

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny – 20 February 2017

Walking and Cycling STG Review of Progress

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 In January 2016 Cabinet made a series of resolutions based recommendations from the Cycling and Walking Scrutiny Task Group. This report gives a progress update.

2. Summary of the Issue

- a. A Cycling & Walking Scrutiny Task Group was initiated in September 2014 in order to identify opportunities for improving provision for cycling and walking in Cheltenham and to make recommendations which would facilitate these improvements. Recommendations following on from its report were considered by Cabinet in January 2016. The STG's recommendations; Cabinet's response to them; and an update on progress are at Appendix 1.

3. Summary of evidence/information

- 3.1 As the table at Appendix 1 demonstrates, there has been some progress in terms of delivery. Progress across a wider range of actions has been hampered by :

- a significant level of vacancies within the Townscape Team pending a restructure (which is currently underway), This has adversely affected the team's ability to deliver across a range of its projects, including its ability to support the development of projects to deliver the STG's recommendations;
- b medium-term sickness at critical points in project development; and
- c limited staff resource (0.6fte) with a specific remit to deliver sustainable transport initiatives.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 A Member cycle champion (Councillor Max Wilkinson) has been agreed February 2017; this should give projects some momentum.
- 4.2 Officers are investigating opportunities for a cycling festival later in the year, which will help achieve some of the STG's objectives.

Background Papers

January 2016 Cabinet Papers
November 2015 Overview and Scrutiny papers

Contact Officer

Wilf Tomaney, Townscape Manager, 01242 264145, wilf.tomaney@cheltenham.gov.uk

Accountability

Councillor Andrew McKinley

Overview & Scrutiny Task Group Report		Cabinet Response	Progress to February 2017
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Rec 1: Identify opportunities for improving cycle route permeability and cycle parking in areas outside the town centre.	Cheltenham Borough Council should endorse Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign's wish list for improvements to Cheltenham's cycle network. Once agreed, the authority should put aside funds each year to pay for the items suggested, or proactively identify and bid for funds to pay for the suggestions and encourage the County Council to do the same. These could be added to a costed wish list of improvements, which could then be added to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 123 lists or included in funding bids.	<p>Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exercise to identify route opportunities could be undertaken using existing staff resources; the CTCC "wish-list" would be a good starting point. • Cabinet endorsement would then establish a basis for seeking implementation on an ad hoc basis through a variety of projects. • Implementation could be via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CBC funded projects (e.g. task force, parks, townscape projects) ○ support for projects funded by other bodies (e.g. GCC Highways, railway station) ○ planning applications (S106, CIL, integrated design as part of applications) ○ bids to external bodies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. CBC officers have a good working relationship with CTCC, Sustrans, GCC officers involved in promoting cycling and is able to influence projects towards meeting opportunities. 3. Major projects include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. On-going discussions with Sustrans and GCC regarding Cheltenham-Bishop's Cleeve link. As yet unfunded. b. Progressing work through Cheltenham Spa Railway Station Forecourt project to prioritise link between Honeybourne Line and A40 Lansdown Road. Likely to be first element of the project. c. Contraflow cycling introduced through town centre to improve connectivity across town. Implemented through Cheltenham Transport Plan
Rec 1a: An equivalent exercise should be undertaken for walking	Councillors should work with residents and walking experts to draw up a wish list of improvements for residents. Locations should be identified for benches and funding identified for maintenance.	<p>Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route identification is not as advanced for walking as it is for cycling and the lobby group less active locally. • An exercise to identify route opportunities could be undertaken using existing staff resources. • Cabinet endorsement would then establish a basis for seeking implementation on an ad hoc basis through a variety of projects. • Implementation could be via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CBC funded projects (e.g. task force, parks, townscape projects) ○ support for projects funded by other bodies (e.g. GCC Highways, railway station) ○ planning applications (S106, CIL, integrated 	No progress to date. A project for the Walking and Cycling Advisory Group to consider (see Rec 7).

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		design as part of applications) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o bids to external bodies 	
Rec 2: Gloucestershire County Council should investigate and engage with Cheltenham residents in order to promote a borough wide 20mph default speed limit to make the environment safer and more attractive to walkers and cyclists.	A default speed limit does not mean that all roads will have a 20mph limit. Selected roads will have a higher speed limit, and a few may have an even lower limit. The Council should also investigate the possibility of securing additional funding for this from public health budgets	Agree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately a decision for the County Council. CBC would need to work with others to lobby for 20mph limits. • Cabinet would need more information to support a shift in this direction. Cabinet will lobby GCC to undertake further work to consider impacts, opportunities, extent of implementation etc. • Would need broad based political and community consensus. Timescale and staff resource - unclear. Level of work required is dependent on level of support within GCC.	CBC 20mph Member Working Group established. Currently developing a questionnaire for public consultation. No date yet on consultation.
Rec 3: Gloucestershire County Council should undertake an assessment aimed at removing guard rails, which are a key barrier to walking and encourage faster vehicle speeds.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree. • Guard rail removal and street declutter is an integral element in the design considerations for most street based projects (task force, GCC maintenance, GCC capital and safety schemes). This work is being considered as a low-cost, quick win through CDTF projects where funding is available.	CBC officers continue to lobby for guard rail removal where appropriate. CBC has removed of guard rail at High Street/St. George's Sq using GCC funding.
Rec 4: Benches should be strategically positioned along routes to allow people to rest – on inclines, at attractive viewpoints, at nodal points on the street and transport network (bus stops in particular	Benches are an important part of any walking strategy, for elderly and disabled people in particular. They need to be well maintained and comfortable.	Agree. A small budget exists for street bench repair, but is shared amongst other functions and focussed on repair. It is insufficient to launch a proactive strategy.	Identified as an important project, but currently there is insufficient staff time to implement. 1 new street bench implemented at Norwood Triangle in partnership with Cheltenham Connect. On-going repair programme continues.

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<p>Rec 5: Cheltenham Borough Council should work with the Cheltenham Trust and Gloucestershire County Council to promote cycling and walking within Cheltenham, especially once Thinktravel loses its LSTF funding in 2016.</p>	<p>i. Images of cycling and walking in Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Trust promotional material should depict them as attractive and normal activities for everybody.</p> <p>ii. The Cheltenham.gov.uk page: <i>Walking in Cheltenham</i> should be improved to promote walking within the borough.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council should work with Cheltenham Trust to create maps of walking routes within the town.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to agree approach on walking with the Trust, which currently holds information on leisure walking. <p>Subject to agreement of input from Trust.</p>	<p>No progress to date. A project for the Walking and Cycling Advisory Group to consider (see Rec 7).</p>						
<p>Rec 6: The needs of walkers and cyclists should be considered before other road users when making policy and planning decisions and their needs should be considered at the start of any major planning project.</p>	<p>i. At the start of any major project when the equality impact statement is carried out, the needs of cyclists and walkers should be considered (as two separate categories).</p> <p>ii. Cycling and walking are not the same mode and their needs should be considered separately in all policies and plans.</p> <p>iii. The planning hierarchy of transport modes adopted by the JCS should also be adopted by the Cheltenham Plan and applied to planning and policy decisions.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="416 1002 896 1311"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Hierarchy of Transport Modes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Highest</td> <td>1. Pedestrians and people with mobility difficulties 2. Cyclists 3. Public transport and social/ community services 4. Access by commercial vehicles 5. Ultra-low emission vehicles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lowest</td> <td>6. Other motorised vehicles</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>iv. Increased cycling provision should not be at</p>	Hierarchy of Transport Modes		Highest	1. Pedestrians and people with mobility difficulties 2. Cyclists 3. Public transport and social/ community services 4. Access by commercial vehicles 5. Ultra-low emission vehicles	Lowest	6. Other motorised vehicles	<p>Agree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning policy already aware and incorporating into relevant plans. Though there is no need to repeat the JCS hierarchy statement in the Cheltenham Plan Need to continue to raise awareness in development management and as part of projects. Some process adjustments already made. <p>These are policy and project process issues and should not, in themselves have cost implications.</p>	<p>Planning Policy established in JCS. Needs to carry forward to Cheltenham Plan</p> <p>Needs continued vigilance through the planning application system. Transport Projects Officer now more directly involved in planning application discussions.</p>
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	<p>the expense of walkers. Ideally cycle provision should not be on the footway. Where traffic speeds make it necessary, good quality segregation should be provided for bikes on the highway.</p> <p>v. If people are to be encouraged to walk, pedestrians need to have an at least equal level of service as other methods of transport and positive provision of space and safe crossing points. Their needs should be considered in the design of all public space including car parks.</p> <p>vi. Walking is a particularly important mode of transport for some groups of people such as those with visual impairment or other disabilities. The needs of these groups should be considered in planning and policy decisions.</p> <p>The Cheltenham Plan will consider the inclusion of separate walking and cycling policies</p>		
Rec 7: A cycling and walking working group should be created to provide input into projects.	This could operate in a similar way to the access working group with Wilf Tomaney as the facilitator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree. • Implement on a 6 monthly meeting cycle. • Composition as per O&S Task Group. • To act as advisory group only in respect of various projects as appropriate. • Cycle and Walking Champion (see below) to chair. • Governance arrangements subject to advice by Democratic Services. 	Work is currently underway to establish a walking and cycling group. A first meeting is imminent.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair to be the cycling and walking champion. 	
Rec 8: Cheltenham Borough Council should endorse the Gloucestershire County Council Cycling Strategy and draw up its own walking strategy.	The Gloucestershire County Council Cycling Strategy is likely to be adopted this municipal year. Cheltenham Borough Council could resolve to endorse it and take on some of its recommendations. There is no equivalent County Council strategy for walking, which strengthens the case for CBC producing its own walking strategy.	<p>Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycle Strategy – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBC should consider endorsing the GCC cycling strategy, which the Task Group broadly supported. Report required to Cabinet. Walking strategy – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely to have benefits, but this would be a major piece of work. Strategy preparation would need to cover routing plus a gamut of issues including joint working and corporate buy-in, health and others. Insufficient staff resource or skills. Likely to require consultancy advice. Report on feasibility required to Cabinet. 	<p>No progress in terms of endorsement of GCC cycle strategy. Needs report to cabinet.</p> <p>Walking Strategy would be a project to be delivered under auspices of the walking and cycling group.</p>
Rec 9: Cheltenham Borough Council should select a cycling and walking champion from its members.	This member could represent CBC on the GCC Cycle Forum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree – resolve to establish Cycling Champion. <p>A Member “champion” would drive the walking cycling agenda; report to cabinet; be available as a point of contact to consider project development.</p>	Councillor Max Wilkinson appointed as Cycling Champion February 2017
Rec 10: Cheltenham Borough Council should lead by example by devising and implementing its own green staff travel plan.		<p>Agree</p> <p>Work in hand – completion date March 2016.</p>	Staff Green Travel Plan approved by Cabinet October 2016.

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Rec 11: Cheltenham Borough Council should consider the introduction of Car Free Sundays.	This would involve the shutting of defined town centre streets to traffic one Sunday per month to allow for community events, following the example of successful schemes elsewhere.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to explore opportunities to implement car-free Sundays. • Officer report to Cabinet Member required. • An issue already being discussed by Cheltenham Business Partnership and Cheltenham Connect. Champion could promote. Needs GCC decision.	No progress to date
Rec 12: Cheltenham Borough Council should push for a more collaborative approach on street design, working across disciplines and departments and also across councils (County and Borough).		Agree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cycle/walking champion would be helpful in promoting multi-disciplinary working within and across organisations. Likely to affect planning, townscape, green space, property, CDT, car parks, tourism. 	High level joint officer group meets every 6 weeks Considering how GCC officers can work from CBC offices to ensure better working practice.