given the finite S106 contributions available to the Council we need to ensure it is spent on schemes that are both cost effective and deliver on the objective of assisting local people in securing employment. I therefore propose that the Council set up a pilot to run for an initial 9 month period but be reviewed after the initial 6 months, in order to allow officers time to analyse the performance of the scheme. This information will then inform a subsequent report to Cabinet to decide to either cease the service, continue it in its current form or amend the service.

9.3 In conclusion, I believe that the setting up of this scheme will build on the measures currently operated by the Council and its partners to assist people to secure employment. It also has the potential to help employers overcome recruitment and retention issues. .

10.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

10.1 If successful, this scheme should meet many of the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It will assist in getting people to work and will reduce the use of private cars and therefore reduce the amount of carbon emitted. Thus it will have economic, environmental and social benefits.

11.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The continuation of the scheme will require public subsidy to function. However, this can be funded through existing S106 monies specifically acquired for such a scheme.

12.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

12.1 There is a risk that the operating costs of the scheme will not be able to be lowered to a sustainable amount.

12.2 Some of the Section 106 funding is ring-fenced specifically for improvements to public transport within Skelmersdale and contractually will have to be returned to developers if not spent within a set timescale for schemes such as the cycle to work scheme.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a significant direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account when undertaking the actions detailed within this article.

Appendices

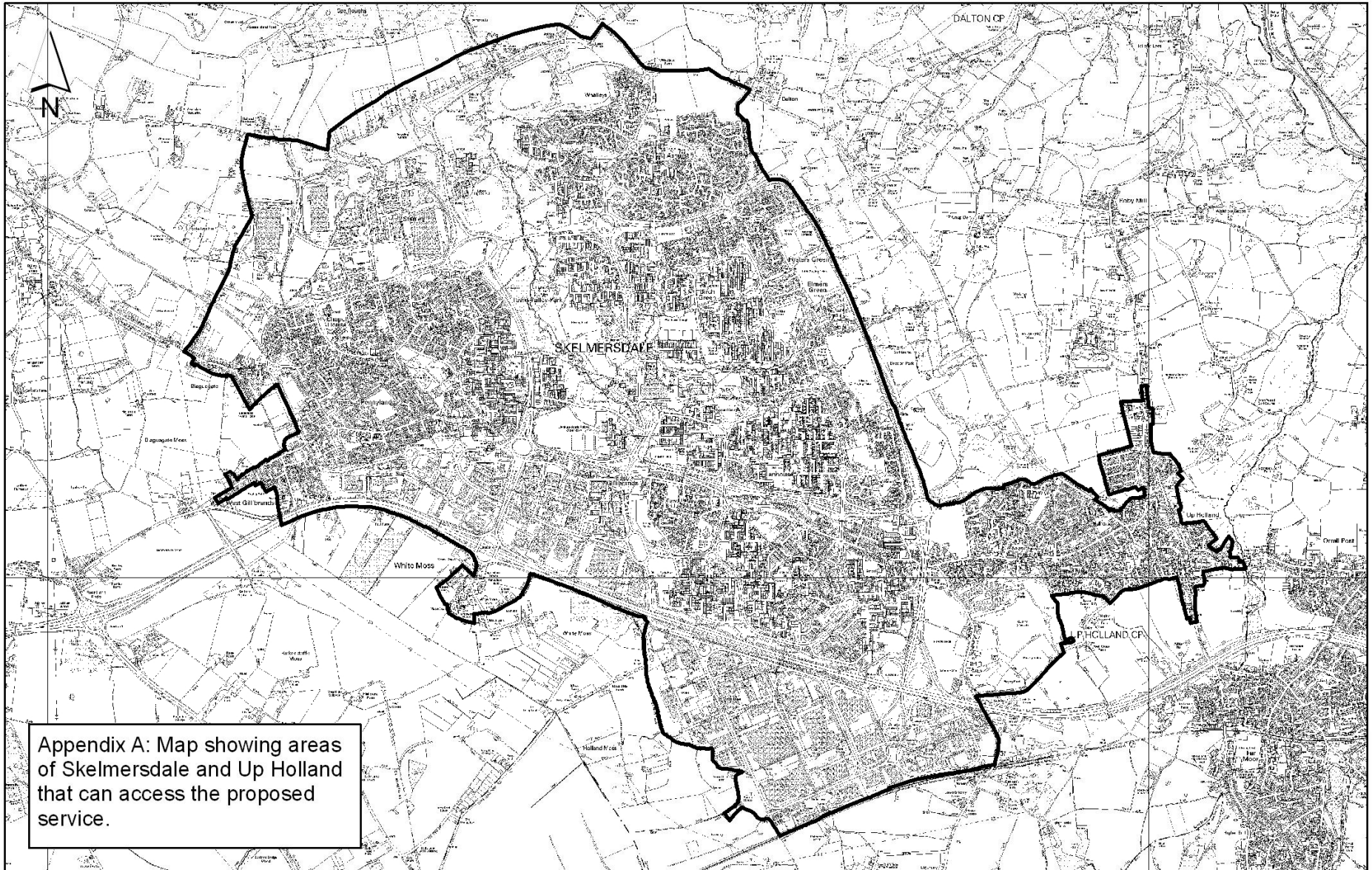
Appendix 1- Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix A- Map showing the areas that can access the proposed scheme

Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment - process for services, policies, projects and strategies

<p>1. Using information that you have gathered from service monitoring, surveys, consultation, and other sources such as anecdotal information fed back by members of staff, in your opinion, could your service/policy/strategy/decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) disadvantage, or have a potentially disproportionately negative effect on, any of the following groups of people:</p> <p><i>People of different ages – including young and older people</i> <i>People with a disability;</i> <i>People of different races/ethnicities/ nationalities;</i> <i>Men; Women;</i> <i>People of different religions/beliefs;</i> <i>People of different sexual orientations;</i> <i>People who are or have identified as transgender;</i> <i>People who are married or in a civil partnership;</i> <i>Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave or men whose partners are pregnant or on maternity leave;</i> <i>People living in areas of deprivation or who are financially disadvantaged.</i></p>	<p>No</p>
<p>2. What sources of information have you used to come to this decision?</p>	<p>An analysis of similar schemes has taken place and officers have met with officer at LCC and Merseytravel to investigate how similar schemes have worked.</p>
<p>3. <i>How have you tried to involve people/groups in developing your service/policy/strategy or in making your decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy)?</i></p>	<p>As part of the evaluation of the service I have consulted with a number of organisations involved in the scheme including LCC and Merseytravel</p>
<p>4. <i>Could your service/policy/strategy or decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) help or hamper our ability to meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010? Duties are to:-</i></p> <p>Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; Advance equality of opportunity (removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of people); Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.</p>	<p>Although some disabled people may be able to benefit from this scheme, some severely disabled people may not be able to operate a bicycle and therefore may not be able to benefit from this service.</p>
<p>5. <i>What actions will you take to address any issues raised in your answers above?</i></p>	<p>Any disabled people who need assistance getting to work and cannot use ride a bike should be able to benefit from alternative schemes such as the Demand Responsive Transport System</p>



Appendix A: Map showing areas of Skelmersdale and Up Holland that can access the proposed service.

