

CABINET MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Consultation on the Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Author(s):

Executive Director of City Development

Purpose of Report:

To seek Cabinet approval to consult on the City Council's Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Description of Decision:

To seek Cabinet approval to consult on the Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which will encourage Sunderland residents to travel sustainably; encourages healthier travel; and will help to bring the network up to the latest standard as set out in the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance note LTN 1/20. The LCWIP consultation draft has been prepared in accordance with DfT guidance and the availability of the document will help the City Council in the preparation of funding bids for active travel modes as well as for transport schemes generally.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The LCWIP is key to implementing the policies set out in the City Plan and in the statutory land-use Local Plan. Whilst it will achieve transport related objectives related to air quality and traffic congestion, it will also contribute significantly to achieving wider health, wellbeing and economic objectives.

It will enable the City Council to develop a city-wide plan for cycling and walking through engagement with residents, businesses, interested groups and stakeholders on a programme of infrastructure improvements that will encourage citizens to use active travel modes for work and leisure and to enable the Council to access future funding opportunities in line with developing government policies.

The Covid pandemic has thrown these issues into greater perspective. Successive lockdowns and greater working from home over the past 15 months has enabled people to develop different lifestyles and travel patterns. Walking and cycling have thus become increasingly important for people to gain daily exercise. Together these provide an opportunity to achieve more permanent changes to travel patterns. The measures set out in the draft LCWIP will help us to encourage Sunderland residents to continue to use active travel.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The only other option considered would be to not adopt a plan or programme and implement Active Travel schemes on an ad-hoc basis. This would be contrary to government guidance and it could result in the Council being less likely to benefit from future funding opportunities for active travel. This would mean that the City Council could not access central Government funding for cycling and walking and Sunderland residents would be denied the benefits of greater active travel. There is also the danger that other funding streams such as Transforming Cities and 'levelling up' funding could be withheld due to the lack of an adopted LCWIP.

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

CABINET – 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Report of Executive Director of City Development

1. Purpose of the Report

This report seeks approval to consult on the City Council's draft Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

2. Description of Decision

This report seeks Cabinet approval to consult on the Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which will encourage Sunderland residents to travel sustainably; encourages healthier travel; and will help to bring the network up to the latest standard as set out in the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance note LTN 1/20. The LCWIP consultation draft has been prepared in accordance with DfT guidance and the availability of the document will help the City Council in the preparation of funding bids for active travel modes as well as for transport schemes generally.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Transport shapes our everyday lives and can determine how much physical activity we undertake, how pleasant or long our journeys are and where we choose to live. However, the dominance of car use can damage the fabric of our environment as well as our health. If we are to address these issues it is important to make walking and cycling in Sunderland, safe, affordable, accessible and enjoyable and part of our everyday lifestyles.
- 3.2 Walking and cycling are the most environmentally benign modes of transport. They rely purely on human muscle power and have zero carbon impact. The bicycle is actually the most energy efficient land vehicle ever invented. Both modes are ideally suited to the type of short journeys that we generally make around our area and have the added benefit of improving our health as well as supporting the improved collective health of the city.
- 3.3 This document explores walking and cycling provision in Sunderland and sets out a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for consultation. It provides a comprehensive framework to guide the City Council and its partners over the next 10 years when making funding applications, in taking planning and design decisions regarding transport more broadly and for walking and cycling specifically.
- 3.4 The emerging draft programme of schemes included in the document has been developed from discussions with the Neighbourhood Boards and through analysis of the responses to the 'Let's Talk' discussions with local communities. This has provided a valuable insight into community aspirations.

4. Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan

4.1 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans were first introduced by the Government in 2017. Changes in travel patterns and the Government's response to the Covid pandemic has thrown active travel into sharper focus and effectively given LCWIPs new impetus. The scope of this Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) consultation draft is determined by the guidance from DfT on LCWIPs and more recent advice including DfT's 'Gear Change' policy document.

4.2 The document includes the following:

- Consideration of the value of cycling and walking in delivering wider economic, social, health and environmental policies and strategies
- Discussion of the current context of cycling and walking in Sunderland
- Development of a draft infrastructure plan to encourage cycling and walking
- Consideration of aspirations for cycling and walking in Sunderland
- Support for economic growth by providing and enhancing access to employment, education and training by cycle and foot.

4.3 In developing this draft LCWIP officers have aimed to achieve the following:

- Set out a strategy for creating an integrated, high quality, accessible and well-maintained cycling and walking network that connects people and places within Sunderland
- Ensure that the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are reflected with new developments being permeable and connected and supported by the delivery of wider transport infrastructure improvements
- Improve, develop and maintain the quality of Sunderland's cycling and walking networks
- Ensure that walking and cycling are included within relevant highway maintenance policies and procedures and consider opportunities to introduce provision for pedestrians and cyclists when undertaking routine maintenance
- Improve safety and reduce the number of cyclists and pedestrians killed or seriously injured within Sunderland – through the provision of new or improved infrastructure and via the delivery of training and safety awareness initiatives
- Continue to give children the skills to enable them to safely walk and cycle to school and the confidence to use sustainable modes of transport through later life
- Continue and enhance the promotion of walking and cycling alongside the other sustainable modes
- Provide the information and support to allow people to cycle and walk confidently and safely
- Deliver the positive health and wellbeing message behind walking and cycling and the benefits they can bring to individuals, the area and the environment

- 4.4 The geographical scope of the LCWIP consultation draft is the area covered by Sunderland City Council. The main settlements covered include Sunderland, Washington, Houghton le Spring and Hetton le Hole.
- 4.5 The LCWIP consultation draft has been prepared in consultation with Transport North East. Preparation of the document has been overseen by an officer steering group drawn from across the Council.

Consultation Process

- 4.6 In order to ensure that residents and stakeholders are aware of the consultation process it will be publicised via a series of press releases to promote it and remind interested parties of the opportunity to respond. A social media plan will also be put in to place. The Draft for Consultation will be housed on the Sunderland City Council website with accompanying further information and interested parties will be invited to make comments with a contact e-mail address provided.
- 4.7 We will utilise our existing community networks, information platforms, partnership arrangements and Area Officers to encourage responses to the consultation. It is envisaged that the consultation process will last for four weeks. Following this process a final version of the plan will be produced that takes in to consideration the result of the consultation process and a further report will be submitted to Cabinet to consider the plan's adoption.
- 4.8 Once approved, the document will help the Council in the preparation of the following:
- Preparation of business cases and funding bids for future investment – these include Levelling Up Fund, Active Travel Fund, Active Travel Capability Fund, Transforming Cities Fund future rounds and other transport investment packages that include a significant active travel element
 - Preparation of Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements. The City Council is developing robust Travel Plans for major developments that it is promoting with private and other public sector partners. Examples of these include the International Advanced Manufacturing Park, the new City Hall, the new central business district at Riverside Sunderland and a number of new schools
 - City Hall Mobility Hub which will encourage staff working in the building to use active travel, sustainable modes or public transport.
- 4.9 In the short to medium term we intend to use the LCWIP in the following:
- Preparation of more localised walking and cycling strategies and action plans
 - Allocation of funding in local delivery plans through the Area Boards and Committees
 - Preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, particularly in the former Coalfields area
 - Consideration of significant major planning applications and other proposed land-use changes through the Development Management process. This could include securing private sector contributions for walking and cycling through planning gain agreements

- Preparation of heritage trails to encourage people to explore our rich heritage in a more sustainable manner
- Organisation of active travel 'events' to encourage take up of walking and cycling.

4.10 The full draft document is attached at Appendix 1.

5. Reasons for the Decision

The LCWIP is key to implementing the policies set out in the City Plan and in the statutory land-use Local Plan. Whilst it will achieve transport related objectives related to air quality and traffic congestion, it will also contribute significantly to achieving wider health, wellbeing and economic objectives.

It will enable the City Council to develop a city-wide plan for cycling and walking through engagement with residents, businesses, interested groups and stakeholders on a programme of infrastructure improvements that will encourage citizens to use active travel modes for work and leisure and to enable the Council to access future funding opportunities in line with developing government policies.

The Covid pandemic has thrown these issues into greater perspective. Successive lockdowns and greater working from home over the past 15 months has enabled people to develop different lifestyles and travel patterns. Walking and cycling have thus become increasingly important for people to gain daily exercise. Together these provide an opportunity to achieve more permanent changes to travel patterns. The measures set out in the draft LCWIP will help us to encourage Sunderland residents to continue to use active travel.

6. Alternative Options

6.1 The only other option considered would be to not adopt a plan or programme and implement Active Travel schemes on an ad-hoc basis. This would be contrary to government guidance and it could result in the Council being less likely to benefit from future funding opportunities for active travel. This would mean that the City Council could not access central Government funding for cycling and walking and Sunderland residents would be denied the benefits of greater active travel. There is also the danger that other funding streams such as Transforming Cities and 'levelling up' funding could be withheld due to the lack of an adopted LCWIP.

7. Impact Analysis

- (a) Equalities** – Cycling and walking can be equally enjoyed by people of all age groups and abilities. By investing in these modes, the benefits can be enjoyed by a wider range of people and not just those with higher incomes.
- (b) Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** –n/a
- (c) Sustainability** - The measures set out in the LCWIP adhere to the City Council's sustainable development principles and are intended to improve social, economic and environmental conditions in Sunderland, and more widely – regionally, nationally or globally.

- (d) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion – n/a**

8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- (i) **Financial Implications** – There are no direct costs of adopting the LCWIP. Any costs associated with the consultation on the LCWIP will be met from existing Infrastructure, Planning and Transportation budgets. The LCWIP will support the Council to access funding opportunities that may not be available should there not be an approved LCWIP.
- (ii) **Risk Analysis** - The main risk is the opportunity cost of not having a LCWIP in place and missing out on funding opportunities.
- (iii) **Employee Implications** – Funding has been made available through the Active Travel Capability Fund for additional staff resources arising from implementation of the LCWIP.
- (iv) **Legal Implications** – There are no legal significant legal implications.
- (v) **Policy Implications** – The LCWIP has been prepared in the context of the Council’s existing policies relating to transport, planning and health.
- (vi) **Health & Safety Considerations** – There are no Health and Safety implications.
- (vii) **Property Implications** – There are no property implications.
- (viii) **Implications for Other Services** – There are no implications for other services.
- (ix) **The Public / External Bodies** – The LCWIP will be subject to public consultation once approved by Cabinet.
- (x) **Compatibility with European Convention on Human Rights** – There are no Human Rights Implications.
- (xi) **Project Management Methodology** – The LCWIP does not fall within the definition of a ‘project’ for the purposes of Cabinet Approval.
- (xii) **Children’s Services** – There are no specific implications for children.
- (xiii) **Procurement** – Preparation of the LCWIP has not involved procurement of any products or services.

9. Glossary

LCWIP – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

DfT – Department for Transport

LTN 1/20 – Local Transport Note 1/20

10. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

11. Background Papers

‘Gear Change’ Department for Transport 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

LCWIP Guidance 2017

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908535/cycling-walking-infrastructure-technical-guidance-document.pdf