

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 5 OCTOBER 2017  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE)

COLE GREEN WAY GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN 2018-2023 CONSULTATION

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 A Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) is being prepared for Cole Green Way by the Countryside Management Service (CMS) on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
- 1.2 Cole Green Way is a 6.2km non-motorised transport route following the former Hertford to Welwyn Garden City branch line. It provides a traffic-free connection between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City connecting at both ends to links to the respective town centres and forms part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 61.
- 1.3 The GAP will focus on the section of Cole Green Way between Hertford and the A414 which is owned by HCC and will make recommendation for the management of the remainder of the route.
- 1.4 A briefing document has been produced as a first stage of engagement on the GAP. This report summarises the GAP briefing document and sets out the proposed officer response to the consultation.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That this Panel notes that a Greenspace Action Plan is being prepared for Cole Green Way by the Countryside Management Service on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council.
- 2.2 That this Panel notes the proposed approach of the Countryside Management Service to preparing the Greenspace Action Plan, particularly the stakeholder engagement strategy, as well as the outline proposals for Cole Green Way as set out in the briefing document.
- 2.3 That this Panel agrees the proposed officer response to the Cole Green Way Greenspace Action Plan briefing document consultation.

**3 Background**

- 3.1 A Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) is being prepared for Cole Green Way by the Countryside Management Service on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
- 3.2 Cole Green Way is a 6.2km non-motorised transport route following the former Hertford to Welwyn Garden City branch line. It provides a traffic-free connection

between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City connecting at both ends to links to the respective town centres.

- 3.3 It forms part of a developing network of strategic non-motorised public transport options. This network is helping meet a key objective of the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3): 'Promoting and supporting sustainable travel to reduce growth in car traffic and contribute to improved health and quality of life for residents with a positive impact on the environment and on the wider challenge of reducing transport's contribution to climate change.'
- 3.4 Pressure on the A414 corridor is already high and is likely to increase as a result of proposed development within Welwyn Garden City and Hertford. Forecast growth of traffic means that enabling and promoting active and sustainable travel is increasingly important.
- 3.5 The GAP will focus on the section of Cole Green Way between Hertford and the A414 which is owned by HCC. This section of the route is in need of major improvement including surfacing, drainage, signage, access points, street furniture and management and promotion of the route. The GAP will also provide recommendations for the management of the remainder of the route
- 3.6 A briefing document has been produced as a first stage of engagement on the GAP.

## **4 Explanation**

- 4.1 The Cole Green Way GAP briefing document sets out that the Cole Green Way GAP 2018-2023 will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of HCC and members of the public, and will act as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan will be largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year.
- 4.2 The plan will be costed and potential funding sources identified. Once the final GAP is agreed, external funding will be sought to enable the plan to be delivered, which is likely to result in incremental delivery of the actions within the plan.
- 4.3 The briefing document sets out the stated aim of GAP as follows: To develop the Cole Green Way into an attractive, functional, multi-user route which is well-used for active travel and recreation alike and rich in biodiversity and heritage.
- 4.4 The briefing document also lists a series of objectives for Cole Green Way as follows:
  - i) To improve and maintain the Cole Green Way, as a core component of Hertfordshire's strategic non-motorised transport network
  - ii) To increase use of the Cole Green Way for both active travel and recreation.
  - iii) To ensure financial sustainability of all management operations on site.
  - iv) To protect and enhance the natural environment and heritage of the Cole Green Way.
  - v) To ensure that users of the Cole Green Way feel safe and welcome at all times
  - vi) To develop and maintain an informed, involved and enthusiastic local community.

- 4.5 The briefing document identifies that effective community engagement is at the centre of a successful GAP. In order to enable as many stakeholders and interest groups as possible to have the opportunity to feed into the production of the new GAP, there will be a structured two-stage approach to engagement.
- 4.6 For the first stage, stakeholders and site users from the wider community have been invited to comment on the core aspirations put forward in the briefing document. This first stage of community engagement is running between Thursday 31st August and Thursday 12th October.
- 4.7 For the second stage, stakeholders and site users from the wider community will be invited to read through and make comment on the draft GAP, which will include detailed proposals and actions. This stage will run for 6 weeks in January and February 2018. To support this stage, there will be a guided walk and engagement session for any users or interested groups that wish to discuss the proposals or a particular aspect in more detail.
- 4.8 Following this exercise, the final document will be produced, published and promoted more widely to the general public.

## **5 Next Steps**

- 5.1 The consultation on the briefing document is open until Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Officers have considered the briefing document and propose to respond to the consultation as follows:

*“Thank you for consulting Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on the emerging Cole Green Way Green Space Action Plan 2018-2023.*

*The Council agrees that Cole Green Way is in need of improvement and is therefore fully supportive of the preparation of a Cole Green Way Green Space Action Plan.*

*Cole Green Way is an important part of the local network of non-motorised transport and as such the plan represents a valuable opportunity to enhance the network and enable and promote sustainable travel. Given proposed growth in Welwyn Garden City and Hertford, the development of an action plan for Cole Green Way is considered to be especially timely.*

*The Council notes the aims and objectives set out in the briefing document and confirms that it is fully supportive of these.*

*It is important that the final action plan is focused on delivery and has due regard to funding opportunities and sustainable management of the route.*

*The proposed approach to stakeholder approach is considered to be robust and the Council looks forward to working in partnership with the CMS and HCC in the development of the Greenspace Action Plan.”*

## **6 Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The Council’s Business Plan 2015-2018 contains corporate priorities to maintain a safe and healthy community and to protect and enhance the environment. The

production of a GAP for Cole Green Way is fully aligned with the Council's vision in these areas.

## **7 Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

## **8 Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

## **9 Risk Management Implications**

9.1 There are no risk management implications as a result of this report.

## **10 Security and Terrorism Implications**

10.1 There are no security or terrorism implications arising from this report.

## **11 Procurement Implications**

11.1 There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

## **12 Climate Change Implications**

12.1 No climate change implications have been identified resulting from this report.

## **13 Policy Implications**

13.1 There are no policy implications as a result of this report.

## **14 Equalities and Diversity**

14.1 There are no equalities and diversity implications as a result of this report. The Council will work with the CMS and HCC to ensure that the GAP has due regard to equalities and diversity issues.

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### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Cole Green Way Map.

### **Background Documents:**

1. Cole Green Way Greenspace Action Plan 2018-2023 Briefing Document August 2017.