

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 9 March 2021

Report Title: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Craig Browne – Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Transport

Senior Officer: Frank Jordan – Executive Director Place

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Council has clear ambitions for delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth and environmental improvement. A key element of achieving these ambitions is delivering investment in transport infrastructure that supports cycling and walking. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans have been developed for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, setting out ambitious programmes to deliver high quality walking and cycling networks. These four towns were selected for the development of an LCWIP following an evidence-based review, which identified them as having the highest potential in the borough to increase walking and cycling.
- 1.2. A step change in levels of walking and cycling across Cheshire East will contribute to the Council's strategic outcomes for environmental improvement, health and wellbeing, the local economy and communities. Cheshire East Council has committed to delivering local action to tackle the climate change emergency and increasing levels of walking and cycling can make a substantial contribution to this imperative.
- 1.3. Department for Transport has provided technical support to develop LCWIPs, stating that *'whilst the preparation of LCWIPs is non-mandatory, local authorities who have plans will be well placed to make the case for future*

investment'. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2020, this continues to be the approach. There are clear indications that authorities with complete and adopted LCWIPs are more likely to receive DfT funding in future years, as part of national funding programmes such as "Gear Change".

- 1.4. The plans prepared in Cheshire East have identified a sequenced programme of potential routes and infrastructure improvements for future investment. These improvements take account of the volumes of cycling and pedestrian movements in Cheshire East, and the potential to increase these mode shares to achieve wider strategic outcomes. All schemes identified in LCWIPs will be subject to further detailed development and design work, with extensive public consultation necessary before schemes are implemented.
- 1.5. It is important to recognise that the LCWIPs are not fully funded at this stage. They establish a plan for improvements that can help in securing future funding from a wide range of sources. Funding to deliver schemes would be drawn from existing budgets, such as the Local Transport Plan and external sources such as Department for Transport specific grants or developer contributions. Delivery of projects will be embedded into the annual capital programmes and be responsive to take maximum advantage of available funding opportunities as they arise.
- 1.6. Appendix 1 includes summary LCWIP maps for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, and Appendix 2 includes the full LCWIP documents. Note: owing to their size, the documents comprising Appendix 2 are not included in the agenda papers but are available on the agenda web page.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That Cabinet:

- 2.1.1. Approve the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow as the basis for future development and planning of sustainable transport infrastructure within Cheshire East.
- 2.1.2. Note that the Plans will be an integral part of the Council's local transport strategy, alongside the Cycling Strategy and the Local Transport Plan.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The LCWIPs are evidence-based plans that have identified an integrated and high quality walking and cycling network necessary to achieve the Council's wider environmental, economic and community objectives.
- 3.2. The adoption of the LCWIPs will provide a strategic approach to the Council's investment in walking and cycling infrastructure from both internal budgets and external funding sources.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The DfT has noted that LCWIPs are not mandatory documents but that local authorities who have plans will be well placed to make the case for future investment. Therefore, not developing LCWIPs would likely result in avoidable constraints for securing external funding. Additionally, failure to develop a strategic network plan may lead to future investment being uncoordinated and poorly integrated.

5. Background

- 5.1. It is the Council's ambition to improve walking and cycling facilities within the Borough. Investing in good quality cycling and walking infrastructure to give people safe and attractive routes is an important factor in encouraging the uptake of walking and cycling for commuting and leisure.
- 5.2. The Cheshire East Cycling Strategy, adopted in 2017, outlines the target to double the number of people cycling once per week for any journey purpose in Cheshire East by 2027, which also aligns to the Government's ambition.
- 5.3. Following the publication of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) by the DfT in 2017, LAs have been encouraged to develop LCWIPs to provide a strategic approach to identify walking and cycling improvements which are required at a local level.
- 5.4. Local Authorities (LAs) have been advised by the Department for Transport (DfT) to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs); which should provide a strategic approach to identify walking and cycling improvements needed at a local level to increase the number of people cycling and walking for journeys to employment, education and other everyday purposes.
- 5.5. LCWIPs have been developed for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, setting out ambitious plans to deliver high quality walking and cycling networks, with schemes consistent with Local Transport Note 01/20, including segregated cycling infrastructure where possible. Local Transport Note 01/20 is the latest guidance for local authorities on designing high quality, safe cycle infrastructure. The Local Transport Delivery Plans process

is identifying similar high quality walking and cycling infrastructure that is required in other areas of Cheshire East.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1. As the local transport authority, Cheshire East Council has a legal duty to maintain a safe and efficient highway network. Developing a coordinated, high quality walking and cycling network will contribute to fulfilling this legal duty.

6.1.2. In developing future schemes, the appropriate legal processes will need to be followed for the implementation of schemes e.g. Traffic Regulation Orders. This will be completed for specific schemes as they come forward for development and implementation.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. There are no direct finance implications from the adoption of the LCWIPs, however, adoption of the plans will put the Council in a stronger position to gain external funding.

6.2.2. Upon adoption by the Council, the LCWIPs will provide a framework of prioritised schemes that could become part of the approved Capital Programme for Transport and Highways once a funding stream has been formally agreed and the necessary financial approvals are in place.

6.2.3. Schemes are anticipated to be funded from a range of sources including: Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block; developer funding such as Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 & 278 Agreements; the Council's own resources, and any other external funding that is available.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. Adopting the LCWIPs will assist in the delivery of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and routes identified in the LCWIPs have been included in the Local Transport Delivery Plans options lists for the respective towns.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed and is included as Appendix 3 to the report.

6.4.2. Audits of routes were completed as part of the development of the LCWIPs including the consideration of accessibility issues for a range of users. The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer was involved in this process.

6.4.3. The EIA has identified that:

- Residents should benefit from schemes that will be delivered, helping to improve levels of physical activity, with benefits to physical and mental health.
- Research has shown that a higher proportion of men than women cycle in the UK. It is anticipated the delivery of higher quality and safer infrastructure would help to address this imbalance.
- People with disabilities, such as sight loss and physical mobility impairments, can be negatively affected by some highways and transport schemes. Appropriate mitigation measures will be put in place when individual schemes are brought forward for further design, development and implementation. As part of scheme development appropriate design guidance should be followed alongside early and proactive engagement with these groups to understand their needs and requirements.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. There are no Human Resources implications associated with the adoption of the LCWIPs.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. Risk registers and risk assessments will be produced as part of the Council's standard approach to project management and governance as schemes come forward for delivery.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. The routes proposed in the LCWIPs have been fed into the Local Transport Delivery Plan process to ensure that routes are co-ordinated with other transport improvements connecting into rural areas.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1. The standard of cycling infrastructure is aimed to be suitable for a competent 12 year old child (as per DfT Guidance document Local Transport Note 01/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design). Pedestrian infrastructure should follow best practice including guidance set out in the Manual for Streets 1 & 2. Route sections identified in the vicinity of schools will be considered for inclusion within the Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel to School programme.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. The public health benefits of active travel are well established. Travelling actively helps people meet the recommended physical activity

targets, improves physical and mental health, whilst reducing the risks of poor health and premature death.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2025 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint. The LCWIPs have been aligned with the LTP and therefore wider Council strategies. The LCWIPs set out measures to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, which will enable more sustainable travel.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All wards in Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. From the 1st May to 25th June 2018 the LTP went through a public consultation. Representatives from local walking and cycling user groups in Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow were invited to attend their local LTP consultation drop-in sessions to specifically help inform development of the LCWIPs covering those areas.

8.2. A workshop was held with local user groups in April 2020 to inform development of the Crewe LCWIP.

8.3. Workshops were held in January 2021 with representatives from local community user groups (including Active Travel Crewe, Active Travel Congleton, Macctastic, Cycle Wilmslow) to gain feedback on the proposed LCWIP to inform the final documents.

8.4. Proposals from the LCWIPs have been discussed with Town Councils as part of wider transport discussions, including during the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

9. Access to Information

9.1. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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