

Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	12 December 2018
Report Title	Swale Cycling and Walking Guidance Statement 2018-2022
Cabinet Member	Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson
Lead Officer	Christopher Blandford and Lyn Newton
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. Cabinet to adopt the Swale Cycling and Walking Guidance Statement 2018-2022.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Swale Cycling and Walking Guidance Statement 2018-2022 for adoption. The document has been developed following comments received during a consultation held between the 10th August and the 5th October 2018.
- 1.2 The guidance statement and the associated action plan will enable the Council, working with its' partners such as Kent County Council (KCC) and local Town and Parish Councils, to proactively respond to funding opportunities and monitor ongoing improvements to the cycling and walking network.

2 Background

- 2.1 A *Swale Cycling Strategy 2013-2018* was prepared by KCC and Swale Borough Council (SBC) in 2013 with the support of the Swale Cycle Forum. The strategy set out fifteen cycle routes which subsequently supported the Swale Local Plan, through the *draft Swale Transportation Strategy*. As the cycling strategy is now reaching the end of its lifespan, it is an opportune time to update its content. The strategy has been brought forward at this time as a guidance statement in order to emphasise how it has been designed to be used routinely to help SBC and its partners in making decisions and bids for funding in relation to cycling and walking.
- 2.2 SBC has influence over cycle route policy through the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) and in responding to consultations, whilst the construction of new routes and their long term maintenance is within the remit of KCC. The document therefore establishes a strategic direction for the next four years but does not constitute a commitment from the Borough Council for incurring any costs for the construction or maintenance of potential routes.

- 2.3 Since the previous strategy was prepared, the Department for Transport has also indicated through its investment strategy (2017) that cycling and walking should be considered together where appropriate, potentially through shared-use routes.
- 2.4 The government also outlined that it will make over £1 billion available during the next five years to local bodies for investment in cycling and walking. The new guidance statement provides a basis to bid for funding, by including an action plan with feasible routes and improvements. Funding sources could include initiatives from the Local Enterprise Partnership (Local Growth Fund) and other funding awarded to Kent County Council (KCC) by the Department for Transport.
- 2.5 The development of a new document is also a part of the *Visitor Economy Framework for Sittingbourne, Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey 2018-2023* which includes the action to increase destination infrastructure for shared use routes. Potential walks have also been considered such as those in development as part of the *Visitor Economy Framework*, from Produced in Kent after a successful bid for LEADER funding, and from Natural England who are seeking to improve coastal access.
- 2.6 The document has drawn on the findings of the recent 'Looking Ahead' consultation which is the earliest stage of public engagement on the next Local Plan and closed on Friday 8th June. The consultation included questions on a number of relevant areas including sustainable transport, congestion and air quality.
- 2.7 Going forwards, the cycling and walking guidance statement could potentially be an element of helping to develop, over time, more integrated cycling and walking routes. This could be achieved through helping to implement the policies in the adopted Local Plan in respect of designing new developments for cycling and walking; linking new developments to services and facilities; better links with leisure routes; and new ideas to promote cycling and walking in the town centres. It is anticipated that it will both inform and be informed by Local Plan and Local Transport Strategy Reviews, which in turn can provide the basis for funding bids.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to adopt the Swale Cycling and Walking Guidance Statement 2018-2022.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 **Do nothing** – this is not recommended as potentially Swale could miss out on funding opportunities which have the potential to improve cycling and walking in the Borough, both for the commute to work and school, and for leisure use.
- 4.2 **Status Quo** – this is not recommended as the current strategy expires in 2018 but the Council could continue to rely on the proposed routes which accompany the current Local Plan (through the *Swale Transportation Strategy Draft 2014-2031*).

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 A cycling and walking consultation was held between the 10 August and the 5 October 2018. The consultation sought the views of residents and local organisations on ways to promote these forms of transport and suggestions to develop appropriate facilities in the Borough. Promotion was also carried out through the SBC website, social media, email marketing and through established walking and cycling groups. Copies of the consultation document were also available in public spaces such as local libraries. Efforts were also made by SBC and KCC officers to contact cycling and walking stakeholder groups in Swale to get their informed view.
- 5.2 The consultation received a positive 122 responses, including feedback from a meeting of the Swale Youth Forum on the 3 October, which have been used to develop the document and the associated action plan. A number of issues were raised which are summarised at appendix III.

Policy Development and Review Committee

- 5.3 The consultation was presented to the Policy and Development Review Committee on the [12 September 2018](#) and received a number of useful comments which have been incorporated into the document. These included further suggestions of groups to speak to; local issues of maintenance to the routes and the issue of parking on cycle tracks and lanes; measures which could prevent quad bikes from using routes; improved maps to help promotion and encourage residents to walk and cycle; protection for rights of way; improvements which create a 'joined-up network' and joint promotion with schools to ease congestion.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>The document will contribute to the corporate priority of 'A Borough to be proud of', particularly the 'delivery of smaller-scale regeneration projects ... to improve the appearance and facilities of our towns and villages'. It will also contribute to creating 'a borough with a strong brand, which is recognised nationally and internationally for its advantageous business environment and for its wealth of visitor attractions.' Under this priority it will also contribute to the delivery of 'world-class multi-modal transport links which facilitate economic growth and enable residents from across the Borough to take advantage of it.'</p> <p>A contribution will also be made to the priority of 'A Community to be Proud of', particularly in a contribution to creating 'a community in which everyone plays their part in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing through healthy lifestyle choices'.</p>
Financial, Resource and	The document will not require any financial, resource or property commitments from SBC as it seeks to create a basis to influence

Property	the development of a cycling and walking network in Swale. The routes identified will help to inform the planning process where developers fund routes as part of their section 106 commitments, for example, and to provide a basis for future bids for government funding and from other sources such as the Local Growth Fund which may be required for match funding.
Legal and Statutory	The document is not a statutory function of SBC. KCC has responsibility for the building of new routes, and SBC has influence through JTB, working in partnership and in responding to consultations. Any agreed plans for new routes will however help to inform the Local Plan which is a statutory document.
Crime and Disorder	The proposal does not have a direct impact on crime and disorder, but shared-use routes could help to tackle anti-social behaviour by creating a diversionary activity for young people.
Environmental Sustainability	None identified at this stage but an increase in the number of cycling and walking routes has the potential to decrease congestion and improve the air quality of Swale.
Health and Wellbeing	The document will seek to develop the cycling and walking network to provide more opportunities for residents to engage in physical activity either through their daily commute or leisure activities. In this way, new facilities could contribute to the NHS recommendation that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No specific implications at this stage. Improvements and new routes are tested at the planning stage by SBC and KCC Highways on the grounds of safety.
Equality and Diversity	The document will not exclude any group on the basis of equality and diversity.
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific implications at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Swale cycling and walking guidance statement 2018-2022
- Appendix II: Cycling and walking network action plan 2018-2022
- Appendix III: Summary of consultation responses

8 Background Papers

8.1 None.