

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 9 NOVEMBER 2020

UPDATE ON ACTIVE TRAVEL IN WORCESTERSHIRE

Summary

1. The Panel has requested an update on county-wide work to enable and promote cycling in Worcestershire.
2. Senior Officers from the Directorate of Economy and Infrastructure have been invited to the meeting along with the Cabinet Member for Highways.

Background

3. The Panel has been keen to keep up to date with the Council's work to enable cycling in Worcestershire and this update follows the Panel's previous discussions which are detailed in the background papers of this report.
4. The Panel requested a further update to understand progress with cycle schemes and enabling cycling.
5. The 8 May 2019 Panel Report outlined that demand for cycling in the County has been low although is increasing. The 2011 Census data identified that approximately 2% of all journeys to work were made by bicycle. However, this data does not take into account leisure and utility cycling and data derived from the 2011 Census is now somewhat dated.
6. The Panel have subsequently reviewed cycling again in June 2020, to discuss the increase in cycling both during the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. There are a limited number of cycle counters across the County. These are located at:
 - (i) Worcester – St Peters Drive, Red Hill Lane, Woodgreen Drive, Pitchcroft, Wolverton Road Towpath
 - (ii) Redditch – Offenham Close, Spring Vale Road, Ipsley Street
 - (iii) Stourport – Minster Road.
8. The collected data for the counters has been used to produce the graph in Appendix 1, which illustrates the national and local trends for cycling during 2020 against a set baseline which is the average for 2019. Cycling has been consistently higher in 2020, although this is impacted by weather events with a decline in trips correlating with storms Ellen and Francis in late August 2020 and falling again with storm Alex. This follows national trends.

Government Policy

9. In July 2020, the Government published new advice and guidance for cycling, which replaced the previous documents:

- Gear Change: a Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking which sets out four themes:
 - Better streets for cycling and walking
 - Cycling and walking at the heart of decision making
 - Empowering and encouraging local authorities
 - Enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do
- Cycling Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20 provides guidance on delivering high quality cycle infrastructure based on the following overarching principles:
 - Coherent
 - Direct
 - Safe
 - Comfortable and convenient.

10. Embedded within both of these documents is the aspiration to encourage people to be more active, contributing to health and well-being.

11. National planning policy is also supportive of cycling infrastructure. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) also promotes walking and cycling directing that opportunities to promote walking and cycling are “identified and pursued” (NPPF Paragraph 102c) with development providing high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (NPPF Paragraph 104e).

12. To assist with delivering these ambitions Worcestershire County Council is working with the borough, city and district councils as Local Plans are revised and to respond to planning applications.

13. In Worcestershire, transport policy and proposals are set out in Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). The document sets out proposals for the period 2018-2030 and was adopted in 2017. LTP4 sets out a series of policies specifically for active travel which are listed below.

Policy Number	Title
WC1	Infrastructure and other measures for pedestrians and cyclists
WC2	Partnership working to deliver walking and cycling measures
WC3	Maintenance
WC4	Spatial planning and developer contributions for walking and cycling
WC5	Walking and cycling safely
WC6	Parking for cycling
WC7	Network Direction Signage

14. LTP4 sets out a series of active travel corridors and broader active travel investment programme across the county, to be delivered as funding becomes available. Active travel corridors are walking and cycling links along a corridor to create a comprehensive, integrated network linking key trip attractors including schools, train station and employment locations.

15. The approach set out in LTP4 aligns with both the Government's Transport Analysis Guidance "TAG", which sets out the mandatory criteria for development of business cases to support all major transport infrastructure investment. This includes investment in sustainable travel modes as part of investment in major highways infrastructure. As a result, all new major infrastructure schemes in Worcestershire now include extensive measures to support these modes. For example:

- Worcester Southern Link Road (Phase 4) – This major scheme includes comprehensive upgrade of cycling provision between Powick Hams and Whittington, and the provision of three bridges and an underpass at the Ketch to provide pedestrians and cyclists with a range of safe crossing points over the dualled Southern Link Road, when completed.
- A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Scheme – This scheme includes walking and cycling enhancement as part of a proposed series of schemes to improve congestion and journey time reliability in Bromsgrove.
- Hoobrook Link Road, Kidderminster – This scheme included the provision of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure along its full length.

Funding

16. External funding bids are also submitted to the Department of Transport as and when suitable funds are announced such as the National Productivity Investment Fund. A successful bid to this fund is enabling the delivery of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Network of cycle routes which is delivering nine walking and cycling routes across the town matched by funding from developer contributions and the County Council's reducing congestion programme.

17. Two initial bids (expressions of interest) for active travel have also been submitted to the Department of Transport's Local Pinch Point Fund for Evesham Transport Strategy and the South Worcestershire Corridor which includes the Worcester to Malvern Hills and Worcester to Kempsey active travel corridors. We are currently awaiting feedback on these bids

18. Appendix 2 provides a detailed update on progress with schemes, during the last 12 months and sets out the detail of the Bromsgrove programme which is currently in delivery. It also sets out a series of potential future schemes which are in development and feasibility for 2020-2022. In addition to further elements of some of the schemes outlined above, this includes proposals from LTP4, including proposals in Wyre Forest, Worcester and Evesham.

20. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government released its Emergency Active Travel Fund, in two phases. We are currently awaiting feedback on our submission to phase two of the fund.

21. Delivery of the phase one elements of the fund is in progress, including cycle parking and mapping, surface improvements at Old Road Powick part of the linking to the new Hams Way footbridge, a link from the Stourport to Kidderminster route to the new development at Silverwoods and signing and lining the Bromsgrove to Redditch route on existing quiet lanes.

22. The phase 2 bid was based on Worcestershire's indicative allocation of

£1,082,000 to bring forward 4 active travel corridor schemes across Worcestershire.

Details of these schemes are in appendix 3, and on the website at:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20055/strategies_plans_and_bids/2248/emergency_active_travel_fund

Purpose of the meeting

23. The Panel is asked to:

- consider and comment on the latest information on cycling
- determine whether any further information or scrutiny is required at this stage
- agree any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Member.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Worcestershire County Council Comparison of Weekly Average County Cycle Flows

Appendix 2 – Cycle Infrastructure Delivered and Planned

Appendix 3 – Emergency Active Travel Phase 2 Bid

Appendix 4 – Maps (a-f) of Cycle Infrastructure for each District Area (Bromsgrove, Malvern, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest)

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes of Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 June 2020, 8 May 2019 and 3 October 2017
- Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) - [web-link to LTP4](#)

Minutes and Agendas are available on the Council's website at: [web-link to minutes and agendas](#)