



High Wycombe Travel Consultation Update

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Recommendations:

1. The Committee note the summary of the public consultation on the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
2. The Committee note the proposed next steps for progressing the draft plans to adoption, including a separate meeting with local members.

1. Background

- 1.1 The development of the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and the High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) commenced in 2019 and 2020 respectively. The two plans have been informed by extensive engagement with Buckinghamshire Council members, officers and local stakeholders, and have been produced in parallel to ensure alignment and synergy.
- 1.2 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy outlines a future ambition for the town's transport system, consisting of a vision statement, three 'connecting' themes, and a set of key outcomes for each of those themes. 26 different transport interventions are proposed for the High Wycombe area.
- 1.3 The High Wycombe LCWIP uses 5 network planning concepts to outline a future walking, cycling and wheeling network and a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements, covering a study area of a 20-minute walking and a 25-minute cycling catchment surrounding High Wycombe town centre, and links with surrounding settlements.
- 1.4 The purpose of producing these plans is to ensure the Council has an informed long-term strategic approach to future transport investment in the High Wycombe area, and a set of balanced and evidenced proposals that can be taken forward for further development, future funding applications and ultimately delivery.
- 1.5 Following engagement with local members, public consultation on the draft plans took place over an 8-week period between October and December 2022. The consultation responses have now been analysed, with a view to making amendments to the draft High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and the draft High Wycombe LCWIP, prior to their adoption as Council policy.
- 1.6 This paper and Appendix A summarise the key headlines of the consultation participation and results. A separate meeting is being arranged with local members representing ward areas affected by the plans, to present the consultation findings in further detail and discuss proposed amendments to the draft plans.

2. Main content of report

Public consultation overview

- 2.1 **Objective:** 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.

2.2 **Method:** The consultation period ran over 8 weeks between 14th October and 12th December 2022 and was held online via the YourVoiceBucks platform, with printed copies of the draft plans and consultation survey available from High Wycombe Library during the consultation period. The consultation was promoted locally through the following methods:

- 2 well attended drop-in events, held at Eden Shopping Centre and High Wycombe Library on Saturday 5th November and Friday 18th November, with relevant material displayed and Council officers available to answer questions
- Council press release and features in residents' and schools' newsletters
- Regular social media posts, including short videos and interactive polls
- Regular local radio advertisements
- Advertisement posters on local buses
- Flyers, posters and banners displayed at 14 locations across High Wycombe with scannable QR codes to provide easy access to the consultation webpage
- Targeted communication with key stakeholders, including a focus group with Buckinghamshire New University students


2.3 **Responses:** 249 responses were received through the YourVoiceBucks platform. Respondents could elect to answer survey questions on one or both of the draft plans. 198 respondents completed the Transport Strategy survey and 206 completed the LCWIP survey. In addition, a number of written representations were received via email and post and have been considered in the analysis of responses.

2.4 This is considered a reasonable response rate when benchmarked against recent LCWIP consultations run by other local authorities; for example, North Northamptonshire consulted on a LCWIP for a town with a population of 68,164 (Census 2021) over a similar period with 64 respondents. In 2022, Milton Keynes City Council ran a 12-week consultation on its LCWIP for the city and received 90 responses.

2.5 The presentation included at Appendix A summarises headline consultation findings to core questions included within the online survey. It also summarises written representations received and the results of social media polls.

Key themes in consultation responses

2.6 The list below summarises key themes and areas of consideration for potential changes to the draft plans. Specific proposed amendments will be discussed with local members in the upcoming meeting.

- a) **Greater consideration of the needs of vulnerable users** (e.g. equestrians, individuals with disabilities, or limited mobility) and those reliant on the use private vehicles.
- The wording and proposed initiatives in the draft plans will be reviewed to ensure consideration for all users. The needs and impacts on all user groups will also be assessed as and when individual proposals are taken forward.
- b) **Insufficient focus and emphasis on behaviour change and supporting measures.**
- The draft plans will be amended to highlight the importance of the behaviour change and supporting measures, and the role they play in influencing travel behaviour and encouraging uptake of sustainable and active travel.
- c) **Public transport connectivity in rural areas and neighbouring settlements not adequately considered in the draft Transport Strategy.**
- The Transport Strategy has considered for all forms of travel and their connections to and from the town. The Transport Strategy will be revised to clarify and highlight the role of the proposed initiatives, such as mobility hubs and demand responsive flexible bus services, in improving connectivity throughout High Wycombe and beyond. Affected areas mentioned in the survey responses have been documented and will be taken forward for review.
 - The LCWIP will also be revised to acknowledge the importance of wider connectivity, including integration between public transport services and hubs, and walking and cycling infrastructure.
- d) **Bus service quality:** Various comments about current bus service prices, reliability, late night and weekend coverage and accessibility
- Whilst outside the immediate scope of this consultation, affected routes and areas mentioned in the responses have been documented for future information and consideration. Wording amendments will clarify that reliability, pricing and greater consideration of vulnerable users are important elements of bus network planning in High Wycombe.
- e) **Congestion issues on main arterial routes** especially during peak times
- The Transport Strategy will be reviewed to explain the role of optimised traffic lights, and the key routes commonly mentioned in the consultation responses (A40, A404) will be reviewed alongside
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the schemes set out in the draft strategy to ensure they are appropriately incorporated.

f) Improved walking and cycling infrastructure

- Various comments on the proposed LCWIP network were received and specific suggestions for additions/amendments to indicative proposals.
- The LCWIP will emphasise that the individual proposals that are set out are only indicative at this stage and will be subject to further design, feasibility assessments, local engagement and impact assessments. However the proposals, including suggested additions/amendments, will be amended where it is appropriate to do so.
- Comments regarding localised footway maintenance and parking enforcement matters have been recorded but are outside of the scope of the LCWIP and Transport Strategy.

g) Suggested public realm improvements

- Comments and suggestions, such as enhancement of parks and public spaces, benches and environmental enhancement, have been recorded and will be considered as the individual proposals are developed, where relevant.

h) Concerns about implications of parking standards, car-light living and additional demand management measures such as charging people for the use of roads, parking restraints and clean air zones.

- The Transport Strategy and individual proposals will be reviewed in light of this feedback to ensure careful consideration is given to a balanced approach, recognising the equal need to minimise the negative impacts of vehicular traffic and national requirements to reduce carbon emissions.

i) Performance outcomes, monitoring and evaluation

- Suggestions that the draft plans should more clearly outline how progress and performance against objectives will be monitored.
- The Transport Strategy and LCWIP include reference to performance indicators but will be amended to make clear that further work will be required to understand each initiative's potential impacts, value for money, and deliverability.

j) Revisions to the timeline and level of ambition of the Transport Strategy

- The Transport Strategy acknowledges that major transport projects and behaviour change can take a long term to achieve and deliver and is intended to outline a long term, incremental approach, and this was supported. This consultation feedback will be considered to ensure that the schemes required in the next five, ten, fifteen years and beyond are appropriate and can deliver the 2050 Vision.

3. Next steps and review

- 3.1 A meeting is being arranged for July 2023 with local members representing ward areas affected by the plans to present the consultation findings in further detail and discuss proposed amendments to the draft plans.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that the amended High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP will be presented to Cabinet for approval and adoption in October 2023.
- 3.3 Once adopted, the plans will be used to inform the Council's approach to transport planning in High Wycombe and identify priorities for future investment decisions.
- 3.4 The High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe LCWIP will be integrated appropriately with the Council's countywide LCWIP, Local Transport Plan (LTP5) and Local Plan for Buckinghamshire which are in development in order to achieve an overarching strategic approach for the county.
- 3.5 Specific proposals and interventions identified in the plans will be subject to further development, engagement and public consultation, if and when they are taken forward. The proposals identified will be delivered subject to funding availability.