



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Cycling Strategy
<b>Date:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	<b>European Cycle-Friendly Employer Accreditation Scheme</b> To provide information on the Sustrans and Cycle NI proposals for a workforce cycling accreditation scheme.

1.2	<p><b>Advocacy and Influence</b></p> <p>To consider proposals for Council engagement with the Department for Infrastructure on the implementation of the Belfast Bicycle Network Plan.</p>
2.0	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note emerging detail of the Cycle-Friendly accreditation scheme.</li> <li>• Agree to invite DfI to a future meeting to discuss plans for the implementation of the Bicycle Network Plan and agree Council priorities; and</li> <li>• Note the ongoing partnership work of the Active Belfast initiative and the work of the ‘Task And Finish’ subgroup.</li> </ul>
3.0	<p><b>Main report</b></p>
3.1	<p><b>European Cycle-Friendly Employer Accreditation Scheme</b></p> <p>A new cycle-friendly accreditation scheme for employers, which is delivered by Cycling UK, was launched in Belfast on the 19 April 2018. The scheme is aimed at encouraging staff to commute to work by bike and was developed to provide a European standard for cycle-friendly companies. It is run by the European Cyclists’ Federation (ECF) across Europe. It will be delivered in the UK by Cycling UK and supported by Sustrans. Sustrans is promoting the scheme as part of the €4.4m CHIPS project (Cycle Highways Innovation for Smarter People Transport and Spatial Planning) which involves Belfast working with European partner countries to tackle high levels of air pollution by encouraging cycling.</p>
3.2	<p>The scheme recognises that encouraging staff to cycle to work and for business journeys helps improve staff health and can boost productivity. Research shows that on average, employees who cycle-commute take at least one day per annum less off sick than colleagues who do not cycle to work. The benefits can also be found for people’s mental wellbeing, as studies have shown car commuters are at least 13% more likely to feel constantly under strain or unable to concentrate than those who cycle/walk to work.</p>
3.3	<p>To gain certification, organisations will have to meet some basic measures like cycle parking and providing information to employees, plus some additional measures which</p>

	<p>they can choose. Employers are then graded Gold, Silver or Bronze depending on their commitment to making their workplace more cycle-friendly. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bronze - A staff member is responsible for improving cycling to work, and parking a bike is as easy as parking a car.</li> <li>• Silver- There are some facilities like lockers and regular events but they could improve. On-site assessment and advice is provided.</li> <li>• Gold- cycling to work is stress-free and seamless for staff and visitors. There are showers, bike mileage reimbursements, and incentives to get more staff cycling.</li> </ul>
3.4	<p>The outline detail of the scheme would indicate a contribution to delivering a number of the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda in particular “Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city”. An indicator of this outcome is to increase “the percentage of all journeys which are made by walking, cycling or public transport”.</p>
3.5	<p>Officers from across Council departments are currently engaging with Sustrans and Cycling UK, regarding further detail of the Cycle-Friendly Accreditation Scheme and a follow up report will be brought back to committee at a later date.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Advocacy and influence</b></p> <p><b>Belfast Bicycle Network Plan</b></p> <p>The Council responded to the public consultation on the Draft Belfast Bicycle Network Plan in January 2017, highlighting the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the timeframe for the delivery of the network will be dependent on the resources available and it is critical that adequate resources are allocated to the implementation of the plan; and</li> <li>• the omission of a number of the main arterial routes which service high density residential areas from the primary network was viewed as a major oversight, in particular the Lisburn and Ormeau Roads.</li> </ul>
3.7	<p>In relation to strengthening the Council’s advocacy role with DfI, it is suggested that the Council invite DfI to a future meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee to discuss their plans for the implementation of the Belfast Bicycle Network Plan and that the Council highlights potential areas for consideration as priorities to deliver the bicycle network plan for Belfast.</p>

3.8	<p>It is suggested the following priorities are raised with DfI for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to introduce new cycling infrastructure along key arterial routes linking to the city centre such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Ormeau Road linking to the proposed Gasworks Bridge and Towpath;</li> <li>- the north of the city linking the National Cycle path along the River Lagan; and</li> <li>- the west of the city connecting the Royal Hospital and the new transport hub.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Sydenham Greenway – the potential to link the existing Comber Greenway and Connswater Community Greenway with the North Down Coastal Path at Holywood. This has the potential to provide a link to the George Best Belfast City Airport, the Harbour Estate and the proposed park and ride facility at Tillysburn.</li> <li>• Through the Green and Blue infrastructure plan (as part of the ongoing Local Development Plan work) consider routes and links along green corridors and rivers which can be used to promote cycling and walking.</li> </ul>
3.9	<p>Although DfI have made progress on developing the cycling network in the city centre, there is a lack of progress on developing a coherent bicycle network city-wide. The Middlepath Street scheme, once completed will link the city centre to the east of the city and the Connswater Greenway, however there is a need for convenient and safe cycling infrastructure linking the city centre to the north, west and south of the city. There is also a need to maximise opportunities around the development of greenways such as the Comber and Connswater Greenway and develop new greenways.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Active Belfast</b></p> <p>It should be noted that the Council is already committed to working at a strategic level on promoting physical activity including cycling through the work of the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) and the Active Belfast initiative. On behalf of BSP, the Active Belfast Partnership has developed and agreed a new overarching strategy for physical activity within Belfast. ‘Get Active Belfast’ provides a platform to strengthen the partnership approach to addressing inequalities by creating a more active city. It is not a replacement for strategies which are currently being taken forward by individual organisations, but is intended to create additional value through working together at a strategic level. In this, it is acknowledged that <i>‘increasing participation in physical activity cannot be achieved through any single solution’</i>, but requires a collaborative approach which embraces the themes of education, transport, planning, public health, community development and sport.</p>

3.11	<p>Get Active Belfast also sets out seven pledges in pursuit of the five strategic priorities and associated outcomes. These are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support schools to offer physical activity throughout the day</li> <li>2. Create an integrated Active Travel network</li> <li>3. Create more active places through local spatial planning</li> <li>4. Strengthen connections to and within the health sector</li> <li>5. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign on the benefits of being active</li> <li>6. Deliver wide ranging and inclusive community based activity programmes</li> <li>7. Support local sports clubs to deliver inclusive and adapted sports for all</li> </ol>
3.12	<p>Each pledge will have an associated action plan, with the first of these being around the pledge to 'create an integrated active travel network'. A 'Task and finish' subgroup has recently been established for this pledge and key stakeholders have been asked to commit to three meetings, with a view to producing a collective action plan to be rolled out from mid-2018.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There may be resource implications associated with the implementation of the bicycle network proposals in association with Dfl and council involvement in the Cycle-Friendly Accreditation Scheme. A follow up report will be brought back to committee at a later date outlining potential resource implications.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.14	<p>No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.