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Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Update
Date:	8 January 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor England, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Place Councillor Smith-Wright, Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – Slides from Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Member Briefing – October 2023 Appendix B – Detailed List of Engagement Activity Appendix C – Key Stakeholder List Appendix D – Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Member Briefing – October 2023 (Appendix A)
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	DBC – Dacorum Borough Council HCC – Hertfordshire County Council LCWIP – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan RST - Department for Transport's Route Selection Tool

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Corporate Priorities	Sustainable future: Take action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Clean, safe and green: Provide a clean, safe and green-focussed environment
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	Proud and thriving borough: Realise our potential as a great place to live and work with a thriving business community
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	1. To update the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the LCWIP progress to date.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That the content of the report is noted.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1 Introduction/Background:

1.1 Introduction

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a fundamental document in making the case to secure future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure over the next 10 years.

It will seek to inform planning and investment decisions by producing:

- Walking and cycling network plans for further development
- Prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements
- Report summarising the work completed.

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) is working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, who is project managing the LCWIP alongside consultants WSP.

1.2 Benefits of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Evidence shows that enabling increased active travel trips, including walking and cycling, brings benefits in areas such as road safety, congestion reduction, clean air, quieter streets, social mobility, the economy and public health, and wellbeing. Gear Change (England’s Cycling and Walking Strategy, published in 2020 by the Department for Transport) gathers much of the existing research on the benefits of active travel. Figure 1-1 is an infographic taken from Gear Change, listing some of the key benefits.



Figure 1 - Infographic highlighting the benefits of Walking and Cycling taken from the Gear Change Document. It indicates the Health, Wellbeing, Economy, Congestion, Local Businesses and Climate change benefits which can be received from promoting active travel.

LCWIP's also play a fundamental role in securing funding from central government, particularly Active Travel England (ATE), as they help local authorities prioritise and design effective walking and cycling projects. ATE specifically requires network planning to inform the prioritisation of schemes, ensuring they align with national design standards and local needs.

1.3 LCWIP Process

The DfT produced LCWIP Technical Guidance for Local Authorities (April 2017) and the process is summarised in the table below.

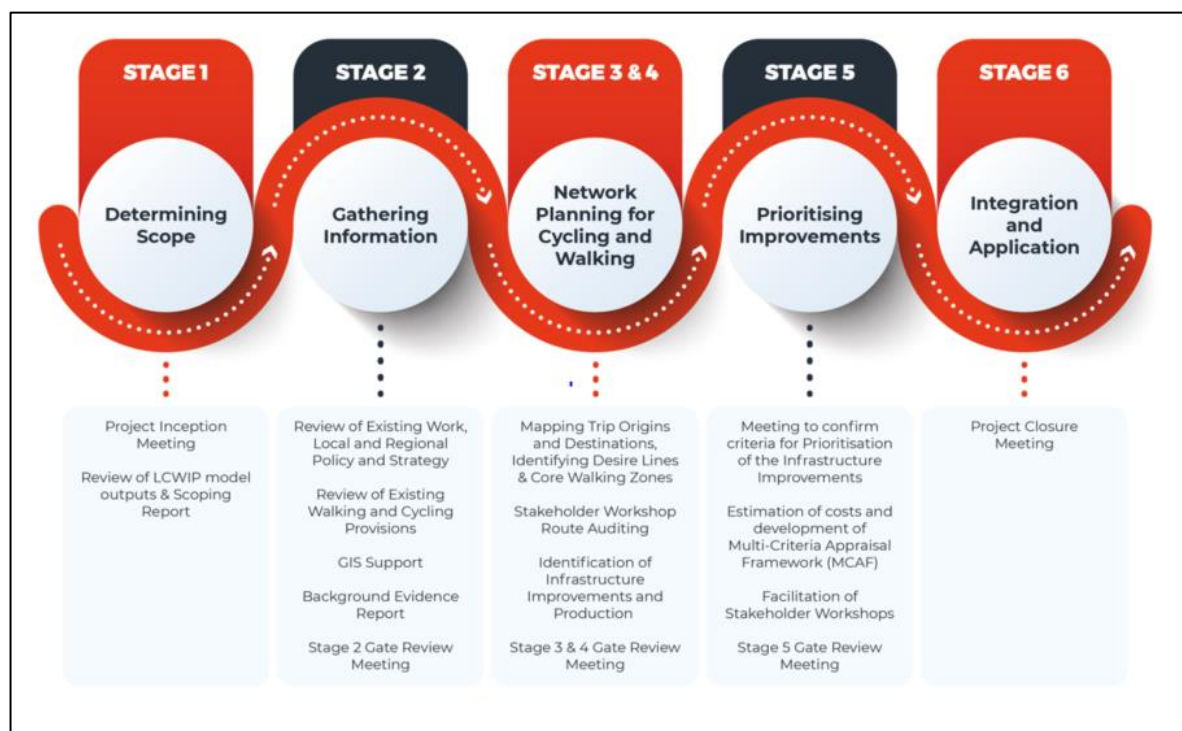


Figure 2 – The LCWIP Process

The Dacorum LCWIP project is currently finalising Stage 5 of this process, as illustrated in Figure 2 above. A six-week public consultation is planned for early 2025.

Policies for the Dacorum Local Plan, where relevant, have been drafted on the basis of the emerging LCWIP and a number of LCWIP interventions have been included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that supports the Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation.

2 Update on the Dacorum LCWIP progress to date

2.1 Engagement

There have been a number of key stages of engagement in the formation of the plan, as shown in Table 1 below. Additional engagement has been detailed in Appendix B (Detailed List of Engagement Activity). A list of Key Stakeholders can be found in Appendix C.

Date	LCWIP stage	Activity
Oct 23	2	Initial Member Briefing Introduction to project, background and purpose.
Nov 23	2	Dacorum Climate Action Network Event Publicise the plan and upcoming engagement.
29 Jan 2024	2	Review of Draft Walking and Cycling Networks (HCC & DBC Members and Officers) The first of two workshops whereby HCC and DBC councillors and officers were shown draft walking and cycling network plans and were asked to provide feedback on the routes identified and highlight any key issues or opportunities. This was undertaken in person at The Forum.
30 Jan 2024	2	Review of Draft Walking and Cycling Networks (Key Stakeholders) The second of two workshops whereby organisations external to HCC and DBC were invited to review and feedback on the same walking and cycling network plans. This was hosted online via Teams. Please refer to Appendix C (Key Stakeholder List) for the list of invitees.
30 Jan – 26 Feb 2024	2	Early Engagement Period (Stakeholder and Public) A four-week online engagement period was held to collect feedback on the network from the key stakeholders mentioned above and the public. The feedback from the online engagement, along with feedback received in the above meetings, was then used to refine the LCWIP network.
17 Sept 2024	3 & 4	Review of Infrastructure Improvement Plans (Members and Key Stakeholders) The first of two workshops in the second round of engagement. County and District councillors and officers, as well as organisations external to HCC and DBC, were shown the draft infrastructure improvement maps that were produced based on the audits undertaken. Participants were provided with an opportunity to comment on the identified

		improvements and make any further suggestions. They were also invited to review and feedback on updated network maps.
19 Sept – 13 Oct 2024		Consultation Period (Members and Key Stakeholders) A four-week consultation period was held to collect feedback on the infrastructure plans from the key stakeholders listed above. The feedback from the online consultation, along with feedback received in the above meetings, were then used to refine the infrastructure plans.

Table 1 – LCWIP Engagement Activity

2.2 Walking and Cycling Networks

Walking and cycling networks were developed early in the process, a key goal at this stage of the LCWIP was to determine where the greatest propensity exists – where targeted investment in infrastructure improvements could generate the newest walking and cycling trips.

Model outputs, existing cycle facilities and strategic active travel routes and connections were mapped alongside potential future developments, key destinations (rail stations, schools, and key employment areas), and the outputs of the early-stage stakeholder engagement session for reference.

Strategies that fed into this process included (but were not limited to) the Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted and Tring Sustainable Transport Studies and the Hemel Garden Communities Transport Vision and Strategy, with consideration given to green networks such as the Hemel Hempstead Green Loop and the Nickey Line.

The LCWIP project team used all these sources of information to determine ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ walk and cycle desire lines across Dacorum.

As detailed in Table 1 above the draft walking and cycling network plans were then reviewed by members, key stakeholders and the public in January and February 2024.

Once the network plans were updated following stakeholder comments, a priority network of primary cycling routes were considered for auditing. As there were more primary routes than could be audited with the resources available, a sub-set of primary was selected for audit based on stakeholder feedback and discussions between WSP, HCC and DBC. This included most identified primary routes in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring.

2.3 Route Audits and identification of potential infrastructure improvements

Using the Department for Transport’s Route Selection Tool (RST), on-site audits were undertaken in May and June 2024 by trained WSP and HCC personnel. The tool was used to assess the suitability of a route in its existing condition against the core design outcomes of directness, gradient, safety, connectivity, and comfort. The process of scoring routes against the criteria in the RST identified issues (e.g., cyclists mixing with high volumes of traffic) which informed the identification of infrastructure solutions (e.g., segregated infrastructure). The RST also identified critical issues at junctions to be addressed.

The list below details some of the themes that were identified during the route audits: -

- Preferred location of cycle routes (shared path or carriageway)
- Speeds
- Volume of traffic

- Footway parking (particularly by schools) creating hazards
- Footways not in good repair
- Narrow pavement, location of path
- Dangerous manoeuvres by pedestrians
- Routes criss-cross across different sides of the roads
- Segregation of major roads (e.g. A414, Leighton Buzzard Road)

Once route audits were complete, high level infrastructure improvements were identified.

2.4 Stakeholder input into infrastructure proposals

Table 1, shown in section 2.1, along with Appendix B (Detailed List of Engagement Activity) details the steps taken that have enabled Key Stakeholders and Members to feed into the development of the plan.

Key Stakeholders and Members were consulted on the development of the walking and cycling routes (along with the public) in January and February 2024.

Key Stakeholders and Members were more recently consulted on the proposed infrastructure improvements as part of the Stakeholder Feedback Consultation during September and October 2024.

2.5 Prioritisation of infrastructure improvements

Individual infrastructure improvements will be grouped to form a selection of 'prioritised routes', which will combine all the infrastructure improvements on an alignment – including both pedestrian and cycling improvements. Each route will be considered in terms of its alignment and the infrastructure proposed and then scored in terms of:

- How likely walking and cycling trips are to increase in this location (based on the GIS model introduced in section 4.3)
- How well it fits with the existing road network
- How well it supports the strategic place vision
- How well it supports access to educational facilities
- Whether it supports new housing developments
- Whether it supports access to jobs
- How well it aligns with LTN 1/20
- How technically feasible it is likely to be
- Its dependency on other schemes and projects

The total scores of each will be used to rank the routes/groups in a prioritised list, grouped by settlement.

2.6 The Nickey Line

The Nickey Line, in Hemel Hempstead, was not audited as part of the LCWIP as it is being separately looked at as part of a wider active transport programme across the county.

The strategic importance of the Nickey Line has been acknowledged therefore a number of connecting routes have been audited as part of the LCWIP.

3 Next steps

Table 2 below summarises the next steps for the project.

Build of public consultation platform (10 weeks) <i>* Note half term - w/c 17 Feb 2025</i> Feedback on earlier online platforms used in previous engagement indicated concerns with usability. This feedback has been taken on board and HCC has agreed to use a different platform that will allow information to be displayed more clearly.	31 st Jan 2025
Finalise draft LCWIP report	13 th Jan 2025
Finalise Communications Plan (HCC/DBC)	20 th Jan 2025
Public Consultation on Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (6 weeks)	10 th Feb – 21 st March 2025
Responses reviewed, final LCWIP report issued	April 2025
Senior level sign off	Summer 2025
SLT, PHSLT, Scrutiny & Cabinet approval	Summer 2025

Table 2 – LCWIP Next Steps

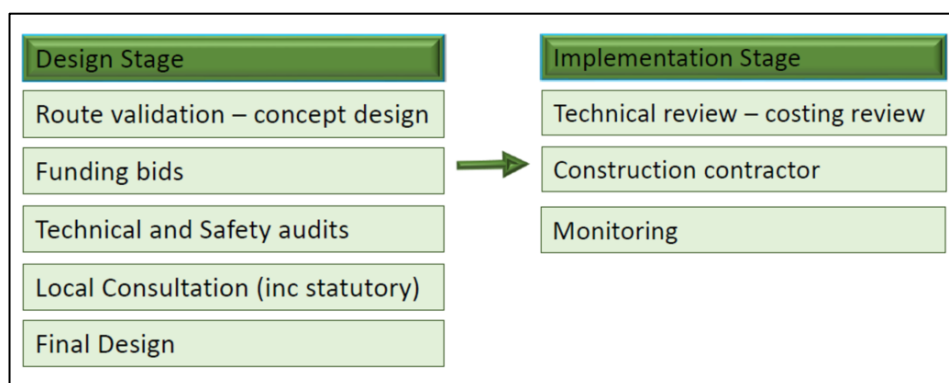


Figure 3 – Post HCC Adoption LCWIP Process

Once adopted by HCC, the projects identified in the LCWIP will feed into HCC programming and validation processes, as detailed in Figure 3 above, to be taken forwards as funding becomes available and inform both plan making and decision making.

4 Consultation

Please refer to Appendix B and C for information on who has been consulted to date.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a 10-year strategic approach to planning cycling and walking improvements and forms part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle. LCWIPs help to provide the evidence and strategy to help to secure future central government funding for walking and cycling infrastructure over the next 10 years.

The plan should enable Hertfordshire County Council and Dacorum Borough Council to bid for funds from central government in order to secure an improved provision for walking and cycling in the borough.

6 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications for the preparation of the LCWIP. In due course, delivery of some schemes may require Traffic Regulation Orders, Planning Permissions and/or have other legal implications.

7 Risk implications:

There is a risk that if the consultation does not begin on 10 February 2025, then the consultation will need to be delayed significantly to allow for the Pre Election Period at HCC.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

Community Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out and annexed -

A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is attached as Appendix D. The CIA confirms that the LCWIP will positively impact the community generally by enhancing active travel infrastructure across Dacorum. The types of positive outcomes to be delivered include:

- More opportunities for cycling, walking and wheeling within the borough's communities;
- Positive social, physical and mental health and wellbeing impacts for people of all ages and abilities.

Human Rights – There are no Human Rights affected.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

In encouraging an increase in active travel trips, the LCWIP will bring many positive impacts, including towards: -

- Climate Change – mode shift to active transport is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing transport emissions.
- Health and Wellbeing – improving active travel infrastructure will encourage more trips to be made by walking and cycling which will encourage healthy lifestyles for residents and all the benefits that come alongside increasing movement and activity levels.
- Community Safety – the focus of the LCWIP is to secure funding to bring forward better infrastructure, such as segregated cycle paths, improved visibility and lighting among much more. This will keep cyclists and pedestrians safer when using the roads and paths.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

None.

11 Conclusions:

This report is for information only to update Scrutiny on the steps that have taken place in the formation of the Dacorum LCWIP. This is a HCC led project, in partnership with DBC. The next key milestone will be the six-week public consultation from 10 February 2025, which will include detail on the draft plan, the walking and cycling networks and the infrastructure improvement proposals.

Once the public consultation has concluded and the responses reviewed, the final plan will be presented to the relevant meetings and committees at both DBC and HCC for adoption.