



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

TravelTelford



Active Travel Update

Communities Scrutiny

February 2022

Background

During 2019 we recognised that our approach to Sustainable Travel (which includes Active Travel) needed prioritisation at a local level with no significant national funding available. The Borough had previously received a Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) however no direct funding for this work has been received for a number of years.

Our Active Travel work is currently led by the Cycling & Walking Strategy (2017) and Local Transport Plan (2011-2026). Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was acknowledged that these policies needed updating to reflect the changing position, and as result, work commenced on reviewing and updating these strategies.

The need to develop our approach has been accelerated by the significant change in travel habits through the pandemic, with more people using active travel options in their day to day lives. This has also been recognised by the Government with the publication of 'Gear Change' and 'Local Transport Note 1/20' as well the appointment of Chris Boardman - the first national commissioner for the new national cycling body, Active Travel England.

In 2021 the team was expanded to meet demand by recruiting additional roles including a dedicated Active Travel Delivery Specialist and Bike Hub Manager.

We are also in the process of recruiting for a Schools Active Travel Officer who will also provide a link with the Public Health team to ensure alignment of our Active Travel work.

Data Collection

2020 Active Travel Consultation

In May 2020, prior to commencing work on revised strategies and schemes, a public consultation was undertaken to inform the current public perception and needs surrounding active travel.

This consultation was wide ranging, and sought views on:

- Understanding of current walking and cycling levels
- Existing barriers to use and public preferences
- Awareness of current facilities and initiatives
- What could be improved locally



Results

We received 514 responses and the key findings were:

What would make people cycle more:

- More lanes
- Cycle parking
- More signage
- Clearer maps
- Maintenance
- Improved safety
- Segregation from traffic

What would make people walk more:

- More crossing points
- More lighting
- Priority
- Reduced pavement parking

General areas for improvement included:

- Better route information
- More mapping
- Training programmes

This data will be used to shape projects going forward, both from a strategy and delivery perspective.

Route Inspections

In 2020, teams undertook route inspections of all our main walking and cycling routes. This work generated over 900 enquiries which are currently being actioned through existing works packages and targeted maintenance programmes.

We also have a dedicated road sweeper that will be used predominately to keep local walking and cycling routes in good order. This sweeper will be able to target remaining issues identified from these inspections, while undertaking route-wide treatments, making them safer and more appealing to use.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

A Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) provides a long-term approach to developing and improving local cycling and walking networks, to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.

The key outputs of LCWIPs are:

- Create a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies cycling and walking infrastructure improvements for future investment
- Ensure that consideration is given to cycling and walking within both local planning and transport strategies
- Make the case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure

LCWIPs are not mandatory, however, those who have one are often better placed to make the case for future investment.

While our current Cycling & Walking Strategy from 2017 is relatively recent, and has a list of potential schemes within it, there is opportunity to revisit this to ensure it is fit for the future. As such, the LCWIP is currently in development and will update the Cycling & Walking Strategy to ensure we are in the best position to improve our network, and secure external funding to do so.

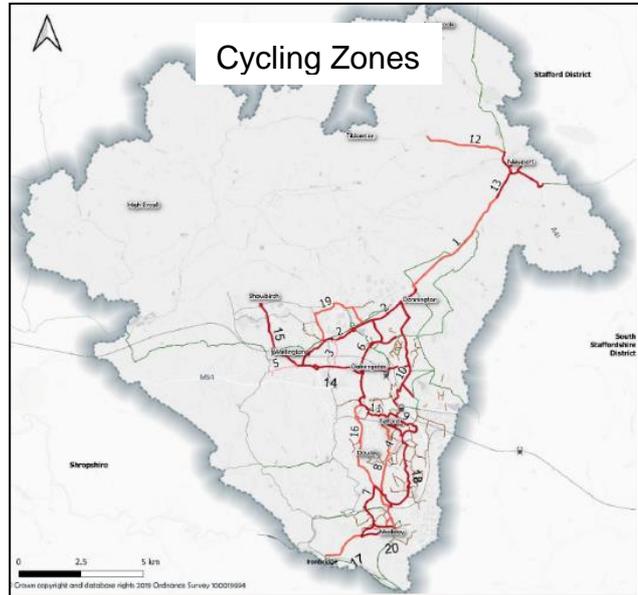
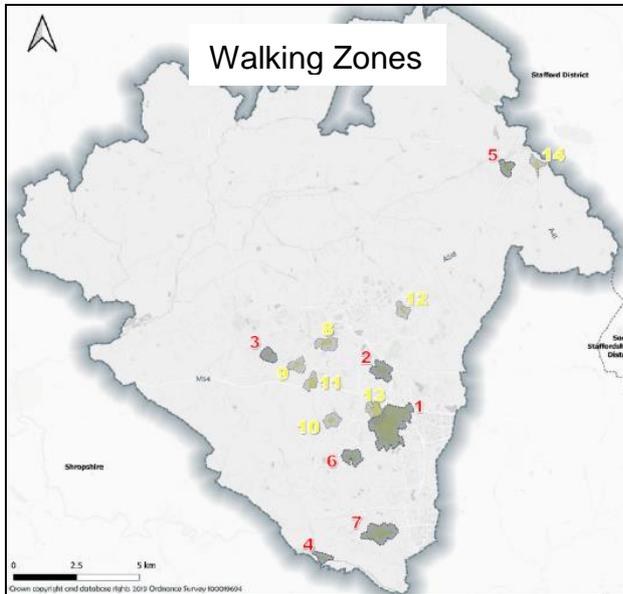
In developing our LCWIP we have:

- Considered intelligence from the 2020 consultation and route inspections
- Used local and national data to determine potential trip generators and understand how our residents and visitors travel around the borough
- Undertaken internal stakeholder workshops

Walking Zones & Cycling Corridors

The LCWIP will identify key areas for development and improvement. This helps determine our priorities for the coming years around infrastructure for active travel.

The zones will be based around our borough towns and their connectivity.

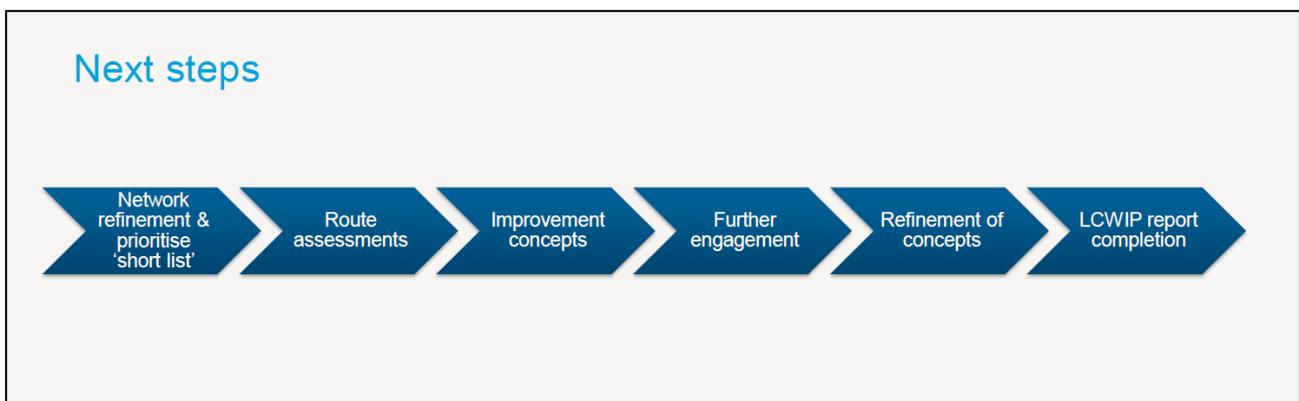


Next Steps

This project will continue with the following key milestones:

- Engage with local groups and other stakeholders
- Complete LCWIP in line with government guidance
- Update overarching Walking & Cycling strategy
- Embed into emerging Local Transport Plan

Specifically in regard to the LCWIP document, the following stages will be followed:



Funding

There is a variety of funding streams to deliver Active Travel schemes across the borough which include:

- **Travel Telford Sustainable Transport Fund**

This fund is a £2.6m Council investment over 4 years from the £50m Highways capital programme. The fund covers a variety of investment into public transport, active travel and electric vehicle infrastructure.

- **DfT Active Travel Fund (formerly Emergency Active Travel Fund)**

In the first phase of this funding the Council was awarded £76k which was spent on walking and cycling measures at the Wrekin and also measures in Local Centres to support re-opening of our High Streets and to allow for social distancing.

In the second tranche of funding the Council successfully secured £229,500 for the A518 Connectivity Package, a scheme that provides an off road cycling and walking link between Clock Towner Roundabout and Kynnersley Drive.

- **DfT Revenue – Capability funding**

The Council has also successfully secured £181k to develop infrastructure plans and carry out behavior change activities, such as training and promotion in our communities.

Bidding & Future Funding

In 2021, a bid to the DfT for further capital funding for £1.8m was submitted to carry out improvements along the Silkin Way, as identified in our Silkin Way Investment Plan.

While we await the outcome of this bid, if successful, it would be used to improve:

- All highway interaction points, implementing and/or improving crossing facilities at each location
- Route improvement works north of the Town Centre through Central Park, Snedshill and Oakengates where the route is less attractive to users

A decision from the DfT has been delayed but is now expected in spring. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Enforcement and Transport along with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment and Cultural Services have recently written to the new head of Active Travel England asking for support with the bid.

Future Funding

It is anticipated that additional funding opportunities for Active Travel will be available in order to realise our plans.

Silkin Way Investment Plan

The Silkin Way is a key 14 mile walking/cycling route running north to south of the borough serving many of our communities, employment sites and local points of interest.

We have developed a comprehensive £8m investment plan to improve this leisure and commuter route to bring the whole route to a flagship standard. Such investment will encourage more people to use the route for both leisure and commuting.

Satisfaction Survey

Before work started on the Silkin Way project a survey was launched to find out how satisfied residents were with the existing condition of the route. This will help shape future plans to ensure we are meeting expectations of existing and future users of the Silkin Way.

555 people responded and the key findings were:

- 35% use the route daily and 30% weekly
- 77% people use the route for leisure
- Most people rated the route at 3 on a scale on 1-5 (5 being the highest and 1 the lowest)
- Lighting was rated 1 by 40% showing that this is a key area for improvement

In addition, many responders provided specific feedback that will be taken into consideration when planning future phases of work.

Signing

Signage along the route is a mixture of new and old and there are sections where the signage is not sufficient with people not being able to successfully navigate along the route. We are in the process of redesigning signage along the whole route, which will help with navigation but also give the route an identity and consistency to provide reassurance to those who use it. This work will commence in spring 2022.

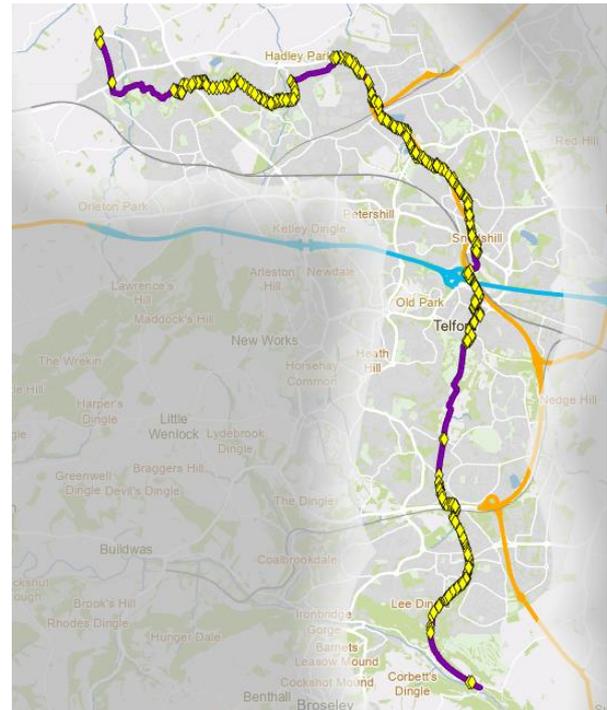
In undertaking this work a network of directional signage for the whole route will be provided and supported by additional way markers. However, it is intended to retain as many original features as possible including the iron wheels found along the route.

Lighting & CCTV

There are sections of the route that are not lit and as identified in the survey this is a barrier to people using it. The map to the right shows the location of all street lights currently located on the Silkin Way.

Options for lighting on these sections in currently being explored, taking into considering environmental and climate change issues as we do so. Where possible, we will look to innovative solutions to provide this including the use of solar or wind powered lighting.

We will also work with colleagues in Public Protection to ascertain where additional CCTV may be required along the route. This may include crime hot-spots as well as areas with less natural surveillance.



Crossing Points

There are many locations where the Silkin Way crosses the highway, with significant variation on the type and quality of crossing facilities provided. As such, a review of every highway interaction along the route has been completed and improvements where required identified. This has been included in the bid to the DfT.

Street Furniture

There is currently a mixture of street furniture used along the route such as benches and bins. However, it is noted that these are of varying standard, and in places lack facilities for cyclists.

Opportunity will be sought to improve the existing street furniture and bring forward a package of features including benches, bins and practical maintenance stations for cyclists to help improve their journey and experience.

General Maintenance

Towards the end of 2021, an extensive route maintenance programme on the Silkin Way started. This project has included:

- In depth sweeping/clearance
- Repairing surface defects
- Removing soil and vegetation where the route narrows
- Vegetation clearance
- General cleansing

The example below show sections before and after:



A518 Connectivity Package

This project was delivered following the successful bid to the DfT Active Travel Fund, which looked to provide an off road link between Clock Tower Roundabout and Kynnersley Drive. This route provides an alternative to the route of NCN55 that uses rural lanes through The Humbers, and therefore enables easier and safer travel between Muxton and Newport, and then onto our wider cycle network.

The works was completed in December and created an additional 1.25mile/2km of shared use footway/cycle way segregating active travel modes from traffic. The scheme also included the delivery of a major road surfacing scheme, combining work to minimise disruption on the route.



Following completion of the route, work is now ongoing with Sustrans to formally relocate National Cycle Route 55 to this route.

Scheme Feedback

The council has done a great job!

Well done great job all of you

Brilliant. I avoid cycling on the road, so this will help me get to Newport by bicycle.

Great idea hopefully cyclists will use it, glad you've resurfaced the road at the same time.

Thank you for creating the cycle path it's made my rides to Newport a lot safer.

Great job, build more

It's amazing! Seen quite a few bikes on it already

Great job and cycle path

Cycle Storage

In order to promote cycle use and secure storage in the borough, a project to install additional cycle parking spaces started in the summer of 2020. In the first two phases of this project, there have been 176 cycle stands provided to local communities following engagement with all Ward Members, Town/Parish Councils and local businesses.

It is the intention to continue to provide these facilities in future phases, and will again look to our communities to indicate where they are required.



As part of our LCWIP, there will be opportunity to install cycle storage facilities at key transport hubs/district centres.