

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	13 January 2021
Subject:	Report on Cycle Provision in Gloucester		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Environment		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Central Severn Vale Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To respond to the Notice of Motion submitted at full council in September 2020 on cycle networks in the City.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted and forwarded on to the County Council as the relevant Highway Authority.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The notice of motion submitted to full council requested that the city council:

Prepare a report on the current cycling infrastructure within the city boundaries, to include recommendations on how this infrastructure could be better interconnected and improved to make cycling a more popular mode of transport.

- 3.2 The starting point for any discussion on cycling provision in the City will be the Central and Severn Vale Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (see appx 1). This document, published in August of this year by the county council, provides a framework for improving the walking and cycling provision in Gloucester and its environs. It maps the current asset and provides some indication as to where improvements should be focussed. In Gloucester this includes Oxstalls Lane, London Road, and city centre improvements that effectively link London Road (a National Cycle Network sustrans route) to the canal towpath.

- 3.3 The Plan is accompanied by a series of maps, one of which identifies where cycle corridors are, along with attractions such as retail areas and employment sites. This report will build on county council's plan and suggest where infrastructure improvements may help implement the wider cycling strategy. It will begin with

recreational cycling for those wishing to cycle out of Gloucester and will then focus on the city itself.

Recreational routes

- 3.4 Gloucester is blessed with excellent off-road cycle routes to the south and north. The former has seen much investment of late and the only real issue is accessing it from certain parts of the city. For example, even those living in areas that are quite close such as Linden and Podsmead will struggle to access it, with the Bristol Road, it's associated industrial areas and the canal acting as barriers.
- 3.5 Going North, the National Cycle Network sustrans route (with the exception of the flood flow route on Port Ham and the long-term issue of the 'board walk' at Maisemore) is of good standard. Accessing this route is not clear however, and it would be useful to look again at the old railway bridge across the Eastern channel of the Severn at Llanthony as a cycle path to connect this route the City. Hartpury College have recently been in conversation with the County Council to see if there is a way to improve the cycling routes between the City and the College.
- 3.6 Going West there is a good, if slightly contrived, off road route out of the city as far as Highnam – sadly beyond here, going on the busy and dangerous B4215 is unavoidable; the alternatives are the equally busy A40 & A48.
- 3.7 Going Northeast out of the city is acceptable for recreational cyclists however the official waymarked route does meander through Longlevens and Churchdown and some improvements to a more direct route to help commuters would be welcome. Routes East and Southeast are not particularly provided for and could do with improvement.

Routes within the city.

- 3.8 Gloucester is fortunate in that it is relatively flat, and it is possible to pick a way through most of the older parts of the city on relatively quiet residential streets. Parked cars, poor maintenance, lack of lighting and speeding are probably the biggest barrier to people feeling safe, and the county council are looking at options to address these, including managing speeds around schools. One of the main barriers to movement in general is the 'outer ring road' (essentially the A38 from Westgate Street/St Oswald road gyratory, through to Cole Avenue). This, coupled with the difficulty presented by the railway line to Bristol, means that many journeys are difficult or potentially dangerous. Where they are possible along cycle routes, they are hard to find (without good sign posting), poorly maintained and often incoherent.
- 3.9 While limited work has been done to improve some of the crossings over the A38, where work has been done it is difficult to use, takes time and is not very instinctive. A potential priority for future focus therefore is on facilitating cyclist crossings of the outer ring road including St Oswald's/A417, the Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham Road, Barnwood Road, Metz Way, Painswick Road, Cotteswold Road, Stroud Road and Cole Avenue. Approximately half the population of Gloucester lives on the other side of this outer ring road barrier, and if they want to access the city centre and all that it offers, then they will have to cross it at some point.

- 3.10 Crossing the railway will be difficult to improve upon without significant investment so it is probably more practical therefore to address issues of lighting and maintenance.
- 3.11 The maintenance regime of some cycle paths also needs consideration. It is no use having a good cycle path if it is strewn with broken glass or is difficult to navigate due overhanging vegetation. More needs to be done in this respect and along with increased use of mechanical flails, the re-tendering of the city council's street care contract and any re-negotiation of the mini highways agency agreement with the County Council should to improve upon this.
- 3.12 Signage, while sometimes very good, can be non-existent and a new cyclist to Gloucester may not be aware of some of the 'back alley' cycle paths that exist. Some work would be welcome ensuring that all are well waymarked. Also lighting on some paths is poor or non-existent.
- 3.14 Finally it may be worth looking at reducing traffic speeds across parts of the city. While the work being done around schools is welcome, this could include wider ranging 20 mph zones and increased traffic calming.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 This paper highlights a number of ways the cycling infrastructure for the City can be improved and developed. This in turn will create an improved infrastructure for contractors delivering Council contracts and who have signed up to our Social Value TOMs framework, and ensure they can maximise the social value delivered through their contract.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Cycling is an almost carbon and pollution free means of travelling around Gloucester. Any improvement in cycling provision as proposed by the report will have clear environmental benefits for the City.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Do nothing, which at best will mean no increase in cycling within the city and may actually lead to less cycle mileage being achieved.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 Cycling is an active, environmentally benign means of getting around Gloucester. Improving cycle infrastructure will improve health, reduce local pollutants/greenhouse gas emissions and lead to reduced congestion.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 Cycle provision is a county council highways function so if approved this report will be forwarded on to the county council for consideration. The city council needs to be aware of the maintenance of cycling assets when re-tendering the streetcare contract and re-negotiating the mini-highways agreement.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 Potential financial implications arising from this report are principally for the County Council to consider, so are not addressed here.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 There are no legal issues resulting from this report.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 This report is predominantly for information only.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 There are no PIA or Safeguarding issues identified with this report.

12.2 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None.

Background Documents: None