

ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 13 June 2023

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For information

Also considered by: N/A

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report updates members on the active travel initiatives that the District Council is engaged in, along with the funding opportunities that are being pursued in order to facilitate the delivery of specific projects, supported by the Movement Strategy (2022) and emerging Local Plan.

This report supports the Key Aim of: the Council's commitments to promoting better active travel and working towards Net Zero 2030.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer(s): Emma Henshall, Ext. 7358

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

To note this update report for information.

Reason for recommendation: Identifying opportunities for better active travel across the District is a key priority that can assist in reducing carbon emissions, improve air quality and result in positive health outcomes, as well as helping work towards the Council's Net Zero 2030 commitment.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Active travel has many benefits - walking, wheeling and cycling can all help to positively impact the health of the population and bring significant environmental benefits including improving air quality, reducing noise pollution and reducing traffic and therefore carbon emissions. The Council is committed to promoting and creating opportunities for better active travel in the District through its Movement Strategy (2022) and emerging Local Plan.

- 2 The Sevenoaks Urban Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was completed and launched earlier this year and identifies a number of walking, wheeling and cycling improvements that are required at the local level, with a view to developing local networks over the longer term. Work is now ongoing to progress a number of these suggested improvements, and specific project updates are set out below.

Sevenoaks Town east to west walking, wheeling and cycling route (LCWIP route 3)

- 3 This route connects the east and west of Sevenoaks town, connecting together 6 schools and local facilities to provide a safe and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling route as an alternative to short car journeys. The route is mapped at Appendix 1 (route 3 - turquoise). We have been working with KCC to design the route, which has recently opened for public consultation. The consultation runs until 14 July 2023 and seeks views on the proposed route, including a number of design options. Full details of the consultation are available online here: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walkwheelcycle
- 4 Once the public consultation has closed, we will take on board all feedback received before tweaking and finalising the route. It is hoped that construction will begin in early 2024 with the route opening later the same year.

Sevenoaks to Otford Route (LCWIP route 1)

- 5 This route connects Sevenoaks town centre with Otford village centre including making significant improvements to the A225 and to the very busy Bat and Ball junction. The route is mapped at Appendix 1 (route 1 - green).
- 6 We have secured £184,000 from the latest round of Active Travel England funding which allows us to progress the scheme to detailed design stage. We are therefore working efficiently to appoint consultants to update feasibility work undertaken in 2017 and to prepare an outline design for the scheme, which will include local stakeholder engagement. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of the year. The detailed design work will then follow in early 2024 and this will put us in an advantageous position to bid for funding for the construction of the route. Given the significant constraints and challenges along the southern part of the route from Bat and Ball down to Sevenoaks, the abovementioned work will prioritise the northern section of the route from Otford to Bat and Ball.

Sevenoaks to Seal to Otford Route (LCWIP route 6)

- 7 This route connects Sevenoaks town centre with Seal and links through the proposed Sevenoaks Quarry development (conceptually at present) to connect through to the Riverside Retail Park south of Otford. The route is mapped at Appendix 1 (route 6 - pink).

- 8 We are in the process of procuring consultants to undertake scheme planning and design work for this route, which will include local stakeholder engagement and engagement with the Sevenoaks Quarry developer to understand what might be achievable. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the autumn.

Swanley Urban Area LCWIP

- 9 Consultants Sustrans have now been appointed and work on the Swanley Urban Area LCWIP is underway. The focus is on improving opportunities to walk, wheel or cycle around the town, including improving user safety and experience. The routes will help better connect areas and destinations within the town and provide a safe and attractive alternative to car travel. Local stakeholder engagement will take place towards the end of June. It is anticipated that the LCWIP will be completed by the end of the year.

Workplace Travel Plan

- 10 A Workplace Travel Plan sets out a package of initiatives and incentives to encourage safe, healthy and sustainable travel options. Our current Plan dates back to 2011, but since then we have seen significant changes in working patterns along with the Council's aspirations in relation to air quality, movement and working towards Net Zero 2030.
- 11 Work has therefore begun on a new Workplace Travel Plan, which focuses on inspiring behaviour change through a 'change for one day' initiative. A staff survey has recently been undertaken to capture current travel preferences and barriers to change. This was really well responded to and will inform the development of the Plan going forward. We aim to launch the new Plan in July 2023.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

The active travel initiatives referred to in this report have largely been secured and/or completed using external funding from Active Travel England and in partnership with KCC. We could choose not to engage in further active travel initiatives, through external funding streams or our own budget, however this would contradict the Council's commitment to promoting and creating opportunities for better active travel in the District, and therefore disadvantage our residents. This is not considered to be an acceptable approach. Further, the Council has made a commitment to working towards Net Zero 2030.

Key Implications

Financial

Funding for the active travel initiatives referred to in this report has been secured through external sources and it is not expected that any top up will be required. Funding for the Workplace Travel Plan will be met from existing budgets.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

No legal implications have been identified.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. This report is to inform members of the ongoing work to meet the commitment.

Conclusions

This report updates members on the active travel initiatives that the District Council is engaged in. It is considered that progress so far is consistent with working towards Net Zero by 2030.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Cycle Routes identified in the Sevenoaks Urban Area LCWIP

Background Papers

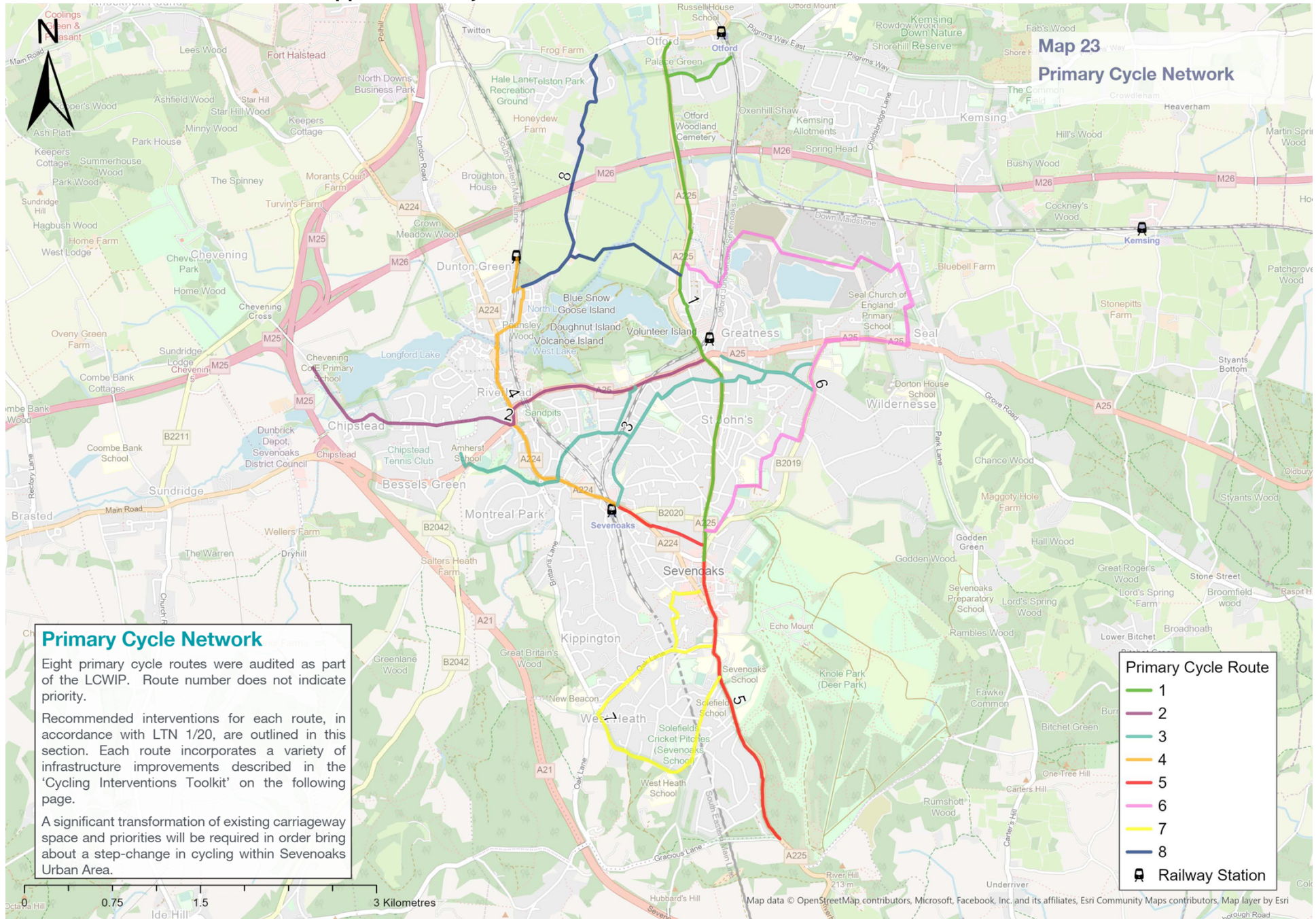
None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services

Appendix 1 - Cycle Routes identified in the Sevenoaks Urban Area LCWIP

Map 23
Primary Cycle Network



Primary Cycle Network

Eight primary cycle routes were audited as part of the LCWIP. Route number does not indicate priority.

Recommended interventions for each route, in accordance with LTN 1/20, are outlined in this section. Each route incorporates a variety of infrastructure improvements described in the 'Cycling Interventions Toolkit' on the following page.

A significant transformation of existing carriageway space and priorities will be required in order bring about a step-change in cycling within Sevenoaks Urban Area.

Primary Cycle Route

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- Railway Station