



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Cycling in Lowestoft
Meeting: Climate Emergency Agenda Item 131
Date: 2 March 2021

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/NON CONFIDENTIAL

Background/Introduction

This document seeks to summarise the work to date and calls for clarification on how the Town Council can proceed with matters relating to cycling and, particularly, within its powers.

Details

Below are extracts from minutes relating to considerations to date. Officers would suggest that the Town Council is able to do the following:

1. Write policy in relation to Cycling within the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan
2. Build Cycling considerations into all recommendations on planning applications
3. Provide infrastructure such as parking spaces and lock ups within parks and open spaces (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s.57 s.63)
4. Promote cycling information; route maps, grants, health initiatives etc.
5. Make payments for the Highways Authority for road traffic calming (Highways Act 1980 s.274)

Climate Emergency 200901

47. 3 Supporting the growth in cycling, walking and other forms of transport/exercise – This ties in with the previous item. Feedback has been received from visitors to the town that, compared to other areas, Lowestoft has good cycle routes, but there are areas for improvement, particularly to link Lowestoft with other towns safely. Suffolk County Council has a map of routes but it is out of date. It was agreed the Town Council needs to promote cycling and other outdoor activities. It was queried whether the Town Council could create its own map of cycle routes. Staff will look into this. The Events and Communications Officer can explore other ways to promote outdoor activities, such as fun runs at the Town Council's parks and open spaces.

Climate Emergency 201006

62. Responses to the cycling consultation run in the Lowestoft Journal and online

Responses have been received and circulated previously. The Deputy Clerk has started work on a document to bring together all the ideas the Council has been considering about cycling. A map-based consultation for cycling and walking strategies is mentioned in East Suffolk Council's October Planning Newsletter. The Deputy Clerk has contacted the relevant officer, who is happy to speak with this Committee ahead of its next meeting about the initiative. Staff have used the Lowestoft Journal and the Town Council's website and Facebook page to promote cycling in the town and it was suggested that the Town Council could contact local cycling groups to discuss activities and promotion when it is appropriate to do so.

Cllr Green arrived 15:42

There used to be a 'Bike and Go' scheme at the train station but the scheme has ended. This may be something the Town Council decides to pick up as several areas now run similar schemes. It was suggested that any ideas Councillors have should be sent to Deputy Clerk to be included in the document she is putting together. The draft document will be circulated to the Committee, including the consultation responses. A Community Engagement Policy is being developed and it was suggested this could include provision for engagement with clubs. Cllr Barnard will contact Highways England about the development of a cycle route between Hopton and Lowestoft. Suffolk County Council has provided a response as to why no schemes in Lowestoft are being prioritised to benefit from funding, but the matter is ongoing.

Climate Emergency 201103

78.2. The draft Cycling Strategy – Officers have put together a draft document, Councillor feedback is required to develop it, and it will be circulated to the whole Council for input. Cllr Barnard has found a source of grant funding, which may be used to produce maps, or towards bicycle racks in the Town Council's parks. Cllr Barnard will send the details to officers.

Standing Orders 201118

28.1 Tree Policy, including any recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee – The Tree Policy, Co-option Policy and Cycling Strategy are being reviewed by officers and other Committees and Sub-Committees. Feedback on the documents from Councillors was welcomed. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee has requested officer review of the Tree Policy, particularly regarding the legal rights of the public.

28.5 Cycling Strategy – Officers have put together a draft document, encompassing facts and figures, but Councillor input is now required to detail the Council's aspirations. This will be brought back to the next meeting for further discussion.

Climate Emergency 201201

99.2 Consideration of the draft Cycling Strategy and any feedback from Councillors – Cllr Hardie has provided comments via email and Cllr Barnard has responded to East Suffolk Council's map-based consultation. After the Deputy Clerk has reviewed the strategy following feedback on the 'Bike and Go' scheme, the strategy will be reviewed by the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee.

Standing Orders 201216

38.6 *Cycling Strategy – Cllr Butler has sent in comments, which include safety concerns, which support similar comments previously made by Cllr Hardie. It was requested that the Climate Emergency and Community Safety Committees review this strategy, with specific regards to the concerns raised regarding road safety, at which point the strategy can be referred to Full Council rather than back to this Sub-Committee. It was commented that Lowestoft does have a good cycle network compared to some other areas, and some measures which slow cyclists down do improve safety. It would be difficult to improve the cycle network due to the infrastructure of the roads. The Town Council has got cycle maps on its website and officers will review how cycling is being promoted by the Town Council. East Suffolk Council is reviewing its own strategy, and ran a map-based consultation. East Suffolk Council’s ideas for the Town Council’s Cycle Strategy would be welcomed. There is currently no cycle route from Gunton to Hopton to reach Great Yarmouth. Councillors would prefer to see off-road cycle routes. This Sub-Committee would like the strategy to take account of Cllr Butler’s comments and the comments raised during this meeting, and would like to see if the other Committees mentioned have any specific comments regarding road safety.*

Climate Emergency 210112

118.1. *The draft Cycling Strategy and any feedback from Councillors, including specific concerns regarding road safety – The Committee does not advocate bicycle lanes on roads as they can be dangerous when there is insufficient space for vehicles to overtake. It was commented that the provision of cycle paths in the town is generally good, particularly compared to other areas. Cllr Butler has raised some specific issues regarding road safety. Suffolk Highways and Highways England have the responsibility for cycle paths. The Town Council can identify and report issues, but it would be beneficial if it could suggest solutions as well. It was suggested that the footpath along the side of Denmark Road which has no houses could be converted to a dedicated cycle lane. Both the road and the footpath along The Ravine are uneven, often with brambles and natural spring water along the route. This Committee would like to see a cycle route from the Oulton Broad train stations to Carlton Marshes, and a safe route between Lowestoft and Hopton. Comments from East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council will be sought on the draft Strategy. It is likely that people would be more encouraged to cycle if they felt safer doing so and suitable places to lock their bicycles. It was suggested that the Council should advocate the provision of electric bicycle lockups and this should be built into the Strategy. Cllr Green has been researching the options and costs start from £600. Charging points for electric bicycles may need to be considered alongside this, but this Committee would need to consider the overall environmental impact of the stations and the likelihood that it would be a large footprint cost, versus the benefit of them and how well used they will be.*

Standing Orders 210120

48.1 *Tree Policy – It was suggested that items 48.1 – 48.6 be taken together, as they have already been reviewed. There was a discussion about the condition of the Sparrows Nest public conveniences, but these have already been identified as one of the priorities for refurbishment in 2021 – 2022. In terms of the Toilet Strategy itself, there have been no significant changes. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the policies and procedures as identified in items 48.1 – 48.6 as reviewed and amended; seconded by Cllr Youngman; all in favour.*

48.2 Toilet Strategy

48.3 Cycling Strategy

Community Safety 210121

45. *Reviewing the draft Cycling Strategy and any feedback from Councillors, including specific concerns regarding road safety*

Cllr Butler had circulated a report regarding road safety for cyclists. Even though the Town Council is not the authority responsible for highways, it could still take on a reporting role and facilitate raising concerns through the online reporting tool, where possible and appropriate. The Highways Technician will be talking to the Planning and Environment Committee soon, where there may be an opportunity to seek his views on the timescales and reporting criteria. It was suggested that the Town Council could keep a log on its website of any issues it has reported, whilst making it clear that the Town Council is not the highways authority. It was suggested that the consideration of the safety of cyclists could extend to pedestrians as well, particularly where there are shared lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. It was suggested these could be more clearly defined, such as by having designated colours.

A common strategy across the county would make it easier for people to understand in the future. It was been confirmed that Lowestoft's third river crossing will have cycle lanes on both sides. The Cycle Strategy is still ongoing.

It was agreed to carry this item forward to next meeting to see how it is progressing and how the ideas arising from this meeting could be incorporated. These comments will also be fed back to the Climate Emergency Committee, which has also been considering the draft Strategy. Connectivity around the town, and with neighbouring towns, could be improved. As well as raising issues, it was suggested that it would be useful to put forward suggestions as well. Arrangements for highways budgets are changing in May, and it is understood that highways funding allocated to County Councillors will be reduced.

Finance and Governance 210211

135.2h. Adopting the following Town Council policies: The Toilet Strategy Working Group will be meeting shortly to look at the Toilet Strategy and specifications for the Town Council's public conveniences. Cllr Coleby proposed deferring a recommendation to adopt the Toilet Strategy until March's meeting of this Committee, to take into account any comments from the Working Group; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to adopt all of the policies and procedures as listed in items 135.2hi – 135.2hxiv, with the exception of the Toilet Strategy; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

135.2hi Tree Policy

135.2hii Toilet Strategy

135.2hiii Cycling Strategy

Full Council 210223 (Draft)

169.2g. Adopting the following Town Council policies: - CB would oppose cycling strategy. Some of it not even relevant to Lowestoft. Some provision for new developments but not existing. CB prev comments not incl. needs to be reworked. Cycling strategy is on climate agenda, don't take position today, defer to March

awaiting feedback from climate. Any other Cllrs can feed in in the interim. JH has also made comments which are not included.

Recommendations/Decision

Members consider all of the above and particularly the guidance on what a local council may be able to deliver and provide Officers with direction on how to progress.