

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

17 JUNE 2021

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| Report Title | PROGRESSING A STROUD DISTRICT CYCLING AND WALKING STRATEGY |
| Purpose of Report | To inform councillors of progress regarding cycling and walking initiatives within the District and present the emerging Stroud Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) |
| Decision(s) | <p>The Committee RESOLVES to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) support the emerging Stroud Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as the first phase of a District Cycling and Walking Strategy; b) work with Gloucestershire County Council in the production of further LCWIP documents for the District; c) continue to support the funding of walking and cycling infrastructure projects identified in the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan, and d) delegate authority to the Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer in consultation with the Head of Planning Strategy, Director of Place and the Chair of the Environment Committee to allocate funding to projects which are consistent with the above plans. |
| Consultation and Feedback | <p>The Stroud LCWIP has been subject to a period of stakeholder involvement. Stakeholders, including SDC officers and councillors were able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make recommendations for routes and comment on the draft network identified; • Highlight key issues experienced on the existing networks; • Identify improvement needed to serve local needs |
| Report Author | <p>Simon Maher, Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer Tel: 01453 754339 Email: simon.maher@stroud.gov.uk</p> |
| Options | <p>Option 1 - Utilise the Stroud LCWIP and future LCWIPs for the District as the focus for future investment in the walking and cycling network.</p> <p>Option 2 – Consider projects for the improvement of the walking and cycling network on a more ad hoc basis.</p> <p>It is recommended that option 1 is adopted, as the LCWIPs are being developed to implement the strategic priorities set out within the approved Local Transport Plan and are subject to input from the District Council from an early stage.</p> |

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| Background Papers | N/A | | | |
| Appendices | N/A | | | |
| Implications (further details at the end of the report) | Financial | Legal | Equality | Environmental |
| | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

1. Background

- 1.1 The scope of a Cycling and Walking Strategy for the Stroud District was agreed at Environment Committee in June 2017 with the aim of directing an allocated £300,000 Cycling and Walking budget towards identified cycling projects through match funding and opportunities identified with other partners and stakeholders.
- 1.2 Since 2017 funding from the Cycling and Walking budget has been allocated on an ad hoc basis, focussing on projects identified in the scoping document and on identified deliverable projects.
- 1.3 This initial budget has been all but allocated to projects throughout the district (see section 2) however a further allocation of £200k was agreed at Full Council on 25th February 2021 following a request from Environment Committee in Autumn 2020.
- 1.4 Following the Department of Transport's launch of the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Strategy (CWIS) and guidance on the production of local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, Gloucestershire County Council has embarked on a series of LCWIPs for the county, including the Stroud LCWIP which is subject to presentation at the committee meeting. These are further ratified by the recently adopted Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2041.
- 1.5 The Stroud LCWIP will be the first of several such documents for the District, each focussing on a specific area and identifying cycling and walking infrastructure improvements for future investment. The next LCWIP within the district will look at the area around Cam and Dursley, with Wotton - Kingswood to follow.

2. Current Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Investments in the District

- 2.1 *Nailsworth to Dudbridge Cycleway*: Working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Gloucestershire County Council, a programme of works to resurface the majority of the route and carry out bridge repairs as well as make biodiversity improvements is nearing completion. The Cycling and Walking budget has contributed approximately £140k to the project with further funding coming from CIL funding, GCC, Gloucestershire Health Services, and ERDF European funding.
- 2.2 *Cam- Dursley Greenway*: Steered by the Cam Dursley Greenway group, and working with GCC, the District Council has committed £50k toward physical works along the route, plus another £25k match funded with £25k of CIL funding to make cycle friendly highway improvements along the route.

- 2.3 *Wotton-Kingswood- Charfield Greenway*: Led by the WKC Greenway group, the District Council has committed £18k towards a detailed feasibility study being carried out by Sustrans. Once complete it is envisaged that the study will present a deliverable project.
- 2.4 *Cainscross*: £25k from the Cycling and Walking budget match funded to £25k from CIL funding has been allocated to highway improvements along Cainscross Road to be carried out by Gloucestershire County Council.
- 2.5 *Frampton on Severn*: £10k from the Cycling and Walking budget match funded to £10k from CIL funding has been allocated towards improvements to footpaths and pedestrian links in Frampton.

3. Overview of Stroud LCWIP

- 3.1 Gloucestershire County Council commenced work on a programme of LCWIP documents in 2018 with the intention of producing a plan for each of the county's main towns. The purpose of the LCWIP process is to assist local authorities to:
- identify cycling and walking infrastructure improvements for future investment in the short, medium and long term;
 - ensure that consideration is given to cycling and walking within both local planning and transport policies and strategies; and
 - make the case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure.
- 3.2 The key outputs of the LCWIP are:
- a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development;
 - a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment; and
 - a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.
- 3.3 The network of routes identified in the LCWIP have been selected through the use of various tools and analysis as well as a period of online stakeholder involvement to which the District Council provided feedback.
- 3.4 Stakeholder input and the actions and responses to this input will be summarised in the Stroud LCWIP. These responses have fully taken into account the feedback provided, for example the inclusion of Stonehouse to Hardwicke as a primary route, and the acknowledgement that the route from Chalford to Stroud is best served by a dedicated cycleway along the A419, with the parallel route along the canal providing a pedestrian route or alternative leisure route.
- 3.5 The routes also complement those identified in the adopted Stroud District Local Plan and the emerging Pre-Submission Stroud Local Plan Delivery Policy E113 which look to protect and support walking and cycling routes within the District.

4. CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Stroud LCWIP only covers part of the District, however, in terms of potential to increase active travel and contribute to a modal shift in transport by removing barriers to cycling and walking, investment in the cycling and walking infrastructure of this area has the potential to reach a large section of the population and link some of the major settlements and employment centres within the District.
- 4.2 Support for the Stroud LCWIP as a key document in driving future cycling and walking infrastructure investment will not hinder any ongoing or future initiatives in other parts of the District. Indeed, it is envisaged that existing initiatives will form a key element in informing future LCWIP documents for other areas of the District.
- 4.3 By supporting the Stroud LCWIP and the production of further LCWIPs for other parts of the District, and through our continued work with relevant stakeholders, the District Council will be taking a strategic and comprehensive approach to delivering a sustainable cycling and walking network throughout the District.
- 4.4 An important aspect of the Stroud LCWIP document is that it provides deliverable solutions to providing a cycling and walking network, which in turn provides a good basis on which to bid for further funding to help implement the schemes.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as it is informing Members of the progression of the Strategy and to support outlined future projects. The additional budget was dealt with by full Council (Para 1.3) on 25th February 2021.

Adele Rudkin, Accountant, Email: adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications although the approval of the Stroud LCWIP will support the delivery of the Government's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Policy, the Gloucestershire Local Transport plan (2020 – 2041) and will aid compliance with the Council's decision making framework.

One Legal, Tel: 01684 272691, Email: patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk

5.3 Equality Implications

An EqIA is not required because this report is not recommending specific delivery action however the strategy will have positive impacts on equality by providing improved active travel options for local communities.

5.4 Environmental Implications

A focussed strategy for providing active travel options will encourage a shift away from car use, particularly for short journeys, and thus a reduction in emissions associated with those journeys.