

Planning Committee

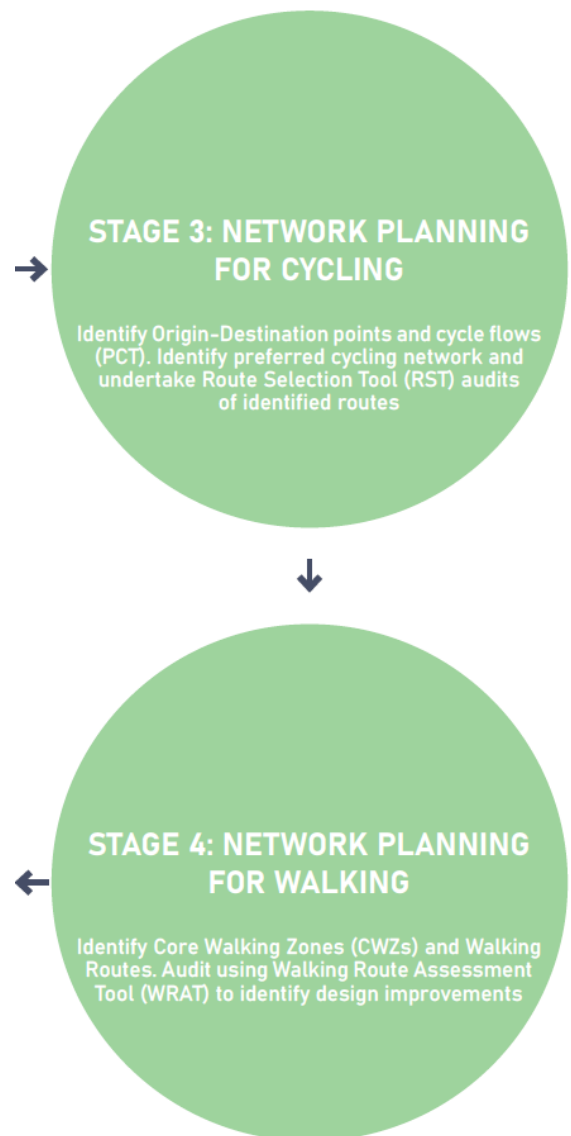
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| Title: | LCWIP Working Group Update |
| Date: | 8 April 2025 |
| Contact Officer: | Becky Reid, Environmental Project Officer |

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the committee about progress made by the LCWIP Working Group (LCWIP-WG) since last report 10 December 2024.

Update from OCC LCWIP Steering Group meeting

2. At last report, an update on the previous OCC led LCWIP Steering Committee meeting that took place on 21st November 2024 was given. Following this meeting a link to an initial proposed map was sent out to the OCC Steering Committee meeting on 17th December 2024 requesting feedback. This map was circulated more widely in Thame – including to the members of the LCWIP Working Group - by the Environmental Project Officer.
3. This consultation was open until 5th January 2025. Due to the timing of the consultation over the Christmas Holidays the Environmental Project Officer contacted OCC and requested that the consultation was extended to allow more time for responses to be gathered, and this was agreed if needed. The Environmental Project officer asked for feedback from the key stakeholders – including the members of this working group - about whether this was needed, but following no response the consultation ended on 5 January 2025, as originally planned. No report was submitted to the Planning Committee since this time, as there have been no details to share until now.
4. On Thursday 13th March a meeting of the OCC led LCWIP Steering Committee was convened. Below is a summary of the content of this meeting.
 - 4.1. Firstly, the consultants confirmed that Thame's LCWIP is at Stage 3 & 4 - Network planning for Walking and Cycling. Shown right. They detailed that work in these phases has included identifying origin-destination points and cycle flows, core walking zones and walking routes across the town. This work led to the creation of their draft map, that was consulted on as outlined above. The



consultants reported that they had processed feedback that they had received in this consultation and used it to update their first draft map. The updated map is shown below.



4.2. Following this work the consultants shared that they visited Thame to audit the routes identified. This audit involved the use of various tools that were explained.

4.3. For cycling routes, this was done using the Route Section Tool (RST) which is used to compare existing and potential design options for cycling looking at: Directness, Gradient, Safety, Connectivity, Comfort and Critical Junctions. Each of the primary routes identified were scored using these criteria. The summary findings are identified below, but during the meeting more detailed breakdowns of specific routes were explored.

| Category | Highest Score (%) | Lowest Score (%) | Average Score (%) |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Directness | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Gradient | 100% | 48% | 75% |
| Safety | 80% | 0% | 54% |
| Connectivity | 100% | 86% | 99% |
| Comfort | 100% | 0% | 36% |

4.4. For walking routes, the Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT) was used, looking at existing conditions for walking based on 3 key themes: Attractiveness, Comfort, Directness, Safety, Coherence (dropped kerbs & tactile paving). Again, the summary findings are identified below, with more detail being provided during the meeting for specific routes.

| Category | Highest Score (%) | Lowest Score (%) | Average Score (%) |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Attractiveness | 100% | 17% | 63% |
| Comfort | 83% | 40% | 66% |
| Directness | 100% | 40% | 74% |
| Safety | 100% | 0% | 74% |
| Coherence | 100% | 0% | 26% |

4.5. Key findings on strategic routes were presented as follows:

- Within the town, carriageway widths were limited on many high traffic volume routes due to the historic nature of the town,
- Instances of narrow footways and missing footways,
- Crossings could be better provided on desire lines,
- There are sections of existing facilities for cycling that could be better joined up and improved,
- Hostile junctions for cycling, particularly at gateways to the town (Tythrop Way) and gateways to the town centre (Park St/Chinnor Road),
- Many 'over-engineered' side road junctions with large corner radii,

4.6. Key findings in neighbourhoods were presented as follows:

- There are some existing examples of filtering and traffic restrictions, including Towersey Road and Denbigh Road,
- Dropped kerbs and tactile paving were often missing from side road junctions,
- The town benefits from a porous network of paths, particularly in the north of the town,
- Opportunities to widen and resurface footways in residential areas,
- Opportunities noted for School Street interventions, such as Ludsdon Grove.

4.7. Key findings in the town centre were presented as follows:

- The town centre benefits from vehicular restriction on Butter Market to create a low-traffic environment,
- Use of materials and cobbled surface enhances the towns historic character, however could be a trip-hazard to some,
- The town centre is currently dominated by car parking,
- High traffic volumes along High Street/Cornmarket including frequent bus services,
- Frequency and quality of crossing provision could be improved, particularly at key junctions (such as Cornmarket /North Street).

4.8. Key finding on traffic-free routes were presented as follows:

- Phoenix Trail is an attractive and well-used route in the town, however the connections onto the trail could be improved,
- Improvements could also be made where the trail interfaces with the road network,
- Some traffic-free routes in the town are currently narrow and unsuitable for cycling,
- The town would benefit from improved wayfinding to signify existing routes,
- The auditing also noted routes which would benefit from barrier access removal.

- 4.9. Following sharing their auditing results, the consultants then presented details on their approach to design recommendations the range of traffic calming techniques available to them.
- 4.10. Design considerations on strategic routes were presented as follows:
- Limited scope in Thame for segregated infrastructure, so corridor improvement to improve walking/cycling conditions would have to be explored,
 - Improved crossing facilities at key junctions in the study area,
 - Provision of segregated facilities on peripheral routes where the width allows,
 - Target improvements on existing cycle routes.
- 4.11. Design considerations in neighbourhoods were presented as follows:
- Consider opportunities for area-wide traffic reduction, including School Streets
 - Traffic calming and speed reduction measures
 - Improved functionality of the walking network, including consistent provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving,
 - Footway widening and resurfacing where carriageway width allows,
 - Wayfinding to highlight existing path network,
 - Surfacing improvements to existing paths to improve drainage and reduce trip hazards. Could incorporate artwork and lighting solutions,
 - Improved crossings near schools and to connect to parks/other local destinations.
- 4.12. Design considerations in the town centre were presented as follows:
- Explore opportunities to further enhance the public realm through seating, greening,
 - Consider role of par parking in the town and whether any could be re-purposed,
 - Improving crossing provision along Cornmarket to improve the accessibility of the High Street,
 - Review footway widths and widen/declutter where possible,
 - Opportunities for additional cycle parking,
 - Speed reduction and traffic calming along Cornmarket to reduce impact of vehicular traffic,
 - Improve side road junctions to provide priority to pedestrians (i.e. continuous footways).
- 4.13. Design considerations for traffic-free routes was presented as follows:
- Widen existing shared paths to 3m where feasible,
 - Where necessary, convert footpaths to bridleways to ensure continuity of network,
 - Wayfinding to signify routes & new routes,
 - Resurfacing and drainage to ensure year-round usability, provide lighting to improve perception of safety and usability of routes when dark,
 - Carriageway markings to denote shared space,
 - Improve transition onto traffic-free routes through reconfiguration of access barriers,
 - Improve crossing provision where traffic-free routes meet the road network.
- 4.14. The consultants then detailed the next step of the LCWIP process: Stage 5. This prioritises the design measures identified for each route, and prioritises against prioritisation factors developed with OCC. This is being standardised across OCC LCWIPs through a prioritisation framework that is in development. This could include factors such as demand, population catchment, impact on road safety, audit scores, environmental impact, costs, funding, land ownership, stakeholder support and contribution towards overall network.

4.15. This stage is intended to help identify measures for implementation over the LCWIPs ten-year programme. The intention is that the process is treated as 'live' and that local authorities continually monitor and update the prioritisation programme.

4.16. The meeting was ended seeking feedback on the following:

- Whether the auditing accurately represents people's experience in Thame?
- Whether there are any specific designed approaches that they should be considering?
- Whether there are any specific opportunities or risks to highlight?
- And a request for any further questions.

4.17. The details of this meeting have been distributed to our local LCWIP Working Group members who have been given the opportunity to respond. Feedback is being collated by the Environmental Project Officer. If any Councillor wants to provide feedback, or has contact with Stakeholders who they believe need to be asked for input, responses are requested no later than 23rd April 2025.

Action Required

- i) To send any comments on this report to the Environmental Project Officer, to pass on to OCC and the consultants leading on Thame's LCWIP no later than 23rd April 2025.***