

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire
Public Consultation

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 15th November 2022

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and
Housing

Report by: Chief Planning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

Cambridgeshire County Council has published for consultation an Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire. This report provides a summary of the Active Travel Strategy along with commentary that has helped to inform the draft consultation response which can be found at appendix 1 to this report.

The Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel the 'go to' option for local journeys, increasing journeys travelled by foot or cycle, improving air quality, providing affordable travel options and improving the health and wellbeing of the community. Active travel is one of the steps individuals can take to help reach zero carbon targets.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has previously consulted on its refreshed LTP, the local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). This was reported to Cabinet on 19th July 2022 - [Minute 22](#) refers. This strategy, along with the Transport Strategy for Huntingdonshire, which is also being reported to Cabinet today, will sit under the LTCP.

Cambridgeshire County Council will use the strategies to decide investment priorities and ensure effective implementation of the LTCP. They will also support and complement the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

The Active Travel Strategy consultation commenced on 26th September 2022 and closes on 7th November. Due to the timing around Cabinet dates, it has been agreed that the Huntingdonshire District Council response may be submitted by the end of November to allow members to have time to fully review and consider the consultation document.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

- a) To agree the proposed response set out in the completed questionnaire at Appendix A
- b) To authorise any necessary minor amendments to be approved by the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing and the Chief Planning Officer and then submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) has published an Active Travel Strategy (ATS) for Cambridgeshire for public consultation between 26th September and 7th November 2022. It has been agreed by CCC that Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) may submit their response after this date to enable the strategy to be formally considered by Cabinet. This report seeks approval for submission of the formal consultation response on behalf of the District Council as shown at Appendix A and in line with recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Since 2017, the responsibility to produce the Local Transport Plan, now called the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) has fallen to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), as the Local Highway Authority (LHA), continues to produce transport strategy documents which are aligned with the emerging vision and objectives of the CPCA's emerging LTCP – the Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire is one such strategy.
- 2.2. The ATS is a 'child' document of the LTCP. It builds on the overarching policy position set by the LTCP, setting the detail on how it will be achieved, linking all relevant national and local policy and guidance in one reference document. This supports the development of and future investment in a pipeline of active travel schemes that will help deliver the vision for Cambridgeshire. The ATS will also build on the work of the Cambridgeshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), identifying further gaps in the network, connecting more rural areas with transport hubs, education and market towns forming a second tier of prioritised routes to inform different funding streams. The consultation draft of the Cambridgeshire LCWIP was considered by Cabinet on 15th July 2021 - [Minute 18 refers](#) . The ATS will also complement the statutory Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) which sets out how the public rights of way network, which CCC is responsible for, will be managed and improved. The ATS will also support and complement the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036.

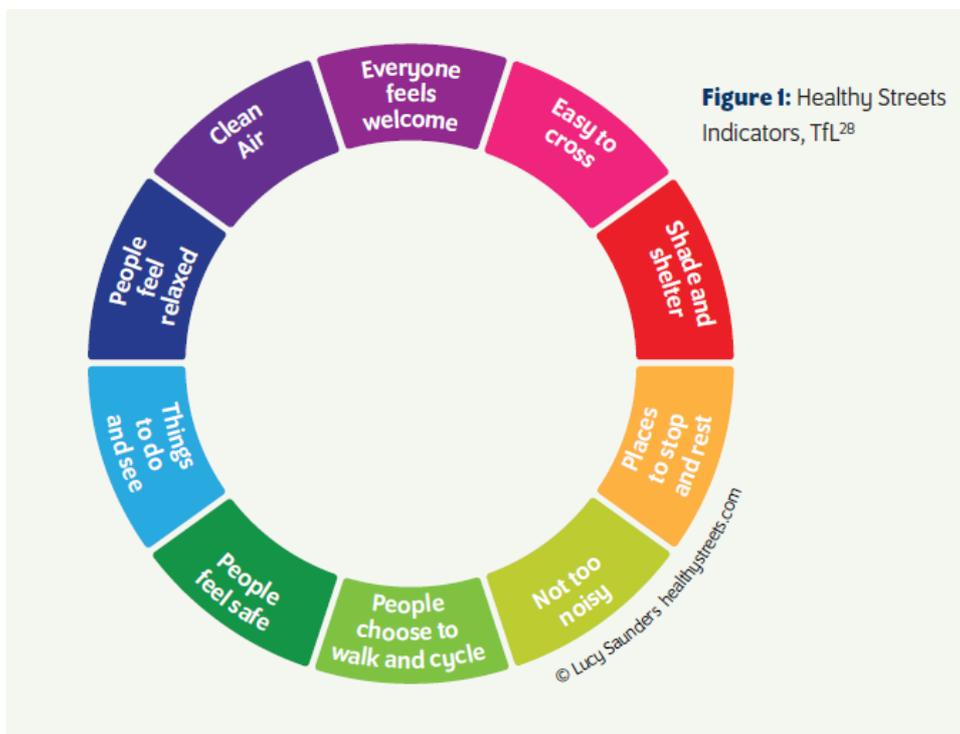
3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1. The Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire builds on the overarching policy position set by the LTCP, setting the detail on how it will be achieved, linking all relevant national and local policy and guidance in one reference document. It sets out the vision and objectives, the policies and high-level action plan.
- 3.2. Through the ATS, CCC will

- Ensure the existing and future Active Travel network is fit for purpose by;
 - a) Ensuring active travel is planned as part of all transport schemes and developments at the outset; and
 - b) Exploring new ways to prioritise maintenance of existing active travel infrastructure, addressing the importance that well maintained routes have on sustained use; and
 - c) Embedding a 'whole life cycle' approach to scheme development, ensuring all new schemes are designed and funded to minimise the ongoing maintenance cost.
 - Explore new ways to promote and encourage active travel and support initiatives that create behaviour change and modal shift to active travel modes, including the issue of 'knowing what's out there'. Look holistically at the shared experience and influences that make walking or cycling an attractive option as a form of travel.
- 3.4. The approach to active travel is set out in the Policies section on pages 26 – 46. As set out in Policy AT01, the ATS aims to play a significant role in contributing positively to the climate change, environment, and health agendas, support economic growth and mitigate the transport impacts of the growth agenda and help protect the county's varied but distinctive character and environment. It is noted that active travel networks will be provided across the county to embrace, enhance, expand and encourage active travel journeys. Safety, inclusivity, and connectivity are referenced as at the heart of this to ensure all can get to where they need to go.
- 3.5. The following further 27 policies are set out within the 4 Es as referenced at paragraph 3.2 namely Embrace, Enhance, Expand and Encourage.
- 3.6. **Embrace** covers policies AT02 – AT09 (pages 27-31) to put active travel at the forefront of decision making and investment decisions. Existing user needs, including those of equestrians, will be recognised and considered by CCC in its work and how it will collaborate with others, including District Councils, to deliver enhanced and expanded active travel networks noting "all partners must consider active travel and prioritise it through the planning process and from the inception of all ideas, projects, programmes and plans which involve people making journeys." This is to enable accessible and inclusive provision for all.
- 3.7. **Enhance** covers policies AT10 – AT15 (pages 32-35). It focuses on the active travel network used for everyday journeys to places of education, health and work, and local amenities such as town centres and will be considered alongside the ROWIP. Enhancements should, where possible, incorporate ecologic benefits in accordance with CCC net biodiversity gain 'Doubling Nature' set out in its Climate change and Environmental Strategy. Any new NMU route to be offered to CCC for adoption will have to meet the criteria set out in the CCCC NMU Adoption Policy and CCC will consider how to prioritise and deliver maintenance of active travel infrastructure.
- 3.8. **Expand** cover policies AT16 – AT23 (pages 36 – 42) and notes that high quality routes linking towns and villages with key destinations, main

employment areas, transport hubs and schools. This links with the draft Cambridgeshire LCWIP which identified routes most likely to generate additional cycle journeys and was reported to Cabinet previously, as noted at para 2.2.

- 3.9. **Encourage** covers policies AT24 – AT28 (pages 43 – 46) and recognises that many factors affect how people choose to travel. A key focus will be to encourage more people to feel safe, comfortable and confident to travel more short journeys by active travel modes.
- 3.10. Throughout the 4 Es, the Healthy Streets approach is referenced which aims to ensure that all decisions made by CCC in the built environment improve people's health by delivering better places for people to live in. This is shown through the 10 Healthy Streets indicators illustrated below



- 3.11. Details on funding and Implementation are set out from page 48 onwards. An initial High Level Action Plan is noted. This is followed by the Active Travel Strategy Action Plan divided into three categories:
- Tier 1 – schemes identified through LCWIP and shown 'green' on the Active Travel Network maps in the strategy – the Huntingdonshire map can be found on page 58.
 - Tier 2 – additional active travel schemes identified through a review of known schemes from adopted transport strategies and new schemes through stakeholder engagement – shown 'orange' on the Active Travel Network map.
 - Tier 3 – proposed future actions identifying possible additional studies/ investigations and/or initiatives to take place as opportunities and funding arises.

- 3.12. As Tier 1 is directly linked to the Cambridgeshire LCWIP, the draft response to the ATS at Appendix 1 asks that it is read alongside the HDC response to the LCWIP – this was discussed at Cabinet on 15th July 2021 Minute 18 refers . The final response submitted at that time included reference to the Propensity to Cycle tool used that did not highlight much activity in the Ramsey area and, in light of this, that schemes identified previously for the Ramsey area should be reviewed and considered further under the LCWIP methods. In doing so this would include projects for the market town of Ramsey being included within Tier 1.
- 3.13. Schemes will form part of the Cambridgeshire Transport Investment Plan (TIP). This is mentioned briefly in the strategy and in the High-Level Action Plan at ATAP06 which notes a review and update of the TIP and associated processes for scheme inclusion and inputting of information to ensure it remains and effective too. Currently the strategy does not provide any detailed programme or project plans to support the delivery and the only timescales given are for the high-level action plan.
- 3.14. The Strategy recognises many of the issues known in relation to increasing active travel but is not detailed on how each of these will be achieved and funded or prioritised. This will be a point for CCC as Local Highways Authority to consider further.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1. The Panel discussed the Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire Public Consultation report at it's meeting on 2nd November 2022.
- 4.2. It was observed by Councillor Gray that the rural nature of Huntingdonshire was not at the heart of the strategy, in particular the lack of focus on walking and cycling routes in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The Panel heard that this sentiment was understood and covered by section six of the response.
- 4.3. In response to statements by Councillor Gardener and Councillor Pickering, who felt that positive improvements and options to improve active travel should form part of the response, the Panel heard that such suggestions would be welcomed by the Executive Councillor. The Panel agreed that there were many issues across the district with the failure to link pedestrian and cycle routes to form a district wide network, specific examples from Alconbury and Hail Weston were given by Councillor Gardener and Councillor Cawley. It was further observed that until valid alternatives were offered for rural areas, residents would not have a valid alternative to private cars thus affecting carbon targets and aspirations for the district. Councillor Cawley also observed that stronger language could be used in the response to reinforce this sentiment.
- 4.4. In response to a question from Councillor Howell regarding no public consultation events in the north of the district, the Panel heard that the events had been arranged by the County Council who had also made the consultation and plans available at key libraries and online for all residents.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1. Active Travel is a key consideration in many areas of work for the Council. It will support CCC as Local Highways Authority to ensure issues are considered, addressed, funded and implemented in a timely manner.
- 5.2. Through engagement in the process, the District Council ensures the needs of the district, and its communities are fully considered.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN

- 6.1 Subject to approval, the response questionnaire attached as Appendix 1 to this report will be submitted to CCC.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

(See [Corporate Plan](#))

- 7.1. The Active Travel Strategy will help deliver several of HDC's priorities for 2018-22, in particular:
 - Tackling climate change and caring for the environment
 - Supporting our resident needs
 - Support development of infrastructure to enable growth

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1. The CCC Active Travel Strategy consultation commenced on 26 September 2022. The consultation is available online at [Consult Cambridgeshire](#). The draft strategy, the response survey and the opportunity to speak to staff from the CCC transport planning team has also been possible at a range of events in Huntingdonshire and the rest of the county:
 - **Ramsey Market:** Saturday 1 October, from 10am until 1pm
 - **Tesco superstore Huntingdon:** Saturday 1 October, from 2pm until 5pm
 - **St Neots Market:** Thursday 6 October, from 10am until 1pm
 - **Waitrose St Ives:** Thursday 6 October, from 2pm until 5pm
 - **March Market:** Wednesday 12 October, from 9am until midday
 - **Tesco superstore Chatteris:** Wednesday 12 October, from 2pm until 5pm
 - **Whittlesey Market:** Friday 14 October, from 9am until midday
 - **Wisbech Market:** Friday 14 October, from 12.30pm until 3pm
 - **Grafton Centre, Cambridge:** Wednesday 19 October, from 10am until 3pm
 - **Ely Market:** Thursday 27 October, from 10am until 3pm
- 8.2. Information has also been made available in libraries across the county, so residents who are unable to access the internet or cannot attend an event can view hard copies of the draft strategies and complete the survey.

9. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire promotes active travel modes which has potential for significant health and well-being benefits.

10. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The Council has committed to tackling climate change and protecting Huntingdonshire's environment and has a duty to deliver sustainable place-making. The Council has a key influencing role in climate action. Working collaboratively with the CCC, the Council can influence transport behaviour to promote environmental benefits. The Council also sets policies and strategies which will influence businesses and communities to tackle climate change whilst enabling sustainable living and growth. Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions created by less vehicular transport and increased active travel modes will support the Council's aspirations for a net zero Huntingdonshire.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 11.1. The submission of a response to the draft ATS, enables the Council to influence the final version. This enables the Council to maximise the effectiveness of the document and its benefits to the residents and businesses of Huntingdonshire. More detail and consideration of the achievability of its aspirations will increase the value of the document.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 - Proposed response on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[CCC consultation portal for Active travel strategy for Cambridgeshire public consultation](#)

[Cabinet Report 19th July 2022 on draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#)

[Cabinet Report 15th July 2021 Consultation on Draft Cambridgeshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)

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