

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING POLICY AND MANAGEMENT**

Decision Made: 12 July 2024

#### **Maidstone Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan**

##### **Issue for Decision**

To seek approval for a public consultation on the technically preferred cycling and walking routes following analysis and site audits.

##### **Decision Made**

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

##### **Reasons for Decision**

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).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

*Figure 1. LCWIP Process DfT Guidance*

### **What has happened so far?**

In December 2023 Maidstone Borough Council was awarded money to develop an LCWIP by Active Travel England Capability Fund via Kent County Council.

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.

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

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.

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

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?**

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.

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.

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 focusing on the shorter routes to better utilise funding into account.

### **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

To not approve the consultation of the LCWIP.

This option was not selected as it would mean Maidstone Borough Council would likely miss the deadline to apply for the funding.

### **Background Papers**

None

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Harwood A -". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Signed:

Councillor Tony Harwood - Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm on Friday 19 July 2024**