

Revision of the Faversham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Introduction

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are an initiative from Central Government asking local authorities to put together a long-term strategic approach to identifying the walking and cycling infrastructure which is required across an area.

LCWIPs provide a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, usually over a 10-year period. Future government funding for cycling and walking will be tied to local authorities having an LCWIP in place.

Department for Transport guidance advises that LCWIPs should be ‘live documents’, regularly reviewed to monitor progress and reflect changing circumstances. This should provide councils with the flexibility to update their network plans to reflect local changes, including new development sites, funding opportunities and additional routes.

Development and sign off of initial Faversham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Phil Jones Associates were appointed in 2021 by the Town Council to develop an initial LCWIP for Faversham, supported by a working group of members of the Town Council, members and officers of the Borough Council and officers of Kent County Council as well as members of the community with relevant expertise. Faversham Town Council approved the initial LCWIP on 7 February 2022 on the understanding that it would be regularly reviewed and subject to change.

At the Swale Joint Transportation Board 28 February 2022 it was agreed that the Faversham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (FLCWIP) be used:

- as an evidence base in SBC and KCC decisions, especially in KCC Highways Strategies and Plans, KCC and SBC planning applications and their associated Section 106s and to inform the SBC Local Plan Review.
- by SBC and KCC to assist in applying for funding for active/sustainable travel initiatives.

The FLCWIP is also specifically referenced in the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan as a document that planning applicants should refer to.

Revision of Faversham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Adrian Berendt of Berendt Consulting Ltd was appointed to revise the FLCWIP in Autumn 2023. In revising the LCWIP he has drawn on feedback from the public, particularly general feedback provided by visitors to the Town Council organised exhibition on the East West Cross Town Walking Route and also met with a number of SBC and KCC officers, SBC and KCC members, and relevant community organisations. Drafts of the revision have been discussed at meetings of the Active Travel Advisory Group and the Active Travel Committee and individual members of these groups have been encouraged to make comments. The final version of the revised plan was agreed at the Active Travel Committee meeting on 9 October, with the proviso that some small amendments were made.

Changes in revised document

The new document has been:

- Significantly shortened and is better focused on conclusions and potential improvements
- Updated to reflect changes in government policy and local circumstances
- Updated to reflect progress that has been made over last couple of years in improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and feedback from the public and councillors on areas where interventions would help active travel
- Better aligned with the Town Council's Highways Improvement Plan so the two documents are complementary.
- Revised to reference the Town to Parishes project outcomes, this was an SBC Area Committee funded project looking at improving Active Travel links between Faversham and neighbouring parishes

The intervention list that forms part of the document can also now be easily amended to reflect changes requested by the Active Travel Committee.

Following on from suggestions made at the Active Travel Committee on 9 October small amendments have been made to the section referencing new development 3.1.2, the title of the map at Figure 27 has been amended and an outdated map summarising recommended walking routes has been removed along with outdated references to the temporary pedestrianisation scheme which operated during the pandemic. It is proposed to review whether some sections that are part of the current narrative can become appendices in the future.

Benefits of having a revised document

Having a revised FLCWIP will:

- help the TC Planning Committee in pressing developers for walking and cycling infrastructure improvements in line with the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Make it easier for the Town Council to influence the content of the Swale Transport Strategy which will be developed alongside a fresh Swale Local Plan
- Assist in the development of funding bids by KCC and SBC and make it more likely that Faversham is given priority by these higher authorities when they are deciding on priority areas for applications

Recommendations

That the Town Council

1 Agree the revised FLCWIP

2 Confirm with Swale Borough Council whether it needs to be resubmitted to the Swale Joint Transportation Board