

This brief is provided as a summary of the funding processes followed to deliver Non-Motorised Used schemes associated with the National Highways delivery of the A14 and the A428. This process resulted in two programmes of work as explained below.

Highways England NMU Programme 1 –

In April 2019 a Grant Funding Agreement was secured between Highway’s England and Cambridgeshire County Council for £1.9M of Designated funds to deliver Non Motorised User (NMU) schemes as part of the A14 improvements.

A range of schemes were identified by County Council officers which included –

- A1198 – Papworth to Cambourne
- Bar Hill to Longstanton NMU route
- Longstanton Bridleway 10 upgrade
- A1198 Wood Green to Godmanchester
- Girton footpath 4 and 5 upgrade
- Girton to Oakington
- Washpit Lane
- Boxworth to A14
- Dry Drayton NMU link
- Hilton to Fenstanton
- Buckden to Hinchbrook

A condition within the Grant agreement required the National Highways funding to be complimented by match funding.

Outline costings and a delivery programme was prepared for each of the above schemes and through this work it was apparent that only some of the schemes matched the required criteria set by Highways England.

This process identified the compliant proposals for Programme 1 which were as follows –

	HE Grant	CCC – Match Funding	Total
Papworth to Cambourne	£743,000	£231,000	£974,000
Bar Hill to Longstanton	£50,000	£932,000	£982,000
Longstanton Bridleway 10	£388,097	£0	£388,097
Girton to Oakington	£550,000	£450,000	£1,000,000
Washpit Lane	£100,000	£0	£100,000
	£1,831,097	£1,613,000	£3,444,097

The above schemes were tested through the Highways England validation process to ensure they provided value for money. These schemes have now been delivered and the funding has been drawn down from National Highways.

Although not confirmed by National Highways there was an expectation by CCC that a second round of funding for scheme delivery would likely follow in the next financial year, 2021/2022 with the possibility that those schemes outstanding from the original list could be delivered through that process.

National Highways NMU Programme 2 –

Following completion of Programme 1, during August 2021 discussions took place between National Highways and the County Council regarding the opportunity to competitively bid for additional Designated funds to develop a second programme of NMU schemes.

Initially the advice was to develop the bid in readiness for January 2022 with a view to being ready to start works in April 2022.

An ambitious list of 11 schemes were identified by County Officers which included the undelivered schemes from the original 2019 list and additional schemes :

- Girton footpath 4 and 5 upgrade
- A1198 Wood Green to Godmanchester
- Boxworth to A14
- Dry Drayton NMU link
- Buckden to Brampton NMU2
- Hilton to Fenstanton
- Huntingdon railway station to Alconbury Weald
- Great Paxton to St Neots
- Alconbury Village Link
- Oakington to A14 NMU
- Offord Cluny to Godmanchester

A bid of £22.5M was submitted following a construction cost estimate being completed for each scheme along with further analysis using National Highways Prioritisation Matrix.

In March 2022, National Highways stated that although they were supportive in general of the list of enhancements, their view was that £22.5M is too big an ask considering their previous investment of over £3.5M in NMU provisions (Programme 1, Wayfinding and Ouse Valley Way enhancements) through the A14.

They advised that the County should prioritise the programme to 4/5 projects with key factors such as partnership funding and political sensitivity. The method of appraisal would be undertaken using National Highway's new User and Communities Appraisal tool.

National Highways also stated that they were unable to submit any bids under the A14 project, but they would be happy to explore and develop an application under the new A428 project.

In August 2022 a revised prioritised programme was submitted which included scheme descriptions, levels of CCC funding, the Benefit Cost Ratio value Capital Fund calculations, a high-level programme showing how the schemes fitted the 2022/25 funding window along with the individual Scheme Input Control modules.

The revised scheme list was as follows –

- Girton footpath 4
- Boxworth to A14
- Dry Drayton NMU link
- Huntingdon railway station to Alconbury Weald
- Alconbury Village Link
- Oakington to A14 NMU
- Girton to Oakington (Phase 2)

In September 2022, National Highways indicated that the schemes would have to go through an internal Designated Funds governance process where they would review affordability, prioritisation, timelines, risks to delivery and Benefit Cost Ratio values. Once reviewed they would recommend how to move the application forward.

In February 2023 National Highways informed officers that the schemes would not receive support through the A428. It was suggested that the schemes could be resubmitted if Designated funds were to become available through the 3rd Road Investment Strategy, which focuses on the Government's aims for investment from 2025 to 2030 but no details have been confirmed with regards to this.

Whilst this is a disappointing outcome, especially given the extensive support and effort invested by officers, councillors and local communities it should be noted and recognized that throughout the process there have never been any guarantees or commitments from National Highways that they would be able to provide any additional funding to deliver these schemes. Whilst it would have been helpful for this process to have moved at a faster pace, it should be noted that the Designated Fund is a national funding pot that is highly sought after and competition is incredibly high amongst local authorities nationally and National Highways will have had to ensure that the selection process was thorough and robust.

Next Steps –

As part of the Government's ambition to increase cycling and walking in the UK by 2025, as outlined in the first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS, 2017) and more recently the CWIS published in 2022, a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is seen as a new strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at a local level.

An LCWIP will make the case for future Active Travel investment through funding bids.

The Cambridgeshire LCWIP, adopted in October 2022, aligns with a long-term vision to improve the County's walking and cycling networks in order to increase the number of residents travelling on foot and by cycle and thereby improve the health and well-being of all those living and working in Cambridgeshire.

A prioritised list of routes for each District within Cambridgeshire was established using the 2011 Census as a key data source as recommended by the Department of Transport. This data provides origin and destination information for all walking and cycling trips from usual residence to place of work.

Levels of population dictate to a large extent the fact that the prioritised key routes are in or are linking between larger urban areas.

As part of the work on the Active Travel Strategy (due to be adopted in March 2023) a wider active travel network has been identified which includes the current prioritised LCWIP routes (tier 1) plus an additional set of tier 2 routes.

Tier 2 routes have been identified through a review of known routes (identified through previously adopted transport strategies) and new routes (identified through stakeholder engagement and officer review) that will support the creation of a wider connected active travel network across Cambridgeshire.

The next step will be to prioritise the tier 2 routes (Dry Drayton is included) which will then form part of an expanded LCWIP.

The work currently being undertaken to secure the land required to provide the new route will continue. Although we are presently unable to give assurances around future funding, we will endeavour to explore other funding streams as this scheme does form part of our aspirations around a future active travel network in this area.