

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

Title:	Travel Plan Working Group Update
Date:	19 September 2023
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1. Purpose of Report

To report on action taken since last NPCC meeting.

2. General Update

The Travel Plan Working Group, chaired by Cllr Helena Richards, last met on 11/09/2023. The members of the meeting discussed a new approach to ensure that the group would be more focused on work that needed to be done between each official meeting. The decision was taken to focus at present on 2 projects, allowing all capacity to be focused on these, as otherwise they would not be able to be progressed in a timely manner. These projects are

2.1. A Hopper Bus for Thame

2.2. Thame's response to the development of an LCWIP for Thame. (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan)

3. LCWIP Update

Thame is one of the next towns identified by OCC to have our LCWIP created. The aim of outcome of this piece of work is the development of a cycling routes map for Thame, a walking routes map for Thame and a town centre map for Thame.

3.1. What is an LCWIP

In 2017 the Government published its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. It sets out the Government's ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey.

LCWIPs are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks over the next ten years and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.

LCWIPs will:

- set out an analysis of the current network and opportunities for improvements
- contain a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core routes for further development
- contain a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment.

LCWIPs will assist local authorities to:

- identify cycling and walking infrastructure improvements for future investment in the short, medium and long term
- ensure that consideration is given to cycling and walking within local planning and transport policies and strategies
- make a case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure.

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) supports the introduction of LCWIPs. The framework states that planning policies should:

"provide for high-quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on local cycling and walking infrastructure plans)."

Read more at

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/active-travel-0>

3.2. Development of Thame's LCWIP – current status and TPWC role.

At present OCC is developing a brief that will be used to employ consultants who will lead on this project for Thame. The TPWG is working with the officers at OCC and have fed into this brief to ensure that Thame's voice is clearly heard. The development of the LCWIP is a staged process that engages with a group of local stakeholders to develop the draft plans and then consults with the community more widely about this draft, before putting forward the final draft for further consultation. The TPWG will:

- Be part of the stakeholder group – as well as identifying other relevant stakeholders to be invited. This will include members of the Community Travel Working Group that has already been established.
- Compile details of all work previously undertaken in Thame around Active Travel and provide these to the successful consultants so that they can build on work already completed. These include:
 - TNP2
 - Thame's Green Living Plan
 - Thame's Wayfinding Strategy
 - Cycle and walking routes previously identified by members of the community. Including those from LPRA.

4. Hopper Bus update

4.1. Action taken since last meeting

- Work is separately taking place to establish a CIO for the benefit of Thame in general, with the Hopper Bus being one of the projects that it would oversee.
- Route development: Cllr Baines has spent time developing route options for a bus within Thame, timing routes and testing them.
- Costing the service: financial modelling has been started, but is dependent on the final route being agreed. This includes investigating the cost of purchasing a bus. Further work needs to be done to confirm all of these details, including discussions with Thame based organisations who have a bus to scope whether or not they may be willing for their bus to play a part in this service.

Alongside this action conversations carried on with OCC, and developments have now paused further action due to the current status of these conversations.

4.2. Current status.

Since the last NPCC meeting conversations have continued with the OCC Public Transport Team. They have stated that it is their preference now to combine the Section 106 funding with Buckinghamshire Council's (BC) Section 106 funding connected to the new estate being developed opposite Haddenham Garden Centre. This would be used to deliver a service that met commuter needs in Haddenham from this estate, as well as the needs of connecting the estates on Wenman Road into Thame town centre and on to H&T parkway. This service would run regularly throughout the day from these locations. If this happens BCC will lead on the

project, and this will lead to a tender process. Thame Town Council's CIO would be tendering against other bus companies and may not win the tender.

Following a discussion at the last TPWG meeting, it was decided that a full bus route to meet the needs of the Haddenham Section 106 funding requirements was not something that TTC wanted to be involved in.

4.3. Next steps

In order to decide how and if TTC will continue to develop a Hopper Bus/Community Transport scheme, a meeting has been arranged with OCC on 27/9/23 to determine the following:

- Whether OCC are open to TTC exploring an alternative to the Haddenham and Thame route outlined above – using the Thame Section 106 funds (or at least part of them) independently from the Buckinghamshire S106 funds. If yes, work will continue to develop a Hopper Bus scheme.
- If the above is not possible, and the BC/OCC joint route is still possible, we will be determining whether TTC can still influence the final route through:
 - directing where it runs whilst in Thame.
 - being allocated some of the Section 106 funds to better promote the service locally and give it more chance of success than the 121 route has had.
 - ensuring that the correct bus is purchased for this service – one that has flexibility to move around estates in Thame, and therefore not having such a large bus, but rather exploring smaller models.
- If using Section 106 funds towards a separate Community Transport Hopper Bus project is not possible, we will also discuss whether it is worth TTC applying to the current Community Transport fund to continue to develop a Community Transport project that runs alongside the service that they are developing.

Action Required

- i) To note the report.*
- ii) To send information to the Environmental Project Officer about any other documents that need to be provided to the Consultants to aid the LCWIP work.*