Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to respond to the below question as put to the chair of the Environment & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ETOSC) by County Councillor, Mr. Max Hunt:

   ‘The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has said that new roads and upgrades should prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to promote more physical activity. Would the chair ask the Director of Environment & Transport (E&T), in conjunction with Public Health officers, to report to the ETOSC on how Leicestershire County Council (LCC) might address the set of draft guidelines for local authorities from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence?’

Background

2. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Quality Standards set out the priority areas for quality improvement in health and social care and are there for anyone wanting to improve the quality of health and care services. They cover areas where there is a variation in care with each standard providing a set of statements to help improve quality and information on how to measure progress. The standards are not mandatory, but can be used to plan and deliver services to provide the best possible care.

3. NICE has been consulting on the Quality Standard ‘Physical Activity: Encouraging Activity in the General Population’ and the following five draft supporting quality statements:

   **Quality Statement 1:** Local authorities and healthcare commissioners have physical activity champions to oversee the development and implementation of local strategies, policies and plans;

   **Quality Statement 2:** Local authorities develop and maintain connected travel routes that prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and people who use public transport;

   **Quality Statement 3:** Local authorities involve community and voluntary groups in designing and managing public open spaces;
**Quality Statement 4:** Workplaces have a physical activity programme to encourage employees to move more and be more physically active; and,

**Quality Statement 5:** Schools and early year’s settings monitor and update travel plans annually to increase active travel.

### Addressing the 5 ‘NICE’ Draft Quality Statements

4. A number of local authorities across the country have benefitted from ‘Devolution Deals’ which has enabled them to be in a strong position to fund and drive forward the active and sustainable travel and physical activity agenda. For example, the devolution deal between the Treasury and Greater Manchester has paved the way for the councils and NHS in Greater Manchester to take control of the region’s £6 billion health and social care budget. This has enabled the City Mayor to commit high levels of funding towards walking, cycling and public transport and put them in a strong position to address the guidelines stipulated in the five ‘NICE’ draft quality statements.

5. Leicestershire County Council is not in a position to compete with this, however, its Environment and Transport and Public Health Departments are actively addressing the principles laid down in the five statements and the below sets out some of the work being done. Both departments will continue to work closely together to encourage active and sustainable travel and physical activity.

**Quality Statement 1:** Local authorities and healthcare commissioners have physical activity champions to oversee the development and implementation of local strategies, policies and plans.

6. Leicestershire County Council is the host organisation for Leicestershire & Rutland Sport (LRS) who fulfill the role as Physical Activity Champion. John Sinnott, Chief Executive of the County Council is an advisor to the LRS board, which drives forward the Physical Activity agenda.


8. The Council host a Physical Activity Delivery Group to encourage physical activity to be embedded in wider agendas. For example, the County Council and LRS are jointly funding an officer to work with schools to promote and encourage physical activity and active and sustainable travel as part of the ‘Whole School Approach’ strategy: [https://www.lrsport.org/activeschools](https://www.lrsport.org/activeschools). This officer works closely with the School Sports and Physical Activity Network (SSPAN) officers to widen the coverage of LCC’s safe and sustainable travel agenda, which aims to reduce congestion and improve safety outside schools. The group also explores funding opportunities and prepares funding bids through funding providers such as Sport England.
Quality Statement 2: Local authorities develop and maintain connected travel routes that prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and people who use public transport.

9. There is a considerable amount of work already being done by the Environment and Transport Department and Public Health that supports this standard as set out below.

10. Public Health supports this standard and fully recognises that transport systems and the wider built environment can influence peoples’ ability to be active. It is the view of Public Health that when developing and maintaining travel routes, pedestrians, cyclists and users of other modes of transport including public transport that involve physical activity should be given the highest priority over motorised transport (cars, motorbikes and mopeds, for example).

11. The attractiveness of active travel is affected by distance, the nature and quality of a route and its access and safety. Improved travel route design that is maintained to a high standard will provide the greatest opportunity for people to move more in their day-to-day lives. Public Health believes it is important to encourage safe, convenient active travel that is accessible for everyone, including older people and people with limited mobility.

12. Public Health considers that funding should be prioritised to support safe (i.e. segregated where necessary) infrastructure with appropriate speed limits (20mph on residential streets and on roads with possible conflicts between cars and pedestrians, cyclists or other vulnerable road users). Sustrans, the sustainable travel charity, suggest a proxy for this would be that the routes would be safe for a ‘competent 12 year old child to ride unaccompanied.’

13. One way of ensuring this is delivered in practice is to take a Health In All Policies (HIAP) approach to transport, environmental and planning policies and for larger developments to undertake Health Impacts Assessments. This is the approach being taken with a development at Lutterworth and other developments and policies including:

- New Lubbesthorpe;
- Melton Local Plan;
- Hinckley West – with focus on physical activity (with LRS); and,
- The Leicestershire County Council Environmental Strategy.

13. In addition to the above, ‘Active Travel’ is included as a priority in the Public Health Physical Activity Grant. There is a consistent offer for walking / running / cycling across localities and this is a priority for the work of the School Sport & Physical Activity Networks.

14. When designing road improvement schemes, the County Council work to various design standards such as the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges; Manual for Streets; Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions as well as take guidance from Department for Transport Local Transport Notes. Whilst working to these standards the County Council has internal processes to ensure that cycling, walking and public transport is inherent within the design
process of schemes e.g. non-motorised users audits are a key part of the design process to ensure that all modes are fully considered in the scheme design.

15. To reflect current legislation and to take into account developments in cycle infrastructure design, the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Cycle Proofing Working group is actively engaged in bringing up to date ‘Local Transport Note 2/08: Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 2/08). The DfT want to ensure that the refreshed LTN 2/08 is fully embedded in how local councils and practitioners deliver cycling infrastructure. The County Council will keep a watching brief on progress with this refresh and ensure that best practice arising from this is captured in cycle and road scheme designs going forward.

16. The recent North West Leicester Transport project that was introduced jointly with the City Council is a good example of where cycling and walking infrastructure has been enhanced as part of a scheme to improve traffic capacity along the A50. As part of this project, footways were widened to cater for cycling, shared use facilities were constructed across roundabouts and toucan crossings were introduced. Bus stop infrastructure was also improved.

17. Where possible, the County Council will look to take opportunities to improve existing infrastructure and cater for sustainable travel options as part of any road maintenance schemes it undertakes e.g. widening of footways when undertaking surfacing, introducing dropped kerb crossing points etc.

18. In addition to incorporating sustainable travel infrastructure as part of road improvement and maintenance schemes, the County Council continually look for opportunities to improve sustainable travel infrastructure provision. This is done through the planning process, as well as by ensuring new development layouts have suitable and adequate cycle, walking and public transport infrastructure to ensure their long-term sustainability. The cycle, walking and public transport improvements introduced utilising S106 monies from the Glenfield Optimus Point residential and commercial development is a prime example of this. Improvements included the widening and surfacing of the Ivanhoe trail (a disused railway between Glenfield and Ratby), creating an excellent walking and cycling link between the two villages, new bus priority signals onto the A50 from the Brantings estate in Glenfield and new shared use cycle/walking facilities fronting the site providing a link through to Kirby Muxloe. The bus service 13 route has also been extended to cover this development using S106 funding.

19. In 2017, the Government published its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS). The Strategy sets out the Government’s ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), are a new, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level are set out in the CWIS. To drive this forward, the DfT invited expressions of interest for technical assistance and support for the development of LCWIPS. Leicestershire County Council submitted an expression of interest for up to 50 days support and in September 2017 this was successfully awarded. The County Council are now in the process of producing its first LCWIP for Melton utilising this support. The skills and
knowledge gained from this support will be used to develop further LCWIP’s across the county, which will help inform the strategic direction for cycle infrastructure investment and any funding bids for such infrastructure in the future.

20. Further to the infrastructure aspects detailed above, the Environment and Transport department actively promotes and encourages safe and sustainable travel in schools and businesses and through its flagship ‘Choose How You Move’ brand and web site. The website provides a range of sustainable travel information, guidance and advice e.g. cycle maps, bus area guides, travel plan guidance, walking routes, car sharing, a journey planner and much more.

21. In 2016, Leicestershire County Council in partnership with Leicester City Council, were successful in securing over £3 million revenue funding over 3 years from the DfT Access Fund to invest in sustainable travel initiatives. The project target area covers Anstey, Glenfield, Groby, Birstall and Lubbesthorpe in the county; business parks around Fosse Park/M1 Junction 21 and New Parks, Braunstone and Leicester City Centre.

22. The partnership is about to enter the third year of its sustainable travel programme which includes initiatives such as personal travel planning, sustainable travel business grants, workplace cycle programmes, business and schools engagement etc. The schools work has included a new ‘School Clear Zone’ initiative being introduced in the vicinity of Millfield L.E.A.D Academy, Braunstone Town to reduce congestion, increase active and sustainable travel and improve safety. This has involved the introduction of physical traffic management measures under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and supporting these measures with travel behaviour change initiatives including a new park and stride site using a pub car park. Evaluation of this scheme has shown a positive reduction in school gate traffic, parking and congestion and an increase in sustainable modes of travel to the school.

23. The Environment and Transport department delivers Bikeability (cycle training programme) to around 2600 year 5 and 6 pupils per year. This training provides these primary school pupils with the skills and confidence to cycle safely on the road and helps to encourage cycling from an early age. the department also oversee the School Crossing Patrol service with 90 patrols currently in operation helping pupils cross the road safely and encouraging more walking to school.

Quality Statement 3: Local authorities involve community and voluntary groups in designing and managing public open spaces.

24. Through the Public Health Physical Activity Grant there is a consistent offer for walking, running and cycling and there are a number of projects which use outdoor gyms, forest schools and conservation projects (these vary from locality to locality). The LRS website also promotes the use of outdoor spaces/parks through its self-help/care offer.

25. A needs assessment undertaken by Public Health on active travel to school has supported some of the work that they are now doing around encouraging active travel in schools.
26. Public Health also actively encouraging cycling and walking clubs for adults e.g. Walking for Health.

**Quality Statement 4:** Workplaces have a physical activity programme to encourage employees to move more and be more physically active.

27. Leicestershire County Council actively encourages employees to be more physically active through a range of methods. An overarching Workplace Health Strategy group has developed a strategy and action plan which includes physical activity as one of its priority areas. An example of how this has supported and encouraged staff to become more active includes the provision of a staff Pool Bike and Electric Bike hire scheme (which recently invested in 10 new Electric Bikes) for employees to use for visiting sites/attending appointments away from County Hall or commuting. There are lockers that staff can hire to store clothing and a drying room for them to air wet clothing as well as a range of shower and changing facilities. There is also a number of secure cycle parking facilities located around the County Hall premises.

28. The Environment and Transport department run a number of lunch time walks and there are also a number of lunch time fitness classes in the sports pavilion that staff can take part in.

29. The Council have also invested in a ‘Better Points’ phone app that staff can download and then use to earn points for walking, cycling and other sustainable modes of travel, which can then be redeemed for 1000’s of high street vouchers.

30. Through work at the Unified Prevention Board, a sub-group of the Leicestershire Health and Well Being Board, Public Health and Localities have a Workplace Health Offer to organisations. Organisations can receive a workplace health needs assessment which identifies and supports them to improve areas of employee health and wellbeing. The assessment undertaken by Leicestershire and Rutland Sports is based upon Public Health England and Healthy Working Futures (2017) ‘Workplace Health Needs Assessment’ and will shortly be launched for all Leicestershire County Council staff to allow us to have a more robust understanding of the health needs of our staff and develop programmes, messages and other resources to address these.

31. LRS offer Workplace Health Physical Activity Competitions, Champion Training, Business Games and have resources which are available to local businesses

**Quality Statement 5:** Schools and early year’s settings monitor and update travel plans annually to increase active travel.

32. Supporting schools with the development of a School Travel Plan is an integral part of the Environment and Transport department’s role in encouraging active and sustainable travel at schools. The department has been able to expand the coverage of support through the appointment of the jointly funded ‘Whole School Approach’ officer and through the partnership working with SSPAN’s. Schools are encouraged to sign up to Modeshift STARS (on line travel planning tool with accreditation scheme). Schools can achieve Gold, Silver and Bronze
accreditation status dependent on the number of initiatives they take up. To date Elizabeth Woodville Primary School in Groby has achieved Gold status. The school also won primary school of the Region of the Midlands and North West and will be attending the national awards at Parliament in March. Millfield LEAD Academy in Braunstone Town has achieved Silver status and Ibstock Junior School has achieved Bronze status. A further 10+ schools are anticipated to be accredited throughout the next 12 months.

33. Active Travel is a key priority for SSPAN’s. SSPAN’s for each area across the county have to deliver interventions targeting active travel to their primary and secondary schools. Interventions are funded through the Public Health Physical Activity Grant.

34. Active Travel Workshops are to be delivered at the upcoming Public Health ‘Health and Wellbeing’ Conferences for both schools and early years establishments.

35. Active Travel is a key priority in the Healthy Schools Healthy Tots programmes and one of the key priority groups for the Children & Families partnership at LCC: [https://www.leicestershirehealthyschools.org.uk/about-us](https://www.leicestershirehealthyschools.org.uk/about-us).

Conclusions

36. The 5 ‘NICE’ Quality Statements are noted by Leicestershire County Council and reaffirm the wide range of work and initiatives already being undertaken by its Environment and Transport and Public Health departments to encourage active and sustainable travel and physical activity.

37. Whilst it should be recognised that Leicestershire County Council does not have the funding levels or powers to compete with devolved authorities such as Greater Manchester, this report has emphasised the great deal of work being done by the County Council in line with the guidelines set out in the 5 Quality Statements.

38. Leicestershire County Council’s Environment and Transport and Public Health departments will continue to work closely together to ensure sustainable travel and physical activity are promoted and encouraged.

Background Papers


LRS Active Schools: [https://www.lrsport.org/activeschools](https://www.lrsport.org/activeschools)

Leicestershire Healthy Schools: [https://www.leicestershirehealthyschools.org.uk/about-us](https://www.leicestershirehealthyschools.org.uk/about-us).
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