

## **Delegated Officer Report**

**Decision Maker:** Sayyed Osman, Deputy Chief Executive

**Date of Decision:** 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Subject:** Social Prescribing & Active Travel Pilot

**Report Author:** Rachel Dyson, Thriving Communities Lead

**Ward (s):** Central District

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**Reason for the decision:** The purpose of the decision is to allocate the £100k funds awarded by Department of Transport via Transport for Greater Manchester to undertake an Active Travel & Social Prescribing Pilot.

**Summary:** In 2022 TfGM, on behalf of the GMCA, was awarded £100k by Department for Transport (DfT) to undertake a feasibility study into an Active Travel Social Prescribing pilot. The intention of the pilot was to trial new walking and cycling programmes to enable increased active travel and physical activity, seeking to work with a small population of up to 20,000 people. Oldham Council, as lead for itself and Action Together (as the Local Infrastructure Organisation and lead provider for Social Prescribing) were successful in being chosen to take forward the feasibility study on behalf of GM and submitted a full bid to Department for Transport seeking funding for a 3 year pilot. The bid was unsuccessful, and due to the short timescale for the feasibility study the £100k grant award was not spent. Therefore, it is proposed that Oldham Council, alongside Action Together, use the funds to take forward a small scale pilot during 23-24, based on the core elements of the original bid proposal to DfT. The proposed project is outlined in the Appendix to this report, and this has been approved by GMCA. Subject

to Council approval, £83,000 will be allocated as a grant to Action Together to deliver the Social Prescribing Network Development, and Community Development elements (including a £25,000 grant pot for distribution to community groups), with the remaining £17,000 to be allocated to Project Coordination, Training and Infrastructure & Equipment which will be directed by the Project Steering Group.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

Option 1 – To allocate the funds as set out in the Appendix below, and in line with the original project proposal as approved by TfGM and GMCA and to enter into a Grant Agreement with Action Together.

Option 2 – To develop an alternative proposal to spend the allocated funds and submit for approval to GMCA/TfGM. This option is not recommended as the attached proposal is in line with the objectives of the funding and has previously been approved.

Option 3 – Do not drawn down the funding from GM. This option is not recommended as will result in Oldham losing out on additional funds to support service provision and community activity which will benefit residents.

***Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.***

This proposal has been developed in partnership between Oldham Council (Thriving Communities, Sport, Leisure & Wellbeing, Public Health, Transportation Policy, Districts), Action Together as VCFSE Local Infrastructure Organisation and lead provider for Social Prescribing. Through the process we have also consulted with Northern Roots, Central Primary Care Network and TfGM.

***Recommendation(s):***

Option 1 – To allocate the funds as set out in the Appendix below, and in line with the original project proposal as approved by TfGM and GMCA and to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with Action Together.

## Implications:

What are the **financial** implications?

Funding of £100k has been awarded from the Department of Transport via Transport for Greater Manchester, to support the Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot.

The preferred option (option 1) is to allocate the funds to be expended during 2023/24. A full breakdown of the proposed expenditure can be seen in the table in Appendix 1, section 2. There are no adverse financial implications as a result of this proposal.

(Jenny Howarth Senior Accountant/Nicola Harrop Finance Manager)

What are the **legal** implications?

As detailed in this report, the Council has been successful in applying for a grant of £100k, which will now be used to deliver a small scale pilot scheme. The grant application was made on the basis that Action Together would ensure the delivery of some elements of the pilot.

The subsidy control regime has been considered and it has been determined that, for the purpose of the pilot, neither the Council nor Action Together will be an enterprise nor will they be engaged in an economic activity that entails offering goods or services on a market.

Contract Procedure Rules do not apply to the award of a grant.

A grant agreement must be put in place with Action Together to formalise the allocation of part of the grant funding. The grant agreement must include any requirements of TfGM or the GMCA. Legal Services should be engaged to draft the grant agreement.

(Sarah Orrell – Commercial & Procurement Solicitor)

What are the **procurement** implications?

There are no Procurement implications as this report concerns grant funding, However, as always when paying out monies to external organisation, we should ensure an open and fair process has been followed that will comply with any scrutiny and are in line with the specific grant funding conditions, as the grant can be clawed back if the conditions are not met. A

grant agreement must be formalised.  
(Mohammad Sharif 26/05/2023)

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?*

None

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)

It's not anticipated that any vulnerable group will be negatively impacted by this decision.

*What are the **property** implications*

None

**Risks:**

No risk comments received.

**Co-operative agenda**

The allocation of this funding is consistent with the Council's co-operative aim to develop Thriving Communities; supporting community leadership, co-production and early help.

(Amanda Richardson, Corporate Policy Manager)

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

**There are no background papers for this report**

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
	R. Dyson
<b>Date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2023

Please list and attach any appendices:-

<b>Appendix number or letter</b>	<b>Description</b>
Appendix 1	Social Prescribing & Active Travel Pilot Proposal

In consultation with Deputy Chief Executive, Sayyed Osman

Signed: 

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023

# Appendix 1 - Oldham Active Travel & Social Prescribing Pilot Proposal

## 1. Background

In 2022 TfGM on behalf of the GMCA was awarded £100k by Department for Transport (DfT) to undertake a feasibility study into an Active Travel Social Prescribing pilot. The intention of the pilot was to trial new walking and cycling programmes to enable increased active travel and physical activity, seeking to work with a small population of up to 20,000 people.

Oldham were successful in being chosen to take forward the feasibility study on behalf of GM and submitted a full bid to Department for Transport seeking funding for a 3 year pilot. The bid was unsuccessful, but due to the short timescale for the feasibility study the £100k was not spent. Therefore, it is proposed that Oldham use the remaining funds to take forward a small scale pilot during 23-24, based on the core elements of the original bid proposal to DfT.

The original objectives for the pilot were:

- To address local community identified need relating to underrepresented groups, high levels of deprivation and health inequalities.
- To actively promote increased levels of physical activity through cycling and walking
- To demonstrate clear links between infrastructure development and the proposed social prescribing schemes.
- To support modal shift to active travel providing people with travel choices and supporting changes in behaviour.

The key elements of the GM initial proposal were:

- Linking areas of poor health/low physical activity to areas with an emerging high-quality network
- The prescription of cycling or walking wherever appropriate, and making available cycles, as well as training, access to cycling groups and peer support
- Co-design of the detailed programme using COM-B model
- A focus on active travel for everyday trips

## 2. Proposal

Our pilot will build capability and capacity within our Social Prescribing (SP) Network around active travel and physical activity, strengthen connections between this network and Active Travel infrastructure, and expand opportunities to take part in physical activity and active travel within communities.

The pilot will target a population within Central Primary Care Network (PCN) of c.20,000 on specific estates where we know residents feel isolated from amenities and there are significant health inequalities (Holts, Alt, St. Mary's, Coldhurst, Higginshaw, Eldon Street).

The pilot will develop the following areas:

### **Social Prescribing (SP) Network**

- Implement an active travel volunteer buddy scheme – SP clients will be matched with a volunteer buddy to support them with travelling to community activities and everyday journeys, building confidence and supporting with journey planning. Buddies will receive training to build their knowledge and skills, e.g., road readiness, local routes, motivational approaches

### **Community Development**

- Investment in community anchors and grassroots groups with the Voluntary, Faith, Community & Social Enterprise sector (VCFSE) enabling them to; enhance and develop physical activity and active travel programmes/activities; increase knowledge, skills, awareness and confidence about active travel and walking and cycling infrastructure; influence behaviour change within communities

### **Equipment & Infrastructure**

- Establish SP spot purchase/loan scheme for basic equipment (e.g. trainers, clothing, cycle helmets, lights etc.).
- With local partners (e.g. Housing Providers, Colleges, libraries, VCFSE organisations, businesses) identify opportunities to reduce barriers to walking and cycling through the provision of equipment to support the active travel activities, or to develop infrastructure in the area, for example; secure storage, pathway signage and maps. We will co-design these solutions to ensure they meet local need, including working with projects receiving investment (see above).

### **Training**

- Development and enhancement of walking and cycle coaching schemes to meet needs of the local community (e.g. walk leadership, riding a bike, road readiness, maintenance, safety, journey planning etc.) and building capacity and capability within the local VCFSE to deliver this.

## Budget

Item	23-24 Pilot
<i>Project Coordination</i>	2,000.00
Project Manager (In kind from Thriving Communities 0.2FTE)	0.00
Communications & Marketing	2,000.00
<i>Social Prescribing Network</i>	33,151.41
0.5 FTE Volunteer Coordinator	25,651.41
Volunteer Expenses	2,500.00
Social Prescribing spot purchase/loan budget	5,000.00
<i>Community Development</i>	49,848.33
Investment in local anchor & grass roots organisations	25,000.00
0.5FTE Active Travel Community Development Worker	23,013.33
Grant Administration	1,835.00
<i>Training</i>	5,000.00
Training programmes (staffing & delivery costs)	5,000.00
<i>Infrastructure &amp; Equipment</i>	10,000.00
Purchase of equipment to support grass roots activity & to develop community co-designed minor works e.g. signage / street furniture	10,000.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100,000.00</b>

The approach is intended to link with and be complementary to the infrastructure developments which are happening in the Central PCN area. There are significant developments planned to the local walking and cycling network in the near future, supported by the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, the Mayor's Challenge Fund, Active Travel Fund and Emergency Travel Funds.

This includes plans in and around the Town Centre and core retail area to improve cycle access, pedestrian access from the bus station, extending the pedestrianised zone and reappportioning some routes back to cycles and pedestrians. On key town centre routes we plan to improve surfaces, lighting and paths and build cycle stands, and to implement a modal filter to enable a traffic free route into the town centre. There are also plans for an Active Neighbourhood in Westwood (Coldhurst).

Towards the southern end of Central developments will connect Alexandra Park, and the Northern Roots site, to the National Cycle Network, create off road routes to the Lees Linear Park and improve junction crossing points. At the northern end of Central there are plans to improve paths to Royal Oldham Hospital, linking to existing routes and improving the lighting and surface.

Each infrastructure scheme will have an activation programme aimed at increasing usage. This is led by the active travel forum which includes local walking and cycling groups, community organisations, council officers and TfGM, and will include residents and community partners dependent on the scheme. Currently this incorporates an active travel roadshow and schools programmes, we will build on the knowledge and learning from this in the pilot and social prescribing will form part of the activation programme.

The project will work closely alongside the Active Travel Stakeholder Forum, which includes key local stakeholders with an interest in walking and cycling, to ensure plans are integrated and learning is shared. There is also a key link with Oldham's existing Bikeability programme in schools, and community offer for families. We will work with the programme where possible to extend the reach of community opportunities to learn to ride

for children and their families, within the pilot focus area. We will also work alongside GM initiatives Love to Ride and their Train the Trainer programme which can support our volunteers and community groups.

There are other initiatives within the borough which support people with cycling and improved confidence, including the Northern Roots cycling plan and the Local Pilot which is underway in one part of our proposed pilot area. It will be key for this project to work alongside these initiatives to ensure linkages are made strategically and operationally, for example through matched investment and codelivery where appropriate.

### **3. Partnerships & Engagement**

This proposal has been developed in partnership between Oldham Council (Thriving Communities, Sport, Leisure & Wellbeing, Public Health, Transportation Policy, Districts), Action Together as VCFSE Local Infrastructure Organisation and lead provider for Social Prescribing. Through the process we have also consulted with Northern Roots, Central Primary Care Network and TfGM.

Through the project we will work with existing anchor organisations within communities. For example, our Community Champions network has reach into South Asian, Black African and Roma communities, and a strong learning disability & autism partnership. We have VCFSE partners working in the area including BAME Connect and The Ghazali Trust already delivering physical activity programmes. We have connected with Ability Wheels to understand more about the barriers faced by people accessing their services, and the opportunities to develop our active travel offer for those with disabilities. We are working through the Social Prescribing network to engage with staff and participants to understand issues they are facing, and in particular will support those with long-term physical and mental health conditions.

Engagement during the feasibility stage demonstrates there are barriers to active travel around lack of confidence, affordability of basic equipment and clothing, awareness of local routes, safety concerns, ability to ride a bike, access to bikes and bike storage and cultural norms around car usage vs walking. We anticipate that we will need to provide support around confidence building, journey planning and route finding, cycling and walking training schemes, women only activities, bike/scooter loan schemes and providing accessible and secure storage.

In the process of developing this proposal we have reviewed existing insight relevant to this pilot, engaged with existing SP staff and with key stakeholders.

Consultations on local infrastructure and active travel projects demonstrate support for cycle and walking pathways in Central, but raise challenges around accessibility, safety and usage. Responses were limited and support the need for proactive engagement with communities to understand barriers and promote widespread behaviour change. Northern Roots' cycling plan consultation shows 76% of Oldham residents don't own a bike and concerns over safety of local infrastructure and confidence are barriers, particularly for women.

We engaged with SP workforce (12 link workers) and VCFSE groups in Central (257, 10% response rate). Key findings:

- 50% of link workers, 35% of VCSE groups currently encourage active travel

- SP and VCFSE workforce would find training and awareness about local routes and schemes beneficial to enable informed, regular conversations about active travel
- Barriers; equipment affordability (bicycles, footwear, clothing), Oldham geography and weather, ill health, mobility, cultural barriers, religious dress, low awareness of benefits, lack of friend/champion to motivate and practically support
- Ideas; peer support/buddying, low-cost equipment to buy/hire, community talks, group walking and cycling activities, promote active travel routes to amenities, cycle workshops/training, community cycling hubs, motivational active travel champions

We have engaged key stakeholders 1-to-1; strategic - PCN business partner, Northern Roots and Road Safety leads; potential delivery partners - Positive Cycles, Ability Wheels; local community anchors - BAME Connect and Ghazali Trust. Partners support the approach, and recognise the need and demand within the identified communities.

Our Sport England funded Local Pilot included significant community engagement in Central (Glodwick) to understand barriers to physical activity and co-design solutions, supported by community investment. We will build on LP [principles](#) and learning, taking a similar approach to building community solutions for active travel through SP across Central.