

Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Climate Alliance Cycling Meeting 17th May 2021 - Notes

Attendees:

- Parvis Khansari, WC Director – Highways and Environment
- Allan Creedy, WC Head of Sustainable Transport: transport planning
- Dave Thomas, WC, a traffic engineering manager; Scheme delivery – design stage
- Spencer Drinkwater – WC transport planner/transport and development manager; Integrated Transport team, covering Active Travel
- Dave Knight – RWB Environment Group and Wiltshire Climate Alliance, Transport Group
- Andrew Nicolson, (ADN) WCA Transport Group Lead; Cycling UK (West Wilts)
- James Bradbury, Wiltshire Climate Alliance Transport Group; Chippenham

Agenda items:

1. Active Travel Fund schemes feedback

WCA: Local group feedback would have avoided many of the problems

Has caused unnecessary friction within communities and set Active Travel plans back in some cases.

WC: Initial funding received was labelled as Emergency Funding – difficult to implement.

Gov't issued 63-page consultation guidance.

Waiting for new cabinet to be formed. Central government views have formed. Nations Health, decarbonisation.

Consultation – WCA can support this.

WCA: Proposal that WC work early and often with the local cycling community groups.

ADN's reanalysis, to be shared, based on national weightings (non-cyclist etc.), which showed broader support for all schemes than the self-selected numbers of respondents suggest.

WC: Lots of support, small team, therefore, prefer collective consultation as through WCA.

Getting public support is key- change in mentality.

Gov't ramping up asking to change stance on Active Travel – step change.

WCA: Would be useful to understand when tranches likely to be coming through.

WC: – often driven by Treasury – don't typically get much notice.

Actions: WCA to work to try to coordinate feedback

WCA to help educate, survey, communities

AND to share re-analysis

WC: [what?]

2. LTN 1/20 and cycle infrastructure development

WCA: How being implemented in WC? – see separate document

WC: Gov't has clearly stated that to access funding for active travel and other cycle funding, LA's must meet the new design guidance; many of the current WC approaches and plans do not. WC have to record evidence where step away from guidance to ensure auditable and clear decision making.

WCA: LTN1/20 guidance says should design from perspective of cyclist and should experience through cycling/walking the routes.

WCA and WC: Great if live in urban area and can easily shift from one route to another; not in market towns with few or no alternative routes.

WC is in South West Highway Alliance (SWHA) of councils –common theme, how to apply LTN1/20 to rural areas, market towns. Historic legacy of town means cannot fit everything in. WC has keen cyclists on design team.

This is also where WCA and the local groups can support, for example in RWB maps have been developed which have specific interventions.

WCA have contacts in Chippenham, Corsham, Salisbury, RWB, (BOA, Devizes?).

Need contacts in other main towns: E.g. Trowbridge, Melksham

Aiming to focus on those people who may need encouraging, to cycle.

Actions: WCA to try to identify contacts in under-represented towns.

WCA to share maps and work

WCA to produce a critique of LTN1/20 for the Wiltshire setting.

WC: [what?]

3. Bringing about modal shift

Mainly WCA comments:

- Ambition and policy is one thing – implementation is another –monitoring and measurement – more ambitious targets
- Resourcing and accelerating process (at scale and speed) – how?
- Behavioural change – within council, decision makers (training, reinforcing policy benefits)
- Cultural alignment – saying one thing the doing other, e.g. website refreshed to look like more routes in W towns are maps with upgrades noted, but nothing new on the ground.

4. Cycling and Active Travel in development of next Local Transport Plan [LTP4]

WCA: Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – what progress?

WC: Draft for Salisbury – put on hold during Covid emergency activities. Chippenham and Trowbridge next year and one for whole county to follow.

WCA: Existing strategy no longer fit for purpose or aligned to new central government approach, e.g. – what plans?

WC: Climate Change and Health will frame the Local Plan, see documents.

Decarbonisation plan should be in place within the month.

5. How Highways and Transport funding is allocated and prioritised

Highways budget (actual expenditure) 2019-20 = £55m net chargeable to General fund, £67m net expenditure in 2019-20.

WCA: But what % was for Active/sustainable travel? How are you going to fund implementation?

WC: It is complicated by government systems: Revenue work tends to be maintenance work. Central government funds capital schemes, + Integrated Transport (a much smaller sum). Cycling infrastructure uses all of these sources although Integrated Transport budget is main contributor + Section 106 [developer agreement] contributions.

WCA: Could we strengthen Section 106?

WC: Planning system constraints mean sometimes cannot put in place as much as wanted. Government proposals for planning reform may make this harder. Basic premises are good, and a lot is achieved through this, sometimes the outcomes are less than needed.

£2bn funding is promised during this parliament for cycling in UK.

WC: have learnt that those with pipeline of schemes in place are more likely to be successful feels it is good at getting government funding, as new/different funding programmes roll out.

WCA: Cycling & AT schemes have extremely good Benefit/Cost ratios, compared with road schemes. This should influence scheme prioritisation and development.

Actions:

WCA: share ideas of ways to leverage Section 106, e.g. formulas for general application.

[send WC material on high benefits/costs of cycling etc schemes?]

6. Human resource constraints on C&AT design and implementation.

WCA: How can we be more effective and quicker? WC is under-resourced in sustainable travel team – how are we to make progress e.g. RWB-SWI route 10 years in planning, HE [Highway engineering?] budget now uncertain, delays are jeopardising the project. Nothing has changed on ground. Man knocked off his bike and hospitalised 17th March 21 on proposed route.

WC: Routes in RWB – outline proposals developed by the community have been put forward but insufficient resource to do all site visits/follow process quick enough. Stretched resources.

WC: With increasing climate change resource, WC are giving thought on how align themselves to Active Travel agenda. Trying to break silos and be more agile.

WCA There is opportunity to create improved Wiltshire Network. We can input proposals.

WC: please leave scheme design and development to us. We are good at it.

7. Consultation processes going forward.

WCA: How can we help? WCA can support this. Access those with interest

WC: Please help us with community engagement: we hear from the 10% strongly 'pro' and the 10% strongly 'anti', but not from the silent 80% in between.