

TITLE OF REPORT: CONSULTATION ON NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR - REGULATORY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

COUNCIL PRIORITIES: PEOPLE FIRST & SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To inform Members of a public consultation on the draft North Hertfordshire District Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) running from 26th September for six weeks.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the committee note the contents of the report.
- 2.2. That the committee Members be encouraged to, individually and through the Area Committee, respond to the North Hertfordshire District LCWIP consultation draft attached at Appendix 1, and encourage residents and local organisations to do so too.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The LCWIP is a critically important document that sets out priorities for future investment to make the built environment safer and more attractive for people walking, cycling, using a wheelchair or mobility scooter, or (subject to new legislation) e-scootering (collectively referred to as 'active travel').
- 3.2. Schemes set out in the draft LCWIP can expect to be funded over the next several years by Active Travel England (a funding body and inspectorate set up by Government) and Section 106 contributions from developers following approval of their planning applications.
- 3.3. Having a comprehensive plan with strong local buy-in should ensure North Herts attracts significant government funding, and that schemes in the LCWIP can be developed and delivered.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options being proposed as this report is informing members about the draft LCWIP consultation process being undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council. The Council could refrain from contributing to the preparation of or responding to the draft LCWIP, but this could result in a document that may not accord with the Council's own Transport, Local Plan and Climate Change policies.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Executive Members and Deputies have been briefed on the relevant matters in this report. Members will also receive a presentation on the consultation draft at the Highways Liaison Panel meeting on 14 September.
- 5.2 The development of the draft LCWIP included consultation with local members and organisations in 2021 through online workshops on 21 July and 29 November, and an in-person workshop on 1 December.
- 5.3 The consultation process will be online, and open to all residents, members and organisations to respond to. Hard copies of the report and consultation questionnaire will also be made available at the District Council Office and local libraires. NHC and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have worked together on a communication and engagement plan in order to reach local members, organisations and residents. This will be through internal and external newsletters, press releases, social media, Town Talks, councillor surgeries, and other talks and meetings.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The government's *Active travel: local authority toolkit*, published on 10 August 2022, sets out the primary actions for local authorities with respect to active travel:
- **Develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).**
 - Develop and implement Travel Demand Management Plans.
 - Plan for and improve active travel infrastructure.
 - Promote behaviour change to enable active travel.
- 7.2. LCWIPs are part of the government's 2017 cycling and walking investment strategy.
- 7.3. Although not mandatory, the aim of an LCWIP is to help authorities in England take a strategic approach to improving conditions for walking and cycling and ensure that consideration is given to walking and cycling within local planning and transport policies.

7.4. Developing an LCWIP will help an authority make a strong case for future investment in active travel infrastructure.

7.5. The main outputs from an LCWIP are:

- a mapped network plan for walking and cycling that identifies preferred routes, current and future travel patterns, and core zones for further development;
- a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment in the short, medium and long term that contributes towards meeting broader local goals;
- a report that sets out the underlying analysis, including the barriers and enablers for walking and cycling, and provides a narrative to support the improvements identified.

7.6. Government funding for active travel (£2 billion, announced in May 2020) will now be administered by Active Travel England.

7.7. Active Travel England (ATE) is a new executive agency of government, set up to deliver on two clear objectives (key points emboldened):

*The DfT [Department for Transport] and ATE share the common objective of delivering **increases in active travel to 50% of all journeys in urban areas**. To achieve this ATE and the DfT will work together in recognition of each other's roles and areas of expertise, providing an effective environment for ATE to achieve its objectives through the promotion of partnership and trust and ensuring that ATE also supports the strategic aims and objective of the DfT and wider government as a whole.*

*ATE will support the department's objectives by driving up standards and the capacity and motivation of local authorities and other organisations providing transport works to deliver active travel infrastructure and provide best practice design standards. **It will manage funding for dedicated walking and cycling initiatives and challenge failure by withholding funding for failure to meet standards**. It will assess the compliance of schemes in the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund, Roads Investment Strategy 2, the Levelling Up Fund and other significant departmental investments that deliver active travel and **prevent funding for schemes that do not meet DfT design guidance**. It will offer training and be a repository of best practice guidance for local authorities and developers working to ensure active travel design is embedded in new developments.*

7.8. ATE will also act as a statutory consultee on strategic (large) planning applications to ensure compliance with the government's strategy on active travel and agreed standards, as set out in Local Transport Note 1/20. (See link in section 17 below)

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. HCC in partnership with NHC have prepared the draft North Hertfordshire District LCWIP for public consultation. The draft Report is attached at Appendix 1 and associated

appendices at Appendix 2. The LCWIP seeks to unlock substantial new funding from government for North Hertfordshire.

8.2. The LCWIP will determine the priorities for investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in North Herts for the next several years.

8.3. The LCWIP will be an important part of the evidence for the Sustainable Travel Town programmes for Letchworth Garden City and Royston.

8.4. The LCWIP supports:

- Local Transport Plan policies 1 (Transport User Hierarchy), 6 (Accessibility), 7 (Active Travel – Walking), 8 (Active Travel – Cycling), 15 (Speed management), 17 (Road Safety), 18 (Transport Safety and Security), 19 (Emissions Reduction).
- The North Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan, adding detail to Packages 4, 5, and 7–15 of the interventions proposed for Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston, Knebworth and Little Wymondley.
- Emerging Local Plan policies SP6 (Sustainable transport), SP9 (Design and Sustainability) SP14 (Site BA1 – North of Baldock), SP15 (Site LG1 – North of Letchworth Garden City), SP17 (Site HT1 – Highover Farm, Hitchin), T1 (Assessment of transport matters), BA3 (Land south of Clothall Common), BA4 (Land east of Clothall Common), IC3 (Land at Bedford Road), KB1 (Land at Deards End), KB2 (Land off Gipsy Lane), KB4 (Land east of Knebworth), and generally supports future developments in Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston, Knebworth and Little Wymondley.
- North Herts Transport Strategy policies:
 - 2. Adoption of a transport user hierarchy;*
 - 3. Deliver a step change in cycling and improved walking within the main urban centres through travel behaviour change and better facilities;*
 - 5. A ‘Sustainable Spine’ corridor along the A5051 with a focus on enhanced public transport and cycling connectivity between the towns.*
- North Herts Council Climate Change Strategy:
 - Progressing the implementation of a better cycle network in North Herts, linking the district and beyond*
- Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan Policy KBT1:
 - KBT1 Sustainable Modes of Travel The provision of sustainable modes of transport, electric vehicle charging points and the protection and enhancement of public rights of way will be supported.*

(Links to the above reports are provided at Section 17 Background Papers)

8.5 This is the first iteration of the North Herts LCWIP. Hertfordshire County Council are developing LCWIPs with each of the ten districts and boroughs in Hertfordshire. This necessarily limits the amount of officer time and budget available to develop the North Herts LCWIP. For this reason it focuses on Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston,

Knebworth, and the shortest inter-urban route, Stevenage–Hitchin via Little Wymondley. The plan identifies priority routes elsewhere in the district, and acknowledges that a second iteration is needed to complete the plan. NHC and HCC will work in partnership to review this first iteration of the LCWIP and its effect within a 2 year timeframe and will be subject to available funding and resources both locally and nationally.

- 8.6 Consultation on the draft LCWIP will take place from 26th September to 7 November 2022 for six-weeks. HCC will be running the consultation. The consultation will be run entirely online, largely because of its scale. Officers will present a report on it to each of the Area Committees. Officers will also be giving Town Talks, attending councillor surgeries and other pop-up events during the consultation. Dates and venues will be published on both the HCC and the NHC websites. Hard copies of the consultation questionnaire and a hard copy of the draft report and appendices will be made available at the Council Offices Customer Services Centre and in the local libraries. Members are also requested to help collate any consultation responses for those residents that are not able or do not have access to the internet. Full details on how to submit a response will be published prior to and during the consultation period. The below online link to the consultation will only be accessible from 26th September. [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans \(LCWIPs\) | Hertfordshire County Council](#).
- 8.7 The outcome of public consultation will be reported to Hertfordshire Highway & Transport Cabinet Panel together with the revised LCWIP for adoption. The final LCWIP will subsequently be reported to Cabinet for endorsement.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under the Terms of Reference of the Constitution, paragraph 9.8.2 (d) provides that area committees should act as a forum for discussion on matters of local interest and in particular elicit/hear the views of local bodies and organisations
- 9.2. There are no legal implications arising from this report as this is a consultation being undertaken by Herts County Council.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no financial implications for North Herts arising from this report. North Herts contributed circa £15k towards the preparation of the draft LCWIP which was funded from the GAF Revenue reserve budget, with HCC funding two thirds of the budget.
- 10.2. The consultation on the draft LCWIP is being funded by HCC.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are no risk implications arising from this report or the consultation.
- 11.2. Development and adoption of an LCWIP by HCC and endorsement by NHC will greatly reduce the risk of missing out on future funding opportunities to deliver improvements for active travel.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. The LCWIP consultation will endeavour to reach a broadly representative cross-section of the North Herts population. Members' assistance is sought in getting word out to residents in their ward/division.
- 12.3. Feedback through the consultation that relates to the needs and concerns of people with protected characteristics will be addressed in updates to the Draft LCWIP.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.
- 13.2. The consultation involves no external procurement.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no direct environmental implications from the consultation.
- 14.2. Feedback through the consultation that relates to environmental protections or enhancements will be addressed in updates to the Draft LCWIP.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. Engagement and communications around the consultation is being managed within the existing resources of Hertfordshire and North Herts Councils.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. Appendix 1: North Hertfordshire District LCWIP: Consultation Draft
- 16.2. Appendix 2: North Hertfordshire District LCWIP: Consultation Draft – Combined Appendices

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- NHDC: [Draft Local Plan](#)
- NHDC: [Transport Strategy](#)
- Letchworth Heritage Foundation: [Letchworth Garden City Cycling Strategy](#)
- Wymondley Parish Council: [Wymondley Neighbourhood Plan](#)
- Knebworth Parish Council: [Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan](#)
- HCC: [Local Transport Plan](#)
- HCC: [North Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan](#)
- HCC: [Improving walking and cycling across Hertfordshire \(Active Travel Fund\)](#)
- DfT: [£2 billion package to create new era for cycling and walking](#)
- DfT: [Cycling and walking investment strategy](#)
- DfT: [Active travel: local authority toolkit](#)
- DfT: [Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking](#)
- DfT: [Local Transport Note 1/20](#)
- ATE: [Active Travel England Framework Document](#)