

Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management

11 July 2024

Maidstone Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning and Healthier Stronger Communities Policy Advisory Committee	9 July 2024
Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management	12 July 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Tom Gilbert (Principal Planner – Spatial Planning).
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the progress on the development of a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan for the Borough and seeks approval for a public consultation on the technically preferred cycling and walking routes following analysis and site audits.

The report will then go to the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management for final approval.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy & Management:

1. To approve the public consultation on the technically preferred cycling and walking routes for the Maidstone Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Maidstone Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We expect the recommendations will positively materially affect achievement of the corporate priorities as the LCWIP helps to deliver the Council's Strategic Plan.</p>	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>We expect the recommendations will positively materially affect achievement of the corporate priorities as the LCWIP helps to deliver the Council's Strategic Plan.</p>	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development]
Financial	The proposal set out in the recommendation is to consult on the LCWIP is within already approved budgetary headings and so needs no new funding.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations to consult on the LCWIP within our current staffing.	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development]
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) flow from the Government’s 2017 strategy on cycling and walking. They are not mandatory but are the preferred method by which funding may be obtained. Consulting on the Maidstone LCWIP is within the Council’s powers under legislation and the Constitution. 	Deputy Head of Legal Partnership
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) outside of existing Council processes for consultations.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications to Crime and Disorder	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Procurement	The recommendation has no immediate impact on procurement.	Karen Britton – Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and align with “Action 1.1 Update the Integrated Transport Strategy, and work towards a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to prioritise walking, cycling, public transport,	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

	and electric vehicles” of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.	
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the Government’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017), are a new, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. LCWIPs provide a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, usually over a 10-year period. This is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) paragraph 110 (d).

2.2 The key outputs of LCWIPs, as set out in the Government guidance are:

- A network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development;
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment; and
- A report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

2.3 LCWIPs are intended to assist Local Authorities to:

- Identify priority cycling and walking infrastructure improvements for future investment in the short, medium and long term;
- Ensure that consideration is given to cycling and walking within both local planning and transport policies and strategies; and
- Make a case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure.

2.4 The Government’s Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) outlines the objectives and financial resources for the period April 2021 to March 2025. This strategy aims to make walking and cycling a natural choice for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey by 2040 reiterating the importance of walking and cycling as transport modes.

2.5 The Government has stated that although LCWIPs are not mandatory plans for Local Authorities, they are the preferred strategy to have in place when submitting funding bids. Therefore, MBC seeks to have LCWIPs in place to optimise funding opportunities.

2.6 Kent County Council are also developing a county wide Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). KCC consulted on this between November 2023 and January 2024. This is independent of the Maidstone LCWIP and one does not lead from the other.

2.7 An LCWIP consists of 6 stages set out in figure 1 below.

Stage	Name	Description
1	Determining Scope	Establish the geographical extent of the LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.
2	Gathering Information	Identify existing patterns of walking and cycling and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes.
3	Network Planning for Cycling	Identify origin and destination points and cycle flows. Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required.
4	Network Planning for Walking	Identify key trip generators, core walking zones and routes, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required.
5	Prioritising Improvements	Prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment.
6	Integration and Application	Integrate outputs into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.

Figure 1. LCWIP Process DfT Guidance

What has happened so far?

- 2.8 In December 2023 Maidstone Borough Council was awarded money to develop an LCWIP by Active Travel England Capability Fund via Kent County Council.
- 2.9 Once the funding was awarded the Council appointed the consultants AECOM to develop the LCWIP for the entire borough. AECOM have a wide range of experience developing these strategies, most recently working on Folkestone & Hythe District Council's LCWIP and the Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan for Kent County Council.
- 2.10 What has happened to date is the following: data gathering (including a review of proposed development locations from the Local Plan Review, existing trip generating activities, such as schools, leisure centres and existing walking & cycling routes), then the identification of potential walking zones and cycling routes. At this stage key stakeholders (including KCC, Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum and other walking and cycling organisations) were engaged to provide technical feedback on the routes. For cycling this involved the creation of clusters for origins and destinations and then the classification of desire lines into primary, secondary and tertiary routes based on
- 2.11 Following this the routes have been refined and prioritised using technical parameters (including anticipated flows, origin and destination sizes) The prioritised routes resultant from this work form part of the consultation.
- 2.12 This provided nine cycling routes including in no order (see appendix 2 to the report):
- Ashford to Maidstone

- Lidsing to Maidstone
- Langley to Maidstone
- Boughton Monchelsea to Shepway
- Bearsted to Marden
- Tovil to Newnham Park
- Peneden Heath to Cornwallis Academy
- Downswood to Newnham Park
- Tovil to North Shepway

2.13 Similarly for the walking routes the walking zones were established and walking routes established in those zones that scored the highest based on origin and destination. As a result, nine prioritised routes were established (see appendix 1 to the report); including:

- Barming to Maidstone
- Bearsted to Maidstone West Railway Station
- Invicta Park to Maidstone Grammar School
- Weaving to Bearsted
- Bearsted Railway Station to Woodcut Farm
- Harrietsham to Heathlands Garden Community
- Headcorn Railway Station to employment allocation EMP1(1)
- Coxheath to Shepway
- Tovil to Maidstone Barracks Railway Station

What is to be consulted on?

2.14 The forthcoming consultation will focus on the identified 8 priority cycling routes (please see appendix 2 to the report) and 9 priority walking routes (please see appendix 1 to the report) in the Borough.

2.15 The Council is seeking views on these routes. The consultation will take the form of an online consultation utilising the Council's 'Let's Talk' platform and will use the PDF versions of the routes identified in appendices 1 & 2 to the report plus a questionnaire. The website will also be using a mapping system to display the proposed routes so that people can attach their comments to specific points on the identified routes as well.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1 – to not approve the consultation of the LCWIP.

3.2 Option 2 – to approve the consultation of the LCWIP and give the Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development delegated authority to finalise the consultation wording and website graphics.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Option 2 – to approve the consultation of the LCWIP and give the Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development delegated authority to finalise the consultation wording and website graphics as this will enable the consultation to be commenced expediently.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The matter was considered by the Planning and Healthier Stronger Communities Policy Advisory Committee on Tuesday 9 July 2024 with support expressed for the report recommendation, providing the Cabinet Member take the Committee's comments on the routes into account.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If the recommendation is agreed, then the report will go to the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management for approval and the consultation will commence on the 22 July for 4 weeks closing on the 19 August 2024.
- 7.2 The responses from the consultation will then be collated and reviewed and a final LCWIP drafted and brought back to members and the cabinet member for approval in Autumn 2024.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Maidstone LCWIP Proposed Priority Walking routes.
 - Appendix 2: Maidstone LCWIP Proposed Priority Cycling routes.
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None