

Planning and Environment Committee

Title:	Travel Plan Working Group Update
Date:	23 January 2024
Contact Officer:	Becky Reid, Environmental Project Officer

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report on action by the Travel Plan Working Group – previously reporting to Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee. Reporting here on action taken since last NPCC meeting on 19 September 2023.

2. General Update

- 2.1 The Travel Plan Working Group, chaired by Cllr Helena Richards, last met on 15/01/2024. Current focus of the group is:
 - establishing the need for a Community Bus in Thame, and
 - supporting the roll out of the LCWIP – a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

3. LCWIP Update

- 3.1 Thame is one of the next towns identified by OCC to have our LCWIP created. 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 By engaging with the local community now, the LCWIP will provide a joined up approach to achieve our local infrastructure, that takes in local knowledge and local need.
- 3.5 Due to limited capacity within their own team, OCC are putting out a tender for this work so that some consultants can take the work forward at a quicker pace than they would be able to in house. The latest update from OCC is that they are now in the process of

speaking with their legal teams at OCC to finalise the contracts they need to send out to the consultants when the brief gets submitted to them. They are aiming to have this all completed by the end of January so that they can then move forward to select a consultant to take this forward.

- 3.6 The TPWG is standing by and has, in the meantime, been compiling a list of relevant stakeholders to involve once the community engagement starts. The TPWG is also drawing together all relevant documentation that has already been created at a local level and can feed into this work.

4. Community Bus Update

4.1 Current status

4.1.1 Throughout the development of the Community Bus, TPWG has been working closely with OCC Public Transport Team to identify what Section 106 funding is available towards this project. During this time Buckinghamshire Council approached OCC with the ambition of starting a new bus route from Haddenham to Thame that had been built into their Section 106 funding requirements.

4.1.2 Time was taken to explore whether this route could be combined with the current 121 route being delivered in Thame and delivered as one project. It quickly became clear that by combining them, both services would become more viable and therefore more sustainable longer term. OCC were keen for this to happen, and the TPWG felt it was a good way forward as it would not only sustain the 121, but would also improve it by connecting East of Thame to Haddenham Station and Haddenham Garden Centre.

4.1.3 Discussion then turned on whether or not the new Community Bus that Thame Town Council could take on this route and deliver it. Due to Buckinghamshire Council's Section 106 requirements this service has to be delivered 6 days a week, including 7am – 7pm during the week. There would be no flexibility to deliver additional services within Thame using the bus and the TPWG felt that this service was a Public Transport service, rather than a Community Transport service. Taking on this service did not provide the opportunity to meet other needs in the community, and so it is not a bus service TTC should take on at this time. OCC were then asked if some of the Section 106 money could be given to Buckinghamshire Council to enable them to retain the current 121 bus route as part of their new route, and some retained to allow Thame Town Council to continue to deliver an additional Community Bus as well. OCC decided that £150,000 should go towards the Buckinghamshire Council service (guaranteed to run for 5 years), and that the remaining Section 106 funding towards Public Transport in Thame could be used for the Thame Community Bus.

4.2 Next Steps

4.2.1 Community Consultation: A meeting has been arranged on 29/02/24 to get feedback from the community about what they think the gaps are in Thame regarding transport. A subsequent questionnaire will also be sent out to gather additional feedback, and following this an initial proposed route and costings to deliver this will be created.

4.2.2 Alongside this, work is being continued to establish a CIO for the benefit of Thame in general, with the Community Bus being one of the projects that it would oversee. The Town Clerk is leading on this element of work.

4.2.3 Once the above are completed, a plan to establish the CIO and recruit a coordinator for the bus project (if still deemed necessary and viable) will need to be made.

Action Required

- i) To note that £150,000 of Section 106 funds towards Public Transport in Thame, will be used in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council to maintain and extend the 121 service for 5 years from implementation – expected April 2024***