

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 90

Subject: Mini-Holland feasibility study – Wish & Westbourne

Date of meeting: 14 March 2023

Report of: Executive Director – Economy, Environment and Culture

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Ward(s) affected: Wish, Westbourne, Goldsmid, Central Hove, South Portslade

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report introduces the Mini-Holland feasibility study currently being undertaken in West Hove (Wish & Westbourne wards) and outlines the study's findings and recommendations. A Mini-Holland scheme consists of transformational spending in an area to improve active and sustainable travel use.
- 1.2 In 2021 Active Travel England (ATE) looked to expand on three London Mini-Holland pilot areas (Enfield, Kingston, and Waltham Forest) and invited local authorities to submit an Expression of Interest (Eol).
- 1.3 This committee decided in July 2021 to proceed with expressing an interest for Mini-Holland, therefore a formal Eol was submitted to ATE (part of Department for Transport (DfT)) in August 2021 for the Wish & Westbourne area.
- 1.4 A total of 34 Eols were submitted nationally, with 19 areas selected to progress to the feasibility study stage, including Brighton & Hove City Council.
- 1.5 The feasibility study is currently in development and is required to be submitted to ATE by 31 March 2023. The study aims to submit a bid for implementation funding, which would deliver active travel infrastructure aligned to the Gear Change vision and meet the technical standards within Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) cycle infrastructure design; create significant placemaking improvements for the Wish & Westbourne communities; as well as supporting complementary measures including behaviour change and engagement.

- 1.6 Progression of the feasibility study is consistent with the city's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), the emerging Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5), and the citizens' Climate Assembly recommendations.
- 1.7 A successful bid would help create a significant further step change in sustainable transport and active travel provision and use in the city, and address the needs of the Climate Assembly recommendations.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Committee supports the submission of the Mini-Holland feasibility study to Active Travel England (summarised in Appendix 1) and delegates authority to officers to do so by 31 March 2023.

3. Context and background information

Background to Mini-Holland

- 3.1 A Mini-Holland is defined by DfT as: *“Mini-Hollands involve **intensive, transformational spending** on local roads and streetscapes to make them, over time, **as cycle and pedestrian-friendly as their Dutch equivalents**. This includes installation of high-quality segregated cycle lanes on main roads, low-traffic neighbourhoods and high streets, and greater roadspace allocation for people walking.”*
- 3.2 Mini-Holland therefore represents a significant opportunity to receive government grant funding and deliver large scale improvements in active travel infrastructure and complementary measures in the West Hove area. It supports the council's commitment to reduce vehicle emissions, improve mental and physical well-being, create safer streets, and invest in sustainable and active travel modes. The Mini-Holland scheme is a highly competitive process, with only a small number of the competing 19 local authorities set to receive full implementation funding.
- 3.3 In October 2022 following a competitive tender process, the council appointed consultants Jacobs, and sub-consultants Phil Jones Associates (PJA), to undertake the technical elements of the study. Both consultants involved with the study have conducted previous work on Mini-Holland schemes and similar active travel & placemaking schemes, and are therefore in a position to advise on the technical requirements needed for successful study submission. Additionally, the council commissioned Design South East (DSE) to provide independent design advice and recommendations for the study, including a design workshop and site visit, to ensure the status quo is challenged by subject matter experts in the field and therefore a robust study is submitted.
- 3.4 It is important to note that the term 'Mini-Holland' is one used by ATE and though we are currently using this terminology in relation to the study, this would not be used for the programme itself should funding be secured. For example in the three London area examples to date, each had a distinct name and branding as part of the programme, none of which were called

Mini-Holland (programme names for the London Mini-Holland examples were: Go Cycle (Kingston), Walk Cycle Enjoy (Waltham Forest) and Cycle Enfield (Enfield)). It is envisaged that a name for the programme would be created in conjunction with the local community as the plans for the programme develop further.

Relevant Policies and Schemes

- 3.5 The feasibility study incorporates and responds to several relevant national and local policies and schemes. Additionally, scheme infrastructure design will need to be compliant with central government requirements.
- 3.6 The government released the 'Gear Change' vision document in July 2020; this sets out the national ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choice for short journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The accompanying Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) sets out a step-change in how local authorities must deliver cycling improvements. To qualify for any government funding, local authority schemes must adhere to the design principles set out in LTN 1/20, which among other things sets out the need to design cycling improvements along direct routes and to physically separate cyclists from both traffic and pedestrians where possible on busy routes.
- 3.7 Key recommendations from the Brighton & Hove Climate Assembly (2020) are for the creation of healthier low traffic / pedestrianised communities, that the council should actively consult and engage with the community, the introduction of mobility hubs (a mobility hub is a recognisable place which provides and connects up different types of travel, like cycle hire, stations, parking and transport information), and that cyclists should be prioritised over cars through well-designed dedicated cycling networks that are safe and practical for day-to-day use as well as leisure.
- 3.8 The council has begun to develop Local Transport Plan (LTP) 5. The emerging plan sets out several proposed interventions falling within six transport priority areas including:
 - Create an inclusive and integrated transport system
 - Reduce car use
 - Develop streets and places that encourage and enable active travel
 - Promote and facilitate the use of low and zero emission vehicles
 - Increase public transport use
 - Promote and use technology to reduce and manage travel
- 3.9 The council approved the city's first LCWIP in March 2022 in order for the council to strategically plan for improvements to the active travel network. The LCWIP aims to improve the active travel network, promote active travel and enhance links between Brighton & Hove and neighbouring areas. Wider benefits of the plan include greater connectivity, equality of opportunity, and improved public health and overall quality of life for residents. It will also help meet the challenge of becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030.

- 3.10 The following elements of the council's LCWIP feature within the feasibility study area, which formed the basis of putting forward the Eol (which was successful in securing funding for the feasibility study).
- Priority Strategic Route for improvement: A259
 - Priority Strategic Route for improvement: New Church Road
 - Priority Strategic Route for improvement: Sackville Road / Hove Street
 - Strategic Route for improvement: Portland Road
 - Strategic Route for improvement: Boundary Road / Station Road
 - Area-based treatment: Poet's Corner area
- 3.11 There is therefore a strong strategic case for investing in the area via the approved LCWIP which commits in principle to improvements to the above routes and areas.
- 3.12 There are also existing regeneration schemes in the area such as Kingsway to the Sea, which will benefit from transport improvements to the wider area for those visiting new and improved attractions on the seafront.

Existing Transport Network

- 3.13 An audit of the existing network was undertaken by Jacobs and PJA, identifying the study area's walking and cycle porosity levels (which tests connections between areas' movement cells), permeability levels (how many clear routes run through the areas' movement cells), and key severance features and locations). At present, current cycling and walking porosity levels for the area are poor and require significant improvement. Data has also been analysed to establish levels of car, van, and cycle ownership, along with percentages of residents who travel to work by sustainable and non-sustainable modes. While the percentage of residents using sustainable travel modes for the area is high, access to adequate active travel network facilities remains low when considering national design standards for infrastructure.
- 3.14 Identification of current travel routes through the area have been established through previous and newly commissioned traffic counts, vehicle flow (telematics) data, and cycle and pedestrian (Strava) journey data. Significant levels of through-traffic on the major east-west routes, the boundary north-south roads, and the level crossing and Olive Road bridge to the west have been identified.
- 3.15 Pedestrian and cycling collision data highlights several clusters of collision 'hot spots' within local centres and high streets, particularly in the areas surrounding Portslade station and Portland Road high street.
- 3.16 The suitability of the study area for Mini-Holland investment focuses on the compact street layout of the area, with the compact design and local centres providing an attractive and walkable neighbourhood. The area has excellent public transport links as it is well-served by bus routes, Portslade and

Aldrington train stations within the study area and Hove station within walking distance nearby.

- 3.17 Generous street dimensions within the area generally are ideal for active travel infrastructure development, with a significant number of related schemes and measures due to be delivered within the study area and immediate vicinity. Central to the development of the scheme outcomes are the incorporation of and accessibility to the Kingsway to the Sea regeneration project, development of the LCWIP routes and areas, Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), and the Hove station area masterplan.
- 3.18 The feasibility study will be assessed by ATE, categories to be scored include network development, permeability, coverage of existing and potential active travel routes, identification of 'rat-runs', boundary treatments, internal treatments, placemaking and engagement practice. It is expected that some of these categories will show improvement between existing infrastructure and infrastructure development possible within the area.

Study findings and recommendations

- 3.19 A report containing significant levels of data for the area has been prepared, and analysis of this as well as stakeholder feedback (see Section 5 of this report and Appendix 2) informs the underlying basis for suggested improvements. A draft summary report has been prepared; this will form the basis of what is submitted to ATE by 31 March 2023.
- 3.20 The summary reports covers an overview of the work on the feasibility study to date, including setting out the vision for the Mini-Holland programme, the case for change, network development, indicative proposals, community stakeholder engagement and the economic case.
- 3.21 The case for change in the area focuses on the compact street layout with a layout suitable for active travel, generous dimensions of east-west routes, excellent public transport connections, existing highway safety issues (particularly for vulnerable road users), opportunities to address severance, building on existing levels of active travel use, existing and planned projects in the area, and initial indications of positive support from stakeholders engaged in the process so far.
- 3.22 In terms of identifying issues with the current network, this has revealed poor quality facilities for active travel across the area for example poor pavement surface quality, high severance in the area notably from the railway line which restricts north-south movements, poor coverage of existing facilities eg crossings, gaps in provision of safe and high quality active travel facilities, and vehicle rat-running through the area north-south.
- 3.23 The study recommends taking forward initial concepts including the development of active travel improvements, signposted active travel routes, placemaking improvements, area-based treatments, and public transport and active travel priority measures. A map displaying initial concepts can be found within the summary report (Appendix 1). These concepts are for bid

submission purposes and will develop further in conjunction with stakeholder and public consultation and engagement, and through future decisions by this committee.

- 3.24 Key to the Mini-Holland approach is community involvement and engagement, therefore this features as a key component of the proposed programme.
- 3.25 The study recommends that approximately £20m of funding should be sought from ATE for transformational active travel improvements to the area. The economic case for change has indicated that the proposed programme has a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.15:1, meaning that for every £1 spent on the programme, there is a predicted benefit of £2.15.
- 3.26 Should implementation funding be secured, the development of projects and schemes will return to committee through several phases of development.

Resource Implications

- 3.27 Resourcing of the Mini-Holland bid has been covered by the grant from ATE which has principally funded the technical consultancy support as well as independent design support from DSE.
- 3.28 Should the Mini-Holland bid be successful, the programme includes resourcing for a team of officers to run the programme including engagement and consultation. The funding sought also allows for resourcing of design improvements as well as their construction.
- 3.29 Should the Mini-Holland bid not be successful, the Mini-Holland will not proceed. However, some scheme elements may be taken forward as stand-alone projects, subject to securing suitable funding and resource for successful delivery.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The success of the council's original Expression of Interest to undertake feasibility demonstrates that the council's case for a Mini-Holland has met initial ATE criteria and has an opportunity to secure multi-million pound investment in the area. However, the alternative option is to not proceed with the submission of the Mini-Holland feasibility study to ATE.
- 4.2 In this instance the funding opportunity would be lost and it is possible that the feasibility study funding (£78,947) would need to be returned to ATE. Significant officer resource has also been spent developing the Mini-Holland proposal to this point, in conjunction with community stakeholder and ward councillor engagement in this area.
- 4.3 It is therefore recommended to proceed with submission of the feasibility study in order to ensure best success at securing funding for the area, which will be used to develop proposals in conjunction with and for the local community.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 ATE have required stakeholder engagement as part of the feasibility study but have specified that public consultation is not appropriate at this early stage of scheme development. Should implementation funding be secured, full public consultation and stakeholder engagement will be carried out throughout the scheme development to ensure community buy-in to the Mini-Holland programme.
- 5.2 Stakeholder engagement has been carried out to inform the feasibility study, this has taken the form of:
- **Ward member briefings** - July 2022 and December 2022
 - **Early engagement meetings with key stakeholders** – autumn 2022
 - **Internal officer workshops across a range of council areas** – December 2023
 - **Stakeholder workshop** - January 2023
 - **Design workshop** - January 2023
 - **Peter Kyle MP briefing** – February 2023
- 5.3 These stakeholder engagement activities explained the background and context of Mini-Holland schemes and the feasibility study, and some of the data collection conducted, and to seek feedback and input to shape the feasibility study prior to submission to ATE. Stakeholder feedback is summarised in Appendix 2, this included both broad comments on the nature of improvements needed and how further work could be conducted with the community, and specific comments about particular routes or areas within the study area and how / why they needed to be improved.
- 5.4 ATE have required stakeholder engagement as part of the feasibility study but have specified that public consultation is not appropriate at this early stage of scheme development. Should implementation funding be secured, it is important to emphasise that full public consultation and stakeholder engagement will be carried out throughout the scheme development to ensure community buy-in to the Mini-Holland programme and the detail of schemes as they develop.
- 5.5 Should full implementation funding be secured from ATE, community buy-in will be a key feature of each stage of the programme development. The Mini-Holland approach is about transformational change, intensive spending and impact in a geographically specific area, and it is vital to listen to and engage with the community in order to ensure the programme fully reflects the concerns and ideas of the community. Figure 4-4 in the summary report sets out the proposed stakeholder and community engagement stages and activities which expands on feasibility study engagement to date. Within the proposed stakeholder activities is the establishment of a Working Group to steer the programme in line with feedback from the local community.

- 5.6 The proposed Mini-Holland programme and projects within it would return to this committee for future decisions on the detail of proposals. These are not detailed at this stage as they will need to be developed in conjunction with the local community.
- 5.7 A key element of the feasibility study development has been commissioning Design South East (DSE) to provide an independent design review of the study. This should strengthen the bid and has included a review of the early data and analysis work undertaken, as well as a full day design workshop and site visit, with subject matter experts including transport planners, urban designers and architects providing their independent views on the proposed approach. This has helped inform the feasibility study. Utilisation of Design South East will also be a key feature of the proposed Mini-Holland programme.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Mini-Holland feasibility study represents a unique opportunity for transformational change for travel & transport in the west Hove area.
- 6.2 The council is one of only 19 authorities shortlisted via the feasibility study process and this process has enabled the council to develop the case for change even further, to demonstrate why investment in west Hove is needed.
- 6.3 ATE will assess feasibility studies following the submission on 31 March 2023 and the outcomes are likely to be known in the spring.
- 6.4 Should implementation funding be secured, next steps would involve working directly with the local community and ward councillors to discuss issues, opportunities and solutions and developing these further into schemes, which would come back to this committee for further decisions.
- 6.5 Should full implementation not be secured, there is potential for ATE to award funding for specific scheme elements within the bid.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The Mini-Holland feasibility study has been undertaken using the £78,947 revenue funding received from ATE following the success of the Expression of Interest. A full spend of this feasibility funding is planned. ATE have indicated that only a small number of authorities will be selected to receive full implementation funding following their assessment of the feasibility studies for the 19 areas.
- 7.2 The Mini-Holland feasibility study proposes an approximately £20m programme for the funding of active travel improvements in the west Hove area. This would include both capital and revenue expenditure over a seven-year period from 2023/24 if the bid is successful. This sum would cover all scheme costs including consultation & engagement, staffing, scheme implementation (capital and revenue) and monitoring.

- 7.3 Should the Mini-Holland bid not be successful, the Mini-Holland will not proceed. However, some scheme elements may be taken forward as stand-alone projects, subject to securing suitable funding and resource for successful delivery.
- 7.4 There is potential to enhance the scheme through match funding for which decisions would come back to a future meeting of this committee.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 23/02/23

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with supporting the submission of the feasibility study. Any relevant legal implications will be considered when individual schemes are brought forward for implementation.

Name of lawyer consulted: Katie Kam Date consulted (23/02/2023):

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The provision of extensive infrastructure improvements for active travel in the Wish & Westbourne area will enhance travel choices for residents and visitors both in the area and around the wider city, particularly those with mobility difficulties or other disabilities. Conditions for vulnerable road users will be improved.
- 9.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced for this early stage of the Mini-Holland programme.
- 9.3 Should implementation funding be secured, specific projects taken forward from the programme will be subject to design and consultation and will require further Equalities Impact Assessments. The programme-level Equalities Impact Assessment will also be updated regularly as the work progresses. The council must ensure that when schemes are designed, elements of a scheme do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, and must consider their duty to make reasonable adjustments anticipating the needs of those with protected characteristics.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The Mini-Holland programme proposes transformational change in relation to active travel infrastructure and behaviour change initiatives.
- 10.2 Improvements for active travel in Wish and Westbourne will enable higher levels of active travel uptake and reduce the attractiveness or need to travel by motorised transport. This will support meeting the council's environmental objectives, including those set out in the emerging LTP5 and the Sustainable Community Strategy, such as a shift towards greater use of sustainable

transport and reducing carbon emissions, as set out in the Carbon Neutral Programme.

11. Other Implications

Social Value and procurement implications

- 11.1 There are no direct implications associated with supporting the submission of the feasibility study. Should implementation funding be secured, the council's procurement procedures will be adhered to in terms of commissioning goods and services related to the implementation of the Mini-Holland programme. As part of this process social value implications will also be considered.
- 11.2 Major decisions relating to the detail of the future programme will be brought back this committee.

Crime & disorder implications:

- 11.3 There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

Public health implications:

- 11.4 Enabling greater uptake of active travel across the city will provide both long and short term benefits to the mental and physical health of our residents. This approach supports the implementation of the Brighton & Hove Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

- 1. Wish & Westbourne Mini-Holland feasibility study – summary report
- 2. Wish & Westbourne Mini-Holland feasibility study – stakeholder workshop summary

2. Background documents

- 1. Active Travel England: Mini-Holland feasibility studies – Assessment guidance for local authorities (2022)
- 2. Active Travel England: Mini-Holland feasibility outline (2022)