

## **Birmingham Strategic Partnership, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007 Board Meeting**

### **North Birmingham Cycling and Walking Route – Sustrans' Connect2 BIG Lottery Living Landmarks funding bid**

#### **Summary**

The section of the North Birmingham Cycling and Walking Route from the Good Hope area of Sutton Coldfield to the Pype Hayes area, largely along the Newhall Valley Country Park, has been included on a long list of 120 cycling/walking projects by Sustrans for possible inclusion in the final rounds of the BIG Lottery Living Landmarks fund. A map accompanies this note.

Sustrans are a national charity promoting cycling and walking, originators of the National Cycle Network and Living Landmarks national finalists with their project, "Connect2". This will consist of 50 to 70 schemes nationwide, and will be in competition with up to 5 other organisations with projects based on single sites. Should Sustrans win the competition, significant additional match funding would become available for the North Birmingham Route and assist in completing and extending the route and links to it. The route was put forward to Sustrans on the basis of a proven commitment from the City Council over several years of construction and a longstanding approval of the fuller proposed route, along with evidence of support from community organisations.

#### **Background**

The North Birmingham Cycling and Walking Route has been developed since 2001, the proposed route having been approved by the then Street Services Advisory Team and Leisure and Culture Advisory Team and broadly comprising green corridors in Kingstanding and Walmley, linked via Sutton Park and the Birmingham and Fazeley canal. Most recently, in 2006, a section north of the Newhall Valley Country Park to the Coleshill Road was constructed following approval by the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services. A feasibility study is underway on a further section of route across Rectory Park to Good Hope Hospital under the Safer Routes to Hospital programme. Negotiations are also underway with Walmley Golf Club about access for a short distance over land in their ownership that does not form part of the golf course, in order to link the Newhall Valley to Penns Lane. A feasibility study will confirm details in 2007/8. Subject to budget availability, construction of these sections is anticipated in 2008/9.

#### **Funding process**

Sustrans are in the final rounds of the BIG Lottery Living Landmarks funding competition and hope to reach the final round, to be decided by a "Restoration" like public TV vote in late 2007, where £50M will be awarded to the winning project. Living Landmarks aims to improve the natural or built environment by funding a landscape project of national significance whilst enhancing a sense of place for local communities and meeting local needs. Sustrans hope is that Connect2, with its nationwide spread will gain more support than the other 5 single-site finalists. Connect2 aims to reconnect people to their local places so they can choose to travel in ways that create a sense of community pride and benefit their health and the environment, specifically tackling obesity and carbon emissions. Connect2 seeks to overcome real barriers in order to offer people the chance to walk and cycle. Connect2 aims to provide a high quality experience to users where landscaping, planting, quality surfacing and segregation from heavy traffic is commonplace.

Should Connect2 be successful, a match funding contribution of approximately 50% is envisaged. This would enable linking routes to local communities and destinations to be added to the committed main spine route. This improved connectivity will enhance usage. The scale of the Connect2 scheme will be scoped up over coming months and a preliminary estimate of costs prepared. It is possible that if successful, the Connect2 contribution could be in excess of £500,000. Any funds would be available for draw down over a 5 year project period. Within the typical £1M Capital programme for cycling, this would be a manageable City Council commitment.

### **BSP support**

The BSP is asked to;

- i) give the proposal support in principle, bearing in mind that local partnerships/delivery groups in Erdington and Sutton Coldfield will have a local interest and are still to be approached.
- ii) note that there are several national lottery funding opportunities (see also item 7i) and as these are not in competition the BSP can give support to both.
- iii) seek a further discussion on the approaches to promoting cycling and walking and explore its contribution to BCC's review of the 'cycling and walking strategy' for the city.
- iv) note that support in principle does not commit to joint funding but does represent a desire to link local efforts that encourage more cycling and walking.

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19<sup>th</sup> February 2007