

## **Report to the Transport for South Hampshire Joint Committee**

**Date:** 21 June 2010  
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**Subject:** Urban Challenge Fund

### **Purpose of the Report**

This report summarises the Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) consultation response to the proposed Department for Transport (DfT) Urban Challenge Fund.

### **Recommendation**

**That the Transport for South Hampshire Joint Committee ratify the officer response to Government's consultation on the Urban Challenge Fund.**

### **Introduction**

1. In November 2009, "The Future of Urban Transport", was published, which outlined the important role transport has to play supporting the success of urban areas. This was produced by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit in association with the DfT and was based on a significant amount of research undertaken into the impact of transport, both negative and positive, on urban areas.
2. Building on this work, in March 2010, the DfT published "Supporting Cities: A Discussion Paper on Plans for an Urban Challenge Fund". The Urban Challenge Fund aims to provide funding for urban areas to address the many challenges transport creates in an urban environment. This is attached as Appendix 1.
3. The DfT have invited comments on this paper by the 4 June. As there was no formal Joint Committee between the publication of the document and the close of consultation, an officer response was submitted in advance of the 4 June. This report seeks ratification of that response by the Joint Committee and the full response in attached in Appendix 2.

## Background

4. The initial work led by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit with the DfT and other government departments identified that the complex impact that transport has on urban areas. Whilst the work demonstrated that good quality transport links are essential for the success of urban areas, there are a number of negative impacts, particularly associated with increasing levels of car usage. These include congestion, accidents, poor air quality, poor health due to physical inactivity, greenhouse gas emissions and noise. These are estimated to cost up to just under £50 billion per annum.
5. The Urban Challenge Fund aims to deliver a range of transport interventions that make urban areas successful and address the negative impact that transport has on urban areas. It aims to build on the successful work undertaken in the Sustainable Travel and Cycling Demonstration Towns, where more people now walk, cycle or use public transport. This has contributed towards addressing the negative impacts of transport, by for example, increasing the proportion of the population that is physically active, leading to improved health and reduced healthcare costs.
6. The other key strand of the Urban Challenge Fund builds on the previous Transport Innovation Fund (TIF), which sought to reduce congestion through a package of measures, that had to include either road user charging or workplace parking levy. The document admits that TIF was too focussed on congestion. In contrast, the Urban Challenge Fund provides flexibility to allow bidding authorities to consider a range of potential demand management measures, without the mandatory requirement for road user charging or workplace parking levy.
7. The Discussion Paper outlines a number of potential measures that could be included within an Urban Challenge Fund bid. These include:
  - (i) **Sustainable Travel** measures, which includes a range of Smarter Choices initiatives and improvements to street design;
  - (ii) **Encouraging Modal Shift** measures, which outlines a range of interventions to encourage public transport use;
  - (iii) **Demand Management** measures, which still includes road user charging and workplace parking levy, but also a number of other alternative interventions including parking controls, low emission zones and freight consolidation centres; and
  - (iv) **Traffic Management** measures, including consideration of junction design, reallocation of road space to non car modes and more efficient signal timings.
8. The Discussion Paper expects that bidding authorities should have strong governance arrangements in place to deliver.

9. No additional funding is proposed for the Urban Challenge Fund and it is anticipated that funds will be top sliced from existing budgets.

### **TfSH Response**

10. TfSH generally welcomes the proposed Urban Challenge Fund and concurs with interventions that would be implemented. The full TfSH response is attached as Appendix 2 and this section summarises the key points.
11. The following key points noted in the TfSH response are:
  - (i) highlighting the appropriateness of an Urban Challenge Fund to South Hampshire and giving examples of existing success within the sub-region;
  - (ii) welcoming the fact that road user charging or workplace parking levy are no longer mandatory requirement for bidding and a range of other potential demand management measures can be used;
  - (iii) welcoming the need for good governance and highlighting how the TfSH Joint Committee provides a good model;
  - (iv) recognising that the majority of measures come under the Reduce and Manage parts of the TfSH Strategy and have been identified as a high priority for investment in the recently submitted “Urban South Hampshire 2014 to 2019 Delivery Strategy”;
  - (v) highlighting the need for revenue funding to support any Smarter Choices measures proposed within the Strategy;
  - (vi) suggesting that work should be undertaken to better quantify the benefits of improved street design; and
  - (vii) highlighting the need to work in partnership with the Highways Agency, when developing and implementing a traffic management strategy.

### **Summary**

12. The Urban Challenge Fund would appear to provide a good opportunity to secure additional funding to deliver a range of appropriate transport interventions across South Hampshire. The TfSH consultation response welcomes the fund and makes some positive suggestions to clarify details on how elements of it would operate in practice.

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background papers

**The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.**

NB the list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

TITLE

LOCATION

None