

Divisions Affected – Banbury Calthorpe, Banbury Grimsbury & Castle, Banbury Hardwick, Banbury Ruscote, Bloxham & Easington, Deddington, Wroxton & Hook Norton.

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

20 July 2023

BANBURY LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Report by Corporate Director of Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve the Banbury Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).**

Executive Summary

2. A strategic Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has been produced for Banbury (see **Annex A**) in order to fulfil the County Council's adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) Policy 3a, which states that the County Council will "*[develop] Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for all main urban settlements (over 10,000 inhabitants) across the county by 2025, according to national guidance and best practice with the aim of increasing walking and cycling activity.*"
3. The LCWIP identifies a network of walking and cycling routes in and around Banbury (including potential future routes) and sets out high level proposals for improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure which makes up this network. These infrastructure improvements are intended for development over a ten year period to 2033 and will help to enable modal shift from private vehicle use to active and sustainable modes of travel.
4. Adopting the Banbury LCWIP will help to provide local policy backing to maximise the County Council's ability to secure funding for development and delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure in the Banbury area. Funding is likely to come from central government and through planning obligations from development sites within Banbury and the surrounding villages.

Introduction

5. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, ideally over a 10 year period, and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.
6. Central Government are encouraging Local Authorities to adopt LCWIPs to assist in:
 - (a) demonstrating a prioritised list of active travel infrastructure schemes for an area
 - (b) demonstrating where funding is required, and the benefits investment will bring
 - (c) meeting targets to increase active travel which may also benefit health inequalities, air quality and climate change objectives
 - (d) guide developers and developer funding to invest in active travel measures.

Local Policy

7. Production of the Banbury plan delivers Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Policy 3, which states:

We will:

- (a) Develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for all main urban settlements (over 10,000 inhabitants) across the county by 2025, according to national guidance and best practice with the aim of increasing walking and cycling activity.
 - (b) Implement local cycling and walking networks in line with LCWIP proposals as funding opportunities arise to achieve a step change in the use of cycling and walking in line with local and national targets.
 - (c) Support rural areas and smaller settlements to develop their own walking and cycling plans.
8. The LCWIP is in alignment with the adopted Banbury Vision and Masterplan SPD, which seeks to deliver attractive sustainable transport as part of a wider regeneration of Banbury. In addition, OCC is providing LCWIP advice into the Cherwell Local Plan review.
 9. The approved LCWIP will inform the forthcoming Banbury Area Travel Plan, as one of the area travel plans being developed to show how LTCP policy is to be delivered at the local level.
 10. Once schemes in the LCWIP begin being delivered this will contribute to the following LTCP targets:

By 2030 our targets are to:

- Replace or remove 1 out of every 4 current car trips in Oxfordshire
- Increase the number of cycle trips in Oxfordshire from 600,000 to 1 million cycle trips per week
- Reduce road fatalities or life changing injuries by 50%

By 2040 our targets are to:

- Deliver a net-zero transport network
- Replace or remove an additional 1 out of 3 car trips in Oxfordshire

By 2050 our targets are to:

- Deliver a transport network that contributes to a climate positive future
- Have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

11. Of the 9 priorities in the Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2022-2025 the LCWIP directly supports priority 5 and contributes to priorities 1, 2, 3, 6, 7. The 9 priorities are:
 1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
 2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
 3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
 4. Support carers and the social care system.
 5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network.
 6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
 7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
 8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
 9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit.

Financial Implications

12. The LCWIP will help the County Council to negotiate with developers for funding and direct delivery of infrastructure for active travel. It will also help with preparation of bids for government funding, as demonstrated by the recent Active Travel Fund bid processes.
13. Development of any new schemes proposed in the LCWIP (except those to be directly delivered by developers) will need to be considered through the County Council's capital programme governance and budget setting process as funding becomes available.
14. Any new cycling and walking infrastructure will have revenue implications due to pressures on staff resources, which will be either funded within current base budgets or bid for through Active Travel Fund (or similar) bids. Ongoing maintenance for each scheme would be identified during the early stages of

that scheme. Where possible, commuted sums to fund ongoing maintenance of new infrastructure related to new developments would also be identified and secured to minimise the revenue impact of the new infrastructure. Any revenue pressure after this would be considered as part of the Council's Budget Strategy process.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner (rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
(Finance)

Legal Implications

15. The LCWIP is a requirement of the County Council's adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, which is a statutory document, required under the Transport Act 2000. Delivering the LCWIP is likely to require the County Council to exercise its powers to make traffic orders to regulate traffic in the Banbury area. The appropriate statutory consultation will take place as and when any orders are promoted, together with compliance with any relevant statutory duty applicable at the time.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor (Environment)
(jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Legal)

Staff Implications

16. Individual schemes within the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will require development and delivery which will only take place once capital funding is awarded. Staff funded via the annual revenue budgets will be involved in progressing funding bids and staffing implications for scheme development and delivery will be included in the capital bid/award.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

17. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is available in **Annex B**.
18. Development and implementation of LCWIPs for all the main urban settlements in Oxfordshire (LTCP Policy 3a) is one of Oxfordshire County Council's commitments to move towards the vision set out in the LTCP for *"an inclusive*

and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive".¹

19. Whilst no negative equalities impacts have been identified which could arise as a direct result of approving the Banbury LCWIP, there is a significant opportunity to tackle inequality.
20. Investment in cycling and walking measures improves travel choice and encourages active, healthy lifestyles. Once implemented, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will make a positive contribution to improving connectivity throughout the Banbury area by improving access to cycling and walking infrastructure for all socio-economic groups and those with protected characteristics. Having the right infrastructure for cycling and walking in the right places, will enable greater take up of active travel and could help to reduce inequalities in health. Improved cycle and walking routes will help accessibility between the more deprived areas in Banbury and the rest of the town.
21. All individual highways schemes may result in unintended negative equalities impacts. This risk will be considered in detail on a scheme-by-scheme basis (using scheme-specific EIAs as appropriate) when the individual schemes promoted in the LCWIP are developed.

Sustainability Implications

22. Development and implementation of LCWIPs for all the main urban settlements in Oxfordshire (LTCP Policy 3a) is one of Oxfordshire County Council's commitments to move towards the vision set out in the LTCP for *"an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive"*.
23. A Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) is available in **Annex C**. The CIA for the plan is overwhelmingly positive, recognising the significant potential for improvements across the following climate impact categories:
 - a) Transport and Connectivity (by supporting a shift to active travel)
 - b) Buildings (by promoting sustainable development)
 - c) Procurement and Investment (by investing in climate action)
 - d) People and Organisations (by driving behaviour change with enabling infrastructure)
 - e) Just Transition (by promoting health and wellbeing through active travel, promoting engagement and coproduction, and reducing inequality).

¹ Oxfordshire County Council, Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, July 2022, p5, available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/LocalTransportandConnectivityPlan.pdf>

Risk Management

24. No significant risks have been identified which will arise as a direct result of approving the LCWIP.
25. Risks of negative side effects associated with individual schemes which are promoted in the LCWIP may arise in future as and when those schemes are funded and progressed.
26. These scheme-specific risks will be identified in the relevant scheme's risk register during the early stages of that scheme's development, in order to ensure that an informed decision can be made on each scheme.
27. There are several risks associated with a decision not to approve the LCWIP:
 - (a) Risk of failure to achieve the goal set out in LTCP Policy 3a due both to the resulting delay to the Banbury LCWIP programme and to the potential knock-on delays to the development of other LCWIPs
 - (b) Risk of failure to secure future funding for active travel infrastructure in the Banbury area from central government (due to the Department for Transport and Active Travel England's stated preferences for funding schemes which are identified in LCWIPs)
 - (c) Risk of failure to secure adequate provision of active travel infrastructure from future local developments (for which the LCWIP provides additional local policy backing).

Consultation and Engagement

28. The Banbury LCWIP was developed with the guidance of local councillors from County, District, and local interest groups in walking and cycling such as Banbury Active Travel Supporters (BATS). They provided local and specialist knowledge in the development of the LCWIP and considered, and represent, the needs of all walking and cycling users in development of the plan.
29. Initially a network of 17 cycling routes in the town and eight to neighbouring villages were presented to County and District councillors for their comments in 2021, and, following refinements made as a result of that input, the routes were put out for online consultation on our 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' web portal during May and June 2022. Suggestions from this first consultation led to some of the routes being revised and presented along with a formal draft LCWIP document for further consultation in 2023.
30. The Draft Banbury Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation ran from 23 January to 26 February 2023. A consultation report is available in **Annex D**. During the consultation Officers held a 'drop in day' at Banbury Town Hall on 1 February 2023 for Members and the public to speak face-to-face with Officers.

31. A total of 95 people completed the online questionnaire and a further 14 responded in writing (by email) these were mainly from organisations. Of those who completed the questionnaire 47% thought the proposed cycling improvements were 'ambitious' or 'adequate' and 47% said if the proposed walking improvements were implemented this would encourage them to walk more.
32. Whilst there is support for the production of a Banbury LCWIP, particularly from Cherwell District Council and Banbury Active Travel Supporters, many respondents had detailed comments on the content and proposals which led to significant alterations to the final document presented here from the consultation draft.
33. The responses to the consultation have been very constructive and helpful in informing the final version of the Banbury Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The changes include an update to the clarity over a number of proposals, and changes to the route maps to reflect feedback.
34. The comments received regarding proposals for specific routes, shows us how important these routes are to all modes of transport, and how much more detailed engagement will be conducted with local people as these routes are developed through concept, preliminary and detailed design. The LCWIP is a tool to help identify and prioritise routes for investment, as the first phase of any route scheme, however, the specifics of each route scheme need a lot of further work.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director of Environment and Place

Annex: Annex A. Banbury LCWIP
 Annex B. Equalities Impact Assessment
 Annex C. Climate Impact Assessment
 Annex D. Banbury LCWIP Consultation Report

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

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