

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 29 September 2025

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: East Sussex Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Purpose: To provide an update on the progress of the East Sussex LCWIP alongside other active travel schemes, initiatives and training.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) To note recent project development and delivery associated with the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) alongside other active travel schemes, initiatives and training.**
 - (2) To note ESCC recent response to ATE's Local Authority Capability assessment.**
 - (3) To note the current activities associated with the review of the East Sussex LCWIP.**
 - (4) To note engagement with the Place Scrutiny Committee, with an invite circulated to all Councillors, on the draft East Sussex LCWIP will take place through a workshop in early November 2025, prior to a public and stakeholder consultation in early 2026.**
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1 Background Information

Introduction

1.1. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) are strategic plans developed by local authorities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure over a 5-10-year period. LCWIP's overarching aim is to make walking, wheeling and cycling an easy choice for journeys by setting out network and investment priorities.

1.2. The national policy context for LCWIPs is the Department for Transport's (DfT) Gear Change strategy, published in July 2020, which sets out a bold vision for cycling and walking, and outlines DfT's plans to revolutionise active travel. It focuses on the need for:

- Healthier, happier and greener communities
- Safer streets
- Convenient and accessible travel
- Ensuring active travel is at the heart of transport decision-making

1.3 Complementary to Gear Change is the DfT's second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2), published in March 2023. CWIS2 sets out an ambition for 'walking, wheeling and cycling to be the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys'. In turn, CWIS2's ambition is supported by a series of objectives to increase the percentage of short journeys in towns by walking and cycling, increase walking activity, doubling cycling activity and increasing the percentage of children walking to school.

1.4 Active Travel England (ATE) was established in August 2022 as an executive agency of the DfT, to support the delivery of these policies, and specifically to drive up the standards of active travel infrastructure delivered by local authorities through undertaking annual assessments. ATE

also have responsibilities for the allocation of active travel funding, monitoring of performance, approval and inspection of schemes, provision of training, good practice and knowledge sharing.

East Sussex Local Transport Plan

1.5 From a local policy context the [East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 \(LTP4\)](#), adopted at the County Council's Full Council meeting in October 2024, embraces a planning for people and places approach focusing on enabling and encouraging integrated journeys and reducing the need to travel through land-use and planning policies that support sustainable travel.

1.6 East Sussex LTP4's more robust ambition for active travel is reflected in the 'Supporting safer, healthier lifestyles and communities' chapter, with the inclusion of the specific policy B2: Active travel. Policy B2 emphasises that planning, designing, delivering, and maintaining new and enhanced high-quality infrastructure and placemaking schemes, which support more active travel, will consider national infrastructure guidance and best practice, including DfT - Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design, Manual for Streets and Inclusive Design, together with ATE design tools and guidance.

1.7 The chapter also highlights the need to align with key strategic plans including District & Borough Local Plans, the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan and the draft East Sussex Rail Strategy to support sustainable development and integration between modes alongside increasing the opportunities to secure funding. Inclusive engagement is highlighted as critical, ensuring that this is integrated from the outset of scheme development. This is to enable all people to have a voice, particularly from groups that are seldom heard and to manage any challenges to scheme design. The chapter also highlights the opportunities associated with the need to review the East Sussex LCWIP to provide a greater balance across identified schemes which support walking, wheeling and cycling.

Current Local Cycling Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan

1.8 The current [East Sussex LCWIP](#) was approved by Cabinet in September 2021. It was developed in accordance with the DfT [LCWIP technical guidance](#) at the time, and in partnership with key local stakeholders. It sets out an ambitious proposed network of preferred cycling and walking routes and measures in specific areas of the County. The DfT recommended that LCWIPs must be focussed on areas where there is the greatest opportunity to increase levels of cycling and walking. Therefore, the East Sussex LCWIP was focussed on the coastal strip and larger market towns. It was made clear that the deliverability of the plan was dependent on the Council and its partner's ability to seek and secure funding to both develop and deliver future schemes.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 The responsibility for delivering the ambition for active travel, as outlined in the East Sussex LTP4 and the East Sussex LCWIP, lies with various teams in Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) who are directly or indirectly involved in seeking funding to plan, design, deliver, and maintain new and enhanced active travel infrastructure and placemaking schemes. This includes Infrastructure Planning & Place; Major Projects & Growth (MPG), Road Safety, Transport Development Planning, Highway Maintenance, Transport Hub, Parking and Highways contractor, Balfour Beatty Living Places.

2.2 This is complemented by partnership working with the Public Health department and key local partners including the district and borough councils, the South Downs National Park Authority and our neighbouring local authorities. Improvements to infrastructure are also supported by the delivery of active travel initiatives and training to support travel behaviour change.

2.3 The following section outlines the funding available for active travel, the County Council's response to the ATE Capability Assessment, the active travel capital and revenue funded related projects that have been developed and delivered since the LCWIP's adoption in 2021, and the current work programme on the review of the East Sussex LCWIP.

Funding of active travel infrastructure, initiatives and training

2.4 Funding for the identification, development and delivery of active travel infrastructure alongside initiatives and training is currently funded by numerous sources. This includes ATE capital and revenue (capability) funding which is used to develop and deliver active travel schemes, initiatives and training. This is alongside the annual capital grant for the development and delivery of integrated transport schemes. Development contributions augment this funding either secured via Section 106 agreements or from Community Infrastructure Levy bids.

2.5 In recent years, the County Council has been successful in securing project and programme-specific capital infrastructure funding to enable the development and delivery of active travel schemes through our MPG team. Other funding and programmes managed across the CET Directorate that directly or indirectly support active travel in the county include:

- Road Safety Speed Management Programme
- Safer Roads Programme
- Bikeability Programme
- Public Rights of Way - Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement Programme, and
- Highways - Structural Maintenance programme

2.6 Further details of the funding available for active travel schemes for 2026/27 and the details on the different types of funding is outlined in Appendix 1.

2.7 Forthcoming changes to Government funding for transport infrastructure are anticipated from 2026/27 onwards with the move away from short term or intermittent funding to a longer-term funding settlement. We are supportive of this approach as it will enable a more robust approach to the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure programmes, including for active travel infrastructure, over a longer period. With devolution and the potential for the establishment of the Sussex Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) in May 2026, the transport priorities for the wider Sussex geography will be set by the new Mayor eventually through the development of a joint LTP for Sussex. Therefore, this may influence future longer-term allocations of funding for active travel within East Sussex received via the MSA.

2.8 In addition, local government reorganisation and the introduction of new unitary authorities across Sussex will bring closer alignment between planning and transport policy, and ensuring development more strongly plays its part in promoting active travel and delivering active travel infrastructure.

County Council - Response to ATE Capability Assessment

2.9 As outlined in paragraph 1.4, ATE undertake an annual assessment of local authority capability in relation to active travel from 0 to 4. The County Council currently has a local authority [active travel capability rating of 1](#) which is defined as 'some local leadership and support with developing plans and isolated interventions'.

2.10 The most recent assessment was provided at the end of June 2025 with a requirement to respond by 1 September 2025. Whilst there is currently no guidance from ATE on what constitutes a specific capability rating, ATE have indicated that the assessment for 2025/26 will apply a greater weighting to scheme delivery. There is also a new focus on understanding levels of active travel training within the authority, and local capability for value for money and monitoring and evaluation of schemes.

2.11 The County Council's response to the assessment is summarised within Appendix 2. It demonstrates the considerable progress made, especially related to local leadership and LCWIP

network development during the last year, and that the actions being taken in relation to these elements, are filtering through into scheme development and delivery.

2.12 Overall the County Council's 2025 self-assessment demonstrates that we have attained a level 2 (or above) on the majority of criteria and are moving closer towards a level 2 rating for delivery. As a consequence, we have requested that ATE consider raising our overall rating from 1 to 2.

2.13 Confirmation of ATE's local authority ratings will be provided in October 2025, with publication shortly afterwards. The ratings, alongside local population numbers, will continue to determine future allocations of funding for active travel scheme development and delivery.

Active Travel initiatives, activities and scheme project development and delivery

2.14 The adopted East Sussex LCWIP included a priority programme of twenty schemes to support both walking, wheeling and cycling across the prioritised LCWIP areas of Eastbourne and South Wealden, Bexhill and Hastings, Newhaven, Lewes and the SDNP. To date, 15 of these priority schemes have either been delivered or are at a development stage, either led by the County Council or a key local partner or community led groups.

2.15 To complement scheme development, the current LCWIP highlights the importance of integrating initiatives to support travel behaviour change as part of active travel scheme development and delivery.

2.16 Appendix 3 includes examples of active travel schemes, initiatives and activities that have been developed and delivered over the last four years funded in part or full by capital and/or revenue funding secured and received by the County Council. Examples of these schemes include School Streets and the design of measures to support the journey to school, Peacehaven & Telscombe Active Travel scheme – active travel neighbourhood approach, Eastbourne Town Centre and Hastings Green Connections, which is re-prioritising road space for people walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport alongside inclusive placemaking. This is complemented by active travel behaviour change initiatives (as outlined in Appendix 4) and active travel training to enable the county to embrace national guidance and ATE's scheme development tools to enhance active travel scheme design.

Embedding active travel into policy

2.17 Considerable work is undertaken to ensure that active travel policy, as reflected in the East Sussex LTP4, is embed into relevant County Council plans and policies, for example the Healthy Weight whole system partnership plan, the Environment Plan and the East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy to 2050. This is alongside integration within key partners plans including the districts and boroughs and SDNPA local plans, with the inclusion of specific policies focussed on active travel to enable sustainable development.

East Sussex LCWIP Review 2025

2.18 The current East Sussex LCWIP outlines the potential alignment of the proposed cycling and walking networks in each geography. Whilst there has been progress in the development and delivery of a number of the prioritised schemes included in the plan to embrace the stronger strategic direction at both a national and local level in relation to active travel policy and guidance, and to develop a plan that more clearly indicates the County Council and our partners priorities of deliverable active travel schemes, a review of the East Sussex LCWIP has commenced. This will place the County Council and their partners in a stronger position to secure future funding.

2.19 The draft vision of the LCWIP aspires to promote healthy and active lifestyles by delivering a safe and inclusive walking, wheeling and cycling network that connects our communities and local destinations.

2.20 The review of the LCWIP includes a series of key stages, which are in alignment with the [DfT's LCWIP technical guidance](#). These include the following which is set out in more detail in Appendix 5: -

- Stages 1 & 2 - Project Inception & development of evidence base (June 2025)
- Stage 3 - Review and update of walking and cycling network plans (September 2025)
- Stage 4 - Development of walking and cycling concept design work (November 2025)
- Stage 5 - Prioritisation and appraisal of potential schemes (December 2025)
- Stage 6 - Public consultation of the East Sussex LCWIP (January 2026)

2.21 With the East Sussex LCWIP being a supporting document to the East Sussex LTP4 County Council officers will engage with the Place Scrutiny Committee at stage 4, with the invite extended to all Councillors to brief them on the progress of the review and to discuss the emerging work on the draft prioritised list of schemes for inclusion in the plan, ahead of the public consultation in early 2026.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 In recent years, there has been a national shift in transport policy placing a greater emphasis on the opportunities for active travel, resulting in strategies and plans and associated guidance and tools to support local authorities to develop and deliver higher quality integrated active travel infrastructure. The County Council has embraced this with the adoption of the East Sussex LTP4 which sets out a robust ambition for active travel across the county in planning for people and places over planning for vehicles.

3.2 The onus on delivering active travel infrastructure, initiatives and activities in the County Council does not sit with one team but across various teams in CET Directorate as well as Public Health, under the policy auspices of LTP4, as well as partnership work that is undertaken across the county. Since the adoption of the current LCWIP in September 2021, there has been significant progress especially related to local leadership - including the adoption of LTP4 in October 2024 - and LCWIP network development, with those actions filtering through into the complexity of scheme's being developed and starting to be delivered. The Committee is asked to note the recent project development and delivery associated with the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan alongside other active travel schemes, initiatives and training.

3.3 The ongoing delivery of active travel infrastructure, initiatives and activities continues and supports the evidence presented in the County Council's recent self-assessment submission to Active Travel England to increase the Local Authority Active Travel Capability rating from 1 to 2. The Committee is asked to note County Council's response to the recent Capability Assessment submission.

3.4 Following the adoption of LTP4 last year, the review of the East Sussex LCWIP commenced in summer 2025 and will be completed by the end of 2025. The review will support the development of a robust programme of deliverable active travel schemes to support the County Council and their partners in future applications for funding. This will be important with the forthcoming provision of a longer-term funding settlement for transport, devolution with the establishment of the Sussex Mayoral Combined County Authority in May 2026, and local government reorganisation. The Committee is also asked to note the current activities associated with the review of the LCWIP and the planned workshop with members of the Committee and Lead Member, with a wider invite to all Councillors to attend, in November 2025 ahead of public and stakeholder consultation in early 2026.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 \(LTP4\)](#)