

## Cabinet

13 October 2021

### Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans



### Ordinary Decision

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#### Report of Corporate Management Team

**Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth**

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships**

#### Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

#### Purpose of the Report

- 1 The previously adopted County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029 sets out the Council's commitment to produce Local Infrastructure plans in our 12 main towns. The following report seeks approval from Cabinet to formally adopt the first three Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe.

#### Executive summary

- 2 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are an evidence-based strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required to facilitate increased active travel for everyday journeys.
- 3 The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017) recommends that local authorities prepare LCWIPs and County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029 sets out the Council's commitment to producing the plans.
- 4 LCWIPs represent a robust approach for prioritising investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in the short, medium and long term, and support the County Council with making the case for future funding,

particularly as the Government is prioritising funding for those authorities which have developed such plans.

- 5 The LCWIPs for Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe are the first of 12 which the Council has committed to producing in the County Council's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan (SCWDP).
- 6 LCWIPs form an important part of the overall work the Council are doing to encourage active travel. Across the County, the Council is delivering on many infrastructure schemes, projects, campaigns and initiatives to enable and encourage more people to walk and cycle as an active mode of transport both as part of our long-term approach (Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029) and in response to new opportunities and funding bids developed by us and through partner working. These include short, medium and long term schemes and projects such as local path improvements to large scale schemes i.e. the Great North Cycleway, the ongoing Local Transport Plan implementation programme, Transforming Cities Fund schemes, DfT's Active Travel Fund schemes in and around Durham City and Newton Aycliffe developed in response to the pandemic, Capability Fund, DfT 3 and 4 (National Cycling Networks 1 and 14), Towns and Villages walking and cycling programme, Travel Plans, Borrow a Bike and Love to Ride.
- 7 LCWIPs will support the Council's ambitions to develop broader active travel work across the County and will tie in wherever possible to other planned and upcoming schemes and opportunities. In terms of funding, the LCWIP process and adoption has recently become a prerequisite for bidding into national and regional funding opportunities.
- 8 The key outputs of a LCWIP include local walking and cycling network plans, a prioritised programme of improvements and underpinning technical report. These plans will be an essential component in attracting future national funding for the delivery of our walking and cycling infrastructure but will not exclude projects outside of the plans from coming forward.
- 9 The LCWIPs will be embedded across the County Council's services supporting transport, environment, health, leisure and planning agendas.
- 10 Following the drafting of the first three draft LCWIPs, the Council has secured funding from the Government's Active Travel Capability Fund to continue the work across nine more towns (Shildon, Spennymoor, Seaham, Peterlee, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Stanley, Crook and Consett) and develop an LCWIP Lite methodology for smaller

settlements and the walking and cycling routes five miles to/from Durham City. It is intended that all remaining LCWIPs are completed in the next 12 months.

- 11 A bid has also been submitted for the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund 2021/22 Capital funding and the bid was strongly supported by the Durham City LCWIP.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 12 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (a) approve the first three Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe.

## Background

- 13 As well as responding to the active travel, regeneration and economic development, covid response, climate emergency and health funding opportunities which have emerged in the last 18 months, the Council continues to deliver on core work to better plan, manage and develop the walking and cycling network in the long-term. This approach is supported through government and local plans.
- 14 The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017) sets out the case for producing LCWIPs which will support the delivery of the following targets by 2025:
  - double cycling from 0.8 billion to 1.6 billion stages;
  - increase walking to 300 stages per person per year;
  - reduce the number of cyclists killed or injured each year; and
  - increase the percentage of school children (5-10 years) that walk to school from 49% to 55%.
- 15 LCWIPs are identified in the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) as a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing high-quality local cycling and walking networks and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle. The Government has developed the methodology and technical guidance on how LCWIPs should be developed.
- 16 The Council has committed to producing twelve LCWIPs, one for each of the main settlements in County Durham. Initially Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe were chosen as the first three towns as they are sited on the line of the Great North Cycleway, linking the north and south of the county. The remaining 9 LCWIP's will be produced simultaneously to be completed by September 2022.
- 17 LCWIPs are a fundamental element of Building Block 1 in the SCWDP which sets out the need to audit, assess and plan in order to design and build a quality network which is then managed and promoted. It is a key stage to establishing a mature and considered strategy and a network which is fit for purpose.
- 18 In order to best apply the LCWIP methodology to County Durham, it was decided that due to the rural nature of the county and dispersed settlements, a town-based approach was preferable to best capture the aim to enable more people to walk and cycle more often for everyday journeys.
- 19 The first three towns were chosen on the basis that they are sited on the line of the Great North Cycleway, a strategic travel link north-south

through the county and they also contrast in terms of existing walking and cycling infrastructure, potential for improvement and travel demand.

- 20 The area boundary for each settlement is tight to the urban centre and so focusses on inter-urban connections rather than longer strategic or inter-settlement connections which will be considered through other schemes and projects.
- 21 The Council commissioned WSP to carry out the first tranche of work on LCWIPs and a funding bid has been submitted to DfT's Active Travel Capability Fund to enable the Council to continue this support.
- 22 The LCWIP has been developed in accordance with the six-stage process outlined by the Department for Transport (DfT) in its Technical Guidance. The stages are summarised below:
  - **Stage 1 Determining Scope**  
Establish the geographical extent of the LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan;
  - **Stage 2 Gathering Information**  
Identify existing patterns of walking and cycling and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes;
  - **Stage 3 Network Planning for Cycling**  
Identify origin and destination points and cycle flows. Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required;
  - **Stage 4 Network Planning for Walking**  
Identify key trip generators, core walking zones and routes, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required;
  - **Stage 5 Prioritising Improvements**  
Prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment;
  - **Stage 6 Integration and Application**  
Integrate outputs into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.

A technical report which provides detailed information on the development of LCWIPs is available for each town.

- 23 The process includes the requirement to establish a governance structure to ensure the work is embedded across service areas and partner organisations. The Council set up a Project Team and a Project Board which received regular progress reports and presentations. It is expected that this structure will continue through further tranches of the project.
- 24 Consultation is a key component of the LCWIP process. A consultation and engagement plan was executed for the LCWIPs as per government guidelines in the LCWIP Technical Guidance. Workshops for internal and external stakeholders, including local members, were held in early 2020. The workshops were held in each LCWIP area. The consultation was targeted on key stakeholders to engage with those most likely to be able to contribute to the discussion on local routes and travel need. 14 officers attended the internal workshop from a broad range of service areas and external workshop attendee numbers were; Durham 17, Newton Aycliffe 7, Chester le Street 4. Draft network plans were presented to attendees during the workshops. Feedback provided input and insights from local knowledge which helped inform and develop the plans. A separate meeting was held with Business Durham to better understand issues relating to active travel to key employers in each area. A full account of the process is recorded in the LCWIP Technical Reports for each area and comments are recorded in Stakeholder Comments Logs. Unfortunately, some planned activities with stakeholders in each area, such as site visits to audit the routes, were cancelled due to Covid restrictions. Stakeholders have been kept up to date and another update will be provided shortly.

Consultation on schemes to be taken forward to delivery will be carried out in accordance to funding and corporate requirements.

- 25 The LCWIP represents a robust approach for prioritising investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in the short, medium and long term, and it will support the County Council with making the case for future funding. The LCWIP will be embedded across the County Council's departments supporting transport, environment, health, leisure and planning agendas.
- 26 The key outputs of LCWIPs are:
- network plans for walking and cycling which identify key routes and core zones for development;
  - a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment; and
  - a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

## Financial Implications

- 27 Previously, funding had been provided from County Council transport budgets to allow the completion of the first three LCWIP's. It has now been confirmed that an award from the Government's Active Travel Capability Fund of £100,000 has been made which will allow the LCWIPs for the remaining nine towns to be completed. In addition, the funding will allow an "LCWIP Lite" approach to be developed for smaller settlements, routes in between towns and routes within five miles of Durham City. The funding will also allow an element of scheme design.
- 28 The LCWIPs for the three towns include cost estimates for the nine priority routes which were taken forward to outline design stage. These are detailed below though are expected to vary once detailed design is completed.
- 29 Chester-le-Street priority routes:
- Drum Industrial Estate to town centre (2.15kms) £4,897,000;
  - Railway station to town centre (0.46kms) £353,000;
  - Waldrige Road to town centre (2.13kms) £2,303,000.
- 30 Durham City priority routes:
- Belmont to City Centre (3.65kms) £6,550,000;
  - Cock O'North to City Centre (3.25kms) £2,799,000;
  - Gilesgate to Durham University (2.2kms) £1,525,000.
- 31 Newton Aycliffe priority routes:
- Town centre to Aycliffe Business Park (3.2kms) £4,547,000;
  - Railway station to Cobblers Hall (2.8kms) £2,951,000;
  - Stephenson Way (1.3kms) £1,617,000.
- 32 The production of the LCWIPs is the first step in securing funding for future projects and is an essential component when bidding for both national and regional funding.

## Conclusion

- 33 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are an evidence-based strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required to facilitate increased active travel for everyday journeys.
- 34 The LCWIP represent a robust method of prioritising investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in the short, medium and long term,

and will support the County Council with making the case for future funding.

### **Background papers**

- LCWIP Chester-le-Street
- LCWIP Durham City
- LCWIP Newton Aycliffe

### **Other useful documents**

- Complete set of reports available including Durham City / Chester-le-Street / Newton Aycliffe Technical Reports and Scheme Costs.
- DfT's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Strategy.
- County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029.
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### **Author(s)**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Legal advice has been sought to cover the proposals of this report.

### **Finance**

Construction of the LCWIPs is set out above. Funding will be sought from developers and regional and national funding bid opportunities.

The Council has submitted a bid for the Government's Active Travel Capability Fund to continue the work by commissioning consultants. The proposal includes £100,000 for the LCWIPs for the remaining nine towns, and the development of an LCWIP Lite approach to develop plans for smaller settlements, routes in between settlements and routes within five miles of Durham City and £24,000 for scheme design. Though the allocation for Durham County Council has been announced, the funding notification and criteria have yet to be received.

### **Consultation**

Consultation is a key component of the LCWIP process. A consultation and engagement plan was executed for the LCWIPs are per government guidelines in the LCWIP Technical Guidance. Workshops for stakeholders were held during the process, although some elements such as site visits were curtailed due to Covid restrictions.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The reports will adhere to accessibility legislation and will be made available on the Council's website or hard copies on request.

LCWIPs produce scheme designs to Local Transport Note 1/20 standards which includes consideration of the requirements of all types of cyclists and schemes will be constructed according to equality requirements.

### **Climate Change**

Transport is the largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK and private vehicle use, especially car use, make up the bulk of transport emissions. If the UK is to meet its targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transport needs to be decarbonised.

Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure is one of the key changes required in order to provide a credible alternative to the private car and the production of the LCWIP's provides a logical and credible investment strategy.

## **Human Rights**

All recommended actions comply with Human Rights legislation.

## **Crime and Disorder**

None.

## **Staffing**

The Active Travel Capability Fund will enable us to appoint consultants to produce LCWIPs for nine towns and develop a LCWIP Lite methodology to apply to smaller settlements and the routes within 5 miles of Durham City.

## **Accommodation**

None.

## **Risk**

The Government is prioritising authorities who have LCWIPs for future funding opportunities, so it is crucial that the work is completed in order for the Authority to be eligible for Government funding.

## **Procurement**

Recommendations have been made in full consultation with Corporate Procurement.

Procurement will be required for continuing the work with external resources.