

# Place and Resources Overview Committee

## 21 November 2024

### Active Travel Infrastructure Plan

#### For Review and Consultation

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

**Local Councillor(s):**

All

**Executive Director:**

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**Report Status:** Public

**Brief Summary:**

The Active Travel Infrastructure Plan sets out the network plans for walking, cycling and wheeling. It identifies where improvements to the network are required and sets out priorities for the areas covered. Ensuring that Dorset is making the most of its active travel infrastructure will be a key underpinning contributory factor in the delivery of the Climate and Ecological Emergency strategy, and will also support the emerging Dorset Council travel plan.

The plans cover the main urban areas of south and east Dorset and most of the market towns, representing 85% of Dorset's population and schools that account for 91% of the school pupils.

A public engagement exercise was undertaken in December 2023-January 2024. 979 responses were received, and the outputs have been used to inform the proposed network plans.

## **Recommendation:**

Place and Resources Overview Committee is invited to consider the approach taken to the development of the draft Active Travel Infrastructure Plan, including the public survey and draft reports and to comment as appropriate.

## **Reason for Recommendation:**

Comments from the Committee in response to this report will inform the development of the Active Travel Infrastructure Plan before adoption.

### **1. Context**

- 1.1 The Active Travel Infrastructure Plan (ATIP) is a strategic document setting out priorities for active travel infrastructure provision in the short, medium and long term.
- 1.2 Developing an ATIP will help Dorset Council:
  - meet its strategic objectives to increase sustainable travel, reduce private motor travel and increase physical activity, helping to contribute to a wide range of national and local policies and strategies, including the Climate and Ecological Emergency strategy;
  - set out a planned pipeline of active travel schemes ready for funding bids and aligned with future developments; and
  - ensure access to funding from central Government for active travel – dependent upon having a plan in place – is secured in future.
- 1.3 The ATIP development process is set out in technical guidance from the Department for Transport. Most local authorities have already adopted plans, including BCP Council.
- 1.4 The first stage in plan development involves analysing existing travel patterns, establishing the main trip destinations such as centres of employment, schools and town centres, augmented with background data such as the density of population, density of jobs and other demographic information.
- 1.5 This information is further supported by modelling of the potential for active travel for work and school trips, based on trip length and gradients

encountered along the route. This helps inform and quantify which parts of the network are likely to generate the greatest benefit in terms of carbon saved, increased physical activity and car journeys shifted to active travel.

- 1.6 Barriers to active travel – whether physical, or due to hazardous road conditions or other factors are a fundamental part of the analysis and are in part informed by input from stakeholders and residents – see section 2 below.
- 1.7 Key corridors linking neighbourhoods to destinations are then analysed and draft network plans for active travel produced.
- 1.8 The plans set out the future priorities for active travel infrastructure at a strategic scale, with the aim being to focus on resolving the biggest barriers on the primary network for people walking, wheeling or cycling. They are not comprehensive plans for active travel on every road, street or path in the Dorset Council area.
- 1.9 Prioritisation of the routes and any resulting schemes are based on the following criteria:
  - whether there is new housing proposed in the Local Plan near the route
  - the average deprivation of the area surrounding the route (using the Index of Multiple Deprivation)
  - the potential number of people cycling to work
  - the potential number of people cycling to school
  - the population living within 400 metres per km of route
  - the number of jobs within 400 metres per km of route
  - walking and cycling casualties per km of route
  - number of major destinations (town centres, schools, employment areas, significant leisure sites) within 100 metres of the route

## 2. **Public engagement**

- 2.1 Dorset Council undertook an online public engagement exercise on the development of the ATIP in December 2023 – January 2024. This survey asked residents their general views on active travel, showed the first draft plans for south and east Dorset and asked respondents for their input on

the barriers to active travel, such as busy roads or junctions which make active travel feel unsafe and might be difficult for less able people to cross or use.

- 2.2 979 responses to the public engagement exercise were received, including over 1,081 barriers on the draft plans and 480 additional routes submitted across the whole of Dorset.
- 2.3 The inputs to the public survey have been analysed and a report included in the Appendices, including maps showing where the barriers and routes submitted are located, mapped against the draft networks for each area.
- 2.4 Plans focus on links within and between urban areas in Dorset since these are locations where the greatest potential for active travel increase can be found. Wholly rural links or recreational paths that do not also provide a link between neighbourhoods and destinations, while important to communities, are not included in the ATIP. These are covered by other strategies, such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

### 3. **Draft network plans**

- 3.1 620 route sections have been examined, comprising 702 kilometres of roads and paths, of which 413kms are proposed only as cycling routes, covering longer distances, usually between settlements. 289kms of routes also have walking / wheeling potential – mainly within towns linking key destinations and town centres to neighbourhoods.
- 3.2 Network plans have been produced for the following areas:
  - East Dorset – including Wimborne Minster, Ferndown, Verwood, West Moors, West Parley and Corfe Mullen
  - South Dorset – Dorchester, Weymouth, Chickerell and Portland
  - Purbeck – Wareham, Upton, Swanage and Wool
  - Gillingham and Shaftesbury
  - Bridport and Lyme Regis
  - Blandford Forum, and
  - Sherborne

3.3 The areas for which draft network plans have been produced cover 85% of Dorset's population. Smaller villages, or those located a long way from where services are located, have not been included in the plans, except where they already lie on the National Cycle Network.

#### 4. **Next steps**

4.1 If supported by the Committee and other stakeholders the finalised network plans and prioritised schemes will be put forward for adoption and published.

#### 5. **Financial Implications**

5.1 Development of the plan has been supported through grant funding specifically for the purpose from Active Travel England, the Government's arms-length authority with responsibility for active travel policy and funding decisions. There is no cost to Dorset Council in producing the plan.

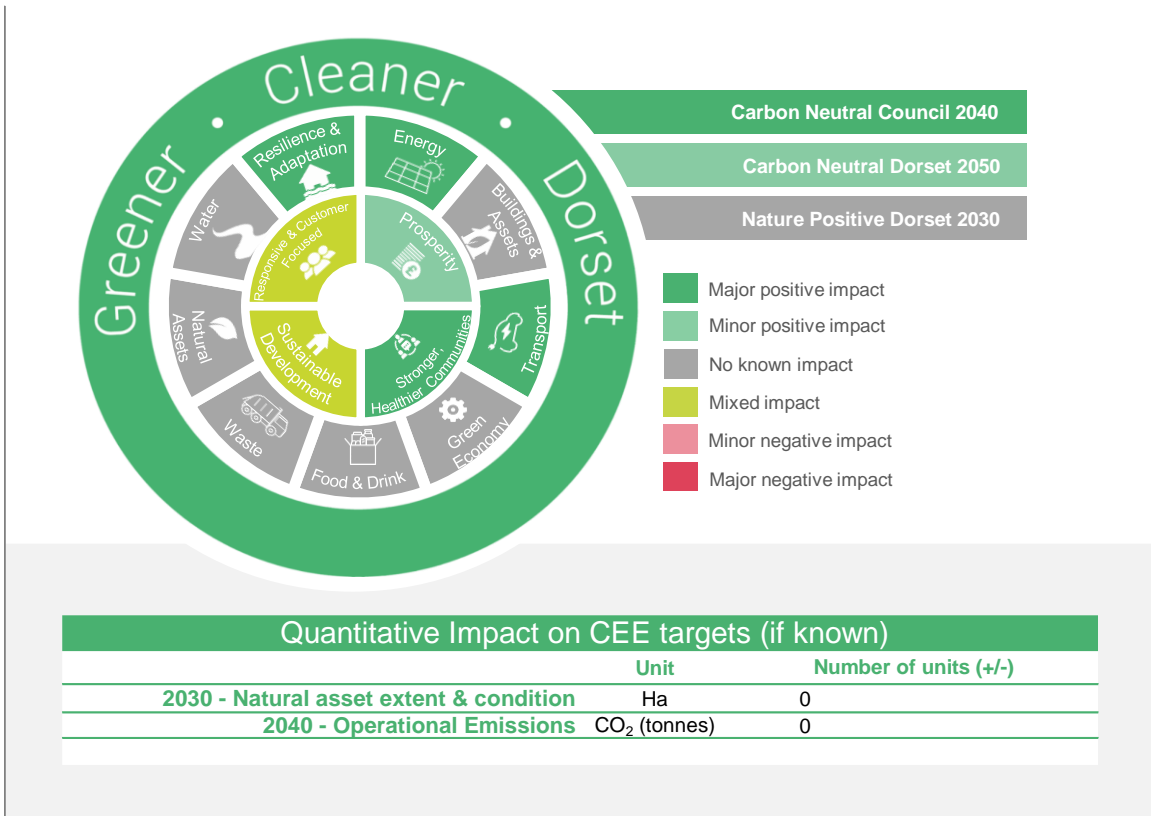
5.2 Having an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan in place is necessary to maintain future funding from Active Travel England, which has provided around £3.5m funding to support active travel scheme development in Dorset since its inception.

5.3 Improvements to active travel infrastructure can bring savings to the Council by reducing the requirements to provide school transport for pupils within walking distance of a school which are incurred when existing routes are deemed unsafe.

5.4 Ensuring an adequate safe active travel infrastructure exists in towns enables older or less able residents to retain independence and meet their local needs without access to a vehicle, helping – marginally – to reduce long term social care needs.

5.5 Active travel provision enables a realistic alternative to the many short journeys currently undertaken by private motor transport. This can help improve the efficient use of highway assets, reduce harmful emissions from travel, improve air quality and reduce the need for capacity improvements, maintenance costs and make more efficient use of parking capacity.

#### 6. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**



## ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	major positive impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	major positive impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	major positive impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	minor positive impact
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	neutral
Responsive & Customer Focused	neutral

## 7. **Well-being and Health Implications**

- 7.1 Improving the network for active travel will enable more residents to choose to walk, wheel or cycle in their neighbourhoods, benefiting from regular physical activity as well as helping to build and maintain social relationships locally.
- 7.2 Reduced motor traffic as a result of any shift to active modes for short journeys in towns also offers the potential to improve safety as well as reducing air and noise pollution.
- 7.3 Higher levels of active travel in communities can also lead to improved community safety through increased natural surveillance.

## 8. **Other Implications**

- 8.1 No other implications have been identified.

## 9. **Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

## 10. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 10.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been developed for the plan, in part informed by the public engagement exercise. Improvements to active travel will be of particular benefit to disabled people and disadvantaged communities.
- 10.2 Over 23,000 households in Dorset do not have access to a vehicle and are therefore likely to be more reliant on active travel both as a means of transport in itself, but also to access public transport. Access to better conditions for active travel is particularly beneficial to disabled people, older people, younger people and other groups who are less likely to have access to a vehicle.

## 11. **Appendices**

- [Appendix 1: Active Travel Infrastructure Plan Survey Report](#)
- [Appendix 2: Active Travel Infrastructure Plan public engagement survey analysis](#)

12. **Background Papers**

No background papers.

13. **Report Sign Off**

11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)