



Suffolk
County Council

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

SUFFOLK LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2021



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INTRODUCTION

This Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out a series of measures to achieve a transformational change in the levels of cycling and walking across the County.

Suffolk has a population of over 757,000, although it is largely a rural County almost two thirds of properties are in the urban areas.

The County town of Ipswich is a developing area with a population of approximately 180,000 within the extended built up area. Lowestoft built up area (population over 73,000) and Bury St Edmunds built up area (population over 41,000) are the next most populous towns in the County.

We need to provide a transport network that focuses on moving people quickly and efficiently using cycling and walking. Providing for those short trips within the towns and links for rural communities to their local amenities.

Creating the appropriate conditions for more cycling and walking is imperative, making it attractive and convenient and part of people's daily travel need. We have ambitious plans to change behaviours and to encourage alternatives to the use of the private car that will maximise the use of the transport network.

For the sake of the current and future generations we must tackle poor air quality and address the issues raised in the climate emergency which was declared across Suffolk by the County, District and Borough Councils during 2019. Cycling and walking benefits our mental and physical health. It is also an important factor in reducing traffic congestion, encouraging people to reduce car travel. It is therefore vital that cycling and walking are made genuine transport options for people to use for their everyday journeys.

STATISTICS FOR 2020



1.6M

OVER 1.6 MILLION WALKING, RUNNING, HIKING TRIPS IN 2020 (STRAVA METRO DATA) AN INCREASE OF 126% ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR

8 NEW MODAL FILTERS CREATING HEALTHIER STREETS



246K

OVER 246,000 CYCLE TRIPS IN SUFFOLK IN 2020 (STRAVA METRO DATA) AN INCREASE OF 76.9% ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR

10.5 KM

OF ADDITIONAL CYCLE LANES



24

DR BIKE SESSIONS

200

ADDITIONAL CYCLE PARKING SPACES

DETERMINING THE SCOPE

We have adopted a strategic approach to developing a network of active travel routes in our towns and in linking the rural population to local services. The scope of this LCWIP is therefore County wide looking to utilise the potential of the public highway and rights of way where they can provide a suitable off road route alternative. This document provides an over-arching view of the County's network beneath which we will work with the Districts and Boroughs to provide more detailed analysis at the local level.

We want people to be able to walk and cycle for their short journeys to work, shop, education and to their onward travel using bus or rail. We want to improve our transport network so that people can walk and cycle from their homes to where they want to go as easily and directly as possible. This is not just for those who already walk and cycle, but also for those who would change their mode of travel if it were more convenient and they felt it was a suitable and safe alternative.

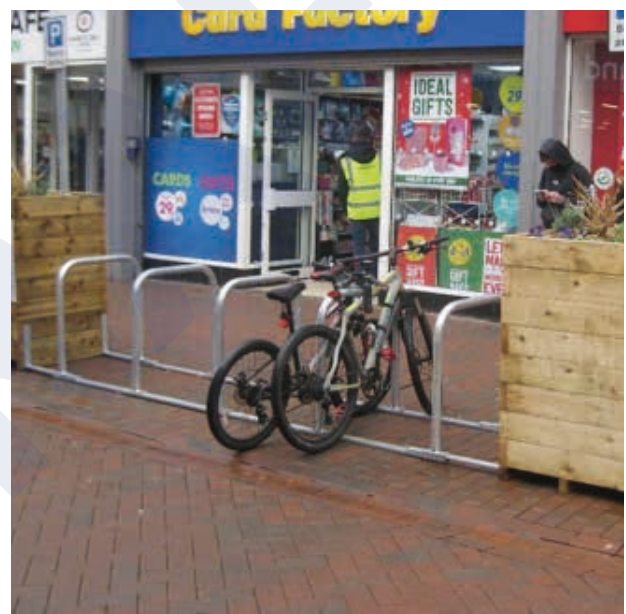
The network of cycling and walking routes will adopt cycling and walking infrastructure which is segregated from high volumes of motorised traffic and develop low trafficked streets to provide the space and the conditions to encourage more people to walk and cycle.

GATHERING INFORMATION

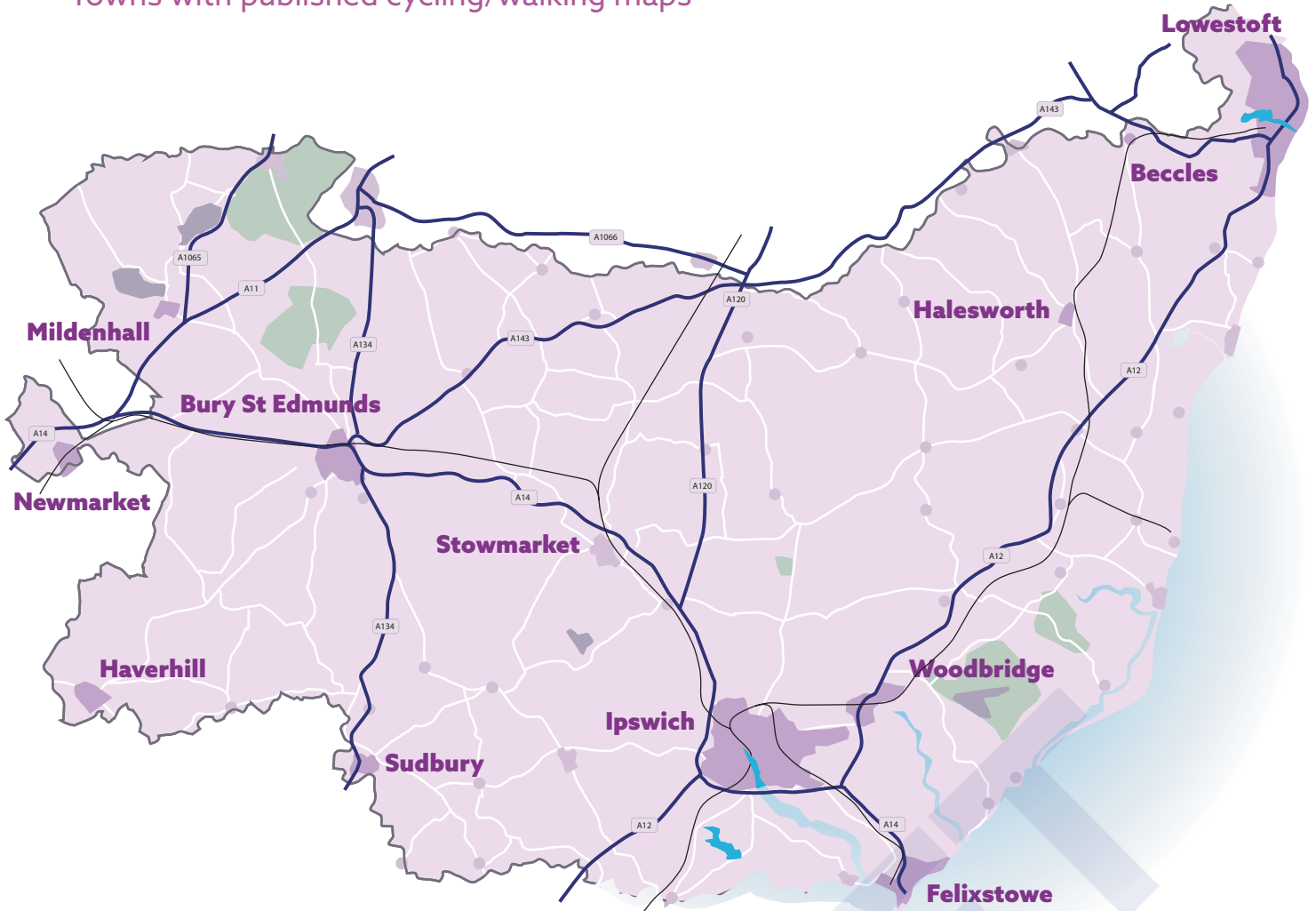
A Cycling Policy Development Panel was established in 2019 to identify and review potential cycling schemes from across Suffolk. The panel consisted of elected members and representatives from Sustrans, Public Health, Rights of Way and cycling advocates. The Panel engaged with our County Councillors requesting input from them for their locality. New schemes were captured in addition to the feedback via the SuffolkSpokes cycling portal, which had been compiled over the years from Parish, Town and District Councils and individual members of the public.

Twelve individual town cycle maps also provided a baseline for the existing infrastructure, illustrating the existing facilities and highlighting any gaps in the network. The maps provide an audit and description of the infrastructure including whether the route is traffic free or sharing the space.

These maps have been upgraded during 2020 to also include more detail on the rights of way walking routes in the area, indicating the value of the short cuts and alternatives available when not travelling by car.



Towns with published cycling/walking maps



THE BENEFITS OF CYCLING AND WALKING

There are many benefits of encouraging people to walk and cycle over use of motorised forms of transport. NICE, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, states :

"Increasing how much someone walks or cycles may increase their overall level of physical activity, leading to associated health benefits."

An increase in cycling and walking can also help to:

- Reduce car travel, leading to reductions in air pollution, carbon dioxide emissions and congestion.
- Reduce road danger and noise.
- Increase the number of people of all ages who are out on the streets, making public spaces more welcoming and providing more opportunities for social interaction.
- Provide an opportunity for everyone, including people with an impairment, to participate in and enjoy being outdoors.



AIR QUALITY

Poor air quality is considered the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK .

Studies have shown that long-term exposure to air pollution (over years or lifetimes) reduces life expectancy, mainly due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung cancer. Short-term exposure (over hours or days) to elevated levels of air pollution can also cause a range of health impacts, including effects on lung function, exacerbation of asthma, increases in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and mortality.

Public Health England reported in 2018 that the health and social care costs of air pollution in England could reach £5.3 billion by 2035 unless action is taken. In 2017 the costs were already over £42million

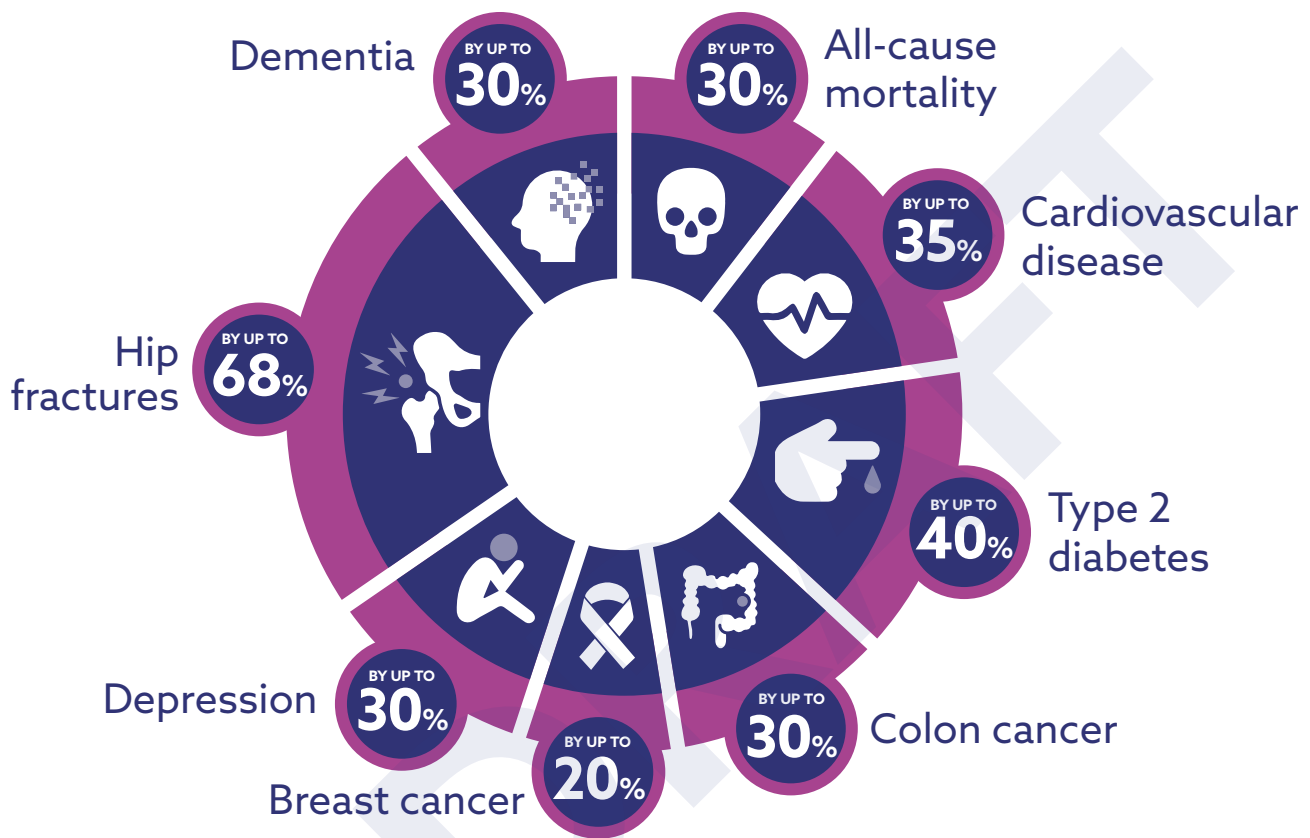
HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Public Health England states that physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking) and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone).

Around 34% of men and 42% of women are not active enough for good health. We are around 20% less active than in the 1960s, if current trends continue, the expectation is that we will be 35% less active by 2030.

Physical activity has significant benefits for both physical and mental health, it can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. Making cycling and walking part of the daily routine for travelling to the shops, work or school is a simple way to increase the amount of physical activity.

REDUCTION IN ILLNESS DUE TO INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Source: Public Health England guidance - Physical activity: applying All Our Health

NETWORK PLANNING FOR CYCLING

CRITERIA

A methodology was developed during the Cycling Policy Development Panel to allow cycle routes to be evaluated for their role within the network and their potential to deliver more cycle trips. The process allows a relative ranking of schemes and the opportunity for additional schemes to be slotted into the prioritised listing. While all proposals were captured and evaluated, the results focussed attention on the towns which presented the greatest opportunity to grow the numbers cycling, given the more compact network of streets and the greater population density. The list of prioritised schemes this is now also available to inform highways mitigation for future housing or commercial developments in urban and rural locations across the County.

METHODOLOGY

The list of existing schemes for an area was plotted onto a map to illustrate their distribution.

A "tube map" was produced for the towns, using origin and destination data to show direct desire lines across the towns. Using the "tube map" concept, a representation of the town was developed showing the direct routes, to help identify the key corridors.

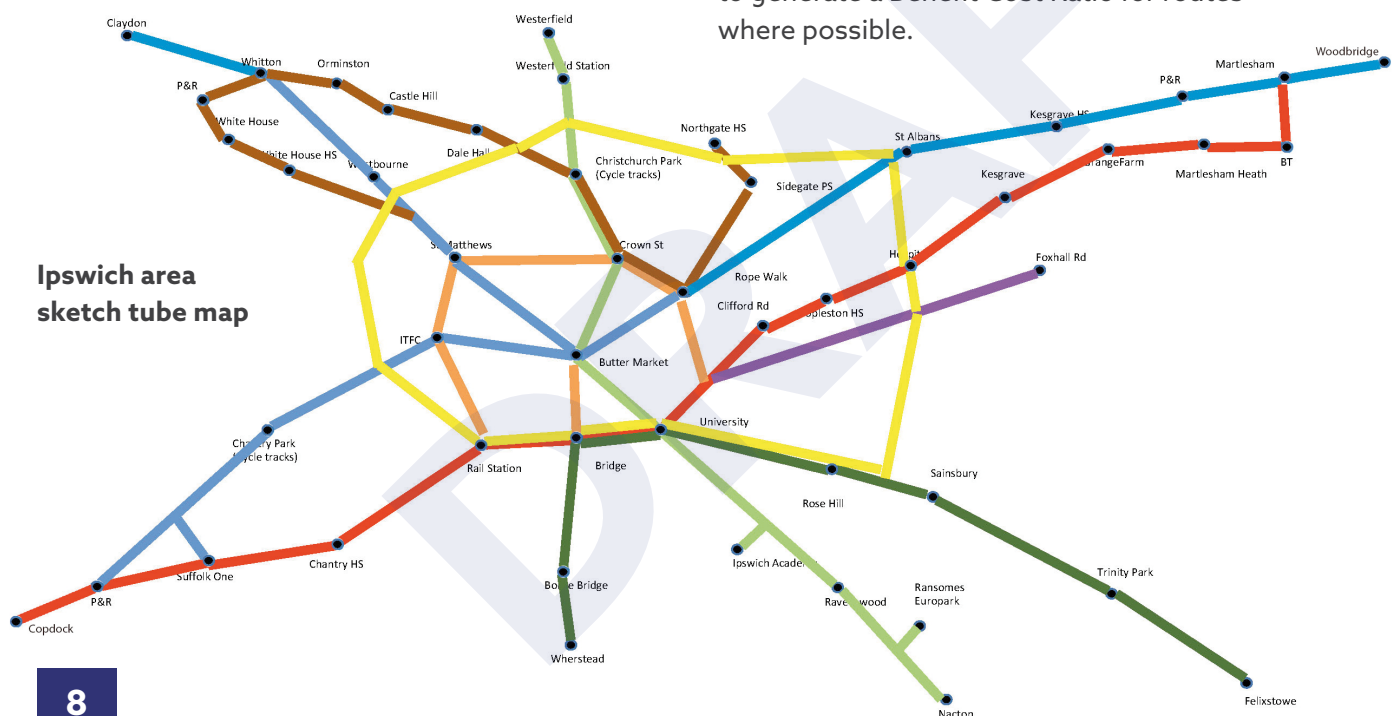
A check was made of the potential schemes against the key routes, aligning schemes on the routes within the highway network. Using the plots of schemes and the tube map, these were consolidated into corridors and any schemes outside of corridors were investigated to see if they provided value to the overall network.

The Propensity to Cycle Toolkit and Strava data is used to determine the current usage and the potential to increase the numbers of cyclists, and a consideration of the deliverability were captured for each scheme.

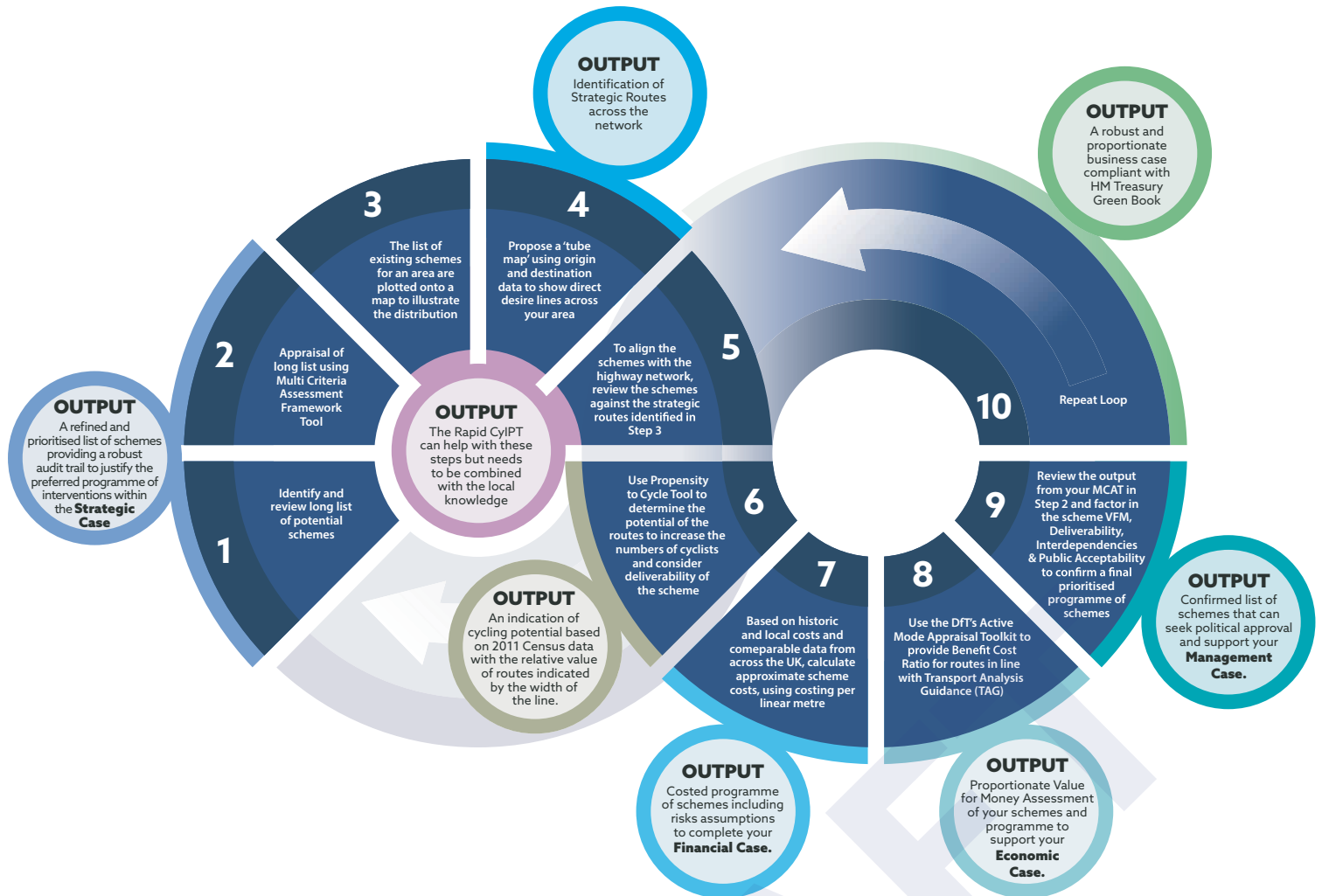
Approximate scheme costs were calculated, using a costing per linear metre.

The Active Mode Appraisal Tool was then used to generate a Benefit Cost Ratio for routes where possible.

Ipswich area
sketch tube map



STEPS IN THE METHODOLOGY



NETWORK PLANNING FOR WALKING

CRITERIA

Our cycle maps for the 12 key towns of Suffolk have been updated so that they now contain the public rights of way in the town with links to neighbouring villages. These maps illustrate the walking route options which often utilise pedestrian “cut throughs”, green routes and riverside walks which are traffic free and can provide a more direct and pleasant pedestrian route.



METHODOLOGY

Following on from the experience of developing a list of cycling routes, we have followed a similar methodology in selecting walking routes. The cycling and walking maps provide details of the existing network and highlight potential new routes, highlighting the direct and traffic free options. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan and subsequent area based analysis of existing rights of way routes have captured additional potential improvements for routes which have been added to the prioritised list.

New routes and enhancements to existing routes have been costed using an estimated amount per linear metre. The estimation of the numbers using the routes can be challenging, as there is not a direct substitution for the Propensity to Cycle Tool, however Datashine provides a view of the commuter based walking trips, providing straight lines links between the output area nodes. Strava Metro data also provides a further source of information for the use of the walking routes.

PRIORITISING IMPROVEMENTS

PRIORITISED SCHEMES

The Active Mode Appraisal Tool allowed most of the schemes to build a benefit cost ratio (BCR) based on potential trips and cost. The BCR is then used to prioritise the list of schemes. Those schemes with the higher BCRs are developed further to prepare them for future funding bids (e.g. Active Travel Funding). For those with a lower BCR, these schemes remain relevant as they may benefit from local funding relating to a nearby development's transport mitigation or other specific budgets relevant to the location. Where such funding is available this will advance the priority of the scheme as the additional funding is factored in.

The evidence based methodology provided the prioritised list which was used initially in the preparation of the Active Travel Fund (2020) bids and remains available to inform future decisions.

PRIORITISED LIST

In line with the Gear Change vision we look to ensure that cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys so that the number of short car trips is greatly reduced.

The prioritised list of potential cycling and walking schemes is published online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/walkingandcycling in the background information with an outline of the scheme and an estimate of the potential costs involved. This list is updated on a regular basis to reflect amendments as some schemes are completed and others newly identified. The list contains outline proposals for cycling and walking improvement schemes across the County and is used to guide decisions on budget allocation and to help identify potential options when new funding opportunities arise.

MAKING CHANGES

The strategic schemes identified in the list will require additional design work to provide the optimum solution to achieve more cycling and walking. This can include trials of measures to reduce motorised traffic such as modal filters, these have the benefit that they can be adjusted once deployed, allowing a flexibility for the implementation based on real world experience.

When assessing schemes and reviewing designs we use an array of tools to derive scores to allow prioritisation and to check that proposed solutions will achieve their objectives.

- Walking Route Assessment Tool
- Cycling Level of Service
- Junction Assessment Tool

All the tools provide a series of criteria, which are assessed against a range conditions to indicate suitability for the experienced and inexperienced/vulnerable users. The output provides a series of scores which is used to assess the suitability of the design.

Temporary and experimental traffic orders are also used to provide opportunities to provide solutions and to see how they perform and how people react to the changes. Combined with the feedback from public engagement and consultations we can adapt solutions to make them appropriate to the individual circumstances.

INTEGRATION AND APPLICATION

POLICY INTEGRATION

The Suffolk Local Transport Plan develops the theme of the transport hierarchy placing cycling and walking and of course wheeling using mobility aids as the top priority. This is also described in the Government's Gear Change vision to ensure we put cycling and walking at the heart of transport, place-making and health policy.

The transport hierarchy

Walking and Wheeling
—
Cycling
—
Public Transport
—
Taxi / Car Share
—
Private Car

We support people to walk and cycle more by creating healthy streets, the measures include providing modal filters, low traffic neighbourhoods and amending the wait times at signalised crossings. Our aspiration is to continue and develop these measures and to develop a mini-holland approach to reduce the volume of motorised traffic on our urban residential streets to continue the growth in the numbers cycling and walking.

We also promote behaviour change to encourage people to adopt cycling and walking and to make use of the physical infrastructure. A range of initiatives and campaigns are used to promote cycling and walking. These include cycle skills training, travel planning and working with schools, housing developers and businesses to reduce the day to day reliance on cars. We have partnered with Love to Ride to promote behaviour change across Suffolk using their challenges and incentives. We look to work with our District and Borough colleagues to encourage behaviour change.



This LCWIP supports the School Streets and Play Streets initiatives, to ensure schools to have the ability to have a school street and for local communities to provide healthier streets.

Our Green Access Strategy (Rights Of Way Improvement Plan) provides information on the opportunities to make greater use of the rights of way network to help people get around by foot and bicycle, especially in the more rural areas. This integrates with our LCWIP's objectives and provides input into the priority list as the right of way improvements are identified.

The prioritised list of cycling and walking schemes is published on the Suffolk County Council website and shared with colleagues in the District and Borough Councils.

Further schemes are expected to be identified and existing priorities amended or reinforced as the District/Borough Council's develop and update their own cycling and walking strategies.

This LCWIP covers the whole County, but it is recognised that more detailed work is required at a local level. It is proposed that we will work with the District and Borough Councils to provide focused LCWIPs, building on existing work such as the East Suffolk Council's developing Cycling and Walking Strategy and the Ipswich Borough Council's Cycling Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.

Our LCWIP has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening to ensure the protected characteristics as identified in the 2020 Equalities Act are treated fairly and equitably in the provision of cycling and walking infrastructure and services.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of schemes is factored into their design and development. Counters are deployed to help assess the use of new facilities. We are collecting data from cycle counters installed at point closures and from automated traffic counters. On street traffic monitoring is also being introduced to capture automated on street real time transport movements using the latest technology.

Consultations are also used during the trial and design stages of schemes to understand the public response to the changes and the associated engagement process.

The feedback from the consultations allows us to review and modify the trials and for our designs to provide an optimal solution acceptable for all users of the highway network.

We have a dedicated page on our website www.suffolk.gov.uk/walkingandcycling where we publish the latest news and seek the views of the public on the measures implemented.

