

Extraordinary Cabinet



TBC 2021

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| | Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Scheme (LWCIP) |
| Purpose of the report | To make a decision |
| Report Author | Sandy Muirhead |
| Cabinet Member | Cllr Robert Noble |
| Confidential | No |
| Corporate Priority | Clean and Safe Environment |
| Recommendations | <p>Cabinet is asked to:</p> <p>To agree to participating in the production of a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWCIP)</p> <p>To agree the allocation of the available funds:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £20,000 towards Phase 1 of the feasibility study to be funded from Green Initiatives Fund• £175,000 towards the production of an LWCIP for Phase 2. To be funded from Spelthorne's Surrey Infrastructure Feasibility Study Fund |
| Reason for Recommendation | <p>LWCIP's are blueprints to increase walking and cycling routes. They have benefits in terms of modal shift, health, and well-being of residents especially as we move into COVID-19 recovery and beyond and reducing the impacts of climate change.</p> |

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in October 2020 resulting in an increased focus on environmental and sustainability issues. Environmental issues have been set out as a new corporate priority and the Capital Strategy (2021-2026), as agreed by Council on 25 February 2021, has a "green" focus. There is also the ongoing work of the Climate Change Task Group which continues to look at promoting green measures for the Council and residents

to undertake. In terms of sustainability the task group has highlighted the need to reduce carbon emissions and is looking at ways of encouraging residents to cycle and walk to a greater extent with benefits in both reducing carbon emissions and improving health and wellbeing.

- 1.2 Therefore, the proposal for Spelthorne to develop, in conjunction with Surrey County Council, Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LWCIP) (Appendix 1) is a positive move to reducing carbon emissions. LWCIPs provide blueprints of walking and cycling routes within an area that have been assessed as meeting Department of Transport (DfT) standards. They are linked to the Local Transport Plan 4 which Surrey are currently developing. This will be focused on 'avoiding' the need to travel, 'shifting' to lower energy consumption travel (including walking and cycling) and 'improving' efficiency of networks and reducing vehicle emissions. The LWCIP's will complement the work which is being done as part of the review of the Local Plan. The Local Plan is looking at what additional infrastructure is required because of future growth, and what form it should take (with a move away from the car to more sustainable forms of transport).
- 1.3 The LWCIP's are considered essential for all areas within Surrey, but it has been proposed these are developed on a cluster and corridor basis as opposed to a simple borough boundary basis. The cluster and corridor approach prioritises areas where there is a natural desire line for walking and cycling and where take up is likely to be higher.
- 1.4 Surrey County Council have approached Spelthorne to be involved in producing a LWCIP, which will provide a Borough wide study of possible options for cycling and walking and because of links to the River Thames Scheme there are opportunities to be evaluated which would allow connectivity for walking and cycling from Runnymede, through Spelthorne to Elmbridge. As a result, the first tranche of work proposed on the LWCIPs will take place in Runnymede and Elmbridge followed by us as outlined in Appendix 2.
- 1.5 The key outputs of a LWCIP plan are: -
 - A prioritised network plan for walking and cycling across the Borough with preferred routes and core zones for further development (these do not all need to be delivered and can be "as required" depending on the funding secured)
 - A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment (capital investment)
 - To make the case to LEPs' and government departments for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure
- 1.6 Cabinet need to be aware that in order to deliver the LWCIP future capital funds will be required over the next 5 to 10 years from the Council (match funding). The actual amounts will depend on the scale and number of schemes identified by the feasibility study (see financial section) and until the initial work is complete the overall potential cost can only be indicative.
- 1.7 There are considerable benefits to improving walking and cycling in the Borough both in terms of achieving climate change targets and improving the health and wellbeing of Borough residents.

- 1.8 The study would also add to the work of the Wider Staines Sustainable Transport Package of schemes which aims to improve walking, cycling and bus patronage in the wider Staines areas as part of measures to encourage model shift from private car use. As a Council we put in £365,000 of CIL money to part fund Phase 1 of a three-phase package costing in total £4.95M. Phase 1, currently nearing completion, focuses particularly on footpath and cycling route improvements in Staines, Stanwell, and Ashford North. This phase improves sustainable travel options between Heathrow and Staines town centre, enabling the area to reach its latent growth potential. The overall package also enhances links to Staines town centre. The LWCIP could identify options to extend routes to other parts of the Borough.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 Not to participate in the feasibility study could limit opportunities for meeting climate change and health and wellbeing targets in the Borough by not encouraging walking and cycling. All other Councils across Surrey are being programmed in to LWCIPs in one of four phases. If we decided not to proceed at this stage, we could potentially ask to be put in a later phase. However, the opportunity of linking in with the River Thames scheme would be lost (it is time critical as a feasibility study needs to be in place outlining routes as part of the Development Consent Order for the scheme). This would be to the detriment of our residents if a study is put forward for other boroughs who are affected, and not ours.
- 2.2 It is recommended that funding is set aside for both phase 1 and phase 2 works. Participating in the feasibility study would develop plans which could be implemented in the future, funds allowing, to improve residents' health and well-being by encouraging cycling and walking and reducing use of the car thus reducing emissions and contributing to climate change targets

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 There are two options for funding, the Green Initiatives Fund and the Surrey Infrastructure Feasibility Study Fund,

Green Initiatives Fund

- 3.2 The first option for funding is the Green Initiatives Fund of £250,000 which was agreed by Council on 25 February 2021. This fund can be used for a whole range of green measures and the LCWIP clearly fits into the spend category.
- 3.3 Phase 1 of the DfT LCWIP is likely to cost around £60k. The County Council is looking for Spelthorne to fund a third of the cost for this element (£20k) to be spent summer 2021, with the rest being paid for by SCC. It is recommended that the Council's contribution of £20k is financed from the Green Initiatives Fund.

Surrey Infrastructure Feasibility Fund

- 3.4 The second option is the Feasibility Fund. Councils in Surrey collectively needed to develop infrastructure feasibility studies so bids can be made for full project funding when bidding rounds become available. It ensures there are dedicated resources to develop a robust pipeline of schemes.

- 3.5 The fund has a gearing ratio of 1:0.86. For every £1 which Spelthorne Borough Council invest in the fund the Council will receive £1.86 for scheme development due to investment from Surrey County Council and Enterprise M3 LEP (EM3). The fund will help Spelthorne Borough Council work with neighbouring local authorities, Surrey County Council and the LEP.
- 3.6 The Feasibility Fund was agreed by Cabinet on 17 July 2019, and a sum of £210k was ring fenced for the fund. It is a one-off sum, not a rolling commitment. Control of the spend is retained by Spelthorne. Overall there is £390k available with the monies from Surrey and the LEP. Phase 2 is between £200 and 300k for the feasibility, economic assessment, and business case development (spend autumn 2021). Again, Spelthorne would need to fund 50% of this. It is recommended that the Fund finances £175k relating to the production of a LCWIP for phase 2.
- 3.7 Phase 2 may identify schemes requiring investment, which could cost overall a minimum £7-8M, ranging up to a maximum of £20M over the 10-year life of the plan. There is an expectation that Spelthorne would need to contribute capital match funding in the order of £2m to 5m. This assumes that Spelthorne contribute 25%, the County contribute 25% and the remaining 50% comes from central government grants. The 50/50 split between central and local government is standard on all capital development projects. However, Cabinet need to be aware that if, for example, we look for funding from the Levelling Up Fund there is a risk that the funding from Central Government could be as low as 25%, and we and Surrey would be expected to fund the remainder. In that case, the worst-case scenario if we were to commit fully to a programme costing £20m would be £7.5m. It is worth bearing in mind however that the LWCIP will be deliberately designed so that it can be 'chunked' up into smaller elements so that Councils can prioritise their spend if they cannot commit to the whole plan.
- 3.8 The potential future spend on delivering the LCWIP should hopefully be known by the time Council have to agree the Capital Strategy 2022 - 2026 next February. At that point, Council would need to consider the level of spend, and when it is likely to come forward, bearing in mind the Plan has a 10-year lifespan.
- 3.9 The CIL pot is likely to have several calls on it but at the time the plan comes forward, there may be scope for the County to bid for CIL funding to deliver some elements. The Council could also consider allocating some of the CIL money each year to funding pot for LWCIP schemes as they could be part of the required infrastructure to support the development of the Borough.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 Any walking and cycling opportunities would provide benefits to all residents through providing a safer environment for all residents to walk or cycle. Funding of schemes also needs to be monitored to ensure their development is not to the detriment of ongoing maintenance of the highway and also that highways funds are available to maintain any new routes. Schemes developed under the LWCIP programme would have to undertake an equality and diversity impact assessment to ensure they are not discriminatory.

5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

5.1 The proposed scheme encourages modal shift resulting in reduced car emissions, thus improving air quality, and reducing carbon emissions. In terms of sustainability encouraging walking and cycling will improve the health and well-being of residents.

6. Timetable for implementation

6.1 Appendix 2 indicates the likely timelines.

Background papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Local Infrastructure and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Appendix 2 Proposed programme for the feasibility studies.