

**CABINET**  
**19 NOVEMBER 2020****WORCESTERSHIRE WHEELS TO WORK (WW2W) SCHEME PROPOSAL**

---

**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Dr K A Pollock

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Economy and Infrastructure

**Recommendation**

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) approves commissioning the preparation of a business case for a Wheels to Work Scheme to confirm whether investment in a bespoke Wheels to Work Scheme for Worcestershire offers benefit to the County and value for money; and**
  - (b) notes that the completed business case and associated recommendations will be reported to Cabinet for a decision.**

**Why is this Important?**

2. This report is a response to Notice of Motion 1 Wheels to Work and Education, submitted to Council 16 July 2020. As the Motion is in relation to the exercise of an executive function it has been referred to Cabinet for a decision.

**Background**

3. This report considers the proposal set out in the following Notice of Motion which was agreed by Council at its meeting on 16 July 2020. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr M E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J W Raine and Mr T A L Wells:

“Many County Councils operate a ‘Wheels to Work’ Scheme, to help residents access employment and other key services, such as education, where public transport might not be available. Worcestershire County Council operated a scheme in the 2000s, but it was stopped when Government funding for travel planning was removed.

Instead of closing down their schemes, some other local authorities sought to continue the scheme by appointing local private sector partners to administer the

scheme on behalf of the County Council, with the partners re-charging the grant element of the scheme to the Council.

Locally, Staffordshire County Council's Wheels to Work scheme is an excellent example, which offers either the loan of a bicycle or a moped, with appropriate safety equipment, for a period of 6 months.

Reinstatement of a "Wheels to Work & Education" scheme in Worcestershire could provide genuine, low-cost alternatives to enable many residents to get to work or education.

Rather than offering mopeds, however, e-bikes would be a cheaper and more environmentally sustainable option.

Phase 2 of the government's Active Travel fund could be used to set up such a scheme in Worcestershire. Alternatively, following Staffordshire, we could appoint local private sector partners to administer the scheme on behalf of the County Council.

We therefore request that Cabinet investigates bringing back a "Wheels to Work & Education" scheme that makes bikes and e-bikes available to help residents education who are unable to use passenger transport due to COVID-19 restrictions, lack of service provision or other constraints, especially younger ones who are less likely to have a car, to access employment and education sites where public transport is limited or not available."

(Mr Jenkins and Mrs Oborski (as mover and seconder) and Mrs Tucker (as third signatory of the Notice of Motion) have been invited to the meeting).

4. 'Wheels to Work' and other short-term transport assistance schemes typically involve the rental of mopeds, bicycles or e-bikes to residents for travel to work, or the provision of short-term subsidised rail or bus passes.

### **Rationale for Implementing a Wheels to Work Scheme**

5. Worcestershire is a semi-rural county with over 85% of residents living in the main urban areas or on inter-urban corridors. These areas benefit from varying levels of access to key services and facilities. For the remaining 15% who live in more remote locations accessing employment can be difficult, particularly for residents who don't have access to a car. Access to bus services is a reasonable alternative for some residents. However, this can be more challenging in the remote areas of the county and for employment which requires working unsociable hours such as evenings or early mornings.

### **Strategic Benefits and Dis-benefits of a Wheels to Work Scheme for Worcestershire**

6. Wheels to Work schemes exist to ensure those with limited means are able to access employment and become and/or remain economically active. They also deliver other strategic benefits by enabling users to access other services (health, education and training) as well as leisure and social opportunities, which can deliver

a significantly improved quality of life. Schemes can include bike and e-bikes which are environmentally friendly and may encourage users to maintain using these modes of transport beyond their participation in the Wheels to Work scheme, reducing personal travel costs and assisting in addressing environmental issues including air quality deterioration and congestion.

7. In some cases, Wheels to Work Schemes can eventually become revenue-neutral after initial set up costs, as users' hire charges cover the costs of operating the scheme. However, most schemes require some level of ongoing financial and resource (staff time) support to administer.

8. A further current consideration for a Wheels to Work scheme is that younger people are known to be disproportionately struggling to secure employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst also being less likely to have access to private transport. A Wheels to Work scheme may increase opportunities for younger people to access a greater breadth of employment options at the very beginning of their working lives, at a time when opportunities may be more scarce than normal.

9. Local Authorities either deliver Wheels to Work Schemes in house, or commission these out to third sector or private sector providers. The business case will consider potential delivery options, based on experience from elsewhere, scheme focus and scope, risks and cost.

### **Wheels to Work Scheme Transport Modal Options**

10. Wheels to Work schemes cover a variety of modal options, from moped and cycle hire to the provision of passes for public transport. No further work is proposed for the public transport option as this will duplicate alternative provision which is already established through the Job Centre and would therefore bring no additional benefits to Worcestershire.

11. However, it is proposed that the business case includes a review of the bicycle (including e-bikes) and moped options for Worcestershire to assess the potential benefits and costs of these different modes.

### **Finance**

12. The initial costs of a detailed business case are to be commissioned from consultants. The funding for this has been identified within the existing Transport Planning revenue budget within Economy and Infrastructure.

13. The business case will identify the detailed costs of establishing and maintaining a Wheels to Work scheme, depending on the modal option chosen. The initial and ongoing costs and requirements for funding of the scheme will form part of the subsequent Cabinet report to consider the business case.

## **Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments**

14. A public health impact assessment screening will be included in any business case development, with the findings published within the business case to ensure these influence any service specification made.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

15. The development of a business case for a Wheels to Work Scheme for Worcestershire would be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening to ensure that the needs of protected groups are properly considered in any service specification.

## **Risks**

16. There are no significant risks arising from this report because the recommendation is to procure a business case. The business case will consider the potential risk to the Council of developing a Wheels to Work scheme.

## **Supporting Information**

Staffordshire Wheels to Work Scheme:

[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/wheels/RASPpage.aspx](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/wheels/RASPpage.aspx)

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

### Specific Contact Points for this report

Emily Barker, Head of Planning and Transport Planning

Tel: 01905 822071

Email: [EBarker@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:EBarker@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Rachel Hill, Assistant Director

Tel: 01905 843539

Email: [RJHill@Worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:RJHill@Worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Supporting Information**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Economy and Infrastructure) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meeting of the County Council held on 16 July 2020