



Report to Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee

Date:	1 February 2024
Title:	Active Travel and Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport
Contact officer:	Hannah Joyce, Head of Transport Strategy & Funding
Ward(s) affected:	None specific
Recommendations:	To note the updates on the delivery of active travel in Buckinghamshire and on the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This paper summarises the Council's approach to the delivery of active travel infrastructure and initiatives in Buckinghamshire, highlighting examples of recently delivered schemes.
- 1.2 This paper also provides an overview of the work underway to develop a Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) that will outline a high-level future cycling, walking, and wheeling network across Buckinghamshire.
- 1.3 Relevant background information to this topic area is included in reports previously presented to this Select Committee, including an overview of opportunities and challenges for active travel in Buckinghamshire (March 2021) and an explanation of the Council's approach to delivering transport schemes, including active travel infrastructure (March 2022).
- 1.4 Whilst not featured in this paper, the Council also delivers ongoing travel planning initiatives with schools, businesses and development sites to encourage active and sustainable travel.

2. Background

- 2.1 'Active travel' refers to journeys made by active modes, including walking, cycling and wheeling. 'Wheeling' includes wheeled mobilities, such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters and adapted cycles.
- 2.2 Nationally, increased emphasis has been placed on active travel in recent years, with increased funding provision for infrastructure alongside higher technical design standards (including Local Transport Note 1/20) that local authorities are asked to follow to access national government funding. Buckinghamshire Council is reliant on seeking and securing external funding and building relationships with partners to enable the delivery of active travel infrastructure.
- 2.3 A new national inspectorate and funding body, Active Travel England (ATE), was established in 2022. Alongside providing support to local authorities, ATE administer government capital and revenue funding for active travel, informed by assessments of local authorities' performance. As of June 2023, ATE is also statutory consultee on all planning applications for developments equal to or exceeding 150 housing units, 7,5000m² of floorspace, or areas of 5 hectares.
- 2.4 In 2022, ATE carried out the first national assessment of local authorities' active travel capabilities, resulting in local authorities being awarded a Level rating (using a 0-4 scale, with 4 being the highest rating). Local authorities outside of London completed a self-assessment of factors including local leadership, network plans and delivery record. Following moderation by ATE, Buckinghamshire Council was awarded a Level 2 rating, defined as *'Strong local leadership, with clear plans that form the basis of an emerging network with a few elements in place'*.
- 2.5 During 2023, the Council secured over £875k of funding through successful applications to ATE. This ringfenced funding has supported the development of future active travel infrastructure schemes, including in Buckingham and High Wycombe, as well as the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP and the promotion and monitoring of recently delivered active travel infrastructure.
- 2.6 To develop and deliver active travel infrastructure, the Council works in close partnership with national and local stakeholders, including funding bodies, landowners, charitable organisations, residents and volunteer groups, Buckinghamshire Council members, Town/Parish Councils and neighbouring local authorities.
- 2.7 In early 2024, supported by external funding, the Council has delivered workshops for Buckinghamshire Council members and relevant Council officers. During these workshops, the Council's approach to active travel and future plans were discussed, alongside examples of good practice.

3. Active Travel

3.1 Since the previous report on active travel presented to the Select Committee in March 2022, the following active travel infrastructure schemes have been delivered in Buckinghamshire:

- **St Peter's Greenway:** Off-road rural link connecting Berryfields and Buckingham Park developments in Aylesbury. Named St Peter's Way as the route runs past the remains of St Peter's Church. Includes solar stud lighting, resting places and planting, with over 3,400 hedgerow plants and trees planted by over 200 volunteers. Scheme funded by the Department for Transport and developer funding contributions, and delivered under budget.
- **Platinum Way:** Upgrades to the former Emerald Way, now providing a continuous connection between Aylesbury town centre and Aylesbury Vale Parkway rail station via Prebendal Farm, Haydon Hill and Fairford Leys. Includes new and re-routed sections, 3 parallel crossing points and cycle parking facilities. Scheme funded by the Department for Transport. Community artwork and over 4,000 hedgerow plants and trees planted by over 300 volunteers, in conjunction with Chiltern Rangers.
- **Canal Towpath Improvements:** Extension and width and surfacing upgrades to the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal towpath, providing a connection between Aylesbury town centre and the Kingsbrook development. Scheme funded through the Aylesbury Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme and developer funding contributions. Similar improvements to the Wendover Arm canal towpath are being undertaken by partner organisations.
- **Waddesdon Greenway School Link:** 800m extension to the Waddesdon Greenway with solar stud lighting, providing a connection to Waddesdon schools and village centre, avoiding the A41. Waddesdon Parish Council and Haddenham & Waddesdon Community Board are due to create a community orchard along the route in 2024.

3.2 Whilst the above infrastructure schemes provide point-to-point connectivity, it is important that the Council designs infrastructure that is flexible and able to support a range of users and journey types and lengths, including where active travel modes are used for the 'first or 'last' mile. This highlights the importance of integrating active travel infrastructure with wider transport infrastructure and networks.

3.3 The following features are key considerations for the Council in the design and design and delivery of active travel infrastructure that is inclusive and attractive:

- **Benches and seating** – to allow people to rest on their journeys and extend the distance they are comfortable travelling;
- **Lighting** – providing lighting can increase a sense of personal security and helps support year-round utility journeys. Depending on the location and circumstances, options include low-level lighting on bollards, solar-powered studs, lighting only between certain times, or installations activated by the presence of people walking, wheeling or cycling;
- **Tree, planting and greening**– to provide shade and shelter and enhance the attractiveness of routes;
- **Wayfinding** – clear and consistent signs and road markings help people navigate and can include destination and distance information;
- **Litter bins** – to encourage the responsible disposal of litter and waste;
- **Cycle parking** – that is secure, well located and caters for all users.

3.4 To encourage local ownership and usage, new and improved active travel infrastructure in Buckinghamshire is promoted through community events and campaigns. For the recently delivered infrastructure detailed in section 3.1, opportunities for community participation have included tree planting initiatives and launch events, which have enabled residents to find out about the new infrastructure, have their bike repaired or registered, and access wider council initiatives (such as travel planning and public health campaigns). Alongside this, promotional campaigns have included targeted engagement with local schools and businesses in the vicinity, alongside mapping and social media messaging.

3.5 Using data counters, the Council collects data on active travel journeys at a selection of locations around the county. As standard practice, data counters are being installed as part of the delivery of new active travel infrastructure. The Council has a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in place, which monitors the average daily cycling count per active cycle counter per day and data trends are reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. As part of the preparation of Local Transport Plan 5, the Council will be reviewing and updating monitoring and evaluation processes, and this will consider active travel.

3.6 The maintenance of highway assets, including active travel infrastructure, is a challenge for local authorities. Ringfenced capital funding from government is often available for infrastructure, but funding is much scarcer for ongoing maintenance or repairs to existing infrastructure. The Council is advocating for greater funds for maintenance of its expanding active travel infrastructure network. For new infrastructure, in some cases, community involvement and support from partner organisations and businesses may assist with some elements of maintenance, such as looking after planting or keeping infrastructure clear of obstruction.

- 3.7 Looking ahead, the Council has a range of active travel infrastructure schemes at varying stages of development across Buckinghamshire. These schemes will be subject to further investigation and local engagement as they progress.
- 3.8 In parallel, the Council is progressing its vision for the Buckinghamshire Greenway, a flagship active travel route across Buckinghamshire, forming a north-south spine running from Brackley and Silverstone in the north to the Colne Valley in the south. The Greenway has been split into discrete route sections to enable progressive delivery as and when necessary funding and consents are secured. The first section of the Greenway to be delivered in 2018 was the Waddesdon Greenway, with the section between Wendover Dean and Great Missenden to follow in 2024. This route section is currently being delivered by Sustrans in partnership with the Council and the Chiltern Society.
- 3.9 The Buckinghamshire Greenway will form the core spine of the forthcoming Buckinghamshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) that will set out the Council's priorities for improved active travel connectivity between settlements across Buckinghamshire.

4. LCWIPs

- 4.1 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are evidence-based long term plans that identify cycling, walking, and wheeling improvements at the local level. 'Wheeling' refers to adapted cycle, wheelchair and mobility scooter users.
- 4.2 LCWIPs can be produced at differing geographical scales but commonly contain:
- A proposed network of walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure for further investigation and development;
 - A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment;
 - A report explaining the process followed and analysis underpinning the LCWIP.
- 4.3 The development of LCWIPs by local authorities is recommended by national government and the LCWIP process is supported by national technical guidance¹. LCWIPs enable local authorities and partner organisations to take an informed network-based approach to planning and delivering active travel infrastructure. They provide an evidence base that can support funding applications and guide investment decisions. LCWIPs are key tools in setting out a local authorities' priorities for further investigation, However, it is important to note that an LCWIP does not provide or guarantee funding.

¹ Department for Transport (2017), Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Technical Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance-and-tools>

4.4 In Buckinghamshire, the following town-level LCWIPs have been, or are in the process of being, produced. Each LCWIP outlines proposed town-wide networks and links to surrounding settlements.

- **Aylesbury Garden Town:** Produced in 2019 in support of the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan. A refresh of the LCWIP is currently in progress.
- **Buckingham:** The walking and cycling network identified in the Buckingham Transport Strategy (2017) has recently been transferred into an LCWIP 'lite'.
- **High Wycombe:** Developed alongside the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and adopted by Cabinet in January 2024.

In addition, a **Chesham** LCWIP is being developed locally. Whilst this work is being led by Chesham Town Council, a draft of the Chesham LCWIP has been shared and considered as part of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP.

5. Buckinghamshire LCWIP

5.1 Acknowledging that there is not currently an overarching LCWIP providing coverage across Buckinghamshire's wider geography, the purpose of developing a Buckinghamshire LCWIP is to define priorities for a future walking, cycling and wheeling network across Buckinghamshire. This will provide an evidence base to support the emerging Local Transport Plan 5 and Local Plan for Buckinghamshire.

5.2 The proposed LCWIP network is to be formed of a series of priority inter-settlement links that are likely to have user demand and are aligned with local priorities. These inter-settlement links are referred to as 'corridors'. Where relevant, consideration is to be given to 'cross-border' links into neighbouring authority areas close to the county border, which generate travel demand into and out of Buckinghamshire.

5.3 Work on the Buckinghamshire LCWIP commenced in 2022. Data analysis and engagement has been carried out at the Community Board level, with input sought from Buckinghamshire Council members and Community Boards.

- Data analysis and mapping has been used to identify key destinations and gauge likely demand levels. Destination types considered include employment, education, public transport hubs and networks, town and village facilities, leisure and visitor attractions and neighbouring authority areas. Analysis has considered the likely scale of trips by active travel which could be enabled between journey origin and destination locations if infrastructure was in place.
- Stages of engagement have been carried out with Buckinghamshire Council members and Community Boards, firstly to present the data analysis and understand local aspirations for active travel infrastructure improvements. Secondly, through workshops with Buckinghamshire Council members, to

determine the priority aspirations to be included in the proposed Buckinghamshire LCWIP network.

- 5.4 This approach has ensured that the proposed Buckinghamshire LCWIP network will provide geographical coverage. The overall proposed network is to be formed of indicative straight lines between communities, incorporating the following:
- The proposed Buckinghamshire Greenway network spine;
 - Towns covered by LCWIPs and the inter-settlement corridors they identify;
 - Priority inter-settlement corridors identified through the Buckinghamshire LCWIP process.
- 5.5 The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will not define exact interventions for individual corridors, reflecting that many are at an early concept stage. Each corridor will require further investigation, following the publication of the LCWIP, to determine the exact nature and scale of interventions required. This work will be informed by a technical design note that draws on relevant national and local guidance. This includes Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) and Inclusive Mobility.
- 5.6 During the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP, a high volume of local aspirations have been identified. Aspirations that are not proposed to be included in the LCWIP network are to be captured on supplementary plans. Whilst not forming part of the proposed LCWIP network, the aspirations are being recorded for reference and potential input into any future localised studies.

6. Legal and financial implications

- 6.1 The Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008) requires all Local Transport Authorities to publish statutory plans, known as Local Transport Plans, setting out their policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport in their area and for the implementation of those policies, to review, maintain and improve all aspects of local transport. The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will support the Council's emerging Local Transport Plan 5, as well as the future Buckinghamshire Local Plan, and is key to accessing funding opportunities for local walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure initiatives. However, it must be stated that funding availability and the delivery of infrastructure is not guaranteed.

4a Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

- 6.2 The Director has read and approved the report.

4b Section 151 Officer comment

- 6.3 The Director has read and approved the report.

7. Corporate implications

7.1 The delivery of active travel infrastructure and the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP align with the following Corporate Plan priorities and supports progress on a range of wider Council objectives:

- **Strengthening our communities:** The delivery of active travel infrastructure contributes towards healthy and well-connected communities, increasing opportunities for increased physical activity, with associated health and wellbeing benefits.
- **Improving our environment:** The development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP is listed as a key action against this corporate priority: *'Promote the benefits and improve the attractiveness of walking, cycling and wheeling as a realistic alternative for short local trips through the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Buckinghamshire'*. In addition, the delivery of active travel infrastructure supports progress on the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy action number 42.
- **Increasing prosperity:** The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will sit alongside new and emerging planning, transport, visitor economy and regeneration strategies. The ongoing delivery of an increased walking, cycling and wheeling network has potential to support local economies and strengthen the local visitor economy.

8. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

8.1 Local councillors and Community Boards have been engaged throughout the development of the Buckinghamshire LCWIP and are engaged during the development and delivery of active travel infrastructure projects in their area.

9. Next steps and review

9.1 The draft Buckinghamshire LCWIP is proposed to progress to public consultation in Spring/Summer 2024 (dates to be confirmed).

9.2 Subject to the outcomes of public consultation and adoption, the Buckinghamshire LCWIP would be integrated appropriately with the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP5) and Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, currently in development, in order to achieve an overarching strategic approach for the county.

9.3 The Buckinghamshire LCWIP would provide a medium-long term strategy. Individual corridors identified in the LCWIP would be subject to further investigation and engagement to determine their specific requirements, with delivery subject to prioritisation and funding availability.

9.4 In line with national LCWIP guidance, the Buckinghamshire LCWIP would be a 'live' policy document that could be periodically reviewed and updated in future.

10. Background papers

10.1 None.

