

Impact Assessment

Assessment of: Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Service: Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Head of Service: Jamie Hulland

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Assessment carried out by (job title): Katalin Fulop (Transport Planning Officer)

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been drafted for the Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam area. This draft LCWIP, outlining various proposals to improve cycling and walking infrastructure in the area, was put to public consultation. Following this, the draft LCWIP was approved at the Torridge and North Devon HATOC (2022 October and November, respectively). Feedback from all 3 events was used to produce a final version of the LCWIP, which will be taken to Cabinet in October 2023, and will be used as the basis for infrastructure improvements in the coming years.

2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

Devon County Council aims to improve cycling and walking levels across the county, in order to tackle the Climate Emergency and improve public health and wellbeing. Physical inactivity is a significant issue in relation to public health. Physical activity has several health benefits in reducing or preventing many chronic conditions. For most people the easiest, most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that fit in everyday life, such as walking or cycling. In providing more choice for active travel we aim to improve 'social determinants of health' through improving local environments and economy, as well as directly improve mental and physical health.

Within the Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam area, the need to encourage cycling and walking is particularly acute, given the fact that the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan¹ proposes delivering a minimum of 17,220 new homes in the area between 2011 and 2031. Without interventions to increase the proportion of people cycling and walking, the traffic generated by these developments would significantly increase pressure on the local motorised transport network.

Therefore, an LCWIP has been drafted, which identifies cycling and walking infrastructure improvements that are likely to have the greatest impact. This will enable Devon County Council to strategically prioritise and seek funding for particular interventions.

Aims/Objectives

The LCWIP is intended to:

- Plan for cycling and walking using evidence and data on existing and future potential demand;
- Target investment where it can have the greatest impact;
- Identify cycling and walking infrastructure improvements in readiness for funding bids; and
- Plan cycling and walking networks that meet core design outcomes and the needs of users.

The principal objective of the improvements proposed within the LCWIP is to improve cycling and walking levels, and thus:

- Reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the Climate Emergency;
- Support public health and wellbeing;
- Improve access to employment, education and services;
- Enable the local transport network to accommodate planned growth; and
- Deliver economic benefits, such as increased spending in local shops.

Going Forward

The draft LCWIP has been developed rigorously using the process recommended by central government. The proposals in the draft LCWIP were refined in light of consultation

¹ [North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 - 2031 | Torridge District Council \(section 4.19\)](#)

feedback to form the final LCWIP.

Not progressing an LCWIP in any form would leave Devon County Council without a clear pipeline of improvements in the Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam area, reducing Devon County Council's ability to secure funding and thus reducing the rate of improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

Limitations

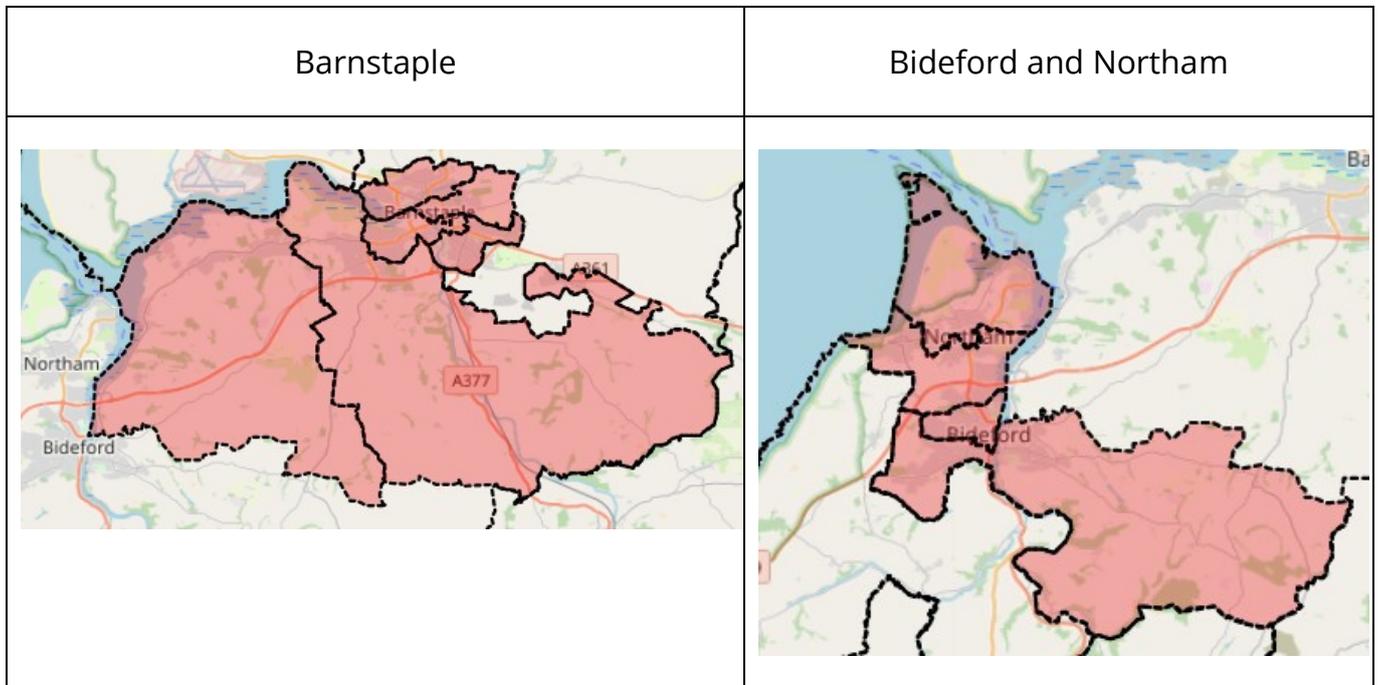
A constraint on the delivery of the proposals contained within the LCWIP is that the proposals are not currently funded. The majority of funding is likely to be secured through bids to central government as and when opportunities arise, meaning exact delivery timescales cannot be committed to at this stage. Devon County Council will therefore need to take a flexible approach, adapting to changing circumstances, to ensure the proposals are delivered as efficiently as possible.

Additionally, the proposals in the LCWIP are high level rather than detailed designs. As such, further development of the proposals may identify additional constraints, which may make delivery of the proposals more challenging.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

The people potentially affected by the proposals are principally those living or working in the Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam area. Therefore, their diversity profile is presented below, with Devon and England overall used as comparators. The propensity for certain demographic groups to walk or cycle is also discussed, to inform assessment of the potential differential impacts of the proposals, e.g. whether certain age groups are likely to disproportionately benefit.

The 2021 Official Census data was used. Barnstaple area was defined as Middle-layer Super Output Area (MSOA): North Devon 007-012, Bideford was defined as MSA: Torrington 003-004 and Northam was defined as MSA: Torrington 001-002. The areas covered are shown in the map below.



Age

As shown below, the populations of Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam were all somewhat older than the England average, with the proportions aged 0-19 and 20-64 being below the England average, and the proportions aged 65+ being above the England average.

Barnstaple and Bideford were similar to the pattern across Devon, but Northam had the oldest population, with 36% being aged 65+, compared to the England average of 18%.

Geography	Population	% Age 0-19	% Age 20-64	% Age 65+
Barnstaple	43,255	21%	55%	24%
Bideford	18,753	23%	56%	21%
Northam	12,352	15%	49%	36%
Devon	811,638	20%	54%	26%
England	56,490,048	23%	58%	18%

Younger people (aged 0-20) tend to be more reliant on walking and cycling than those aged 21-59 and older people (aged 60+), making 36% of trips by cycle or foot, compared with 26% and 23%, respectively².

Ethnicity

As with Devon as a whole, the three areas considered were all significantly lower in ethnic diversity than England as a whole, with 96-98% of the population being White, compared with a England average of 81%. The non-White population was predominantly mixed / multiple ethnic groups and Asian.

Geography	Total	White	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	Asian	Black/ African/ Caribbean	Other ethnic group
Barnstaple	43,254	96.5%	1.2%	1.6%	0.3%	0.4%
Bideford	18,757	97.7%	1.1%	0.7%	0.1%	0.3%
Northam	12,350	98.1%	1.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%
Devon	811,642	96.4%	1.4%	1.5%	0.3%	0.5%
England	56,490,048	81.0%	3.0%	9.6%	4.2%	2.2%

White people tend to make a greater proportion of trips (2%) by bicycle than Asian or Black people, who both make 1% of trips by bicycle. However, Asian and Black people and people from mixed/other ethnic groups make a greater proportion of trips on foot, and make a greater proportion of trips by 'active travel' (i.e. walking and cycling combined) than White people³.

² [National Travel Survey: 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-and-statistics/national-travel-survey-2019) (2019 data tables)

³ [National Travel Survey: 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-and-statistics/national-travel-survey-2019) (2019 data tables)

Health and disability

The proportions of people describing themselves as being in very bad or bad health within the 3 areas were higher than the Devon and England averages, especially in Northam. This could be due to the aging population shown above.

Geography	Total	Very good health	Good health	Fair health	Bad health	Very bad health
Barnstaple	43,263	45.9%	34.0%	14.1%	4.7%	1.3%
Bideford	18,759	44.8%	34.2%	14.9%	4.9%	1.2%
Northam	12,353	41.1%	35.0%	16.6%	5.5%	1.7%
Devon	811,640	47.1%	34.2%	13.5%	4.0%	1.1%
England	56,490,046	48.5%	33.7%	12.7%	4.0%	1.2%

Disabled people and people with long-term illnesses tend to make fewer trips by all modes than non-disabled people. The disparity is particularly stark amongst those whose condition(s)/illness(es) reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities 'a lot', who make an average of just 594 trips annually, compared to 1,014 among non-disabled people. Additionally, whilst the proportion of trips made by walking is similar amongst both disabled people and non-disabled people, the proportion of trips by cycle is considerably lower for disabled people (1.1%) than non-disabled people (2.0%)⁴.

Gender

As shown below, the gender split of Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam were all similar to Devon and England averages, with Northam having the highest proportions of females. Information about other gender identities was not collected at the 2021 Census.

⁴ [National Travel Survey: 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/national-travel-survey-2019) (2019 data tables)

Geography	Total	Female	Male
Barnstaple	43,262	51.8%	48.2%
Bideford	18,757	50.5%	49.5%
Northam	12,351	52.4%	47.6%
Devon	811,640	51.5%	48.5%
England	56,490,048	51.0%	49.0%

On average, females make slightly fewer trips in total than males, at 734 per person per year versus 878 per person per year. Females make a greater proportion of trips on foot, but a lower proportion by bicycle, with the result that the proportions by active travel combined were the same for both genders (23%).

Socio-economic status

The proportions of trips made on foot decline from an average of 36% among people in the lowest income quintile, to 22% among those in the highest income quintile. The proportion of trips made by bicycle is approximately the same (2%) for all income quintiles, albeit the absolute number of bicycle trips is highest among those in the highest income quintile, partly by virtue of said individuals making a greater number of trips across all modes.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Stakeholders within the transport industry include:

- Sustrans – a cycling and walking charity, and custodians of the National Cycle Network. As the proposals in the LCWIP seek to improve walking and cycling levels, they are considered to be aligned with the charity’s aim of “creating streets that

make walking, wheeling and cycling safer for everyone”⁵. Furthermore, some of the proposals would complement the sections of the National Cycle Network No. 3 at Barnstaple and Bideford.

- Public transport operators such as Great Western Railway and Stagecoach South West. Some of the proposals in the LCWIP could encourage people to switch from bus or rail to walking or cycling for short trips, negatively impacting patronage on public transport services. However, they may also improve access to public transport hubs, making walking or cycling in combination with public transport more attractive when compared to the private car, which would benefit public transport operators. As proposals are developed further, opportunities for integration with public transport will be maximised, ensuring the impacts on public transport are as beneficial as possible. Proposals also seek to reduce congestion, improving public transport journey times.
- Shared cycle operators, who may seek to introduce shared cycle schemes within the area if the proposals in the LCWIP increase cycling levels.
- Active Travel England - who is the government’s executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.

Political stakeholders include:

- Devon County Council – the local transport authority and promoter of the LCWIP. The delivery of proposals within the LCWIP are aligned with various objectives of the Council, including encouraging modal shift to active modes of transport and tackling the Climate Emergency. It could also help mitigate the impact of development on the local road network, which the Council is responsible for maintaining and improving (where appropriate), thus reducing future costs to the Council.
- North Devon Council and Torridge District Council – the local planning authorities. The delivery of proposals within the LCWIP could reduce the impact of development on the local road network, by improving alternatives to the private car for accessing these developments.

Other stakeholders include groups representing particular segments of society, who would have an interest in ensuring the needs of the people they represent are considered in any infrastructure delivered through the LCWIP. For instance, Living Options Devon, who

⁵ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

represent disabled people and Deaf people, would have an interest in ensuring infrastructure is accessible as possible for disabled people.

Additionally, owners of local businesses could stand to benefit from the proposals in the LCWIP, as the improved walking and cycling links may make it easier for customers to access their businesses. Similarly, local employers may benefit from gaining access to a wider pool of labour.

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

- Public Consultation
- National Travel Survey Data
- Census Data

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Devon County Council has worked with North Devon and Torridge District Council's and Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam Town Council's to propose 4 walking zones and 6 new cycling routes in and around Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam (BBN), for improvement over the next 10-20 years to help people travel more actively. The proposed routes were detailed in the draft BBN Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which identified the gaps in the existing active travel network and outlined the focus of future walking and cycling investment.

Two stakeholder engagement events were held in April 2022, one in Bideford and one in Barnstaple to discuss the draft Plan and seek views of local stakeholders and community groups. After amendments to the plan considering the stakeholder views a 3 week long public consultation was held from 21 September to 12 October 2022. Information relevant to the plan and consultation was hosted on a public consultation website (www.devon.cc/bbnlcwip). This contained:

- the link to the full Draft BBN LCWIP Report,
- a summary of the Draft BBN,
- Paper and online questionnaire online to be completed by anyone wishing to provide their views on the proposals.
- link to the eight-page leaflet – which was published in the North Devon Gazette (2022 September 21st edition)
- Introduction to LCWIP and links to videos explaining the LCWIP process.

Paper copies of the BBN LCWIP were available at Northam, Appledore, Bideford and Barnstaple Libraries at reception.

385 responses were submitted to the online questionnaire, 11 phone calls were taken, 37 emails and 1 letter were received.

The majority of people who responded agree that the LCWIP supports its aims to: respond to the climate crisis; support health and wellbeing; improve accessibility and mobility; accommodate housing and employment growth support local economic growth; and improve safety for walkers and cyclists.

The majority of people were in support of the proposals with at least 80% support for each individual proposal and eight of ten proposals were supported by over 90% of people who filled in the questionnaire.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

All residents by geographic area

Where proposals involve re-allocation of road space to pedestrians and/or cyclists at the expense of general traffic, journey times by motor vehicle may increase.

Construction works to deliver the proposals in the LCWIP may generate noise and cause some traffic disruption, negatively impacting local residents.

Potential modal shift from public transport to walking/cycling may reduce patronage on certain routes.

All residents will benefit from the improved walking and cycling links to employment, education and services through associated health benefits and improvement to local environment, including air quality. Sharing road space will provide greater choice of travel mode and mitigate against some actual and perceived risks. This should enable them to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality.

Infrastructure delivered through the LCWIP will be designed according to latest standards and guidance, such as *Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design*⁶. This will ensure the infrastructure best meets the needs of all residents, and will reduce as far as practicable the potential for disadvantage.

The potential impacts on all users will be considered further when detailed designs are developed for the proposals. This will include consideration of negative impacts and mitigation, such as encouraging modal shift to tackle the climate emergency, minimising impacts during construction and integrating public transport within the proposals.

Age

Older people (aged 60+) make a lower proportion of trips by active travel (walking and cycling) than those aged less than 60, meaning older people may receive a smaller share of the proposals' benefits than their proportion of the overall population.

Younger people (aged 20 and under) make a large proportion (36%) of trips by active travel, so younger people will likely particularly benefit from the proposals. This should enable them to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality. Increased walkability also increases social engagement, physical activity and mobility.

The design of individual proposals will be in accordance to the latest standards and guidance, such as *Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design*. Therefore, it will cater for users of all ages and confidence levels; for instance, it will cater for

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

young/inexperienced cyclists, who may be less confident sharing space with vehicular traffic.

Being physically active in old age is associated with positive health benefits, such as reduced cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and general mental wellbeing. Ensuring even surface, placement of benches and lighting will make walking safer and more attractive.

Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people

Disabled people make a lower proportion of trips by cycle than non-disabled people, meaning disabled people may receive a smaller share of the proposals' benefits than their proportion of the overall population.

The infrastructure will be designed according to latest standards and guidance, such as *Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design*, as well as consider solutions developed by disabled people summarized in the Disabled Citizens' Inquiry report⁷.

The needs of disabled people will be considered throughout the development of each of the proposals. For example, segregation between pedestrians and cyclists will be provided where appropriate and practicable, enabling all people to walk or wheel along the infrastructure as easily and safely as possible. This will remove barriers less able bodied people may face when using existing infrastructure, thus improving access to opportunities and encouraging participation.

Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs

It is not considered that there is the potential for any adverse impacts on the basis of culture and ethnicity.

Black and Asian people, people from mixed/multiple ethnic groups and people of other ethnicities make a greater proportion of trips by active travel than White people, so people of these ethnicities may particularly benefit from the proposals. This should enable them to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality.

⁷ [Disabled Citizens' Inquiry | Executive summary \(sustrans.org.uk\)](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/disabled-citizens-inquiry/)

Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)

Women make a smaller proportion of trips by cycle than men, meaning women may receive a smaller share of the benefits of the proposed cycle infrastructure than their proportion of the overall population.

The infrastructure will be designed according to latest standards and guidance, such as *Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design*. This may help eliminate some of the barriers to cycling women currently experience, such as safety concerns, and thus enable them to cycle more frequently, redressing the current gender imbalance in cycling levels. Consequently, this should enable women to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality.

Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related

It is not considered that there is the potential for any adverse impacts or beneficial impacts on the basis of sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership.

Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

This includes, where relevant: income, housing, education and skills, language and literacy skills, family background (size/single people/lone parents), sub-cultures, rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, children in care and care experienced people, social connectivity and refugee status/no recourse to public funds. Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

It is not considered that there is the potential for any adverse impacts on the basis of other socio-economic factors.

People in lower income groups make a greater proportion of trips by active travel than those in higher income groups, so people in lower income groups may particularly benefit from the proposals. This should enable them to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality.

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and

religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).

- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

It is not considered that there are any relevant human rights considerations. Everyone has the freedom of movement, and these proposals seek to rebalance the transport and accessibility environment to provide greater choice and remove barriers for more vulnerable groups.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost

The use of recycled materials in the construction of the proposed infrastructure will be considered during the development of each proposal.

Conserve and enhance wildlife

All improvements are within existing highways boundary. If green area is affected, surveys will be carried out to ensure mitigation measures are in place.

Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape

The infrastructure proposed in the LCWIP will likely encourage modal shift from car to walking and cycling, enabling the local transport network to more effectively accommodate trips arising from local development. This may reduce or eliminate the need for further improvements to the network, e.g. road capacity increases.

Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage

One of the proposals includes widening the grade I listed Barnstaple Longbridge originally from the 14th century, with significant improvements in the 1960s. It has the highest potential for active travel journeys in North Devon but only has 1.8m footway and no cycle facilities, with on road cycling considered dangerous due to the high volume of traffic. Segregated two way cycle lanes and improved footway would be provided by widening the bridge and slightly narrowing the carriageway of the A3125.

Minimise greenhouse gas emissions

The construction of the infrastructure proposed in the LCWIP may generate greenhouse gas emissions in the short term. However, this will be reduced as far as practicable during the detailed design phases of each proposal.

The infrastructure proposed in the LCWIP will likely encourage modal shift from car to walking and cycling, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport. This will be improved as far as possible by delivering the improvements as efficiently as possible (following the prioritisation laid out in the LCWIP), enabling benefits to be realised as quickly as possible.

Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)

The construction of the infrastructure proposed in the LCWIP may generate pollution in the short term. However, this will be reduced as far as practicable during the detailed design phases of each proposal.

The infrastructure proposed in the LCWIP will likely encourage modal shift from car to walking and cycling, reducing pollution from transport. This will be improved as far as possible by delivering the improvements as efficiently as possible (following the prioritisation laid out in the LCWIP), enabling benefits to be realised as quickly as possible.

Contribute to reducing water consumption

No negative consequences. No direct outcomes.

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)

The infrastructure proposed in the LCWIP may have a shorter life span than previously due to more extreme weather conditions.

Continue research into best construction materials for different route purposes and ensure a maintenance plan is in place.

Other (please state below)

11. Economic analysis

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Impact on knowledge and skills

These proposals should improve access to educational establishments and sites where training is provided, enabling residents to improve their knowledge and skills.

Impact on employment levels

These proposals should improve access to employment sites, increasing employment levels and enabling residents to access better-paying jobs.

Impact on local business

These proposals should improve customers' access to local businesses, increasing revenues for said businesses.