

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 7 March 2001
Time: 2.00 to 5.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

TRANSPORT GRANT-CONSIDERATION OF FRAMEWORK FOR 2002–03 BIDS

Purpose

1. To consider and offer comments on the categories of Transport Grant bids to be invited for support in the financial year 2002-03.

Recommendations

2. That bids are invited for:
- a. bids for preparation costs support for additional infrastructure schemes contributing to a wider community regeneration programme are invited for 2002-03.
 - b. road schemes currently receiving support in line with the indicative start dates in the 5-year programme
 - c. package schemes currently receiving support
 - d. new packages presented as part of an overarching partnership or consortium strategy including innovative proposals for public transport.
 - e. Safe Routes to School/Safer Communities and closer relationship with road safety funding. This is subject to the outcome of reviews of Safe Routes to School and road safety arrangements.

Criteria

3. Additional infrastructure schemes including a road element or an interchange and other appropriate measures will be considered for inclusion for preparation programme costs support provided that they contribute to wider community regeneration. Local authorities will have to demonstrate how any proposals will contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life and economic regeneration of the affected communities if they are to be included in the programme. New packages should include innovative projects relating to public transport,

where appropriate, which will contribute to better integration and modal shift. As indicated in paragraph 9 below available funding is limited and it will not be possible to start work on major additional projects until 2004-05 based on current budgets.

4. A Road Safety Strategy is being drawn up and consideration will be given to linking the Safe Routes to School initiative, funding of trunk road safety and the special grant order funding of local authority road safety more closely together. Consideration will be given to supporting, innovative proposals leading to safer communities. Guidance will be issued in the light of the review on the Safe Routes to School initiative due at the end of April and the outcome of the road safety review.

Timing

5. Local authorities will be invited to prepare bids in May/June 2001, for submission to the Assembly by 31 August 2001. Guidance will be issued to reflect the categories of bids invited.

Background

6. Transport Grant is hypothecated from the Local Government Settlement. It is paid as 50% grant and 50% Supplementary Credit Approvals. A note on the development of the grant is attached at Annex A.

7. The announcement of the 2001-02 settlement included, for the first time, a five-year forward indicative programme of major rail and road infrastructure improvements to enable authorities to plan ahead. A copy of the programme is attached at Annex B. The programme sets out the strategic support necessary to deliver the key rail and other package interventions and to start delivering supported road schemes, many of which have been receiving preparation cost support for a significant number of years.

8. Transport Grant is not the only source of funding contributing to the delivery of integrated transport. The Assembly provides two formula based grant payments to each local authority, covering road safety interventions and local transport services subsidy payments. Local authorities need to determine their own priorities within the general unhypothecated local government settlement when determining what other resources to commit to expenditure on highways, footpaths, lighting etc. A further funding stream is the Bus Fuel Duty Rebate paid to local bus operators. The Strategic Rail Authority, the Welsh Development Agency and Lottery Board also make funds available for infrastructure and service support, for industrial access and town centre regeneration, and for community transport initiatives respectively.

9. All local authorities in Wales completed Local Transport Plans in the summer of 2000. These detail local authorities' transport strategies and priorities and explain how they intend to deliver integrated transport at a local level. These plans will become statutory when the

relevant part of the Transport Act 2000 is commenced in Wales. The Local Transport Plans present the local strategic framework against which bids need to be assessed. Discussions are taking place with local authorities on the way Plans can be used in the most effective way to ensure that investment is put to good effect.

10. Local authorities have been strongly encouraged to seek Objective 1 support for eligible schemes. It has been indicated that success in securing such support would enable the start of works date indicated in the 5-year programme to be brought forward.

Forward Commitments

	2002-03 indicative expenditure	2003-04 indicative expenditure	2004-05 indicative expenditure	2005-06 indicative expenditure
Draft budget	56.3	66.3	66.3	66.3
Formal indicative allocations made for package delivery	28.0	18.6	0	0
Additional earmarked allocations for rail projects in the 5 Year forward Programme	9.4	17.0	18.0	4.0
Current Estimated costs of Committed Road Schemes	11.1	12.0	5.7	1.6
Earmarked allocations for road projects in the 5 Year forward Programme	3.0	10.0	19.0	42.0
Earmarked for Safe Routes To School	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Total of commitments¹²	53.5	59.6	44.7	49.6
Balance Remaining	2.8 (5)*	6.7	21.6	16.7

* see paragraph 12

11. 23 of the packages receiving indicative allocations for 2002-03 have been allocated full funding to enable completion. Others have either received full funding for some elements, or indicative allocations at 60% and 40% of the 2001-02 allocation.

12. The vast majority of the 2002-03 indicative budget of £56.3m is already earmarked to support the Assembly's strategies for Rail, Safe Routes to School and to deliver local road schemes. The indicative budget for 2002-03 will be subject to ratification by the Assembly. In considering the categories of bids to be invited, no assumptions can be made that the existing budget will be increased as a result of the Budget Planning round. A further £10 million is available for transport purposes for the next 2 financial years (2002 -03 and 2003-04).

Decisions on the allocation of these funds between Transport Grant and other budgets will be determined later in the year in the light of up to date information on pressures, but in the meantime £2.2m will be made available in 2002-03 to increase the indicative budget to £5m.

Consideration of Categories Eligible to Bid

13. As a result of the existing commitments and the implications of delivering the indicative 5-year programme, the scope for supporting new schemes is limited. The resources committed by local authorities in preparing bids and the National Assembly in their processing and assessment is considerable. To secure best value for money and avoid abortive effort the invitation to bid needs to reflect the need to focus on schemes already receiving Transport Grant support or identified in the forward programme. Any new package schemes considered should be addressing transport solutions to problems which cross authority borders or be taking forward recommendations of studies carried out with Transport Grant support.

14. It is recommended that eligibility of bids be defined in the context of the desired outcomes, in relation to the 5-year programme and partnership and consortium strategy delivery, as set out in paragraph 2.

Programme Criteria

15. Grants must be awarded in support of activities which will help deliver the Assembly's objectives in www.betterwales.com, Putting Wales First and those identified locally in the Local Transport Plans.

16. The quality and standard of information on feedback and monitoring of the scheme performance against objectives and Assembly targets varies considerably between authorities. Officials will be working with the WLGA to identify how more effective monitoring and reporting at a regional level can be achieved . This will also support the Local Authority Policy Partnership process.

Action for Committee

17. The Committee is asked to consider the proposals for defining the eligibility for the submission of bids for new projects and to offer comments.

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TRANSPORT POLICY 2 DIVISION

TRANSPORT GRANT

The Transport Grant scheme was originally designed to support major capital road projects costing more than £5 million on the basis that local authorities could not manage such large projects from within their own resources. The full cost of schemes is met by the Grant and associated supplementary credit approvals (SCAs.).

In the 1998-99 bidding round, support was introduced for integrated transport package schemes with the focus on schemes which would support efforts to deliver a modal shift away from car use. Support for such packages has increased significantly year by year. Indicative allocations of 60% and 40% respectively are allocated to the two years following the bid year to enable authorities to plan and progress their proposals.

The purpose of Transport Grant has gradually changed over the last few years. The publication of the Assembly's own strategic plans and targets and the preparation of Local Transport Plans by local authorities last year highlights the need to focus the grant to support delivery of objectives identified by the Assembly and by authorities in their Local Transport Plans.

"Better Wales" and more recently, "Putting Wales First: A Partnership for the People of Wales" sets out the Assembly's strategic objectives and the need to work in partnership, pursuing individual programme objectives to support major themes of sustainable development, tackling social disadvantage and delivering equality of opportunity. It undertakes to set out a new transport policy which puts the emphasis on achieving and supporting local and regional solutions.

In March the Assembly will consult on a draft Transport Framework document. The outline of the draft Framework was endorsed by the Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 29 November 2000. The draft will be debated by the Assembly in March 2001.

Annex B

Five Year Forward Programme

Year	Approx. total costs £million	Commence Main Construction
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2001-02	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-opening Vale of Glamorgan line to passenger traffic, with new stations at Llantwit Major and Rhoose and the opportunity to serve Cardiff International Airport from the Rhoose station. • Improved interchange facilities at Ammanford and Llandovery stations on the Heart of Wales line and provision of information points at stations.
2002-03	0.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen Street Rail Station capacity enhancement to accommodate the enhanced levels of passenger rail services identified by the SWIFT consortium for the Cardiff Valley Lines • Capacity enhancements to the Rhymney Valley railway Line, including a new station at Energlyn , • Capacity enhancements to the Cambrian Railway line, including a passing loop at Dovey Junction • New rail station at Llanharan to improve accessibility to the rail network for the large number of people living in the area.
2003-04	15	
2003-04	16	
2003-04	2.5	
2003-04	1	
2003-04	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity enhancements to the Taff Vale North railway line to cater for half hourly passenger services to Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil ; • A497 Abererch to Llanystumdwy improvement, with provision for combined footway and cycleway
2003-04	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance works on Wentloog to St Mellons road link to provide a direct freight route between Wentloog and the strategic road network, including the new intermodal Eurofreight terminal and to improve local access particularly for public transport cycling and walking
2003-04	18	

between Wentloog and St Mellons

2004-05

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- New Neath – Port Talbot Peripheral Distributor Road 1C and then 1B (Seaway Parade and A4241 Afan Way), to assist commercial development of the docks area, free the flow of public transport
- Tredegar Park Interchange improvement
- Porth Lower Rhondda Fach link phase 1, including a new bus/rail interchange.
- Maesteg Passing Loop to enable improved service frequency

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2005-06

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- A486/B4336 Ceredigion Link Road improvement, a series of on line improvements and the Llandyssul Bypass
- Church Village Bypass
- New rail station at Brackla to serve residential and employment area

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