

REPORT TO THE CABINET

17th JANUARY 2017

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dafydd Meurig

Subject: Footway, Coetmor Road Bethesda

Contact Officer: Dafydd Wyn Williams - Head of Regulatory Department [acting]

Decision sought

Capitalisation of £120,000 underspend in the Regulatory Department, as a contribution towards safety improvement by providing a footway between Plas Ffrancon and Ffordd Hen Barc along Ffordd Coetmor, Bethesda.

Local member's views

I greatly welcome this proposal as I have been trying to get a foot-way on this road between Plas Ffrancon and Hen Barc for several years. The road is extremely busy, leading from Bethesda to Carneddi and Rachub and is also used by buses. Many pedestrians use it as Plas Ffrancon Leisure Centre and Bethesda Cricket and Bowling Club are on this road. Recently the Cylch Meithrin and Flying Start have located to Plas Ffrancon adding to the numbers who use this road. In addition, Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen and Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid are either side of this road and a large number of pupils from these schools use it every morning and afternoon. There is no foot-way on the road and pedestrians and vehicles share the same space. Over the years, traffic on this road has increased substantially. Constructing a foot-way would be a huge contribution to the safety of this part of the area. I really hope that this scheme can be realised.'

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A feasibility report was provided in July 2011, to create a new footway between Plas Ffrancon and Ffordd Hen Barc along Ffordd Coetmor, Bethesda. A copy of this report is appended in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Since writing the report the landowners have been approached and an agreement in principle has been reached.
- 1.3 A bid was submitted to the Welsh Government for £255,000 capital funding to realise this scheme under the theme Safe Routes in Communities in October 2011. Unfortunately, this bid was unsuccessful. From the feedback received it is considered that the scheme is too costly to be supported. A copy of the submitted bid is appended in Appendix 2.

- 1.4 Recently, the local member has reminded the Department of the increasing need for a footway provision at this location and has reported the community's concerns and that the lack of provision is also stopping many from walking to school and to the leisure centre.

THE SCHEME AND FUNDING

- 2.1 The scheme places a new footway provision on part of the roads network in Bethesda which is used a great deal by pedestrians, especially school pupils walking to Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen and those walking to Plas Ffrancon Leisure centre as well as persons walking to the cricket club and the bowling lawn near Ffordd Coetmor. There is currently no footway provision at all between Plas Ffrancon and Ffordd Hen Barc and such a provision would be a substantial safety improvement as well as being an extremely valuable resource for the community.
- 2.2 Creating a footway on Coetmor Road is part of a broader strategy to expand and improve walking and cycling routes in the Bethesda area. During this financial year the Department has attracted money for improving cycle and walking links on Lon Las Ogwen, between Tregarth and Bethesda. Creating a footway along Coetmor Road would improve links between Rachub and Bethesda with obvious access benefits for pedestrians to local schools, leisure centre and the wider community
- 2.3 A workshop has recently been held with the Community Council where footway networks were identified to provide the opportunity of active travel in the community. Of all the routes identified, it was agreed that creating new footway along Coetmor Road was the priority. The reasons being:
- Safe link between Llanllechid Primary School and Dyffryn Ogwen Secondary School;
 - Safe link between the schools, Plas Francon Leisure Centre, the bowling green and Llandllechid cricket club;
 - A safe resource to enable the wider community to access local facilities and services and strengthen the link between Bethesda and Rachub;
- 2.4 With the introduction of Active Travel Act of 2013 in 2015, there is a statutory for all local authorities to provide active travel routes. The Bethesda area is included within the list of the main settlement areas which prioritize areas which qualify for the Active Travel Projects. This scheme will not only provide a link between leisure and educational facilities with the greater community but also contribute to our statutory duty under the Active Travel Act 2013.
- 2.5 Some further work has been carried out recently on the scheme's estimate and it is deemed that £280,000 is now required to realise the scheme bearing in mind land costs, design as well as improvement construction.

- 2.6 This plan is at a more developed stage than other such schemes in the County. It is believed that the plan meets the necessary criteria to attract grant funding from the Welsh Government, but of course a healthy financial contribution from the Council strengthens any bid for funding. The Government requires a contribution of at least 10% by local authorities towards their capital bids. Normally the Department offers the services of Department staff as a contribution, but on more expensive plans those assessing the bids possibly require more persuasion. As seen with capital bid submitted for Lon Las Ogwen, offering more substantial capital contribution can come to fruition, in this instance capital of £ 280,000 was awarded when a contribution of £ 200,000 from the Council's capital contribution was offered
- 2.7 In effect this is what is under consideration here, that the Department is given the power for the capitalisation of £120,000 underspend in the Department as a means of strengthening our bid for further funding from the Government to realise the scheme. It is expected that a bid for funding will be submitted by the Department during February 2017.

Views of the statutory officers

The Chief Executive:

"I understand from the department that the Bethesda area is among the areas to be prioritized for active travel plans and that the resources for realising the project is in place. I have nothing further to add."

The Monitoring Officer:

No comments with regard to propriety

The Head of Finance Department:

I confirm that the Regulatory Department has underspend / adequate reserves to offer as match funding to strengthen the application for funding from the Welsh Government. I believe this is a good opportunity to attract grant funding to finance a project that has clearly been the wish of many residents in the area for many years. I anticipate that the plan will alleviate concerns by significant safety improvements. If successful, the Council's contribution of £120k will create an asset worth £280k which is welcomed.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Feasibility Report