

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 21st June 2017

Subject: Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Members will recall that a report was brought to the Executive Board in June 2014 just a few weeks before Yorkshire hosted the world's biggest annual bicycle race – The Tour De France (TDF), and where, according to race director Christian Prudhomme, Leeds - delivered the “grandest of Grand Departs”.
2. The June 2014 ‘TDF Legacy for Leeds - Cycling Starts Here’ report made a number of recommendations including ‘endorsing the five key objectives of the Cycle Yorkshire Strategy’; ‘setting up and resourcing a Cycling Starts Here Programme Board to include city partners, with Leeds taking the strategic lead’; and to ‘support the development of a holistic Cycling Strategy for Leeds’.
3. Work has been ongoing, and much has been delivered in line with the original proposals. The Council having coordinated a Leeds Cycling Starts Here Programme Board and conducted extensive consultation are now in a position to bring forward a cycling strategy on a page for the city. The strategy has taken time to prepare as it needed to reflect the views of a wide range of partners both internal and external, and take account of a wide-ranging public consultation last year.
4. The results from the first round Leeds Transport Conversation engagement have also indicated support for place making and reducing the impact of traffic in the city centre and for making the city streets more conducive to walking and cycling for a liveable and healthy Leeds.

5. Building on the continuing £35 million investment in the City Connect cycle superhighways, the Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy consolidates this and the previous investments into a reinvigorated approach to developing Leeds as a city that embraces cycling as an everyday normalised activity for all, whether that is going about one's daily business, cycling for fun or leisure, or pursuing it as a sporting activity. However, the funding and resource opportunities for cycling change frequently making budget commitments and forward planning particularly challenging.
6. The Cycling Starts Here Strategy is coming forward at a vital time in cycling development for the UK. Following the duty established in the Infrastructure Act 2015, in April 2017 the Government released its first national statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) which details the Government's aspirations for cycling and walking up to 2040 and the ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The Cycling Starts Here Strategy is fully complementary to the CWIS approach and its preparation puts Leeds in a better position to prepare its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in response.
7. The Cycling Starts Here Strategy is also aligned to the draft West Yorkshire Transport Strategy, the new Leeds Transport Strategy, and the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and Active Leeds objectives. Going forward the strategy will build on the lessons learned from previous projects and initiatives including those of City Connect, the broad range of promotional and access initiatives that have taken place both in the city and in West Yorkshire, including the successful GoCycling campaigns.
8. By embracing the Cycling Starts Here Strategy, Leeds has the opportunity to utilise cycling as a catalyst for delivering some of its Best City ambitions. Cycling contributes to better health and wellbeing and produces no polluting vehicle emissions. It therefore can be a significant contributor to cleaner air as part of the wider drive to improve air quality standards as part of the emerging air quality plan for the city. The Cycling Starts Here Strategy therefore supports our ambition for Leeds to become a more prosperous, liveable and healthy city.

Recommendations

9. Executive Board is recommended to:
 - i) Note the contribution of partners and stakeholders to the production of the Strategy;
 - ii) Note the findings of the consultation process;
 - iii) Endorse the Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy;
 - iv) Request that progress is reported to Scrutiny Board annually;
 - v) Provide future updates on the Cycling Starts Here Strategy to Executive Board as necessary.
 - vi) To note that the Chief Officers for Highways & Transportation and Culture & Sport will be responsible for implementation.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To report the progress made in the development of cycling in the city and seek Members endorsement of the Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy.

2. Background information

- 2.1 A key Council commitment when securing the Tour De France was to use it as a catalyst for developing a lasting cycling legacy. As part of this at the time the Council endorsed the five key objectives of the Cycle Yorkshire Strategy and used this as a framework to develop its own plans and a new cycling strategy.
- 2.2 In the spirit of city-wide partnership working and maintaining strong relationships with partner and local organisations, a Cycling Starts Here Board was established to deliver the cycling strategy. The Council lead Board includes an elected Member, officer representation from Council Directorates, and external bodies such as British Cycling, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the community based Leeds Cycling Consultation Forum. The Programme Board, following an extensive public consultation, has now brought forward a new Cycling Strategy on a Page for the city. See Appendix A.
- 2.3 The city faces a number of significant challenges in the areas of transportation, traffic congestion, air quality, public health, and sport and active lifestyles; and these issues are being addressed through a range of strategies and policies. However, one thing they have in common is the contribution that cycling can make towards improving the situation in all these matters.
- 2.4 Cycling is recognised as a modern-day activity that is able to transform the environment, city scape, ethos, and health of a city's inhabitants. In many of the world's leading cities, where cycling has been brought back to play an important role in the city, the bicycle has revolutionised the feel and atmosphere and working environment of entire communities for the better. A healthy cycling culture will change Leeds for the better. The city is making steps towards such a position but still has some way to go before cycling becomes "normalised" across the community as a general travel option alongside its acknowledged value for recreation.
- 2.5 Examples of the restorative and transforming effects of cycling can be seen across many cities in Europe, the United States of America, Asia and elsewhere. It is possible too that Leeds can realise the benefits which include, but are not limited to; reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality, revitalised city centre living, an improved urban environment and public realm, health benefits through increased exercise, more active and engaged children, public safety, and a more productive workforce.
- 2.6 In combination with high quality low emission public transport provision, it is recognised that cycling is an integral part of the wider transport offer; providing a solution to travel around high-density development areas, and displacing private vehicles which contributes to improving air quality in the urban environment.
- 2.7 The recent Transport Conversation and Public Transport Investment Programme proposals highlight the need to support Healthy Leeds objectives by encouraging more active modes - walking and cycling - as part of an overall package of transport measures.

- 2.8 Cycling is an important means of mobility for young people, whether they are travelling to school, visiting friends, or simply getting some exercise and having fun. As part of the Leeds Child Friendly City programme children and young people wished that *'Children and young people can make safe journeys and easily travel around the city'*. Safe cycling and walking environments are important to delivering this ambition.
- 2.9 This report presents the cycling strategy developed by the Cycling Starts Here Programme Board. In preparing the strategy the Board has been very mindful of the strong synergies between cycling and walking as complementary sustainable and healthy modes of travel. Good, well designed, investments in cycling can bring significant beneficial benefits for pedestrians also and this is an integral part of any process of managing the wider interface with traffic. Similarly the process of promoting and encouraging cycling sits alongside supporting and championing the place of walking in the city. Consequently both cycling and walking have a firm role and place integral to the emerging Leeds transport strategy and the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy.
- 2.10 Through the Governments 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' (CWIS), the Government has set out guidance for local authorities to develop 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans' (LCWIP). Once developed, the local CWIP will identify;
- a network plan for walking and cycling with preferred routes and core zones for further development
 - a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment, and
 - a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides narrative which supports the identified improvements and network
- 2.11 Whilst the preparation of a CWIP is non-statutory, it will place the city in a much better place to make the case for investment. The Cycling Starts Here Strategy aligns with the ambitions within the CWIS and provides a firm platform for the further development into a new local CWIP in due course.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The Cycling Starts Here Programme Board has been used as a focus to bring partners from across the city together to develop the cycling strategy. The Programme Board has members from across the Council and from external organisations with an interest in developing cycling in all its forms, including British Cycling who are acting as advisors, and the WYCA with its responsibility for the draft WY Transport Strategy. The chair of the principal local cycling group 'Leeds Cycle Campaign' and nominated spokesperson for the public 'Leeds Cycling Consultation Forum' representing the cycling public is also on the Board.
- 3.2 The Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy is positioned at a local level within a group of national and regional cycling strategies developed by the Government (CWIS and LCWIP), Cycle Yorkshire, (A Strategy for Cycling in Yorkshire and Humber) and WYCA (The WY Cycling Strategy and WY Cycling Prospectus). See Appendix C for a matrix diagram of the various cycling strategies. All these strategies aim to grow cycling across the region at differing organisational levels. The Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy is informed by these high level strategies and is complementary to them, but with an emphasis on local action and delivery across the Leeds District.

The Leeds strategy has received the backing of cycling organisations Sustrans at the local level in addition to high level endorsement from British Cycling.

- 3.3 The Cycling Starts Here Board developed a draft strategy and 'cycling vision' that underwent a full public consultation in summer 2016. This consultation produced over 1500 responses including replies from some targeted 'hard to reach' minority groups, young people, and businesses.

Strategy Consultation

- 3.4 The consultation which took place in May and June 2016 revealed that over 80% of respondents agreed with the core aims, themes, objectives and values of the draft Strategy. The key thematic areas for the strategy were identified as:

- *Improved cycling infrastructure*
- *A comprehensive Cycling Strategy (including how this relates to other city strategies and priorities)*
- *Better cycling safety, and*
- *A better cycling environment (i.e. as a means of enhancing the cities general appeal).*

- 3.5 In summary the consultation confirmed that:

3.5.1 People want to cycle more, but are held back by concerns for personal safety on the highway from both perceived and real traffic danger.

3.5.2 A desire to be able to confidently choose bicycling for transport in Leeds and that to achieve this the single most important issue was to reduce both real and perceived risks of road danger and conflict when using the road network part of which is achieving greater mutual understanding and respect between different road users.

3.5.3 It was recognised that cycling is not for everyone and therefore a balanced approach is needed - accommodating appropriately various needs of users within a wider strategy - that recognises the value of sustainability and a balanced strategy which supports and encourages cycling, walking and public transport use through provision and promotion of a high quality infrastructure.

3.5.4 A shift towards a cycling culture will be beneficial on many levels. Cycling and walking is a means to achieve a healthier environment, create a nicer place to live and improve the health of the population. Cycling can add a sense of belonging, access, responsibility and freedom that the car cannot provide, but the transition for people who cannot see beyond the car for all their transport needs will be challenging.

3.5.5 In conclusion the consultation also collected views on what the shape of a long term ambition for cycling for might look like by comparing the present day with future more transformative scenarios that included current best practice design and the potential to have some car free areas. The response here overwhelming favoured (97%) the transformative approach to their environment.

Final Strategy

- 3.6 The results of the survey were reviewed in detail by the Cycling Starts Here Programme Board who recommended the making of a small number of amendments to the draft strategy to reflect some of the key findings and a number of the most commonly expressed views. The headlines of the final strategy which is appended to the report are as follows:

A Vision: - To inspire more people to cycle more often

Aims to: - Make cycling a natural everyday choice
- Improve safety, convenience for cycling and health and wellbeing across the city
- Improve environmental sustainability, better air quality and reduce pollution of all types

Themes to: - Develop a thriving and active cycling city
- Promote a cycle friendly city
- Build a great city for cycling

- 3.7 The Cycling Starts Here Strategy on a Page does not specifically identify proposals, initiatives, or programmes designed to deliver the strategy Vision and Objectives. These are included within a separate draft Cycling Starts Here Action Plan which lists planned future actions up to 2020 and beyond. A shorter 'Action Plan Overview' listing the most significant activities is presented in Appendix B. The Action Plan will be updated on an annual basis.

- 3.8 A key aspect of taking the strategy forward will be drawing from the lessons learned and successes from previous cycling projects and initiatives. In terms of investment this includes the creation of new cycleways and paths in the city over a number of years and most of all reflecting on the learning from the implementation of the Government and WYCA funded City Connect route (which has been a different scale compared with previous schemes). Similarly behavioural change and promotional programmes are an essential element of the strategy such as the experience from travel plans for businesses and schools and collaborations with Sustrans. Events and other promotions together with the extensive work undertaken in Leeds and across West Yorkshire with the GoCycling and access to employment programmes will underpin future work and development. Alongside this sits the relationship with British Cycling who play a key role in supporting cycling sport and activity at the grass roots and other relationships, such as with Leeds University, where the new triathlon centre which complements the Council's planned Urban Bike Park.

- 3.9 The final amended Strategy presented in this report has been approved by the Cycling Starts Here Programme Board and hence is now commended to Executive Board for the Council's endorsement as the Cycling Strategy agreed by the city-wide Programme Board as informed by consultation.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The Cycling Starts Here Programme Board includes the lead Member for transport, representatives of key Council service areas, external partners and stakeholders, and is chaired by the Council's 'Cycling Champion' and former Leeds City Councillor, Roger Harrington. The work of the Board is overseen by the Executive Member for Resources & Strategy and Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning.
- 4.1.2 The Cycling Starts Here Programme Board has reported progress to Scrutiny Board on three occasions since 2013/14, including on the preparation of the Cycling Strategy, and progress on other cycling activities and developments across the city since 2014.
- 4.1.3 The Draft Cycling Starts Here Strategy was circulated directly to all Council Members as part of the public consultation held in the city last year. Members supplied ten responses.
- 4.1.4 In addition to the public engagement and consultation report in section 3 above, the work of the Board has included full engagement with the Leeds Cycling Consultation Forum, The University sector, Sustrans, and the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An EDCI Screening report was completed for the June 2014 Executive Board report and this has now been updated to reflect subsequent progress (attached as Appendix D). The ambitions link to the Best Council Plan 2013 – 2017 whose priorities are improving outcomes for children and families, getting people active and enjoying healthy lifestyles, and developing a low carbon infrastructure for the city.
- 4.2.2 Objective 1 of the new strategy seeks to 'Enable everyone to participate in cycling activities targeting women, children and BME groups and people with disabilities'. The consultation worked with Voluntary Action Leeds to ensure that people from minority groups were fully represented, and consequently 11% of respondents were from a non-white British background. 36% were women, 6% had a disability, and 9% were under 26 years of age.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The Best Council Plan 2015 – 20 is a plan for 'Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities'. This is being delivered through a series of eight cross-cutting projects of which the Cycling Starts Here Strategy will directly contribute to the following;
- *Making Leeds the best place to grow old in* (cycling into old age)
 - *Strong communities benefitting from a strong city* (providing access to bicycles within deprived communities)
 - *Cutting carbon and improving air quality* (zero emission transport option)

- *World class events and a vibrant city centre that all can benefit from* (World Triathlon Series, Cycling World Championships 2019, and mass participation public rides/events)
- *More jobs, better jobs* (cycling provides low cost access to work and employment opportunities, including support for job seekers)
- *Early intervention and reducing health inequalities* (encouraging gentle to moderate physical activity in children and adults)

4.3.2 Cycling can contribute to making Leeds the Best City in the UK by contributing to at least 10 City Priorities and 5 key indicators for 2020; including encouraging growth in the cycle retail market and tourist opportunities, providing new infrastructure and improved road safety, promoting physical activity through commuting and bike to school etc., contributing to air quality improvements, increasing access to transport options to a range of people, enhancing the public realm through street improvements, and increasing the share of travel by sustainable modes.

4.3.3 The Strategy has a special focus on the benefits to young people from cycling and the contribution this will make to a Child Friendly City through listening to the needs of young people, and encouraging participation.

4.3.4 Negotiations with British Cycling to renew our Cycling Partnership and recreational cycling programme are proceeding. The partnership delivers a public guided rides programme and an annual public mass participation ride in the city centre which this year will be the HSBC UK City Ride on 10th September.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 Investment in cycling will help the Council's deliver its Best Plan priorities and breakthrough projects. The Cycling Starts Here strategy cuts across and can contribute and support a wide range of projects and outcomes. It would be expedient to utilise the growing popularity of cycling to attack poverty and reduce inequalities. The Cycling Starts Here Strategy presents a timely opportunity for the Council to show its continued support for cycling, and to help play its part in delivering a strong economy and compassionate city.

4.4.2 Cycling provides a viable alternative to a number of journey's that are currently made in Leeds by petrol and diesel vehicles especially, emitting carbon dioxide and Nitrogen oxides, and fine particulates, all damaging to the environment and public health. The Government has declared Leeds as one of the six UK cities failing air quality standards and their intention to mandate the development of a 'Clean Air Zone' by 2020. Approximately 50% of these harmful emissions are derived from transport sources. Cycling can, as part of a transition to more sustainable modes of travel - like walking, public transport, car sharing and low emission car club vehicles - play a significant role in efforts to curb emissions in the city.

4.4.3 Significant investment has already taken place over the last seven years, including capital investment from the Local Transport Plan and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund with the support of Department for Transport grant funding. Success in securing Cycle City Ambition Grant for the City Connect project at a cost of £35M is the single largest investment yet in cycling in the city. Currently a new Urban Bike Park is being built at Middleton and a triathlon centre and cycle circuit at Boddington Fields with funding support from British Cycling has recently been

opened. Officers are currently investigating a city bike hire scheme as the next significant step in raising the use of cycling as a means of getting around the city.

4.4.4 The importance of cycling has been recognised in the LEP Strategic Economic Plan. However, future investment will to a great extent depend on national government policies and also the degree to which synergies with the developing West Yorkshire Transport Strategy and Transport Fund investment programme can be harnessed. It is acknowledged that in the present revenue funding climate that the challenge of funding the essential promotional and behavioural change programmes need to lock in the benefits of the infrastructure benefits and capture the latent potential for major cycling growth will be demanding. The region is currently considering the opportunities presented by the recently announced 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' (CWIS) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information, and Call In

4.5.1 There are no legal implications.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The risks relating to the delivery of the TDF cycling legacy through the Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy fall into the three categories described below.

4.6.2 Reputational risk in terms of expectations following the TDF and development of the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan measures should they not receive sufficient support or weight in future spending decisions.

4.6.3 Managing expectations of stakeholders. During the three years since the hosting of the Grand Depart and the present report there has been a step change in the resource and energy being devoted to promoting cycling in the city. However, going forward as some of the resource streams wind down and come to an end (such as the Cycle City Ambition Grant) there is potential for a hiatus as the funding streams and further partner agreements needed to deliver the future Strategy are identified and put in place. It will be necessary to manage expectations and carry stakeholders along with this phase to ensure their full and continued support.

4.6.4 A potential dearth of resources going forward to develop and build the legacy could undermine the ambitions for cycling in the city. Securing the funding to deliver infrastructure improvements identified in the strategy is challenging and complex and at present the newly published CWIS does not imply any additional funds beyond the £1.2bn already allocated nationally over the next 5 years. Leveraging new funding will require the careful management and allocation of existing resources and strong collaborative working with the Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership and other key partners to explore and create new funding and income streams.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Cycling Starts Here Strategy aims to make cycling a natural everyday choice; improve safety, convenience for cycling and health and wellbeing across the city; improve environmental sustainability, better air quality and reduce pollution of all types.

- 5.2 The strategy promotes cycling for everyone; residents, employees, visitors, children; of all abilities, race and gender. Building on Leeds' place in history as a Tour De France Grand Depart city and the Cycle Yorkshire ambition it will get more people cycling more often, whether they are regular or occasional cyclists, whether they currently cycle or don't cycle at all.
- 5.3 Cycling's profile as a low cost, low pollution, healthy and enjoyable transport mode has grown significantly in recent years and as exemplified by cities elsewhere has much more potential for growth in the future. At the same time, the evidence of the benefits of cycling continues to stack up with national government and business support for cycling also increasing. This Strategy will put Leeds firmly on track to join the family of successful world and UK cities that have embraced cycling to improve their prosperity and quality of life.
- 5.4 The challenge of delivering a new cycling future should not be underestimated but significant progress is already being made towards building the core infrastructure and encouraging people to use it. The new Cycling Starts Here strategy provides the platform the city needs to maintain focus with its partners and stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally to maintain the current momentum and see further progress.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- i) Note the contribution of partners and stakeholders to the production of the Strategy;
- ii) Note the findings of the consultation process;
- iii) Endorse the Leeds Cycling Starts Here Strategy;
- iv) Request that progress is reported to Scrutiny Board annually;
- v) Provide future updates on the Cycling Starts Here Strategy to Executive Board as necessary.
- vi) To note that the Chief Officers for Highways & Transportation and Culture & Sport will be responsible for implementation.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Leeds Cycling Starts Here (Cycling Starts Here) – Strategy on a Page

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

8.2 Appendix B – Cycling Starts Here ‘Action Plan Overview’ 2016 – 2017

8.3 Appendix C – Cycle Strategies Matrix

8.4 Appendix D – Equality Impact Assessment