

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – Thursday 15 April 2021**

### **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Note the process that has been set by the Department for Transport and followed by the County Council for undertaking a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the amendments that have been made following the outcome of the public consultation process.
- b. Review the contents of the LCWIP and offer further feedback for consideration before it is published as the final 2021 version.

#### **Report of Darryl Eyers, Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

#### **Summary**

##### **What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?**

1. Staffordshire's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) follows the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance that specifies a six-stage approach to producing an LCWIP. The draft LCWIP was published for consultation in February 2020 and includes a £31 million 10-year programme of investment for Burton upon Trent, Cannock, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and Lichfield.
2. In response to the consultation, it is proposed that the final LCWIP recognises that £31 million is a minimum investment requirement necessary to meet new government standards set out in local transport note LTN 1/20 on delivering high quality cycle infrastructure. The LCWIP has also been expanded to acknowledge the walking and cycling needs throughout Staffordshire which will also significantly increase the £31 million funding ask.
3. Members are being asked to review the LCWIP and offer any further feedback for consideration before it is published as the final version. Once the final version has been approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, it will be published on Staffordshire County Council's website. Government has announced that future funding for walking and cycling is more likely to be secured by local authorities that have a published LCWIP that follows Government criteria.
4. Active Travel England is a new inspectorate that is being set up by Government who will be a statutory consultee within the planning system, pressing for high quality walking and cycling provision. They will also be publishing annual reports on highway authorities and grading our performance.

5. Going forward, every opportunity will be sought to secure additional funding for walking and cycling and the LCWIP will be the basis of future funding bids. It can also be used to help negotiate developer contributions through the planning consent process.
6. Progress has already been made on securing funds to deliver schemes in the LCWIP, for example through the Active Travel Fund. On 3 March 2021, the Government announced Staffordshire County Council's 2021/22 indicative Capability Fund revenue allocation of £252,386 to further develop high quality LCWIP schemes and implement complementary behavioural change programmes. Capital funding allocations are also expected for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25.
7. Policies and proposals within the LCWIP will be integrated into other policy documents such as the District/Borough Integrated Transport Strategies and Local Plans. LCWIP delivery and promotion will also utilise other relevant Corporate public health engagement that is already taking place, such as Together Active and Do It to Feel Better.

## Report

### Background

8. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has not previously been considered by the Select Committee. A delegated decision was made in February 2020 by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to submit the draft LCWIP to the Department for Transport and publish it for consultation.
9. In 2017, the Government invited local transport authorities to publish LCWIPs to help deliver their Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. LCWIPs are also recognised in other national policies including National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) and Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking.
10. Within Gear Change, the Government also announced the setting up of an inspectorate led by a new national walking and cycling commissioner. They will be a statutory consultee within the planning system, pressing for high quality walking and cycle provision in Local Plans and planning applications, in line with new standards laid down in LTN 1/20 guidance. Active Travel England will also be publishing annual reports on highway authorities and grading our performance.
11. LCWIPs are a long-term approach to developing cycling and walking networks, including a 10-year prioritised programme of improvements. Department for Transport (DfT) guidance specifies the six-stage approach to producing an LCWIP, as described in Table 1.

**Table 1: LCWIP Process Determined by DfT**

Stage	Name	Description
1	<b>Determining Scope</b>	Establish the geographical extent of the LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.

<b>2</b>	<b>Gathering Information</b>	Identify existing patterns of walking and cycling and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes.
<b>3</b>	<b>Network Planning for Cycling</b>	Identify origin and destination points and cycle flows. Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required.
<b>4</b>	<b>Network Planning for Walking</b>	Identify key trip generators, core walking zones and routes, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required.
<b>5</b>	<b>Prioritising Improvements</b>	Prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment.
<b>6</b>	<b>Integration and Application</b>	Integrate outputs into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.

12. For large geographical areas such as Staffordshire, DfT Guidance recommends focusing on areas that have the greatest potential for growing cycling and walking trips. Based on this guidance, the County Council chose to focus the LCWIP process on the six main urban settlements of Burton upon Trent, Cannock, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and Tamworth. These are compact settlements of a size that can support journey distances that can be easily made by walking and cycling to the largest number of jobs, services and education establishments.
13. In 2017, the focus of the LCWIP was justified to the DfT in a bid for 60 days of technical support. The bid was successful and during 2018 and 2019, Phil Jones Associates (PJA), who contributed as authors of the LCWIP guidance, were appointed to Staffordshire County Council to complete the GIS analysis that was required to determine the locations of highest cycling demand. The cycling charity, Sustrans, was also commissioned to advise the County Council in the development of the LCWIP. Both PJA and Sustrans provided a high level of experience in the auditing of the priority cycling routes and town centre walking zones to help identify effective and deliverable schemes.
14. The network planning for cycling relied on the mapping of the main origin and destination points. Commuter and school trips were considered, together with forecast future demand from proposed new residential development sites. The six town centres were defined as the core walking zones where the greatest number of walking trip generators are located close together and where all pedestrian infrastructure is deemed to be important.
15. The analysis and audits identified a total of 200 potential schemes throughout the six urban centres that could benefit cyclists and/or pedestrians ranging from an estimated scheme cost of £10,000 to £1.5m, with a combined total cost of £31 million. These schemes were further prioritised in terms of Effectiveness, Fit with Policy, Economic Impact and Deliverability.

## **Public Consultation Process**

16. The results of the GIS analysis and route audits that led to the identification of the 200 schemes were reported in the draft LCWIP that was published for consultation in February 2020.
17. Councillors, key stakeholders and residents were invited to comment on the draft LCWIP document in June/July 2020. 99 responses were received, including 16 stakeholders and 15 councillors. 36 respondents were from outside the six urban centres covered by the draft LCWIP.
18. Highlights from the consultation are as follows:
  - a. 42 respondents requested that the LCWIP should cover the whole of Staffordshire
  - b. 23 respondents suggested that the LCWIP was not ambitious enough and should recognise DfT's new guidance note, LTN 1/20
  - c. 10 respondents were not supporters of cycling
  - d. Four stakeholders felt that the LCWIP overlooked the contribution that improved canal towpaths could make to enhancing the walking and cycling environment
  - e. 17 respondents were critical of the poor condition of existing cycle routes and stated that investment should be focused on footway and cycleway maintenance
  - f. 8 respondents stressed the need for better cycle parking
  - g. Other issues raised included the need for wayfinding and leisure routes; the need to focus on school trips; and the recognition that e-bikes are increasing the potential for longer distance cycle journeys.

### **Outcome of the Public Consultation Process**

19. The £31 million investment recommended in the draft LCWIP is now recognised as a minimum requirement. This level of funding does not fully acknowledge the need to consider local transport note LTN 1/20 which provides DfT guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality cycle infrastructure. LTN 1/20 was published in July 2020, after the publication of the draft LCWIP. The £31 million also does not include the need to upgrade and maintain all existing cycle infrastructure and footways, and the need to provide high quality cycle parking and wayfinding.
20. In response to the consultation, the final LCWIP has been expanded to recognise the walking and cycling needs throughout Staffordshire which will further increase the £31 million investment requirement. As funding opportunities arise, LCWIP appraisals, route audits and business cases will be completed, when necessary, to justify investment in the following:
  - a. Local cycle networks and walking zones in Staffordshire's smaller towns
  - b. Expansion and upgrade of the National Cycle Network
  - c. Accessible canal towpaths in the vicinity of local settlements and canal side attractions
  - d. Upgrade of greenways and well-used leisure trails
  - e. Potential opening of disused rail lines
  - f. Maximising the opportunity to enhance walking and cycle provision at the interfaces with HS2

- g. Maximising the opportunity to create new walking and cycling infrastructure associated with strategic development sites

## **Next Steps**

21. In view of the process that has been set by the Department for Transport and the outcome of the consultation process, members are being asked to review the LCWIP and offer any further feedback for consideration before it is published as the final version. Government has announced that future funding for walking and cycling is more likely to be secured by local authorities that have a published LCWIP that meets the required six-stage approach detailed in Table 1. Once the 2021 version has been approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, it will be published on Staffordshire County Council's website, with the aim of reviewing the document every three years.
22. Going forward, every opportunity will be sought to secure additional funding for walking and cycling and the LCWIP will be the basis of future funding bids. Policies and proposals within the LCWIP will be integrated into other policy documents such as the District/Borough Integrated Transport Strategies and Local Plans. County Council responses to Neighbourhood Plans will also consider LCWIP recommendations.
23. Through the planning consent process, developers will be made aware of the LCWIP and will be required to consider it in the preparation of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans. Through this process, S106 obligations and S278 conditions should be negotiated to reflect the LCWIP. The robust evidence base that has been used to support the LCWIP is expected to make these negotiations more successful in terms of securing developer contributions.
24. Economic regeneration teams at both the District/Borough Councils and the County Council are actively engaged in encouraging the growth and prosperity of the six town centres included in the LCWIP. The County Council will work with the District/Borough Councils on the highway and transport aspects of these strategies, to promote the recognition of LCWIP recommendations.
25. LCWIP delivery and promotion will utilise other relevant Corporate engagement that is already taking place. This includes the sharing of communication channels used by Together Active Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and the Public Health and Prevention Team. The Public Health and Prevention Team are developing a Whole Systems Approach to obesity bring together key stakeholders, across the system, to work in partnership in addressing obesity levels in Staffordshire. There is also the opportunity to tap into the Do It to Feel Better campaign that links to the County Council's Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. The provision of additional revenue resources would enable the County Council to promote and encourage use of new walking and cycling facilities.
26. The LCWIP links to the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework approved by Cabinet on 17 February 2021. A shift from vehicle travel to walking and cycling for shorter journeys will contribute towards carbon reduction and improved air quality. Delivery of the LCWIP will influence travel in Staffordshire,

helping to reduce Staffordshire's wider carbon emissions and contributing to the wider benefit of increasing active travel.

27. Progress has already been made on the delivery of schemes in the LCWIP. DfT funding has been secured through the Active Travel Fund and other funds managed by Sustrans. Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure throughout Staffordshire is also being made through S106 developer contributions, HS2 Phase One Road Safety Fund, Getting Building Fund (managed by Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership), Cannock Chase Council Community Infrastructure Levy, Heritage Lottery Fund, Highways England and West Midlands Railway (CCIF fund). The County Council will continue to ensure funding opportunities are maximised through ongoing engagement with appropriate stakeholders.
28. Staffordshire County Council's 2021/22 indicative Capability Fund revenue allocation of £252,386 is available to support:
  - a. The development and design of proposed LCWIP schemes to LTN 1/20 standards
  - b. Further LCWIP appraisals and route audits throughout the wider Staffordshire area
  - c. LTN 1/20 reviews of walking and cycling infrastructure proposed as part of the planning application process
  - d. Behavioural change programmes linked to LCWIP infrastructure
  - e. Raising the profile of walking and cycling in Staffordshire
29. DfT capital funding allocations expected for the funding period 2021/22 to 2024/25 will support the delivery of LCWIP infrastructure to LTN 1/20 standards.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

30. The LCWIP will support the following priorities, as identified in the Strategic Plan:
  - a. Help Staffordshire's economy to grow and generate more good jobs
  - b. Invest in infrastructure for growing communities
  - c. Improve education and training so that life-long learning offers everyone the opportunity to succeed
  - d. Inspire healthy, independent living
  - e. Support more families and children to look after themselves, stay safe and well

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

31. A delegated decision to publish the final version will be made by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

### **Community Impact**

32. A Community Impact Assessment has been produced and is provided in Appendices 2 and 3. There are identified benefits provided by the delivery of the

LCWIP that can be associated to the population as a whole. There will be positive impacts on:

- Mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyles
- Economic growth, income, workplace health and sustainable access to jobs
- Transport, the built environment, air quality and use of recycled materials
- Strengthening communities, improving community safety and access to education and leisure

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (revised main document)

Appendix 2 – Community Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – CIA checklist and Executive Summary

Appendices to the draft for consultation LCWIP document can be found at:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Transport/transportplanning/Walking-and-cycling.aspx>

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