

FoDDC Active Travel Grants

Introduction

News of this funding, which comes from the government's Shared Prosperity Fund, is very welcome. Incentives to encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle more are particularly important with regard to healthy lifestyles and climate change mitigation.

In Newent, we have constraints imposed by the historic buildings in our town centre and by the limitations of the footpaths which criss-cross the expanded settlement.

Creating an extended network of user-friendly footpaths and cycle routes and safe cycle storage is an ambition already embedded in the Master Plan created with and for the NDP.

Although this is a tight window for the grant application, the chance to apply for funding is one we should not miss.

Information from the FoDDC

The Forest of Dean District Council Active Travel Grant Scheme (ATGS) enables local groups to apply for funding of up to £15,000 to help with active travel solutions. Applicants will need to provide a minimum 20% 'match funding' contribution, i.e. up to £3,750 match funding for a £15,000 grant and there is £100,000 of funding to be allocated in total.

Applications for the grant will need to come from eligible organisations, including charities, community groups, communities interest companies (CIC's), businesses or a limited range of Forest of Dean based, community focused statutory bodies, e.g. Parish Councils or schools.

Examples of Active Travel Schemes that could be funded include new or improved cycle parking or facilities, improvements to walking, cycling or wheeling signage or information boards. It could also include promotional or training events which promote behaviour change and ultimately help to increase walking, wheeling and cycling.

The Forest of Dean Active Travel Grant Scheme is open now for applications and closes on 01 November 2024.

Timetable

The estimated timetable for the ATGS process is as follows:

<i>Publication of ATGS and invitation of funding applications</i>	<i>27 September 2024</i>
<i>Deadline for receiving applications</i>	<i>1 November 2024</i>
<i>Assessment of funding applications and award of funding</i>	<i>13/14 November 2024</i>

<i>Grant Agreements signed and returned</i>	<i>Within 28 days of being sent to the recipient</i>
<i>Deadline for delivery and submission of all claims</i>	<i>14 March 2025</i>

Local Response

Active Travel Routes – The NDP Steering Group has been looking at the proposed routes for walking and cycling provided by the GCC (LCWIP) and the Newent Cycling Group and others. However, the proposals need to be assessed and other solutions suggested potentially raised by experts who are well-versed in regulations for cycle tracks and are aware of best practice in order to create through routes. Sustrans is such an organisation.

A feasibility study by Sustrans is suggested as the best way to use this grant to look at a potential east-west cycle route through Newent. The scope to extend the study throughout the whole town may be outside the scope of this grant but is also worth exploring.

Funding for implementation for the route will be easier to source if a feasibility study has been carried out first.

Cycle storage – although a simpler project, the siting of safe cycle storage needs to be investigated. A number of sites have been suggested, including the Lake Car Park, and close to the Library. These will need to be assessed before the application is made in conjunction with officers at GCC (Transport Hub). The purchase costs of an appropriately sized safe cycle storage unit look to be up to £4K but other options need to be explored and the installation costs known. This can be covered before the application is made.

Funding

Newent Town Council will need to provide match funding to a maximum of £3000.00 the required minimum of 20% for each applications should they be successful.

Funding for the larger projects may be sourced from S106 funding or further government grants.

References

FoDDC Active Travel Fund:

<https://news.fdean.gov.uk/news/grants-of-up-to-gbp-15-000-available-to-help-with-active-travel-solutions>

Sustrans: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-us/>