

Cheshire East Council

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	14 th March 2017
Report of:	Frank Jordan, Executive Director – Place
Subject/Title:	Cycling Strategy for Cheshire East
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr David Brown – Highways & Infrastructure

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present Cheshire East Council’s Cycling Strategy to Cabinet. The strategy sets out the vision for cycling within the Borough and provides a strategic framework that can shape policy, planning and design decisions.

Our Vision for Cycling in Cheshire East:
“To enable more people to cycle safer, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys.”

- 1.2. The strategy covers the period 2017 – 2027. It sets out a plan for guiding investment. The strategy aims to achieve an ambitious target of doubling the number of people in Cheshire East who cycle, at least once a week, for any journey purpose by 2027.
- 1.3. In adopting the strategy now, there is an opportunity to capitalise on increased public awareness and interest in cycling resulting from the hugely successful Tour of Britain. This includes development of a legacy, as detailed in the “Tour of Britain 2016 – Initial Evaluation” report.
- 1.4. The strategy demonstrates how a network of high quality strategic cycle routes, connecting key growth areas and local communities, can be developed. A map has been prepared to illustrate the conceptual strategic cycle network, which will shape the Council’s future infrastructure programme for cycling. This network connects all principal towns and key growth areas, whilst enabling access to leisure opportunities and Cheshire’s natural environment.
- 1.5. The Cycling Strategy supports the ‘Quality of Place’ concept which deals with the quality of the built and natural environment, its interaction with the

people living in the area, the ability of individuals to make a life there and the vibrancy of the area and its culture.

- 1.6. This document is relevant to a number of the Council's services including Infrastructure & Highways, Planning, Public Health, Regeneration & Growth, Public Rights of Way and Leisure & Tourism. During development of the strategy there has been engagement with Council officers across these disciplines, ensuring that different teams have helped to shape the strategy and have a strong understanding of their role in the delivery.
- 1.7. External stakeholders including Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and Sustrans (National Cycling Charity) also contributed to the strategy. Local cycle groups have also actively participated in the process through attendance at seminars and stakeholder meetings, which has been extremely valuable.
- 1.8. A draft cycling strategy was published in July 2015. Public consultation on this document sought the views of all residents, cyclists and non-cyclists. Almost 1,000 people responded to the consultation stating that their greatest concern about cycling is safety. This mirrors wider surveys in the UK, which have found safety concerns are a major impediment to increasing levels of cycling. Therefore, the objective is to create high quality cycling facilities that enable people to feel safer when making cycle journeys.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Cabinet is recommended to agree the vision and objectives as set out in the Cycling Strategy (Appendix 1). Upon this agreement, the document will be adopted as a part of the Council's transport strategy framework.
- 2.2. Authorise the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Highways & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, to finalise the Executive Summary of the strategy as a shortened public facing document (Appendix 2).

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. In March 2016, when the Government launched their draft 'Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy', it was considered that walking also be included in the Cheshire East Cycling Strategy. This approach was discounted as it was considered that the addition of a walking theme would bring limited benefit to the development of the Borough's Cycling Strategy and to do so would detract from a document that needed to focus on the importance of delivering an ambitious step change in cycling throughout Cheshire East.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. Cheshire East Council continues to invest in cycling and this ambitious strategy has been produced to provide a framework to guide future

investment in cycling, working collaboratively with partner organisations and local cycling groups.

- 4.2. Cycling can also help meet the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan outcomes with a particular focus on *"making Cheshire East a green and sustainable place"*, *"enabling people to live well and for longer"* and ensuring *"Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy"*.
- 4.3. Due to the current challenging and complex funding climate, this strategy aims to establish a clear programme of cycle improvements for which funding can be sought from a variety of sources. It must also be acknowledged that the Council cannot achieve a step change in cycling and the objectives of this strategy without significant input from partners, not least in terms of funding for implementing schemes.
- 4.4. Funding allocated to Cheshire East from central Government is limited and reducing. In terms of funding to improve cycle routes, the Local Transport Plan budget has reduced by approx. 50% and the main source of potential funds is the Local Growth Fund, accessed through competitive bidding in conjunction with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.5. There are also other funding sources including developer contributions and potentially ad hoc dedicated funding for cycling from the Department for Transport through schemes such as the Access Fund.
- 4.6. Due to the challenging and complex funding climate outlined above, this strategy therefore aims to establish a clear programme of cycle improvements for which funding can be sought from a variety of sources. In addition to providing a long term framework for investment, this Cycling Strategy will assist in the preparation of bids to ad hoc funding sources by demonstrating the Council's commitment to promoting cycling.
- 4.7. The benefits of increasing the levels of cycling are well recognised and wide ranging for communities, the public sector and businesses. Cycling can contribute to the delivery of a number of Cheshire East aims including economic growth, healthier communities and an improved environment.
- 4.8. Through consultation with internal and external partners and a review of base evidence/policies, the following objectives and key next steps have been developed (see table below).

Objective		Next Step
Objective 1	Create and maintain safe, attractive, cohesive, direct and adaptable networks and infrastructure	Plan and deliver high quality cycling infrastructure that forms cohesive routes on strategic corridors and local routes – see Chapter 7
Objective 2	Ensure cycling is integrated with other transport modes, transport networks, the public realm and new developments	
Objective 3	Ensure high quality facilities are in place to support people who cycle and that will attract people to live and work in the area	
Objective 4	Use targeted cycle promotion, education and training	Work with partners and community to foster a strong and supportive cycling culture – see Chapter 8
Objective 5	Integrate and align policies, procedures and practices to encourage cycling	Continue co-ordination and integration of CEC and partner delivery of cycling improvements – see Chapter 9
Objective 6	Deliver cycle-friendly infrastructure in partnership with the community, officers and organisations of Cheshire East	Deliver cycling improvements where possible through Local Transport Plan programme and secure external funding – see Chapter 10

4.9. Achievement of Objective 1 ‘create and maintain safe, attractive, cohesive, direct and adaptable networks and infrastructure’ will underpin all other aspects of the strategy. Local consultation and national surveys show fear of cycling with motorised vehicles as a key barrier, particularly for those who do not cycle at present. To achieve a step change in the levels of people cycling in Cheshire East, there is a clear need to provide joined-up high quality cycle routes which address these concerns.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. In 2014 and 2015, the Council hosted a series of seminars to discuss the way forward for cycling across the Borough. The seminars were well attended by cyclists from across the Borough with a significant level of enthusiasm to see the cycling agenda progressed more vigorously within Cheshire East, including in the planning process and ‘cycle-proofing’ new development proposals.
- 5.2. The development of a draft cycling strategy was approved in January 2015 and in July 2015, the draft cycling strategy was launched www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/cycling_in_cheshire_east/consultation-on-the-cycling-strategy-for-cheshire-east.aspx
- 5.3. Between 14th July and 14th September 2015, Cheshire East Council consulted residents, cyclists, and other stakeholders, on the draft version of the strategy. The aim was to gain feedback on the draft strategy and to help

shape the final version. A large majority of respondents (89%) agreed the vision of the strategy is good, with just 5% disagreeing.

- 5.4. Internal working groups were held with the relevant Council services including Infrastructure & Highways, Planning, Public Health, Regeneration & Growth, Public Rights of Way and Leisure & Tourism. In developing the strategy, there has been a period of engagement with Council officers including interviews, workshops and meetings. This has ensured that a wide range of teams have helped to shape the strategy and understand their role in the delivery.
- 5.5. External stakeholders including Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and Sustrans also contributed to the strategy development. Local cycle groups have also been actively engaged in the process through attendance at seminars and stakeholder meetings, which has been extremely valuable.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. All Cheshire East Wards.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

- 7.1.1. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) policy, which is currently being developed, will examine ways of securing funding that can be used to expand the strategic cycle network across the Borough.
- 7.1.2. The Local Plan Strategy Part 2 will be the opportunity to cross-reference the vision and objectives of the Cycling Strategy with the Local Plan Strategy.
- 7.1.3. The Cycling Strategy will support a number of corporate objectives including those relating to health, the environment and supporting economic growth.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. There are no legal implications in this strategy.

7.3. Financial Implications

- 7.3.1. Key to delivering significant improvements to cycling in Cheshire East will be leveraging in external funding sources and below are some potential future funding opportunities:
 - Further Section 106 / CIL funding to be secured through local developments.

- As part of the Growth Deal process, a bid has been submitted through the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership for £2.67 million capital funding to construct five new high quality cycle routes.
- A further bid has also been submitted to secure £1 million revenue funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) for delivering cycle and walking schemes for a 3 year period.
- Other major infrastructure projects can also deliver improvements for cycling. Examples include Crewe Green Link Road and the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road scheme which is delivering a parallel cycle route and mitigation measures in the Disley area.

7.4. **Equality Implications**

7.4.1. Everybody Sport and Recreation run a disability inclusion programme where cyclists can learn to ride using disability bikes.

7.5. **Rural Community Implications**

7.5.1. The challenge of ensuring that rural communities can access the cycle network has been addressed in the Cycling Strategy and it is recognised that urban and rural areas require different approaches.

7.6. **Human Resources Implications**

7.6.1. There are no human resource implications.

7.7. **Public Health Implications**

7.7.1. The Public Health England '**Everybody Active, Every Day**' (22) strategy recognises that walking and cycling are good for our physical and mental health and the many ways the built and natural environment impacts on the choices people are able to make. It emphasises that by developing 'active environments', through thoughtful urban design and creating transportation systems that promote walking and cycling, we can help to create active, healthier, and more liveable communities.

7.7.2. The benefits of cycling are well recognised and outlined in the strategy, including:

- Actively promoting healthier travel options in the workplace can reduce absenteeism by up to 20%.
- Increased walking and cycling in urban England and Wales could save the NHS approximately £17bn (2010 prices) within 20 years because of its impact on diseases associated with physical inactivity.
- Motorised vehicles are a contributor to poor air quality which affects health levels.

7.8. Implications for Children and Young People

7.8.1. Creating a safer network of cycle routes across the Borough is key in encouraging young people to ride. In 2015/16 the Bikeability programme trained 5,055 young people and funding has been secured from the Government for the programme up to 2020.

7.8.2. Incorporating physical activity into a child's daily routine is a good way to promote a healthy and more active lifestyle. There are additional health benefits of cycling including: blood pressure control; bone, muscle and joint health; reduced risk of diabetes; and improved psychological wellbeing.

8. Risk Management

8.1. The Cycling Strategy sets out an ambitious plan for delivering a step change in cycling. However, this cannot be achieved without significant input from partners, not least in terms of funding for implementing schemes. If funding is not forthcoming then expectations will need to be managed to reduce the reputational risk to the Council.

9. Access to Information/Bibliography

9.1. All links to external documents are included within the Cycling Strategy (see Appendix 1).

10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

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