



# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Growth and Development
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Growth and Development
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 7 December 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Growth and Development
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	Y

**SUBJECT: Blackburn with Darwen Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To seek approval of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Prioritisation report which provides the long-term strategic approach to identifying walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure improvements in the Borough.

The LCWIP has been prepared over a 2-year period, steered by the Council’s Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Operational Group and public consultation (‘Have your say on Walking and Cycling’). The LCWIP is presented as a collection of reports prepared in three Phases:

- Phase 1 – Baseline Conditions report (published March 2022)
- Phase 2 – Blackburn and Darwen network planning reports (published December 2022)
- Phase 3 – Prioritisation report (October 2023, subject of this decision)

The key output of Phase 3 of the LCWIP is a list of prioritised areas/routes for future infrastructure interventions, providing the focus for investment and further feasibility/design work. An adopted LCWIP is key to receiving ongoing revenue and capital grant funding from Active Travel England (ATE).

Over the course of the LCWIP’s implementation, a variety of behavioural change work and initiatives will need to be delivered alongside new infrastructure to help ensure people’s travel choices lead to modal shift. Existing programmes of work are in place, supported by the Council’s Leisure and Health teams (ActiveBwD, Together an Active Future), and the Council will continue to seek opportunities to expand capabilities in this area alongside the delivery of infrastructure improvements.

The LCWIP Phase 3 Prioritisation report is provided as a Background Paper to this report.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Approves adoption of the LCWIP (Phase 3 report) as the strategic framework for developing future transport policy and programmes of investment around active travel infrastructure for Blackburn with Darwen;

- (ii) Notes the outcomes for the prioritisation of the further development of active travel schemes in the Borough, as set out in the Phase 3: Prioritisation report;
- (iii) Support further investigations/feasibility and design work to be undertaken, as and when resources and budgets allow, to ensure that a pipeline of schemes is developed to a stage ready for any funding applications that may arise; and
- (iv) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Growth and Development, following consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Development, to submit any future active travel funding applications for developments in line with the LCWIP.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

In 2020, the Council completed a number of area-based Walking and Cycling Connectivity Studies covering parts of North Blackburn, West Blackburn, South East Blackburn and Darwen. These supported preparation of the new Local Plan. The LCWIP builds upon these studies, covering the entire Borough, and has been prepared in line with the specific Government technical guidance on preparing such plans [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans technical guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/86484/local_cycling_and_walking_infrastructure_plans_technical_guidance.pdf).

It has focused on identifying key corridors connecting residential areas (both existing and proposed) to destinations such as town centres, local centres, schools, employment sites and transport hubs. In the past investment in active travel infrastructure has often come via individual projects, or a by-product to larger highways schemes or accompanying development sites. Therefore it has tended to be piecemeal and lack a holistic overall vision. The LCWIP instead identifies a coherent network showing the desire lines for active travel.

These corridors were audited to demonstrate that it is possible to construct high quality cycling infrastructure to the minimum standards set out by the Department for Transport in its 2020 Local Transport Note for Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20). Whilst no equivalent design standard exists for walking infrastructure design, there are several relevant publications (such as Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2, and Designing for Walking by the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation). Walking improvements include but are not limited to widened and resurfaced footways, upgraded crossings, better wayfinding, urban design and placemaking will also be recommended according to the latest best practice.

The outputs of the LCWIP are detailed as follows:

- A network plan for walking and cycling, which identifies preferred routes and core zones to be protected against or enhanced by nearby development;
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment;
- The LCWIP strategy report, which sets out the process and underlying analysis to draw together both outputs to be put forward as transport policy.

By taking a strategic approach to improving conditions for cycling and walking the LCWIP, once approved, will help Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council 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.
- Make the case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure. (While the preparation of LCWIPs is non-mandatory, the DfT has said that LAs who have plans will be better placed to make the case for future investment).

It is therefore recommended that the LCWIP strategy is approved and becomes embedded in Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Policy. Once adopted, it will help develop an economic case

for investment. The next steps will be undertaking feasibility studies for the routes, preparing detailed designs and costings, managing scheme delivery, and monitoring and evaluating performance of schemes post-implementation.

The LCWIP is intended to be reviewed and updated periodically, particularly if there are any significant changes in local circumstances such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, and as the shape of the road network changes.

Put simply, the objectives of the LCWIP are to:

- Increase cycling activity, by doubling the number of cycling stages made by 2025;
- Reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on the district's roads;
- Increase walking activity, in terms of walking stages per person; and
- Increase the percentage of children usually walking and cycling to school.

The LCWIP provides a strategy for active travel infrastructure investment in accordance with technical guidance issued by the Department for Transport for Local Authorities. At Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council we produced an LCWIP by working in partnership with Lancashire County Council, with input from Transport Planners from external consultants Costain.

The LCWIP utilised the tools and best practice guides provided by DfT for Local Authorities including the Route Selection Tool, Walking Route Audit Tool and Propensity to Cycle Tool. In July 2020 the Department for Transport released new technical guidance (Local Transport Note 1/20) to provide standards for cycling infrastructure design. These design standards have been used to plan the routes and will be adopted in the implementation of our LCWIP network.

This report therefore seeks to set in place a new long-term approach to implementation of high-quality active travel infrastructure to recognised best practice along these targeted corridors.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

The LCWIP forms an ambition for an improved future walking and cycling network in the Borough, but delivery of the ambition is heavily dependent upon significant external funding. The success of the LCWIP should be determined by how much of the strategy is implemented, at least in part, over the next ten years, given dependencies on securing new and additional public funding support.

There is risk associated in the delivery of some of the network routes – individual schemes on each route will need to be consulted separately once more detailed work has been undertaken. The delivery of some schemes may also be dependent on land acquisition and planning permission. However, the risks associated with not having an agreed LCWIP for co-ordinating and prioritising active travel improvements is that infrastructure will be more piecemeal, there will be a lack of coherent network of routes, and there will be less funding available from government funding streams.

There is an emphasis from the DfT on monitoring the impact of schemes to build an evidence base on what works and does not work to be able to support future bids. The LCWIP will ensure that walking and cycling improvements are targeted in locations that will have the greatest affect.

Without an approved LCWIP the council is less likely to be successful in funding from central government for future grant applications and secure less in s106 contributions from developments.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The [Health and Wellbeing board of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021](#) approved the Council's first Cycling and Walking Plan (2021-2024), setting policy and ambitions on the active travel agenda, and committing to preparing a formal LCWIP. The LCWIP reports set out the justification for the strategy and the underlying analysis for selecting specific routes. The reports include appendices with maps of the

proposed walking and cycling networks and audits of the routes with recommendations for improvements.

The LCWIP is referenced within the Council's emerging new Local Plan (2021-2037), to ensure policy alignment in planning. The joint Local Transport Plan 4 for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire County Councils, remains in progress. The LCWIP will act as a daughter document to a future LTP4, and act as part of the implementation plan for LTP4.

The benefits of incorporating the LCWIP into Blackburn with Darwen planning policy include:

- Ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to cycling and walking in all local planning and transport decisions, and identify potential policy conflicts;
- Adding to the evidence base which can be used to support a Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or Local Transport Plan;
- Enabling the consideration and adoption of wider policy levers to encourage more walking and cycling;
- Enabling the Council to seek appropriate contributions to the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure through planning agreements in the form of Section 106 obligations; and when Section 278 highway agreements are made;
- Identifying places where new strategic cycling or walking routes can be delivered by a new development, and ensure the protection of alignments for future planned cycling and walking routes.

The LCWIP will also help to consider the impact of planning applications and other proposed land use changes on existing and planned cycling and walking infrastructure, and to identify sites that are well served, or capable of being well served, by cycling and walking routes. The approval and adoption of our LCWIP will assist developers in the preparation of Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications for the adoption of the LCWIP. The Council already has budget allocated from the ATE Capability Fund for the development of active travel infrastructure. The LCWIP will provide further direction in how best to prioritise and deliver the active travel programme. However, there is no obligation to undertake all the routes at once, and no set timescale for delivery. But in making the implementation of the LCWIP a long-term policy goal then there is commitment on the ambition to deliver the infrastructure over the long-term.

Having an LCWIP in place will help to capitalise on funding opportunities and coordinate improvements. Without an LCWIP there is a risk that future funding applications may be overlooked in the absence of a long-term strategy. It also enables the local planning authority to request Section 106 contributions where relevant to development sites coming forward, and delivery of LCWIP schemes.

Any relevant financial implications will be considered when individual schemes are brought forward for implementation.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The LCWIP is not a statutory document and there are no direct legal implications associated with approving the document. Any relevant legal implications will be considered when individual schemes are brought forward for implementation.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Publication of the LCWIP does not have any new direct resource implications. The Council is currently recruiting to a vacant post within Growth and Development (Senior Transport Planner) who will in part be responsible for the development, management and overseeing of LCWIP scheme delivery. The Council's Highways service will also be involved in some aspects of scheme design and delivery. As with delivery of the current Active Travel Fund 4 and Levelling Up Fund allocations, this will be managed within existing departmental resource or using revenue funding from the grant scheme available.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

Active travel infrastructure improvements will enhance the provision and choice for people to travel in and around the borough, especially those with mobility difficulties or other disabilities, and will improve conditions for vulnerable road users.

The council must ensure that when schemes are designed, elements of a scheme do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, and must consider their duty to make reasonable adjustments anticipating the needs of those with protected characteristics. Schemes taken forward from the LCWIP will be subject to further design and consultation, and Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out.

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

The development of the LCWIP has been informed by the recent 'Have your say on Walking and Cycling' consultation. It has also been shaped through ongoing discussions and review by the Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Operational Group comprising key stakeholders from across Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (including Growth and Development, Highways, and Public Health). Regular meetings have also taken place with Lancashire County Council to ensure alignment with cross-border LCWIPs in preparation.

The further development of LCWIP proposals based on the network prioritisation will include significant engagement and consultation at scheme design stage. This will include with local communities and other key stakeholders who are most likely to be impacted.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Darren Tweed (Strategic Planning and Transport Manager)</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b>
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	Blackburn with Darwen LCWIP Phase 3: Prioritisation Report