

Cabinet

15 February 2024

Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report describes the Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and summarises the information gathering and consultation process that has taken place to ensure the Plan responds to local issues and reflects the aspirations of local people to create a safe and attractive environment for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 1.2 Approval of the Warwickshire LCWIP will enable the County Council to:
 - demonstrate a clear commitment to walking, wheeling and cycling, supporting the priorities in the Council Plan (thriving economy, healthy lives and sustainable futures) and delivering the objectives in the Warwickshire Local Transport Plan and Sustainable Futures Strategy.
 - build on an existing programme to improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure.
 - respond to significant demand by local communities for better facilities, demonstrated by the sizeable response to LCWIP consultation.
 - provide high quality infrastructure to support a growing population; and
 - make a strong case for investment in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure.

Background

- 1.3 Walking, wheeling and cycling are ideal modes of transport for short local trips. They are low-cost, accessible, healthy, environmentally friendly and efficient. The majority of Warwickshire residents live in urban areas; where distances to key destinations are often short; and combining 'active' travel with bus or rail travel offers opportunities for longer distance journeys. Both urban and rural areas provide a range of attractive recreational settings for walking, wheeling and cycling.

- 1.4 The Warwickshire LCWIP presents a long-term, county-wide plan for investment in walking, wheeling and cycling routes and Active Travel Zones. It is a key delivery plan for the recently adopted Sustainable Futures Strategy (contributing to targets to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 in Warwickshire) and Local Transport Plan (Active Travel Strategy Policy Position AT2: Better, safer routes for walking and cycling).
- 1.5 The Government published the first [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) in 2017 with an ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or part of a longer journey. The Strategy included [guidance for local authorities on the preparation of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) (LCWIP); a programme of prioritised improvements to facilitate more walking and cycling for everyday journeys.
- 1.6 In 2020, the Government provided a clear commitment to walking and cycling with publication of [Gear Change](#) and cycle infrastructure design guidance ([Local Transport Note 1/20](#)). A second [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) was published in July 2022 and set out the Government's ambitious target that 50% of all journeys in towns and cities should be walked or cycled by 2030.
- 1.7 During 2022 and 2023, [Active Travel England](#) (ATE) was established as an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport. ATE's purpose is to raise design standards for active travel infrastructure, hold local authorities to account for their investments in active travel, provide advice on how to improve walking, wheeling and cycling provision and to increase skills and capacity in local authorities to deliver schemes. Since June 2023 ATE has also been a statutory consultee on all planning applications for developments equal to or exceeding 150 housing units, 7,500m² of floorspace or an area of 5 hectares.
- 1.8 The adoption of a Warwickshire LCWIP is considered essential in order to access ATE capital and revenue funding, maintain Warwickshire's [Tier 2 rating](#) in the ATE assessment of local authorities and meet ATE monitoring requirements.
- 1.9 In addition to supporting applications for Government funding, the LCWIP is an important tool in seeking developer funding and in working with other organisations and landowners, including National Highways, HS2 and the Canal and River Trust, to maximise active travel investment opportunities in Warwickshire.

Information Gathering and Preparation of Draft LCWIP

- 1.10 Warwickshire's first LCWIP builds on previous improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and supports an ongoing programme of safe and active travel initiatives. It updates the recommendations of the [Cycling Infrastructure Task and Finish Group Report](#) which was presented to Cabinet by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October, 2018.

- 1.11 Between 2021 and 2022, an extensive information gathering exercise was undertaken, involving review, analysis and mapping of:
- Existing walking and cycling facilities and networks
 - Census data
 - Road traffic collisions
 - Physical barriers to active travel
 - Walking and cycling catchment areas
 - Travel demand for short trips and propensity to cycle
 - Local viewpoints – including more than 2,000 comments from local residents (in response to the [LCWIP survey and interactive map](#) in Summer 2021), as well as feedback from meetings with stakeholders and information in Neighbourhood Plans
- 1.12 The information gathering exercise was fundamental to the production of the [draft LCWIP](#), published in June 2022. It demonstrated that there is clear evidence and demand for improvements to Active Travel infrastructure in Warwickshire.
- 1.13 The [draft LCWIP](#) was set out in three sections:
- Part 1: Introduction – aim and objectives, challenges and opportunities, local aspirations and types of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure. It includes a review of the wider national, regional and local policy framework.
 - Part 2: District/ Borough reports – local data review and future proposals, including focus areas for walking improvements and network plans for cycling schemes.
 - Part 3: Implementation: integration, prioritisation, activation and evaluation. This section includes a prioritised programme of cycling infrastructure improvements for future investment.

LCWIP Consultation - methodology

- 1.14 Consultation on the draft LCWIP was undertaken for 8 weeks between June and August 2022 to ensure that Warwickshire residents, people who use local services, communities, organisations, and partners, were informed, involved and able to influence the final plan.
- 1.15 Information was collected about current walking, wheeling and cycling habits, as well as age and ethnicity of the respondents. Comments and levels of agreement were sought in relation to each section of the draft LCWIP:
- Part 1 - main aim, and 10 challenges and opportunities
 - Part 2 - data sources and the proposals for walking and cycling schemes
 - Part 3 - priorities
- 1.16 People could feedback in a variety of ways:
- [Online survey on Ask Warwickshire](#) (17/06/22 to 14/08/22).
 - Paper-based version of online survey requested by telephone or email. Alternative formats or help to complete the survey could also be requested (no requests were made for either).

- Comments sent directly to Transport Planning team at Warwickshire County Council (via phone, post or email).
- Six drop-in sessions (Leamington Spa, Stratford-upon-Avon, Rugby, Nuneaton, Coleshill and Atherstone) between 20/06/22 and 01/07/22
- One live online event on 21/06/22. A recording of the online event was made available on the Ask Warwickshire survey portal.
- Individual meetings with organisations and individuals, including Warwickshire Youth Council, Warwickshire Vision (Leamington), Rugby Cycle Forum, Shipston-on-Stour Town Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Canal and River Trust and National Highways.

1.17 The consultation was promoted extensively by Warwickshire County Council using a variety of communication channels:

- Emails to 265 stakeholders including disability and environmental groups, transport operators and users, and health, business and education professionals.
- Email bulletins to 860 people who had signed up for updates after completing the [LCWIP survey and interactive map](#) in Summer 2021
- Posters and fliers in libraries and community venues
- LCWIP Media Releases – at different stages of the consultation ([event promotion](#), [survey launch](#), [reminder](#) and [last call](#) for comments)
- Media Releases mentioning LCWIP consultation – opportunities were used to link with other relevant events including publicity in [advance](#) and [after](#) the Cycle to Work Day and [JustOneJourney](#) Campaign
- External Coverage by other news websites (including Leamington Observer, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber, Radford Semele Parish Council) and local blogs (such as Jeremy Wright MP, Bicycle Ben)
- County Council Newsletters - LCWIP consultation featured at least twice in: Warwickshire Update (weekly newsletter to residents – 10,000 Subscribers), Warwickshire Matters (monthly newsletter to Town and Parish Councils - 300 Subscribers) and Climate change Newsletter (ad-hoc newsletter- 250 Subscribers)
- County Council Social Media Posts:
 - 200 Facebook posts on WCC Pages (Corporate, Safe and Active Travel, Warwick Communities, Stratford Communities, North Warwickshire Communities and Nuneaton and Bedworth Communities). Paid advertising generated 580 click-throughs.
 - 150 Twitter posts across various WCC Twitter accounts (WCC Corporate, Safe and Active Travel, Public Health).
 - 15 LinkedIn posts
 - 10 NextDoor posts (used to target areas (Rugby and North Warwickshire) where there was a lower response rate to the survey
- Non-WCC Social Media included [South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust](#), [North Warwickshire Borough Council](#), [Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#), [Green Nuneaton](#) and [Bicycle Ben](#)

LCWIP Consultation - overview

- 1.18 The consultation successfully engaged with a wide range of people, reflecting the views of residents and organisations from across the county. A total of 1031 people responded to the online survey, demonstrating the high level of public interest in active travel in Warwickshire, and ensuring that the LCWIP is based on a good understanding of local viewpoints. (See Appendix 1 Consultation Report for detailed analysis). The six drop-in sessions were attended by a total of 100 people. 75 email responses were submitted.
- 1.19 In terms of geographical representation, residents from Warwick District and Stratford-on-Avon District were over-represented in the online survey. They make up a proportion of 25% and 23% of the population in Warwickshire (43% and 30% of survey respondents), whereas 11% of Warwickshire residents live in North Warwickshire Borough (7% of respondents), 22% in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough (9% of respondents), and 19% in Rugby borough (12% of respondents). However, the large sample sizes and ability for all respondents to comment on proposals in all districts and boroughs (not just the area in which they reside) meant that a significant amount of useful data was collected across the county.
- 1.20 Regarding diversity and equalities, analysis of the responses compared to the Warwickshire population showed a slight over-representation of people between ages of 40 and 64, white and male. About 5% of respondents stated that they used mobility aids to get around, including walking sticks, frames, wheelchairs, mobility scooters and electric trikes. One third of respondents accompanied children (with pushchairs, prams, scooters, balance bikes and children's cycles) whilst walking in Warwickshire. 9% of respondents stated that they had a long-standing illness.
- 1.21 An Equality Impact Assessment of the LCWIP is included as Appendix 2 to this report. This notes that walking and cycling are the most accessible of all modes of transport, both in terms of age of user and ability. Walking and cycling are also the most accessible forms of physical activity – providing health benefits (mental as well as physical) for people with protected characteristics under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 1.22 Detailed analysis of the consultation feedback was undertaken by the County Council's Business Intelligence Service and the full report is provided as Appendix 1. Conclusions from this analysis were that:
- There was a high level of agreement with aims and proposals.
 - The majority of respondents stated that they would walk and/or cycle more should the routes be delivered as outlined in the plans.
 - People welcomed the opportunity to comment in detail about the infrastructure plans.

LCWIP Consultation - updating the plan

- 1.23 The feedback from the LCWIP consultation (online survey as well as face-to-face meetings and email responses) endorsed the overall approach set out in the draft LCWIP but also provided very specific comments on the text in the documents and the schemes proposed in the network plans.
- 1.24 Due to the large volume of responses and the desire to incorporate these suggestions into the final version, the updating process has taken longer than expected. However, the extended review period has meant that the final LCWIP can also respond to the publication of new strategies and data.
- 1.25 Key changes following the consultation and review include:
- ‘Wheeling’ added to the aim, in line with latest Government active travel policies. 78% of survey respondents agreed with the proposed aim. The term ‘wheeling’ includes the use of wheelchairs (manual and electric), mobility scooters, prams, buggies and push scooters. It includes people who may not identify with walking, but use the pedestrian environment at a similar speed to walking.
 - List of challenges and opportunities re-ordered and updated. Many people highlighted that ‘safety’ is the greatest challenge.
 - Policies section revised with new strategies such as Warwickshire Local Transport Plan, Sustainable Futures Strategy and the Government’s Policy Paper: Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2).
 - Data sections for each Borough and District updated with 2021 Census (whilst referencing 2011, as the 2021 Census travel data was impacted by travel restrictions, reduced availability of public transport, furlough of staff and a shift to hybrid and homeworking).
 - Measures for walking and horse-riding clarified, following comments that these were not covered sufficiently in draft LCWIP.
 - Reference to the role of promotion, publicity, and other types of infrastructure (cycle parking, [School Streets](#) etc.).
 - Walking and cycling network plans significantly changed in response to very detailed comments (583 respondents commented on walking plans and 681 respondents on the cycling plans). Updates to plans include:
 - Change of status for some existing, programmed and potential schemes to respond to new funding and/or construction.
 - Addition of a significant number of new routes, particularly in Nuneaton, Rugby, Kenilworth and cross-county. However, some suggestions were not taken forward - due to lack of wider connectivity and low level of demand.
 - Some alterations to proposed route alignments and extent.
 - Changes to some names of routes to provide greater clarification.
 - All priorities checked and some revised (mostly upwards). All third party schemes now scored as high priority – following comments that active travel infrastructure is integral to new developments and developers should provide facilities at the outset. Core Walking Zones renamed as Active Travel Zones and allocated high priority. (472 respondents commented on priorities).

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The Warwickshire LCWIP identifies and prioritises over 300 walking, wheeling and cycling schemes, for potential delivery by Warwickshire County Council and its partners. Delivering this level of infrastructure would have a positive impact on people's ability to complete more walking, wheeling and cycling journeys, but would also require major capital financial investment beyond what the Council can fund from its own limited resources.
- 2.2 Adopting the LCWIP is likely to raise expectations over the delivery of active travel schemes, but it does not commit the Council to any additional expenditure at this stage. Investment in active travel infrastructure will continue to be heavily reliant on external funding. The LCWIP will strengthen the case for investment and help the Council to build on recent successes in securing millions of pounds of external grants and developer contributions for improved walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure. Future potential funding streams for delivering schemes identified in the LCWIP include the Active Travel Fund (from which the Council has already secured £7.3million), HS2 Road Safety Fund and Local Integrated Transport Settlement as well as development funding linked to Local Plans (existing and future Section106 developer agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy – although under the Levelling Up and Re-generation Act 2023 these will eventually be replaced by a new infrastructure levy which may impact the availability of funding).
- 2.3 The types of infrastructure, progress of schemes and pace of development will be subject to further modelling, feasibility, design work, business case development and consultation with local communities. All of these tasks will have financial implications. Revenue funding from Active Travel England (Capability and Ambition Fund) is already being used for the development and design of Warwickshire's pipeline of new walking, wheeling and cycling schemes.
- 2.4 Investment in walking, wheeling and cycling has the potential to deliver indirect savings through the economic, environmental, health and well-being benefits associated with active travel and greater levels of physical activity. For example, measures to support walking, wheeling and cycling, alongside initiatives to improve public transport, can provide alternatives for short trips and some longer journeys, thereby reducing the costs of congestion and air pollution associated with the growth in motor vehicle traffic on local roads.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Transport is the single largest cause of carbon emissions in the UK. Developing a co-ordinated approach to walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure will support further investment in active travel modes, thereby contributing to reduced carbon emissions as well as lower levels of congestion and improved air quality.

- 3.2 The UK has legally binding carbon net zero targets (net zero by 2050 and reduction of carbon emissions by 78% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels). Warwickshire's LCWIP will therefore contribute to these nationally required targets.
- 3.3 The LCWIP is a key delivery plan for the recently adopted Sustainable Futures Strategy and also helps to support the environmental objectives set out in the Council Plan and Local Transport Plan.

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 The adoption of the Warwickshire LCWIP will form the basis for delivery of a pipeline of schemes and guiding of investment opportunities over a 10-year period including:
- next 1-2 years - programmed schemes (with either full or partial funding towards implementation)
 - next 5 years – those potential schemes identified as Very High or High Priority in the LCWIP assessment.
 - next 5-10 years - other potential schemes as funding and development opportunities arise.
- 4.2 There will be an annual review of the LCWIP schemes with progress reported to the Cycle Schemes Programme Board (officer group), Members Cycling Liaison Group, and Local Access Forum.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Consultation Report
 Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment
 Appendix 3 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 1 - Introduction
 Appendix 4 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 2 – North Warwickshire
 Appendix 5 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 2 – Nuneaton and Bedworth
 Appendix 6 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 2 – Rugby Borough
 Appendix 7 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 2 – Stratford District
 Appendix 8 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 2 – Warwick District
 Appendix 9 – Warwickshire LCWIP Part 3 – Implementation

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): not applicable as this is a county wide report.

Other members:

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Cross-Party Members Cycling Liaison Group:
Councillors Tim Sinclair and Jenny Fradgley

Chairs & spokes persons of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees:
Councillors Jeff Clarke, Jonathan Chilvers, Sarah Feeney, and Jenny Fradgley