

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 20 April 2021

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Torbay Local Transport Action Plan and the Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

When does the decision need to be implemented? Immediately

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Mike Morey, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, mike.morey@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Assistant Director Contact Details: David Edmondson, Assistant Director – Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency, david.edmondson@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval and implementation of the Local Transport Action Plan (LTAP) and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- 1.2 Additionally, as part of the adoption of the LTAP this report recommends beginning the process of forming an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators to deliver bus improvements across Torbay.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.

We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

We want Torbay to be the premier resort in the UK, with a vibrant arts and cultural offer for our residents and visitors to enjoy; where our built and natural environment is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate change emergency.

- 2.1 Transport planning, shaping how people can move and travel around Torbay, has multiple impacts on the society, economy and the environment. The proposals in this report, the adoption of two key documents, help us to deliver the Council's ambition by supporting the vision of Torbay being a place which supports thriving people, a thriving economy, tackling climate change and being a Council fit for the future.

- 2.2 The reasons for the decision are to ensure that the delivery plans are up-to-date (the current Local Transport Implementation Plan has expired) and that both the LTAP and the LCWIP can together form an effective mechanism to deliver the ambitions of the Council and the community.
- 2.3 Following earlier Cabinet approval, a consultation was undertaken on draft versions of both the LTAP and the LCWIP. The results from the consultation can be found in a separate consultation and engagement report.
- 2.4 The outcome from the consultation has led to some changes to the draft documents in order to reflect community views. A wealth of feedback was gained during the consultation process and, as well as to inform the final versions of the documents, the information will inform the implementation of both sets of plans.
- 2.5 Further updates to the LTAP also reflect the latest Government strategy for buses.
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3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- (i) That the Torbay Local Transport Action Plan 2021-2026 (set out in Appendix 1) be approved with authority delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency to undertake any minor amendments to the document, before publishing on the Council's website.
- (ii) That the Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (set out in Appendix 2) be approved with authority delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency to undertake any minor amendments to the document, before publishing on the Council's website.
- (iii) That the Cabinet supports a partnership approach with local bus operators and asks the Assistant Director of Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, to begin the process of an Enhanced Partnership as set out under the Bus Services Act 2017, initially with informal discussions to be held with operators with further reports presented to cabinet throughout the process.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Torbay Local Transport Action Plan 2021-2026 (post-consultation version)

Appendix 2: Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (post-consultation version)

Appendix 3: Consultation report regarding the transport plans consultation carried out between 3 February and 14 March 2021

Appendix 4: Change log for the post consultation versions of the Torbay Local Transport Action Plan 2021-2026 and the Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Background Documents

Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026)

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/transport/local-transport-plan>

Edginswell Station Funding Decision

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3924>

Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>

Government's Cycling and Walking Plan for England, Gear Change

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>

Government's National Bus Strategy for England, Bus Back Better

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better>

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to produce a document (commonly referred to as an implementation or action plan) detailing how its Local Transport Plan (strategy) will be delivered. The Local Transport Plan was adopted by full Council in 2011 and is a 15 year plan (until 2026) prepared jointly with Devon, in recognition of the wider impacts of transport, cross boundary movements, and wider strategic connectivity matters.
- 1.2 The current document (the Torbay Local Transport Implementation Plan 2016-2021) is out of date and is due to be replaced. It is proposed that this new plan constitutes the proposed Torbay Local Transport Action Plan 2021-2026. The new plan seeks to reflect the current Community and Corporate, whilst also reflecting upon the context of the existing strategy.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Action Plan is to set out the planned investments and commitment of the transport capital grant received from Government, alongside other funding the Council has or is able to achieve. This Action Plan principally proposes capital transport projects as opposed to revenue interventions. However, the Authority recognises the importance of revenue investments where possible to do so as well. This involves scheme development, travel planning and bus service support.
- 1.4 The Action Plan proposes the delivery of transport schemes across 7 key areas, including:
 - Healthy Mobility (Active Travel)
 - Public Transport (including Edginswell Station)
 - Road Safety, 20mph areas and Minor Works
 - Electric Vehicle Charging
 - Signal Replacements
 - Completing Major Schemes
 - Other Key Investment Areas
- 1.5 A key aspect of the proposed Action Plan is to substantially enhance the Council's delivery of active travel infrastructure in Torbay, recognising its role in supporting healthy lives, a thriving economy and tackling the climate emergency.
- 1.6 The Government has underlined its support for significantly enhancing active travel infrastructure nationally. This includes a number of funding opportunities available for local authorities, technical support and guidance. The Government is particularly supportive of the creation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (according to an approved methodology) as a means to provide a strategic and joined-up approach to delivering a long-term whole-network approach to improve active travel infrastructure. Torbay Council has identified value in producing its own plan in order to achieve this and has undertaken this work in conjunction with WSP consultants. The approach and methodology used reflects what is considered best practice and draws upon the most up to date and strongest evidence relating to delivering active travel effectively as well as integrating local considerations.

- 1.7 During the course of the consultation, the Government published the National Bus Strategy, 'Bus Back Better'. This strategy applies to England and sets out a vision for improving bus services nationally. It recognises the need to act quickly, whilst acknowledging that the industry will need ongoing support for some time to recover from the consequences of Covid-19. The strategy makes it clear that funding will be made available to Local Authorities who pursue this vision and seek to make the improvements to their services and network. This has clear direct benefits to the Local Authority, not least in respect of accessibility for the community and supporting the carbon neutrality aims. The LTAP has been updated to reflect the National Bus Strategy and support an Enhanced Partnership approach to be agreed and signed off by April 2022 with a need for in principle agreement by June 2021 and a Bus Service Improvement Plan by 2021. It is an approach and method of collaboration which was introduced through the Bus Services Act 2017.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 An implementation or action plan to cover the remaining 5 year period of the Local Transport Plan Strategy is required in order to update an expired plan. An alternative could be that no replacement plan is developed but this would carry risks in terms of funding availability via grants and other sources, could lead to less co-ordinated transport project delivery and higher potential for projects to not meet local needs/aspirations. There is not a requirement for the Council to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, but the benefits of producing such a document are that it supports the finer detail of how the LTAP is implemented with regards to active travel, secures community support as well as engagement, and provides an ambitious, joined-up plan to deliver improvements to active travel in Torbay which should help to secure external funding that is dependent on having a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in place.
- 2.2 It is recognised that with the Council producing its updated Climate Strategy over the next 12 months, a national transport decarbonisation plan expected shortly, a multi-year spending review expected later this year, meeting the asks of the national bus strategy and other considerations, that the Local Transport Action Plan may need early review. It is anticipated that the Council will soon need to adopt a new Local Transport Plan ahead of 2026 that will demonstrate clearly how the network will be decarbonised. Many of the proposals set out in the action plan support a decarbonisation strategy in any case and transport projects take time to deliver and rely on a level of early commitment and certainty. Therefore it is important to plan ahead but being prepared to change focus if necessary.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 As set out in the LTAP and the LCWIP, financial commitments arise from a combination of existing capital grants (including the 'Integrated Transport Block'), existing and future Section 106 contributions and other external funding that becomes available for the Council to bid for, from a variety of sources. There is also potential for schemes contained within both plans to be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Proportion, through the agreed decision-making process. The Authority separately receives funding for network maintenance.

- 3.2. The preparation of an up-to-date Local Transport Action Plan and a new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan strengthens the ability of the authority to draw in external transport funding and provides an enhanced framework to target expenditure in order to achieve best value, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.3. As noted in 2.2, there may be changes in how the capital grant funding is allocated to Local Transport Authorities following the multi-year spending review that will be reflected on when the detail is known.
- 3.4. The National Bus Strategy makes clear the intent of Government to support partnerships, franchising and ambitious plans for improvements to bus services and infrastructure. Funding will be made available to local governments to support that but such funding will be discretionary and dependent on support for an enhanced Partnership.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1. There are no legal implications.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1. Torbay Council undertook a public consultation concerning the Local Transport Action Plan, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and also to gain information which might be useful in informing the delivery of Active Travel Fund schemes (Phase 2) which funding has been secured for to deliver a number of projects during 2021
- 5.2. The aim of the campaign was to engage the Torbay community (including residents, businesses, community groups, etc.) to ensure the Council progresses transport initiatives in a manner which best meets local needs and priorities. The Council sought views on the principle of what was being proposed as well as the detail.
- 5.3. The consultation opened on Wednesday 3 February and closed on Sunday 14 March 2021, running for a period of over 5 weeks.
- 5.4. Further detailed information is available within Appendix 3 of this report, which contains a separate Consultation Report covering methods, publicity details and results. The Council's Consultation and Engagement team have supported the consultation approach through advice to the Spatial Planning team and support during and after the consultation activity. The consultation process has been led by Spatial Planning in conjunction with the involvement of a number of other Council departments and external partners.
- 5.5. Both draft plans have been modified to take account of the results which has led to a number of changes (detailed in Appendix 4, which contains a 'change log').
- 5.6. Should the Council agree to the principle of an Enhanced Bus Partnership, engagement with operators in the first instance will be critical. Engagement with the community on bus matters will align with the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 During the course of the delivery of the LTAP and LCWIP there is the potential for the Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012 to be of relevance as part of a consideration of social value in goods or works contracts.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1. Transport has a significant role to play in climate change mitigation. Approximately 28% of Torbay's carbon footprint is derived from transport. In addition, the transport network is a series of infrastructure with its own climate change vulnerabilities which must be made resilient to current and projected climate changes.
- 7.2. The Local Transport Action Plan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan have been produced with reference to the evidence emerging from the Council's engagement with the Devon Climate Emergency Project Group and the Council's own internal carbon neutral programme.
- 7.3. As identified within the Interim Devon Carbon Plan and the Net Zero Torbay 2050 Report (University of Exeter) there are a number of transport sector related actions within the Council's area of influence and control that are recommended need to be accelerated in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 in Devon and Torbay. This includes achieving a 10% shift (by distance) to walking, cycling and public transport by 2050 (5% by 2035). In addition, a shift to electrification and ultralow emission technologies of motorised transport will be required. Torbay is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, therefore transport actions will need to be further accelerated and deployed faster. The LTAP and LCWIP represent firm commitments towards achieving carbon neutrality within a realistic framework for delivery, however further work during the course of monitoring and review of these plans will need to be undertaken to further understand if actions need to go be altered in order to fully support decarbonisation plans.
- 7.4 The National Bus Strategy promotes in the wider implementation of battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell buses. Decarbonisation of the local bus fleet will be a critical part of discussions with operators.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 The risk of not adopting the LTAP and LCWIP is that the Council does not achieve the potential benefits of having them in place (identified earlier in this report and the appendices) and carries a number of risks in terms of lost opportunities to gain external funding and enable the delivery of its corporate objectives. With regards to the LTAP, there is a legislative requirement to have an up-to-date Local Transport Plan to cover its implementation.

Equality Impacts

9.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
<i>It is not enough to state that a proposal will affect everyone equally. There should be more in-depth consideration of available evidence to see if particular groups are more likely to be affected than others – use the table below. You should also consider workforce issues. If you consider there to be no positive or negative impacts use the 'neutral' column and explain 'there is no differential impact'</i>			
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	It is envisaged that the plans will support improvements to access and transport options availability for this group.		
People with caring Responsibilities	It is envisaged that the plans will support improvements to access and transport options availability for this group.		
People with a disability	It is envisaged that the plans will support improvements to access and transport options availability for this group.		
Women or men	It is envisaged that the plans will support improvements to access and transport options availability for this group. Note that infrastructure improvements made to active travel infrastructure are likely to have a higher beneficial impact on user groups who feel less confident using lower quality active travel infrastructure. There is some evidence to suggest women are likely to benefit more from active travel (cycling) improvements and therefore could close a current gap in quality (more men cycle than women).		

People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	It is envisaged that the plans will support improvements to access and transport options availability for this group.		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	It is envisaged that the plans will support improvements to access and transport options availability for this group. Improving active travel and sustainable transport infrastructure may have a larger impact on persons living in deprived backgrounds but only if targeted correctly and supported by complimentary measures. The LCWIP supports a whole system approach being delivered towards physical activity within the Council.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on	It is envisaged that the plans will support improved public health impacts, particularly in respect of		

	the general health of the population of Torbay)	improving access to employment and recreation, increasing opportunities for physical activity, improving the environmental quality of Torbay and enhancing wellbeing.		
10..	Cumulative Council Impact (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None identified		
11.	Cumulative Community Impacts (proposed changes within the wider community (inc the public sector) which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None identified		