

Cabinet

14 June 2023

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Ordinary Decision



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 Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029 sets out the Council's commitment to undertake 12 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The first three LCWIPs (Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe) were adopted in October 2021. The following report seeks approval from Cabinet to formally adopt eight further LCWIPs for Bishop Auckland, Consett, Crook, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley.

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 the previously adopted County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029 sets out the Council's commitment to produce the plans for our 12 main towns.
- 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 LCWIPs form an important part of the overall work the Council is 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 (NCN725), the ongoing Local Transport Plan implementation programme, Transforming Cities Fund schemes, Levelling Up Funding schemes, DfT's Active Travel Fund schemes in and around Durham City and Newton Aycliffe developed in response to the pandemic, Capability and Ambition 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.
- 6 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. LCWIPs can support the green economy and healthy workforces in alignment with the Inclusive Economic Strategy, by improving physical connectivity between places in the County and promoting better access to services. In terms of funding, the LCWIP process and adoption has recently become a prerequisite for bidding into national and regional funding opportunities.
- 7 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.
- 8 LCWIPs intentionally have tight audit boundaries which cover the continuous urban areas of the towns. This is consistent with the LCWIP approach set out by Government as it aims to facilitate and encourage short everyday intra urban trips. Longer inter urban links between settlements will be addressed in future LCWIP Lite programme (see para 11 for more detail).

- 9 The LCWIPs will be embedded across the County Council's services supporting transport, environment, health, economic growth, leisure and planning agendas.
- 10 Following the adoption of the first three draft LCWIPs, the Council 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 which is a streamlined approach to developing LCWIPs for inter-urban routes and smaller settlements. Eight of these LCWIPs are included in this report.
- 11 The ninth town, Barnard Castle, has been withdrawn from the current programme of LCWIP production and will instead become the first LCWIP Lite town which will include interventions better suited to the rural nature of the area. The LCWIP Lite project uses the LCWIP framework, but the methodology has been amended to better suit smaller towns, villages and inter-urban routes. This ensures the priority schemes identified will fulfil funding bid requirements, the process will be quicker to implement, and the outcomes will be more in keeping with rural areas. Once the LCWIP Lite for Barnard Castle has been completed we will deliver suitable interventions to enable and encourage active travel in the town.
- 12 We have been granted £177,586 through the Department for Transport's Capability & Ambition revenue funding, a bid strongly supported by the 12 town LCWIP's. We will now be able to take priority routes from the eight town LCWIP's to outline design and further develop the LCWIP Lite methodology and Routes within 5 miles of Durham City project.
- 13 We will continue to seek funding to develop design work and deliver schemes on the ground.
- 14 Consultation is a key component of the LCWIP process. A consultation and engagement plan was executed as per the DfT's LCWIP Technical Guidance. Workshops for internal and external stakeholders, including local members, 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 current and future active travel demand. Further informal consultation has taken place with Cabinet Members to agree the recommendations in this report.

Recommendation(s)

15 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) approve the remaining eight LCWIPs for Bishop Auckland, Consett, Crook, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley.

Background

- 16 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 few years, 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.
- 17 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%.
- 18 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 bicycle. In 2020 Government published Gear Change, setting out bold plans to see a step-change in cycling and walking across England. Government expects councils to prepare an LCWIP to be eligible for future transport funding. Central Government has explicitly stated that local authorities with LCWIPs will be better positioned to secure future funding for sustainable transport. The Government has developed the methodology and technical guidance on how LCWIPs should be developed.
- 19 The Council has committed to producing 12 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.
- 20 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.
- 21 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.

- 22 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.
- 23 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 (LCWIP Lite and Routes within 5 miles of Durham City).
- 24 WSP consultants were commissioned by the Council to produce all 12 town LCWIPs.
- 25 The LCWIPs have 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.

- 26 The process includes the requirement to establish a governance structure to ensure the work is embedded across service areas and partner organisations. The Council has set up a Project Team and a Project Board which receives regular progress reports and presentations. It is expected that this structure will continue throughout the development of designs and implementation of LCWIP priority routes.
- 27 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 May 2022. 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 Barnard Castle 7, Bishop Auckland 8, Consett 4, Crook 7, Peterlee 5, Seaham 6, Shildon 8, Spennymoor 6 and Stanley 6. 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 and the priorities for further development. 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. Most of the LCWIPs evidence the changes made through the differences between the initial key desire lines and the final key desire lines (before & after consultation). Crook is a good example of this, note the differences between figure 4.3 and 4.4, where desire lines have been extended to consider the linkages between Tow Law and Willington, as well as Fir Tree. These changes account for Crook's importance in terms of the Three Towns and for smaller rural settlements that depend on Crook for vital service. Emerging Levelling up Funding schemes have also been mapped and considered when determining required changes. Stakeholders have been kept up to date and will be sent the final LCWIP reports once adopted. Detailed engagement / consultation with the public will be undertaken as part of scheme development when appropriate funding sources are identified.
- 28 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, economic growth, health, leisure and planning agendas.

29 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

30 Previously, funding had been provided from County Council transport budgets to allow the completion of the first three LCWIPs. An award from the Government's Active Travel Capability Fund of £135,000 was made which allowed the LCWIPs for the remaining nine towns to be completed with some elements of scheme design. In addition, the funding allowed an "LCWIP Lite" approach which is a streamlined approach to developing LCWIPs for inter-urban routes or smaller settlements and the development of the Routes within 5 miles of Durham City project. We have been granted £177,586 through the Department for Transport's Capability & Ambition revenue funding, a bid strongly supported by the 12 town LCWIPs. We will now be able to take priority routes from the eight town LCWIPs to outline design and further develop the LCWIP Lite methodology and Routes within 5 miles of Durham City project.

31 The LCWIPs for the eight towns include cost estimates for the three priority routes which were taken forward to outline design stage. These are detailed below though are expected to vary once detailed design is completed.

32 Crook priority route desire line 3 (estimated cost £5.5 million).

33 Peterlee priority route desire line 10 (estimated cost £5.5 million).

34 Shildon priority route desire line 7 (link to Bishop Auckland, estimated cost £1.5 million).

35 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

36 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.

- 37 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 Bishop Auckland
- LCWIP Consett
- LCWIP Crook
- LCWIP Peterlee
- LCWIP Seaham
- LCWIP Spennymoor
- LCWIP Shildon
- LCWIP Stanley

Other useful documents

- Complete set of reports for all eleven LCWIP towns available including Durham City / Chester-le-Street / Newton Aycliffe LCWIP's.
- DfT's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Strategy.
[gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy)
- DfT's Gear Change
[gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)
- County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029.
[durham.gov.uk/article/11677/Strategic-Cycling-and-Walking-Delivery-Plan-2019-2029](https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/11677/Strategic-Cycling-and-Walking-Delivery-Plan-2019-2029)
- County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

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

Finance

The development of the LCWIPs has been funded by Government's Active Travel Capability Fund.

The report does not commit the Council to any investment at this stage. The LCWIPs for the eight towns do however include cost estimates for the three priority routes which were taken forward to outline design stage. These are Crook priority route desire line 3 (estimated cost £5.5 million); Peterlee priority route desire line 10 (estimated cost £5.5 million); and Shildon priority route desire line 7 (link to Bishop Auckland, estimated cost £1.5 million). The cost estimates for these schemes expected to vary once detailed design is completed.

The Council has been successfully awarded a bid for the Government's Active Travel Capability & Ambition Fund to continue the outline design work by commissioning consultants.

Funding for implementing any schemes will be sought from developers and regional and national funding bodies as bid opportunities arise.

Consultation

Consultation is a key component of the LCWIP process. A consultation and engagement plan were 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 enabled 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 project. The Capability & Ambition Fund will enable us to appoint consultants take forward priority routes to outline design stage. The detailed design and project management/delivery will require an internal staff resource.

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 is required for continuing the work with external resources.