

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Phase 2 Feasibility Works (Planning Policy-Rachel Raynaud)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides an update on the phase 1 work undertaken to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and seeks approval for the release of funds for phase 2 feasibility work.

Recommendation(s):

To approve the release of £161,000 revenue funding (held in the Council's Surrey Future Feasibility Fund) as match funding to enable completion of phase 2 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

1. Context of report

1.1 The Government have produced an updated Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) outlining their ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys by 2040. The CWIS sets out the following targets to achieve by 2025:

- To double cycling to 1.6 billion cycle stages in 2025.
- To increase walking stages to 300 stages per person per year.
- To increase the percentage of children that usually walk to school to 55% in 2025.

1.2 Measures to transform cycling and walking include:

- the creation of a national cycling and walking commissioner and inspectorate
- higher standards for permanent infrastructure across England
- getting GPs to prescribe cycling and exercise
- creating a long-term budget for cycling and walking similar to that for roads.

1.3 Over £1 billion of Government funding has been made available to local bodies that may be invested in cycling and walking over the next five years. In order to be in a position to bid for funding, local authorities will need to have up-to-date feasibility studies in place which identify appropriate costed schemes.

1.4 A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a key transport planning document that has been defined by the Department for Transport (DfT), which aims to deliver improved facilities for existing active users whilst also encouraging a mode shift for new users. An LCWIP is intended to facilitate a long-term approach to developing active travel proposals over a period of approximately 10 years and identifies costed schemes to enable funding bids to be submitted.

1.5 A report on the delivery of phase 1 of the LCWIP was presented to this Committee on 21 January 2021. At that meeting the Committee approved the following:

- 1) £20,000 revenue funding as match funding to enable commencement of phase 1 of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Runnymede Borough to commence in the financial year 2020/2021 with withdrawal of funding required in 2021/22.
 - 2) The £20,000 revenue funding referred to at 1 above be met from the Council's contribution to the Surrey Infrastructure Feasibility Fund and be released only when Surrey County Council's contribution of £40,000 is confirmed.
 - 3) Members agreed in principle to match fund stage 2 of the plan development, but that on completion of phase 1 a report was brought to Members to provide an update on the phase 1 work, and to seek approval for the Council to release funds for stage 2 feasibility work.
- 1.6 Atkins were commissioned by Surrey County Council (SCC) and Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for the Borough in 2021 and submitted their phase 1 report in June 2022.

2 Report and, where applicable, options considered

- 2.1 The primary objective for the LCWIP is to increase the number of people walking and cycling in the Borough. This includes aims to:
- Make cycling a safe, attractive and convenient mode of transport for people of all ages, and confidence.
 - Expand the existing cycle network and establish a continuous travel network for the Borough.
 - Increase inter mobility with improved connectivity in the areas around transport and major employment hubs such as railway stations and high streets, as well as other key destinations.
 - To make Runnymede an area where people can have an excellent quality of life supporting the population's social and economic aspirations
- 2.2 The RBC LCWIP has considered the full extent of the Borough, with an emphasis on links between key trip attractors and destinations that will encourage a greater mode share for the active travel modes of walking and cycling. The development of the plan is split into two phases with phase 1 including:
- Review of previous studies, strategies and guidance.
 - Background data analysis.
 - Draft active travel network development.
 - Stakeholder engagement to refine the draft proposed network.
 - Preliminary corridor assessments undertaken using a multi-criteria assessment framework (MCAF).
 - Site visits and formal assessments using standardised tools - Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT) and Route Selection Tool (RST).
 - Concept design development.
 - Further stakeholder engagement to review the concept designs.
 - Programme prioritisation and cost estimation.

- 2.3 Targeted stakeholder engagement was carried out in phase 1 to ensure that the views and knowledge of key stakeholders were taken into account. Before the start of the project, a “Call for Ideas” was conducted via Commonplace, an interactive mapping tool where members of the public could identify issues and opportunities within Surrey’s active travel network. During the project two sets of workshops were held with representatives from SCC and RBC, local cycling and walking groups, local businesses and other local stakeholder groups as well as elected members. The first set of workshops presented the existing issues and the identification of walking and cycle routes. The second set of workshops reviewed the proposed infrastructure interventions.
- 2.4 Key findings from the review of previous studies and data analysis, and stakeholder engagement sessions were used to inform the walking and cycling route selection process. The assessment framework involved two stages. Firstly, a ‘long-list’ assessment using both qualitative and quantitative criteria to reduce the number of options down to 10 Core Walking Zones (CWZs) and respective walking routes (see page 121 & 125 of the report) and 19 cycle routes (page 82 of the report). Following a further assessment to evaluate these options in more detail (including stakeholder consultation, audits, site visits and further engagement with SCC and RBC officers), the second stage involved developing a ‘short list’ of options. These Phase 1/prioritised routes included four cycle routes and three CWZs (Figure 4 & 5 page 11 of the report). Routes not selected as Phase 1/prioritised routes, may be developed at a later stage. As the project developed, interdependencies became more evident between the walking and cycle routes. These interdependencies are reflected in the route prioritisation, costing and intervention approach.
- 2.5 The short list was derived by quantifying stakeholder input, potential usage and design and access. This included considering the feasibility of the proposed schemes as well as the potential of the improvements to encourage new walking and cycling and to what degree the selected routes will foster pedestrian and cycle access to and from key destinations. The categories were subsequently weighted. The weightings were intended to give a slightly higher input to the design factors, as proposed interventions with a greater anticipated impact over the existing condition could support a more substantial uplift in walking and cycling.
- 2.6 The next stage of the LCWIP implementation is to advance the design concepts for the first phase of active travel corridors to a feasibility level of design and assessment. This will allow a more detailed review of individual routes/interventions, evaluation of constraints, and refinement of the proposed design measures. During this process public engagement will be a key element of developing high-quality and attractive routes for local users. The progression of these schemes, either as a work package or individual schemes, will likely be subject to external factors such as funding applications or potential inter-dependencies with other proposals within the local area.
- 2.7 The LCWIP should be reviewed and updated periodically, and additional active travel opportunities may also be identified and incorporated into the LCWIP in response to major new development sites, and as walking and cycling networks mature and expand.

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 Surrey's emerging fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) is due to be considered by SCC's Cabinet in July 2022. It is anticipated that the emerging LTP4 will further advance strategies to support and encourage walking and cycling, particularly in the context of the climate emergency declared by the UK in July 2019 and set a pathway towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Key policy areas emerging in LTP4 that are particularly pertinent to the LCWIP include:

- Planning for place: supporting '20-minute neighbourhoods' which are planned so that people can meet the majority of their needs locally, within a 20-minute walk or cycle ride.
- Active travel and personal mobility: improving conditions for walking and cycling and aiming to develop facilities to LTN 1/20 guidance.

3.2 Surrey Climate Change Strategy seeks investment in initiatives and infrastructure to encourage more people to walk and cycle and Action Ref. PPAT 2.0 of the Runnymede Borough Council Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030 seeks to facilitate and encourage active transport in the Borough to reduce traffic congestion and emissions and improve air quality and health and wellbeing.

3.3 The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan Policy SD3: Active and Sustainable Transport seeks to support schemes and development proposals which enhance the accessibility and connectivity between people and places by active and sustainable forms of travel.

4. **Resource implications (where applicable)**

4.1 Funding for this scheme is held in an earmarked reserve, from which RBC's £161,000 contribution to phase 2 costs will be taken. Overall, between the two phases the funding split between RBC and SCC is approximately 50:50.

4.2 Outline costs have been estimated by Atkins for the shortlisted design measures identified in phase 1. The estimates are reflective of the early concept stage and are intended to provide an indicative, rough order-of-magnitude cost only. Details of how the indicative costs estimates were produced and what they include/do not include are set out on page 161 of the report. It should be noted that to obtain funding from Government for active travel improvements, proposals need to accord with updated Cycle Infrastructure Design (Local Transport Note 1/20) published in 2020. LTN 1/20 is intended to support the delivery of the high-quality infrastructure necessary to achieve the ambitions of the CWIS. Inclusive cycling is an underlying theme, so that people of all ages and abilities are considered and empowered to take up cycling. LTN 1/20 is being integrated into the LCWIP process, establishing the design aspirations of schemes identified as part of the LCWIP.

4.3 There are a number of potential sources of funding available to deliver improvements identified in a LCWIP:

- Integrated Transport and Maintenance Block funding: This is provided annually to Surrey County Council by the Department for Transport

(DfT) to enable investment in various transport and highway projects and programmes.

- Government grants: Government frequently provides opportunities for local authorities to bid competitively for funding opportunities, with differing themes and objectives depending on the focus of the funding such as Emergency Active Travel Fund and the Active Travel Fund. Government funding can also be made available for active travel improvements such as the cycle rail fund to improve cycle facilities at railway stations.
- CIL

4.4 To date the above Government funding streams have not required match funding, however this cannot be guaranteed in the future.

4.5 Officer input into phase 2 will be undertaken using existing staff resources.

5. **Legal implications**

5.1 None for the purpose of this report.

6. **Equality implications**

6.1 Age is a characteristic protected by the Equalities Act 2010. Improving walking and cycling provision within the Borough will help those residents without access to a car to travel. This is likely to include larger numbers of both younger and older residents. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the phase 2 works.

7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

7.1 In June 2019, parliament passed The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendments) Order 2019, which now requires the Government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gasses by 100% relative to 1990 levels by 2050. Nationally it is the Governments ambition to make walking and cycling the national choice for shorter journeys, as well as short sections of longer journeys.

7.2 In Surrey 46% of carbon emissions are transport related, and as part of Surrey County Council's Climate Change Strategy investing in initiatives and infrastructure to encourage more people to walk and cycle are an important priority in achieving this vision.

7.3 Action Ref. PPAT 2.0 of the Runnymede Borough Council Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030 seeks to facilitate and encourage active transport in the Borough to reduce traffic congestion and emissions and improve air quality and health and wellbeing.

8. **Other implications (where applicable)**

8.1 Not applicable

9. **Conclusions**

9.1 It is recommended that Members of the Corporate Management Committee approve the release of £161,000 revenue funding (held in the Council's

Surrey Infrastructure Feasibility Fund) as match funding to enable completion of phase 2 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

(To resolve)

Background papers

To access the report please click on the following link:

<https://FiletransferGB.atkinsglobal.com/message/TUht3YLkpFilKoll8xRvo0>