



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

16 March 2023

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Sustainable Travel Programme: Progress Update and Next Steps
(Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the County.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update in delivering the key cycle network and to seek approval for the proposed forward plan of activities set out in Section 4, including a series of community engagement exercises.

3.2 Additionally, this report seeks approval to accept the Active Travel Capability and Ambition Fund Grant 2022 of £285,069 to undertake further feasibility and business case development for sustainable travel opportunities and to note the submission of a bid to the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 to support a forward programme of work.

3.3 Finally, the report seeks approval to delegate authority to the Executive Director – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, Infrastructure

and Environment to modify the key cycle network delivery programme as required, providing it remains consistent with the Council's priorities and aspirations for sustainable travel.

4. Information and Analysis

- 4.1 As the Council looks to accelerate the development of the cycle network in line with expectations from councillors and Active Travel England, the current approval and governance processes create significant delay in moving forward the programme. It should be noted that all significant changes to policy or budget requests will be brought to Cabinet within the standard process.

Background

- 4.2 The Council Plan 2022-2023 sets out a priority to develop and deliver a strategic approach to sustainable travel and transport across the County. This includes the promotion of walking and cycling with many additional supporting and aligned deliverables across climate change, health, and Children's Services.
- 4.3 The Sustainable Travel Team delivers a varied programme of projects, including design and implementation of the Key Cycle Network (KCN) and the Local Cycle Network (LCN) alongside work to support business, community and school travel planning.
- 4.4 The Derbyshire Cycling Plan, launched in early 2016, set out aspirations shared by Derbyshire Sport (now superseded by Active Derbyshire), the County Council, district/borough councils, Peak District National Park Authority, Derby City Council and other key stakeholders. These aspirations were to create "*the most connected and integrated county for cycling in England*" with Derbyshire being recognised as a world class cycling destination for all. Underpinning this were four strategic aims:
- Infrastructure Connectivity: High quality connected routes, in all cycling environments, supporting all forms of cycling, creating, and supporting economic growth.
 - Increased Participation: Behaviour change approaches and targeted participation programmes at community level will support and enable more people to cycle, closing the gaps in participation and reducing health inequalities.
 - Effective Communication and Marketing: Excellent, well-connected marketing and communications for Derbyshire residents and visitors

to the County, helping to change behaviour, increase confidence and get more people cycling regularly.

- Advocacy: Cross sector advocacy for policy change and implementation at the highest level.

4.5 Providing this infrastructure is also an essential part of the Council's low carbon mobility ambitions and an integral part of its wider carbon reduction ambitions. These ambitions will be carried forward into the refreshed Local Transport Plan for 2024 onwards.

Progress Update: Network Delivery

4.6 The continued development of the Key Cycle Network (KCN) was approved by Cabinet on 16 January 2020 (Minute No. 8/20 refers). The report identifies 127 proposed sections of strategic route across the County and sets out the methodology for appraising and prioritising delivery. The identified KCN projects have been organised into a 10-year infrastructure pipeline and prioritised for investment in the short, medium and long term. This forms the basis of Derbyshire's delivery programme for the LCWIP.

4.7 Following the Cabinet approval, four of the five KCN projects classed as short term (typically <3 years) are now complete, including the Clowne Greenway. Resources are now being focused on the 20 projects which have been identified as medium term (typically <5 years) for further consideration and development towards full business case ('shovel-ready' schemes) ready for making bids when appropriate funding opportunities arise.

4.8 The KCN delivery programme is designed to be agile and responsive to changing circumstances and all proposed links, irrespective of their overall prioritisation, remain under constant review. Whilst the Council is taking the lead in developing this programme, it incorporates the aspirations of a range of different stakeholders and community groups with similar ambitions, some of which are directly involved in funding and developing various sections of the network.

4.9 It should also be noted that to deliver the cycle network, at times, officers will need to undertake sensitive landowner negotiations, make applications for planning and initiate legal orders and agreements.

4.10 Cabinet should note the significant progress that continues to be made in delivering the KCN. To ensure this progress can be maintained, the delivery programme needs to be responsive to the funding streams, community capacity and other opportunities that are available at any

given time, so it is proposed that Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Infrastructure and Environment, to modify the delivery programme as required, within the agreed framework of the KCN plan approved by Cabinet in January 2020.

Network Update: White Peak Loop

- 4.11 A distance of 62km - or 71% - of the White Peak Loop is complete. The missing gaps are between High Peak Junction near Cromford and Matlock, Rowsley to Bakewell and around Buxton.
- 4.12 Significant progress has been made on finalising a feasible design for a multi-user link from the end of the Monsal Trail at Topley Pike to the new A6 Hogshaw roundabout in Buxton. A preferred route has been identified through Wye Dale and Woo Dale that would require new bridges over the river. The proposed route involves work within a flood plain, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation and will need landowner permissions, planning consent and external funding to construct. The proposals will be used as a basis for the Council's pre-planning discussions with the Peak District National Park Authority and other key stakeholders before consulting more widely and carrying out further work to fully cost the scheme/secure planning permission.
- 4.13 Officers will continue to carry out preparatory work, preliminary design and cost estimates to support the implementation of the White Peak Loop onwards from the A6 Hogshaw roundabout through Buxton to Harpur Hill - also meets local needs as part of a Buxton Walk and Ride Network proposed in the Sustainable Travel Plan for the town.
- 4.14 It is expected that once a suitable and feasible route alignment is identified, officers will undertake a local engagement with residents and key stakeholders.

Network Update: Derwent Valley Cycleway

- 4.15 The Council is funding a feasibility study to investigate the overall viability and route options for a multi-user leisure and commuting route following the River Derwent, as closely as possible, from its confluence with the River Trent at the iconic Long Horse Bridge near Shardlow to Hathersage in the Derbyshire Dales. Approval for the funding, up to a maximum of £100,000, to be released from the Challenge Fund Reserves, was given at the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure on 11 March 2021 (Minute No. 20/21 refers). The study, which is on-going, builds on previous work by

the Derwent Valley Trust and will also inform route options for the missing section of the White Peak Loop between High Peak Junction, near Cromford and Matlock, as well as the crossing of the A6 at Rowsley. This project also complements the schemes being funded and managed by National Highways for the sections between Darley Abbey and Duffield, working in partnership with the Trust, as well as the Council and Derby City Council.

Network Update: Pennine Bridleway National Trail

- 4.16 Officers are progressing with investigation/feasibility work for the missing sections of the route within the Glossop area. Significant local engagement is being undertaken with the British Horse Society and the Council's Highways, Rights of Way and Countryside services to look at improving the A626 Glossop Road railway bridge and upgrading Charlesworth Footpath No.115 as a possible alternative to the approved route of the Pennine Bridleway under Dinting Viaduct. This may prove to be a cheaper and more viable option but is not without its challenges.
- 4.17 Officers will also be engaged in detailed conversations with key landowners in order to find a suitable route for the section between High Lane and Green Lane at Simmondley.

Network Update: Little Eaton Branch Line

- 4.18 This was acquired by the Council in 2014 with the purpose of developing the former railway as a multi-user path for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. The 3.5mile route between Duffield Road in Little Eaton and Rawson Green will extend the National Cycle Network Route 54 from Derby City towards Ripley.
- 4.19 A recent community engagement exercise has demonstrated significant enthusiasm for the project with the online survey showing support from 97% of all respondents and almost 50% indicating they would use the Greenway weekly and 90% monthly. This would make a sizeable contribution towards achieving the Council's goals for increasing participation in active lifestyles
- 4.20 Officers continue to investigate the best solutions for existing and additional access points along the route. The proposal is included within the Highways Capital Programme for 2023-24 and funding would support site clearance, resolve encroachment issues and aid planning consent.

Network Update: Bolsover Loop to Trans Pennine Trail

- 4.21 The development of this link will plug a gap in the Key Cycle Network between Markham Vale and the Trans Pennine Trail, joining together

the Clowne Greenway with Poolsbrook Country Park. Project design continues and high-level cost estimates have been reached. 'In principle' support is being gained from landowners and funding opportunities considered for its construction.

Network Update: Peak Forest Tramway Trail

- 4.22 A scheme has been identified and costed to resurface the Tramway Trail between Buxworth and Chinley. The proposal is included within the Highways Capital Programme for 2023-24 and subject to confirmation, would support commencement of work in 2023. Going forward, the next stage will involve seeking landowner permissions to upgrade the route from a footpath to a bridleway through a public path creation agreement in order to formalise its use by cyclists and horse riders.

Network Update: Swadlincote to Burton National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 63

- 4.23 The feasibility and high-level design work which has been commissioned by Sustrans for the Stanton to Swadlincote section of the Route, is almost complete. This is currently funded by the Department for Transport and Sustrans' 'Paths for Everyone' programme. At this stage, the shortlist for Tranche 7 of funding includes additional development funding requests to take the route to full design and planning in 2023-24.

Active Travel Capability and Ambition Fund Award 2022-23

- 4.24 The Government's Capability and Ambition Fund 2022-23 builds on the previous Local Authority Capability Fund and supports commitments made in "Gear Change" (the Government's cycling and walking plan released in July 2020) to increase the capability of local authorities to plan good active travel infrastructure. This includes building more expertise and undertaking more evidence-based planning, alongside delivering behaviour change initiatives.
- 4.25 The Council has recently been awarded a grant of £285,069 from the Fund to cover the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25. This allows for the continued development and building of the County's technical capability and readiness for delivering an ambitious approach to high quality walking and cycling infrastructure networks. The core proposal seeks to build capacity in network design and scheme planning by developing holistic market town networks and developing business cases ready for making bids when an appropriate funding opportunity arises. The proposals also seek to expand the Council's active travel monitoring and evaluation capability, as well as further public engagement to understand ambition for high quality walking and cycling networks.

- 4.26 The draft D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which has been prepared jointly by the Council, Derby City Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, sets ambitious targets to increase levels of cycling and walking, particularly for short trips that could replace private car journeys. The Council's Capability and Ambition proposal to Active Travel England was focused on the 27 market towns where most services, employment and education are located. They are also where there are high levels of 'self-containment' (the degree to which people live, work and learn in the same vicinity) which offers a high propensity for walking and cycling being the natural choice for short journeys. At a local level, building capacity to promote a travel revolution is fully aligned with the aims of the Derbyshire Council Plan, Derbyshire Local Transport Plan and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It is also in alignment with the Derbyshire Cycling Plan which sets out key aspirations shared by other key partners to create "*the most connected and integrated County for cycling in England*".
- 4.27 The draft D2N2 LCWIP is currently exhibited for public consultation, which is due to close in early March 2023. A subsequent report will be brought to the Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Environment in line with agreed delegations, to approve the adoption of the final version of the LCWIP, as set out in the report to Cabinet of 11 February 2021 (Minute No. 26/21 refers).
- 4.28 Given the valuable work to be supported by the Capability and Ambition Fund in aiding the work programme of the Sustainable Travel Team, it is proposed the Council accepts the latest grant award of £285,069 allocated by Active Travel England on behalf of the Department for Transport. This will allow

Active Travel Funding Tranche 4

- 4.29 At very short notice, Active Travel England has announced a £200 million fund for local authorities to build priority walking, wheeling and cycling schemes and an invitation for applications has opened with a two week timescale for submission. This is exceptionally tight but given the existing pipeline of planned work in the LCWIP, KCN and LLCN programmes it is considered possible to make a strong submission for funding.
- 4.30 To qualify for funding, all schemes must comply with Manual for Streets, LTN 1/20, and the DfT Inclusive Mobility Guidance. Authorities will be required to show that designs consider a range of users. "*For example,*

in response to research indicating women often do not feel safe walking, wheeling or cycling; we expect to see schemes that take this into account and ensure women feel safer and more confident using active travel modes. We will consider any scheme that reflects the desired outcomes of Gear Change. Examples include a town/city centre placemaking scheme, protected cycle track/junction, a rural path, a network of quiet routes to schools or other popular destinations, or other proposals such as addressing a collection of existing smaller design issues on your network.”

- 4.31 Nominally, the Derbyshire has an allocation of £1.2m within the Fund but it is possible to bid up to 300% of this value. Given the very short timescales involved it is not possible to seek approval in advance of bid submission so, in consultation with the Executive Director – Place and the Cabinet Member Infrastructure and Environment, the following programme of work - with a key focus on the Key Cycle Network sectors - has been developed for inclusion in the bid. The total estimated value of the work is circa £3.5m:

KCN Sector	Activity
Matlock to Bakewell and Buxton (Wye Dale Woo Dale - Fairfield Common)	Surveys, preliminary design, public consultation and planning
Matlock to Bakewell and Buxton (Fairfield Common - Buxton Railway Station)	Surveys, preliminary design, public consultation and planning
Buxton to Ashbourne (Buxton Railway Station - Harpur Hill)	Surveys, preliminary design, public consultation and planning
Buxton to Dove Holes	Surveys, preliminary design, public consultation and planning
Duffield Road in Little Eaton to Rawson Green in Kilburn	Detailed Design and first stage construction
Rawson Green to Ripley Greenway	Feasibility study
Cemetery Road, Dronfield to Peak Resort, Unstone Green	Construction
Connecting Sheffield and Manchester - Hope Valley Corridor Improvement	Feasibility, local engagement and business case development
A617 Road Crossing	Detailed design and installation
Connection to the Stockley Trail	Design, planning application, consultation and construction of route.

4.32 The Council's submission will also seek additional funds to design and implement a series of rail station access improvement works which will help support the continued roll out of the Council's mobility hubs. It is expected the Council will be informed of the outcome of this application in late March.

4.33 Also, it should be noted an additional report will be bought to Cabinet upon resolution of bid to accept any formal grant offer from Active Travel England.

5. Consultation

5.1 To support the continued development of the network, officers will seek to facilitate a range of community engagement exercises on the following projects:

- White Peak Loop: Route alignment and feasibility within Buxton.
- Continued extension of the Derwent Valley Cycleway.
- Pennine Bridleway – Route alignment and feasibility within Glossop.
- Little Eaton Branch Line, statutory consultation and planning submission.

5.2 Officers will brief the Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Environment and local members for the area prior to any engagement activities commencing.

5.3 Officers will utilise the existing Council website and various communication channels to ensure residents and key stakeholders are encouraged to participate in area-based engagement and statutory consultations where appropriate.

5.4 Results of all engagement and consultation activities will be published on the Council's website after approval by the Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Environment.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Option 1: Cabinet may choose to not continue with the proposed development of the cycle network, although that would place the sustainable travel agenda at significant risk.

6.2 Option 2: Cabinet may also choose not to accept the grant award from Active Travel England and not to progress the proposed market town feasibility work. However, this option is likely to significantly reduce the

ability of the authority to make further funding applications to Department for Transport and would no longer align with the shared D2N2 joint draft LCWIP.

- 6.3 It is now recommended that the County undertakes a programme of ambitious and exciting work to ensure the Council can deliver on its commitments and aspirations and ensure residents, businesses and visitors are equipped with a range of sustainable travel options within Derbyshire.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Cabinet Report, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, dated 11 February 2021 (Minute No.26/21 refers).

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

10. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the significant progress that has been made in delivering the Key Cycle Network across Derbyshire.
- b) Approves the proposed forward plan of activities set out in section 4, including a series of community engagement exercises, subject to all planned funding being confirmed.
- c) Approves to accept the Active Travel Capability and Ambition Fund Grant 2022 of £285,069 to undertake further feasibility and business case development for sustainable travel opportunities.
- d) Notes the submission of a bid to the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 which has been developed in consultation with the Executive Director – Place and the Cabinet Member Infrastructure and Environment.
- e) Approves to delegate authority to the Executive Director – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, Infrastructure and Environment to modify the planned Key Cycle Network delivery programme as required, providing it remains consistent with the Council's priorities and aspirations for sustainable travel.

11. Reason for Recommendations

- 11.1 To ensure the Council can continue to make progress on delivering its ambitious sustainable travel aspirations including, but not limited to, the delivery of the Key Cycle Network and Local Cycle Network and to ensure the delivery programme remains responsive and flexible to funding other opportunities that may present themselves

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- 12.1 No.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Active Travel have awarded the Council £285,069 Revenue Grant from their Capability and Ambition Fund. This money must be spent by 12 January 2024.
- 1.2 The Council is responsible for the funding of any overspends and must return six monthly monitoring to Active Travel England.
- 1.3 If the Council fails to meet the objective for which the funding was awarded, Active Travel England reserves the right to reclaim the funding; Active Travel England also reserves the right to reclaim any unspent funds.
- 1.4 Capital funding has been secured from the 2023 Local Transport Grant provided by the DfT and is part of the Capital Delivery Programme for 2023-24.

Legal

- 2.1 The Director of Legal and Democratic Services will provide advice as necessary on the individual projects included in the Council's sustainable travel agenda.

Human Resources

- 3.1 It is expected that the current staffing arrangement within the Sustainable travel team will be adequate to deliver on ambitions stated in this report, including the 0.5FTE Project Officer post which is currently vacant.

Information Technology

- 4.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 At this stage it is not expected an equalities impact assessment is required. As individual projects emerge, officers will review the need and complete assessments as required.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 This proposal will help deliver the following Council Plan priorities: Resilient, Healthy and Safe Communities; High Performing, Value for Money and Resident-Focused Services; A Prosperous and Green Derbyshire. Specifically, the retention of these services will also enable the delivery of Place Directorate priorities around sustainable transport and travel.
- 6.2 The use of walking and cycling reduces the number of private vehicles on the road and has a positive impact on CO₂ emissions. With many people becoming increasingly concerned for the wider environment, combined with the rising costs to own, and run a private car, it is anticipated that many travellers will be contemplating more sustainable travel options to benefit the environment and their own living costs. If this happens it will have a positive impact on the Councils wider environmental sustainability objectives and support the targets set in the Climate Change Strategy: Achieving Net Zero.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 None.