

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Planning and Development)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Please list any other meetings this report is going to i.e. Leader Brief, Cabinet with the date in the next column)	Thursday, 6 July 2023

## Cycling Project Update

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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### Purpose of the Report

- To provide the final update of the work undertaken to deliver a cycling project and to gain a wider understanding of cycling and wheeling within the Borough.

### Recommendations

- To receive the final report for the work undertaken on the cycling project for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Reasons for recommendations

- The specific actions noted in the March 2022 O&S report have been achieved. A number of these have been developed further and are on-going; to be progressed through individual SMT/EMB reports or through the Climate Change Working Group.

### Other options considered and rejected

- N/A

### Executive summary

- This report provides details on work undertaken as part of the cycling project, measured against actions proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Actions covered in this report include:
  - Use of comms, social media platforms and promotion of cycling
  - Online consultation of cycle users in the Borough (Residents)
  - Online consultation of cycle users in the Borough (Internal Council Staff)

- d. Provision for cycle parking across the Borough
- e. Engagement with Lancashire County Council
- f. Local Plan
- g. Engaging partners and preliminary options for further work

7. There are no HR or customer service implications resulting from this report.

### Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (Please bold one)

Housing where residents can live well	<b>A green and sustainable borough</b>
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	<b>Healthy, safe, and engaged communities</b>

### Background to the report

9. A recommendation was made to establish a cycling task group at the March 2022 Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was proposed that instead of a Task Group, a project of work was undertaken to achieve key objectives and to gain a wider understanding of cycling within the borough.
10. This report details the work undertaken on this project between March 2022 to present, with reference to on-going work packages.
11. It was proposed that the Cycling Project comprised measures intended to achieve several key objectives:
- a. Engage with our communities to develop a wider understanding of cycling needs in the borough
  - b. Use social media promote and raise awareness about cycling and the available resources in the Borough
  - c. Engage with Lancashire County Council to better understand the plans for future provision of cycling related infrastructure in the Borough
  - d. Engage our partners to develop an understanding of existing provision for cyclists for bike training, maintenance, and access to free equipment/security marking.
  - e. Develop policies in the new Local Plan to promote and enable cycling
12. The specific actions proposed for the Cycling Project are listed in the table below:

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1.	Use of comms and social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter etc to promote cycling in the borough including raising awareness of changes to the Highway Code and promotion of cycling as part of the refreshed Check out Chorley tourism campaign	Comms/ Spatial planning	A number of social media posts
2.	Online consultation of cycle users in the Borough	Spatial planning/ Comms	Citizenspace survey undertaken late Spring and survey findings to be reported back to members inform future cycle priorities and actions
3.	Explore provision for cycle parking in the	Spatial	Report with recommendations

	Borough focussing on the Town Centre and service centres across the borough	planning	including locations, costs, and next steps to be presented to members
4.	Engage with Lancashire County Council to investigate plans for cycle infrastructure in Chorley	Spatial planning	Present findings to members as to plans /costs and any opportunities for the Council to enable scheme delivery.
5.	Engage partners ( statutory/voluntary sector) to find out what the offer is for Chorley residents/cyclists for cycle training, bike maintenance courses (particularly targeted at vulnerable cyclists, excluded or minority groups ) and any free or low cost equipment opportunities (for example bike lights, helmets etc)	Spatial planning	Identify what provision exists and ways to promote these and /or gaps or opportunities which would encourage higher volumes of cycling in the borough.

13. Intermediate work updates have been provided to the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG), where a steer also has been provided by members for work packages.

### **Use of communications, social media platforms and promotion of cycling**

14. There is an objective to raise the profile of cycling and educate using social media, as one of the barriers to cycling is lack of confidence and a perception that cyclists should not be given the same priority on the highway as motor vehicles. Recent changes to the Highway Code, e.g. the hierarchy of road users, are intended to address this. The intention was to build on that and use it as a platform to raise awareness. Communications Team have put out some posts regarding the changes to the highway code at the beginning of this project. However, it is intended others will be released periodically.
15. Check Out Chorley website has a dedicated cycling section, including urban and rural cycling maps for the Borough, as well as links to local cycling groups and suggested routes.
16. Chorley Council Climate Change website has also included a sustainable transport section.

### **Online consultation of cycle users in the Borough (Residents)**

17. An active travel consultation took place online using Citizen Space from the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 to the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022.
18. The survey was designed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the main issues, understanding and wants of the residents in Chorley with respect to active travel methods. Input was sought from Sustrans during the drafting stage, to improve the accessibility and wording of questions. For example, by using inclusive language as we recognise that some people who use wheeled mobility aids, for example a wheelchair or mobility scooter user, may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling.
19. The questions within the survey were a mix of multiple choice (quantitative) and open questions (qualitative). Questions covered all areas of active travel provision including,

walking, wheeling, and cycling for daily journeys and commuting, as well as storage and infrastructure.

20. Explanations were designed to manage expectations and what Chorley Council could realistically manage to do. Reference to LCC (as the highways authority) was made where necessary.
21. Due to issues around GDPR the consultation was aimed at older teenagers and adults. This was felt to be appropriate in this instance as the aim was to find the views of people who could drive but may consider active travel as an alternative.
22. The consultation was promoted on Chorley Council's social media pages, with several sponsored posts promoted on social media during the period of the consultation. This was supported by a press release sent to local newspapers to raise awareness.
23. Internally the consultation was promoted via Yammer, In the Know, Parish liaison and at working group meetings
24. An email detailing the consultation was also sent out to relevant local cycling and green groups.
25. The online survey received **179 responses**, of which **2** were on behalf of local cycling groups:
  - a. The Bus Stop Bikers Cycling Group: an informal recreational cycling group catering for beginners to experienced cyclists, ranging in age from teenagers to well into the seventies.
  - b. Horwich Ride Social: a voluntary group that provides social rides for both ladies only and mixed groups covering all ride disciplines.
  - c. There were no written responses.
  - d. Social media comments were also collated for themes to be captured from comments made outside of the formal consultation. These responses are noted at the end of the report.
26. Key themes emerging from the responses include:
  - a. The majority of respondents reported that they would visit Chorley's towns and villages more and spend more time and money if there were improved cycling facilities.
  - b. The top three most popular infrastructure measures were: New segregated cycleways, Pedestrianised areas and Incentives for residents/visitors to walk or cycle.
  - c. Interest was also shown for the following three categories:
    - i. Bike maintenance (Beginners maintenance courses, free minor repair workshops and security marking).
    - ii. Cycling courses and training for children and adults.
    - iii. Group leisure activities, including guided ride and walks.
    - iv. An app offering rewards for green choices
  - d. Road Safety – Including traffic, road surface condition, lighting and signage, obstructed cycle lanes, gully cleaning and education.
  - e. Infrastructure – Cycle parking and storage, suggestions for new or upgraded off-road routes (including bridleways).
  - f. Personal topics – Impact on vulnerable groups, personal barriers, and health.

- g. Connections to other public transport.
27. Other themes raised include:
- a. Design of the consultation
  - b. The science behind climate change
  - c. Items not related to the consultation.
28. Recommended Actions Arising from the Survey:
- a. Assess provision and distribution of secure cycle storage facilities to ensure it is attractive to use and near to where people need to go.
  - b. Comments relating to other projects are being collated to be passed onto the officer working on them for their information, e.g. Canal towpath improvements.
  - c. Comments regarding highways will feed into the infrastructure work with LCC.
  - d. Develop and deliver periodic communications to the public regarding the benefits of active travel, linked with climate change and air quality messages through the website and social media channels where appropriate.
  - e. Link with partners or leisure colleagues to investigate potential or promote existing cycle training, group leisure opportunities and cycle maintenance/repair workshops.

### **Online consultation of cycle users in the Borough (Internal Council Staff)**

29. With cycling to work still very low at the Council, an internal survey was released to understand why staff were not cycling to work and what measures could be taken to improve cycle to work rates.
30. The survey ran February – March 2023 and promoted on the Loop and through email with the Senior Leadership Team.
31. The survey received a total of 26 responses, all but one of the respondents had no interest in cycling to work. Reasons given for this include:
- a. living a long distance from work
  - b. childcare responsibilities around work hours
  - c. lack of desire to due to perceived fitness levels
  - d. weight of kit which must be taken to and from work (e.g. the new laptop system)
  - e. lack of or out-dated shower facilities, with staff feeling uncomfortable waiting for single shower facilities
32. Survey respondents suggested measures which could lead to increased interest in cycling to work:
- a. Provisions of secure cycle storage near to work locations, this could be indoors, due to the expense of the bikes
  - b. Comfortable changing facilities
33. In 2022 secure cycle storage units were installed at Bengal Street Depot. Usage has been low despite promotion. Internal survey suggests they are too far from where people work, (Town Hall to Bengal Street).
34. As part of the wider accommodation project, officers are looking at how the design of the Town Hall basement could be adapted to include secure indoor cycle storage along with access, large lockers for storage and improvements to the basement shower facilities, which are also due for renewal in this project.

35. HR have also started to look at a relaunch of the “cycle2work” scheme available to staff. This is a government initiative which offers the most cost-effective way to get new cycling equipment and is designed to get more people cycling to work by offering a tax free, salary sacrifice scheme for purchase of bikes and equipment.

### Provision for cycle parking across the Borough

36. Officers have explored provision for cycle parking/storage initially focussing on the Town Centre and service centres across the borough. Work is on-going to identify suitable sites for new bike storage pods/bins and a trial on Portland Street car park to assess public appetite.
37. The Council would like to place a total of 6 secure cycle storage facilities on the Portland St car park as a trial for secure cycle storage use in the Town Centre. This will comprise relocating 2 underused bike bin units from the staff trial and will require the purchase of 4 additional units.
38. The cost of bike bins is £500 each, therefore the 4 additional storage units will be £2,000 to funded through the Climate Change budget.
39. The Council has provided several open bike storage rails throughout the Town Centre. However, the lack secure storage was raised by residents as some bikes are very expensive and can be subject to vandalism or theft. Open racks are acceptable for short-term cycle parking, whereas the cycle storage bins provide longer term alternatives.
40. The proposal is for the 6 bike bins to be secured on Portland St car park balancing a location near to railway, bus station and town centre, allowing storage for people completing a journey using public transport or for those who work in the town centre.



41. Figure 1 Plan of Portland Street car park showing the design and proposed location of secure cycle storage units.

42. Members at the CCWG raised concerns over the design of the units. Chorley Council will own these bike bins, which can have designed sticker branding added to make them more appealing during the trial.
43. If the trial is successful and the units are used by residents, officers will investigate alternative designs going forward for a larger roll-out.
44. The trial will be promoted on the Council's social media pages and the Town Centre Ambassadors will be monitoring usage over the period to understand uptake and monitor any misuse of the units.
45. The uptake will allow the Council to understand the scale of secure cycle storage required, to allow budgets to be set and this information can also be fed into the EV Feasibility Study which covers cycle storage and bike storage points.
46. Two storage units will still be available to staff at the Bengal Street Depot.
47. Following the completion of the trial a decision can be made as to whether the bike storage bins are relocated for staff or distributed to other assets such as leisure or community centres.
48. The summer period will also provide a greater indication of peak usage due to the more palatable weather when cycling rates are usually higher.
49. Concerns have also been raised regarding the impact of taking short-stay car parking spaces out of use as part of the trial or longer-term storage unit placement. A request was made to consider the grassed areas or hashed sections of the car parks. This was not considered viable for the current trial due to potential safety conflicts between cyclists and cars in the hashed areas, and lack of suitable groundwork to anchor the storage units securely on the grassed areas. If the trial is successful and rolled out further, all options will be considered regarding permanent placement.
50. Alternative cycle storage provision is being considered for the Borough's more rural or touristic locations, which would be more in keeping with the surrounding environment, e.g. Astley Park.
51. These examples utilise trunks from fallen trees, which could be obtained at relatively low cost with notches cut in for bicycle wheels and metal hooks for locking.
52. The National Trust and some wildlife trusts have examples of these installed on their properties:



Figure 2 Example of tree trunk bike rack from the National Trust

### **Next Steps for Delivery of Cycle Storage**

53. The town centre cycling trial will be the first work package, success will be evaluated before further options are considered.
54. Officers are now finalising costs, design options (to make them more attractive for a prominent location) and assessing final locations (taking on member concerns).
55. Approval to proceed will be sought from SMT, Leader Brief and then CCWG.
56. Due to lead times for design and report writing it is envisaged to have final approval and installation by September 2023.
57. The trial will last for approximately 2 months and will be supported by promotion on social media and support from the Town Centre Ambassadors to ensure success and for any questions to be answered and issues resolved as soon as practically possible.
58. Following this time, the usage figures and any problems or conflicts encountered will be reflected upon to decide on the viability and future work packages.

### **Engagement with Lancashire County Council**

59. The work with LCC is on-going. We have engaged with LCC on the forthcoming Central Lancs Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) revision.
60. Chorley have been feeding into County our preferred options within Chorley and on connections outside of the Borough such as to South Ribble, Preston, Wigan and Bolton. This has included resident responses from our local consultation and advice sought from our own transport consultants, Tetra Tech who are producing the Chorley Transport Strategy, and the draft Chorley Transport strategy has also been shared.



61. Jacobs, LCC's appointed transport consultants are currently refining the plans based on comments from all Lancs Local Authorities and interested parties (e.g. Sustrans). This work is on-going at County level and we are awaiting the draft LCWIP proposals to share with members.
62. LCC have obtained money from the government Active Travel Fund, after looking into this for Chorley the funding rules state it is only available for Highways/Transport authorities and is not available to district councils.
63. During the Emergency ATF in 2020, a number of pop-up cycle routes and low-traffic neighbourhoods were implemented – one of which was along Shady Lane in Cuerden.
64. LCC have communicated that some previously planned routes in Chorley, e.g. Park Road (from town centre to A6), which were not progressed as part of Covid restart funding do remain a priority for the district as well as the LCWIP work.
65. For Active Travel Fund 4, there are no schemes from Chorley in the shortlist.
66. Going forward, The LCC Active Travel team would like to be a consultee for planning applications and feed in views about how active travel can be enabled for developments. This is currently being progressed and would enable improved 'designing in' for active travel in future developments.

### **Next Step for Engagement with Lancashire County Council**

67. We will continue to engage on the LCWIP and bring the plans to Local Plan Working Group and Climate Change Working Group for information as soon as they are received.
68. We will also continue to lobby for active travel investment in Chorley and push for projects with LCC.

### **Local Plan**

69. The emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan includes a spatial strategy that seeks to direct development to the most sustainable locations which will help to reduce reliance on cars and encourage active travel. The design and layout of new developments can also reduce the dominance of cars and provide permeability to support active travel, and better walking and cycling links can help support more active and healthy lifestyles.
70. Policy direction 20 Active Travel (included below) sets out the policy approach to be taken in the new Local Plan and this will be developed into specific policy.

#### **Policy Direction 20: Active Travel**

A higher proportion of journeys made by walking, wheeling, and cycling will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring development proposals are in accordance with the spatial strategy.

2. Increasing the capacity of the walking, wheeling, and cycling network across Central Lancashire in locations where significant growth in the number of short journeys is anticipated.
3. Protecting existing land designations that support active travel such as open spaces.

New developments must enable and encourage active travel by:

1. Being located in proximity to essential services and facilities to minimise the need to travel, where feasible within a 20 minutes public transport journey.
  2. Ensuring footpaths and related infrastructure (e.g. kissing gates etc.) are disability and pram accessible as standard and include measures to reduce pavement parking.
  3. Prioritising sustainable transport over the use of the private car, by creating safe, attractive, and integrated walking, wheeling, and cycling routes/provision within the development.
  4. Being fully integrated and connected to existing walking and cycling infrastructure where feasible.
  5. Providing cycle storage, electric bike charging, changing and showering facilities in all Class E developments.
  6. Providing cycle storage in apartment block developments.
  7. Incorporating attractive active travel connections to public transport hubs. A Sustainable Travel Plan must be submitted with planning applications for new development demonstrating how the above criteria have been met.
71. The Part Two Preferred Options Consultation (draft local plan) which is expected late 2023/early 2024, will include all the partners referenced in the report including the Active Travel Team to ensure the policies are fit for purpose and achieve the objective of enabling more cycling across Chorley.

### **Engaging partners and preliminary options for further work**

72. This section of work is on-going and comprises an investigation of further measures in response to residents' and members' feedback.
73. There are several existing partners which provide resources for bike training, maintenance, and equipment across Lancashire. These include:
- Wyre Wheels offer four weeks of LCC funded training sessions for people who are disabled, have limited mobility, recovering from illness or injury or elderly.
  - Love to Ride Lancashire, provides an information resource for riding and maintenance tips as well as a social space.
  - LCC use funding from the Department for Transport to offer some free Likeability training courses, which are delivered by Go Velo (a Lancashire based cycle training company).
74. Chorley Council have partnered with some of these organisations on other projects and we are collating updated information to provide greater visibility of these resources by signposting on social media channels and in updates to the Chorley Council Climate Change website.

75. Some local authorities offer directories of local cycle shops, national organisations and local route maps on the own websites. As mentioned above Check Out Chorley provides some of this already.
76. Bike maintenance opportunities were raised by some residents to help build knowledge and South Ribble Borough Council have periodically offered free bike repair sessions for residents, which have been very successful.
77. South Ribble Borough Council have accessed funding through the Big Bike Revival with Cycling UK for a programme of free bike servicing. There were positively received, and sessions are now funded through members ward budgets.
78. Figures received from the South Ribble Active Health team suggest that a 2-hour Dr Bike session costs around £200, if provided by in-house expertise. Whereas an external supplier can cost upwards of £300 from a reputable supplier, such as GoVelo.
79. Spaces for residents are usually booked in advance to allow for appropriate work planning.
80. The repairs undertaken are:
  - Brakes (cables, balancing, blocks)
  - Gears (cables and indexing)
  - New inner tubes/puncture repairs
  - New Handlebar Grips
  - General service/clean/lubrication
  - If clients bring parts (new headsets, tyres, new derailleurs) they are fitted at no cost, but are not provided through the scheme.
81. As LCC is the highways authority Chorley Council is limited in the hard infrastructure solutions we can provide. However, where possible and to complement a future roll-out of cycle-storage, officers have started preliminary work to investigate alternative infrastructure suitable for our own land or properties. These include:
  - a. Stands:
    - i. Cost around £1000-£1200 for a complete model with tools and pump
    - ii. Normally sited in secure/semi-secure areas e.g. cycle parking, railway stations, tourism facilities.
    - iii. Cheaper versions exist (e.g. ~£600 for just a pump).
    - iv. Often aimed at commuters to provide facilities for puncture repairs etc.
    - v. If the new cycle parking/storage is a success this may be worth investigating further to improve the offer.
  - b. E-bike charging
    - i. Facilities for charging e-bikes are not yet common away from home, though some businesses allow battery charging from a standard socket within commercial premises (e.g. cafes)
    - ii. Outside chargers traditionally require connection to a mains circuit extension from a building can be costly
    - iii. Investigating as part of wider electric vehicle work.
    - iv. Solar alternatives Currently being trailed across some NHS properties to improve staff health and with decarbonisation efforts.
    - v. Cost is around £5,000 for complete system with solar panel and battery.

82. The progression of the higher cost measures is dependent on the results from the storage trial to see if there is a genuine need for these before committing officer time and taking further.

### **Next Step for Engagement with Partners**

83. A paper will be brought to the CCWG setting out what we can offer as a Council for bike maintenance and training, which may include a scheme like South Ribble Borough Council or alternatives.
84. Investigate potential for revamping Council webpages (including whether it is a better fit on the Leisure or Climate pages) to include directory useful links to local and national cycling suppliers/organisations.

### **Climate change and air quality**

85. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.
86. In particular the report impacts on the following activities:
1. **net carbon zero by 2030,**
  2. energy use / renewable energy sources
  3. waste and the use of single use plastics,
  4. **sustainable forms of transport,**
  5. **air quality,**
  6. flooding risks,
  7. green areas and biodiversity.
87. The following mitigation measures have been undertaken to limit the environmental impact:
1. The environmental footprint of the proposed measures will be considered as the measures are taken forward, as some will depend on usage figures from the storage trial.

### **Equality and diversity**

88. Input was sought from Sustrans during the drafting of the public consultation, to improve the accessibility. For example, by using inclusive language, such as the term “wheeling”, we recognise that some people who use wheeled mobility aids (a wheelchair or mobility scooter) may not identify with the terms walking or cycling.
89. No impact assessment has been completed for this report, as impacts will be considered via an EIA as part of the proposed works taken forward.

### **Risk**

90. Overall risk of the work undertaken in this report is low. Though there are areas which should be considered as part of developing future projects:
91. Reputational risk, considered low:

1. There could be conflict between perceptions of different road users and vulnerable groups and responses to social media posts.
  2. Inappropriately designed infrastructure for vulnerable users.
92. Operational risk, considered low currently:
1. Need to ascertain if resident consultation responses translate into real world actions, the town centre storage trial should help with this, prior to committing to funding further infrastructure measures.
  2. Locations of proposed infrastructure to be considered to reduce space conflict following assessment of storage trial, as part of viability assessment for permanent locations.
  3. Potential vandalism of cycling and infrastructure assets.

### Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

93. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### Comments of the Monitoring Officer

94. There are re no legal implications arising from this report.

### Background documents

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Sustainable Public Transport Second Monitoring Report 17/03/2022. [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 17th March 2022, 6.30 pm \(chorley.gov.uk\)](https://www.chorley.gov.uk/Agenda/Agenda-for-Overview-and-Scrutiny-Committee-on-Thursday-17th-March-2022-6.30-pm)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cycling Update (Verbal) 16/03/2023. [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 16th March 2023, 6.30 pm \(chorley.gov.uk\)](https://www.chorley.gov.uk/Agenda/Agenda-for-Overview-and-Scrutiny-Committee-on-Thursday-16th-March-2023-6.30-pm)

### Appendices

List the appendices in the order that they are attached to the report with titles as appropriate. Any spreadsheets/diagrams should be in pdf format and be headed up.

Appendix A: <https://checkoutchorley.com/cycling/>

Appendix B: <https://chorley.gov.uk/ClimateChange#Sustainable%20transport>

Appendix C: <https://www.lovetoride.net/uk?locale=en-GB>

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
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This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.