

- 1.2 Local Authorities in England are strongly encouraged by the Department for Transport (DfT) to have an LCWIP in place to access future government funding streams and maintain the council's rating by Active Travel England. To not adopt the LCWIP risks Thurrock Council being downgraded to a rating of Zero by Active Travel England, which would likely reduce future grant funding for the council to support active travel infrastructure and schemes from the DfT.
- 1.3 An adopted LCWIP will also support the delivery of the council's future Local Plan by forming part of its transport evidence base, align with the Council's upcoming Transport Strategy and form part of the Local Transport Plan 4.

Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, the Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.4 Approve the Thurrock Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for adoption and publication.

2. Commissioner's Comments

- 2.1 None.

3. Proposals – the rationale and evidence for the recommendations

- 3.1 The Government has committed to making walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choices for millions more journeys, as stated in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2)¹ in particular for short local trips. Local Transport Authorities are the responsible bodies for developing and maintaining local transport infrastructure and service delivery in delivering this commitment.
- 3.2 The benefits from having higher levels of walking, wheeling and cycling are diverse expanding from physical and mental health to addressing inequalities. These include improving air quality and reducing particulates (PM2.5); minimising carbon emissions through modal shift away from cars; improving both physical and mental health and wellbeing; addressing inequalities by

¹ The second cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS2)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-cwis2>

making local travel less reliant on private transport; and tackling congestion by making more efficient use of space.

- 3.3 In 2017, the government published its Technical Guidance for Local Authorities² to support the development of LCWIPs. These should have a long-term approach, ideally over a 10-year period. Although it is not a statutory requirement, having an LCWIP has become a critical element in accessing government funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Active Travel England (ATE). The Local Authority Active Travel Capability Ratings from ATE are now used to calculate revenue and capital funding allocations to local authorities. Thurrock Council is currently rated Level 1- *Some local leadership and support with developing plans and isolated interventions*. Failing to adopt an LCWIP could result in Thurrock's rating being downgraded to the lowest rating "Level 0", reducing future funding allocations. The highest rating available is Level 4.
- 3.4 Any active travel infrastructure delivered using funds originating from the DfT must be delivered in line with the latest Cycle Infrastructure Design guidance given in Local Transport Note 1/20³ (LTN 1/20). The guidance sets the five principles of active travel routes: "Coherent", "Direct", "Safe", "Comfortable" and "Attractive", alongside geometric design requirements and consideration for traffic volumes and speeds. Adherence to LTN1/20 guidance essential to qualify for funding.
- 3.5 In 2022, a Cycling and Walking Network Audit was commissioned which collected, analysed, and mapped the active travel network within borough. The study gave a classification of all roads and paths in the borough in relation to its suitability for cycling at differing levels of cycling experience in line with the national Bikeability training standards.
- 3.6 Guidance note LTN1/20, outputs from the 2022 Cycle Network Audit and the Technical Guidance for Local Authorities are the three main bases on which the LCWIP has been developed, along with data analysis of travel patterns

² Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans - Technical Guidance for Local Authorities - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f32aa668fa8f57ac88dc9dc/cycling-walking-infrastructure-technical-guidance-document.pdf>

³ Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

from the 2021 census, the Propensity to Cycle tool⁴ developed by the DfT and Sport England's Active Lives Survey⁵.

Proposal

3.7 The LCWIP is a high-level plan that identifies potential interventions for making it easier and safer to walk and cycle. Each of the proposals will require further investigation in the way of feasibility studies, detail design and engagement or consultation prior delivery and subject to resources and funding being available.

3.8 Despite being a high-level plan, proposals in the LCWIP are considered deliverable and in adherence to relevant guidance. A full description of the proposals can be found in the appendices 1 and 2. The most common interventions are the following:

- Crossing and junction improvements - parallel, zebra and toucan crossings, raised tables, continuous pavement, drop kerbs, junction layout modifications
- Footway improvements - widen footways, remove barriers, improve ramps
- Traffic management - modal filters
- Traffic calmed streets - speed limit reductions
- Cycle facilities - segregated cycle lanes
- School streets - temporary traffic restrictions
- Shared paths improvements - widen paths, removal of barriers

3.9 If fully implemented, the proposals in this LCWIP would create a continuous and interconnected network for cycling across the borough as well as improved local provisions for walking and wheeling.

Future Growth

3.10 Future developments identified through the Thurrock Local Plan will need to give consideration for active travel, promoting walking and cycling to support

⁴ Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) for England and Wales
<https://www.pct.bike/>

⁵ Active Lives
<https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/data/active-lives>

local growth and mitigate against a reliance on private car travel. Through the delivery of the LCWIP, the council has a forward plan to promote the delivery of high-quality cycling and walking infrastructure within developments and linking them to the proposed primary and secondary walking and cycling networks, with opportunities for developer contributions.

- 3.11 Development of the LCWIP has also considered the approval of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). If approved, the LTC has the potential to create significant severance barriers across the borough. As part of an overarching mitigation strategy, National Highways are proposing to deliver localised improvements for walkers, cyclists and equestrians to support the project. Due to the ongoing uncertainty, the LCWIP has shown the mitigation measures and their linkages with the main proposals within the LCWIP on a separate plan (Appendix 1, p50). A decision on the approval of the LTC is now expected to be made by the Secretary of State by 23 May 2025. Thurrock Council continues to oppose the current proposed alignment of the LTC due to its impact on residents and communities across the borough, and the lack of identified benefits of the scheme mitigating existing challenges.

Reason for Recommendation

- 3.12 Supporting the adoption of the LCWIP provides the council with a framework to plan, design and deliver cycling network enhancements across the borough. This creates a network of safer and more attractive routes to allow more residents to incorporate cycling into their travel for shorter trips. The LCWIP also identifies a number of key walking and wheeling infrastructure enhancements in parts of the borough to improve walkability for residents and visitors. The adoption of this plan will give the council a strategic focus in seeking funding or allocating active travel funding from the DfT or other related grant funds to improve active travel options in line with Government targets.
- 3.13 Adopting the LCWIP will also give the council further credibility with the DfT and ATE in showing active travel and supporting infrastructure is being supported by Thurrock Council at a political and managerial level. Active Travel England are seeking for the adoption of the LCWIP to support

Thurrock Council in maintaining its existing Local Authority Active Travel Rating.

- 3.14 Supporting the adoption of the LCWIP will strengthen the delivery of current active travel schemes. To date, where the council has proposed active travel schemes, these have not been prioritised and given the support in progressing through to on-site delivery, resulting in the council delivering limited capital spend against its allocations of c £1.716m since summer 2020.
- 3.15 Additionally, supporting a programme to deliver active travel infrastructure will help in the council's wider aims of reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, improving levels of physical activity, and reducing congestion and car dependency through increased walking and cycling levels. Increased walking and cycling can support both mental and physical health benefits for residents, helping to reduce stress and fight depression, as well as helping to prevent long-term health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Tackling such health inequalities, and access improvements aligns with council priorities and strategies in supporting the wellbeing of residents.

4. Alternative options considered

- 4.1 No alternative consideration has been made to developing the LCWIP. While it is not a statutory requirement to produce an LCWIP, there has been encouragement by the DfT for authorities to produce a long-term plan for walking and cycling infrastructure enhancements. The production of an LCWIP is being linked to ATE's Local Authority Active Travel Rating and this ranking supports funding received.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Formal engagement commenced using the Councils Have my Say Portal for a six-week period commencing 17 July. This included a summary of the LCWIP, the full document available for download, a weblink to access individual proposal areas and a survey to receive feedback on the proposals.
- 5.2 Further details of the public engagement process, including stakeholders is given in Appendix 3 – Thurrock LCWIP Engagement Report. There was very a limited numbers of responses to the engagement, however 85% of

respondents were favourable, and 12% not in favour of the LCWIP. Feedback and recommendations from respondents have also been considered and implemented into the final LCWIP. These include:

- 22 additional “links”, such as shared path, dedicated path, etc., either as new facilities or as improvements to existing infrastructure
- 12 additional “nodes”, such as new crossings or junction treatments either as new facilities or improvements to existing infrastructure
- Revision and modification of three traffic-calmed street proposals (20mph): London Road, Purfleet; London Road, West Thurrock and Southend Road, Stanford-le-Hope.
- Revision of cycle connections within the Fens and incorporation of new connections between the villages and the wider cycle network

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the adoption and publication of the Thurrock Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Adoption and publication of the LCWIP will allow the council to submit future grant funding applications to Government, or list future planning development contributions to enable the delivery of infrastructure as identified within the document.
- 6.2 To date, the council has received the following capital grant allocations to deliver active travel infrastructure – £288,000 Emergency Active Travel Fund; £690,000 Active Travel Fund (ATF) 2; £616,000 ATF3, £305,000 ATF4, and are due to receive £105,000 ATF5. The council has also received revenue grant funding which can be used to support scheme and delivery of schemes through Active Travel Capability Funding (c£94,000 in 24/25, £31,600 in 23/24, £63,000 in 22/23 and £120,000 in 21/22).

Implications Verified by: Nisshanth Narendran, Head of Financial Business Partnering (Place and Corporate)

Date 12.12.2024

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 There is limited risk to the council in the adoption of the LCWIP. The publication of the LCWIP does not guarantee nor permit the implementation of

any measure across the borough, as each scheme will need to be further assessed, designed, and consulted with residents as per expectations for schemes on the public highway. Adoption of the LCWIP does not commit the council towards future expenditures.

RISK DESCRIPTION & CONSEQUENCE	MITIGATIONS	RESIDUAL RISK STATUS (after mitigations)
Reputational Risk of authority with Department for Transport and Active Travel England by not adopting the LCWIP	If not adopting the LCWIP, but to provide written confirmation to DfT/ATE with assurance of support for active travel and how this will be progressed without a formal strategy	Amber
Downgrading of Active Travel England's rating of the authority by not adopting the LCWIP from Level 1 to 0.	If not adopting the LCWIP, but to provide written confirmation to DfT/ATE with assurance of support for active travel and how this will be progressed without a formal strategy	Amber
Authority not in compliance/enabling with Health and Wellbeing strategies and programmes	If not adopting the LCWIP, to ensure the ongoing implementation of environment/infrastructure enhancements to enable physical activity through active travel	Amber
Impact on Local Plan delivery/inspection	If not adopting LCWIP, to create appropriate evidence within other supporting documentation to provide inspector with knowledge/details of mitigation for new development/growth via alternative modes of travel	Amber

Implications Verified by: Kelly McMillan
Date 20 December 2024

8. Legal and Governance Implications

- 8.1 There is no statutory duty for the council to develop or adopt a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, however it is within the council's general power of competence to do so as set out in section 1 Localism Act 2011. The development of the LCWIP enables the council to develop a future long list of schemes for delivering active travel infrastructure. Future schemes will need to be delivered following public engagement or consultation and approved through the formal governance processes within the council.

Implications Verified by: Helen Nicol, Assistant Director Legal & Governance
Date: 11 December 2024

9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 9.1 The report does not have any direct diversity or equality implications. Any potential direct implications of a particular scheme will be considered when that scheme is proposed and progressed for further development. This will include the design stages and construction with opportunities for consultation in this process. Each individual scheme will then consider specific equality and diversity implications local to each area.
- 9.2 The Accompanying Communities Equalities Impact Assessment has identified the opportunity for positive and neutral impacts on key communities and groups through the delivery of the LCWIP, creating more opportunities for people to travel, and consider mobility needs. When schemes are being planned, further consideration of Equalities and the needs of communities and groups will be considered.

Implications Verified by: Roxanne Scanlon, Community Engagement and Project Officer
Date 12 December 2024

10. Other Relevant Implications

- 10.1 No further implications

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 No Further background reports used. Details of papers and documents are listed with footnotes throughout the report.