



Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

# Bath & North East Somerset Active Travel Masterplan Initial Engagement



The diagram below shows how the Active Travel Masterplan fits within the family of transport documents prepared to support the New Local Plan consultation.



**Figure 1** Transport Evidence Documents



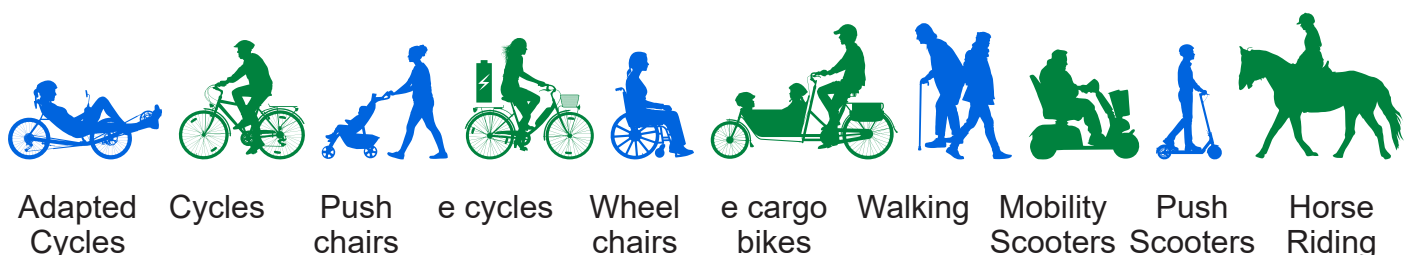
# Introduction

We need to make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choice for a lot more of our journeys. Currently, over a third of car trips across Bath and North East Somerset are less than 5km.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of walking, wheeling and cycling, or ‘active travel’ as an affordable and accessible mode of transport has become increasingly apparent over recent years. Increased active travel can help tackle some of the biggest challenges we face as a society - improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities, and tackling congestion on our roads. Bold action is needed to help create the places we want to live and work – with better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities. It will help deliver clean growth, by supporting local businesses, as well as making it more pleasant to move around and between our rural areas, towns, and city.

Work has already begun developing the planning policy we need to enable more people to travel via active modes through the delivery of the Transport and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This document sets out our approach and expectations for new developments and re-developments in relation to transport, including active travel.

The term ‘active travel’ within the Active Travel Masterplan refers to walking and cycling, as well as wheeling which includes the many other modes of wheel-based travel that supports the aims of the Active Travel Masterplan to enable and encourage a shift away from journeys being made by a private car. Active travel therefore encompasses all the various ways of travelling shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2** Active Travel Modes

**“We want – and need – to see a step-change in cycling and walking in the coming years. The challenge is huge, but the ambition is clear. We have a unique opportunity to transform the role cycling and walking can play in our transport system, and get England moving differently.”**

Gear Change  
A Bold Vision for Cycling (2020)

<sup>1</sup> Transport Delivery Action Plan for Bath - 2020 Onward. Phase 1: Current and Future Report



# What is the Purpose of the Active Travel Masterplan?

The Active Travel Masterplan will be a comprehensive plan that sets out the existing and future network of active travel infrastructure required to enable and provide for sustainable and healthy forms of transport, as well as addressing the climate emergency, reducing inequalities, improving air quality, tackling obesity and reducing traffic congestion across Bath and North East Somerset. The plan will be for all types of active travel whether it's for commuting, leisure, business or every day journeys such as travelling to a local shop, school or doctor's surgery.



The Active Travel Masterplan will support the existing Local Plan framework and will call upon those policies already included in other transport plans and strategies including the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), The Journey to Net Zero transport plan, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), and the Transport and Development SPD. These documents have set out the policy framework including what we want to achieve and why. The Active Travel Masterplan will take this a step further by identifying how we achieve this. The Plan will identify where the improvements and measures are needed to enable those people who can, make the change in their travel habits, keeping the roads clearer and improving journeys for people that have no other option than to drive. It will also establish how we can ensure that more of our roads and public spaces are able to be used by those on active modes.

By implementing infrastructure improvements and behaviour change campaigns, the measures identified in the Active Travel Masterplan will improve the safety, accessibility, and attractiveness of active travel options, while contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions from vehicular transport and the health and wellbeing of residents through supporting them to change their travel habits.



# What is the purpose of this initial engagement?

We want to make sure that the Active Travel Masterplan provides the improvements needed to give our residents and those visiting our district the genuine travel choices they deserve. To achieve this, we need your input to ensure we identify and provide the correct measures and infrastructure in the correct places to enable you to make more of your journeys via active modes where you are able to.

The primary objective of engaging our communities, key stakeholders, and experts is to ensure that the approach we are adopting for the Active Travel Masterplan is both comprehensive and reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of our residents and visitors. We are inviting you to participate in this initial engagement process to:

## Share Your Insights

We want to hear your thoughts, concerns, and ideas regarding active travel. Whether you're someone who doesn't regularly travel on foot or cycle, a regular cyclist, an avid walker, a disabled person, a public transport user, or someone interested in sustainable mobility, your input is invaluable.

## Identify Priorities

Help us identify key areas across the district where active travel initiatives are needed. Your input will guide us in determining where investments should be made to create safer and more accessible routes for walking and cycling.

## Shape the Masterplan

Your feedback will contribute to the refinement and development of the Active Travel Masterplan. We aim to make this document an accurate reflection of our community's values and needs.

It is important to note that this engagement represents just the beginning of a collaborative process. The Active Travel Masterplan is a dynamic document, and your participation in this initial engagement is the first step. We understand that your perspectives may evolve, and additional insights may emerge as the Masterplan progresses.

There will be further opportunities for you to engage and comment on the draft Active Travel Masterplan as it develops. Your continued involvement in this process is essential as we work together to make Bath and North East Somerset more sustainable, healthier, and a better place to live.

## How Your Comments Will Be Taken Forward:

We are committed to a transparent and inclusive engagement process ensuring that all perspectives and voices are valued and heard, creating a welcoming and diverse space for meaningful discussions. All comments received during this initial engagement process will be carefully reviewed and analysed. Your input will be instrumental in shaping the Active Travel Masterplan. Specifically, your comments will inform:

- **The Masterplan Development:** We will consider your feedback when developing the draft version of the Active Travel Masterplan, ensuring that it reflects the needs and priorities of our community.
- **Implementation Strategies:** Your comments will help guide the development of specific projects and initiatives, helping us determine where to allocate resources and efforts most effectively.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Concerns and suggestions related to safety and accessibility for active travel users will be addressed to create a more inclusive and equitable environment.

The following sections in this engagement document aim to provide information on various issues and options related to the Active Travel Masterplan. The engagement questions are designed to gather your feedback and insights on these areas.





# The need for Active Travel

Transport currently accounts for around a third of all carbon emissions within Bath and North East Somerset, mostly from cars. The majority of households living in Bath and North East Somerset council have access to a car, which offers them the flexibility and convenience they value.

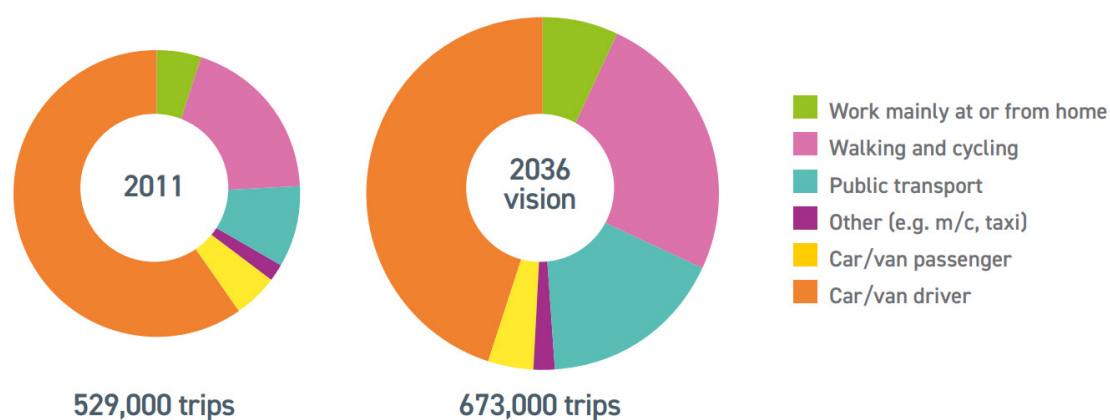
However, this reliance and dependency on cars, in some cases, may have resulted in people feeling somewhat limited in their transport options. We want to increase travel choices, to make it easier for those of us who can, to leave our cars at home more of the time, making access easier for those who have no choice but to use a car.

In March 2019, Bath and North East Somerset council declared a Climate Emergency, which included a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. To combat the challenge of climate change we must act to reduce the number of journeys we currently undertake by car. This is the only way that we will guarantee becoming carbon neutral in transport terms in the long term. The long-term solution therefore needs to be ensuring that those people that are able, can make more of their journeys on foot, by cycling or by public transport. The UK government has set a number of challenging targets for active travel levels. These include:

- the need to double the number of trips made wholly or in part by cycling, from 2013 levels, by 2025.<sup>2</sup>
- increasing the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled to 50% in 2030 and to 55% in 2035.<sup>3</sup>
- increasing the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025.<sup>4</sup>

As well as national targets there are also a number of regional and local targets that rely upon more of us using active travel for more of our journeys.

Figure 3 below shows the modal shift target from the West of England's Joint Local Transport Plan. This shows the proportion of those walking and cycling making up a greater proportion of our journeys and an overall increase in those using active travel.



**Figure 3** Joint Local Transport Plan 4 – Modal Shift Target

<sup>2</sup> DfT - Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

<sup>3</sup> DfT - The Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

<sup>4</sup> DfT - Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

Locally, emissions from transport make up 29% of Bath and North East Somerset's carbon footprint. Our Climate Emergency Strategy (2019 – 2030), identifies the scale of change needed to meet the carbon neutrality target. This includes a 25% reduction in kilometres travelled per person by car each year.

We recognise the need to develop an Active Travel Masterplan to achieve these targets and improve the health and well-being of residents. An Active Travel Masterplan will also enable us to bring forwards interventions in a coordinated manner, delivering a fully joined up network as opposed to a piecemeal approach as may have been used in the past.

We know that the current walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure across Bath and North East Somerset doesn't meet the needs of a large number of people. Many people don't have access to safe cycle routes that they can use away from traffic or safe and direct routes to walk. Reductions in car use can only come if we start making improvements to existing infrastructure as well as providing more cycle facilities, better pedestrian infrastructure and a safer active transport network that everyone can use.

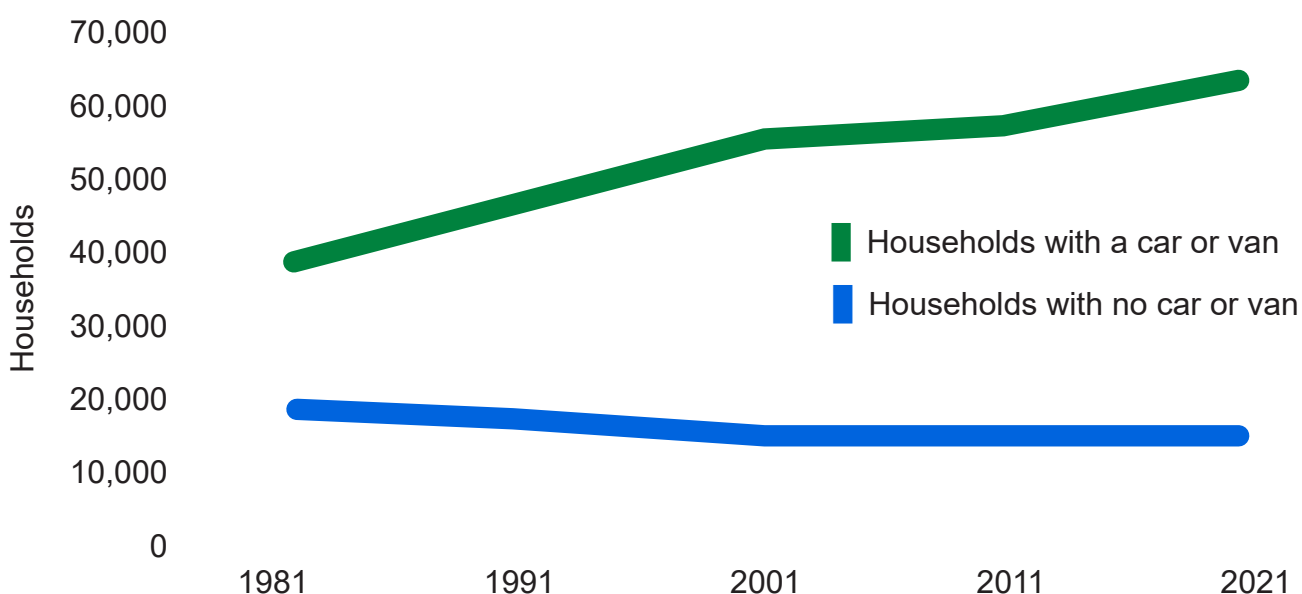
Whilst the majority of households across Bath and North East Somerset own one car, around a quarter of households currently don't have access to their own car. There are also individuals within households that own a car but don't have access to it.





For these individuals moving around the district can be incredibly difficult with limited walking, wheeling, and cycling, and public transport facilities.

This issue has become a lot worse in recent times due to the cost-of-living crisis. The average cost of running a car is currently around £370 per month<sup>5</sup> making it unaffordable for many households. Active travel is a much cheaper form of transport and is therefore becoming increasingly important as it provides a real alternative.



**Figure 4** Bath and North East Somerset Council car availability data

The Active Travel Masterplan is an opportunity to set out the improvements needed to enable these residents to travel and access key services and opportunities by active travel modes.

We need to ensure that the active travel network meets the needs of those disabled individuals who are unable to walk and cycle by ensuring that the infrastructure and improvements we provide are inclusive and allow everyone to use them. For many disabled people across the district cycling and walking is not an option and their only means of getting around is by car. Providing more and better active travel infrastructure will mean that the roads are less congested for those individuals for whom the car or public transport is their only option for travel.

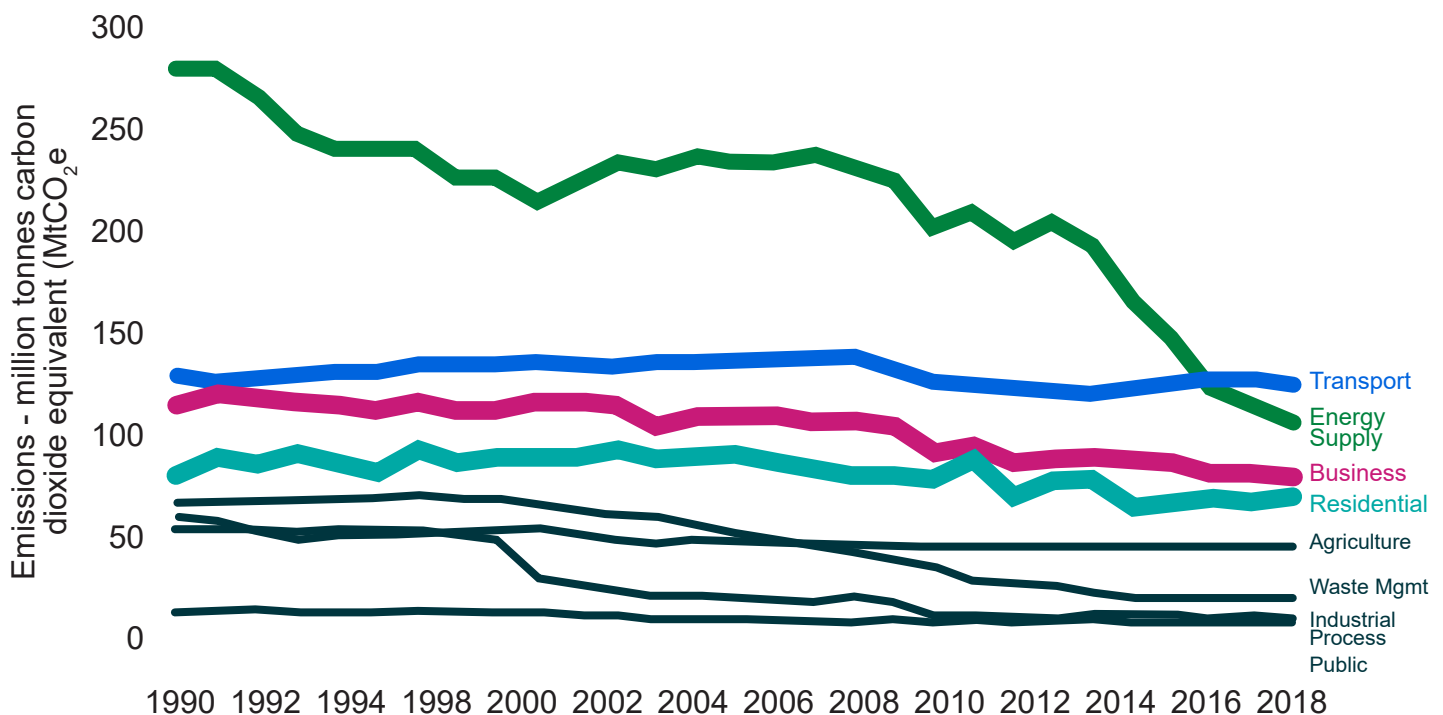
<sup>5</sup> Household expenditure on motoring for households owning a car, by gross income decile group, UK , financial year ending 2018

# Benefits of Active Travel

## Addressing the Climate Emergency

Active travel offers a sustainable solution to address the climate emergency by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the environmental impacts associated with transportation.

Unlike many other sectors that have made significant strides in adopting cleaner technologies and practices, the transportation sector has often fallen short of meeting climate targets<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 5** UK emissions of greenhouse gases by sector 1990 to 2018 – institute for Government  
(<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/article/explainer/uk-net-zero-target>)

Despite advancements in electric vehicles, the transport sector still relies heavily on fossil fuels, therefore making a substantial contribution to overall global emissions. In contrast, active travel enables zero-emission modes of transport and reduces the need for motorised vehicles, thereby decreasing congestion and pollution. Active travel modes also have a much lower level of embodied carbon which is the carbon associated with materials and the manufacturing process. To effectively combat the climate crisis, a greater emphasis must be placed on promoting and investing in active travel as a practical transport mode.

**Over 4 in 10 women  
(42%) and 1 in 3 men  
(34%) in England are  
not active enough for  
good health**

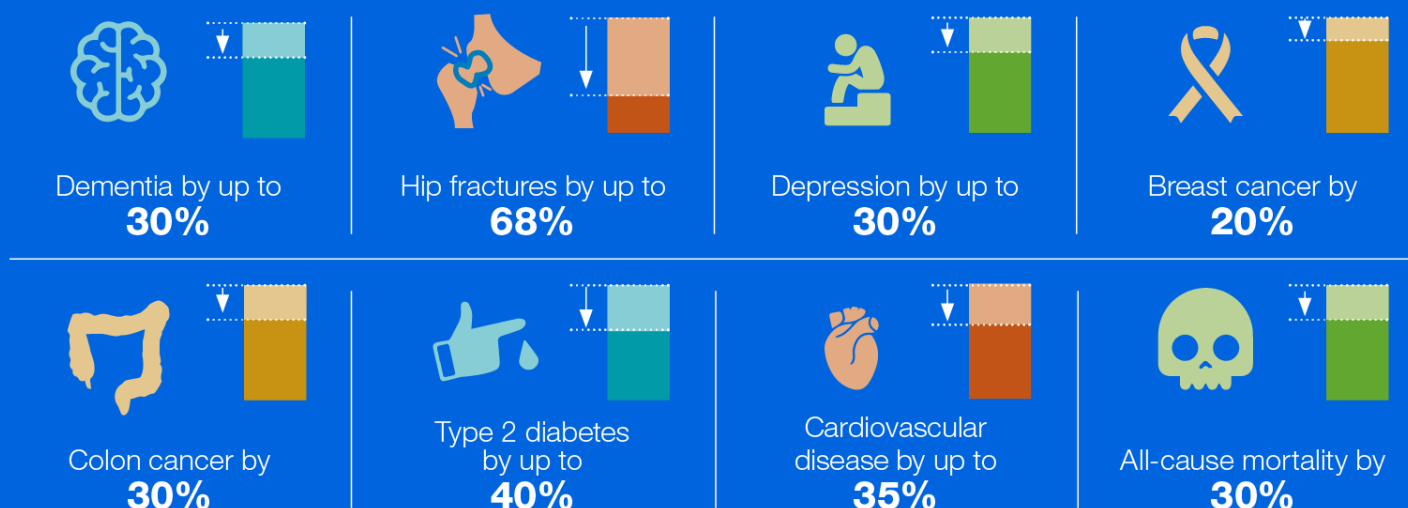
Public Health England -  
Cycling and Walking for  
Individual and Population  
Health Benefits



## Healthy People

Walking and cycling are excellent ways to incorporate exercise into a daily routine, benefiting both physical and mental health. It can help to prevent and manage over twenty chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. It is also linked to overall health benefits, such as reduced injury risk, improved quality of life, increased productivity and reduced absenteeism at work.

### Regular physical activity reduces your risk of...



**Figure 6** Health benefits of active travel

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).<sup>7</sup>

Bath and North East Somerset council are one of eleven local authorities to have been awarded funding from the Department of Transport for a three-year pilot into social prescribing. Social prescribing is a means of enabling health professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. This includes promoting activities such as walking or cycling as a means to address various health and social issues. This innovative practice recognises that physical activity and community engagement play crucial roles in overall health. By prescribing active travel, healthcare professionals aim to encourage patients to incorporate walking or cycling into their daily routines, fostering not only physical fitness but also mental well-being.

Increased reliance on the car over the last fifty years has contributed to a major decline in walking and cycling and an increase in obesity levels. Keeping active is critical in helping address current levels of obesity. The prevalence of obesity in the UK has increased dramatically over the last 25 years with Britain now being the most obese nation in Europe. The majority of the adult population (61.9%) and 28% of children aged 2-15 are either overweight or obese and it is estimated that, without clear action, these figures will rise to almost nine in ten adults and two-thirds of children by 2050.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking

<sup>8</sup> Healthy Weight Strategy Bath and North East Somerset 2015 to 2020

Walking and cycling have also been shown to help manage stress, with studies finding that commuters who combine public transport with active travel suffering less stress. Recent research has found that active commuting is positively associated with wellbeing and is associated with reduced risk of feeling constantly under strain and being unable to concentrate compared to car travel.<sup>9</sup> Physical activity can also have a huge impact on our mental wellbeing, even a short burst of 10 minutes' brisk walking increases mental alertness, energy and positive mood and participation in regular physical activity can increase self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety.

## Local Economy Boost

Making areas more pleasant and more accessible to those on foot and cycles has been shown to have a beneficial economic effect on local businesses. Well-planned improvements to public spaces within town and city centres have been shown to boost commercial trading by up to 30%,<sup>10</sup> whilst the Department for Transport estimates that active travel has a high benefit to cost ratio returning £430 for every £100 spent.<sup>11</sup> This is significantly higher than the benefit to cost ratio of highways schemes. For instance, the fifty-six committed major enhancements schemes included within the Road Investment Strategy returned only £220 for every £100 spent.<sup>12</sup>

There is also compelling evidence that pedestrians and cyclists spend more than people arriving by motorised transport. A study in Bristol found that retailers on a local high street overestimated the proportion of shoppers arriving by car by almost double at 41% compared with the actual proportion of 22%. In fact, over half of the shoppers had arrived there by foot, and greater proportions had arrived by bus and cycle than those estimated by retailers. The retailers also underestimated how far pedestrians had travelled to get to the high street; over 60% lived within one mile, and pedestrians generally visited more shops than those arriving by car.<sup>13</sup>



9 Working Together to Promote Active Travel: A briefing for local authorities, PHE

10 The Pedestrian Pound 2018

11 UK Parliament - House of Commons Committee report - Active Travel in England

12 Highways England - Economic Analysis of the Second Road Period - July 2020

13 (Sustrans. 2006. Shoppers and how they travel. Information Sheet LN02. Sustrans, Bristol)



## Connectivity and Community Cohesion

Active travel plays a crucial role in improving accessibility and connectivity both within and between communities. Walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure enables people to move around more easily, connecting neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces as well as our green spaces, waterways and recreational areas. This increased connectivity enhances accessibility to essential services, public transportation, and social opportunities. Active travel also promotes inclusivity by providing accessible options for individuals who may not have access or be able to use motorised vehicles.



## Inclusion and Equality

The cost of running a car is unaffordable for many people, putting them at risk of becoming socially excluded and effectively marginalised. Likewise, for some low-income families, the lack of a realistic alternative has forced some into owning a car which places a large financial burden on them. Transport is the single largest household expense (excluding mortgage repayments) for rural families, and the second largest for urban ones. Transport costs therefore contribute significantly to poverty, pushing over five million people, or 8% of the population, into poverty.<sup>14</sup> Walking is the most affordable form of transport. Likewise, cycling costs are lower than many other transport modes, making it affordable to most income groups.

There is currently a gender imbalance in active travel uptake, reflecting disparities in accessibility, safety concerns, and societal expectations. In England, females on average made 18% more walking trips than males but males made almost three times as many cycling trips than females and cycled on average over three times the distance.<sup>15</sup> There is a pressing need to better understand and address the current gender inequality in active travel take-up in order to create inclusive and equitable urban environments.

Active travel also offers significant benefits for children and young people, encompassing both physical and mental well-being. Engaging in regular active travel not only promotes a healthier lifestyle by reducing the risk of obesity, but it also promotes overall physical development. Moreover, active travel contributes to the development of independence and mobility skills in youngsters. As children navigate their environment on foot or by bike, they cultivate a sense of self-reliance and confidence, learning to assess and manage risks. This increased independence not only boosts their self-esteem but also instils a sense of responsibility. Overall, embracing active travel as a routine part of daily life for children and young people not only benefits their immediate health but also lays the foundations for it to become a normal everyday activity that continues into adulthood.

<sup>14</sup> Getting the measure of transport poverty - Social Market Foundation - Nov 2023

<sup>15</sup> DfT - Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: Demographic differences in walking and cycling (Aug 2023)

Good active travel links can help tackle social exclusion by improving affordable access to jobs, schools, facilities and opportunities, particularly benefiting those on lower incomes who rely on walking, and disabled people who are challenged by poor infrastructure. In short, improving public realm and better provision and access to walking, wheeling and cycling helps to increase social equity.



Whatever form active travel takes, there are many positive health, economic and environmental benefits from using active travel, as the diagram shows.



**Figure 7** Wider Benefits of Active Travel



# Active Travel and the Local Plan

Bath and North East Somerset Council (Bath and North East Somerset council) is in the process of developing a new Local Plan for the district. This will establish the planning framework for Bath and North East Somerset up to 2042. It will contain a vision, strategy, and policies to guide and manage how the district grows and changes over the next 20 years, and how planning applications for new developments are decided.

The current ways in which we travel will not get us to carbon neutrality by 2030. The way in which we plan and provide new houses, community facilities and jobs has a material impact on the way in which people choose to travel. Planning for people results in developments and places for people, however planning for cars results in places that are dominated by cars. The new Local Plan is an opportunity that must be seized to make a real difference in how we provide for our journeys to enable people to travel by more sustainable and active modes of transport including walking, wheeling and cycling. Failure to seize this opportunity will result in more of our communities being dependent on vehicles that continue to emit harmful emissions.

In line with Bath and North East Somerset council's Corporate Strategy, one of the central aims of the new Local Plan is to respond to the challenge of the climate emergency and facilitate the goal of net zero carbon by 2030. Another key issue that the new Local Plan seeks to address is to set an approach to sustainable transport and movement which facilitates behavioural change and provide key facilities within walking, wheeling or cycling distance. This approach will also help influence existing trips to be undertaken by sustainable modes as well as just those generated by new development.

The new Local Plan is a critical tool in helping deliver the active travel infrastructure needed, not just for those developments contained in the plan but for the wider community. To ensure that those dedicated and protected routes identified in the Active Travel Masterplan are not compromised or prejudiced by development, existing and proposed active travel routes will be safeguarded through the Local Plan. Any development proposals that would reduce, sever or adversely affect their delivery, use or attractiveness, or prejudice the planned development of the network will not be permitted unless acceptable provision is made to mitigate these effects such as through its diversion or replacement. The new Local Plan will also require developers to demonstrate that any alternative provision is deliverable, convenient and safe.

The Active Travel Masterplan will play a pivotal role, serving as a key pillar of our transport strategy for the Local Plan. The sites outlined in the Local Plan are instrumental in realising the Active Travel Masterplan and advancing our efforts to decarbonise our transport sector.

# Active Travel Plan Vision and Objectives

The Active Travel Masterplan, guided by a progressive vision and a set of ambitious objectives, seeks to transform our communities into well connected vibrant, healthy, and environmentally sustainable spaces, resilient to climate change. This section outlines the overarching vision and specific objectives that will shape the Plan's implementation and ultimately enhance the quality of life for all of our residents.

## Vision

Walking, wheeling and cycling will be the first choice for local everyday trips, for people of all ages and physical abilities, with our public spaces designed around people, prioritising their well-being and connection with the places they live, work, and play.

In our envisioned future, streets and pathways will be inviting and accessible, supporting an active and balanced lifestyle, reducing the need to travel by car and contributing towards carbon neutral mobility.





## Objectives

The Active Travel Masterplan is built upon a comprehensive set of objectives, each serving as a stepping stone towards realising our vision:

### Objective 1

#### Respond to the Climate Emergency

- Reduce carbon emissions from transport across Bath and North East Somerset by reducing the number of motorised journeys made across the district, particularly for short journeys.
- Improve physical connectivity by identifying the active travel connections needed to link the places people live to where they work and access key facilities including public transport for onward travel.

### Objective 2

#### Enhance Safety and Accessibility

- Create a holistic network of interconnected walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure that prioritises the safety of all users, regardless of age or ability.
- Improve the safety and the perceived safety of those travelling on foot, on cycles and other non-motorised modes of transport through improved infrastructure design and public education.

### Objective 3

#### Promote Healthy Lifestyles and Well-being

- Enable greater physical activity by making active travel the most convenient, safe, and enjoyable choice for short daily trips leading to healthier, happier communities.
- Ensure the provision of active travel options helps address physical and mental health and wellbeing, obesity rates, and respiratory illness.

### Objective 4

#### Strengthen Social Equity and Inclusivity

- Ensure that active travel is accessible to all, regardless of income, age, gender, or physical ability.
- Address historical disparities and enhance social cohesion by investing in active travel infrastructure for underprivileged and marginalised communities.

### Objective 5

#### Boost Economic Prosperity and Local Businesses

- Stimulate economic growth by making our high streets more attractive to those walking, wheeling or cycling.
- Promote economic growth through delivery of an active travel network that attracts tourism, enhances local businesses and generates employment opportunities within the community.



This Active Travel Masterplan is a dynamic route map designed to guide our communities toward a future where active travel is a normal part of everyday life. Together, we can create a healthier, more sustainable, and inclusive transport network, where people are empowered to make travel choices that suit them, connect with their surroundings, and lead fulfilling lives.



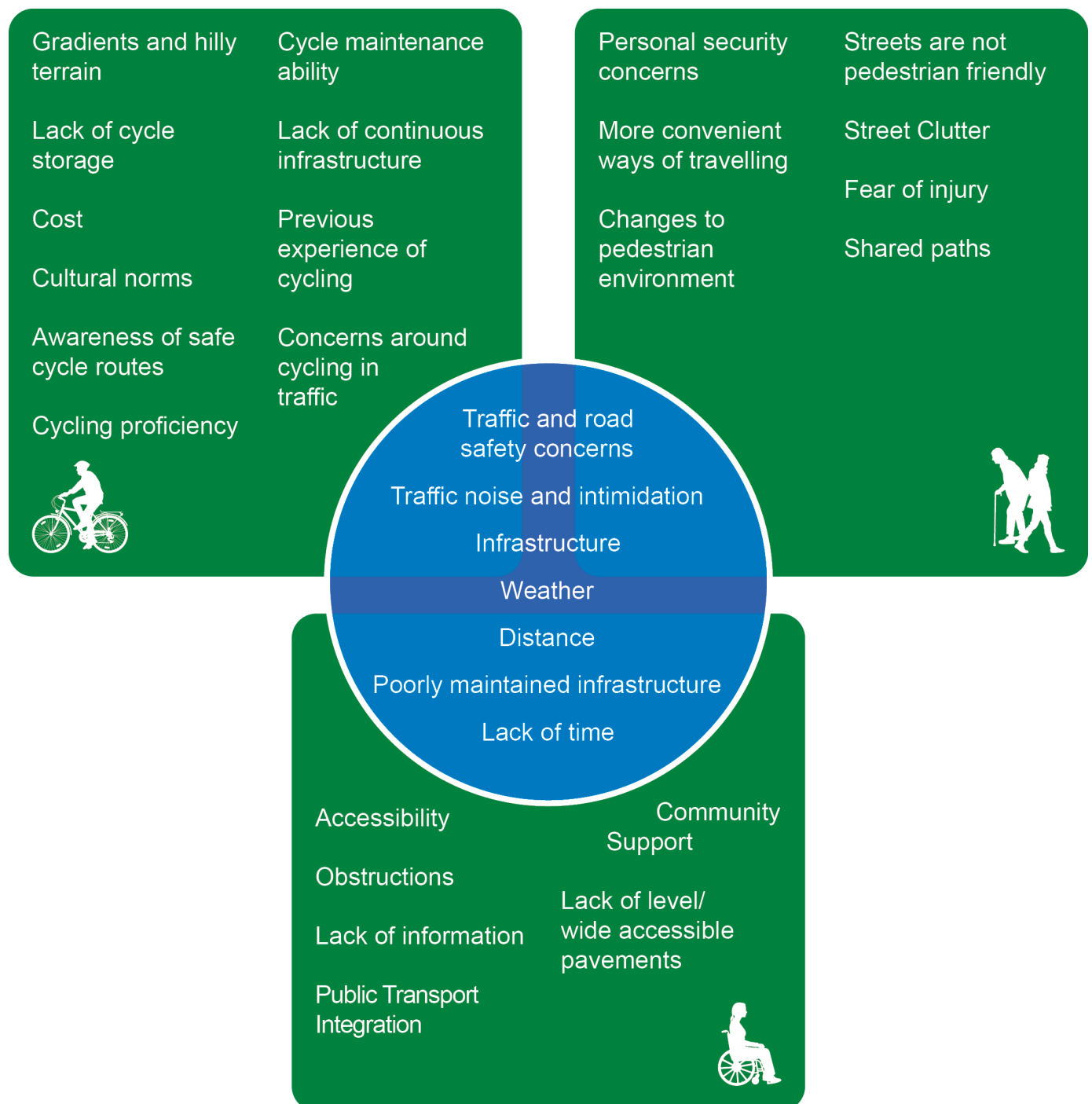


# Existing barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling

A barrier is anything that restricts or prevents someone from accessing or travelling via active modes. These can include physical, mental, age, gender, socio-economic, ethnic and religious barriers.

The first step to increasing active travel is to identify the barriers that prevent people from walking, wheeling and cycling to their destinations.

As part of this engagement process, we want to better understand what barriers currently prevent you from walking, wheeling and cycling more. Below are some that have been identified following previous discussions with our communities.



**Figure 8** Barriers to Active Travel

# Our Approach

The Active Travel Masterplan will be a comprehensive plan that sets out a network of active travel routes and connections. To achieve this, a holistic network of active travel routes will be provided across Bath and North East Somerset in an integrated, connected and accessible way to enable active travel journeys. At the heart of the Plan is sustainability, safety, inclusivity and connectivity, ensuring everyone can get to where they need to go.

The Active Travel Masterplan is designed to complement, reflect, and align with a range of plans and strategies. As a key part of the transport network, active travel will play a significant role in contributing positively to climate change, environment and health agendas, support economic growth, mitigate the transport impacts of the growth agenda, reduce congestion and help protect the district's varied but distinctive character and environment.

Our Active Travel Masterplan serves as the blueprint for the strategic development of active travel infrastructure throughout Bath and North East Somerset. Central to this masterplan is the incorporation of a versatile toolkit of measures, which will play a pivotal role in delivering the network and bringing our vision to life.

The toolkit will provide the practical means for delivering the identified active travel routes and improvements. It will encompass a wide array of measures and resources that can be tailored to the specific needs of different areas and communities. These measures will be set out in the draft Masterplan and will be split into the following four themes:

- **Infrastructure** – Measures and infrastructure improvements to create high quality active travel facilities to enhance the conditions for active travel users. Cycle infrastructure should be accessible to everyone from 8 to 80 and beyond: it should be planned and designed for everyone. Examples include school streets and safe routes to schools, raised table crossings, pedestrian priority on side roads, climate resilience measures and 20mph zones.
- **Active Travel Facilities** – Measures and facilities that sit alongside the active travel network that provide people with the means to use the active travel network. Examples include e-cycle and tricycle hire and cycle parking, as well as other transport projects being undertaken that could help support the delivery of active travel benefits such as the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme.
- **Connectivity** – Measures to improve the connectivity of walking, wheeling and cycling with other modes such as bus and rail. Examples include connections to multi modal transport hubs and better connections to bus and rail, and enhanced connectivity within and between settlements.
- **Behaviour Change/Education** – Measures that support people to start using walking, wheeling and cycling more and promote active travel and facilitate its use. This could include awareness campaigns and training for all road users, including drivers. This will help provide individuals with the necessary tools and resources to navigate and embrace our active travel network with confidence. Examples include digital information, social prescribing, consistent branding and marketing of active travel and cycle training.



By coupling our Active Travel Masterplan with this robust toolkit of measures, we aim to not only establish a comprehensive network of active travel routes but also to ensure the accessibility, safety, and convenience of these routes. Our Masterplan will serve as a guiding framework for the sustainable development of active travel infrastructure and will empower our communities to embrace the benefits of active transportation throughout Bath and North East Somerset.

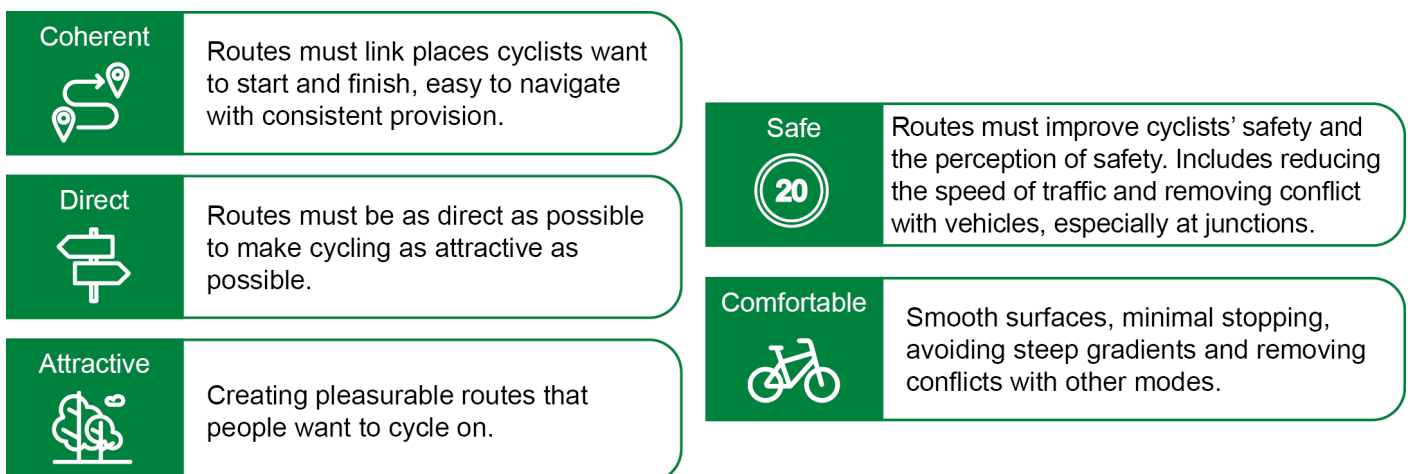
**Figure 9** Healthy Streets concept



## Active Travel Improvements

Improvements to walking and wheeling infrastructure will be designed to align closely with the principles of the “Healthy Streets” concept. This approach prioritises the well-being of residents by creating environments that promote physical activity, reduce air pollution, and enhance the overall quality of life. By integrating the Healthy Streets concept into our walking and wheeling environments, we aim to foster safe, attractive, and inclusive streetscapes that encourage active transportation, improve air quality, and create vibrant, pedestrian-friendly communities. These improvements not only benefit the physical health of individuals but also contribute to the overall health and sustainability of our urban spaces.

We recognise that cycle traffic has its own characteristics that are distinct from motor traffic and pedestrian movement and these need to be incorporated from the outset. Underpinning this is a need to ensure that our cycle improvements comply with the five core design principles laid down in the latest guidance on cycling provision (Local Transport Note 1/20). These five core principles include the following:



**Figure 10** Cycle design – five core principles

## Inter Urban Active Travel Routes

In order to promote active travel as a safe, inclusive, and effective alternative to car travel in Bath and North East Somerset, it is essential to identify and develop a comprehensive network of inter urban active travel routes that serve the diverse needs of the community. These routes have been designed to accommodate the needs of all potential users and allows people to travel between our city, towns and rural areas. Our approach has been to develop a network of active travel routes that incorporates a dual focus, a network of quick routes and a set of quiet routes. Both sets of routes are designed to enable people using all forms of active travel.

### Quick Routes

Quick active travel routes are crucial to encourage individuals to choose active travel modes as a practical alternative to the car. These routes will prioritise directness and efficiency, connecting key origins and destinations often along our main transport corridors. By offering direct routes and quick journey times, active travel becomes a competitive alternative to car use for short commuting trips, reducing congestion and environmental impacts. Quick routes are particularly beneficial for time-sensitive journeys, providing a direct, practical and time-efficient choice for residents.

For people cycling, whilst a substantial proportion of the quick routes network will be via dedicated off-road active travel routes, some sections may involve limited road usage at times, primarily where the route travels through villages and communities that lie along our main transport corridors. In these instances, we are committed to safeguarding cyclists by implementing speed reduction measures and providing dedicated cycle infrastructure wherever possible for their safety.



**Figure 11** Example of a Quick Route running alongside a main road

### Quiet routes

Alongside the Quick active travel routes, we are developing a network of Quiet active travel routes. These routes provide an option for people who prefer a quieter journey and can also help overcome some of the barriers that put off pedestrians and wheelers and might prevent less confident cyclists from getting on their bikes. Quiet routes are essential to encourage a broader demographic to embrace active travel.



These can be formally designated as ‘Quiet Lanes’

- a. Rural lanes, where motor traffic speeds and volumes are sufficiently low for people walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding, to comfortably share with motorised traffic. These can be formally designated as ‘Quiet Lanes.’
- b. Streets in built up areas where volumes and speeds of motor vehicles are low enough for people cycling to comfortably share the carriageway with motor traffic. In this situation people walking and wheeling should be accommodated by pavements or segregated footways.

A recent example of a quiet route is the liveable neighbourhood pilot scheme in Queen Charlton. As part of the Council’s Liveable Neighbourhood programme, a number of trial through-traffic restrictions were introduced in 2022, one of which was in Queen Charlton Lane, a rural countryside lane near Whitchurch. Historically, this lane has been used as a through route to access the A37 when travelling from Keynsham. The introduction of a restriction preventing access for motorised vehicles has resulted in significantly more active travel journeys. Recent monitoring has shown that a year after launch, an average of 50 more pedestrians are walking along the lane each day. This represents an increase of just under 300% compared with baseline data. In addition, the public have commented on how the restriction has improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders alike:

**“Fantastic. The positive effect of the road closure has been huge and should not be underestimated... The number of cyclists, walkers, horse riders (both local and non-local users of the road and village) has visibly increased.”**

Current data indicates that 60% of UK adults do not currently feel safe cycling on UK roads.<sup>16</sup> Quiet routes have the potential to quickly and cheaply create many miles of high-quality network, and therefore enable people to walk, wheel and cycle.



**Figure 12** Example of a Quiet Route - Wellow

<sup>16</sup> The 2022 National Travel Attitude Survey

Developing such routes enhances the appeal of active travel and ensures that walking, wheeling and cycling is an accessible option for everyone, including families and those who may be less confident. On the Quiet routes network, coherence is of the utmost importance. A single 'missing link' can seriously undermine the effectiveness of a route or the entire network.

As a minimum, each of the Quiet routes will need good signage whilst others may need more measures in order to provide a safe, pleasant and tranquil environment for everyone to use. These measures may include some, or a mixture of the following:

- Lower speed limits
- Improved street lighting
- Quiet lanes designation and signage (for rural lanes)
- Modal filters to prevent some or all private motor traffic passing along a street
- Centre line removal, and/or reducing carriageway widths
- Surface changes and treatments
- Physical traffic calming features, such as speed cushions and buildouts
- Junction priority changes
- Changes in signage, including adding gateway features

A review will also need to be undertaken of the accessibility of existing quiet routes that will form part of the Active Travel network to ensure they are accessible and adequate for all users.

By offering both quick and quiet active travel routes, we aim to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for everyone. This approach not only reduces traffic congestion and air pollution but also promotes healthier and more active lifestyles. It aligns with the broader goal of creating a sustainable transport system that promotes healthier, happier, and more connected communities while alleviating traffic congestion and decreasing carbon emissions.





## Urban Routes

The Active Travel Masterplan will set out walking and wheeling zones as well a holistic cycle network for each of our main urban areas across the district. Currently unlit, narrow and secluded active travel routes such as those along canal towpaths or quiet residential roads are not suitable for many people as they feel unsafe using them, leading them to opt for busier main roads instead.

As part of our commitment to creating inclusive, pedestrian-friendly environments the Active Travel Masterplan will actively identify and designate specific walking and wheeling zones. The identification of these zones will serve as the foundation for targeted interventions, including infrastructure enhancements, traffic calming measures, and accessibility upgrades, all geared towards fostering a safer and more welcoming environment for pedestrians and individuals using wheeled mobility devices.

The urban cycle networks identify a series of primary and secondary routes. The primary routes are judged to be the most popular and strategic routes, linking residential areas with key destinations. They form the main spine of the network to which the other routes will connect. Primary routes will be selected based on routes that are expected to have high flows of cyclists along desire lines linking key origins such as large residential areas or new development sites to our town centres mainly along those main routes and corridors into our urban areas.

Secondary routes are less strategic in nature and more locally important as they fill the gaps in the primary network. Secondary cycle routes provide the links from the primary routes to key amenities such as our schools, health services, employment areas, leisure destinations and key transport hubs such as train stations and bus links.





## Community Connections

Creating “community connections” that seamlessly link the quick and quiet active travel routes to smaller villages and rural areas is a fundamental aspect of building a comprehensive active travel network. These connections not only extend the benefits of active transport to more remote areas but also foster a sense of community and inclusivity.

As well as linking smaller communities to the wider network of active travel routes, our community connections will seek to identify those communities that are currently cut off from the services and facilities they use in neighbouring communities. Those living in some of our most rural areas can find that driving short distances to access key facilities such as schools, doctors’ surgeries and local shops is the only viable option given there are no pavements or cycle routes. The Active Travel Masterplan will seek to identify these gaps in the network to ensure that rural areas can access the key services they need.



By strategically designing and implementing these connections, we aim to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas, ensuring that residents in the most rural settlements have convenient access to the larger network. This, in turn, promotes economic vitality, enhances social connections, and provides a sustainable mode of transport for daily activities.

These community connections will be carefully planned to align with the unique characteristics and needs of each locality. They will draw from the principles of inclusivity, safety, and environmental sustainability, enriching the overall active travel experience for everyone. In this way, our active travel network will serve as a vital artery that not only connects urban hubs but also breathes life into the more secluded corners of our district, strengthening the bonds that tie our communities together.



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Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

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