

**Report to:** Transport Committee

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Subject:** **Active Travel – Update**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the development of activity focussed on improving conditions and opportunities for walking and cycling within West Yorkshire, including an update on the delivery of schemes across West Yorkshire.

## 2. Information

### Background

- 2.1 Walking and cycling are at the heart of the Combined Authority's recently published West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan. Our proposition is that both can be used more often, not just for trips in their own right, but also to access all other sustainable modes of transport as part of a joined-up transport network that delivers easy door to door journeys.
- 2.2 As part of our Transport Strategy 2020, the Combined Authority set ambitious targets to increase the modal share of walking and cycling across West Yorkshire, and our ongoing Carbon Emissions Reduction Pathways study indicates that further strengthening of these targets will be necessary to meet our overall target for net zero carbon by 2036. If we can achieve these targets

it will have significant benefits for individuals who cycle and walk as well as delivering wider societal, economic and environmental benefits – some of which are outlined in more detail in Appendix 1.

- 2.3 The most effective way to increase the number of people walking and cycling is through a two-pronged approach of providing attractive infrastructure which is direct, convenient and safe, whilst simultaneously enabling people to reconsider their travel choices and explore the benefits of active travel. This approach has proved successful with the Combined Authority's CityConnect programme and is now being applied to our future network development methodology.
- 2.4 The Connectivity Implementation Plan contains the five pilot Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plans (LCWIPs) which pioneered the use of LCWIP methodology to determine the prioritisation and development of both walking and cycling infrastructure. This approach is now being applied at a larger scale in each of the districts to identify further corridors and walking zones for intervention.
- 2.5 As part of the consultation on the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, we are undertaking to gather two different sets of data to help inform further work. The first of these is qualitative, and seeks to understand the current barriers to walking and cycling in local areas around West Yorkshire and how these might be overcome. This information is being gathered through the walking and cycling specific elements of the survey currently live on YourVoice: <https://www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/connectivity>. The second element is developing our understanding of pinchpoints and potential infrastructure interventions through the use of the interactive map (same page on YourVoice) which, combined with the earlier input from the "Safer Streets" consultation of 2020 will provide a long list of potential schemes for the Combined Authority and District Partners to consider as part of the ongoing pipeline development and LCWIP work.
- 2.6 The LCWIP Phase Two work will be informed by the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan's modelling and development, which has identified key flows ripe for conversion to active travel, or indeed existing flows which could be significantly increased. This, alongside other prior work undertaken both by the Combined Authority and the five Districts will inform the development of a pipeline of schemes for active travel infrastructure.
- 2.7 The Combined Authority is engaged closely with other relevant parties, such as the Canal and River Trust and Sustrans, to ensure that existing greenway schemes are integrated and accessible via the proposed network – resulting in a coherent and cohesive network of on- and off-road cycling and walking infrastructure to help enable modal shift.
- 2.8 Alongside infrastructure development plans, the Combined Authority is further developing its wider approach to community engagement as part of active travel schemes. This will enable us to identify key stakeholders, community groups and alike and engage with them early in the process to enable a

degree of iterative co-design of not only infrastructure interventions but also supporting behaviour change work.

- 2.9 This will include not only an approach to helping develop wider support for the active travel corridor and zone interventions, and understanding with regard to the re-allocation of roadspace, but also to encouraging and enabling a wide range of users to explore and utilise the new infrastructure as part of the growing network. To do this effectively, it is important that we monitor and evaluate schemes after implementation to understand which interventions are most effective in enabling the modal shift required by the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan. This will include understanding how to best ensure that maintenance of schemes is undertaken (e.g. gritting and drain clearance) so that use of the infrastructure can be year-round.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

- 2.10 Monitoring and Evaluation of West Yorkshire's cycling and walking infrastructure is of increasing importance so that we can develop local evidence to support further investment. A current project is collecting all available data that we currently have access into one location to present a "Active Travel Data Dashboard" and this work is likely to be completed in March 2021. Once complete, the current data gaps will be reviewed and options regarding how best these could be filled will be explored, including on new infrastructure that is currently being planned and delivered.
- 2.11 As reported to Committee in January 2021, usage figures from newly completed infrastructure delivered through the Combined Authority's CityConnect programme showed an on-going increase in journeys made by bike throughout 2020, especially on off-highway routes. However, it should be noted that analysis of the cycle counter data for December 2020 and January 2021 shows a dip in usage compared to the same period last year. Considering the strong growth in usage seen in 2020, this dip is likely attributed to the more widespread inclement weather relative to last year, including multiple heavy snow fall events, lower temperatures and ice (coldest January in 10 years), and heavy rainfall (almost double last year) leading to flooding. This does provide support to the case for active travel routes to be added to winter maintenance schedules to ensure they are available for use all year round, as has been the case for the Leeds Bradford Cycle Superhighway, delivered through the CityConnect programme.

#### Delivery of Infrastructure

- 2.12 Through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's CityConnect programme, dedicated to the delivery of cycling and walking infrastructure, we have delivered £60 million of investment in schemes focused on enabling more people to travel by bike and on foot.
- 2.13 Delivery of the most recent phase of CityConnect schemes is progressing well with delivery currently underway on four schemes. Phase 4 of the Castleford Greenway scheme is on site with works progressing well and completion due

during March 2021. Construction of new segregated cycle infrastructure along Claypit Lane in Leeds is complete, with the remaining upgrade to the signals at Sheepscar Junction to be completed in March 2021. The segregated cycle routes along Dewsbury Road and Elland Road in Leeds are both under construction with completion expected in April 2021. When completed these schemes will add over 7km of high-quality cycling and walking infrastructure to the expanding network across West Yorkshire.

- 2.14 An additional four schemes are in development through the CityConnect programme, which are proposed to deliver up to an additional 15km of active travel infrastructure. These include upgrades to the towpaths along sections of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and Huddersfield Narrow Canal, due to go into delivery from Summer 2021 and a new greenway between Bradley and Brighouse due to go into delivery during 2022.
- 2.15 As reported to Committee in January, work is also continuing to deliver the Active Travel Fund – Tranche 2 schemes, with the current focus on engaging and consulting with stakeholders to enable scheme development and delivery plans to be finalised. With confirmation that the local and mayoral elections are progressing in May, some of this activity may be impacted by requirements put in place around election time e.g., the pre-election period (Purdah).
- 2.16 In addition to those schemes outlined above, a range of other programmes are delivering active travel infrastructure as part of other projects. The Corridor Improvement Programme, Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme and Transforming Cities Fund have schemes within them that will significantly improve walking and cycling trips both as separate modes and as part of wider journeys including public transport. The recently launched Connectivity Plan puts active travel at the heart of the Combined Authority's transport ambitions for the future and will continue to drive improvements for walking and cycling across the full range of our work.

#### Behaviour Change Activity

- 2.17 The large range of BCRs (noted in the Appendix) is also partially driven through the importance of uptake of schemes – as the more cyclists use the scheme, the better the resultant BCR. Whilst this is easy to model for new motor vehicle infrastructure it is harder for active travel. This is due to both the current lack of data and evidence, and due to the partial nature of the walking and cycling network that is attractive and useable by a full range of users. For example, a segregated cycling facility may be suitable and attractive to everyone, but if it is inaccessible except by through the use of general traffic lanes, it will continue to be under-used as it remains only of benefit to those already happy cycling amongst motor traffic. The network benefits will continue to accrue as the districts, the Combined Authority and other interested third parties (including the Canal River Trust, HS2 and Sustrans)

work together to build a coherent and cohesive network of safe walking and cycling corridors and areas across West Yorkshire.

2.18 It is also important to engage with potential users and make them aware of the potential of new infrastructure once it has been completed. For example, school streets or a new, safe route to a school may open up opportunities for significant modal shift amongst school pupils, which should be leveraged through supporting and encouraging behaviour change. This approach has driven our ongoing engagement activity. Through the CityConnect programme to deliver active travel in West Yorkshire, which is supported by a dedicated communications and engagement team, the Combined Authority have been delivering targeted behaviour change activity to enable more people to walk and cycle, since 2015. An overview of impacts of the CityConnect programme can be found here - <https://www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk/cityconnect-at-five>

2.19 As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the team have been delivering targeted activity to support people to make essential journeys by bike or foot, which has been funded through Tranche 1 of the DfT Active Travel Fund. Work has focused on delivering support to businesses to become more cycle friendly, working with our district partners to deliver free adult cycle training and supporting community groups to deliver activity in their local area through a community grants programme.

#### *Support to businesses*

2.20 Through the Combined Authorities Bike Friendly Business scheme, over 300 businesses in West Yorkshire have been supported to become more cycle friendly, with over 100 accredited as gold, silver or bronze bike friendly businesses. From July to December 2020, the 23 organisations were awarded grants to boost cycling opportunities for staff, with over £100k awarded in total.

2.21 Provision of pool bikes has been a popular option for business, with around 50 bikes funded so far. This includes bikes used by the App-Bike system at Central Square in Leeds, ebikes at a manufacturer in Guiseley and a variety of bikes provided at Shiers Solicitors in Bradford. Other organisations supported include Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, the Royal Armouries Museum and Open Source Arts in Leeds, which all benefitted from new, high quality, secure bike parking for employees, with around 70 spaces provided in total.

#### *Support for cycle training*

2.22 Following the end of the first lockdown in the summer of 2020, the Combined Authority received £25,000 from the Emergency Active Travel Fund to run a programme of adult cycle training across the five districts of West Yorkshire. This training programme aimed to complement new 'trial' cycling infrastructure, and

- Offered training to over 380 people across West Yorkshire
- Operated a total of 580 hours of group and 1:1 training

The training programme aimed to

- build on higher levels of cycling during the lockdown by giving people the skills to cycle to work (or make other everyday journeys) by bike
- support people to return to cycling after a long break
- enable people who had never learnt to ride a bike to do so

Training was offered on a 1:1 basis and in groups at community venues. Bikes were available to borrow for people who did not have access to one themselves.

### *Support to communities*

- 2.23 During the early stages of the COVID pandemic in 2020, community-based cycle projects played a vital role in supporting key workers and others to get around by bike, reducing the need to use public transport. The latest round of community grant funding was aimed to build on this work and help more people to cycle in the period following the first lockdown.
- 2.24 Through these grants, delivered through the CityConnect programme, over 300 people were able to access a bike, more than 80 people received training to start cycling or to get back on their bikes, including 40 NHS workers, and more than 100 people were kept on two wheels through Dr Bike sessions and free repairs and servicing. Other activities included skills sessions to help people fix and maintain their own bikes, and getting essential cycle kit, such as lights, helmets and locks to people on lower incomes.
- 2.25 Examples of groups that have been supported through this programme include:
- Supporting Bradford Capital of Cycling and Margaret Carey Foundation to continue to loan bikes to key workers as well as virtual and socially distanced bike maintenance courses and winter commuter zoom workshops.
  - In Kirklees, supporting Streetbikes to also offer loan bikes and free repairs and servicing to essential workers.
  - In South Leeds, St Luke Cares skilled up local volunteers to refurbish more than 100 unused bikes and then get them into the hands of people who needed a bike.
  - In Calderdale, a CityConnect grant funded Happy Days CIC to create bike fleets for their tenants at their housing to borrow – some of whom have recently been homeless. They also helped to skill up tenants up to fix these and other bikes.
  - Experience Community used a grant to purchase and pilot some ‘clip-on’ motors for people to attach to the wheelchairs they use. The scheme aimed to trial the motors with 12 volunteers, to support independent, socially distanced travel over longer distances.

- Onna Bike worked directly with NHS workers at Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust, offering convenient on-site cycle training to staff, and then helped some staff to own a refurbished bike (with the support of Ontrak)
- Hop On Bike offered learn to ride, road confidence and commuter training to people from Lister Park, along with passing on the skills to do simple repairs and maintenance of people's own bikes.
- Leeds Bike Mill used a grant to help towards the cost of a refurbished bike or essential cycle equipment – prioritising people on low incomes living in inner East Leeds. They also offered socially distanced Dr Bike sessions in Central & East Leeds to help fix and maintain the bikes of people already cycling.

2.26 Through the next phase of funding from the Active Travel Fund, a further round of community grants has been made available, with applications open from 19/02/21 to 19/03/21. Further details can be found at [www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk/get-cycling/support-for-communities](http://www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk/get-cycling/support-for-communities)

2.27 The Combined Authority are also working with partners in each to district to deliver a range of initiatives across key workstreams that are funded through the next phase of the DfT's Active Travel Fund. Walking and cycling initiatives will target schools, businesses and communities, as well as active travel hub development and adult cycle training courses, including health-based cycle training. These initiatives will be available across West Yorkshire and details of forthcoming offers will be communicated through the CityConnect comms channels as well as through partner channels.

#### Future Opportunities

2.28 The Combined Authority recently completed the development of the first phase of Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plans (LCWIPs), which was a pilot to test our approach to using the approved methodology in each of the five districts. This resulted in the publication of an identified cycle corridor and a proposed walking zone in each district, and a summary of the process and result was published as part of the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan this year.

2.29 Recently consultants have been appointed to take this work to the next stage and identify both further active travel interventions and an approach for developing the integration of these into local areas. This will complement the Combined Authorities own ongoing work in this area, particularly regarding the importance of engagement and securing public support for active travel interventions.

2.30 The Combined Authority continues to work with relevant parties (such as district councils, Canal and River Trust, Sustrans, etc.) to ensure that we work together to bring forward schemes in a planned manner to maximise both efficiency and the impact of schemes. This will present us in a strong position to apply for future funding streams as they become available through the development of a clear pipeline of schemes, varying in scale, which will come

together to build a better, more integrated and attractive active travel infrastructure for West Yorkshire.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

- 3.1 Enabling Active Travel through the provision of safe, convenient, direct, high-quality and attractive infrastructure on both an area-wide and corridor-based approach will assist in modal shift away from cars towards foot, cycle, bus, rail and mass transit alternatives and thus help meet West Yorkshire's ambitious decarbonisation aspirations. This needs to be supported by an equally ambitious programme to encourage and support behaviour change.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 Infrastructure built to enable walking (wide, clear, level footways with continuous crossings across side-roads and safe crossings of motor traffic) and cycling (a wide, connected and cohesive network of low-gradient routes separate from motor traffic) are accessible to all users from all backgrounds and have significant benefits for, as examples, the disabled, the elderly, schoolchildren, all socio-economic classes, families and businesses.
- 4.2 Rebalancing our transport system away from private car use to such modes will significantly improve inclusivity. Across the UK, 20% of men and 30% of women don't hold a driving licence. Only one-third of households in the lowest income decile have access to a car or van and half of lone parent families with children don't have access to a vehicle. Making all potential users aware of such options is needed alongside the delivery of infrastructure, as shown by the successful engagement with users which is being carried out as part of the CityConnect programme.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

### **7. Staffing Implications**

- 7.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

### **8. External Consultees**

- 8.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

### **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 That the Committee notes the updates provided within this report.



9.2 That the Committee continues to support the design and implementation of high-quality active travel infrastructure across West Yorkshire.

**10. Background Documents**

None.

**11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Benefits of Active Travel

