

Cabinet

Meeting date: 7 March 2024

Issue Title: Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Report of: Executive Director - Place

Cabinet Portfolio: Planning Policy & Place

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Non-Exempt

Purpose of Report

1. To adopt the Hart district Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Recommendation

2. Cabinet is recommended to:
 - adopt the Hart district Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) attached at **Appendix 2**, and
 - authorise the Executive Director – Place to make minor alterations, typographical and accessibility (formatting) related corrections to the document before it is published.

Background

3. LCWIPs are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, ideally over a 10-year period.
4. The key outputs of LCWIPs are:
 - a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development,
 - a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment,
 - a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.
5. An LCWIP is not a feasibility study, but a high-level assessment. All proposals will be subject to further feasibility work and detailed design work will be necessary. In some cases, this may mean that a route is moved to an alternative parallel alignment.
6. While it is not mandatory to prepare an LCWIP, authorities that do are well placed to make the case for future investment.
7. Subject to funding and delivery, the LCWIP will lend support in delivering the interlinked themes of:
 - accessibility & inclusivity,
 - health & wellbeing,
 - climate change & air quality,

- mitigating the impact of development, and
 - place shaping & placemaking.
8. The Council and Hampshire County Council jointly commissioned Sustrans to develop the LCWIP for Hart district. The intention is that both the District and the County Council will adopt the final version.
 9. An adopted LCWIP will enable the Council working with the County Council and other partners to:
 - demonstrate a clear commitment to walking and cycling by identifying and prioritising infrastructure improvements,
 - make the case for future funding for active travel infrastructure and developer contributions, and
 - ensure that consideration is given to active modes through integration of the LCWIP with local planning and transport strategies and policies.
 10. In June 2023 Cabinet approved the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for public consultation. The consultation ran for a 10-week period between June and August 2023.
 11. In November 2023 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the working draft LCWIP following consultation. The comments of the Committee, and the actions taken in response to these comments, are covered later in this report.

Main Issues

How the LCWIP was prepared

12. The guidance recommends that LCWIP's are focused on areas where there is a larger/higher density of population and therefore where there is the greatest propensity to increase levels of cycling and walking.
13. The Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032 categorises the towns and villages by their size and the services and facilities they offer. Fleet, including Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath, is the main urban area. Blackwater, Hook and Yateley are the primary local service centres, Hartley Wintney, Odiham and North Warnborough are the secondary local service centres. Consequently, the Hart district LCWIP focuses on these towns and villages.
14. The approach used to develop the cycling and walking networks involved building an understanding of accessibility by walking or cycling to both existing and planned key destinations, including residential areas, employment areas, schools and colleges, leisure and recreation areas. This was informed by a wide range of evidence and documents, for example the Fleet Town Access Plan.
15. The key cycle routes within each of the areas were identified through an evidence-based approach which included analysis of 2011 and 2021 census data alongside other data sources to identify and map out journeys of up to 10km.
16. The core walking zones focused on routes to and from key walking trip generators (within a 2km radius) such as town centres, employment areas, bus and railway stations and schools within each area.

17. Walking and cycling routes, as well as existing barriers to walking and cycling, were also informed, and validated by key internal and external stakeholders throughout the different stages of development. Stakeholders included local Parish & Town Councils as well as local cycling, walking and access groups and local schools.

Results of the 2023 public consultation

18. Formal consultation on the draft LCWIP ran for 10 weeks between June and August 2023. The consultation approach included the following:
 - writing to the contacts on the planning policy database, including Parish & Town Councils and the local MPs,
 - a LCWIP consultation webpage hosted by HCC, including summary information, links to a consultation survey and interactive map of proposed schemes,
 - several consultation events across the district in high footfall areas, where residents could obtain further information about the LCWIP and how to engage,
 - digital campaign including the use of social media, and
 - advertising the consultation in libraries and leisure centres.
19. Over the 10-week period, 249 responses to the walking zone survey and 283 responses to the cycling network survey were received, and 793 comments were placed on the interactive map, which is one of the highest response rates to any Hampshire LCWIP consultation.
20. The feedback broadly supported the cycling routes and walking zones proposed. The majority (58%) of respondents to the cycling survey agreed that the proposed primary and secondary cycling routes connect people with the places they want to get to. While nearly half of respondents (48%) agreed that the walking zones include places people want to walk to. 32% neither agreed nor disagreed and 20% disagreed.
21. The consultation draft LCWIP has been updated to account for the feedback received during the public consultation and a summary of the key findings of the public consultation is included in the document.
22. Some of the changes made as a result of the public consultation included:
 - Walking zone 1 - Yateley core walking zone: Added a crossing at Reading Road,
 - Cycle route 110 - Hartley Wintney to Elvetham Heath: an improved crossing at the junction at Pale Lane,
 - Cycle route 140 - Fleet to Farnborough: identified Avondale as a parallel alternative route to Kings Road,
 - Cycle route 150 - Fleet to Church Crookham: improved crossings at the Basingbourne Road / Florence junction and the Courtmoor (follow on from Greenways) / Velmead junction, where the primary route is crossed by secondary routes,

- Cycle route 220 - Fleet station to Crookham Village: identified a spur to the southern end along Coxheath Road to Gally Hill Road.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee comments

23. In November 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the working draft LCWIP and noted that:
- the strategic elements of the LCWIP were good, provided a high-level framework of the key areas across Hart district where interventions could have the greatest impact on demand,
 - it picked up matters relating to the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency,
 - in general terms the key origin and destination for the cycle routes was well supported,
 - the walking zones were accepted, and in most cases the areas covered were correct,
 - there was an understanding that this was a high-level document, and the details were 'a potential solution' or 'an indication of the type of solution' which could be implemented, and
 - it was noted that the LCWIP did build on previous work such as the green grid and the Fleet Town Access Plan (FTAP).
24. The meeting expressed the following concerns about the document:
- that the document contained many specific design details. This led to concern that it was only these details that would be considered going forward and that many other good and more practical solutions would be overlooked,
 - that some of the routes suggested, although attractive would be discounted as impractical once they were presented to the Highways Authority. It was confirmed that the County Council as joint commissioners of the work had reviewed all of the content of the LCWIP and were satisfied,
 - it was not clear how the feedback from the consultation stages had been taken into consideration. It was agreed that an analysis of the feedback received would be beneficial.
 - that when funding was being sort that, it would only be sort for the items in the report, some of which the members felt were either impractical or undeliverable.
 - that if the funding and focus was on the larger more impractical items the smaller more deliverable items in the report may be overlooked.
25. It was noted that the strategic part of the document, the vision and context were good. It was the detailed solutions to the core walking zones and cycle routes where concerns were being raised.

26. The Committee asked whether there may be an opportunity for further engagement with Ward Members to feed into the detailed solutions for the cycling and walking zones.
27. It was agreed that a clear statement should be added to the report stating that the routes contained in it were not the final decision and that there would be an opportunity in the future to have input into the various routes.
28. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee concluded that they had concerns about the detailed design sections of LCWIP report in its current form and that it would encourage a review of the document in conjunction with feedback. There should be consideration of what further work is required and by whom.

Response to comments raised by Overview & Scrutiny

29. In response to the Committee's feedback further work was undertaken to address the concerns raised and improve the clarity of the document:
 - the structure of the LCWIP has been reworked so that the strategic elements (routes and zones in Section 3) come first, with the detailed indicative interventions shown in Section 4,
 - the introduction to Section 4 (page 53) is now clearer that the interventions shown are indicative; they help understand the scale of change needed and provide a starting point for the development of new schemes,
 - within section 4, the recommended interventions were reviewed and, to aid understanding, a column has been added to each table of interventions identifying the issue that the intervention seeks to address,
 - comments from Parish & Town Councils that were received by email during the public consultation in 2023 were re-reviewed and a response provided to the points made (see **Appendix 3**), and
 - there was a further round of engagement with ward members in January 2024. Feedback received from this additional consultation has been reviewed and the draft LCWIP amended accordingly (**see Appendix 4**).

Implementation and review

30. The LCWIP is a high-level document. The proposed cycling and walking networks indicated in the plan outline the potential alignment of a route and the interventions are at an early development stage and should not be considered as detailed proposals. The delivery of the LCWIP is dependent on both Councils' ability to seek and secure funding to both develop and deliver future schemes.
31. The LCWIP will enable the District Council and County Council to make future bids for funding for the highlighted schemes from a range of organisations, for example the DfT and Active Travel England.
32. Some of the schemes may be delivered in part through negotiated S106 and or S278 agreements through the planning development management processes, and / or the spend of existing S106 funding. An example is the Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB) site – now known as Crookham Park. Through the granting of planning permission, the County Council secured a significant S106 sum to

mitigate the impacts of that development. The QEB Transport Steering Group review the progress on this. The Hart district LCWIP is complementary to the existing work / schemes which are already in the pipeline.

33. The DfT's LCWIP Guidance states that it is 'envisaged that the LCWIP will need to be reviewed and updated approximately every four to five years to reflect progress made with implementation.'

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

34. The alternative option is not to adopt the LCWIP. However, without an adopted LCWIP the district would be at a major disadvantage when seeking active travel funding or developer contributions towards walking and cycling infrastructure improvements.

Corporate Governance Considerations

Relevance to the Corporate Plan

35. A key priority of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023/2027 is to encourage more cycling and walking by extending the Green Grid network and working with Hampshire County Council and others to improve infrastructure and reduce barriers to walking and cycling.
36. This also includes the goal to extend the green grid through adopting and implemented, in partnership with Hampshire County Council, a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Service Plan

37. Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? Yes
38. Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? Yes
39. Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?
Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

40. There are no legal or constitutional implications as a result of the recommendation.

Financial and Resource Implications

41. There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendation.
42. Having an adopted LCWIP will enable the District Council and County Council to make future bids for funding for the highlight schemes, and some may be able to be delivered in part through negotiated S106 and or S278 agreements through the planning development management processes.

Risk Management

43. There are no risk management issues as a result of the recommendation.
44. There may be practical risks with the development and delivery of specific LCWIP routes or zones and these will need to be managed through the relevant risk management and project management processes. There may also be legal processes such as Traffic Regulation Orders that will need to be undertaken,

depending on specific measures progressed. These will be subject to separate assessment and consideration as specific scheme proposals are developed.

Equalities

45. The LCWIP is a high-level document which sets out the framework for delivering infrastructure improvements for walking and cycling. As it does not set out any detailed designs for the infrastructure, there is a neutral impact on people with protected characteristics. Any detailed transport schemes delivered by Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council or a partner organisation will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Climate Change Implications

46. The LCWIP seeks to provide new and improved 'active travel' infrastructure that will make walking and cycling more attractive, safe, direct and comfortable to use to encourage more modal shift away from the car. This will contribute to reducing energy and fuel consumption as well as reducing emissions. This will make a positive contribution towards the Council's target of Hart district being carbon neutral by 2040.

Action

47. Hampshire County Council will seek to adopt the LCWIP.
48. Subject to adoption by both the Council and HCC the LCWIP will be published on the Council's website.
49. The delivery of the cycling routes and core walking zones in the LCWIP are dependent on both Councils' ability to seek and secure funding to both develop and deliver future schemes. The Councils' ability to make the case for future funding from the Government as well as from developer contributions is enhanced by the adoption of the LCWIP.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Core Walking Zones and Primary Cycle Routes

Appendix 2: Hart Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Appendix 3: Parish and Town Council responses to public consultation in 2023

Appendix 4: Hart District Councillor comments – January 2024