



Committee and Date

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Item

Public



Shropshire LCWIP Consultation

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1. Synopsis

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to go out to consultation on the draft Shropshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Local authorities in England are required by central government to prepare Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) that set out a 10-year plan for delivering new or improved infrastructure for walking and cycling.
- 2.2 National policy and guidance, 'Gear Change – A Bold Vision for Walking and Cycling' (March 2020) and the newly released Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (CWIS2) (July 2022) sets out higher and more ambitious standards for active travel infrastructure required to achieve the government's vision of half of all short, urban journeys to be made by cycling or walking by 2030. Government has confirmed that local authorities that do not have a LCWIP and that do not comply with the updated design standards, Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20) will not receive funding for active travel.
- 2.3 An LCWIP for Shropshire will enable the Council to:
- Demonstrate a clear commitment to walking and cycling by identifying and prioritising infrastructure improvements.
 - Respond appropriately to demand from communities for better walking and cycling facilities.

- Provide high quality infrastructure to meet the demand of a growing population.
- Ensure that consideration is given to active modes through integration of the LCWIP with local planning and transport strategies and policies.
- Make the case for future funding for active travel infrastructure, including Active Travel funding from the Department for Transport (DfT)/Active Travel England (ATE) and developer contributions.

2.4. Table 1 below shows how the objectives of the draft LCWIP align with the following Shropshire Local Plan 2022-25 objectives:

Table 1: Alignment of draft LCWIP Objectives with Shropshire Local Plan 2022-25 Objectives

Shropshire Local Plan 2022-25 Objectives		Draft LCWIP Objectives
Focused Strategic Objective and Bulleted Strategic Objectives	What this will mean for you	
Healthy People: Single system view to tackle inequalities, get in early yourself, supported by us/ by our partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle inequalities • Early intervention • Partnerships • Self-responsibility 	Your communities will be healthier, safer, and will feel supported as places to achieve wellbeing for all.	Healthier living for Shropshire residents
		An inclusive network which is accessible, perceived to be safe, and enables opportunity for all regardless of age or ability
Healthy Environment: Keep the planet green, keep Shropshire green and safe. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change strategy and actions • Safe communities • Natural environment 	Cleaner air, access to an improved network of electric vehicle charging points and better integrated transport and active travel options	Reduced congestion and car dependency through embedding walking and cycling as the modes of choice for some local and inter-urban journeys
		Shropshire as a zero-carbon county
Healthy Economy: Infrastructure, home, safer services, education and jobs so you want to come to Shropshire and/or stay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and employment • Safe, strong, and vibrant destination • Connectivity and infrastructure • Housing 	Developer contributions will be used to enhance local facilities, to provide more access to greenspace and to deliver improvements to footpaths, cycleways, and highway	Supports sustainable economic growth in Shropshire's market towns, including the visitor economy

2.5 The draft Shropshire LCWIP is made up of the main report and seven appendices, which include maps for each area and prioritisation matrices. The draft LCWIP incorporates the following outputs:

- A network plan for walking and cycling covering each of the seven towns.
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for each of the seven towns (Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton,

Church Stretton, Ludlow and Whitchurch) as well as an overarching prioritised programme for Shropshire.

- A final report which incorporates the analysis outcomes and an associated narrative

2.6 Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the draft LCWIP to go out to public consultation. Public feedback on the draft LCWIP and its appendices, particularly the proposed routes and interventions for each area, will help ensure the network accurately responds to demand from local communities for high quality walking and cycling infrastructure.

3. Recommendations

That cabinet approves:

3.1 The draft LCWIP document and appendices to go out to public consultation for a period of six weeks.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. There are challenges involved in ensuring alignment of the LCWIP with other plans and strategies, including the Shropshire Local Plan and local strategies such as the Oswestry Master Plan. In particular, there is a need to ensure an alignment of interventions and delivery timescales and that there is a clear and consistent message which supports funding bids. This risk can be mitigated by working closely with internal teams as well as town and parish councils to ensure that LCWIP policies and interventions are taken into consideration in the development of other plans and strategies.
- 4.2. The Government's 'Gear Change' strategy and LTN 1/20' guidance, recommends that local authorities re-allocate more road space for schemes which support more people cycling and walking. This is likely to cause conflict between different user groups, particularly with people driving not wanting to see road space removed. Therefore, it needs to be acknowledged that achieving full consensus on the implementation of some LCWIP schemes will be challenging.
- 4.3. Related to point 4.2, ATE acknowledge that LTN 1/20 guidance is significantly more suited to more modern urban and metropolitan areas which typically have wider carriageways and street layouts. Conversely, the historic layout of many market towns in Shropshire mean that often there is limited physical space for schemes or restrictions in terms of historic and cultural environmental designations. This will mean that it will be more challenging to conform to LTN 1/20 Guidance. ATE have indicated that in cases where local authorities cannot conform to the guidance, in consultation with ATE, it may be departed from and funding can still be awarded, subject to a robust case being developed to demonstrate the reasons for this.

- 4.4. There may be practical risks with the development and delivery of specific LCWIP schemes and these will need to be managed through the relevant risk management and project management processes. There may also be legal processes such as Traffic Regulation Orders that will need to be undertaken, depending on specific measures progressed. These will be subject to separate assessment and consideration as specific scheme proposals are developed.
- 4.5. As detailed in the Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA), the LCWIP will help enable the following opportunities to be realised:
- **Increased physical and mental health outcomes:** Increased provision of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure will encourage more people to walk and cycle more often due to the increased (actual and perceived) safety benefits, convenience and comfort of walking and cycling in the area. According to the NHS, physical activity can also protect against anxiety and depression.
 - **Increased levels of social inclusion:** A good quality inter-connected network of cycle infrastructure and walking routes will enable more residents to walk and cycle for short journeys and as part of longer journeys. Walking and cycling is a cheap or free mode of transport and as such, good quality infrastructure that connects residents to key destinations will enable those people on low-incomes to access education, workplaces and training opportunities as well as leisure and retail facilities.
 - **Reduced carbon emissions and air pollution:** Increased levels of walking and cycling will help contribute to modal shift and therefore reduced carbon emissions and air pollution in communities
 - **Reduced motor traffic noise:** Implementation of new and improved cycle networks and walking routes include likely reductions in noise levels as a result of modal shift from the car to walking and cycling.
 - **Reduced traffic congestion:** Increased levels of active travel in the community may lead to the longer-term benefit of reducing road congestion through modal shifts, particularly at peak times. This, in turn, leads to increased productivity and improved movement of goods and services.
 - **Increased independent mobility for children:** High quality walking and cycling routes can play an important part in tackling road danger at source which may lead to reducing parents/guardians fear of motor traffic and allowing their children to travel to school by bike or on foot
 - **Enhanced liveability of communities:** Streets that enable more walking and cycling produce more cohesive and safe communities for people to live, work and socialise in. The Shropshire LCWIP will help enhance the liveability of communities by seeking to reduce the domination of vehicular traffic thereby encouraging both individuals and families to walk and cycle both for leisure and for transport purposes
 - **Improved economic benefits for local businesses:** A key focus of the Shropshire LCWIP is on the provision of improved walking and cycling routes to local shops and facilities which will encourage the local community to visit local shops and services rather than drive to shops further afield. This, in turn, provides an economic benefit for the community as active travel improvements can lead to an increase in shopping footfall
- 4.6. A revised Opportunities Appraisal and ESHIA will be included in the updated LCWIP document which will be presented to Cabinet post-consultation.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Revenue funding, to support the development of LCWIP's and to deliver cycling and walking initiatives in 2021/22 and 2022/23 has been allocated to all local authorities. Shropshire Council secured £140,302 of revenue funding in 2021/22 to develop the LCWIP (alongside other walking and cycling initiatives). Shropshire Council secured £116,094 of revenue funding for 2022/23 following a submission of an application in September 2022 which is to be allocated towards LCWIP consultation, scheme planning and early feasibility stage design of schemes in Oswestry (see section 5.2) as well as supporting 'capability building' activities. 'Capability building' in this context means building technical capability through hiring more staffing resources to plan and deliver the LCWIP as well as deliver the emerging school travel planning programme for Shropshire.
- 5.2. Having an agreed list of priorities for walking and cycling route improvements through the LCWIP will aid Council in future bids for funds (through ATE) and budgeting to deliver schemes through the Capital Programme and CIL/S106 contributions. The prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements contained in the draft LCWIP will be used to inform Council's capital funding bids for Active Travel Fund rounds, administered by ATE. Although at present ATE permit the use of the draft LCWIP as a tool to inform funding bids, the expectation is that for future funding bids, a fully adopted LCWIP will be used to support funding bids.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 The Shropshire LCWIP will be at the forefront of taking positive action to support several current and long-term challenges relating to climate change. Regionally and locally, it will be integral to the delivery of the following climate change outcomes contained in the corresponding strategies and plans:
- 6.1.1. **Energy and fuel consumption:** The current lack of connected and high-quality active travel infrastructure encourages car travel and discourages active travel. The LCWIP seeks to provide new and improved active travel infrastructure provision that will make walking and cycling more attractive, safe, direct and comfortable to use in order to stimulate modal shift. This will contribute to reducing energy and fuel consumption as well as reducing emissions in alignment with policies contained in the Shropshire Climate Change Strategy, the Shropshire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), the emerging Shropshire Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), the Shropshire Local Plan 2016-38 (currently under review), the Shropshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and Big Town Plan Master Plan Vision, the emerging Shrewsbury Movement and Public Realm Strategy and the Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework. Wherever possible, future monitoring of the performance of the LCWIP will quantify the carbon impact of specific projects and initiatives.

- 6.1.2. **Renewable Energy Generation:** The LCWIP has no expected outcomes in terms of renewable energy generation
- 6.1.3. **Carbon off-setting or mitigation:** Provision of connected and high-quality active travel infrastructure that enables more people to walk and cycle can contribute to carbon off-setting or mitigation by incentivising behavioural change by making consumers consider the environmental impact of their journeys.
- 6.1.4. **Climate change adaption:** Active travel infrastructure, where possible, will utilise materials that are conducive to alleviating flood risk in alignment with the policies contained in the River Severn Partnership Investment Plan

7. Background

- 7.1. The Infrastructure Act 2015 placed a duty on the Secretary of State to set Walking and Cycling Investment Strategies. The first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS), published in 2017, set out its ambition that by 2040 cycling or walking should be the natural choice for all short journeys or part of a longer journey in England. As a key part of the CWIS, the Department for Transport (DfT) encouraged local authorities to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) to enable them to be 'well-placed to make the case for future investment.
- 7.2. The DfT also published a Cycling & Walking Strategy, 'Gear Change', in Summer 2020, to accelerate their ambitions to increase levels of active travel for all or part of people's daily journeys. The strategy emphasised the need to re-allocate and prioritise more space for people cycling and walking. To support this new cycle infrastructure design guidance, Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20), was published in Autumn 2020 which promotes the provision of more segregated facilities for cyclists.
- 7.3. CWIS has since been superseded by CWIS 2, published in summer 2022. This second strategy reaffirms the Government's commitment to its ambition for walking, wheeling and cycling and outlines the objectives to move England closer to this ambition. It also sets out the financial resources available (£2bn – both revenue and capital over the next four years) to support these objectives, as well as performance monitoring arrangements and governance arrangements to be undertaken by its newly created inspectorate body, ATE. ATE, is responsible for:
- Enforcement of LTN 1/20.
 - Provision of advice to improve scheme design, implementation, and stakeholder management.
 - Acting as a statutory consultee for planning applications for all developments over a certain, as yet unknown, threshold.
 - Considering applications for cycling and walking funding.
 - Publishing annual reports on highway authorities, grading them on their performance on the delivery of active travel (similar to Ofsted).

- 7.4. Funding was granted to Shropshire Council through the DfT administered 2021/22 Capability Fund to develop an LCWIP. In November 2021, after a competitive tendering process, City Science were commissioned by Shropshire Council to produce the LCWIP.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. The Shropshire LCWIP has been developed in accordance with the Government's LCWIP Guidance and sets out an ambitious proposed network of new and upgraded walking and cycling routes across Shropshire. The LCWIP Guidance recommends that LCWIP's are focused on areas where there a larger density of population and therefore where there is the greatest propensity to increase levels of cycling and walking. Consequently, the draft LCWIP focuses on seven key market towns – Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Church Stretton, Ludlow and Whitchurch.
- 8.2. The approach used to develop the cycling and walking networks involved building an understanding of accessibility by walking or cycling to both existing and planned key destinations, including residential areas, employment areas, schools and colleges and leisure and recreation areas. The key cycle routes within each of the geographical areas were identified through an evidence-based approach which included analysis of 2011 census data alongside other data sources (including Strava) to identify and map out travel to work journeys of up to 10km. In terms of walking trips, the work to determine the priority network focused on routes to and from key walking trip generators (within a 2km radius) such as town centres, employment areas, bus and railway stations and schools within each area.
- 8.3. Walking and cycling routes, as well as existing barriers to walking and cycling, were also informed and validated by key internal and external stakeholders throughout the different stages of development. Stakeholders included national organisations such as Highways England, Sustrans and the Canal & Rivers Trust, and; local town and parish councils as well as local cycling, walking and access groups and local schools.
- 8.4. It is important to note that the draft LCWIP is a high-level document. The proposed cycling and walking networks indicated in the plan outline the potential alignment of a route and the interventions at an early feasibility stage and should not be considered as detailed proposals. The delivery of the LCWIP is dependent on the Council's ability to seek and secure funding to both develop and deliver future schemes. Once funding is secured for specific schemes these will then be subject to local consultation with members and the public before progressing to implementation.
- 8.5. The LCWIP will be an evolutionary plan and should be treated as a 'live document'. The DfT's LCWIP Guidance states that it is 'envisaged that the LCWIP will need to be reviewed and updated approximately every four to five years to reflect progress made with implementation. The LCWIP will also be updated if there are significant changes in local circumstances, such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, or new sources of funding.

- 8.6. If the recommendation for the draft LCWIP to go for consultation is approved, consultation will run for a six-week period in Spring 2023. The Shropshire LCWIP Public Consultation Plan is provided in Appendix 3. The proposed consultation approach includes the following:
- Pre-Consultation Virtual Briefing Workshop of Shropshire Council Officers
 - LCWIP Consultation Webpage, including summary information, links to a consultation survey, interactive map of schemes and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 - School-Focused Online Survey which will be used to capture feedback from school pupils and teachers across Shropshire. This survey will be communicated through existing Council Education team channels to promote the survey to schools.
 - Seven 'roadshow' style consultation events within each of the seven market towns whereby local people can approach a stall in a high footfall area and obtain further information about the LCWIP and how to engage further.
 - Three online public presentations & Q&A virtual meetings covering Shrewsbury, Shropshire North (Oswestry, Market Drayton, and Whitchurch) and Shropshire South (Bridgnorth, Church Stretton and Ludlow).
 - Information sessions for teachers and pupils at up to four local schools to promote the LCWIP and provide information on how to engage (via the dedicated school-focused survey).
- 8.7. All feedback from the draft LCWIP consultation will be analysed and summarised in a Public Consultation Report. The draft LCWIP will be updated to account for the feedback received during the public consultation and a summary of the key findings of the public consultation feedback will also be included in a final version of the LCWIP. The revised LCWIP will then be brought back to Cabinet with the recommendation to sign to formally approve and adopt it as policy.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The development of the first draft Shropshire LCWIP, in line with Government guidance, establishes the strategic approach to identifying and delivering a high-quality network of cycling routes and walking measures across Shropshire, with a focus on the seven key market towns. This will support the case for future revenue and capital Government funding for cycling and walking and help meet with future requirements placed on local authorities by the new Government inspectorate, 'Active Travel England'.
- 9.2. The LCWIP will significantly contribute to supporting Shropshire Council's priorities relating to climate change, economic growth and recovery and health and wellbeing. The draft LCWIP will also be a supporting document to the Local Transport Plan 4.
- 9.3. Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the draft LCWIP and appendices for public consultation. On conclusion of the consultation period, receipt of the results of the consultation and an updated LCWIP document will be presented to Cabinet.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Member:

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1: Draft Shropshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Appendices.

Appendix 2: Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment

Appendix 3: Shropshire LCWIP Public Consultation Plan.