

Agenda item 3

For decision – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

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Summary

Frome Town Council has led on the production of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Frome, in partnership with Somerset County Council. The aim of the LCWIP is to create a planned network of safe routes for walking, cycling and wheeling to and from key destinations across town, to support active travel.

1. *Introduction*

An LCWIP is a data and evidence led approach to developing networks for safe cycling, walking and wheeling as set out by the Department for Transport (DfT), and is now a requirement for Local Authorities wishing to bid for DfT funding for capital projects for active travel infrastructure.

Somerset Council has produced LCWIPs for Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil and Mendip District Council produced them for Wells, Glastonbury and Street.

Frome Town Council's bid for funding from Somerset County Council's Climate Emergency Fund to develop an LCWIP for Frome and has been working closely with the Active Travel team at Somerset as they will ultimately be responsible for its delivery.

Frome Town Council engaged consultants Phil Jones Associates (PJA) on the project. PJA have significant experience delivering LCWIPs and transport plans for towns of a comparable size to Frome; they are also involved in re-writing the DfT guidance on the LCWIP process.

2. *Rationale*

Active travel is a core pillar of Frome Town Council's Resilience work, due to the enormous health, wellbeing and environmental benefits it brings to individuals and communities. Journeys within Frome are less than 2.5 miles, making it an ideal size for walking, cycling and wheeling. However, the reality is that lack of appropriate infrastructure such as dropped kerbs and safe crossings make some routes impossible to navigate in a wheelchair or while pushing a pram. Main junctions in Frome such as Gorehedge have no safe and direct crossing routes for pedestrians. While cycling across town takes no more than 15 minutes, less than 2% of journeys in Frome are currently taken by bike.

If the recommendations in the LCWIP can be implemented, this would create a comprehensive network of safe, attractive and clear routes across town which would hopefully encourage much greater levels of active travel, reducing congestion, improving air quality, wellbeing and health outcomes.

3. Community Engagement

In 2020 Frome Town Council undertook a large survey called “Walk Ride Frome” through the online Commonplace platform which gathered over 500 responses highlighting places where people felt improvements were needed for safe active travel. This data was intended to inform work such as the LCWIP and future strategies; therefore, FTC did not repeat this exercise for the LCWIP but used the data from the 2020 survey.

Additionally, a working group of FTC Councillors, FTC and Somerset Officers, and community representatives was created to inform the process. The Working Group met four times throughout the process and joined in with the walking audits of the routes, as well as providing early feedback on the recommendations.

All of the recommendations in the LCWIP would require detailed design and consultation before being implemented; this will happen on a project-by- project basis as funding is made available.

4. Outputs

The LCWIP takes a variety of data sets to understand current and potential travel demand on routes across Frome that link key commerce, employment, school, residential and leisure sites. Based on this data, a cohesive network of 10 routes were selected for audit to determine interventions to improve conditions for walking, cycling and wheeling based on defined criteria such as directness, safety and coherence. Mobility, including wheelchairs, scooters and prams are a crucial consideration alongside walking and cycling.

The output is a network of routes, each with a list of recommended interventions which are grouped into short term (1-3 year) medium term (5 year) and long term (10 year). Interventions are prioritised and a rough cost estimate given.

[The full report can be viewed at Appendix 3.1](#) and the [table of recommendations can be viewed at Appendix 3.2 on the website.](#)

5. Next steps

Once approved, the LCWIP will be adopted by Somerset Council as the Highways Authority and will form part of the Transport Strategy for Somerset. Capital funding for delivering active travel projects is made available through a competitive bidding process annually for DfT active travel funding, which Somerset can apply for.

Additionally, Frome Town Council will be able to use the LCWIP to inform requests for S106 funding when negotiating with developers; and look for other sources of external funding to deliver elements of the plan.

Finally, Frome Town Council is hoping to develop a wider movement strategy for the town which goes beyond the scope of the LCWIP to address traffic, parking, public transport and wider connectivity.

Recommendation

To adopt the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Frome