



Report to Policy Committee

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Report of: Kate Martin, City Futures

Report to: Transport, Regeneration and Climate

Date of Decision: 13 March, 2024

Subject: Sheffield Active Travel Infrastructure Plan: initial public engagement proposals

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2629				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

This report summarises our proposed approach to delivering initial public engagement this summer to feed into preparation of the Sheffield Active Travel Infrastructure Plan.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Committee:

- Note the contents of the report and approve the approaches outlined to delivering initial public engagement in support of the development of a Sheffield Active Travel Implementation Plan
- Approve the commissioning of a community engagement specialist to assist in finalising the engagement plan, to work alongside Council officers in delivering engagement this summer and to produce a report summarising the findings for TRC in September

Background Papers: n/a

Lead Officer to complete:						
1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="4">I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.</td> <td>Finance: Holly Nicholl, Assistant Finance Manager</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal: Richard Cannon, Planning and Highways Professional Officer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton & Alaina Briggs, Equality and Engagement officers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Climate: Laura Ellendale, Sustainability Programme Officer</td> </tr> </table>	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Holly Nicholl, Assistant Finance Manager	Legal: Richard Cannon, Planning and Highways Professional Officer	Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton & Alaina Briggs, Equality and Engagement officers	Climate: Laura Ellendale, Sustainability Programme Officer
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	Climate: Laura Ellendale, Sustainability Programme Officer					
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>						
2	SLB member who approved submission: Kate Martin					
3	Committee Chair consulted: Cllr Ben Miskell					
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lead Officer Name: Greg Challis</td> <td>Job Title: Senior Transport Planner</td> </tr> </table>		Lead Officer Name: Greg Challis	Job Title: Senior Transport Planner			
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Date: 5 th March 2024						

1. PROPOSAL

1.0 Background to the Sheffield Active Travel Infrastructure Plan

- 1.1 Active travel (AT) schemes in Sheffield are typically funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) with funding drawn down via the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). By active travel we mean walking, wheeling (using mobility aids such as wheelchairs and pushchairs) and cycling. Such schemes contribute towards healthier and more active neighbourhoods. Securing funding presents an opportunity to invest in the street scene to create a cleaner, greener, safer Sheffield. More people walking, wheeling and cycling to local destinations, particularly when these replace short local car trips, makes for more liveable and attractive places for people and enhances the quality of day-to-day life.
- 1.2 Active Travel England (ATE), an arm of the DfT, have specifically designated a Capability and Ambition Fund to support local authorities in the development of AT schemes. Sheffield's share of the initial regional allocation is £398,480, with a 60/40% split between work which supports capability building on the one hand and behavioural change on the other. The Council has thus been awarded a specific pot of money which can be utilised to help it put together a more robust forward plan of interventions.
- 1.3 Developing proposals for future active travel schemes requires a comprehensive, underpinning evidence base. An essential component of this evidence is to be gleaned through public and stakeholder engagement. Thus officers have prepared this proposal for early community engagement as part of developing a Sheffield Active Travel Infrastructure Plan (SATIP). This is intended to take place alongside work by other South Yorkshire districts to develop their own plans. There will be input and support for us all from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) Active Travel officers, the AT Commissioner and the Mayor.
- 1.4 This work will support a SYMCA 'City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement' (CRSTS) tranche 2 funding bid to the DfT, anticipated to be later this calendar year. CRSTS2 is expected to be the most significant (largest) funding pot next available. We anticipate SYMCA will be submitting the bid in Autumn 2024, although DfT may require indicative programmes in advance of this. Tranche 2 funding will be for 2027 through to 2032. Active travel investment through CRSTS tranche 1 prioritised strategic cycle route interventions. CRSTS tranche 2 is expected to have a broader focus with more emphasis on enabling walking for short journeys to key local destinations.
- 1.5 This report sets out the proposed approach to early engagement based upon what the Council has learned in preparing and implementing AT schemes in the city along with Member feedback on the need to involve people locally in the development of such proposals.

1.6 **Reviewing our work with the public around active travel**

In February 2023 a series of three workshops, brought together by SCC Public Health and behavioural science specialists from Sheffield Hallam University, was held with TRC Members. These were set up to understand barriers and enablers to communicating safer, more sustainable environments and journeys.

Key findings were:

- Insufficient public understanding of our overall vision for Sheffield
- Information gaps about scheme detail, long lead in times/delays or disrupted engagement reduces this understanding
- Insufficient information about schemes and use of different terms/jargon may have contributed to limited public support and allowed the vacuum to be filled by inaccurate perceptions about scheme purposes and potential outcomes

1.7 The approach outlined in this report seeks to address these concerns. It sets out an approach to conducting engagement, especially early public facing work, in a manner which is more sensitive and responsive to the community.

1.8 **Key parameters defining our approach**

In summary, parameters are determined by parallel workstreams, policy requirements and wider outcomes as follows:

- The work Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (TRC) is currently leading to produce a **Transport Vision for Sheffield**. This will provide a clear ambition for the future of transport in the city and explain what this means for people, communities and businesses.
- This Vision will complement and aim to build on intensive work undertaken to draw up the **City Goals**, developed through a wide-ranging grass roots conversation. A broad spectrum of people contributed, explaining what mattered to them and helping create an understanding of what our city stands for. It pulled together people's lived experiences to sit alongside existing research and evidence.
- The **policies outlined in the Sheffield Transport Strategy** (2019-33). These detailed the role AT schemes play in enabling the economy (by a small but significant reduction in congestion on specific corridors); improve the environment (by repurposing road space and making our streets more pleasant places); and reducing inequality (by better connecting people to public transport, education and employment opportunities, and services locally).

- Increasing active travel is also a key objective in **The Way We Travel** decarbonisation route map. Approved by TRC July 2023, it is a key shaping document for the Transport Vision now being developed. Transport activity needs to reduce climate impacts, including engagement activities, and align with the principles.
- The **outcomes required by the funders** (in this instance DfT) from the investment they are making. This, in turn, is based upon the proven benefits, acknowledged by Government, which arise for communities from AT interventions.

1.9 Existing knowledge and research: towards better engagement

For the evidence base underpinning the **Sheffield Transport Strategy** the Council conducted a city-wide, weighted survey which included questions to understand public views on active travel. This reached almost 2000 people and suggested a strong appetite for people to cycle but safety was a key concern, especially for women, where mixing with heavy volumes of motorised traffic.

- 1.10 DfT supported modelling for the South Yorkshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (predecessor to SATIP) indicated key localities which had significant potential for uptake of active travel. Using this knowledge, the Council prepared a proposal for Darnall as part of a Government **Mini Holland** competitive bid process. Officers conducted quite intensive research in the local area to identify and meet community needs and DfT requirements, although this DfT funding stream was later withdrawn.
- 1.11 An LGA-sponsored project involving six local authorities across our region, including Sheffield, looked at using behaviour change techniques to encourage active travel. It deployed the Capability/Opportunity/Motivation-Behaviour (**COM-B**) change model to identify supporting measures that may be needed to maximise take up of AT infrastructure locally. This was part of the extensive work which Public Health have led, including partnering with Sheffield Hallam University researchers, to develop understanding of and apply this low cost yet effective behaviour change intervention. Public health continues to do valuable work in this field, including collaborating with SYMCA in working up research proposals to test the existing evidence base, define key messages and more on behavioural insights. All learnings will be fed into developing our engagement approaches. This is a continual process based on keeping up to date with relevant research and refining our approach given ongoing community feedback and input.

- 1.12 The knowledge that we already have about **public attitudes to AT** stemming from the extensive body of research conducted both locally and nationally. This shows that people want to walk and, to a lesser extent, cycle more in their local areas but, they stress, it needs to be safer for them to do so.
- 1.13 Schools, as significant trip generators, **engage with parents** about why they travel the way they do as part of ModeshiftSTARS accreditations (School Travel Plans). Similar questions have been posed when consulting for 'School Streets'. Findings indicate the main reasons why parents drive – distance, part of a chain trip, health and disability challenges, weather, topography and danger.
- 1.14 Experience shows that whilst, in principle, people may favour a more active travel orientated neighbourhood, feedback shows that the **detail of schemes** is likely to be contentious to some degree. SATIP preparatory work provides the opportunity to do early engagement, explain the parameters and communicate the “why”, to work with communities in preparing for future change and help people locally to shape proposals as they evolve.
- 1.15 **Gaps in our knowledge: tapping into community insights**
- To ensure that the most effective and value for money proposals for active travel are developed, an extensive evidence base is being compiled to meet the outcomes required. Whilst we know that there are significant barriers to people taking up active travel, we do not have a good enough sense of how these challenges differ in nature and scale across the city. There is a significant knowledge deficit city-wide, given the demographic profile of respondents. We have struggled, partly because of resources, to reach many people and communities and capture seldom heard voices.
- 1.16 This in turn mirrors some of the wider inequalities challenges the city faces, including transport inequality itself. This has increased, partly because of the uneven impact of remote working, which is not an option in industries such as health, social care and transport/logistics where there tends to be a concentration of lower paid employees.
- 1.17 The need to fill these gaps gives us the opportunity to tap into community insights and reach out to people and groups at a local level. The engagement plan will therefore seek to address this unevenness by conducting targeted work and feed into the evidence base that we are assembling in support of the SATIP.
- 1.18 Conditions for cycling and walking both require improvement. Whereas cycling requires the creation of a dedicated network to address safety

as a barrier to significant uptake, walking already has a network. Footways and, to a lesser extent, footpaths serve local destinations. However, this network is compromised. It may be obstructed, defective in some way, not of sufficient quality or attractiveness or indeed as direct as it could be. At a hyper local level especially, the Council does not have the detail required to work up area wide solutions that can address such issues.

1.19 Engagement will be designed to connect with groups and individuals who have knowledge and lived experience. By reaching out both to seldom heard groups, as well as those already engaged in active travel and improving the infrastructure for it, we will help address some of the gaps and the unevenness of prior input in terms of city demographics. Much of this may be qualitative information but all will be fed into the SATIP evidence base.

1.20 **Early engagement on future walk, wheel, cycle (WWC) schemes – what should it look like?**

Considering the landscape sketched out above, officers have identified the need both for a more considered approach to engagement and for additional resource to help undertake targeted work in selected areas and with key stakeholder groups. To this end it is proposed that a community engagement specialist be brought in to help finalise and deliver the SATIP engagement plan alongside Transport Planning officers.

1.21 The Council's current, high-level proposal, subject to change given resources and advice from the appointed specialist about what works best, involves:

- Local outreach in conjunction with LACs and involving local community organisations: these will help identify destinations and the barriers and enablers to active travel locally. They will also start to build understanding of how active travel solutions may address these.
- Meetings with city-wide groups with an equality brief and/or a specialist transport knowledge to gather similar information about important destinations and what prevents or helps active travel locally.
- Using short paper surveys in community venues and longer questionnaires with key stakeholder groups to enhance our understanding of these issues.

1.22 **Our approach in summary and next steps**

It is envisaged that engagement will involve LACs and, where appropriate, local community organisations in outreach work. The plan

will be finalised following appointment of the engagement partner assuming Members are supportive of this approach.

- 1.23 Officers have been advised that, owing to the policy implications arising from public involvement and feedback on active travel, engagement should not take place during PERP. This is consistent with the Government's Consultation Principles guidance, which states that consultation should not be launched during local or national election periods. This would likely mean public engagement taking place in June/July, as part of this initial conversation with communities about active travel.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The proposed community engagement plan aims to:
- Ensure that all communities, especially those that are “seldom heard” during SCC engagement, and who are perhaps not strong voices in existing stakeholder groups, are heard throughout engagement.
 - Identify appropriate channels for reaching a demographically diverse city in general and seldom heard people in particular.
 - Pay close attention to postcodes where response rates tend to be low and help gather community level feedback about local destinations, how people travel to these, what would help them to travel actively and what is preventing them from doing so currently.
 - Capture these views for inclusion in the SATIP mapping exercise and summarise in an engagement evaluation report.
- 2.2 This work is a necessary precursor to ensuring that Members make decisions about where to prioritise active travel investment in the city based upon the fullest, relevant information. This in turn will enable the development of a prioritised active travel programme for the city, informed by the public. Members are therefore being asked to approve both the development of the SATIP and the proposed community engagement plan which will inform that development. This should be beneficial in securing funding from DfT. The physical works, when complete, are expected to be an asset for local communities and help make neighbourhoods more attractive places to live, with reduced traffic danger and greater footfall supporting local amenities.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Preparatory work towards proposed engagement includes informal discussions with Members and LAC officers. This report is seeking Members' agreement for the approaches set out and to give the go ahead to start an initial phase of engagement. An indication of the steps involved is given below.

- 3.2 The first stage, this summer, would be initial engagement city-wide to better understand the challenges that people face when trying to walk and cycle to local destinations.
- 3.3 A second stage of engagement, taking place in autumn, would follow prioritisation by Members using a range of criteria that meet our policy objectives and the funders' (DfT) outcomes. This will be the subject of a separate report to TRC in September. By this means, Members will identify local areas where investment in active travel would be targeted initially (in the short to medium term). More focussed engagement would then follow to reach out to the community in those locations. This would aim to help us gain a more detailed understanding of the questions posed in the first stage in specific localities. It would help build understanding for the kind of infrastructure that can assist people in reaching local destinations by walking, wheeling and cycling. This would enable entry into formal business case and funding bid processes.
- 3.4 These two phases will go ahead given approval by Members. Funding only covers this period. Submission of the CRSTS2 along with its supporting documents to the DfT by SYMCA would follow on a date to be confirmed. With agreement from the South Yorkshire districts, this will set out relative allocations of the overall pot for active travel and public transport measures.

4. Other Implications

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is in development and will be refined as part of reviewing the wider engagement plans. Engagement aims to address the unevenness of our knowledge about the challenges people face to travelling actively. In addition to a city-wide trawl for information that will involve equalities and transport interest networks, proposed engagement in localities will focus on the least heard voices in relation to active travel, likely including:
- Women and girls
 - Those from ethnically diverse communities
 - Those with physical and mental disabilities, physical and mental health conditions and long-term health conditions
 - Those from low-income households
 - People whose physical activity is restricted
 - People living in less affluent areas
 - People of different ages including children and young people and older people
- 4.1.2 A variety of channels and techniques will be used in this process, which may be resource intensive but essential to capture community level knowledge and insight.
- 4.1.3 The broader aims of Active Travel are consistent with the Council's commitments to addressing inequality, including health and income disparities and other causes and symptoms of inequality.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 It is proposed that a tender will be advertised to bring in a community engagement specialist to assist with devising and delivering engagement in conjunction with Transport Planning and LAC officers. The value of this would be approximately £50,000. A more focussed and therefore smaller scope second phase of engagement will follow in the areas prioritised for investment. The value of this will be determined once the scope of this work becomes clear, although it is expected to be lower.

4.2.2 Funding for this has been secured from the Active Travel England (ATE) Capability and Ambition Fund held by SYMCA. We are currently waiting on the Grant Acceptance documentation for the 2024 extension funding (which will run to December 2024).

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Where consultation is carried out by the Council, it must do so in a way which is fair. In its judgment in R v London Borough of Brent, ex p Gunning (1985), the High Court provided a set of principles to which public authorities like the Council must adhere so as to consult fairly. These are as follows:

- The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
- The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response. Those consulted should be aware of the criteria that will be applied when considering proposals and which factors will be considered decisive or of substantial importance at the end of the problem.
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
- The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

In addition, and while not legally binding, the Council should also take into account the Government's Consultation Principles 2018 in the absence of there being exceptional reasons to depart from it. This states that consultations:

- A) should be clear and concise
- B) should have a purpose
- C) should be informative
- D) are only part of a process of engagement
- E) should last for a proportionate amount of time
- F) should be targeted
- G) should take account of the groups being consulted
- H) should be agreed before publication
- I) should facilitate scrutiny

- J) should ensure that government responses to consultation are published in a timely manner; and
- K) should not generally be launched during local or national election periods.

The proposals described in this report (i.e. the approach taken to delivering public engagement which will inform the development of the Sheffield Active Travel Implementation Plan) accord with these principles.

The Council must further carry out its consultation exercise in accordance with the public sector equality duty imposed by the Equality Act 2010. The Council will be deemed to be fulfilling this duty where it takes into account and addresses the outcomes of the Equalities Impact Assessment referred to above.

Members are asked to note that this report is seeking approval for the development of the Sheffield Active Travel Implementation Plan (including the initial engagement which is intended to inform that development). Public facing outreach will only take place after the local elections and therefore after PERP. Further, this approval should not be regarded as a decision to implement any individual scheme included within the plan. Individual schemes may be the subject of their own separate statutory consultation processes (per the requirements of the legislation applicable to the Council's enabling powers) and each may be the subject of a further decision made by the Council in accordance with the requirements of its constitution. This may include, for example, a further decision in respect of the making of a Traffic Regulation Order against which objections have been received.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 The SATIP engagement plan is the precursor to the development and implementation of physical measures on the ground in the prioritised areas. Climate Impact Assessments will be prepared that capture the likely impact of those measures as they are developed, designed, and delivered. It has therefore been agreed that undertaking a Climate Impact Assessment using the CIA tool was not appropriate at this stage, and that we would set out the impact context within this section of the report only.
- 4.4.2 Sheffield has set a target to become a net zero city by 2030. In 2017, Transport emissions accounted for 26% of the total in Sheffield. Some 60% of journeys were being made by car, and around 40% of these were less than 1km in distance (roughly equates to a 10–12-minute walk). Between 2017 and 2021 (the latest year for which data is available) transport emissions in Sheffield have reduced to 22% of city emissions that year, but we still need to reduce our annual transport emissions by a further 541 ktCO₂e by 2030.

- 4.4.3 While decarbonising vehicles will achieve the greatest reduction in emissions, this will take time, and does not address other transport related concerns such as road safety, congestion and parking. We therefore also need to change how we travel from a polluting mode to a less polluting mode, including active travel.
- 4.4.4 “Improved routes and facilities that enable as many people as possible to make journeys by walking, cycling and wheeling” is one of the five net zero transport objectives set out in The Way We Travel decarbonisation route map, approved by the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee in July 2023. It is anticipated to contribute a 19% (104 ktCO₂e) reduction in transport emissions. We have a role to play to enable, encourage and support residents to take up more sustainable modes. How we engage citizens around our active travel related measures is critical to ensuring they are effective.
- 4.4.5 If implemented, the SATIP engagement plan has the potential to support reductions in transport emissions through increased engagement in more effective active travel measures delivered at an increased pace and scale over the coming years. Work to support the engagement plan will involve attendance at local meetings and other outreach work including paper-based surveys and face-to-face interviews in community spaces.
This activity will necessarily involve some travel and production of associated publicity materials probably alongside an online presence. Overall, it will generate some additional direct emissions, and we will seek to minimise this by encouraging people to travel by sustainable means to meetings, and seeking out existing community forums which we can attend to gather views.
However, this will be significantly less than the emission that will be saved cumulatively by the implementation of the schemes themselves. These will help people to walk, wheel and cycle locally and a proportion of these trips should replace car journeys.
- 4.5 Other Implications
- 4.5.1 Officers anticipate that conversations with the local community will create a degree of consensus around the need for change towards less car dominated neighbourhoods. It is further expected that a greater understanding will be generated about the benefits of active travel.
- 4.5.2 However, the detail of schemes as they are developed, will necessarily be contentious to some degree. There will be valid objections which may result in changes to our schemes to improve their acceptability. No amount of early engagement can over-ride this. The Council’s approach is to try to learn from all feedback, whether we can address it positively in terms of our proposals or not. This is a two-way process. Officers will keep the Council’s engagement under review and feed this into wider attempts to learn from the Sheffield public.

4.5.3 Equally, the benefits which will accrue from adopting a more people centred approach to use of highway space in local areas should become apparent as schemes “bed in”. Officers believe this is particularly the case where any changes can incorporate features which both assist walking and improve the streetscape, for instance by providing more tree cover for shade and shelter; or seating to improve opportunities for rest, reflection and conversation. Increased footfall should contribute to more liveable and pleasant neighbourhoods.

5.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 The Council has been charged with preparing an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan, together with the other SY districts, to prioritise areas and develop proposals for future infrastructure funding, especially CRSTS2. Given the above, prior public engagement is deemed necessary and funding is available to undertake it. Officers have set out the preferred approach above. Alternative options therefore centre on the following:

5.2 Doing **more engagement** – officers are reasonably confident that the level of engagement which has been put forward here can be delivered within budget and timescales, and that it is sufficient for purpose. Doing anything more would require more specification, and time and resource to deliver and process, thus jeopardising its’ usefulness in terms of effectively feeding into the necessary programmes of work.

5.3 Doing **less engagement** – Members have a clear priority for early and responsive engagement around active travel proposals. Doing less engagement would compromise that requirement. Officers believe the task should be to ensure best value from the resource which the Council has. However, some “scaling back” of work may become necessary given changes to funding and deadlines or difficulties in procurement and delivery.

5.4 Doing **“the minimum” engagement** – this option only becomes appropriate if funding and timescales change more drastically. In any other scenario officers believe this to be an unacceptable way to proceed, given Member priorities and it not being expected to deliver all of the desired outcomes. .

6.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The proposed SATIP engagement work aims to:

- Ensure that all communities, especially those that are “seldom heard” are reached through engagement.
- Identify appropriate channels for reaching a demographically diverse city in general and seldom heard people in particular.
- Pay close attention to postcodes where response rates tend to be low, help facilitate community level discussions about local destinations, how people travel to these, what would help them

to travel actively and what is preventing them from doing so currently.

- Capture these views for inclusion in our SATIP evidence and summarise in an engagement evaluation report.

6.2 It is therefore recommended that Committee approves the recommendations set out in this report and the expenditure required to appoint a community engagement specialist to work with us in reaching seldom heard groups and individuals across the city. This will inform the development of the SATIP and help the Council to better understand active travel considerations as a step towards more sensitive and responsive way of undertaking public engagement.

6.3 Note that a further report will be presented in September when Members will be furnished with the results of engagement as part of the scheme prioritisation process.