

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20 NOVEMBER 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	15
TITLE:	LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Reading, which will be adopted under the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP4), and seeks approval to submit the first iteration to the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 1.2 Appendix A - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
Appendix B - Prioritised List of Cycling and Walking Improvements

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the first iteration of the Local Cycling and Walking Plan, including submission to the Department for Transport.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes further consultation on the emerging Local Transport Plan will be integrated into the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 was adopted by Full Council in March 2011, setting the overarching transport policy for the Borough. The Cycling Strategy 2014 '*Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers and Promoting Safer Cycling*' was adopted as part of LTP3 covering the period to 2019.
- 3.2 The Council undertook a consultation to help inform the development of a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in summer 2019, shaped around five themes. The proposals in this report support the themes '*People and Places*', '*Healthy Lifestyles*' and '*Clean and Green*' and '*Inclusive Growth*'.
- 3.3 The LCWIP will be a 'live' sub-strategy to LTP4 spanning the period 2020 to 2030 in line with ambitions to deliver a carbon neutral Reading by 2030 and residential and employment growth as set out in the new Local Plan to 2036.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Department for Transport invited Local Authorities to submit expressions of interest to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in summer 2017 to help meet the targets set out by Central Government in the Cycling and Walking Investment Plan published in March 2017. The DfT highlighted that Local Authorities who developed an LCWIP would be looked upon favourably in future funding rounds.
- 4.2 Our joint application for the wider Reading area, in partnership with Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils, was one of 46 successful expressions of interest submitted to the DfT. The LCWIP has been developed with support from DfT's appointed consultant, WSP, and Sustrans who are part of the Active Travel Consortium.
- 4.3 The LCWIP sets out ambitious plans to transform our streets to encourage more people to cycle and walk for local journeys or as part of longer multi-modal journeys, through the creation of strategic routes supported by a series of orbital, local and leisure routes better connecting people to the places.
- 4.4 The Plan sets out targets to increase cycle mode share into/from the town centre from 4% to 8% by 2030, and to 10% by 2036. Similarly, walking targets will aim to increase trips from 29% to 35% by 2030, and to 40% by 2036. In addition to these targets, the Plan also sets out our intention to reduce the number of cyclists and pedestrians injured on our roads and to increase the number of children cycling and walking to school.
- 4.5 The current mode share of cycling in Reading is approximately in line with the national average, and with 28% of adults walking and 5% cycling at least three times a week both of these figures are above the national average.

There are examples of significantly higher levels of cycling both in the UK and most notably abroad in places such as the Netherlands and Denmark, therefore our targets have been established to ensure Reading would be amongst the areas with the highest levels of walking and cycling in the UK with the successful delivery of the plan.

- 4.6 Significant levels of housing and employment growth are planned both within the borough and outside in neighbouring authorities, with resulting implications for Reading's transport network. Over 670 new homes are planned every year in the borough to 2036, predominately focused in the town centre and to the south, but also at specific sites to the north, east and west. In addition, thousands of new homes are planned every year outside the borough which will result in significantly increased demand for travel within Reading.
- 4.7 The LCWIP (Appendix A) details the national regional and local policy context including links to the new Local Plan, emerging LTP, Climate Change and Health & Wellbeing Strategies, alongside specific policies relating to areas including air quality. The document details the process followed in developing the plan, as set out in technical guidance issued by the DfT, and the key outputs including cycling and walking network plans and a prioritised list of improvements on the identified routes (Appendix B of this report) which will be used to inform future funding bids.
- 4.8 The measures set out in Appendix B have been prioritised against the five proposed LTP themes (People and Places; Healthy Lifestyles; Clean and Green; Inclusive Growth and Smart Solutions), alongside deliverability considerations and an assessment of the potential to increase levels of walking and cycling. This means that future improvements delivered through the strategy, subject to funding, will be focused to achieve the greatest benefits, including improving facilities in areas where levels of walking and cycling are currently low; areas of future growth to encourage modal change when new development takes place; and areas of higher health inequality and deprivation to provide enhanced access to jobs, education and health services to those most in need.
- 4.9 It should be noted that the LCWIP is a 'live' document that will be reviewed and updated periodically. Feedback on the LCWIP will be sought in parallel to undertaking further consultation on the emerging LTP in spring 2020.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The LCWIP will help to deliver the following service priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 'Shaping Reading's Future: 2019-2023' by encouraging greater levels of cycling and walking through the provision of enhanced facilities throughout the borough:

- Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities.
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe.
- Promoting health, education, culture & wellbeing

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Consultation activities undertaken as part of the initial consultation on the emerging Local Transport Plan have informed the development of this Plan, including almost 3,000 online responses, public drop-in sessions, school workshops and meetings with interest groups and stakeholders, such as Climate Change Strategy 'transport' theme group, Older People's Working Group and the Access and Disabilities Working Group. A workshop was also held with the Cycle Forum in May 2019.
- 6.2 Feedback on the LCWIP will be sought in parallel to undertaking further consultation on the emerging LTP in Spring 2020.
- 6.3 Further engagement activities that have helped inform the LCWIP are set out in Section 6 of the Plan.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None resulting from this report.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to 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.
- 8.2 As set out in Section 6 of the LCWIP, schemes developed under the LCWIP will take into account the needs of those with particular mobility needs as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.3 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the proposals set out within the LCWIP and does not consider there to be a differential impact on groups protected under the Equality Act. Further Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as schemes are developed and approval sought for their delivery.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Our transport strategy is focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. The production and delivery of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan form part of this overall strategy, which has achieved considerable success in recent years including around 35% of trips into Reading town centre being made by pedestrians and cyclists.
- 9.2 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total emissions. Therefore significant investment in sustainable transport solutions, including the proposals set out in the LCWIP, is vital in order to respond to the Climate Crisis declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposals set out in the LCWIP are currently unfunded improvements. However the prioritised list of measures will be used to inform future funding rounds, such as those announced by Central Government and Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 Traffic Management Sub-Committee 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan', 2nd November 2017.
- 11.3 Department for Transport, Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>.
- 11.4 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Technical Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance-and-tools>