



Report to Cabinet

Date:	4 th January 2024
Title:	High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy & High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport
Contact officer:	Hannah Joyce, Head of Transport Strategy and Funding
Ward(s) affected:	Abbey; Booker, Cressex & Castlefield; Downley; Ryemead & Micklefield; Terriers & Amersham Hill; Totteridge & Bowerdean; Tylers Green & Loudwater; West Wycombe
Recommendations:	Note the public consultation results and subsequent amendments made to the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP Agree that the amended High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP progress to adoption at Cabinet
Reason for recommendation:	If adopted as Council policy, the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP will provide a long-term strategic approach to future transport investment in High Wycombe, through a set of balanced and evidenced proposals that can be taken forward for further development, funding bids and ultimately delivery.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) have been developed in parallel to ensure alignment and synergy. Their development has been informed by extensive engagement, including an 8-week public consultation in late 2022.
- 1.2 This report summarises the public consultation results and the subsequent amendments to both plans, which have been discussed with local members.
- 1.3 This report seeks approval for the amended High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP to progress to adoption as Council policy.

2. Main body of report

Background:

- 2.1 The development of the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP commenced in 2019 and 2020 respectively. Extensive local engagement has been undertaken with local members, officers and stakeholders, including workshops to understand key local challenges and opportunities, testing future scenarios and inform the direction of the plans, and an online travel perception survey to capture local travel behaviours.
- 2.2 The draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy High Wycombe LCWIP have also been informed by, and aligned with, other Council policies such as:
 - Buckinghamshire Corporate Plan 2020 –2025,
 - Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework;
 - Buckinghamshire Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy.
 - Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025;
 - High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy;
 - Opportunity Bucks programme
- 2.3 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy outlines a future ambition for the town's transport system, consisting of a vision statement, three 'connecting' themes (Connecting Locally; Connecting Regionally; Connecting Green Spaces), and a set of key outcomes for each theme. A range of transport interventions focused in and around the High Wycombe area are proposed to deliver the overall transport vision.
- 2.4 The High Wycombe LCWIP uses 5 network planning concepts (Walkable Core; Main Radial Routes, Key Links and Hubs; Healthy Neighbourhoods; Wider Network and Strategic Routes; A Cohesive and Connected Network) to outline a future walking,

cycling and wheeling network and a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements. The LCWIP covers a study area of a 20-minute walking and a 25-minute cycling catchment surrounding High Wycombe town centre, and links with surrounding settlements.

- 2.5 The purpose of producing these plans is to ensure that the Council has a clear policy direction and set of transport priorities for High Wycombe that can be taken forward for further development, to inform future funding applications, and to enable efficient delivery of schemes.

Public consultation:

- 2.6 Public consultation on the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and the draft High Wycombe LCWIP took place over an 8-week period between 14th October and 12th December 2022.
- 2.7 The primary objective of the public consultation was to understand the views of people who live, travel, work or study in the High Wycombe area on the two draft plans. The consultation questions focused on capturing respondents' levels of agreement/disagreement with the overarching themes, concepts and principles.
- 2.8 The consultation was conducted primarily online via YourVoiceBucks. Printed copies of the draft plans and questionnaire were also available from the High Wycombe Library during the consultation period. The consultation was promoted via:
- 2 well attended drop-in events held at Eden Shopping Centre and High Wycombe Library, with Council officers available to answer questions;
 - Press release and features in residents' and schools' newsletters;
 - Regular social media posts, including short videos and interactive polls;
 - Advertisements on local buses and local radio station;
 - Flyers, posters and banners displayed at locations across High Wycombe with scannable QR codes providing access to the consultation webpage;
 - Targeted communication with key stakeholders, including a small focus group with Buckinghamshire New University students.
- 2.9 The consultation included two surveys, one on each plan. Respondents could elect to complete one or both surveys. 249 people responded to the surveys in total. 198 respondents completed the High Wycombe Transport Strategy survey, and 206 respondents completed the High Wycombe LCWIP survey. In addition, approximately 36 separate written submissions were received from individuals and local organisations. All responses received have been included in the analysis.
- 2.10 This is considered a reasonable response rate when benchmarked against recent similar consultations run by neighbouring local authorities. For example, North

Northamptonshire Council consulted on a proposed LCWIP for a town with a population of 68,164 (Census 2021) over a similar period and received 64 respondents, and Milton Keynes City Council ran a 12-week consultation on its proposed LCWIP for the city and received 90 responses.

- 2.11 Analysis of the demographic information provided by respondents to the High Wycombe consultation identifies that the respondent age profile was skewed towards older age groups, with over 80% of respondents aged over 35; ethnicity representation was also skewed with 91% from white ethnic group; and 83% of respondents had no disabilities, impairments or long-term health conditions.
- 2.12 Short polls were also hosted on social media platforms during the consultation period to raise awareness and gauge views on key topics. These polls were effective in reaching respondents across all age groups and although the responses received did not form part of the formal consultation results or analysis; they provided additional insight which aligned with the main consultation findings.

Public consultation results:

- 2.13 Headline consultation findings on the overall themes and concepts of the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP are included below, indicating that the majority of respondents are supportive.

High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy

Consultation question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following themes should be key themes in the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy?

- *Connecting Locally: 84% strongly agree or agree;*
- *Connecting Regionally: 79% strongly agree or agree;*
- *Connecting Green Spaces: 78% strongly agree or agree.*

High Wycombe LCWIP

Consultation question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following concepts would encourage walking and cycling?

- *Walkable Core: 82% strongly agree or agree;*
- *Healthy Neighbourhoods: 72% strongly agree or agree;*
- *Wider Network and Strategic Routes: 69% strongly agree or agree;*
- *A Cohesive and Connected Network: 69% strongly agree or agree;*
- *Main Radial Routes, Key Links and Hubs: 67% strongly agree or agree.*

Key themes in consultation responses and subsequent amendments:

2.14 The list below summarises key themes emerging from the consultation feedback. The themes are listed in **bold** and a supporting explanation is provided for each. Several of the themes are common to both plans and represent the key areas where content and phasing amendments been made to the documents as a result.

- **Greater consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users**
 - Comments regarding the needs of equestrians, individuals with disabilities or limited mobility, and those reliant on the use of private vehicles.
- **Insufficient focus and emphasis on the importance of behaviour change and supporting measures;**
 - Suggestions that behaviour change measures should be more prominent in the plans and schemes proposed, recognising that behaviour change is key to their success and uptake.
- **Inadequate consideration of public transport connectivity in rural areas and neighbouring settlements;**
 - Suggestions that nearby communities be included in the focus area of the public transport initiatives proposed in the Transport Strategy.
 - Suggestions that the LCWIP should acknowledge the importance of wider connectivity, including integration between public transport services and walking and cycling infrastructure.
- **Improvements to bus service quality and provision;**
 - Comments on the price, reliability, coverage and availability of current bus services. These are outside the scope of the Transport Strategy, but comments have been recorded and shared with relevant teams.
- **Congestion issues on main arterial routes especially during peak times;**
 - Questions about congestion issues and the use and impact of optimised traffic signals on key local routes (e.g., A40 and A404).
- **Various comments and suggestions for improved walking and cycling infrastructure;**
 - Specific requests for additions/amendments to some proposals. Concern about the status or potential implications of some proposals.
 - Comments regarding localised footway maintenance and parking enforcement matters. These are outside of the scope of the LCWIP and Transport Strategy, but comments have been shared with relevant teams.

- **Concerns about the implications of restricted parking, car light living (where car clubs and lower parking standards are introduced in new developments) and additional demand management measures such as road user charging;**
 - Comments in opposition to the proposal for a 'workplace parking levy'.
- **Performance outcomes, monitoring and evaluation;**
 - Suggestions that the draft plans should more clearly outline how progress and performance against objectives will be monitored (e.g., through the use of Key Performance Indicators [KPIs]).
- **Revisions to the level of ambition and timeline for delivery of the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy.**
 - The Transport Strategy acknowledges that major transport projects and behaviour change can take a long time to achieve and deliver and is intended to outline a long term, incremental approach, and this was generally supported.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Not to adopt the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP. This would mean a lack of clear long-term strategic direction and priorities for future transport investment in the High Wycombe area. Consequently, there would likely be challenges in securing external funding and delivering transport interventions in the town. The public consultation results indicate overall support for the direction of the plans.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP outline proposed programmes of future investment in transport interventions and infrastructure in High Wycombe. Any interventions outlined in these documents which are taken forward for delivery will be subject to further feasibility studies. These will require funding either from existing internal or from external sources. Future opportunities to secure funding from appropriate sources (such as grants, developer contributions, government funding) to progress and deliver the proposed interventions will continue to be explored.
- 4.2 At present, the proposed interventions are, in the main, unfunded, except for those where funding has already been secured to support scheme development or delivery. The table below lists projects that the Council has already secured funding towards, and where they are in the Council's budgets. Funding totals c.£5.2m:

HWTS/LCWIP Project Title	Amount Secured	Funding Source
<u>Projects already included in Council Capital programme</u>		
PT6. North-south bus priority corridor on the A404 Marlow Hill	£100k	s.106
2g. Links to strategic development sites	£936k	s.106 & Active Travel Fund grant
4a. Hughenden Greenway and Cross-Valley Link	£494k	Council funded (former WDC approved)
4b. High Wycombe-Bourne End Greenway	£120k	s.106/CIL
<u>Projects with funding secured, not yet included in the Capital Programme</u>		
1b. Walkable core - placemaking and public realm improvements	£53k	s.106 - funds received - project to be added via MTFP subject to approval
2h. Public right of way improvements	£320k	s106, funds secured via planning, not yet received - project to be added via a future MTFP subject to approval
4c. Links to other settlements	£475k	s.106 - funds secured via planning, not yet received - project to added via a future MTFP subject to approval
<u>Revenue projects</u>		
SHM3 Demand responsive flexible bus services and integrated ticketing	£2,738k	Rural Mobility Fund grant received in 2021 from DfT - included in Public Transport team Revenue Budgets.
Total Funding		£5,236k

4.3 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy supports and builds on the objectives of Local Transport Plan 4, which is a statutory requirement set out in the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008.

4.4 Whilst the adoption of an LCWIP is not a statutory requirement, it is recommended by the Department for Transport as best practice. By adopting the High Wycombe LCWIP, the Council will be in a stronger position to seek government funding for walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure.

4a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

4.5 The Director of Legal & Democratic Services has read and approved the report.

4b Section 151 Officer comment

4.6 The Section 151 Officer has read and noted the report.

5. Corporate implications

5.1 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP support the Corporate Plan priority of “Improving our environment” by outlining a balanced approach to future transport in High Wycombe and supporting investment in sustainable and active transport options.

5.2 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP also support progress on the following Council policies:

- Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework & High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy: The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy builds on the Council’s economic growth ambition through initiatives for well-connected high streets, business parks and industrial estates, while the High Wycombe LCWIP aims to enhance access to green spaces through active travel giving everyone living, visiting and doing business in High Wycombe a pleasant, attractive, natural environment.
- Buckinghamshire Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy: The plans support progress on actions in the Transportation section.
- Opportunity Bucks programme: The plans cover 6 of the 10 wards identified by the ‘Opportunity Bucks’ programme as experiencing the most hardship. The proposed initiatives will play a role in addressing disparities between Buckinghamshire communities by increasing transport choices and improving accessibility for all.

5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening was completed prior to conducting public consultation and this has been updated to support the adoption of the plans. In developing the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP, accessibility for all has been considered and the plans have been amended further in light of consultation feedback received. Full EqIAs will be completed as part of the development of specific proposals and interventions identified in the plans, as and when they are taken forward.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 Local members have been engaged throughout the development of the plans.

6.2 Prior to commencing public consultation, a report was presented at High Wycombe Town Committee in January 2022. The Committee that it supported the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP progressing to public consultation.

- 6.3 During the public consultation period, a presentation was given at High Wycombe Community Board in November 2022 to raise awareness and encourage participation. A presentation was also given to local businesses at the Buckinghamshire Business First business forum in November 2022, attended by Steve Baker MP.
- 6.4 Following the public consultation period, an update report and presentation were taken to High Wycombe Town Committee in June 2023 summarising the consultation results (see 'Background Papers').
- 6.5 A separate meeting was held in July 2023 with local members representing all ward areas affected by the plans to provide an opportunity to discuss to the consultation results and proposed amendments to the draft plans in further detail. Members highlighted the following key considerations about local transport matters:
- Need for a strong public transport emphasis in the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy due to the level of feedback received about the current bus service provision.
 - Calls to extend the new 'Pick Me Up' on-demand minibus service into other areas. However, members were advised this would be dependent on the feedback received from the current pilot and future funding availability.
 - Maintenance of existing cycleways and footpaths, and quality of existing bus services. Members were advised that these issues are outside of the immediate scope of the plans, but comments had been logged and would be shared with relevant parties.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 Specific proposals and interventions identified in the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP will be subject to further engagement and public consultation, as and when they are taken forward. Future engagement activities will seek to achieve a more representative sample of the population, for example through targeted communications.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 If adopted, the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP will be used to inform the Council's approach to transport planning in High Wycombe and to identify priorities for future investment.
- 8.2 The plans would be integrated appropriately with the Council's Buckinghamshire-wide LCWIP, Regeneration Framework, Local Transport Plan (LTP5) and Local Plan for

Buckinghamshire, currently in development, in order to achieve an overarching strategic approach for the county.

- 8.3 Specific proposals and interventions identified in the plans would be subject to further development, engagement and public consultation, if and when they are taken forward and as funding becomes available.
- 8.4 Both plans outline key performance indicators that would be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes during the delivery of the proposed interventions.
- 8.5 In line with government guidance, the plans can be reviewed and updated in future to reflect progress made with implementation, or if there are significant changes in local circumstances.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 Summary of public consultation results, available at: [High Wycombe Town Committee 28.06.23 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.2 **Appendix A:** High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy
- 9.3 **Appendix B:** High Wycombe LCWIP

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please contact the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

