

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 January 2025

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

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Summary

This report presents a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Medway, which will provide a long-term strategy for the development of walking and cycling networks. The LCWIP demonstrates a commitment to providing high quality walking and cycling routes in Medway and will support the case for future investment.

This report is being presented to Committee for scrutiny prior to consideration by the Cabinet in the Spring of 2025.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is invited to comment on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and supporting documentation, and to note that the Cabinet will be asked to agree the Plan in the Spring of 2025.
- 1.2. The Committee is recommended to note the results of the consultation as set out in the report and Appendix F.

2. Budget and policy framework

Budget implications

- 2.1. The costs associated with developing and publishing Medway's Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan are met by the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund (ATF) grant funding received between 2021 and 2023 (ATF2 grant awarded in November 2020 with further funding provided via ATF 4 in March 2023). The financial implications of delivering infrastructure improvements are set out in section 10 of this report.
- 2.2. Adoption of the Medway LCWIP does not commit the council to any additional expenditure at this stage. The LCWIP provides a long term, prioritised plan to develop the walking and cycling network across the area which will likely need

significant external funding to be delivered. Having the LCWIP in place will strengthen the case for investment and help the Council build on recent successes in relation to securing external funding from national government, most notably via the Active Travel Fund.

Policy framework

- 2.3. The Medway LCWIP aligns with both national and local policy, legislation and guidance. Walking and cycling are key elements of central governments targets in relation to Net Zero and transport with an ambition for 50% of all journeys in towns or cities to be walked or cycled by 2030 (Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2022)).
- 2.4. The Government published the first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in 2017. The Strategy included guidance for local authorities on the preparation of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP); a programme of prioritised improvements to facilitate more walking and cycling for everyday journeys.
- 2.5. In 2020, the Government provided a clear commitment to walking and cycling with publication of Gear Change and cycle infrastructure design guidance (Local Transport Note 1/20). A second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published in July 2022 which further extends the ambition for increased walking and cycling as per paragraph 3.4 above.
- 2.6. During 2022 and 2023, Active Travel England (ATE) was established as an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport. ATE's purpose is to raise design standards for active travel infrastructure, hold local authorities to account for their investments in active travel, provide advice on how to improve walking, wheeling and cycling provision and to increase skills and capacity in local authorities to deliver schemes.
- 2.7. The Medway LCWIP aligns with the One Medway Council plan which has 'clean, green, safe and connected communities' as one of its key priorities. A well developed, safe and convenient walking and cycling network will help deliver on this priority by giving residents more travel choices and access to sustainable modes of travel which will have positive impacts on their health and that of their communities. Health and wellbeing are also noted as a key priority within the plan which increased walking and cycling can contribute to.
- 2.8. Medway also declared a climate emergency in 2019 with the Medway Climate Change Action Plan identifying transport as one of its key priorities for combatting climate change. Increasing walking and cycling is key to achieving the aims set out in this plan.
- 2.9. Finally, Medway's Local Transport Plan identifies an increase in travel demand based on population growth as a key challenge locally. Active travel will play a key role in addressing this challenge by enabling a modal shift away from private motor vehicles to more sustainable modes.

3. Background

- 3.1. The DfT's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS), launched in April 2017, aims to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The strategy aims to double cycling levels by 2025, increase walking activity, reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured, and increase the percentage of school children walking to school.
- 3.2. The strategy recommends that local highway authorities prepare LCWIPs, as they are the preferred approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at the local level. They take a holistic approach to network planning and provide a clear, long-term framework for local authorities to deliver on their ambitions around active travel.
- 3.3. SYSTRA, a transport consultancy, was commissioned to work with the Council in the development and delivery of the LCWIP for Medway. All stages of the recommended process for delivery of the LCWIP have now been completed.
- 3.4. The Medway LCWIP will serve as a ten-year plan that outlines the delivery of cycling and walking interventions in Medway to maximise the uptake of active travel until 2034. It provides a network plan for walking and cycling which acknowledges the existing network and identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development, as well as a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment.
- 3.5. The first stage of the LCWIP process involved an extensive information gathering exercise, which focussed on:
 - The existing walking and cycling network in Medway
 - Levels of walking and cycling locally
 - Mapping and understanding current and forecast demand for walking and cycling
 - Barriers to active travel in Medway
- 3.6. Following the above information gathering exercise, the network was audited to identify priority areas for improvement in locations where intervention would have the greatest impact. Examples of priority locations include new developments, employment and education sites and other trip generators such as leisure facilities and shopping areas.
- 3.7. Other factors considered include the suitability of the route in terms of pre existing levels of walking and cycling, directness and topographical conditions such as the gradient of the route.

- 3.8. High level 'concept' designs were developed for the priority walking and cycling routes identified which formed the basis of the consultation undertaken over 6 weeks, between January and March 2024.
- 3.9. All designs were completed in line with LTN1/20 guidance, the standard expected by ATE to ensure that walking and cycling routes are safe, accessible and attractive.
- 3.10. More recently, there has been greater focus on 'wheeling' alongside walking and cycling from ATE and the DfT. 'Wheeling' includes people using wheelchairs, pushing pushchairs and mobility scooters. The LCWIP has taken into account 'wheeling' to ensure concept designs accommodate the accessibility requirements of these user groups.
- 3.11. Concept designs were developed for the following priority cycle routes:

Route number	Route	Approximate length
1	Curlew Crescent to Green Lane, Gillingham	7.6km
2	Maidstone Road, Rainham	1.7km
3	Walderslade Road to Chatham Hill Gyrotory, Chatham	5.3km
4	Upper Luton Road to Kitchener Avenue, Chatham	3.3km
5	Church Street to Sturdee Avenue, Gillingham	6.8km
6	Sturdee Avenue to Woodlands Road, Gillingham	2.4km
7	Dock Road, Chatham	1.8km
8	Corporation Street (Rochester) to Waterfront Way (Chatham)	2.5km
9	Peninsula Way (Chattenden) to Sans Pareil roundabout (Wainscott)	4km
10	Brompton Farm Road to Watling Street, Strood	1.8km

3.12. Concept designs were also developed for the following priority walking routes:

Route number	Route
5	Canterbury Street to High Street, Gillingham
8	Maidstone Road, Chatham

3.13. Following the consultation, a prioritisation and costing exercise was undertaken to complete the final stages of the LCWIP.

3.14. More detail on the LCWIP process and the work undertaken is provided in the technical report appended to this report.

4. Options

- 4.1. Option 1 - To approve and adopt the LCWIP and to work with key local, regional and national stakeholders to seek funding to deliver infrastructure improvements.
- 4.2. Option 2 -To not approve and adopt the LCWIP. Future funding from DfT for cycling and walking infrastructure will be linked to councils having cycling and walking infrastructure plans in place.
- 4.3. Option 3 - To approve and adopt the LCWIP following amendments to the document. Following this, working with key local, regional and national stakeholders to seek funding to deliver infrastructure improvements.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1. The LCWIP for Medway aligns with local and national policy in relation to transport, active travel, sustainability and climate change. It will provide a ten-year plan for the delivery of cycling and walking interventions that acknowledges the existing network and identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development, as well as a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment.
- 5.2. As noted in previous sections, the adoption of the LCWIP aligns with both local and national policy in relation to transport, sustainability and climate change. The adoption of the LCWIP will provide a long-term framework for investment in improving conditions for walking and cycling across Medway. This has a wide range of community benefits, including improved health and wellbeing, improved air quality and reduced emissions from transport.
- 5.3. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been prepared as Appendix H to this report. The assessment has established no adverse impact from the adoption of the LCWIP on protected characteristics. In fact, the adoption of

the LCWIP is likely to have a positive impact on a wide range of groups across Medway.

6. Risk management

6.1. Without an agreed LCWIP in place, the following risks have been identified:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Delivery of priorities and objectives in the One Medway Council Plan, Local Transport Plan and emerging Local Plan	Lack of a strategic plan for infrastructure improvements to meet targets and outcomes in the One Medway Council Plan, Local Transport Plan and emerging Local Plan	An agreed LCWIP will provide a strategic plan for the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure, which supports Medway's existing and emerging policy objectives for active travel	A II
Insufficient funding to deliver significant improvements to walking and cycling routes in Medway	An LCWIP is the Department for Transport's (DfT) preferred method for local authorities to plan and deliver on walking and cycling targets. No strategic infrastructure plan in place may impact on Medway's ability to secure capital funding for active travel infrastructure improvements	An agreed LCWIP will ensure Medway is well-placed to access funding from central government via the DfT and their executive agency responsible for walking and cycling, Active Travel England (ATE).	B II
Inability to demonstrate wider support for walking and cycling improvements	No published record of support for improving Active Travel networks	Public and Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken and reported as part of the LCWIP process, which demonstrated support for the principle of improving walking	B III

		and cycling routes in Medway	
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For risk rating, please refer to the following table.

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

7. Consultation

- 7.1. Consultation with the public and key stakeholders is identified as a key stage in the LCWIP process.
- 7.2. This was undertaken during the development of Medway’s LCWIP over a six-week period, between January and March 2024. A dedicated webpage was set up on the council website, containing a wide range of resources, including a summary report detailing the LCWIP process to that point, an interactive map and drawings for each of the priority walking and cycling routes. A survey was hosted on the page that sought respondent’s views on walking and cycling in Medway, including the various routes identified as part of the LCWIP process.
- 7.3. In addition to the online survey, two in-person engagement events were delivered, to enable residents to speak with council officers and SYSTRA, including hard copies of the consultation resources. Events took place at Medway Park Leisure Centre in Gillingham on 30 January 2024, followed by an event at The Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham the following day.
- 7.4. The public consultation was promoted across the Council’s social media platforms to raise awareness of the consultation. It was also highlighted by local media with both BBC and ITV local news and featured on their evening bulletins.
- 7.5. In total, the consultation resulted in 358 responses. An additional 64 emails were received to a dedicated consultation mailbox plus 2 letters of representation from the Hoo Consortium and The Independent Group on Medway Council representing Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow Ward.
- 7.6. Overall, the consultation showed that residents are broadly content with the LCWIP, with most interventions achieving 50% or above agreeing with most interventions proposed. There was however significant opposition to Cycle Route 2 along Maidstone Road in Rainham. As noted previously, all the designs shared during the consultation are subject to further development and localised, formal consultation.

7.7. A summary of the consultation including responses can be found in the Medway LCWIP Consultation Technical Note, which is included as an Appendix D.

8. Climate change implications

8.1. As noted in previous sections of this report, the adoption of Medway's LCWIP aligns with Medway's ambitions to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050, as set out in Medway's Climate Change Action Plan.

8.2. Transport is the largest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK, accounting for around 26% of total emissions. The LCWIP supports modal shift aspirations and the associated improvements to air pollution, carbon dioxide emissions and congestion.

9. Financial implications

9.1. Adoption of the Medway LCWIP does not commit the council to any additional expenditure at this stage. The LCWIP provides a long term, prioritised plan to develop the walking and cycling network across the area which will likely need significant external funding to be delivered. An agreed LCWIP will strengthen the case for investment and help the Council build on recent successes in relation to securing external funding from national government, most notably via the Active Travel Fund.

9.2. Medway Council currently has a 'Capability Rating' of 1 as defined by Active Travel England (ATE). The rating scheme has 5 levels from 0 to 4 and is based on local leadership, network planning and the delivery of active travel schemes. An agreed LCWIP will help improve Medway's rating, which is considered by ATE as part of funding allocation processes.

10. Legal implications

10.1. The development of the LCWIP has followed DfT's recommended processes and there are no legal implications to be considered.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Medway LCWIP (public-facing version)

Appendix B – Medway LCWIP (technical report)

Appendix C – Design Technical Note

Appendix D – Concept Designs

Appendix E – Consultation summary report

Appendix F – Consultation technical note

Appendix G – Route Prioritisation Scoring Matrix

Appendix H – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None