

Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee	
Meeting Date	10 th July 2025
Report Title	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - public consultation
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Michelle Anderson, Active Travel Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To agree to proceed to public consultation for the Swale Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report explains the methodology used to create the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and show the advantages of having one in place.
- 1.2 To share the Swale LCWIP executive summary which sets out the proposed priority routes that will form the basis of the proposed public consultation.
- 1.3 To share the full LCWIP report.
- 1.4 To gain agreement to proceed to public consultation.

2 Background

- 2.1 LCWIPs are evidence-led, long-term plans to identify cycling, walking, and wheeling improvements. By developing a Swale-wide LCWIP, we will be able to take an informed network-based approach to planning and delivering these improvements.
- 2.2 It is important to note that Faversham already has an existing agreed LCWIP which has been led by Faversham Town Council. As a result, this paper and plan is focused on the other two main residential areas in the borough; Sheppey and Sittingbourne but the overall document covers all 3 urban areas to bring the whole Borough into one place.
- 2.3 There are many advantages to having an agreed LCWIP for Swale. These include the following:

Health and Well-being:

- An LCWIP will encourage more people to walk and cycle for everyday journeys. In turn, this will lead to increased physical activity and improved health.
- This can help reduce obesity, lower the risk of chronic diseases, and improve mental health.

Environmental Benefits:

- By reducing car dependency through walking and cycling, it will help to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions. This will contribute to a healthier environment for all residents and visitors to the borough.
- LCWIPs can also support the development of green infrastructure, creating more pleasant and attractive spaces.

Economic Benefits:

- Investing in the cycling and walking infrastructure can stimulate local economies by attracting tourists and businesses. It can lead to an increased footfall in town centres and boost the local economy.
- Safe and convenient cycling and walking routes can also help reduce congestion, making it easier and faster to travel.
- Evidence suggests that switching to active travel for short motor vehicle trips could save £17bn in NHS costs (nationally) over a 20-year period, with benefits being accrued within 2 years for some conditions. The largest cost savings would come through reductions in the expected number of cases of type 2 diabetes (annual cost to NHS from diabetes is £9bn). ¹
- LCWIPs ensure that cycling and walking are accessible to all, including those with disabilities, and that routes are well-connected to other forms of transport. This can improve access to jobs, schools, shops, and other amenities, making it easier for people to get around.
- A local agreed LCWIP allows Swale Borough Council to be in a better position to bid for active travel funding in the future.

Enhanced Quality of Life:

- Safe, well-maintained walking and cycling routes can create more vibrant and attractive neighbourhoods.
- They can also help reduce traffic noise and congestion, making areas more pleasant and enjoyable to live in.

¹ Jarrett J, Woodcock J, Griffiths U et al (2012) Effects of increasing active travel in urban England and Wales on costs to the National Health Service. *The Lancet*, 379: 2198-2205

A platform for other projects

- An LCWIP can help other local projects to gain support. For example, the Sheppey Light Railway Greenway project could gain greater support and funding with the adoption of a Swale LCWIP.

In essence, LCWIPs provide a comprehensive approach to improving the lives of residents by promoting active transport, enhancing the environment, and boosting the local economy.

- 2.4 The Active Travel Officer has been working with consultants, AECOM, over the last 6-8 months to merge the two draft LCWIPs for Sittingbourne and Sheppey into one and to also create a more succinct and user-friendly executive summary (see below attachment).
- 2.5 The consultants have spent many months collecting data and conducting the necessary analysis required to determine the primary routes selected for this LCWIP. This included:
 - Population information and demographics.
 - Employment density.
 - Car availability per household.
 - Trip generators and attractions (both now and looking ahead at future planned developments).
 - Areas of deprivation in the borough.
 - The existing and future active travel network including public transport links and availability.
 - The highway network.
 - Travel patterns within the borough.
 - The topography of the borough to highlight any physical constraints.
- 2.6 Well established software was also used to look at the propensity to cycle in the borough and visum flows (a tool to see how future travel is likely to change based on the background population growth, the completion of new developments, and all other growth factors considered in the transport model).
- 2.7 From the data gathered, analysis then took place to understand which key cycling and walking routes should be included in the LCWIP. The key origins and destinations of journeys, their associated desire lines and how often they are likely to be used were all determined. This then allowed us to classify those routes into primary routes (high flow), secondary routes (medium flow) and local

routes (low flow). This was done for both cycling and walking for both areas to give the 17 cycling routes and 24 walking routes that are proposed to go to public consultation.

- 2.8 Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken during this process and the feedback has been included in the main LCWIP document on page 85. The KCC Active Travel Co-ordinator has also been engaged in this process.
- 2.9 To improve the cycling and walking infrastructure for the borough, we must secure funding for both the necessary design work for the routes as well as for the infrastructure itself. Active Travel England is the primary source of funding for active travel, and, without an LCWIP, it is unlikely that Swale Borough Council will gain any funding to complete these activities.
- 2.10 Swale Borough Council is in a very good position within Kent with a full-time, dedicated active travel officer in post. What it is lacking, however, is a local LCWIP which is essential to gain the funding and drive the improvements forward.
- 2.11 Funds have already been secured from the Capability Fund for the work completed to date and for the proposed public consultation.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposal is to proceed to public consultation for the Swale LCWIP. It is proposed that this will take place in September 2025 and will be hosted on the consultant's platform.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To keep two separate LCWIPs (Sheppey Towns and Sittingbourne) and run two separate consultation processes. This was rejected as it would involve too much duplication and would not be efficient both in terms of finances and time.
- 4.2 To not have a local LCWIP at all. This was rejected as it would severely jeopardise our position to be able to secure future funding for any active travel improvements within the borough.
- 4.3 To implement a local LCWIP without going through public consultation. This has been rejected as it is important to remain engaged with residents and gain their valuable local knowledge in decision making and plans. Resident involvement and approval of the routes will ensure they are better utilised when installed.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 KCC's Active Travel Co-ordinator has been fully engaged throughout this process and is supportive of this plan.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the consultation will run for 8 weeks, starting in September 2025 and will be hosted on the consultant's platform. The purpose of the consultation is to gain the views of local residents and organisations on the proposed routes within the LCWIP. All comments and feedback will be analysed and considered in the final report.
- 5.3 Consultation will be on-line, but it is proposed that some static stands will be available in the borough for residents to be able to view paper copies of the reports and maps available. The Active Travel Officer will also be available to attend Area Committee meetings, parish and town council meetings or other meetings as necessary to present an overview of the plan.
- 5.4 Social media will be used to promote the consultation alongside links on our website.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The creation of an LCWIP supports the 'Environment priority' within the Corporate Plan; "To provide a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable and enjoyable environment, and to prepare our borough for the challenges ahead." It also supports the section which states Swale Borough Council will: "Form partnerships with key stakeholders to ensure we champion active travel opportunities."
Financial, Resource and Property	To finalise the Swale LCWIP, funding is already in place. Each of the interventions mentioned in the LCWIP will require detailed design and feasibility work to be undertaken. To secure future funding to implement interventions agreed in the LCWIP, it is anticipated that Active Travel England and KCC will be the two main funding streams in the future, but it is likely that an agreed LCWIP will be one of the criteria for this funding.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The development of the LCWIP has followed national guidelines to ensure it is robust and deliverable.
Crime and Disorder	N/A

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	By having an agreed LCWIP and implementing interventions, the long-term environmental and climate impact will be positive for all residents and the Borough as a whole.
Health and Wellbeing	There are numerous health and wellbeing advantages to encouraging more active travel and these are well documented on the Active Travel England websites.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	N/A
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The primary risks are associated with securing the funding from Active Travel England (via KCC) for future financial years. However, active travel is becoming more prevalent on the Government's agenda and the relatively recent creation of Active Travel England also indicates that funding is set to continue in future years.
Equality and Diversity	The LCWIP will incorporate all forms of active travel including wheeling – i.e. wheelchairs and mobility scooters as well as walking and cycling.
Privacy and Data Protection	The privacy and data protection team have been consulted on the wording required for the public consultation and have also reviewed the proposed question set.

7 Appendices

7.1 The Swale LCWIP Executive Summary report and full LCWIP report.

8 Background Documents

None