

3 September 2020**Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE****CYCLING IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Committee on recently published Government guidance and potential funding opportunities; and for Committee to determine Nottinghamshire's priorities and design standards for future investment in cycling. Approval is sought in respect of:
 - A. The priorities for future investment in cycling
 - B. Incorporation of 'Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design' standards into the County Council's existing highway design principles
 - C. Delivery of the proposed Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 programme (should the DfT support the County Council's proposals)
 - D. Further investigation and expression of interest in the Mini-Holland programme
 - E. Further development work and delivery of the cycling schemes included in the Transforming Cities Fund bid
 - F. Approve the proposed consultation and information provision required to deliver each of the schemes and work programmes detailed in this report and its appendices.

Introduction

2. During the last five years the County Council has invested £4m on cycling improvements, the majority of which has been secured from external funding sources such as the Local Growth Fund. This has enabled the delivery of improved cycle networks in the Arnold/Mapperley area, Mansfield, Newark and West Bridgford to help facilitate and mitigate housing and employment development; providing almost 13km of off-road cycle routes and 3.7km of on-road cycle routes (as well as crossing facilities along these routes).
3. The County Council has a network of permanent cycling counters which it uses to monitor cycling levels across the county. These counters are located on routes that generally serve people travelling to work, to town centres and on routes that are for leisure purposes. Cycling levels fluctuate significantly and are dependent on several factors, not least the weather but between 2010 and 2019 cycling levels in Nottinghamshire increased by 4.3%; with much higher increases seen in areas such as Mansfield and Rushcliffe districts.

COVID 19

4. Cycling count data from the lockdown period indicates that cycling levels in the county increased further during the lockdown period (when compared to the same time last year) due to a number of factors, including sunnier weather, spare time, quieter roads, and necessity

(due to advice concerning the use of public transport), etc. After this initial surge, average cycling levels recorded in July 2020 along commuter routes have returned to the levels recorded in July 2019. Average daily cycling levels recorded along leisure routes in July 2020, however, remain significantly higher than the same time last year.

5. Government (and local authorities) would like to sustain the increases in cycling seen during the lockdown period and in May 2020 the Government announced that it is going to make £2bn available to improve walking and cycling, including £250m as part of its COVID-19 response. Greater emphasis on the provision of cycling infrastructure (from both Government and local communities), along with potential future funding offers the Council an opportunity to review and determine its future priorities for investment in cycling.

Policy/Strategy Background

6. The County Council Plan 'Your Nottinghamshire Your Future' sets out an ambitious vision for the future of Nottinghamshire. It details the Council's priorities, aims and objectives which other local strategies, including those related to 'place making' and transport, will aim to deliver.
7. The Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 sets out the County Council's overarching transport strategy for the county (including those related to cycling) and was approved at the 31 March 2011 County Council meeting. The LTP is supported by a number of more detailed documents setting out how the LTP will be delivered, including the current LTP Implementation Plan 2018/19-2020/21 detailing the County Council's priorities for its delivery during the current spending review period (which was approved at 17 May 2018 Communities & Place Committee); and a Cycling Strategy Delivery Plan (which was approved at the 11 February 2016 Transport and Highways Committee).
8. The vision for cycling in Nottinghamshire was developed to help deliver national and local corporate objectives, particularly those relating to the economy, environment and health. Improved cycling access to local centres increases their vitality; improved cycling access to jobs and training can broaden jobseekers' travel horizons; well-planned leisure routes can increase the visitor offer and therefore improve the visitor economy; and car drivers that switch to cycling help reduce local congestion with resulting benefits to the economy. Similarly, increasing cycling is a major theme in all plans to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population, which in turn reduces the financial burden on the health service and lost productivity within the business economy. In addition to improving cycling safety (thereby reducing cycling casualties) cycling can help improve health and wellbeing through increased activity, as well as helping improve air quality by reducing the numbers of trips made by polluting vehicles. The proposals in this report therefore support the delivery the Council Plan 'Your Nottinghamshire Your Future' and in particular commitments 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 & 12.
9. Given the ability of cycling to help deliver corporate objectives, investing in Nottinghamshire's cycling facilities to improve our transport networks therefore form part of the County Council's strategy to help deliver its objectives related to supporting:
 - The economy – by improving access to jobs, training, local centres, and visitor attractions; by reducing the impacts of journey time delay; and to help deliver growth in the county
 - Health and wellbeing – by making our networks safer for all road users; encouraging and enabling more active lifestyles; and by reducing harmful emissions from transport
 - Thriving place and communities – by better connecting communities to each other, as well as to work, training, leisure activities and essential services.

10. As cycling helps deliver the above County Council commitments and priorities, it plays an integral role not only in transport strategy but in the delivery of several corporate strategies, including:

- The Visitor Economy Strategy for Nottinghamshire County Council 2018-2029
- the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Nottinghamshire
- Nottinghamshire Air Quality Strategy
- Nottinghamshire County Council Environment Strategy & Policy, and
- Local land-use strategies (including district council Local Plans).

11. A review of the cycling elements of the above strategies suggests they are still consistent with the Government's recently published national aims, objectives and guidance.

A. Proposed priorities for future cycling investment

12. Investment in cycling facilities (and/or their promotion) will need to continue to focus on the delivery of the commitments within the County Council Plan and its associated strategies. As described in the paragraphs above, cycling helps deliver a number of these commitments and therefore it is proposed that the future priorities for cycling investment will focus primarily on the local objectives related to improving the economy, health and wellbeing, and creating thriving place and communities:

- **The economy** – to help improve the local economy it is proposed that investment in cycling will be prioritised on the following:
 - a) Where it forms part of an integrated package of measures to address congestion on corridors that experience the highest levels of journey time delay
 - b) To support tourism and enhance the visitor economy, focusing on those routes prioritised in the County Council's Visitor Economy Strategy
 - c) Measures that help people access employment and training opportunities
 - d) Where it forms part of an integrated package of sustainable transport measures that help improve the vitality of town centres by improving access to, and within, them
 - e) Where it forms part of an integrated package of measures that supports growth by helping mitigate its impact on the highway network
- **Health and wellbeing** – all improvements that help more people to cycle more often will potentially help improve health and wellbeing. Therefore, in addition to priorities a) - e). detailed above, it is proposed that investment in cycling will also be prioritised on the following to specifically help improve health and wellbeing:
 - f) Targeted road safety education, engineering and enforcement programmes to reduce reported road traffic casualties
 - g) Off-road multi-user routes within the Council's ownership that link to Nottinghamshire's strategic cycle networks to provide joined-up accessible local leisure routes
 - h) Although all improvements that encourage people to cycle instead of making journeys by car will help reduce harmful transport emissions, schemes that form part of an integrated package of measures to help address local air quality management areas and/or locations close to exceedances of air quality limits
- **Thriving place and communities** – it is anticipated that all of the proposed priorities a) - h) detailed above will help deliver thriving places and communities by better connecting communities to each other, to work, training, leisure activities and essential services; and by helping improve the vitality of town centres.

13. All potential cycling investment will also be prioritised for delivery based on:

- The outputs from route selection tools to demonstrate the need for the proposed measures

- County Council member local knowledge and wider community support for the proposed measures
- The feasibility/deliverability of each scheme
- Value for money assessments, and
- The funding available for their delivery.

B. Recently published Government guidance

14. The statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) sets out the Government's ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys or as part of a longer journey; and includes objectives to increase cycling and walking levels. On 27 July 2020 Government published its new cycling and walking plan for England 'Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' alongside Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design.
15. 'Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' details the Government's vision to make England "a *great walking and cycling nation*" and sets out the actions required at all levels of Government to make this a reality, grouped under four themes:
- better streets for cycling and people
 - cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making
 - empowering and encouraging local authorities
 - enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do.
16. Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design has been published to support the provision of high-quality cycle infrastructure to deliver Governments' cycling ambition and objectives; and reflects current good practice, standards and legal requirements.
17. Whilst local highway authorities are responsible for setting design standards for their roads, Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design is national guidance providing a recommended basis for local standards based on five overarching design principles (that networks and routes should be coherent; direct; safe; comfortable and attractive) and 22 summary principles. There is an expectation by the DfT that local authorities will need to demonstrate that they have given due consideration to this guidance when designing new cycling schemes and, in particular, when applying for Government funding that includes cycle infrastructure.
18. The documents also make it clear that Government will not fund, or part-fund, any schemes that do not meet the new design standards and principles described in the two new documents; or allow any other agency or body to fund such schemes using any of its money. It is therefore proposed that the design standards included in Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design be incorporated into existing highway design principles for the provision of cycling and other highways infrastructure whenever possible.

Funding Opportunities for Investment in Cycling

19. Funding for cycling improvements delivered as part of the integrated transport and capital maintenance programmes (including externally funded schemes) will be determined by members as part of the capital highways programmes reports. There is, however, potential for additional investment in cycling through the following funding sources.

C. Emergency Active Travel Fund

20. In May 2020, Government announced that it is going to make £2bn investment available to improve walking and cycling; and as part of its Covid-19 response, Government announced a £250m Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to deliver quick, emergency interventions to make cycling and walking safer. The aim of Government's EATF is to try and embed walking and cycling as part of long-term commuting habits to secure the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits. In the short-term this will also help avoid overcrowding on public transport as the economy restarts.
21. The EATF funding is going to be released in two tranches. Tranche 1 of the recently announced funding is available for temporary active travel measures and the DfT allocated £263,250 towards the County Council's proposals which were approved at the Council's COVID 19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee on 16 July 2020.
22. Tranche 2 of the EATF is for both temporary, low-cost schemes, and permanent schemes with a short lead time, so long as they meet the Government's criteria and must be deliverable (or committed) by the end of the 2020/21 financial year. While Nottinghamshire has an indicative allocation of £2.29m of the Tranche 2 funding, the actual sums allocated to authorities are subject to bids to Government which had to be submitted by 7 August 2020. It should be noted that the costs of the proposals included in the bid exceed the Council's indicative allocation.
23. The Tranche 2 bid is for the following permanent schemes, which are still subject to the necessary Committee approval, detailed scheme investigation and design, consultation, safety audit and equality impact assessments:
- A6191 Chesterfield Road North/South, Mansfield – improvements to the existing on-road cycle lane to provide a fully segregated cycle track
 - Beeston cycling improvements – introduction of a point closure to stop through traffic on Dovecote Lane (which links NCN6 to the town centre) to reduce rat-running and provide a quieter route for cyclists and pedestrians; and additional secure cycling hub at the nearby rail station
 - High Pavement, Sutton in Ashfield – conversion of existing traffic lanes and removal of short-stay on-street parking to create a new lightly segregated cycleway (e.g. by using traffic wands); along with improvements to the High Pavement/Station Road/Forest Street junction traffic signals (to provide crossing facilities for cyclists and to improve capacity for other vehicles)
 - Randall Way, Retford – a new fully segregated cycleway adjacent to the existing carriageway between the A638 and the Hallcroft Road
 - Regatta Way, Gamston – upgrade of the existing facilities to create a new fully segregated cycleway connecting the existing cycling network to the proposed new Transforming Cities Funded cycle/pedestrian bridge over the River Trent; as well as to the National Water Sports Centre and country park at Holme Pierrepont
 - Victoria Street/Portland Street, Newark – creation of a new lightly segregated cycleway on Victoria Street/Portland Street following the introduction of a new one-way traffic system on Victoria Street/Portland Street/Albert Street
 - A behaviour change support package specifically targeted along the Tranche 1 and proposed Tranche 2 infrastructure improvements (and the locations/town centres to which these routes provide improved, safer access), including:
 - Bike aid programme, to provide refurbished bikes to NHS staff, key workers, low paid and unemployed county residents to help them access work and training
 - Travel planning delivered through local businesses, schools, health providers and community groups.

24. Should the bid be successful, the County Council has offered match funding of up to 20% of the actual EATF Tranche 2 funding allocation (upto £600,000). It is proposed that this contribution will be allocated from the existing integrated transport sub-block allocations.
25. Whilst recognising what the DfT is trying to achieve and the eligibility criteria for proposals (which all of the above schemes meet), the County Council also raised the issue of support for two other key cycling related improvements in the county within its bid proposals. The County Council is very keen to see the Calverton mineral line re-opened as a multi-user route but note this requires planning for which we cannot guarantee to meet the required delivery timescales for this fund. We have therefore bid to start the process and undertake some bridge works as well as vegetation clearance. A second key scheme relates to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the new dualled A46 to link the settlements of Newton and Bingham. This necessary infrastructure is preventing the Newton site from delivering significant vital growth in the county. Highways England have secured some funds (£3m) through their Growth and Housing Fund but this allocation will expire soon unless the remainder can be sourced. These additional bids request an additional allocation of £0.6m to be provided giving real dedicated rural infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

D. Mini-Holland schemes

26. The cycling and walking plan for England 'Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' includes mention of 'Mini-Holland' schemes and the potential funding for such schemes. As part of cycling improvements in London, three outer London boroughs with low levels of cycling were chosen through competition to become a 'Mini-Holland'. This involved intensive, transformational spending on their roads and streetscapes to make them as cycle and pedestrian-friendly as their Dutch equivalents through the installation of segregated cycle lanes on main roads, the introduction of low-traffic neighbourhoods, and the provision of extra space for pedestrians. Government reports that this resulted in significant increases in cycling and walking as well as reduced vacancy rates and increased trade for retailers on the low-traffic shopping streets. Government also reports that congestion did not increase as a result of the schemes because the changes allowed many people who had previously driven very short journeys to walk or cycle instead.
27. Government is looking to replicate this across the country and is intending to choose up to 12 willing non-London local authority areas to benefit from intensive investment in Mini-Holland schemes on the same model. The Plan states that the main focus for these future schemes will be on replacing short car trips; and that they "*must be places where cycling is currently low and where there is serious political commitment to dramatic change – not just for cyclists, but for everyone who lives and works there.*"
28. It is proposed that the County Council makes further inquiries concerning the eligibility and selection criteria to access the Mini-Holland scheme so that members can determine if they wish to pursue the opportunity. Following the outcome of these inquiries, a further report will be presented to Committee to consider a potential bid for such funding if necessary.

E. Transforming Cities Fund

29. Derby and Nottingham City Councils successfully submitted a joint bid for Tranche 2 of the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). Schemes funded by the Tranche 2 TCF bid are to be delivered between 2020/21 and 2022/23 with the key objectives of:
- Addressing the Derby to Nottingham mobility pressures, particularly for access to employment and skills development

- Maximising the impact of transport investments that accelerate the delivery of new homes and improve access to new and existing jobs
- Encouraging an increase in journeys by low carbon, sustainable travel modes in order to contribute to climate change objectives, tackle air pollution and contribute to improving public health.

30. £24.4m of the £186.35m total Tranche 2 TCF programme value has been secured for investment in segregated cycle lanes and pedestrian priority on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) priority corridors outside of Nottingham city centre (to south/north/east and west of the city centre). As the LCWIP corridors have been developed for the whole of the D2N2 area (see 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' report to be considered as part of this Committee meeting agenda for further details) several of the identified improvements could potentially cross administrative boundaries into Nottinghamshire. The schemes that will potentially be delivered on the County Council's managed highway are shown in the table below.

Strategic connectivity	Derby-Nottingham-East Midlands Airport	Indicative estimated cost
Nottingham to Derby cycle route (via the A6005 through Beeston and Chilwell)		£2.9m (includes link to Long Eaton)
Nottingham to East Midlands Airport (via the former A453)		£0.92m (includes spur from Kegworth to Sutton Bonington)
Urban Growth Corridors		
Improvement of the existing Netherfield to Nottingham cycle route		£0.215m
New/upgraded River Trent cycle crossing		£7.33m
Improvements to the approaches to new/upgraded crossing		£1m (includes elements in City and County as required)

31. There is currently no County Council funding commitment required for the delivery of the above schemes. The Transforming Cities cycling scheme proposals (along with proposed bus infrastructure improvements) are to be considered at a future Policy Committee meeting. Should Policy Committee approve the proposed cycling improvements the County Council therefore does so without any commitment to financial liabilities for their construction (or for future maintenance of improvements located on land that is not currently adopted highway). If approved, it is anticipated that Via EM Ltd will design and deliver any improvements on the County Council's highway network if possible.

F. Further scheme/programme development, design and consultation

32. Each of the programmes and schemes detailed in this report is still subject to the necessary consultation, statutory undertakings and other issues arising from feasibility studies, detailed scheme investigation, and design; and value for money considerations. This will involve consultation and/or pro-active information provision on the majority of schemes. For most individual schemes, statutory or non-statutory consultation will be undertaken with affected households and businesses only (i.e. households or businesses along the route of a proposed scheme).

33. Formal consultation will be undertaken on all schemes that require statutory consultation. These include any schemes that require a formal Traffic Regulation Order and include the introduction of (or changes to) parking restrictions, environmental weight limits, changes to mandatory speed limits, and changes that ban traffic movements (e.g. the introduction of a one-way system).

34. Non-statutory consultation, or information provision (i.e. informing people that works will take place) will also be undertaken with households and businesses immediately adjacent to schemes that fall wholly within the highway boundary such as new crossing facilities and cycleways.
35. The project manager responsible for the delivery of the scheme will ensure that County Council members are also advised of any proposed consultation prior to it occurring; and will liaise with communications and marketing colleagues where appropriate.

Other Options Considered

36. Other options considered are set out within this report, but it is important that members determine the local priorities for future cycling investment so that funding can be secured and used effectively in the delivery of the Council's objectives.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

37. The priorities and programmes detailed within this report have been developed to help ensure delivery of County Council priorities, national priorities and local transport goals and objectives. The programmes have been developed to reflect a balance of member, public and stakeholder requests and priorities, evidence of need (including technical analysis), value for money (including the co-ordination of works) and delivery of the County Council's vision and transport objectives.

Statutory and Policy Implications

38. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

39. The financial implications, including budget allocations, are set out within the report. Should the EATF Tranche 2 bid be successful, the County Council's financial contribution will be allocated from the existing integrated transport sub-block allocations. Funding of future programmes would be considered and approved by Committee as appropriate.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

40. All programmes detailed within this report comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. An equality impact assessment was undertaken on the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2011/12-2025/26 in March 2011 to ensure that the strategy and its capital programmes to deliver it met the duty.
41. Equality impact assessment of individual significant and major transport schemes (schemes costing more than £250,000) and Bid programmes are also undertaken by project managers to ensure that they comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, based on advice from the policy and equality officers.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

42. Surveys undertaken with the public and local businesses identified reducing traffic congestion as the highest transport priority for both groups. The County Council also has a statutory obligation to address air quality issues resulting from road traffic on its managed roads (there are currently two air quality management areas on County Council managed roads). All the programmes and measures contained within this report have therefore been developed to address congestion, its knock-on effects on air quality and its impacts on local communities. The recycling of materials and aggregates is also considered when delivering highways schemes whenever possible.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that, subject to the provisions set out in paragraphs 32 to 35, Committee approves the:

- 1) proposed priorities for future investment in cycling as set out in paragraphs 12 to 13
- 2) incorporation of 'Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design' standards into the County Council's existing highway design principles
- 3) delivery of the proposed EATF Tranche 2 programme (should funding be secured for its delivery)
- 4) further investigation and potential expression of interest in the Mini-Holland programme
- 5) further development work and delivery of the cycling schemes included in the Transforming Cities Fund bid, as detailed in paragraphs 29 to 31, subject to Policy Committee approval on 30 September 2020
- 6) approve the proposed consultation and information provision required to deliver each of the schemes and work programmes detailed in this report.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 21/08/2020)

43. The report falls within the remit of Communities and Place Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (RWK 24/08/2020)

44. A bid for the proposed EATF Tranche 2 programme has been submitted which includes a number of schemes which exceed the County Council's indicative funding allocation. Should this bid be successful further reports will be brought to committee providing details of the schemes to be undertaken and seeking approval to match funding from the County Council of up to 20%, £600,000, to be met from the existing capital programme allocation for Integrated Transport Measures.

45. The report also outlines a number of schemes that could be undertaken on the County Council's managed highway as part of the Transforming Cities Fund. These schemes will be presented in a report to Policy Committee on 30th September 2020. There is currently no County Council funding commitment required for the delivery of the these schemes.

46. Therefore there are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017
- Government's cycling and walking plan for England 'Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' July 2020
- Council Plan 2017-2021 'Your Nottinghamshire Your Future'
- Place Departmental Strategy – January 2018
- The Visitor Economy Strategy for Nottinghamshire County Council 2018-2029
- Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Nottinghamshire
- Nottinghamshire Air Quality Strategy
- Nottinghamshire County Council Environment Strategy & Policy
- Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011/12-2025/26
- Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2018/19-2020/21
- Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Evidence Base 2010
- Cycling Strategy Delivery Plan 2016
- Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycling Infrastructure Design.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All