

Meeting date: 11th March 2021

Report to: Cabinet



Subject/report title: Solihull Cycling & Walking Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

Report from: Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Growth & Infrastructure Delivery

Report author/lead contact officer: Walter Bailey – Group Manager - Transport & Infrastructure Commissioning

Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of how comments gathered through public consultation on the Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan have been incorporated into both documents.
- 1.2 To seek approval to adopt the final versions of Solihull's Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to:
 - a) Note the comments received through public consultation on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (as set out in Appendix A);
 - b) Approve the Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Appendices B and C respectively) and delegate authority to the Assistant Director - Growth and Development to make any minor amendments necessary to improve clarity or accuracy, in consultation with the portfolio holder.
 - c) Publish the Cycling and Walking summary document (Appendix D).

3. What is the issue?

Introduction

- 3.1 On 22nd October 2020, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Growth and Infrastructure Delivery considered draft versions of the Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy and associated Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), and approved their publication for a second round of public consultation (the first in February 2020).
- 3.2 The need to develop a Cycling and Walking Strategy, and associated LCWIP, has already been established by the Council's transport strategy, Solihull Connected, and is further emphasised by the work that the Council has adopted such, as the Clean Air Strategy and Climate Change Prospectus. The Cycling and Walking Strategy and LCWIP are closely aligned to the Council's objectives of improving air quality and tackling Climate Change.
- 3.3 Consultation was undertaken during November and December 2020 with measures taken to ensure that the consultation process complied with Covid-19 restrictions to ensure public safety.
- 3.4 The approach to consultation included the following:
- Virtual events using GoToWebinar
 - Material published on the Council's website
 - Bulletins via the Council's 'Stay Connected' platform
 - Social media via the Council's social media channels
 - Local media / press releases
 - Email circulation – both to key stakeholders and to those that have expressed an interest in hearing about the Council's transport schemes.
- 3.5 Five virtual events took place using the GoToWebinar online platform, in which 75 participants took part; 1,474 Twitter engagements were recorded and 28,318 individuals viewed content via the Council's Facebook page.
- 3.6 The consultation culminated in the receipt of 65 formal responses from local residents, businesses and cycling and walking user groups. These responses have been analysed and amendments made to the Draft Cycling and Walking Strategy and LCWIP, as appropriate. Appendix A sets out the responses received, and highlights how those responses have resulted in change to the Strategy and LCWIP documents; in summary, the key matters highlighted through consultation include:
- Support for improved cycle provision, particularly designated cycle lanes.
 - The lack of high quality cycle infrastructure is a major deterrent for people to cycle/cycle more often.
 - A need to consider the segregation of pedestrians and cycle users as part of

shared use schemes.

- Shared use paths are not favoured by pedestrians, with safety of all users highlighted as an issue.
- Important to link Solihull Railway Station to Town Centre, particularly improving pedestrian access.
- Reducing severance (access barriers) for pedestrians in local centres including Shirley High Street
- The maintenance of existing cycle routes is important. Ensuring paths are fit for use and to consider upgrading advisory lanes to high quality segregated routes.
- Cycle storage and facilities required at the end destination.
- Improving the confidence and capability of children and adults to cycle.
- Promoting and involving local residents prior and during cycle and walking scheme development.

3.7 Following consultation, feedback was analysed to determine whether changes were required to the Strategy and accompanying LCWIP.

3.8 In addition, a number of meetings have taken place with specific user groups to discuss opportunities to provide further input into the strategy. Continued close-working with local user groups will be vital in the development of cycling and walking infrastructure.

3.9 Based on feedback, the following changes have been made: Further emphasis on the urgency needed to tackle transport emissions particularly through sustainable modes of transport.

- Overview of region-wide cycling and walking programmes taking place including the Emergency Active Travel and Bike Share programmes.
- Update to the strategies policy review including the West Midlands Climate Change Strategy and the Movement for Growth refresh.
- Update to the Cycling Network Plan in the Solihull LCWIP. Further rural links added to the network plan.
- Strategy and LCWIP updated to ensure that readers are aware that local routes will be improved as part of new LCWIP schemes.
- Further reinforcement of the need to improve leisure and rural cycle provision.
- A specific policy on School Streets has been included.
- Updated Delivery Plan within the strategy. Further information on the Active

Travel Fund has been provided.

Further information on amendments is provided in Appendix A. In addition, a more user-friendly version of the two documents has been produced (Appendix D).

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 There is an option to not adopt a Strategy and infrastructure plan at this time. This is not recommended as the absence of a Strategy, and an evidence-based Infrastructure Plan, could lead to a disjointed approach to the delivery of walking and cycling interventions; an approach that would not maximise the potential health, economic, community, environmental and traffic relieving benefits that walking and cycling infrastructure could generate.
- 4.2 Without a Solihull Cycling Network Plan in place, cycle routes have been delivered in isolation. The Solihull LCWIP, a key product of the Strategy, has identified priority corridors for cycle provision therefore; targeted funding will help to ensure a strategic approach to delivering a cycle network is achieved.
- 4.3 The adoption of the Cycling and Walking Strategy and associated Infrastructure Plan is the recommended option.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The need to develop a Cycling and Walking Strategy, and associated Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, has already been established by the Council's transport strategy, Solihull Connected, and is further emphasised by the work that the Council has adopted such as the Clean Air Strategy and Climate Change Prospectus. The Cycling and Walking Strategy and Accompanying LCWIP are closely aligned to the Council's objectives of improving air quality and tackling Climate Change.
- 5.2 Improving cycling and walking provision has the real potential to improve:
 - The environment – Improving air quality across the Borough
 - People's mental and physical wellbeing
 - The performance of the transport network – changing the mode of transport for short distance journeys has the potential to reduce congestion and improve journey reliability.
 - Improve local centres and High Streets – particularly during COVID-19 recovery.

The Cycling and Walking Strategy and LCWIP have now been the subject of two rounds of public consultation. The first consultation exercise was conducted in February 2020, with subsequent public consultation during November / December 2020.

Positive feedback was received on the development of the Solihull Cycling Network Plan and Core Walking Zones. High quality cycle links from both Knowle and Dickens

Heath to Solihull Town Centre were highlighted as priority routes for investment, and a number of additional rural links have been added to the Cycling Network Plan following local user input

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

The Cycling and Walking Strategy, and associated Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan aims to contribute to the delivery of the following key themes in the Council Plan:

- Improve Health and Wellbeing
- Managed Growth
- Build Stronger Communities
- Deliver Value

6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

6.2.1 The Cycling and Walking Strategy will have a positive impact by creating greater opportunities for and inclusive mobility that enables and manages growth, enhances life chances, by creating balanced investment in transport infrastructure with an increasing emphasis on high quality sustainable transport.

6.2.2 Development of the Cycling and Walking Strategy, and LCWIP, has and will continue to involve engagement with the public, key stakeholders and representatives of key interest groups.

6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.3.1 Development of the Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy was considered by the Economic Development and Scrutiny Board on 13 November 2018, 13 November 2019 and 22 October 2020.

6.3.2 Public engagement was undertaken during February and March 2020. A series of public engagement events were held across the Borough. An online survey was published on the Council's website.

6.3.3 Further consultation was undertaken during November and December 2020, delivered predominantly on a virtual basis.

6.3.4 Further public consultation will be undertaken in relation to the detail of specific LCWIP scheme design, development and delivery.

6.4 Financial implications:

- 6.4.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. Development of the Cycling and Walking Strategy, and LCWIP, is being progressed using funding secured from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) with up to £796,000 having been unlocked to support its development as part of the Walking, Cycling & Green Infrastructure Investment Programme. Business Cases will be required to secure funding related to individual schemes and interventions.

6.5 Legal implications:

- 6.5.1 There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report.

6.6 Risk implications:

- 6.6.1 The Corporate Risks Management approach has been applied to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision. This includes but is not limited to political, legislation and reputation risks.
- 6.6.2 Specific Risk Registers will be developed in relation to individual cycling and walking interventions, as and when they are progressed.

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

- 6.7.1 An approved Fair Treatment Assessment is in place for Solihull Connected.

7. List of appendices referred to

- 7.1 Appendix A – Summary of Consultation Responses Received
- 7.2 Appendix B – Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy (will be published as supplement to the agenda and viewable online only)
- 7.3 Appendix C – Solihull Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (will be published as supplement to the agenda and viewable online only)
- 7.4 Appendix D – Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy (Summary Document)

8. Background papers used to compile this report

- 8.1 None

9. List of other relevant documents

- 9.1 Solihull Connected Transport Strategy 2016 and Delivery Plan 2016;
- 9.2 DfT Draft Decarbonising Transport Plan
- 9.3 DfT National Cycling and Walking Plan
- 9.4 Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design
- 9.5 DfT Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy;

- 9.6 DfT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Guidance; and
- 9.7 Transport for West Midlands – Movement for Growth and Cycling Charter.