

CABINET MEETING – 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan: Adoption of Final Document

Author(s):

Executive Director of City Development

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to seek approval to adopt the City Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to approve the Council's LCWIP.

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, well-being and economic objectives.

The Covid pandemic has put 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 LCWIP will help us to encourage Sunderland residents to continue to use active travel and will support funding bids for active travel infrastructure.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The only other option considered was to not prepare an LCWIP. 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 including improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion and the health benefits of increased physical activity

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

LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN: ADOPTION OF FINAL DOCUMENT

Report of Executive Director of City Development

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to adopt the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Council's LCWIP

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 town 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). It provides a comprehensive framework to guide the City Council and its partners over the next 10 years when making funding applications and in taking planning and design decisions regarding transport more broadly and walking and cycling specifically.
- 3.4 The emerging programme of schemes included in the document has been developed from discussions with the Neighbourhood Boards and through analysis of the responses to the 'Lets Talk' discussions with local communities.

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 LCWIP is determined by the guidance from DfT on LCWIPs and more recent advice including 'Gear Change'.

4.2 The LCWIP includes consideration of the following:

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

4.3 The geographical scope of the LCWIP is the area covered by Sunderland City Council. The main settlements covered include Sunderland, Washington, Houghton le Spring and Hetton le Hole.

4.4 The LCWIP has been prepared in consultation with Transport North East, neighbouring authorities Durham County Council and South Tyneside Council. Preparation of the document has been overseen by an officer steering group drawn from across the City Council.

4.5 Once approved, the document will help 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.

4.6 In the short to medium term it is intended to use the LCWIP in the following:

- Preparation of more localised walking and cycling strategies and action plans
- Allocation of existing approved funding for 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.

- 4.7 A consultation on the draft LCWIP was undertaken in October/November 2021. There were 38 responses to the document with over 200 key points raised. Most of these responses were from external sources, outside of the Council.
- 4.8 The key points from the responses can be grouped into categories. These include, more investment, maintenance, knowledge, safety, transport links, other route options, document specifics, signage, future concerns, active travel, and route comments.
- 4.9 The biggest number of responses were document specific (39%). This includes sentence corrections, errors in diagrams and suggested changes to the specific document. 11.5% of key points were on cyclist and pedestrian safety and 10.5% were comments on routes outlined within the document.
- 4.10 Responses also included suggestions on other options of routes within the city and to invest more in other areas such as the Coalfields and Washington. Some key points were raised on how important signage of the local routes is to help cyclists and pedestrian get around. There were future concerns for the infrastructure and the need for more active travel within the city. Most comments made regarding the draft LCWIP document have been addressed in the final LCWIP which is set out at Appendix 1.

5. Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 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, well-being and economic objectives.
- 5.2 The Covid pandemic has put 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 LCWIP will help us to encourage Sunderland residents to continue to use active travel and will support funding bids for active travel infrastructure.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 The only other option considered was to not prepare an LCWIP. 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 including improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion and the health benefits of increased physical activity

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.

Sustrans research (Bike Life Women: Reducing the gender gap) in 2018 showed that men are twice as likely to use a bicycle for travel (7 cities researched) and 73% of women never ride a bike.

79% of women surveyed nationally in Sustrans research would support building more protective cycle lanes.

Investment in cycling and walking infrastructure to reduce the barriers to mobility and build environment that is accessible to everyone will make an important contribution to reducing inequalities and improving health and wellbeing.

- (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

- (a) **Co-operative Values** –
- (i) **Financial Implications** – There are no immediate financial implications of approving the LCWIP. In the future it will help the Council to access funding opportunities that will not be available should there not be an approved LCWIP.
- (ii) **Risk Analysis** - There is a risk that by not having a LCWIP in place the Council is unable to secure external funding to support delivery of the LCWIP.
- (iii) **Legal Implications** – The LCWIP is one of a suite of documents that support the North East Local Transport Plan prepared by Transport North East.

There is a positive impact of the City Council's Network Management Duty in s16(1) Traffic Management Act 2004 of the local traffic authority having regard to obligations and policies with the objective of securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road which includes pedestrians.

- (iv) **Policy Implications** – The LCWIP has been prepared in the context of the Council's existing policies relating to transport, planning and health.

Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure to support and encourage people to be active supports the delivery of the Sunderland Healthy City Plan 2020-2030 priority: "create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities

- (v) **The Public / External Bodies** – Individual schemes within the LCWIP will be subject to public consultation once approved by Cabinet.

9. Glossary

LCWIP – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
DfT – Department for Transport

10. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

11. Background Papers

‘Gear Change’ Department for Transport 2020
LCWIP Guidance 2017

