Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit

To:	Highways and Transport Committee
Meeting Date:	5 March 2024
From:	Executive Director for Place and Sustainability
Electoral division(s):	All
Key decision:	Yes
Forward Plan ref:	2024/036

Executive Summary: The purpose of this report is to seek approval and adoption of the draft Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

a) Note the feedback from stakeholder and developer engagement on the draft Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments.

b) Approve adoption of the draft Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments.

c) Note progress to date and next steps for the high-level action plan and strategic studies within the Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy.

d) Approve the revisions to the 'Transport Assessment Requirements' document since it was last updated in September 2019. These revisions are intended to reinforce to developers, the need to promote active travel and passenger transport as the primary method of maintaining network resilience and improving travel choices across the County.

Officer contact:
Name: Prajina Baisyet
Post: Active Travel Strategy Lead Officer
Email: Prajina.Baisyet@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

1. Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire

1.1 This report relates to four ambitions from the Council's Strategic Framework 2023-28 which includes:

Ambition 1: Achieving net-zero direct carbon emissions by 2045 with an active travel toolkit within our communities involves implementing various solutions:

- Encourage walking, cycling, and other sustainable modes of transportation to reduce reliance on carbon-intensive modes such as private cars.
- Develop and enhance infrastructure that supports green transport options, including pedestrian footpaths, cycle lanes, and integrated public transportation systems.
- Invest in and promote the use of eco-friendly transportation facilities, such as bike-sharing programs and electric vehicle charging stations.
- Conduct educational campaigns to raise awareness about the environmental benefits of active travel and the role it plays in achieving net-zero carbon emissions.
- Partner with businesses to promote sustainable commuting options for employees, including cycle-to-work programs, working from home, and flexible work hours.
- Consider integrating carbon offsetting programs within the toolkit, allowing users to contribute to environmental initiatives that counterbalance carbon emissions associated with travel.

By incorporating these solutions, the active travel toolkit can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable, low-carbon transportation methods and contribute to achieving net-zero direct carbon emissions.

Ambition 2: The Active Travel Toolkit can contribute to promoting travel across the county in a safer, more sustainable, and environmentally friendly manner by incorporating the following solutions:

- Enhance and create infrastructure that supports active travel, including safe pedestrian footpaths, dedicated cycle lanes, and shared spaces to encourage walking and cycling.
- Integrate active travel options with public transport to create a seamless and sustainable multi-modal transportation network.
- Launch educational campaigns to inform the community about the benefits of active travel, emphasising safety, environmental advantages, and overall wellbeing.
- Implement safety measures such as traffic calming, improved street lighting, and signage to enhance the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Introduce bike sharing initiatives to provide a convenient and accessible alternative for short-distance travel, reducing reliance on motorised vehicles.
- Encourage the use of electric bikes and scooters as eco-friendly alternatives for commuting, providing incentives and charging infrastructure.
- Advocate for policies that support active travel, including regulations favouring pedestrians and cyclists, and incentives for sustainable transportation options.

By incorporating these solutions into the Active Travel Toolkit, communities can create a holistic approach to promoting safe, sustainable, and environmentally friendly travel across the county.

Ambition 3: To address and reduce health inequalities, an Active Travel Toolkit can incorporate various solutions, including:

- Encourage and facilitate increased physical activity through active travel options like walking and cycling, which can positively impact overall health and contribute to reducing health disparities.
- Involve local communities in the planning and decision-making processes related to active travel initiatives, ensuring that the toolkit is tailored to specific health challenges and needs within different populations.
- Implement educational campaigns to raise awareness about the health benefits of active travel, targeting communities that may face barriers to participation and providing information on how active travel can improve overall wellbeing.
- Integrate health related initiatives into the toolkit, such as partnerships with healthcare providers to promote active travel recommendations as part of preventive healthcare measures.
- Advocate for policies that support health equity, addressing broader determinants of health and promoting an environment that fosters wellbeing for all community members.

By incorporating these solutions, the Active Travel Toolkit can play a significant role in promoting health equity by addressing the social determinants of health and creating a more inclusive and accessible environment for active travel.

Ambition 4: The Active Travel Toolkit can contribute to enhancing physical, mental health, and overall wellbeing, promoting healthy, safe, and independent lives through various solutions:

- Encourage and facilitate increased physical activity through active travel options such as walking and cycling, promoting cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and overall fitness.
- Develop infrastructure that supports active travel with accessible and safe footpaths, cycle lanes, and pedestrian friendly environments to ensure safety and ease of use.
- Involve communities in the planning and implementation of active travel initiatives, fostering a sense of community and social connection, which positively impacts mental wellbeing.
- Promote active travel routes that incorporate natural elements, such as parks and green spaces, to enhance mental wellbeing by providing opportunities for relaxation and stress reduction.
- Implement measures to enhance safety during active travel, including well-lit footpaths, traffic calming strategies, and educational campaigns to reduce accidents and promote a sense of security.
- Collaborate with healthcare providers to integrate active travel recommendations into patient care plans, promoting a preventive approach to healthcare and supporting overall wellbeing.

By incorporating these solutions, the Active Travel Toolkit can contribute significantly to enhancing physical, mental health, and overall wellbeing, ensuring that individuals can lead healthy, safe, and independent lives.

2. Background

2.1 The Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments is a thorough guide crafted to evaluate and enhance walking and cycling amenities for emerging developments

in Cambridgeshire. Aligned with England's overarching goal of becoming a leading nation in walking and cycling, this toolkit adheres to Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy. It underscores the significance of active travel, encompassing walking and cycling, and discourages dependence on private cars, aligning with the broader vision for sustainable transportation.

2.2   The toolkit aims to provide developers, planners, policy makers, and transport engineers with comprehensive guidance throughout the planning process, ensuring the prioritisation of active travel in new developments. It is in accordance with both national and local transport policies, Local Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents, and technical guidance. Specifically, the toolkit is bolstered by support from Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy's Policy AT04, which underscores the importance of prioritising active travel in new developments.

2.3   As of 1st June 2023, Active Travel England (ATE) has gained status as a statutory consultee for planning applications, with mandatory consultation for applications meeting specific thresholds. The toolkit has been produced to align with ATE's stipulations and is endorsed by the Planning Application Assessment Toolkit released by ATE in May 2023.

2.4   Developed in collaboration with support from the Local Government Association and The Design Council, the toolkit functions as a resource for Local Planning Authority officers. In consultation with the Highway Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council), it establishes expectations for developers at various stages of the planning process. The aim is to guarantee the prompt implementation of top-tier and inclusive active travel infrastructure, maximising the uptake of active and sustainable modes of travel by new residents upon moving into their new homes.

2.5   The toolkit is concentrated on initiatives that promote and foster the adoption of active modes of travel right from the initiation of a new development. It suggests applying the toolkit to developments of all scales, with a specific focus on larger developments. Acknowledging the significance of proportionality in design measures corresponding to the development's scale, the toolkit aims to instigate positive behaviour change, motivating residents to embrace healthier and more active forms of travel.

2.6   Initially drafted by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), with designated funding from the Design Council, this document underwent a collaborative review. Subsequently, CCC found it valuable to adopt the document as a countywide Toolkit. The review process involved input from the team responsible for developing the Active Travel Strategy, the new Active Travel team, and contributions from broader CCC colleagues and district officers.

2.7   This committee was briefed on earlier revisions to Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments and Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy during the meeting on 7 March 2023, with the purpose of reviewing the draft toolkit for subsequent engagement.

2.8   Following the approval of Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy by this Committee in March 2023, this report also delivers the most recent update on the overarching action plan and strategic studies.

2.9   The guidance document for TA requirements has been revised to incorporate new information that has emerged since 2019. This update is crucial for applicants, developers, their agents, and local authority officers when submitting a Transport Assessment (TA) or a Transport Statement (TS). The latest version of the document now includes references to the Cambridgeshire Highways Development Management General Principles for Development (January 2023), National Planning Policy Framework (2023), LTN 1/20 Active Travel Design Guide (2023), and Active Travel Toolkit. Notable changes encompass specific aspects such as bus shelter maintenance per shelter, trip caps, the requirement for applicants to complete the active travel toolkit form, inclusion of Smart Journeys in travel plans, execution of works through S278, and varying travel plan thresholds based on site size (over 200 dwellings or below this threshold), each having distinct requirements.

3.   Main Issues

Developer and Stakeholder Engagements

3.1   The Cambridgeshire Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments underwent consultation with 23 prominent developers across Cambridgeshire, including Homes England, L&Q Group, Vistry Group, Urban and Civic, Hill, amongst others. Additional consultation for the toolkit involved 35 other key stakeholders in Cambridgeshire, comprising walking and cycling campaign groups, bridleways, the British Horse Society, the police, and various others. These engagements with both developers and stakeholders was set at four weeks and occurred during the summer period from 25 July to 21 August 2023.

3.2   Following stakeholder engagement, we received a number of comments, and their primary concerns have been summarised as follows:

-   Equestrian representation has been excluded, and it is suggested that this group be acknowledged in the document.
-   The predominant focus of the toolkit appears to be on travel to work, school, shops, and community facilities, rather than encompassing recreation and health.
-   Equestrian stakeholders highlighted the need to be consulted on future schemes during the earlier stages of a project.
-   Concerns are raised about access to public transport.
-   There is an expressed need for attention to be directed toward the future maintenance of all routes, including footpaths, cycleways, and bridleways.

3.3   In response to stakeholder feedback, we have integrated an additional section into the toolkit concerning User Hierarchy. This section now explicitly includes equestrians in the hierarchy, emphasising the necessity to consider all vulnerable non-motorised users in transport schemes. The objective is to ensure their inclusion in future schemes, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis, with the aim of avoiding any adverse impacts.

3.4   The toolkit integrates active travel seamlessly into daily routines to promote a healthy lifestyle. Newly developed areas just beyond Cambridge are connected through greenways. Additionally, developers outside of Cambridge are integrating green spaces and water parks into their projects, encouraging walking and cycling activities within these developments.

3.5   The equestrian group expressed concerns about the 'improvement' of the current Public Rights of Way network, emphasising the preference for soft surfaces over tarmacking or hard standing. New or enhanced infrastructure for active travel might intersect with existing public rights of way and bridleways. Consequently, the choice of surface materials for a specific scheme should align with Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Design Guide. In instances where space permits, due consideration will be given to the needs of equestrians, and not all green routes will be paved. Developers are encouraged to mitigate any potential adverse impacts on the environment whenever feasible.

3.6   In facilitating extended journeys from a new development, developers will be mandated to collaborate with bus operators to establish a bus route and necessary infrastructure, including a bus stop and shelter, prior to the initial occupancy.

3.7   Collaborate with the Department for Transport and Active Travel England to secure funding for the upkeep of active travel infrastructure.

3.8   Photographs that did not depict either good or poor practice examples have been replaced with more illustrative examples sourced from new residential developments currently under construction across Cambridgeshire.

3.9   District officers and internal teams have provided feedback on the draft version of this document. Their valuable input and suggestions have been integrated into the toolkit. Please refer to Appendix A for the Active Travel Toolkit.

High Level Action Plan and Strategic Studies: Update

3.10   Following the adoption of the Active Travel Strategy in March 2023, the Active Travel Team have concentrated on extensively developing certain sections of active travel strategy high level action plan. For the latest update, please refer to Appendix B, and this Committee will receive ongoing updates as work continues.

Update to the Council's 'Transport Assessment Requirements' document

3.11   The County Council's Transport Assessment Requirements document has been updated to reflect and maintain consistency with the Active Travel Toolkit.

3.12   The most significant updates are:

- Thresholds for vehicle trips in Section 3 of the document, which have been reduced from 60 two-way trips to 30 two-way vehicle movements in any peak hour.
- Changes related to land use types,
- Links to Cambridgeshire Insight accident data,
- Requirement for inclusion of traffic flow diagrams depicting development trips
- Requirement for comparator sites to be comparable to those in Cambridgeshire
- A stipulation that, when applicable, Stage 1 Road Safety Audits must be concluded before determining any application - these audits will not be accepted as planning conditions.

Furthermore, the updated guidelines emphasise giving priority to active travel modes in 'physical infrastructure proposals,' referencing LTN 1/20 and the Cambridgeshire Active

Travel Design Guide (2023) and making mention of linking to the Public Right of Ways guidance. Please refer to Appendix C.

4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 Choosing the 'do nothing' alternative is not considered viable, as the toolkit guarantees the prioritisation of active travel in new developments. It explicitly communicates the expectations for developers, planners, transport engineers, and other stakeholders at each stage of the planning process, aiming to accomplish these objectives at both national and local levels.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 In summary, it is recommended that this Committee adopts the Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments, as it facilitates the thorough evaluation of walking and cycling provisions for various scales of new development in Cambridgeshire.

5.2 The toolkit is applicable to developments of all scales, with particular emphasis on large-scale developments. Whilst it is acknowledged that some principles may not be suitable for small-scale developments, certain decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis for each site.

5.3 Ongoing updates on the progress of the Active Travel Strategy High Level Action Plan and Strategic Studies will be regularly presented to this Committee.

5.4 It is It is recommended that this Committee endorse the modifications to the Transport Assessment Requirements, as they are essential additions to be appended to the Transport Assessment or Transport Statement applications, including the Active Travel Toolkit for all new developments in Cambridgeshire.

6. Significant Implications

Report authors should evaluate significant implications using the sub-headings below. Each specific implication must be signed off by the relevant officer within the Council (or external advisors) and included in the table below for the Executive Director to review before the final report is submitted to Democratic Services (who will delete the table) for publication.

You will also need sign off by the Corporate Clearance Group (CCG) at the relevant CCG meeting.

Further guidance and a checklist containing prompt questions are included at Appendix 1.

6.1 Finance Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

6.2 Legal Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

6.3 Risk Implications

Should developers neglect active travel infrastructure, there is a potential risk that new residents may depend solely on their cars for transportation.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

Please refer to Appendix D for the completed and approved Equality Impact assessment (EqIA) form.

6.5 Climate Change and Environment Implications (Key decisions only)

Carbon & Green & House Gas emissions:
- Implementing this recommendation would lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy efficient, low carbon buildings:
- Following this recommendation would lower energy consumption for both the council and communities.

Low Carbon Transport:
- The proposal aims to diminish reliance on private cars, promoting cleaner modes of transportation like cycling and walking, and fostering an increase in public transport usage.

Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats, and land management:
- The proposal would generate, enhance, or diminish impact on green spaces or natural habitats.

Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution:
- The proposal aims to minimise waste produced by the council and/or residents, boost recycling efforts, and promote the use of sustainable materials.

Water use, availability, and management:
- The proposal seeks to advocate for and/or implement nature-based solutions to address climate change, such as balancing ponds, Sustainable Drainage solutions, tree planting, etc., to effectively manage the impacts of climate change.

Air Pollution:
- The proposal would result in a decrease in air pollution and an enhancement of air quality.

7. Source Documents

7.1 Appendix A: Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments

Appendix B: Active Travel Strategy Action Plan Update

Appendix C: Transport Assessment Requirements

Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessment