

# North West Chilterns Community Board

## LCWIP consultation feedback

### Response to: Buckinghamshire Council's Transport Strategy Team

**Date: 31 March 2023**

Report written by: Jim Stevens CEng, MICE, MCIHT (volunteer adviser and Chairman of the NWC Community Board's Transport and Road Issues Action Group (TRIAG)).

Checked by: Jackie Binning (NWC Community Board Manager).

Approved by: Matt Walsh (Chairman of the NWC Community Board).

### **Introduction:**

This is the NWC Community Board's response to Buckinghamshire Council's Transport Strategy Team's (BCTST) consultation on the initial development of the Strategic, Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

### **Community Board Consultation:**

During the past 6 weeks, the NWC Community Board Manager has, at the request of BCTST, consulted the NWC Community Board on a summary of baseline data/existing conditions and known inter-settlement cycling and walking route aspirations. This consultation information was prepared by BCTST.

In parallel with this, the NWC Community Board Manager has also consulted the NWC Community Board on the Transport and Road Issues Actions Group's (TRIAG) draft aspirational NWC cycling and walking document.

Both consultation exercises purely sought informal views from Community Board members to help BCTST and TRIAG to gather information and views to help their initial work on cycling and walking aspirations and the LCWIP.

It is stressed that both consultations have not been formal Public Consultation exercises and were never intended as such. Buckinghamshire Council will determine the timescale for formal Public Consultation.

There is crossover between the two consultations and Community Board Members and individual residents have provided detailed feedback on both. This is attached at Appendix A. Responses from residents have been anonymised.

The feedback provides very valuable and helpful local opinion and views, comments, suggestions, constructive criticism and objection, which BCTST may find informative and helpful at this early stage.

The feedback includes local views on aspirational 'strategic' routes and links. These routes and links fall into a specific category of information requested by BCTST, namely *key or additional local inter-settlement route aspirations*. These routes and links are highlighted on page 3.

This report attempts to extract the key issues arising from all of the feedback and this is briefly summarised on pages 2 to 6.

The consultation with Community Board members has not been a formal Public Consultation exercise and for this reason and General Data Protection Regulation reasons, BCTST is requested not to transmit the feedback at Appendix A to any third parties outside Buckinghamshire Council.

### **Next Steps for the NWC Community Board:**

The first step for the Community Board is to submit its consultation response to BCTST. This report is that response and has been emailed to BCTST. The response, excluding Appendix A, has also been emailed, for information, to Community Board members and those who responded to the consultation.

The second step is for TRIAG to update the current draft aspirational NWC cycling and walking document to take into account the feedback received.

The third step is for the NWC Community Board to approve TRIAG's updated aspirational NWC cycling and walking document, which it is anticipated will be by the end of May 2023.

The fourth step is to submit the updated aspirational NWC cycling and walking document to BCTST. A copy, for information, will be emailed to Community Board members and those who responded to the consultation.

In the meantime, the current draft aspirational NWC cycling and walking document will be emailed to BCTST as a separate, holding document, as part of the consultation response.

### **Key Issues Arising from the Consultation Feedback**

The following are the key issues arising from the consultation with NWC Community Board members. The key issues include those identified by TRIAG and feedback from residents.

#### **Overview:**

The responses received are overwhelmingly very supportive of the focus being given by Buckinghamshire Council and the NWC Community Board towards developing strategic and local aspirations of cycling and walking infrastructure in the NWC area and across Buckinghamshire more broadly.

The responses provide very valuable and helpful local opinion and views, comments, suggestions, constructive criticism and objection. The objections largely relate to the aspirational Hughenden Greenway.

The following paragraphs describe the key issues that arise at this stage.

#### **TRIAG's draft Aspirational Cycling and Walking Document:**

- TRIAG's draft aspirational cycling and walking document is currently being modified and updated as a result of consultation feedback. It is hoped that the updated version will be approved by the NWC Community Board by the end of May 2023, after which it will be emailed to BCTST.
- The document will describe the Board's aspirations for cycling and walking routes, links and improvements in the NWC area. It will remain a 'live' document and will be updated as necessary.
- It is hoped that the document will eventually support the Strategic, Countywide LCWIP and as such will provide valuable, locally derived information that can be used going forwards, including, as and when, funding opportunities arise.

- It is important to note that a number of the cycling and walking aspirations described in TRIAG's document are policy commitments in the adopted Wycombe Local Plan (e.g. Princes Risborough and B4009 Gt Kimble).

#### **Reducing Car Dependency, Climate Change and Improving Air Quality:**

- It is suggested that the importance of cycling and walking to support the Council's wider aims of reducing car dependency, climate change and improving air quality should be an explicit policy aim of Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Countywide LCWIP.

#### **Key or Additional Local Inter-Settlement Route Aspirations:**

- The following is a list of the aspirations that fall into the category of **key or additional local inter-settlement route aspirations**. This information was specifically requested by BCTST as part of the consultation with Community Board members.
- The list has been prepared using feedback received through the consultation with Community Board members, TRIAG's draft aspirational cycling and walking document and further input from TRIAG.
  - **A continuous Active Travel Route along the A4010 from Stoke Mandeville Bypass, through Princes Risborough to High Wycombe Town.** BCTST consultation documents only include disconnected parts of this aspirational Active Travel Route and therefore require alteration to indicate a continuous route along the entire length of the A4010.
  - **A continuous Active Travel Route alongside the full length of the proposed Princes Risborough Relief Road between Culverton and Great Kimble.** This relief road will eventually become the A4010 in accordance with the Wycombe Local Plan policies.
  - **Active Travel Links from Longwick to Princes Risborough.** Three 'strategic' routes are necessary: (i) through the expansion area to Wades Park/Church Lane (ii) along the existing A4129 to the existing shared cycleway at Tesco's (iii) along Summerleys Road to the Railway Station.
  - **An Active Travel Link from Longwick to the A4010 Active Travel Route.** This could be achieved by creating a route from Longwick to Stoke Mandeville via Owlswick and Kimblewick, with conversion of these minor roads to 'Quiet Lanes' with lower speed limits. Links could also be achieved by creating routes from Longwick to the upgraded B4009 and then onto to the A4010 at Gt Kimble.
  - **Active Travel Links from Longwick to the Phoenix Trail.** This could be by using the existing Bridleway at the end of Walnut Tree Lane (that will need upgrading for cyclists) and by using the wide verge along the B4009.
  - **An Active Travel Route from Hughenden to High Wycombe Railway Station.** This refers to 'principle' of an active travel route connecting Hughenden and High Wycombe (see later comments).
  - **An Active Travel Route along the A40 between West Wycombe and Stokenchurch.**
  - **An Active Travel Route along the B4009 from Chinnor to Great Kimble.**
  - **The Ridgeway National Trail.** This is an important route locally and regionally and there are aspirations to upgrade key links to it from local settlements in the NWC and also to create a Ridgeway riding route.
  - **The Phoenix Trail.** This requires upgrading and improvement for cyclists and pedestrians from the B4009 to Horsenden. Maintenance is required along the rest of the route.

#### **A4010 Active Travel Route:**

- This is one of the key aspirations within TRIAG's draft aspirational cycling and walking document. The route is from the proposed Stoke Mandeville bypass, through Princes Risborough, to High Wycombe. The aspiration is for a continuous route and in this specific context it would be compliant with Government policy.
- The A4010 Active Travel Route is also included in a locally inspired, draft transport strategy for the A4010 that was considered and supported by the NWC Community Board in 2021.

#### **Other A Class Routes:**

- The NWC area has a number of heavily trafficked A class roads that bisect communities and make cycling on the road potentially hazardous and potentially unattractive. These are the A4010, A40, A4128, A4129.
- Princes Risborough will also have a new relief road in due course, as part of the Local Plan expansion of the town. This relief road will bisect the western part of the existing town, the new development and also Great Kimble.
- With the above in mind, identifying aspirations for alternative routes to avoid the need to cycle on the carriageway of these roads is necessary – for example, the Active Travel Route along the verge of the A4010 .
- BCTST's consultation documents acknowledge that cycling would not be easily or safely facilitated on heavily trafficked roads. It is therefore suggested that a map showing all such heavily trafficked routes in Bucks is included in Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic, Countywide LCWIP – with an indication potential Active Travel Routes that avoid using the carriageway of these heavily trafficked routes.

#### **Princes Risborough and Longwick:**

- Both Princes Risborough and Longwick are/will be expanding due to major new development. Thus there is/will be increased demand for new and improved local and strategic cycling and walking routes and links. The adopted Wycombe Local Plan includes a number of policy references to new cycling and walking provision in Princes Risborough, including links to Longwick. Furthermore the Longwick Transport Vision (see Longwick Parish Council's website) includes a number of aspirations for new and improved cycling and walking routes in the parish area and linking to nearby destinations.
- With the above in mind, specific emphasis is necessary in Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Countywide LCWIP regarding the expansion of Princes Risborough and Longwick and the importance of providing strategic and local cycling and walking routes in accordance with the adopted Local Plan and Longwick Transport Vision.
- There does appear to be the need for a full technical assessment to develop a detailed cycling and walking network that covers Princes Risborough and Longwick. This may help guide the detailed layout of new development and associated planning applications. Such a network should also include and utilise existing infrastructure (which may need upgrading).
- With the above in mind, the Climate Action Now Risborough group's response includes a number of eminent aspirations for cycling and walking routes in the town to link existing housing areas with key facilities – using existing infrastructure .
- From an immediate perspective, phase 1 of the Princes Risborough relief road will sever and disrupt existing cycling and walking routes. Appropriate mitigation is necessary to ensure that current levels of Active Travel and road safety are not detrimentally and permanently affected by this.

### Accessing the Chilterns Countryside:

- Improved cycling and walking infrastructure in NWC is a key opportunity to increase tourism in the Chilterns and this could form part of a future Tourism Strategy. This includes Ridgeway National Trail and the cycling and walking links to it. Further development of the Ridgeway and links to it (e.g. Bledlow to Horsenden) is important in this respect and also to create a Ridgeway riding route.
- Better surfaces for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, in particular for the Ridgeway and the Phoenix Trail are necessary.
- Improved road safety signage and road markings for cyclists at road crossings is necessary.
- Improved signage is needed for published cycling routes in the NWC area.
- Better access for cyclists to PR Station, as a gateway to the Chilterns, is necessary.

### Hughenden to High Wycombe Active Travel Route (currently referred to as the Hughenden Greenway):

- Consultation feedback includes both support and objection to this aspirational active travel route.
- The feedback indicates a consensus of support to the '*principle*' of an Active Travel Route connecting Hughenden and High Wycombe, but the feedback raises serious concerns/objections to the actual route being taken through the parkland/green spaces located on the west side of the A4128 (Hughenden Park, National Trust land, playing fields and the green spaces).
- These concerns/objections specifically cite the adverse environmental impact a constructed cycleway/walking route would have on the parkland/green spaces and the chalk stream, also safety concerns for walkers/dogwalkers/other users/grazing farm animals etc in these areas, the impact on the playing field and the football pitch, the adverse impact on the historical setting of the parkland, lack of car parking availability at the village hall/shop and an increase in on-street parking.
- The feedback requests that the route should instead use the existing public highway verge/footway along the western side of the A4128 into High Wycombe and that work should be carried out to fully investigate the feasibility of doing this, including discussion on widths and frontage land.
- The feedback also raises environmental and safety concerns/objections to the aspirational cycling links from Cryers Hill and Four Ashes to the Hughenden to High Wycombe Active Travel Route.
- For the above reasons, TRIAG's draft aspirational walking and cycling document will be modified and will not indicate a specific route. It will instead just refer to the principle of an Active Travel Route connecting Hughenden and High Wycombe.

### Equestrians:

- It is important to recognise that there are very many horse riders that use the bridleway network and public roads in Buckinghamshire every day throughout the year.
- Horse riders are a 'vulnerable road user' and Buckinghamshire has a very high rate of horse fatalities on roads.
- It is strongly suggested that Buckinghamshire Council's LCWIP fully recognises equestrians as an important sector of the community and factor this fully into the development of the LCWIP.
- New and improved cycling and walking infrastructure in some areas would offer a safer alternative to riding on the road.

**Traffic Speeds:**

- Consideration should be given to 'quiet lanes' to encourage more cycling in rural areas and similarly 20mph speed limits on key cycling routes in town/villages.

**Scooters:**

- There are concerns regarding the potential for electric scooters to be a real safety issue e.g. collisions with pedestrians and cyclists, inappropriate speed of some scooter users, risk of collisions with motorists when scooters are used on roads, trip hazards and/or obstruction for pedestrians/wheelchair users/partially sighted created by abandoned scooters.

**Balancing the Needs of Different Users:**

- Balancing the needs of the different users e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, wheelers and equestrians, will need full consideration in the LCWIP.

**Maintenance of Surfaces:**

- Poor surface condition and lack of maintenance can be a major barrier to cycling and walking and therefore reducing car dependency

**Parking on Roads:**

- Concerns exist that current parking standards for new development result in insufficient off-street parking, creating on-street parking and barriers to safe cycling and new cycle routes.

**Detailed Suggestions for Cycling/Walking Improvements:**

- The specific issues included in the feedback from NWC Community Board members will be added to the text and maps in TRIAG's draft aspirational cycling and walking document.
- It is hoped that the modified, updated document will be sent to BCTST by end of May 2023.
- One specific response makes reference to the disruption to cyclists caused by the permanent closure of Marsh Lane in Stoke Mandeville. Marsh Lane is located just outside the NWC area but it is understood that Marsh Lane will eventually be connected onto the proposed Stoke Mandeville by pass, thus reinstating the route into Aylesbury.

**Concluding Comment:**

The NWC Community Board hopes that the information contained in this response is helpful to BCTST with their initial work on the Strategic, Countywide LCWIP. It is hoped to send the updated version of the Community Board's aspirational cycling and walking document to BCTST by end of May 2023.

The NWC Community Board will be happy to help further as necessary and looks forward to further involvement and consultation.