

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC

REPORT TO CABINET

9 JUNE 2020

'Our Way' Vision for Cycling and Walking in Northumberland

Cath Homer, Cabinet Member: Culture, Arts, Leisure and Tourism, together with Stuart McNaughton, Strategic Transport Policy Officer, presented the report to the Committee at their meeting on 3 June 2020.

Although the Committee supported the Strategy, members sought clarification and made comment on the following:

- consideration should be given to creating a network of pathways between smaller towns and villages, and where appropriate, using sustainable and environmentally friendly materials. Where such pathways do exist, action should be taken to ensure that they are adequately signposted and properly maintained;
- members highlighted a number of cycle paths that ended suddenly, particularly in areas of heavy traffic, which could be considered as dangerous and may therefore deter users. They were advised that consultations were being undertaken to improve the infrastructure for cyclists and sources of additional funding were being examined;
- the Council had promoted the cycle to work scheme with employers and could circulate a further newsletter to businesses highlighting the benefits of the project to increase take up;
- members noted the rise in popularity of cycling, as people are encouraged to maintain fitness during the covid pandemic, and also the increasing use of electric bikes which would encourage users to travel further distances. The cycle path network needed to be sufficiently robust to cope with the potential increase of usage;
- consideration should be given to providing better security for leaving bikes in public areas, such as sheds. Also, given the increase in the use of electric bikes, charging points should be provided where possible;
- there was concern that in areas where cyclists and pedestrians shared the same path, the public should be encouraged to behave responsibly and give consideration to the safety of other users. Members hoped that the Strategy would be widely promoted across the County and that this aspect would be particularly highlighted;
- as part of that communications strategy, there should be a renewed effort to encourage cycling and walking in schools, and

- there was skepticism about whether some of the aspirations for 2025, as set out in the document, could be measured or confirmed, such as the number of those walking or cycling on relatively short journeys or achieving high levels of active journeys.

The Committee therefore **resolved** that, subject to the comments as set out above, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the recommendation in the report.

COUNCILLOR JEFF REID

CHAIRMAN