

This Report will be made public on 5 December 2023

Report Number **C/23/67**

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 13 December 2023  
**Status:** Non Key Decision  
**Responsible Officer:** James Hammond, Strategy & Policy Senior Specialist  
Adrian Tofts, Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Jim Martin, Leader and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy  
Cllr Polly Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control

**SUBJECT:** KENT CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY:** Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on a draft Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). The plan aims to develop a network of walking and cycling routes across Kent, integrate cycling and walking into transport policies, set out priorities for future investment and provide evidence to support local projects. The plan is out for consultation until 10 January 2024. The report summarises the KCWIP proposals and puts forward draft comments as the basis for the district council's response to the consultation.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In order to influence the final version of the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan produced by Kent County Council following the consultation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note report C/23/67.
2. To comment on the draft district council responses set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
3. To give delegated authority to the Strategy and Policy Senior Specialist to make any necessary amendments to the responses in Appendix 1, in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control, before submission to Kent County Council.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on proposals for new and improved walking and cycling routes as part of the county-wide Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP).
- 1.2 The consultation opened on 1 November 2023 and will close on 10 January 2024.
- 1.3 Officers have prepared draft responses to the consultation which are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 Officers have highlighted the consultation to ward members whose wards the proposed routes pass through, to see if they have any comments on the proposals (North Downs East, East Folkestone, Folkestone Harbour, Folkestone Central, Sandgate and West Folkestone, Hythe and Hythe Rural wards).
- 1.5 The consultation will close on 10 January 2024, but officers have had to prepare this report midway through the consultation period for December's Cabinet. Any comments from ward members will therefore need to be incorporated into the district council's response after the Cabinet meeting; recommendation 3 above is that Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Strategy and Policy Senior Specialist to make any necessary amendments, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control, before submission to KCC.
- 1.6 The consultation materials can be viewed on KCC's website [here](#).

## **2. KENT CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

- 2.1 The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) concept has been developed by the Department for Transport (DfT) to assist local authorities in taking a strategic and long-term approach to developing cycling and walking networks.
- 2.2 KCC has decided to develop the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) to identify preferred routes, prioritise investment and improve connections across Kent for commuting and non-commuting trips.
- 2.3 The KCWIP aims to support the work that Folkestone & Hythe and several other Kent districts have already undertaken in preparing their own local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, to create a wider strategic network.
- 2.4 The consultation states that the benefits of the KCWIP could include: reduced traffic in towns and improved air quality; improved health for residents; more footfall for local high streets; greater access to employment opportunities, shops and leisure for people who don't have access to a car; greater public transport use; and improved road safety.
- 2.5 The consultation document (page 6) cautions that:

*“There is currently no identified budget for each of the priority schemes presented in this consultation. Applications for funding will be made as opportunities arise either through Active Travel England or other suitable funding streams. Active Travel England has said that authorities with a Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are better placed to secure future funding.”*

- 2.6 The district council’s experience supports the value of creating a cycling and walking infrastructure plan: the Strategy & Policy Senior Specialist has secured funding from the Active Travel Fund awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT), and administered by KCC, based on Folkestone & Hythe’s draft LCWIP. To date the awarded funding has already delivered or will implement the delivery of the following:
- Active Travel Fund Tranche 1: Cinque Ports Cycle Route Phase 4B – St Georges Place to Nickoll’s Road, Hythe. Monies funded the installation of a shared use pedestrian/cycle route path on the A259 Dymchurch Rd from junction with St Georges Place to Nickoll’s Road, Hythe.
  - Active Travel Fund Tranche 2: Cinque Ports Cycle Route Phase 5 – Nickoll’s Road to Dymchurch Redoubt. Monies funded the installation of a shared use pedestrian/cycle route path on the A259 Dymchurch Rd from junction with Nickoll’s Road to Dymchurch Redoubt.
  - Active Travel Fund Tranche 2: funding secured to create a safer and direct route for cycling from Cheriton to Folkestone. The proposed scheme runs along the B2064 Cheriton Road starting near B2063 Risborough Lane and ending at Radnor Park. Delivery is programmed for 2024.
- 2.7 In developing the county-wide KCWIP, the county council has gathered information from national, county and local sources, including demographic, transport, traffic accident and air quality data. A network planning map has then been created to identify desire lines between key destinations and highlight any gaps in the network.
- 2.8 More than a hundred desire lines and walking zones were identified through this process; however, the consultation states that it was not feasible to take all these routes forward. The consultation plan therefore focuses on 15 key walking and cycling routes across Kent; these are illustrated in the plan at **Appendix 2**.

### **3. PROPOSALS WITHIN FOLKESTONE & HYTHE DISTRICT**

- 3.1 Three of the 15 walking and cycling routes are within, or pass through, Folkestone & Hythe district:
- **Route R4 – Canterbury to Folkestone:** This route would run for approximately 35 kilometres (22 miles) from central Canterbury, south via Bridge and Barham, through Hawkinge and Folkestone, to Folkestone Harbour. This is illustrated on the plan at **Appendix 3**.
  - **Route R13 – Folkestone to Hythe:** This route would run for approximately 9 kilometres (5.5 miles) from Folkestone Harbour west

along the coast to Hythe, before turning north to Hythe town centre. This is illustrated on the plan at **Appendix 4**.

- **Route R8 – Ashford to Folkestone:** This route would run for approximately 28.5 kilometres (18 miles) from Hythe town centre, west through Lympne (and immediately south of the site of the Otterpool Park garden town) and then north-west to Ashford Railway station. This is illustrated on the plan at **Appendix 5**.

3.2 The consultation is accompanied by a questionnaire which asks for comments about each of the routes. Questions relating to routes R4, R8 and R13 and general questions about the plan have been extracted from the questionnaire and are attached at **Appendix 1**. Proposed district council responses are given to these questions.

#### 4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Following Cabinet on 13 December, officers will agree any amendments with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control to reflect the comments of Cabinet and local ward members.

4.2 The consultation document states that after the consultation closes KCC will analyse the responses and take the final KCWIP to Kent’s Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee for approval in late spring 2024.

4.3 Where funding is secured for any of the routes in the plan, further engagement will be undertaken to inform the detailed design of each scheme.

#### 5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

5.1 A summary of the perceived risks follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
That the county council does not take account of the district council’s consultation responses.	Low	Low	The district council works closely with KCC and can build on this relationship which has already been developed through working on the district’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
That the cycling and walking routes are impractical and not used by the public.	Low	Low	KCC’s consultation will highlight where there may be gaps or problems with the proposed network. The local knowledge of district council ward

			members may also highlight problems with the network which can be raised with KCC.
That the cycling and walking route improvements are not implemented or are implemented partially.	Medium	Medium	Funding is a problem that is raised in the consultation document (see paragraph 2.4 of this report). The district council can work closely with KCC to identify possible funding sources, such as through Active Travel England.

## 6. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

- 6.1 **Legal Officer's Comments (NM)** - There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.2 **Finance Officer's Comments (RH)** – There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.3 **Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)** – There are no diversity and equalities implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.4 **Climate Change Implications (AT)** - No direct implications arising from this report. Improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure have the potential to reduce carbon emissions from vehicle journeys, improve air quality in towns and improve residents' health.

## 7. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

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### Appendices:

Appendix 1: Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Extracts from Consultation Questionnaire with Proposed District Council Responses

Appendix 2: Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Routes R1-R15

Appendix 3: Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Route R4 – Canterbury to Folkestone

Appendix 4: Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Route R13 – Folkestone to Hythe

Appendix 5: Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Route R8 – Ashford to Folkestone

Appendix 6: Map Extract Illustrating National Cycle Routes 16 and 17

Appendix 7: Map Extract from 'Royal Military Canal Greenway – Working Document' (Ashford Borough Council / Sustrans, November 2017).