

Fenland Transport Strategy

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 7th March 2023

From: Executive Director: Place & Sustainability

Electoral division(s): Chatteris, March North and Waldersey, March South and Rural, Roman Bank and Peckover, Whittlesey North, Whittlesey South, Wisbech East, Wisbech West.

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2023/038

Outcome: To update the Committee on the development of a district-based transport strategy for Fenland

Recommendation: Members are requested to:

- a) Note the feedback from stakeholder and public consultation on the draft Fenland Transport Strategy;
- b) Note progress to date and the next steps for the development and prioritisation of schemes contained in the Fenland Transport Strategy; and
- c) Adopt the Fenland Transport Strategy

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1 Background

- 1.1 The Future Transport Priorities paper to this committee on 7th December 2021 summarised seven year 1 actions of the Joint Administration relating to the work of the Council's Transport Strategy team. Action T.4 refers to the continued development of transport strategies for Huntingdonshire and Fenland to include support for modal shift. An update was provided to this committee on 12th July 2022.
- 1.2 District-based transport strategy for Fenland will be adopted as 'child documents' of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (LTCP) when this is finalised later this year. Figure 1 below shows the relationship between the LTCP and the district strategies.

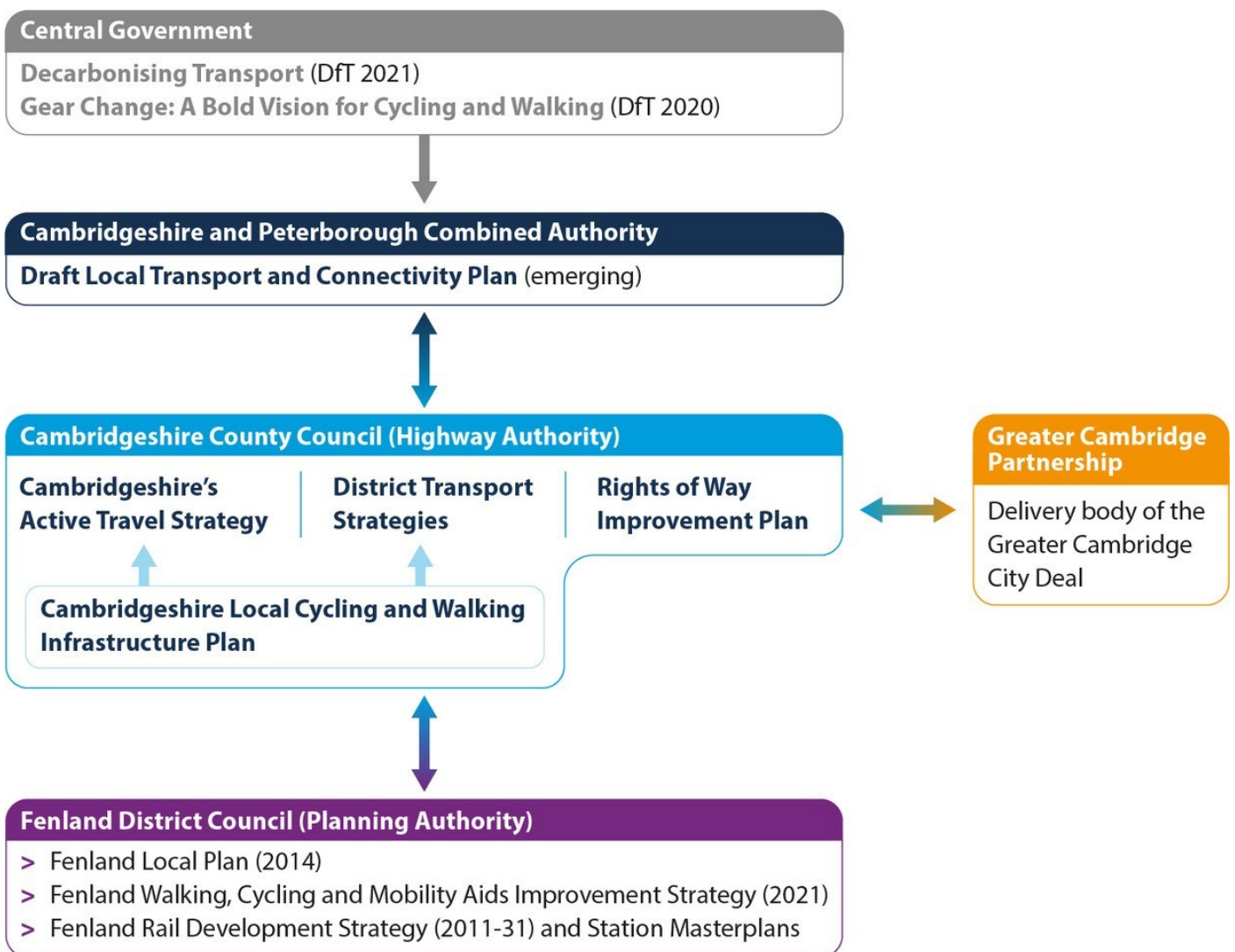


Figure 1: Strategy Relationships

- 1.3 This report provides an update on transport strategy work for Fenland summarising the outcomes from public consultation on the draft strategy and presenting an updated strategy for approval by this committee.

2 Transport Strategy for Fenland

- 2.1 District-based transport strategies set out detailed policies and a 'live' emerging action plan for transport investment in each district. Schemes contained in the emerging action plans are then eligible for LTCP Integrated Transport Block funding from the CPCA. Funding bids can also be submitted to the CPCA, Government and other bodies for delivery of schemes, and contributions from developers can be secured against schemes where they relate to development. It should be noted that active travel schemes for all districts are set out in the Active Travel Strategy rather than in the individual district-based strategies.
- 2.2 The work on the Fenland Transport Strategy has been co-ordinated with that on the Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire, as well as the CPCA's LTCP.
- 2.3 The Active Travel Strategy (discussed in a separate report to this committee) provides a comprehensive set of policies that will enable quality provision of active travel infrastructure across Cambridgeshire, with a focus on achieving mode shift from private car journeys that will contribute to the County Council's target to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2045.
- 2.4 The Fenland Transport Strategy has been developed in partnership with Fenland District Council and the Member Steering Group. The strategy focuses on improving accessibility and connectivity across the district. The Fenland Transport Strategy replaces the Market Town Transport Strategies for Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. The draft Fenland Transport Strategy can be found in Appendix 1.

Vision and Objectives

- 2.5 The Vision for the Fenland Transport Strategy is:

To prioritise and develop a connected, safe and inclusive transport network in Fenland. A network that will enable more people to access employment, education, healthcare and everyday services by a range of transport modes. There is a key focus on active or sustainable travel to improve opportunities, the health and wellbeing of Fenland residents and the environment they live in, now and for future generations assisting with levelling up the Fenland District.

- 2.6 The objectives of the Fenland Transport Strategy are:

- **Objective 1**
Reduce the impact of rural isolation on the day-to-day life and future prospects of Fenland residents by developing better access solutions to key services and facilities
- **Objective 2**
Support the needs of the local economy by developing better connectivity to places of education, retail, employment and healthcare
- **Objective 3**
Enable residents to live fit and healthy lifestyles, as they are able, by developing and promoting a connected, safe and viable active travel network and improving wellbeing
- **Objective 4**
Meet the challenge of climate change and enhance the natural environment by encouraging people to travel more sustainably

Stakeholder engagement and public consultation

- 2.7 A focussed stakeholder engagement exercise was carried out for all three strategies between 9th May and 19th June 2022. A survey was sent to key stakeholders including County and District Councillors, Parish Councils, voluntary organisations and key interest groups seeking feedback on key transport issues, priorities and views on the draft vision and objectives for each strategy. The stakeholder engagement report can be viewed online here: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Transport-Strategies-Stakeholder-Engagement-Report-Final-2022.pdf> . Changes have been made to both strategies based on feedback received.
- 2.8 Public consultation took place between 26th September (the start of the consultation was delayed by two weeks due to the death of Her Majesty The Queen) and 7th November 2022 to seek views on and input into the draft strategies and emerging action plans. The consultation ran in tandem with consultation on the Active Travel Strategy and consisted of:
- In person events around the county (mainly held at markets, supermarkets and shopping centres)
 - Consultation material online
 - An online survey
 - Emails to County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils and stakeholders
 - Social media advertising campaign
 - Strategy documents and paper copies of the questionnaires being available in libraries across the county.
- 2.9 Figure 2 Approximate number of attendees at the public consultation events

Location	~No. of people
Fenland	45
Rest of Cambridgeshire (events focused on Active Travel Strategy, with information about Huntingdonshire and Fenland available)	100

Survey responses

- 2.10 The online surveys for the two strategies were open for six weeks, with regular advertising by press release and social media. Posters were also displayed in community facilities. In total there were 41 respondents, and 13 stakeholders' responses regarding the Fenland Transport Strategy
- The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the draft vision
 - The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed objectives
 - The three most important transport issues identified by respondents were:
 - Lack of public transport
 - Lack of connectivity and accessibility
 - Increasing volumes of traffic
- 2.11 The public consultation report, summarising responses to the online survey can be viewed here: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Transport-Strategy-for-Fenland-Consultation-Report-Final-2023.pdf>

- 2.12 Many people chose to provide their feedback directly at the consultation events rather than via the online survey - this may help to explain the relatively small number of completed surveys. Feedback received at the public consultation events has been collated, with the key themes summarised below.
- 2.13 It should be noted that the events took place in the period when Stagecoach announced the withdrawal of some of its rural bus services and before the CPCA process for replacing the services was complete and had been announced.
- Numerous strong concerns about the withdrawal of bus services by Stagecoach, and poor public transport accessibility more generally in rural areas. People highlighted the significant impact on their lives in terms of accessing employment, education, health and other vital services, such as shopping and leisure facilities.
 - Lack of connectivity for active travel modes between market towns and transport hubs
 - Feedback was also received regarding the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Making Connections proposals. This has been recorded and shared with the GCP.
 - Traffic on the A605 in Whittlesey including Heavy Goods Vehicles
- 2.14 The consultation has provided useful feedback that has informed the development of the strategies and resulted in a range of changes.
- Add more information and detail regarding the rail network 'ask' and highlighting the importance of the Ely Area Capacity Scheme in delivering an increase in rail services
 - Added a brief section on Monitoring and Evaluation- highlight links with the CPCA LTCP and the role of the member steering group in reviewing progress on an annual basis
 - Reorganising the Emerging Action Plan and making clearer which schemes were studies and which were projects
 - Making it clearer that active travel scheme are within the Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy
 - Adding more information and clarity provided by consultation respondents

Action Planning Process

- 2.15 This strategy includes an emerging action plan of schemes. Officers are developing a prioritisation process, based around the Council's Strategic Framework and emerging CPCA LTCP objectives using an EAST (Early Assessment and Sifting Tool) methodology.
- At Highways and Transport Committee on 7 December 2021, it was agreed that priorities should be focused on road safety, active travel, public transport, and climate objectives. The H&T Committee further agreed the use of the emerging CPCA LTCP objectives for scheme prioritisation at its meeting on 8 March 2022.
 - These priorities will be used to develop a methodology for prioritisation of the emerging action plans, in consultation with the relevant Strategy Member Steering Group and Highways and Transport Committee, and will be in place later this year for the annual budget setting processes for the 2024-25 financial year onwards.
 - Active travel routes and schemes that have been identified and prioritised will be eligible for further development and delivery as funding opportunities arise. Some schemes will be funded by or taken forward by partners (for example CPCA, GCP, district councils), or by developers, while other schemes require further investigation or study before funding can be identified for delivery.

- 2.16 The prioritisation of schemes from the district Transport Strategies and Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy / LCWIP for development and delivery will then be reviewed on an annual basis and brought back to Highways & Transport Committee for approval as part of the annual budget setting process. This will involve consultation on the prioritisation with the Member Steering Groups for each district strategy.
- 2.17 Tier 2 (route-based) active travel schemes as shown in the maps of the Cambridgeshire vision of a connected active travel network will be prioritised in accordance with the methodology set by central government for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and added to an updated Cambridgeshire LCWIP. Localised active travel schemes (for example, pedestrian / cycle crossings, wayfinding, promotional initiatives) will use the district-based methodology explained below to create a prioritised list of wider active travel schemes and initiatives.
- 2.18 The prioritisation of schemes from the district Transport Strategies and Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy / LCWIP for development and delivery will then be reviewed on an annual basis and brought back to Highways & Transport Committee for approval as part of the annual budget setting process. This will involve consultation on the prioritisation with the Member Steering Groups for each district strategy.
- 2.19 The next steps for the Fenland strategy development work are set out below:

Accessibility Report / evidence base	Complete
Agree Objectives	Complete
Draft Strategy	Complete
Stakeholder engagement	Complete
Progress update	Complete
Public consultation	Complete
Adoption of Strategy	March 2023
Prioritisation of schemes	Report back to H & T committee in autumn 2023
Annual review of action plans / scheme prioritisation	Report back to H & T committee annually

3 Alignment with Corporate Priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The strategy aims to improve transport in a sustainable way across Fenland
- The natural and build environment were considered as the strategy was developed

3.2 Health and Care

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Focusing on improving accessibility to key services in Fenland including health care the strategy should improve access to health care for those in Fenland.
- A focus on active travel will also improve the health of those in Fenland both by increasing levels of activity and improving air quality

3.3 Places and Communities

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Transport strategy development is informed by public engagement and is guided by the objectives and priorities of the council.
- Public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to inform the objectives, policies and schemes
- The LTP Integrated Transport Block generally delivers small or medium sized schemes that have been developed to address local issues as part of transport strategies informed by engagement with local communities and local councillors

3.4 Children and Young People

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The Strategy has been developed to improve access to key service including education which should have benefit to children and young people
- The approach taken by the strategy is one of sustainability. "Sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

3.5 Transport

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The Fenland Transport Strategy aims to improve transport for all those living and travelling in Fenland. The strategy first set the vision and objectives and states how these are going to be delivered through the policies and emerging action plan.

4 Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Funding for the district strategy work will come from the Integrated Transport Block Strategy Development budget.

4.2 Procurement / Contractual / Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

All procurement activity will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken for the Fenland Transport Strategy.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Stakeholder engagement was carried out in May and public consultation on the strategies took place between September and November. This included an online survey, in person drop in events, social media advertising. Feedback from the events and survey has been used to make amendments to both the strategies.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Transport Strategy development work is supported by Member Steering Groups made up of County Members, and District Councillors. Local County Councillors were offered the opportunity to feed into work as stakeholders and through consultations on the emerging or draft strategies.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Public health is identified as being at the core of the vision set out by the CPCA for their refreshed Local Transport Plan.
- "Health: improved health and wellbeing enabled through better connectivity, greater access to healthier journeys and lifestyles and delivering stronger, fairer and more resilient communities" is one of the six objectives of the refresh of the CPCA's Local Transport Plan, which are proposed to be adopted as the objectives of the Council's transport strategies.

4.8 Climate Change and Environment Implications on Priority Areas:

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Status: Positive

Explanation: “*Climate: Successfully and fairly reducing emissions to Net Zero by 2050*”, is one of the six objectives of the refresh of the CPCA’s Local Transport Plan, which are proposed to be adopted as the objectives of the Council’s transport strategies. The draft strategy objectives include tackling the challenges of climate change and meeting Cambridgeshire County Council’s carbon targets.

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: Any direct implications arising from strategy or scheme development work will be addressed in future reports to this Committee. However, it is also noted that “*Environment: Protecting and improving our green spaces and improving nature with a well-planned and good quality transport network*” is one of the six objectives of the refresh of the CPCA’s Local Transport Plan, which are proposed to be adopted as the objectives of the Council’s transport strategies and are reflected in the draft objectives for the two transport strategies.

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Status: Neutral / potentially positive

Explanation: Small scale transport interventions such as those implemented using Integrated Transport Block funding through district-based strategies do not generally lead to quantifiable improvements to air quality on their own. Policy / strategy approaches that focus on reducing traffic and a cleaner vehicular fleet have potential to improve air quality in areas where transport is the dominant generator of pollutants but need commitment to interventions that will enable or drive significant changes in travel behaviour if they are to be most effective.

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Status: Positive

Explanation: “*Climate: Successfully and fairly reducing emissions to Net Zero by 2050*”, is one of the six objectives of the refresh of the CPCA’s Local Transport Plan, which are proposed to be adopted as the objectives of the Council’s transport strategies. It is expected that the Council’s strategy work will reflect this objective in the interventions that they propose, including consideration of the resilience of those interventions in the context of climate change.

5 Source documents

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority’s Local Transport and Connectivity Plan:

<https://mk0cpcamainsitehdbtm.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/transport/local-transport-plan/LTP.pdf>

- Future Transport Priorities paper to Highways and transport Committee 7th December 2021 [Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)
- Fenland Accessibility Report: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Fenland-Accessibility-Report-2022.pdf>
- Stakeholder engagement report: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Transport-Strategies-Stakeholder-Engagement-Report-Final-2022.pdf>
- Public consultation report: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Transport-Strategy-for-Fenland-Consultation-Report-Final-2023.pdf>
- Cambridgeshire County Council Strategic Framework: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance-and-budget/business-plans/business-plan-2022-to-2023>
- Equality Impact Assessment: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Equality-Impact-Assessment-Fenland.pdf>

Implications sign off

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement / contractual / Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Linda Walker

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: David Allatt

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: David Allatt

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Climate Change and Environment implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

Appendix 1: Fenland Transport Strategy