

## **Highways and Transport Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 November 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - Implementation Report
<b>Report of:</b>	Andrew Ross, Director of Highways and Infrastructure
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	HT/10/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All wards in Crewe, Macclesfield, Congleton and Wilmslow

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1.** The Council has clear ambitions for delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth and environmental improvement. A key requirement to achieve these ambitions is investment in the infrastructure that supports and enables cycling and walking. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been developed for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, setting out ambitious programmes to create high quality walking and cycling networks. These four towns were selected for the development of an LCWIP following an evidence-based review, in accordance with guidelines from the Department for Transport, which identified them having high potential to increase levels of walking and cycling.
- 1.2.** The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on implementation of the LCWIPs. The report contributes to the following priority outcomes identified in the Corporate Plan:
  - 1.2.1. GREEN** – through delivering improved routes, the Council will encourage increases in the number of people walking and cycling. This will positively contribute both to our response to the climate emergency and also to reducing the incidence of air quality problems, especially in urban areas.

- 1.2.2. FAIR** – through delivering improved walking and cycling networks the Council will provide low cost travel options for all residents and visitors to work, school, and other everyday destinations. By improving the network in line with high quality and accessibility guidance this will improve access on to routes for people with mobility aids and adapted cycles.
- 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 LCWIPs prepared for Cheshire East have identified a sequenced programme of potential routes and infrastructure improvements for future investment. It is important to note that the published plans are not fully funded, rather they are a mechanism that helps to Council seek future funding for walking and cycling from a range of funding organisations. These improvements take account of the volume of cycling and pedestrian movements in Cheshire East, and the potential to increase these to achieve wider strategic outcomes. All schemes identified in LCWIPs are subject to further detailed development and design work, with extensive public consultation necessary before schemes are implemented.
- 1.5.** Following Cabinet approval of the LCWIPs in March 2021, further technical work has been completed to develop an outline multi-year implementation plan and to begin delivery of several schemes. The draft implementation plan is included in Appendix 1, which identifies schemes to be brought forward, timescales, and anticipated funding sources.
- 1.6.** The LCWIP implementation plan sets out an indicative funding requirement of £65m to deliver the schemes. It is important to recognise that the LCWIPs are not fully funded at this stage. Appendix 1 summarises the funding that is currently committed to delivery of LCWIP schemes. The LCWIP’s establish a plan for improvements that can help in securing future funding from external sources. One funding source that is anticipated to be key is the DfT’s Active Travel Fund, that can only be deployed on walking and cycling improvements in line with Local Transport Note 01/20 design guidance. This LCWIP implementation plan is intended to form the basis of future funding submissions to the Active Travel Fund.
- 1.7.** Funding to deliver schemes will also be drawn from either existing budgets, such as the Council’s Local Transport Plan, or developer contributions. Delivery of projects is being embedded into the annual

capital programmes and is responsive to take maximum advantage of available funding opportunities as they arise.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1.** The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:
  - 2.1.1.** Approve the draft LCWIP implement plan in Appendix 1 as a basis for future development and delivery of schemes.
  - 2.1.2.** Note that individual schemes will be embedded within the annual capital programmes and subject to scheme design and development including consultation with stakeholders.

## **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.** Approval of the draft implementation plan will enable the Council to proactively develop schemes and seek external funding from central government and other 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 an implementation plan for the 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. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been developed for Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, setting out ambitious programmes to create high quality walking and cycling networks. The scope of these plans reflects the potential for walking and cycling to be a viable travel choice for many shorter trips (up to 5 miles). Emerging networks for walking and cycling cover the wider area around each of the named towns. In addition, the Local Transport Delivery Plans that are being prepared for the 11 principal towns and key service centres in Cheshire East, provide an opportunity to embed a greater range of walking and cycling projects into the Council's integrated transport delivery programmes.

## **6. Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.1. The Council's Cycling Champion – Cllr Suzie Akers-Smith – is closely engaged in the development and delivery of projects arising from the LCWIP's. Through on-going engagement and liaison with local community representatives, the Cycling Champion is able to guide the technical development of projects to reflect local circumstances and better meet users' needs and expectations.
- 6.2. From 1<sup>st</sup> May to 25<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 6.3. A workshop was held with local user groups in April 2020 to inform development of the Crewe LCWIP.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. Proposals from the LCWIPs have been discussed with Town Councils as part of wider transport discussions, including during the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 6.6. Specific engagement and consultation will be conducted on each scheme as it moves forward to the development and delivery phases.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1. Legal**

- 7.1.1.** 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.
- 7.1.2.** 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.
- 7.1.3.** In developing and implementing electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the Council must have regard to the transport needs of disabled persons and of persons who are elderly or have mobility problems. Development of plans will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements for Community Engagement and Equalities Impact Assessment.
- 7.1.4.** Members must be fully aware of the equalities implications of the decisions they are taking. This will ensure that there is proper appreciation of any potential impact of any decision on the Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum, this requires decision makers to carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by officers.
- 7.1.5.** There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change the way in which a local authority carries out its duties but there is an expectation enshrined in case law that any local authority making decisions affecting the public will do so fairly and in a way that cannot be said to be an abuse of power.

## **7.2. Finance**

- 7.2.1.** There are no direct finance implications from the adoption of the LCWIPs implementation plan, however, adoption will put the Council in a stronger position to gain external funding.
- 7.2.2.** Upon adoption by the Council, the LCWIPs implementation plan will provide a framework of prioritised schemes that could be become part of the approved Capital Programme for Transport and Highways once a funding stream has been formally agreed, the schemes are deemed affordable and the necessary financial approvals are in place.
- 7.2.3.** 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 funds if resources are available, and any other external funding that the Council can secure.

**7.2.4.** The DfT has noted in the ‘Gear Change’ strategy that an ‘Active Travel England’ inspectorate is being established. A responsibility of this inspectorate will be to ‘publish annual reports on highway authorities, whether or not they have received funding from us, grading them on their performance on active travel and identifying particularly dangerous failings in their highways for cyclists and pedestrians’<sup>1</sup>. The strategy also notes that ‘Active Travel England’s assessment of an authority’s performance with respect to sustainable travel outcomes, particularly cycling and walking, will be taken into account when considering funding allocations for local transport schemes’.

### **7.3. Policy**

**7.3.1.** Adopting the LCWIPs implementation plan 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.

### **7.4. Equality**

**7.4.1.** An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed for the LCWIPs programme

**7.4.2.** 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.

**7.4.3.** 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. Consideration will be given as part of scheme development to understand any

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)

potential negative impacts and seeking early and proactive engagement with these groups to understand their needs.

- 7.4.4. Specific EIAs will be developed as appropriate for schemes as they come forward for development and delivery.

## 7.5. Human Resources

- 7.5.1. There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

## 7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1. Development and delivery of specific schemes are governed by Project Boards chaired by the Head of Strategic Transport. Officers from finance, legal, research and consultation, estates, and highways will be invited to attend to ensure appropriate project governance and strategic direction. Project risk registers are maintained detailing mitigation measures.

## 7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1. 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.

## 7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1. No direct implications for children and young people have been identified.

## 7.9. Public Health

- 7.9.1. 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.

## 7.10. Climate Change

- 7.10.1. 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.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
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Appendices:	Appendix 1: LCWIPs Implementation Plan (draft)

Background Papers:	None
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