

ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee – 16 July 2024

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For information

Also considered by: N/A

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report updates members on the active travel projects being pursued by the District Council, to provide safe and attractive routes for walking, wheeling and cycling, in partnership with Kent County Council.

This report supports the Key Aim of: Promoting walking, wheeling and cycling, and tackling the challenge of climate change.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Roy

Contact Officer: Emma Henshall, Ext. 7358

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

To note this update report for information.

Reason for recommendation: Identifying opportunities for better active travel across the District is a key priority that can assist in reducing carbon emissions, improve air quality and result in positive health outcomes, as well as helping to tackle the challenge of climate change.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Active travel has many benefits – walking, wheeling and cycling can all help to positively impact the health of our communities and bring significant environmental benefits including improving air quality, reducing noise pollution, easing levels of traffic congestion and reducing carbon emissions. The Council is committed to promoting and creating opportunities for better active travel in the District through its Movement Strategy (2022), Climate Change Strategy (2024) and emerging Local Plan.
- 2 Over the past few years the Government has launched a series of funding opportunities via Active Travel England to develop schemes that would boost walking, wheeling and cycling. The District Council has been successful in bidding (through Kent County Council) for funds to deliver a number of

projects it prioritised. Full details of these projects, along with funding allocations and timelines, are set out in Appendix A. Key project updates are highlighted below.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

- 3 LCWIPs have been completed for Sevenoaks Urban Area (January 2022) and Swanley Urban Area (February 2024). Each Plan identifies walking, wheeling and cycling improvements at the local level, with a view to developing local networks over time. They are available to view at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/wwc.

Sevenoaks Town East to West Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Route (Sevenoaks LCWIP route 3)

- 4 A public consultation on the design of this route was undertaken in June 2023. Of the 490 responses received, the route was supported (61%), but some concerns were raised with the section of the route through Bradbourne Park Road and St James' Road.
- 5 The design has since been revised to address these issues and a second, more targeted, public consultation ran from 10 May to 3 June 2024. 143 responses were received. Analysis of the data indicates majority support for the revisions to the scheme, with 67% of respondents agreeing with the proposed improvements. Subject to careful consideration of the points raised, it is anticipated that construction of the route will begin over the summer.

Sevenoaks to Otford Route (Sevenoaks LCWIP route 1)

- 6 Transport consultancy Phil Jones Associates (PJA) has been appointed to update feasibility work previously completed in 2017 and to prepare outline designs for the scheme. Stakeholder engagement was undertaken in October 2023 to capture local knowledge, opportunities, risks and challenges. This was held at Bat & Ball Station and was very well attended by a range of local residents and stakeholder groups who took the opportunity to meaningfully input into the process.
- 7 Given the constraints and challenges along the stretch of the route from Bat & Ball down to Sevenoaks town centre, the focus for this work has been on the section of the route connecting Otford and Bat & Ball.
- 8 It is anticipated that the outline designs will be completed in the summer, with detailed designs to follow.

Sevenoaks to Seal to Otford Route (Sevenoaks LCWIP route 6)

- 9 PJA was also appointed to undertake a feasibility study and outline designs for this scheme. Stakeholder engagement was undertaken in September 2023 to capture local knowledge, opportunities, risks and challenges. This was held at Seal Village Hall and attended by a number of local residents who were generally supportive overall. The main take-away was a desire to better and

more safely connect Kemsing with Seal, recognising that Childsbridge Lane is a key corridor for school travel, but that safety could be improved.

- 10 Further work has therefore been undertaken, utilising funding from Community Infrastructure Levy receipts, to explore better walking, wheeling and cycling provision in Kemsing, and to enhance its connections with Seal and Otford.
- 11 It is anticipated that the outline designs and high level design recommendations for Kemsing will be completed in the summer.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

The active travel projects referred to in this report have largely been secured utilising external funding from Government (Active Travel England) in partnership with KCC. We could choose not to engage in further rounds of funding, nor dedicate our resources to managing these projects, however this would contradict the Council's commitment to promoting and creating opportunities for better active travel in the District and therefore disadvantage our residents. This approach would also contradict the recently adopted Climate Change Strategy (2024), Movement Strategy (2022) and emerging Local Plan, and as such, is not recommended.

Key Implications

Financial

Funding for the active travel projects referred to in this report has been secured through external sources and it is not expected that any top up from the Council's reserves will be required.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

No legal implications have been identified.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Climate Change Implications

The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact our climate change ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be a decrease in carbon emissions produced in the District as a result of this decision.

Conclusions

This report updates members on the active travel projects being pursued by the District Council, to provide safe and attractive routes for walking, wheeling and

cycling, in partnership with Kent County Council. Delivery of these projects support the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2024), Movement Strategy (2022) and emerging Local Plan.

Appendices

Appendix A – SDC Active Travel Projects July 2024

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – Planning and Regulatory Services