

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	2 NOVEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	15
TITLE:	LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN		
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the outcome of an expression of interest submitted to the Department for Transport for technical support to develop a long-term strategy for cycling and walking.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the committee notes the report

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading's third Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026 (LTP3) sets out our transport vision to 'better connect people to the places that they want to go: easily, swiftly, safely, sustainably and in comfort'. In order to achieve this vision a number of sub-strategies aligned to wider Council policies have been adopted to encourage cycling, walking and public transport use, including the Cycling Strategy 2014, Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the School Travel Strategy. These documents set out detailed policies on how we will deliver infrastructure improvements and encourage and promote sustainable travel.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This report sets out our intention to complement the existing LTP3 sub-strategies through the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, following the launch of the Government's 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy'.
- 4.2 The Plan will set out our long-term vision for cycling and walking to encourage more people to consider travelling by these modes for local journeys, or as part of longer journeys, and work towards the strategy's ambition of delivering:
- Better Safety - through safer and better connected communities;

- Better Mobility - improved cycling and walking networks to key destinations, including transport hubs, schools and workplaces; and
- Better Streets - designed for all ages and abilities.

4.3 The core deliverables of the Plan will consist of the development of a network plan identifying preferred routes linking communities with local destinations and a prioritised programme of improvements for future investment. These will be further supported by a report setting out the approach and analysis undertaken.

4.4 It should be noted that the preparation of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is non-mandatory however the strategy states that Local Authorities who have a plan will be "better placed to make the case for future investment".

4.5 In order to encourage Local Authorities to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, the Department for Transport announced the opportunity for Local Authorities to apply for technical assistance through an expression of interest process.

4.6 A joint proposal to develop a Plan for the Reading urban area was subsequently submitted to the DfT, in partnership with Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils and supported by Thames Valley LEP. The DfT recently confirmed that our proposal has been granted technical support for up to 30 days - the maximum based on our population.

4.7 The DfT are now in the process of appointing a consultant to provide technical assistance to authorities who were able to demonstrate a clear strategic vision of working towards the delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan objectives. The overall development of the Plan will be led by Reading Borough Council using existing resources and supported by Officers at Wokingham and West Berkshire, who Officers are already working closely with in the development of the new National Cycle Network route - NCN 422. In addition, the Department has also appointed the Active Travel Consortium led by Sustrans, in partnership with Cycling UK and Living Streets, to provide further support in developing the strategic, economic and policy case.

4.8 Inception meetings with the consultant and Sustrans are expected to take place in the autumn and further updates on the development of the Plan will be reported at future meetings.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will encourage people living, working and visiting Reading to consider cycling and walking for local journeys, or as part of longer journeys, and meets the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active; and
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

5.2 The final plan will also contribute to the following strategic aims:

- To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley
- To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Community engagement will be a key element of the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to ensure that people living, working and visiting Reading have an opportunity to feed their thoughts and ideas into the plan.
- 6.2 As set out in Section 6 in the Cycling Strategy - Partnership, Consultation and Community Engagement, we will work in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including user groups representing cycling, walking and access and disability groups, participants of active travel initiatives and local delivery partners, such as those in the education and employment sector. A series of community based workshops/events will also be set up, as described in the Cycling Strategy.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for improvements developed as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan at an appropriate time.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Department for Transport has granted our request for up to 30 days technical support to develop a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan covering the Reading urban area.
- 9.2 Any additional support will be funded from existing transport budgets or through existing resources.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 Cycling Strategy 2014 - Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2420/Cycling-Strategy-2014/pdf/Cycling\\_Strategy\\_2014.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2420/Cycling-Strategy-2014/pdf/Cycling_Strategy_2014.pdf).
- 10.2 Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan 2017/18, Traffic Management Sub Committee, June 2017: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7282/Item18/pdf/Item18.pdf>.
- 10.2 Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy, Department for Transport, March 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>.

10.3 Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans Technical Guidance, Department for Transport, April 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance-and-tools>.