

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 24 January 2022

Report Title

Rotherham Cycling Strategy (2021)

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The draft Rotherham Cycle Strategy 2021 was approved to go to public consultation by Cabinet on the 22 March 2021. This report provides analysis of the consultation responses received, and resulting revisions to the strategy. Promoting the use of cycling to benefit health and well-being, the economy and the environment, the strategy will deliver improvements both in the Council's existing cycle network and also set out its ambitions and objectives for investing in and expanding Rotherham's cycling provision. This report seeks approval for adoption of the draft strategy provided at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

1. To note the consultation responses and subsequent findings
2. To adopt the Rotherham Cycling Strategy.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Rotherham Cycling Strategy (Final Draft)
Appendix 2 Consultation summary report (presentation)
Appendix 3 Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Sheffield City Region (SCR) Transport Strategy
Rotherham Transport Strategy
SCR Active Travel Implementation Plan (ATIP)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham Cycling Strategy 2021 Consultation Findings

1. Background

- 1.1 Recent years has seen a significant increase in the role of Active Travel to address a range of policy aims from carbon reduction to health & wellbeing outcomes, especially improvements to mental health as well as more recently its role in the recent COVID-19 pandemic. This has brought cycling and provisions to enable active travel into sharp focus at a national, regional and local level.
- 1.2 Key to this has been the provision of external funding which has so far delivered the Fenton Road Cycleway, in Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) Round 1. In Round 2 TCF funding was confirmed early in 2020 at £166m for South Yorkshire. As part of this, Rotherham has a number of projects totalling almost £30m being delivered over 3 years to 2023. In addition, the Council has bid for funding from the DfT Active Travel Fund and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) for £1.5m for a new segregated cycle way on Broom Lane together with improvements in the surrounding area and at Clifton Road junction. Approval for this funding is pending.
- 1.3 The condition of existing highway cycle routes in Rotherham is varied with faded lining, overgrowing vegetation, and the collection of debris in a number of locations, potentially discouraging cycling along a number of routes.
- 1.4 In 2020-21 the Council provided additional funding as part of a wider streetscene allocation of £450,000 to improve the maintenance of existing cycle routes to include the Council's cycle lane lining, removal of overgrowing vegetation and weeds, and more regular maintenance. The aim is to provide a well-maintained and attractive cycle network to encourage cycling, which is a high priority within Rotherham and South Yorkshire.
- 1.5 Key to all of this activity is the need to set out a plan to outline the Council's ambition for cycling, provide a clear basis for further growth and investment in the cycle network and promote the use of cycling for a variety of benefits. This includes improving health and mental wellbeing, providing economic and sustainable alternatives to the car for shorter journeys and helping improve the sense of place within communities by removing unnecessary car journeys in village centres and residential areas.
- 1.6 The draft Rotherham Cycling Strategy was produced early in 2021 and approved to go to public consultation by Cabinet on 22 March 2021. This report advises on the results of the consultation and seeks approval for the adoption of the revised draft cycling strategy for Rotherham.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The draft Rotherham Cycling Strategy 2021 consultation opened on 2 July 2021 and closed on 27 August 2021.
- 2.2 The consultation process received 86 responses, including 74 from within

Rotherham. These responses have been analysed, and changes made to the strategy, with the findings reported at Appendix 2 along with a description of the changes made to the document.

- 2.3 The consultation identified a number of key aspects of cycling in Rotherham at the present time and provided useful insights into peoples' views on the role cycling currently does, and in future could, play in their day to day lives.

Key aspects from the consultation were:-

- There needs to be more engagement with local communities to gain a better understanding of how cycling as a travel choice can be improved, especially in areas with low cycling uptake.
- The greatest scope in increasing cycling is by people already cycling, there is therefore a need to understand more about the needs of non-cyclists.
- Individual benefits such as for enjoyment and especially health motivate more than the wider benefits to society such as environmental or congestion reduction - though these reasons are cited by a minority of people, especially less frequent cyclists.
- Danger from traffic is seen as the biggest barrier to cycling. This suggests the strategy's main focus should be not only on effective measures for actual but also perceived safety.
- Not having a bicycle was the second most cited barrier amongst non-cyclists. A lack of information on existing routes which was seen as a notable barrier for infrequent cyclists, though not for non-cyclists.
- A significant minority of non-cyclists and infrequent cyclists saw trip length, topography, weather and journey time as a barrier to cycling.
- Punitive measures such as higher parking charges were seen as unlikely to encourage more cycling. Instead, more cycle paths are seen as the single most effective intervention with the second being traffic volume reduction which was seen as considerably more important than slower traffic. This reinforces the focus of the proposed Rotherham Cycling Strategy.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Option 1 – The Council could choose not to agree a strategy. Given the role of active travel in the Council's strategic objectives and responsibilities, for instance in promoting mental health, physical wellbeing, carbon reduction and sustainability, and taking account of the widespread public appeal for good-quality active travel options, having no plan may result in inefficient use of resources and missed opportunities for instance for further external funding. This option is not recommended.
- 3.2 Option 2 – The Council could agree a simple delivery plan, similar to an action plan. However, without recording the context, aims and objectives for such a plan, this option would result in a similar outcome to that in 3.1 by having the risk of inefficient use of resources and missed opportunities arising from more joined-up thinking. This option is not recommended.

3.3 Option 3 – A new cycling strategy document can be used to ensure that all strategic objectives are considered and can act as both an action plan and also an engagement tool with key partners and the public. This is the recommended option.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Public consultation was undertaken between 2 July and 27 August 2021. The results of this consultation are reported in Appendix 2 and an overview in section 2.3 above.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 If the revised strategy is approved by Cabinet, it will be published on the Council's website within four weeks.

5.2 Actions indicated in the strategy will be subject to availability of funding, and separate reports and decisions will be required in respect of those actions.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 The creation and approval of the Cycling Strategy is developed from within existing approved Council budgets and in itself does not commit the Council to further expenditure.

6.2 There are no direct procurement implications in this report. However, where any goods, services or works are required from external organisations to support the cycling strategy outcomes these will be procured in compliance with the Council's Finance and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the adoption of the Cycling Strategy as proposed in this report. There will be direct legal implications arising from individual measures taken as a result of the adoption of the Cycling Strategy, such as the requirement for Traffic Regulation Orders, and at that time the appropriate statutory procedure will be followed.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no Human Resources impacts related to the approval of this report's recommendations. Work on the strategy will be contained within the council's Transport Infrastructure Service and within existing or procured consultancy services procured in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Provision of safe and accessible cycle lanes on the highway contribute to the council's objectives for "thriving neighbourhoods" and "better health & wellbeing".

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Monitoring of demographics reported in response to the consultation highlights a low response rate from some groups with protected characteristics. Revised text is included to highlight the need for further, intensive consultation as schemes are developed to ensure the needs of all are taken into account.
- 10.2 When the strategy is formally adopted it will result in infrastructure schemes being delivered and programmes of activity (education and safety training for example) being commissioned. It is proposed that all schemes will receive an Equality Screening and where deemed necessary will progress to a full Equality Assessment. This will ensure all schemes are designed and constructed to take account of the needs of all road users.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The draft Rotherham Cycling Strategy 2021 provides the authority with a sound basis on which to develop and deliver a safe network of on road and off-road routes to facilitate an uptake in cycling. Were it implemented fully, it is estimated that the strategy could deliver a saving in carbon emissions from cars of up to 4% (based on 2018 levels).
- 11.2 Achieving those savings will be dependent on regional and national authorities providing the Borough with sufficient funding, and sufficient freedom to deliver on the most proven and successful approaches for cycling infrastructure. It should be noted that the level of carbon saving associated with active travel in the national Transport Decarbonisation Carbon, and statements in respect of length of cycleways to be provided nationally in the Government's Net Zero Strategy, are both around an order of magnitude less than might be expected of the approach taken in the Rotherham Cycling Strategy, suggesting there may be challenges in securing adequate funding.
- 11.3 Construction of cycling infrastructure will generate additional carbon emissions. Based on the International Energy Authority's analysis, these could be expected to amount to less than 5% of the savings of emissions from cars in the best-case scenario.
- 11.4 Cycling plays only a small role in reducing car mileage and emissions. It may be able to contribute a wider role if aligned to policies of localisation (i.e. reducing demand for travel) and reduced car ownership (i.e. reducing need or desire for second cars could ease the task of moving to electric powered cars). However, it is important that providing for cycling does not detract from messaging and action on long and medium distance car travel which is

disproportionately responsible for generating emissions - ~90% of car emissions in the Borough are generated on trips longer than 5 miles, and ~72% are generated on trips longer than 10 miles.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 A range of partner organisations exist on the subject of Active Travel such as cycling interest groups and associations, Parish/Town Councils with an interest in improving their local environment, educational establishments, as well as disability groups who wish to see the interests of their members accommodated in schemes affecting the highway and wider public realm.
- 12.2 These groups have been engaged as part of the public consultation process and their responses have been acknowledged as part of the findings contained in the attached report at Appendix 2.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The only risk presented at this stage is the risk of not having a strategy as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 13.2 Further reports on risks and mitigation will be required as the strategy is delivered across the borough.

14. Accountable Officers

Andrew Moss, Interim Head of Transport Infrastructure

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

| | Named Officer | Date |
|--|----------------------|-------------|
| Chief Executive | Sharon Kemp | 10/01/22 |
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer) | Judith Badger | 23/12/21 |
| Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) | Phil Horsfield | 17/12/21 |

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).