

REPORT TO: Executive (Transmodal Implementation)
Sub-Board

DATE: 1st March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: **3MG Western Approach Lobbying Plan**

WARDS: Ditton

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of report is to set out, for discussion a lobbying plan to secure European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to support the development of the 3MG Western Access Option (Knowsley).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

2.1 Members endorse the lobbying plan outlined in appendix 1 of this report

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The current European Funding Programme finished on 31st December 2006. Regional Partners are currently developing a document known as the North West Operational Programme (NWOP). The NWOP sets out the key priorities and actions in regard to how European Funding will be allocated in the new programme, which runs from 2007-2013.

3.2 It is unlikely that the new European programme will be launched before November 2007.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This long lead in time presents both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that there will be adequate time to implement a coordinated campaign of action. The main disadvantage is that there will be a need to lobby over a significant period of time and, therefore, there is a danger of either losing momentum, or that the key messages we would want to present, become 'stale'.

There are also differences in the way in which the new European programme will be governed, managed and delivered. These differences have influenced the suggested lobbying approach to be taken. Equally, the fact that the

NWOP has not yet been agreed will result in a different emphasis in regard to the type of lobbying activity required. For example, much work will need to focus on strengthening Halton's position in the sub-region, rather than direct references to specific, individual projects.

4.2 There are three key issues that will need consideration in regard to 'who we need to lobby and why?' 'When we need to lobby?' and 'how we need to lobby'.

(a) **Resources** - compared with previous European programmes, the resources available to the region will be significantly less and, therefore less funding will be available for capital schemes. (Despite this, there is provision in the Operational Plan to fund 'transport gateways').

(b) **Halton's position in the Merseyside Sub-Region** – although Halton is establishing itself as a key player in the sub-region, the other 5 Merseyside authorities will be entitled to 'special' ring-fenced funding. Halton will not be eligible to apply for this funding and this could leave Halton isolated, as it is probable that other sub-regions will receive their own notional allocations.

(c) **The Managing Authority Role** – whilst the Government Office is coordinating the preparation of the Operational Plan the North West Development Agency will assume responsibility for the management and delivery of the new European Programme. Clearly, there will be a need to promote links with the RDA.

4.3 Taking the above key issues into account the following approach is proposed.

Who we need to lobby?

The people and organisations that we need to lobby fall into the following categories:

Champions - e.g. Halton Borough Council's Leader, Chief Executive

Allies - e.g. Knowsley Borough Council

Fence Sitters - e.g. NWDA, Government Office, The Mersey Partnership, North West Regional Assembly, Merseyside Policy Unit

Opponents – e.g. other Merseyside authorities

4.4 It is also important to continue to lobby our own internal champions both to maintain the profile of the scheme but equally to keep champions abreast of changes or issues relating to the development of the programme

4.5 When do we need to lobby?

Successful lobbying is achieved if a lobbying programme operates on a 'drip-drip' basis rather than one 'big bang'. It also works if the same messages are

repeated to different audiences and by different people. Given the timing of the production of the NWOP, lobbying has already commenced; for example, the Chief Executive and Leader have met with NWDA and Government Office counterparts to lobby in general terms for an allocation of European Funding. Whilst it would be sensible to commence tentative discussions in regard to raising awareness of this specific project now, realistically, more lobbying activity will be needed once the NWOP has been submitted to the European Commission in February.

4.6 How we need to lobby

There are a number of lobbying methods that will be required ranging from 'outside lobbying' through media campaigns, events, press releases to letter writing and one to one meetings.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 If ERDF grant for the scheme were not maximised then the financial contribution from the Council would need to be greater or else the schemes would be of lower quality, less beneficial or in some cases undeliverable.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 All proposed developments will comply with the Disabilities and Discrimination Act (DDA).

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

(NB 8.0, 9.0 AND 10.0 ONLY IF KEY DECISION)

11.0 LIST O

12.0 F BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Operational Programme 2007-2013 3rd Draft	External Funding Division, 1st Floor, Municipal Building	Wesley Rourke