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West Sussex Active Travel Strategy 2024-2036



Foreword

In 2016 we published the West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy 2016-2026. Much has changed since that time. The Covid-19 pandemic – along with advances in communications technology – led to many people working at home rather than travelling to their usual place of work, and there was a significant increase in walking and cycling during lockdowns as traffic levels reduced.

We have also seen a shift in government policy with the publication of 'Gear Change' – the government's vision for walking and cycling – in 2020 along with new cycling design guidance (LTN 1/20) and the creation of the Active Travel Fund. Many of our districts and boroughs have developed Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans during the intervening period and in 2022 the county council adopted the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036, which sets out our high-level aspirations for active travel and supports delivery of Our Council Plan priorities all of which are underpinned by a cross-cutting theme of protecting the environment:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential
- Making the best use of resources

In light of this, and to reflect changes in priorities and funding streams, we have reviewed our original Walking and Cycling Strategy. The outcome of the review is this document – the West Sussex Active Travel Strategy 2024-2036, which builds on the work done to date.

We have delivered over 50km of new or upgraded active travel infrastructure since 2016 and this figure will continue to increase over the coming years. However, our focus will be on providing quality rather than quantity to ensure that active travel infrastructure is fit for purpose and provides the best outcomes for our communities. Our plans are ambitious and so it will be necessary to prioritise the schemes we deliver. Many projects will require external funding and so partnership working with our district and borough colleagues, the South Downs National Park Authority, National Highways, and other key stakeholders will also be important, as will the securing of active travel improvements at new development sites.

The benefits of encouraging active travel – particularly for shorter trips such as to school or local shops – are well documented. We are seeing the effects of climate change caused by carbon emissions and we know that other vehicle pollutants contribute to asthma and other health conditions. Walking, cycling, and wheeling more can also lower our travel costs and help to reduce traffic congestion and the associated cost to the local economy.

Our previous Walking and Cycling Strategy was the start of our journey towards

increasing levels of active travel in West Sussex. This new strategy represents the next step of that journey.



Cllr Joy Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

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1. Strategy vision and objectives

Policy context

1.1.1 The West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036 (WSTP) is the County Council's main policy on transport and supports delivery of Our Council Plan and its priorities. The WSTP sets out how the County Council, working with its strategic partners particularly in relation to funding, intends to address key challenges by improving, maintaining and managing the transport network in the period to 2036. This Active Travel Strategy provides further detail about our approach to active travel and how improvements will be prioritised for delivery.

1.1.2 The WSTP sets out our overall vision:

"A West Sussex transport network in 2036 that works for communities in all economic areas by helping to address the spatial economic challenges of the County, level up the coastal economy and provide access to employment and services countywide. The transport network will be on a pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 through more local living, increased use of electric vehicles and reduced use of fossil-fuels. It will also be safer, more efficient and resilient overall with more walking, cycling and use of public or shared transport and less congestion on major routes that connect West Sussex towns with Gatwick Airport, London and nearby cities. The transport network will connect communities and allow residents to live healthy lifestyles with good access to the West Sussex coast and the protected South Downs, High Weald and Chichester Harbour. Active travel modes, public or shared transport will be attractive options in built up areas and between towns, and rural communities will have access to the services they need. Transport impacts such as air pollution, noise and rat-running on adjacent communities and the environment will be minimised to protect a quality of life that reflects the characteristics of the County."

1.1.3 The WSTP details seventeen objectives that will need to be achieved in order to deliver the vision. As stated in paragraphs 6.4 to 6.11 of the WSTP, two of the objectives are relevant to active travel:

- Objective 11: Reduce the need to travel by car by enabling local living.
- Objective 17: Extend and improve the network of active travel facilities so it is coherent and high quality enough to make active travel an attractive, safe option for short distance trips and to transport interchanges.

1.2 Our vision for active travel

Acknowledging the need to balance different transport modes across the network, for active travel in West Sussex this means:

'Our network will be characterised by high-quality active travel infrastructure, focused on connecting people with places and activities via safe, direct, attractive, and coherent routes. People across the county will be informed and aware of their options for walking and cycling locally. Active travel will be increasingly commonplace for everyday journeys, delivering greater economic prosperity, improved quality of life for all those who live and work within the county, and supporting our pathway to net zero carbon'.

1.2.1. This vision statement articulates what we are looking to achieve through our Active Travel Strategy, and directly supports the policy objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan (2022-2036).

1.3 Aims of the Strategy

1.3.1. To achieve this vision the following aims will guide this Strategy over time. Each is aligned with the council's wider policy framework and reflects the application of national policy at the local level.

Aim 1: Support the decarbonisation of our transport network

Our Active Travel schemes will contribute to the decarbonisation of our transport networks and support the pathway to net zero. When we develop active travel schemes this will mean assessing carbon impacts will increasingly form an integral part of our scheme development process. This will ensure approaches to scheme design and delivery maximise the potential to reduce embodied carbon and secure reductions in emissions from journeys that would otherwise be undertaken by motorised vehicles.

Aim 2: Reduce the need to travel by motorised vehicles

We will strive to make walking and cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. This will mean the development and delivery of active travel routes that provide safe and direct connections between people and places, and journey times that make these options the logical choice. For longer distance journeys we will ensure active travel planning considers access to public transport services, including local bus and rail connections, to ensure door-to-door journeys by more sustainable, low carbon forms of travel become the most viable and attractive option across the county.

Aim 3: Boost physical and mental health and wellbeing across the county

There will be a clear focus in our approach on active travel to increase levels of physical activity in West Sussex, supporting both physical health and mental wellbeing. This will include working closely with local stakeholders to determine how best to identify, engage and promote active travel across communities to support it becoming more commonplace as a form of activity in everyday life and provide better access to both green and blue spaces. Replacing car journeys with active travel trips can also help to improve air quality.

Aim 4: Support future economic prosperity and vibrant local communities

Through our approach to active travel investment, we will create better streets and places for people and empower local communities to shape scheme proposals. We recognise that this means consulting on scheme proposals from an early stage in their development, so they appropriately recognise impacts and the benefits for local communities, and for those who work in and visit our county.

Through delivering high quality networks and public realms, we can support an increase in footfall in our towns and cities, supporting local businesses and contributing to our overall economic prosperity. Walking and cycling to work can help to increase productivity levels and reduce absenteeism to due sickness.



Figure 1.1 West Sussex Active Travel Strategy supporting aims

1.3.2. The implementation of this Strategy will also be guided by, and support the achieving of, national objectives. Short term objectives to 2025 are set out in government's [second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy \(CWIS2\)](#). These are to:

- increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled from 41% in 2018 to 2019 to 46% in 2025
- increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 365 stages per person per year in 2025
- double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycling stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025
- increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025

1.3.4. The government's longer-term objectives reflect commitments originally set out in [Gear Change](#) (PDF), the [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) (PDF) and the [Net Zero Strategy](#) to:

- increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled to 50% in 2030 and to 55% in 2035
- deliver a world-class cycling and walking network in England by 2040

1.3.5. Active Travel England - the government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling, and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England - expects that approximately 90% of national objectives can be achieved by increasing levels of walking.

2. Strategy refresh and the context for change

2.1.1. Since we published our Walking and Cycling Strategy in 2016 a rapidly changing policy, economic and social landscape has presented fresh challenges, and numerous opportunities, to embrace active travel as a part of meeting people's everyday transport and mobility needs.

2.1.2. Over recent years we have overseen the planning, design and delivery of active travel infrastructure schemes benefitting residents, employees, and visitors across the county. However, we recognise the potential to do much more. The availability of new funding sources, such as the Government's Active Travel Fund, present an opportunity to strategically plan and deliver active travel investment that builds on what has come before, with schemes developed through early stakeholder and community engagement, and prioritised based on delivering the most benefit to West Sussex.

2.1.3. We therefore determined that our existing Walking and Cycling Strategy required a comprehensive refresh to reflect this, becoming a new Active Travel Strategy to better reflect current and emerging circumstances, and directly support policies and priorities outlined in the WSTP.

2.1.4. As described in Chapter 1, the WSTP is the County Council's main policy on transport containing five thematic and eight area transport strategies which are intended to deliver the plan's objectives covering the following four themes:

- Prosperous West Sussex
- Healthy West Sussex
- Protected West Sussex
- Connected West Sussex

2.1.5. The Plan contains its own Active Travel Strategy with specific Plan objectives relating to active travel. This new Active Travel Strategy is intended to directly support policies and priorities outlined in the WSTP.

Supporting the pathway to net zero

2.1.7. As outlined in our Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030, climate change is one of the biggest challenges that faces our county. Human activity has already led to 1°C of global warming from pre-industrial levels, resulting in damaging impacts on lives, infrastructure and ecosystems already being felt by communities across West Sussex.

2.1.8. Decarbonising transport is essential and causes us to think differently about how we travel. We recognise the role active travel must play in this process to support reductions in transport emissions. This in turn can help improve local air quality and contribute to our pathway to net zero carbon and the wider national commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050. Our Active Travel Strategy (hereafter the 'Strategy') will now directly support our work in achieving this outcome and contribute to both local and national transport policy¹ objectives to decarbonise transport.

¹ 'Decarbonising Transport: A better, greener Britain' (Department for Transport, July 2021)

Improving network performance and sustainable accessibility

2.1.9. There remains considerable potential in West Sussex for walking and cycling to further reduce the need to travel by car for many door-to-door journeys. This is evident for both shorter distance journeys, more conducive to being walked or pedal cycled, or as part of a longer distance journey connecting with public transport – which complements our Bus Service Improvement Plan.

2.1.10. To increase levels of walking, wheeling, cycling and equestrianism for door-to-door journeys and leisure, continued investment in active travel infrastructure networks, supporting services and travel behaviour change initiatives will be essential to achieve this outcome. The term 'active travel' is generally considered to encompass walking, wheelchair, and mobility scooter use, and cycling. However, the needs of all users, including equestrians, will be considered when active travel schemes are developed and designed. The Public Rights of Way network has an important role to play in enabling active travel journeys. This strategy should therefore be read in conjunction with the West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan, which sets out the county council's approach to maintaining and improving the network.

2.1.11. This is reflected in current Government policy to revolutionise active travel², which includes a commitment to invest significant funding locally in high-quality, safe, and protected facilities - reflecting best practice design principles³ - that better cater for journeys on foot or by pedal cycle. This Strategy sets out our commitment to explore available funding sources to deliver active travel investment that facilitates active travel as an increasingly viable and attractive option for everyday journeys.

Contributing to our economic growth and prosperity

2.1.12. High quality transport connections and services are a key enabler for economic growth. Continued investment in our transport network will support individuals accessing employment, skills training, education, and leisure services. Businesses in West Sussex will be able to operate more effectively and boost productivity.

2.1.13. Evidence of active travel contributing to economic prosperity is increasingly apparent. Research⁴ endorsed by the Department for Transport has highlighted the value of cycling in adding around £5.4bn per annum to the UK economy. We see this potential to directly support Our Council Plan 2021-2025 in delivering a sustainable and prosperous economy and helping people and communities to fulfil their potential.

2.1.14. Within West Sussex active travel can play an essential role in contributing to rising economic prosperity over time by providing investment in local mobility networks that offer high quality, attractive and sustainable connections for the journeys people need to make.

Supporting public health and wellbeing

2.1.15. Physical activity is an essential part of supporting good health and wellbeing. The council's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 adopts a life course approach, identifying priorities across three themes - Starting Well, Living and Working

² 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking' (Department for Transport, July 2020)

³ 'Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design' (Department for Transport, July 2020)

⁴ 'The Value of the Cycling Sector to the British Economy' (Transport for Quality of Life, 2018)

Well, and Ageing Well. Walking and cycling, that can represent everyday physical activity to support physical and mental health, represents a low cost and accessible means of introducing more physical activity into people's lives by making it the natural choice to walk, wheel, or cycle. Active travel also has a valuable role in enabling people with certain disabilities or mobility problems to travel independently. For example, using trikes, adapted bikes, or electric bikes.

Embracing new models of mobility

2.1.16. We also recognise that social and mobility trends have changed since our previous strategy, and this will continue as personal mobility needs change and new technologies and transport services become available and accessible. For active travel this means planning investment that both meets current needs whilst being 'future ready', scalable and adaptable.

2.1.17. The increasing use of micro-mobility, including e-cycles and e-scooters for example, is forecast to grow in popularity over time. Therefore, our approach to embracing new models of mobility will be evidence-based, informed by inclusive stakeholder dialogue across our communities, and will remain cognisant of emerging best practice, and aligned with regulatory and legal frameworks.

2.2 The context for active travel in West Sussex

2.2.1. West Sussex covers 199,000 hectares and is home to approximately 860,000 people. The majority of these live in the ten largest towns, although 42% of the county's resident population and over half of our businesses are in rural areas.

2.2.2. West Sussex is also a desirable place to live and work, with an attractive coastline, the protected landscapes of the South Downs National Park and the High Weald and Chichester Harbour Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and attractions and cultural assets throughout the county.

2.2.3. The county's location on the southern coast of the country provides weather conditions that are more conducive to active travel than in much of the country. The topography varies, but much of the county is also largely flat, which reduces the physical effort required to cycle and potentially increases the distance people would be willing to travel by bike. In addition, the increasing use of electric bikes is likely to make longer and hillier commutes more realistic options for some.

2.2.4. The rural nature of much of the county, including natural assets such as the South Downs National Park, has long presented opportunity for travel by active modes for leisure purposes. There are over 4,000km (2,500 miles) of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in West Sussex, which includes footpaths (1,717 miles), bridleways (733 miles), restricted byways (81 miles) and byways open to all traffic (BOATs) (8 miles). There are also long-distance trails which partially follow PRoW, such as the South Downs Way and the Downs Link shared-use paths, for walkers, cyclists, and equestrians. The planned England Coast Path will also form a new long-distance trail through the county, primarily for walkers.

2.2.5. West Sussex also benefits from several National Cycle Network (NCN) routes, with NCN 2, 20, 21, 82, 88 (recently redesignated 288), 223, 228 located fully or partially in West Sussex. This is further illustrated in Figure 2.1.

2.2.6. These characteristics offer significant opportunity to support significant growth in active travel - predominantly walking and cycling – and supporting equestrianism. Existing networks of urban and rural active travel routes present an opportunity to connect people with places and activities in a way that supports public health, improve accessibility, contributes to the local economy and support reduction in transport emissions.

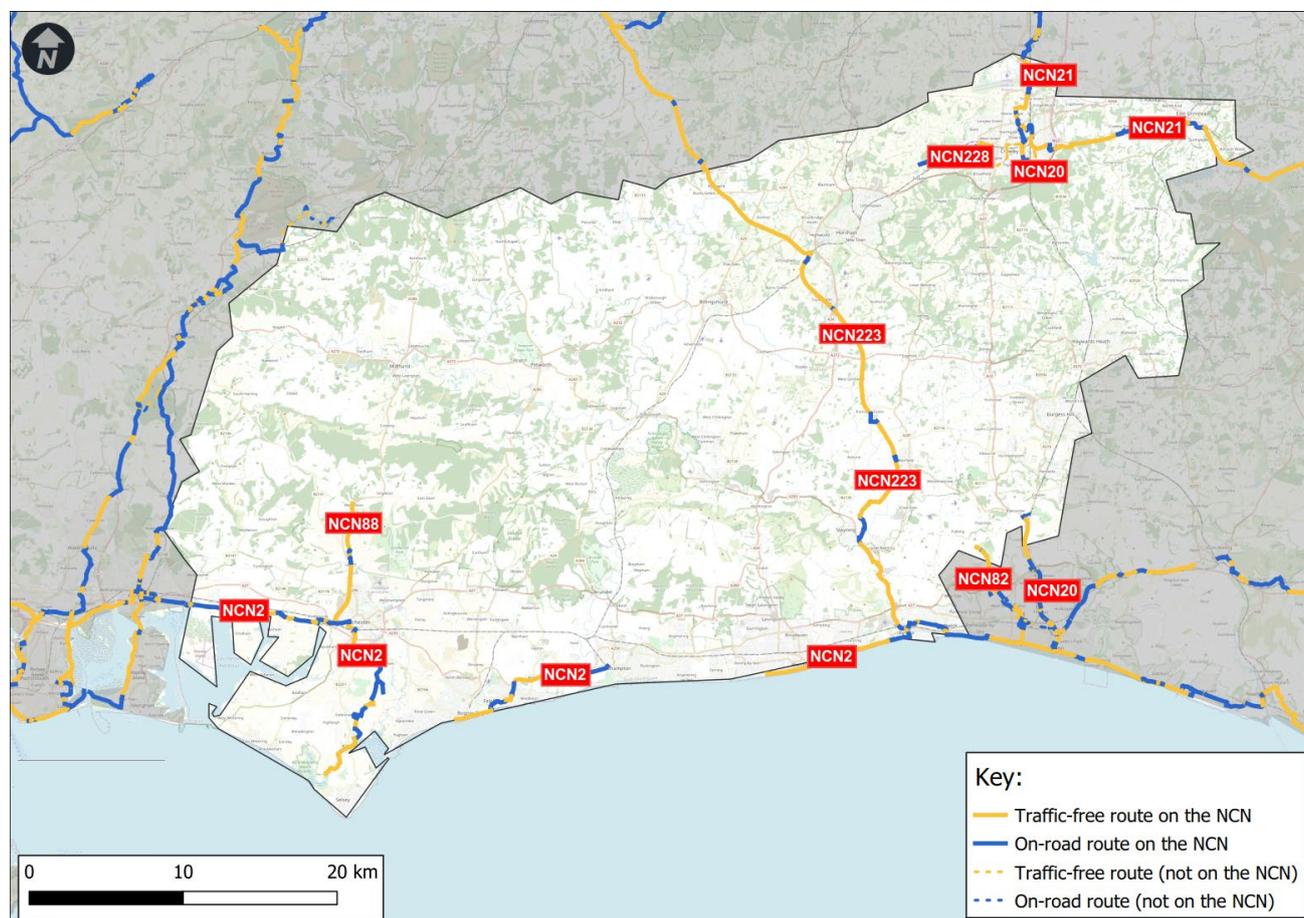


Figure 2.1. National Cycle Network (NCN) within West Sussex

2.3 Current walking and cycling levels

Walking and cycling patterns

2.3.1. In the 2011 Census, 10% of West Sussex residents travelled to work on foot and 3% by pedal cycle. However, 33% of commuter trips were less than 5km, which based on journey distance alone indicates significant potential for further growth in active travel by making walking and cycling viable and attractive for more people.

2.3.2. To achieve this outcome, West Sussex will need to overcome specific challenges, including a limited existing active travel network and major roads and railways creating severance issues by requiring long detours to access crossing facilities. In many areas of the county there is currently a lack of sufficient footways and dedicated cycle routes that will provide direct, attractive, and well-connected routes and which physically separate pedestrians and cyclists from motor vehicles.

2.3.3. However, challenges are not solely related to infrastructure. It will also be important to invest in new models of mobility that encourage people to walk and cycle

more often, skills training, and also ensure the benefits of active travel are promoted and understood across our communities.

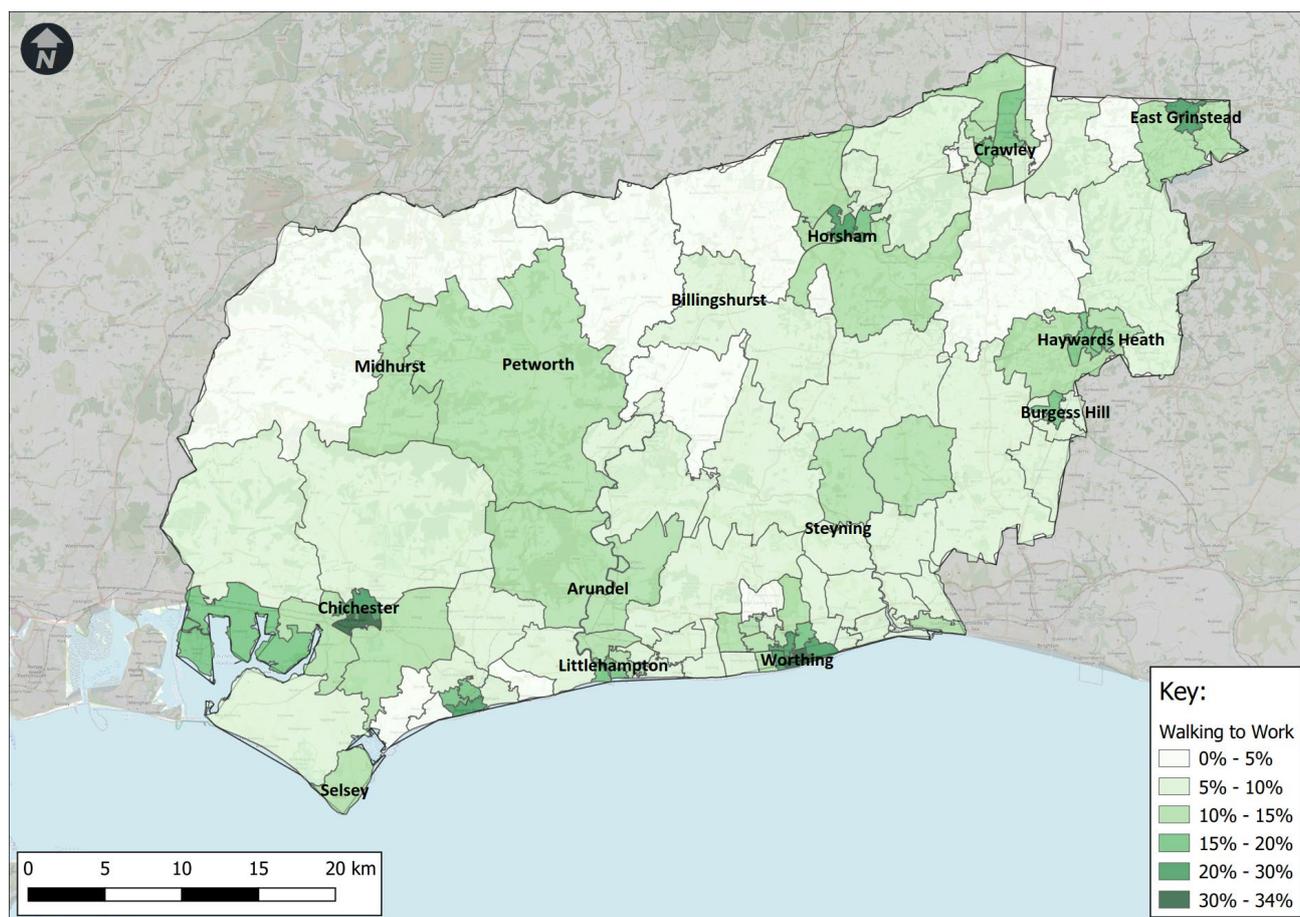


Figure 2.2. Residents that Walk to Work (Census 2011)

2.3.4. We know that the highest levels of walking to work in West Sussex are within urban settlements, such as Chichester and Worthing, with up to 34% of employed residents walking to work in some areas (Figure 2.2). As expected, outside of larger urban settlements levels of walking are markedly lower - often due to the journey distances involved.

2.3.5. Similarly, higher levels of cycling to work are more evident in urban settlements (Figure 2.3). This presents both an opportunity to continue investing in promoting and accommodating active travel journeys within larger towns and a need to address the challenge of much lower rates of active travel across more rural and peri-urban areas of West Sussex.

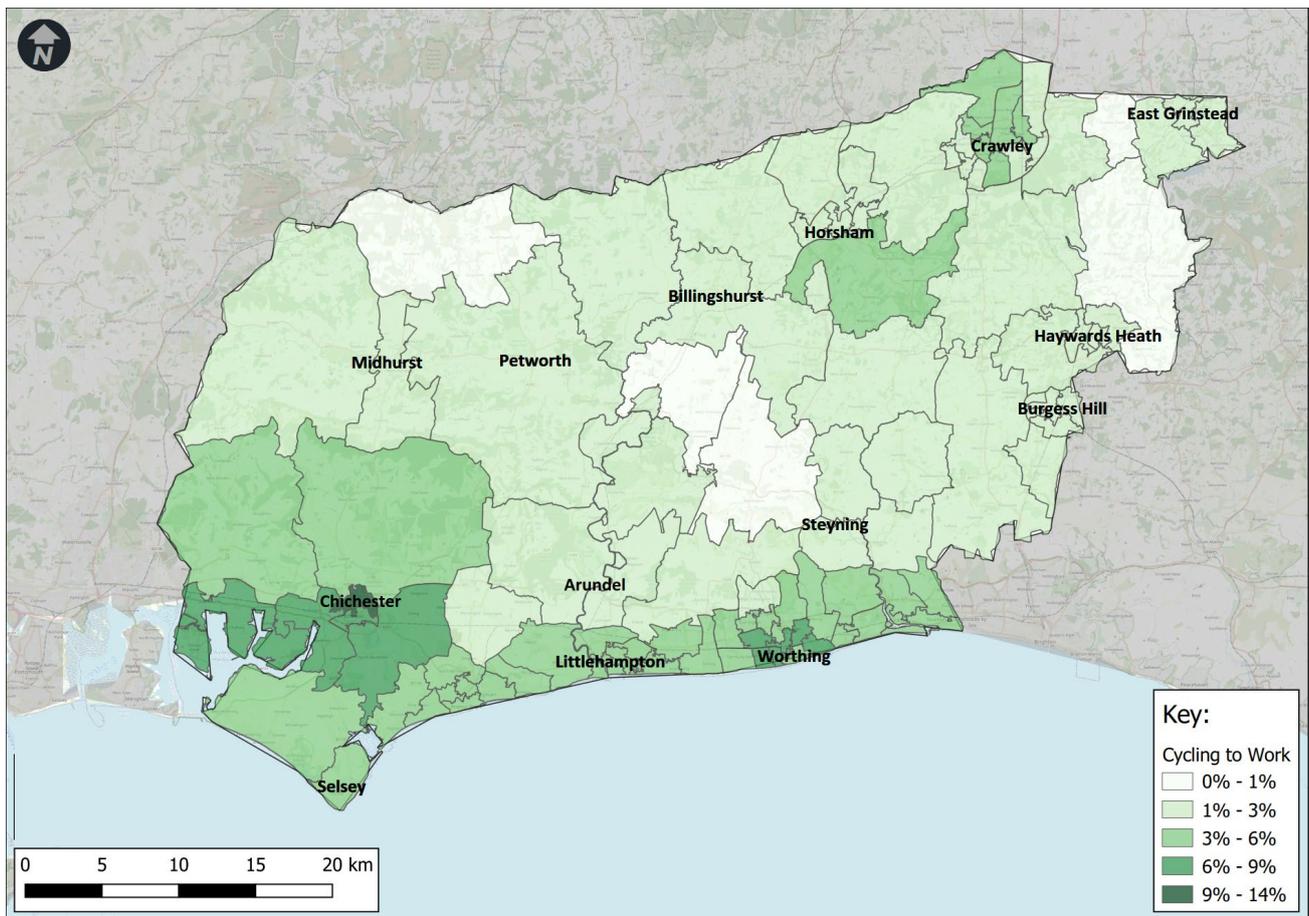


Figure 2.3. Residents that Cycle to Work (Census 2011)

2.3.6. Figure 2.4 shows the estimated routes taken by people cycling to work in West Sussex in 2011, highlighting the top 30 cycle routes (by usage). The routes along the coast, connecting Chichester to Bognor Regis, and Littlehampton to Worthing (and further to Brighton), indicate the highest propensity to cycle in West Sussex in both current and future scenarios in the [Propensity to Cycle Tool \(PCT\)](#). While the 2011 cycle flows are relatively low, the outputs also indicate that the highest flows are within the centres of the urban settlements, including Chichester, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing, Horsham, and Crawley.

2.3.7. Whilst commuter trips are important, they do not represent all cycle trips. Reported cycling levels to school are also relatively low in comparison with other modes. Routes in urban areas such as Chichester, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing, Horsham, and Crawley more heavily used for cycling to school.

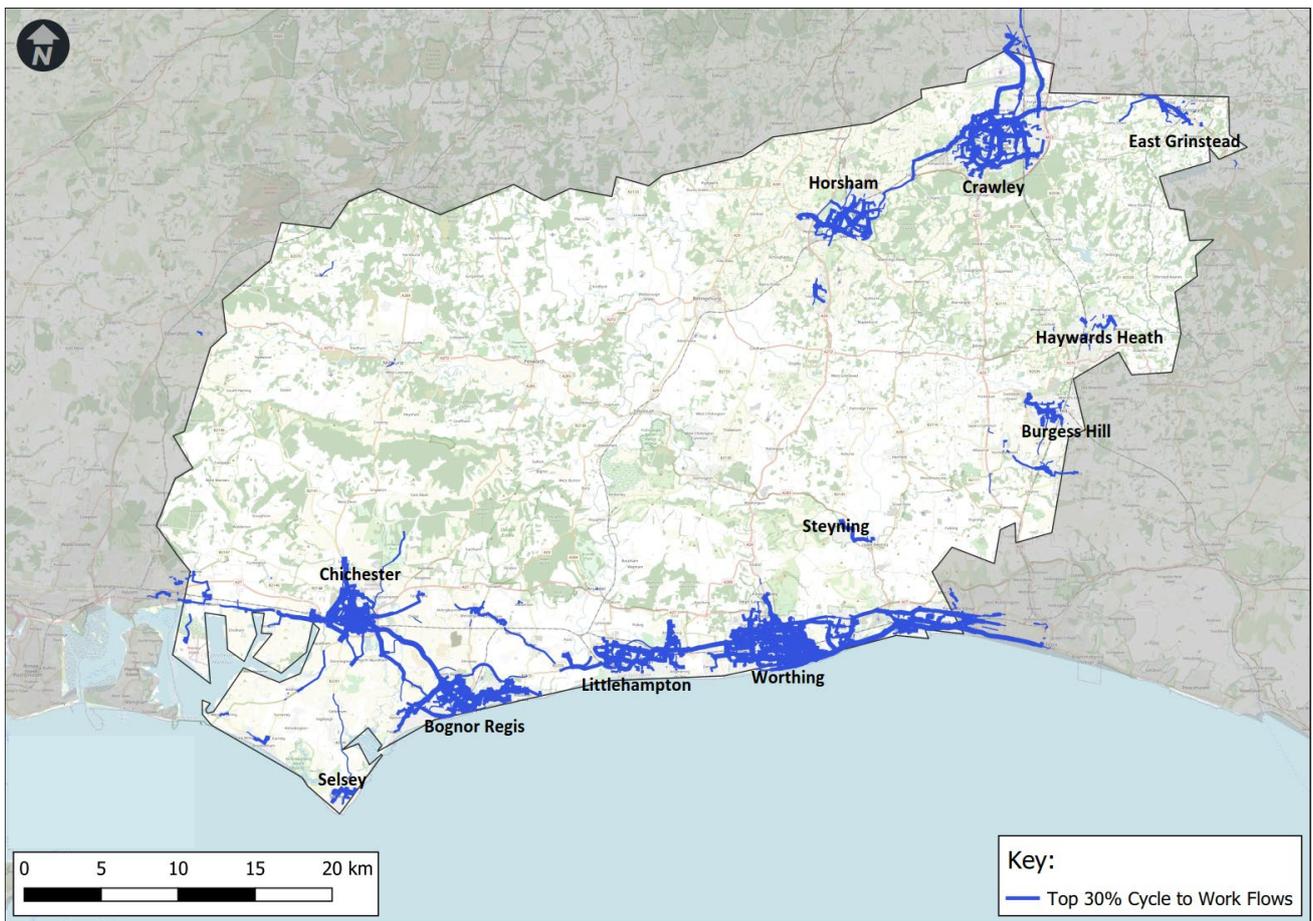


Figure 2.4. 2011 Commuter cycle flows. Increased width = increased usage. (Source: Propensity to Cycle Tool)

2.3.8. Finally, outputs from the [Strava global heatmap](#) in Figure 2.5 show anonymised data collected from people cycling using the Strava mobile app. Note that white denotes the 'hottest' routes, i.e., those with the highest relative usage, while dark red routes are considered 'cool', as they have the least number of relative users.

2.3.9. Whilst the results are typically skewed towards more confident sports/leisure cyclists, the results again highlight the comparatively high usage of the routes along the coast, namely the connectors between Littlehampton, Worthing and Brighton, and surrounding Chichester.

Note

The most recent census of England and Wales was conducted on 21 March 2021 when Covid-19 restrictions, including the stay-at-home rule, were still in place. The Office for National Statistics therefore advises caution when using 2021 census data for planning and policy purposes. However, when working from home is excluded there has been little change in the proportion of people walking and cycling to work in West Sussex between 2011 and 2021.



Figure 2.5. Strava Cycle Flows. (Source: Strava)

Safety and accidents

2.3.10. The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the road in West Sussex has remained relatively stable over recent years and consistent with the national trend. However, the Council's ambition for 'Vision Zero' is that no one will be killed or seriously injured on the road, and this means continuing to strive for ways to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety through this Strategy.

2.3.11. Actual or perceived road safety issues can be a deterrent to using active travel modes. Motor traffic is the main deterrent to cycling for many people, with 62% of UK adults feeling that roads are too unsafe for them to cycle on. Furthermore, Sustrans national 'Bike Life' survey - with over 17,000 respondents - has found that safety is the biggest barrier to cycling, and that cycle routes separated from pedestrians and motor vehicles are significantly more likely to encourage people to cycle than other forms of cycle infrastructure.

2.3.12. Table 2.1 shows the number of collisions involving pedestrians or cycle users within West Sussex from 2018 to 2022 (note this is number of collisions, rather than number of casualties), based on the severity.

| | 2018 | | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Severity | Cycle | Walk |
| Slight | 225 | 152 | 187 | 143 | 187 | 114 | 172 | 130 | 183 | 160 |
| Serious | 89 | 73 | 85 | 73 | 107 | 68 | 81 | 45 | 68 | 67 |
| Fatal | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 316 | 233 | 275 | 221 | 298 | 185 | 254 | 178 | 252 | 231 |

Table 2.1. Collision Data for West Sussex 2018-2022 (Source: WSCC Road Safety Team)

2.3.13. Over the five-year period multiple fatal collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists were recorded in West Sussex. According to the data, between 2018 and 2022 the number of collisions involving pedestrians decreased but then returned to the 2018 level; however, the number of fatal collisions involving pedestrians has reduced since 2018, when 8 fatalities were recorded. Over the five-year period the number of collisions involving cyclists has decreased; however, in both 2018 and 2019, 3 fatalities involving cyclists were recorded. There were four further fatalities in 2020 (when levels of cycling increased due to Covid-19 restrictions). Improving infrastructure for cycling and walking within the study area could potentially contribute to reducing these.

2.3.14. The collision data has been used to produce Figure 2.6, illustrating where the collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists occurred. The figures show all collisions over the five-year period between 2018 and 2022. The data indicates that where collisions occur in close proximity, this is typically along arterial roads or at junctions where there is also a higher number of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians crossing.

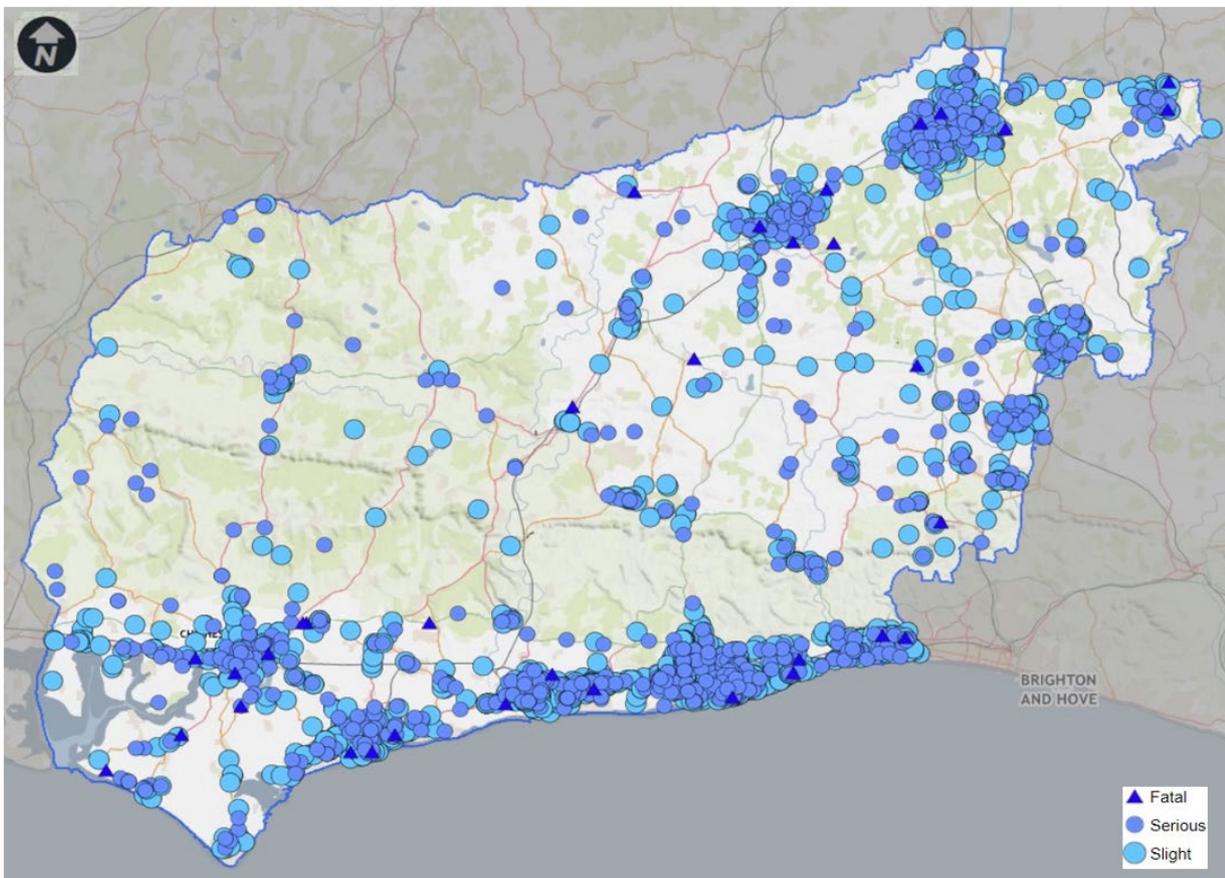


Figure 2.6. Collision Data for West Sussex 2018-2022 (Source: WSCC Road Safety Team © Crown copyright and database rights 2023, OS licence number AC000849983)

2.3.15. The council has identified a significant change in approach to make 'Vision Zero' achievable through a 'Safe System' philosophy. Safe System brings a public health focus on road safety, where efforts are primarily made to address the harm that is being done. This approach recognises that humans as road users are fallible and will make mistakes, which can lead to unintentional death and injury. The West Sussex Road Safety Framework places greater emphasis on expanding and embedding the Safe Systems approach to road safety and traffic management in all highway and transportation activities in West Sussex.

2.3.16. Furthermore, significant changes in planning and design for cycle users have occurred since the publication of the West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy 2016-2026 (which this document replaces), culminating in Government's publication of Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 in July 2020. This document outlines national guidance for providing protected facilities for cycle users away from high volumes of vehicles and higher speed roads and embedding these standards within new road infrastructure.

2.4 Air quality in West Sussex

2.4.1. Air quality policy has close synergies with many other environmental policy areas. For instance, persons living adjacent to busy, and hence noisy, roads are more likely to suffer from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, lung cancer and early death. According to Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, it is estimated that long-term exposure to air pollution in the UK has an annual effect equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths. Air pollutants come mainly from human activities, with road traffic being one of the key causes.

Air quality management areas

2.4.2. To tackle the increasing problems associated with poor air quality, there is a need for joint effort from district and county councils to monitor, assess and act to improve local air quality, which will further benefit the public health and quality of life and help protect the environment. Since 1997 all local authorities have been required to carry out reviews and assessments of air quality. If this monitoring highlights areas where the national air quality objectives are unlikely to be met, under the Environment Act 1995, they are required to designate those areas as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). While air quality in West Sussex is generally good and improving, there are presently seven Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the county, although a number of these AQMAs are expected to be revoked in the next few years due to improvements in air quality.

2.4.3. Whilst the approach to reducing levels of air pollution in West Sussex include a range of measures, a common theme across Air Quality Action Plans is to improve and encourage active and sustainable forms of transport in order to reduce car journeys within and through AQMAs.

2.4.4. Further details on the West Sussex AQMAs and AQAPs can be found on the [Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\) website](#) and [WSCC's Traffic Management Air Quality website](#).

Improving air quality through modal shift

2.4.5. In July 2020, we approved our Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030, which identifies the prioritisation of sustainable transport options as a key commitment.

2.4.6. West Sussex will look to tackle air quality and carbon issues in the county by improving the infrastructure for non-motorised users as part of this wider strategy. This will encourage walking and cycling and a modal shift away from motor vehicles for many journeys currently being made.

2.5 Levels of physical activity

2.5.1. Simply being outdoors can be beneficial for people's health. Many studies have shown the positive benefits that access and exposure to nature can have on people's mental health and well-being. Being outdoors is one of the most consistent predictors of physical activity levels. It also has social benefits, increasing opportunity for social exchange with others, particularly when movement is at slower speeds.

2.5.2. Walking, wheeling, cycling and micro-mobility also entail movement at slower speeds, allowing for increased interaction and exchange, so it makes it easier to stop when necessary at places of interest, such as local shops and services. This leads towards a different concept of the traditional urban area and how the transport network functions, with greater control for the individual regarding their choice of mode and route.

2.5.3. Focussing on inclusive "All Ages and Abilities (AAA)" design and ensuring cycling is accessible for all will be important when providing cycle infrastructure.

2.5.4. Within West Sussex, active travel can clearly play a crucial role in supporting public health and wellbeing. It is one of the simplest and most effective ways to enable adults and children to meet recommended levels of physical activity. This is highlighted in the [Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework](#) (PDF).

2.6 What do people think?

2.6.1. The Council participates in the annual National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) public satisfaction survey. This is a random postal survey sent to households across West Sussex, administered by m2i and Ipsos Mori on behalf of the NHT Network. The survey measures 26 key benchmarking indicators (KBIs) and West Sussex is ranked by these KBIs against participating peer group county highway authorities.

2.6.2. Three KBIs are particularly applicable when considering active travel within the county. These are:

- KBI 11: Pavements & Footpaths
- KBI 13: Cycle Routes & Facilities and
- KBI 15: Rights of Way.

2.6.3. The results of the 2023 survey for West Sussex are shown below:

Pavements & Footpaths

This KBI scored 48 in 2023, ranking joint 21st out of 29 comparator authorities. The average score for this KBI was 50.

Cycle Routes & Facilities

This KBI scored 47 in 2023 ranking joint 15th out of 29 comparator authorities. The average score for this KBI was 47.

Rights of Way

This KBI scored 54 in 2023 ranking joint 12th out of 29 comparator authorities. The average score for this KBI was 54.

The survey outcomes highlight the real need and our desire to significantly increase targeted investment in enhancing our active travel and Rights of Way networks through the period of this Strategy.

3. Theme 1 - Determining our scheme priorities

3.1 The need for scheme prioritisation

3.1.1. There are numerous potential active travel schemes that could be advanced within the county, however there are and will be constraints on available scheme funding and resource for their delivery. Our continued planning, development and delivery of active travel schemes requires a means to determine our scheme priorities. To achieve this, we will use a dynamic and partnership-based approach that defines and maintains a prioritised list of schemes for West Sussex. This will inform:

- Which scheme feasibility studies will be undertaken to inform preferred scheme options, with a focus on delivering best practice and targeting investment where it's most needed and can deliver the most benefit
- Council bids and proposals for future scheme funding opportunities, including with the Department for Transport/Active Travel England, and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Planning Authorities to negotiate effectively with private developers on securing contributions or delivery of high-quality infrastructure where its most needed
- District, borough, town, and parish councils on active travel investment prioritises for the county, to consider and incorporate within Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, and local implementation programmes and
- The on-going appropriate allocation of council resources

3.2 A partnership approach

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) Partners Group

3.2.1. We recognise that developing investment priorities for active travel in West Sussex will benefit from a partnership approach. To achieve this the county, district and borough councils have established an LCWIP Partners Group (further information about LCWIPs is contained in Chapter 4).

3.2.2. The Group is not a formal decision-making body, but performs an advisory role with a focus on:

- Sharing information, including new funding and best practice
- Providing an opportunity to discuss ideas, local concerns, and opportunities for active travel
- Developing early-stage scheme concepts for further consideration and
- Assisting with on-going scheme prioritisation based on available information

3.2.3. The Group is Chaired by West Sussex County Council. Members of the group include representatives from Adur & Worthing Councils, Arun District Council, Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Mid Sussex District Council and South Downs National Park Authority.

3.2.4. Representatives from other parties, including neighbouring local authorities, consultancies and industry bodies may also attend by invitation. As stated in the WSTP, the county council will work with Local Planning Authorities and other partners to prioritise and implement new or improved cycle routes taking account the potential increase in demand (including due to micro-mobility solutions), network function, conditions for users and the impacts of planned development where these are feasible and deliverable, and there is support from local stakeholders.

3.3 Priority scheme development

3.3.1. The council has determined that LCWIPs will play a key role in identifying strategic active travel infrastructure priorities within the county. This reflects guidance from the Department for Transport, which recognises LCWIPs as a strategic approach to identifying active travel infrastructure improvements required at the local level through a structured and evidence-led approach.

3.3.2. LCWIPs have now been developed both by the county council and by individual boroughs and districts. This means there is a wealth of information that can be drawn together into a collective prioritisation exercise to help develop an overall prioritised list of future infrastructure schemes.

Multi-criteria scheme appraisal

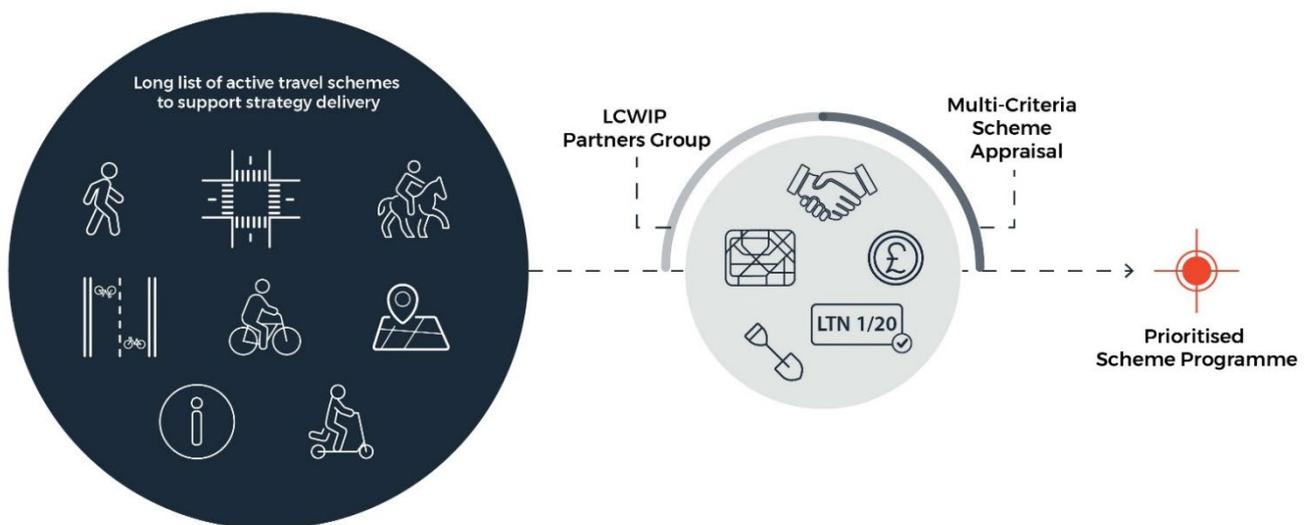


Figure 3.1 Scheme development and prioritisation process

3.3.3. The approach to selecting and prioritising infrastructure improvements will apply a set of qualifying and prioritisation criteria to individual scheme proposals at a concept stage. This approach will use a Multi-Criteria Appraisal Tool (MCAT). This is a spreadsheet-based tool developed by the council which, once populated, creates a ranked list of schemes across the county as the basis for further discussion and agreement.

3.3.4. The chosen criteria are designed to ensure schemes are prioritised based on securing and maximising the overall value of future investment, including the likelihood of successfully securing Government funding. Criteria will consider factors such as (but not limited to) whether a scheme concept:

- Is an LCWIP scheme
- Presents evidence of having undergone an inclusive public consultation
- Complies with current design principles, such as Local Transport Note 1/20
- Contributes to developing a wider, more integrated active travel network in the county
- Is supported by key stakeholders
- Is supported with other external funding contributions e.g., CIL or s106
- Presents evidence to inform an understanding on value for money, perhaps through applying the [Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit \(AMAT\)](#)
- Supports the government's national objectives for active travel (see section 1.3.2)

3.3.5. Schemes will vary in the availability, quality, and completeness of information to include within this appraisal. Therefore, the process is designed to help determine, prioritise, and shortlist active travel schemes that provide the most robust and compelling case for investment in West Sussex.

3.3.6. Inevitably scheme priorities may vary over time. For example, changing social norms or travel patterns within the county, complementary schemes being introduced, or new funding opportunities that arise and may necessitate a review of the relative importance attached to specific schemes. Therefore, the prioritisation process will be dynamic and is expected to change over time. This may include changes to the prioritisation criteria, or their respective weightings, which can be determined through discussion with partners.

3.3.7. The current list of prioritised LCWIP cycling schemes is contained within Appendix A of the West Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. As these schemes will need to be supported with external funding their delivery may take several years.

3.3.8. The county council also has a long list of other active travel aspirations in addition to those identified through LCWIPs. These form a pipeline for future investigation and development. We will look to progress these as resources allow - prioritising schemes where developer contributions are available to fund such investigations. This list will also inform the county council's response to planning applications and help to secure active travel improvements associated with local development sites.

3.3.9. This list will be updated periodically as required to include new additional scheme proposals, or to reflect changes in scheme priorities. As stated in the approach to active travel within the WSTP priorities are split into short, medium, and long-term and will be included when appropriate in the prioritised list. We intend to publish an indicative delivery programme of active travel improvements on our website. This will include details of the schemes we plan to take forward to design and construction in the short-term.

3.3.10. We will also develop a similar prioritised list of walking and wheeling improvements based on the evidence contained within the district and borough council LCWIPs. In terms of scheme delivery our priorities will reflect Active Travel England's road-user hierarchy, which places the most vulnerable users (pedestrians and wheelchair/mobility scooter users) above cycles.

3.3.11. Schemes that support walking, wheeling, and cycling journeys to planned strategic development sites – as featured in Local Plans – can form part of any of the County Councils investment programmes. Schemes that include active travel proposals (including those not currently included in LCWIPs) could potentially be eligible for inclusion in future bids for Active Travel England funding, subject to the funding criteria.

Engagement and consultation

3.3.12. The approach outlined in this strategy, and the active travel schemes that arise, will have impacts on businesses, communities, and the environment. The county council is committed to consulting and with communities and relevant stakeholders in an open, timely and consistent manner following the 'Gunning principles' for consultation and Active Travel England's guidance:

- Initial engagement will be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage and will seek feedback on a concept design
- A second stage consultation will be undertaken (incorporating feedback from initial engagement) to seek views on more detailed aspects of the proposals
- The council will give sufficient information on each scheme proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response
- Adequate time will be given for consideration and response by stakeholders; and
- Consultation responses will be conscientiously considered during scheme development.

3.3.13. In delivering active travel schemes we will take account of the impacts on communities and the needs of all users of the transport system, taking particular care to engage with and listen to young people and those with protected characteristics. These needs may vary in different areas of the county, which will need to be considered. Where appropriate, equalities impact (or similar) reports will be prepared to inform decisions as schemes are developed.

3.3.14. Feedback received through consultation will inform decisions but will not be considered the only, or primary, determinant of decision-making as it is necessary to take other factors into account, including the vision and objectives of this strategy and scheme impact assessments.

3.3.15. The county council will draw on best practice and use approaches such as stakeholder mapping, stakeholder forums and focus groups, particularly on larger projects, to support the active travel scheme design processes and where possible, with the aim of building consensus between local stakeholders.

4. Theme 2 - Delivering active travel infrastructure

4.1 Active travel infrastructure plans

4.1.1. Our active travel infrastructure plans, including Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) within the county, will provide a strategic foundation for delivering active travel infrastructure in West Sussex.

4.1.2. An LCWIP is a plan for active travel infrastructure developed according to the methodology set out in the 'LCWIPs: Technical Guidance for Local Authorities' document, published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2017. LCWIPs are non-mandatory, but the DfT/Active Travel England are increasingly requiring local authorities to have them in place to receive government funding for new active travel infrastructure.

4.1.3. Several different LCWIPs have been adopted in West Sussex with others in development. We have produced a county-wide LCWIP which focuses on inter-urban connections between towns. Simultaneously, different districts within West Sussex are developing their own LCWIPs focussing on the potential for active travel journeys more locally (for example: within Chichester or Worthing). The district LCWIPs will combine with the county-wide LCWIP to create a plan for a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes across West Sussex, capable of facilitating journeys at both the local and regional level.

4.1.4. Taken together, these LCWIPs will provide an evidence base showing the potential for walking and cycling across the whole of West Sussex. They will also identify a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements that, if developed and constructed, will help facilitate a modal shift towards active travel. The LCWIPs will also help support our West Sussex Transport Plan commitment to identify priority locations on major roads and railway lines where crossing facilities may need to be improved to address severance.

4.1.5. The programme of infrastructure works will be primarily high-level concepts for schemes which will then need designing, consulting on, and constructing. Schemes which are taken forward to detailed design should have a sound economic case, support from key stakeholders and an understanding of feasibility in terms of what land is required (whether third party land or highways land) and whether this is realistic.

4.1.6. Having LCWIPs in place will enable the support of the DfT/Active Travel England to be achieved, and thereby open up the potential to gain access to additional funds to help build business cases and support funding applications. Moreover, with LCWIPs in place, West Sussex will be in a better position to withstand scrutiny from Active Travel England, the national walking and cycling infrastructure inspectorate. The county and districts will endeavour to update LCWIPs every 5 years to reflect progress made in terms of infrastructure works completed.

4.1.7. It should be noted that the West Sussex LCWIP does not have primacy over the district and borough LCWIPs (see Chapter 3).

4.2 Infrastructure design principles and application

4.2.1. When planning and designing new active travel infrastructure, West Sussex will follow latest national government guidance, standards, and best practice, wherever possible and viable. We will use assessments against scheme objectives, safety, and levels of service to inform the design process for consistency with WSTP active travel approaches. At the time of writing, the most recent national cycle design guidance is contained in the DfT's 'Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design' (LTN 1/20).

4.2.2. For guidance on designing for walking, the most relevant design guidance at the time of writing is contained within the Inclusive Mobility and Manual for Streets series of documents published by the DfT and Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) respectively.

4.2.3. We will also seek compliance with the latest infrastructure design guidance within any new private developments in West Sussex. All new buildings and roads within West Sussex should be designed with active travel in mind. New developments should include cycle routes, facilities, and connections with the wider cycle network. Similarly, they should provide the crossings and footways necessary to connect into the wider walking network and be accessible for pedestrians of all kinds including, for example, wheelchair users.

4.2.4. New buildings should have facilities for cyclists including ample secure cycle parking (including for non-standard cycles) and ramps where needed. At workplaces and larger developments (such as transport hubs) showers and ancillary features such as pumps and repair stations should be considered. New buildings should be designed to be accessible for all kinds of pedestrians, with step-free entrances for example.

4.2.5. New roads should consider likely motorised traffic volumes and speeds and design for cyclists and pedestrians accordingly. In the case of quieter roads this may include features such as cycle-friendly traffic calming and continuous footway crossings. On busier roads, protected cycle facilities and regular, formal pedestrian and cycle crossings will be needed. Traffic-free routes for cyclists and modal filters should also be considered as part of any new developments. The needs of all active travel modes should be considered within the design of all road network improvements in line with the WSTP.

4.2.6. New footways should be wide and smooth, with places to stop and rest, and with dropped kerbs and the correct tactile paving at any crossing points. Shared footways should be avoided on new roads and junctions.

4.2.7. These same principles should also be applied whenever existing roads are being redesigned, whether as part of a specific active travel scheme or other highways works. Opportunities to improve walking and cycling provision on the existing network should always be taken; for example, by widening footways or retrospectively adding crossings and protected cycle facilities.

4.2.8. All new planning and designing of new active travel infrastructure will incorporate the environmental considerations from the WSTP in all new infrastructure designs. These considerations are:

- Ensure all interventions are designed to cater for climate change impacts, including an increase in extreme weather events by incorporating measures such as shading and take opportunities to reduce flood risk and improve network resilience, considering non-hard engineering measures where practicable
- Minimise the carbon impacts of construction by using low carbon construction techniques and materials
- Avoid where possible and mitigate the negative effects of major improvements on the environment (including green infrastructure and flood risk) and communities and
- Ensure major improvements provide a net gain in biodiversity.

4.3 Maintenance

4.3.1. All walking and cycling routes, whether urban or off-road, can become unattractive or unusable when poorly maintained. During the planning and design phase, the maintenance of routes should be fully considered, and costs accounted for, especially in the areas of surfacing, planting, tree roots, drainage, lighting and signing. Requirements for maintenance access should also be considered during this phase, to ensure that any maintenance vehicles can access the routes and have sufficient space to turn when accessing off-road routes for example.

4.3.2. Regular routine maintenance inspections should be scheduled to monitor the condition of the route and manage the risk from defects. These inspections should be undertaken based on the criteria set out in the council's Highway Inspection Manual and consider defects with the surface of the useable route, the encroachment of vegetation and any drainage related issues. Path sweeping and litter picking are District and Borough Council functions, however where possible the county council will work with partners to deliver these works on our dedicated walking and cycling routes.

4.4 Wider mobility

4.4.1. This chapter has so far focussed on cycling, walking, and wheeling but it is important to also cater for the large number of trips which incorporate walking and cycling as part of longer journeys, and also to consider the role that e-bikes and e-scooters may play in future.

Enabling multi-modal travel

4.4.2. Many journeys involving multi-modal transport in the UK start with a walking stage. To help enable these journeys, walking routes that link with public transport interchanges such as bus stops and bus/coach/rail stations should be given priority in LCWIPs. Similarly, cycle routes to rail stations should also be prioritised to help enable such journeys.

4.4.3. Public transport infrastructure generally complements or at least doesn't conflict with active travel infrastructure. One exception is bus stops, which may need redesigning if on key cycle routes (as discussed in section 4.3). Bus stops should also be accessible for people in wheelchairs or people with other disabilities.

4.4.4. Larger public transport interchanges such as rail stations should be designed as hubs which encourage active modes of transport and make changing modes of transport there as easy and accessible as possible. Plenty of secure and accessible cycle parking should be provided in a convenient and visible location. Ancillary facilities

such as bike maintenance stations, water fountains and shops can further encourage walking and cycling trips.

E-bikes

4.4.5. E-bikes (also known as Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles/EAPCs) are pedal cycles which have an electric motor that can provide assistance up to speeds of 15.5mph. E-bike sales have been increasing both in the UK and globally in recent years, and this trend is set to continue. With e-bikes helping users to pedal with electric assist, they can increase the range of a typical cycle trip and help users with getting up steep gradients. They can also help users carry more and, as a result, many e-bikes are cargo bikes which are helping to increase the potential of cycling to help businesses and commerce. Furthermore, e-bikes can help certain user groups such as the elderly to cycle more easily.

4.4.6. The infrastructure requirements of e-bikes are the same as those of normal pedal cycles. While e-bikes are generally heavier and can be more difficult to balance at low speeds, in design terms they can be considered the same as pedal cycles.

E-scooters

4.4.7. At the time of writing, e-scooters are not yet fully legal across the U.K. Moreover, there are ongoing debates regarding their safety and whether they constitute a form of active travel, with little movement or physical exertion required to use them. However, if e-scooters are made a legal form of transport it is likely that they will be a popular mode of transport for short trips. More research is needed to show that e-scooters are a safe mode of transport and what type of trips they replace. If e-scooters are shown to reduce the number of car trips, and they are proved to be safe, then we will consider the needs of e-scooter users in a future iteration of this strategy.

5. Theme 3 - Supporting travel behaviour change

5.1.1. We recognise that in addition to delivering high quality infrastructure, further investment in initiatives to promote active travel and encourage people to walk and cycle more often is an essential element to our overall strategy.

5.1.2. Travel behaviour change initiatives delivered alongside infrastructure can maximise people's awareness and confidence to change their travel habits and consider walking and cycling as the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as one part of a longer journey combined with public transport. This is key in supporting public health and wellbeing through physical activity, and it broadens people's options for travel and reduces any perceived reliance on private motor vehicles.

5.1.3. Within West Sussex initiatives have been delivered in recent years, either by the council or through industry partners, to provide cycle training and develop skills and promote discounts on cycle purchases. We have worked with schools, employers, and industry bodies to promote national events that encourage walking and cycling. Partners such as Sussex Air have also delivered behavioural change interventions on behalf of local authorities across Sussex. However, we recognise the need to do more, and to build on existing programmes and introduce new ones that reflect national best practice and foster greater collaboration with industry and community partners.

5.1.4. In this section we summarise the main elements of our approach to supporting travel behaviour change and promoting active travel.

5.2 Partnerships with employers, schools, and industry

5.2.1. Delivering travel behaviour change programmes effectively will mean the council continuing to work closely with employers, schools, Sussex Air, and industry partners. This will ensure the council invests in developing programmes that are targeted where they are most needed as stated in the WSTP, in particular where infrastructure improvements are planned or being implemented, and where key audiences are most receptive to change and supporting with delivery.

The council and Sustrans delivered a wide-ranging programme of active travel support in partnership with a selection of schools in 2021. Sustrans Active Travel Officers worked with four schools to engage them in active travel initiatives, including bicycle skills training, 'Dr Bike' sessions, and classroom activities exploring the link between active travel and air quality.

Students from all four schools were invited to take part in a banner design competition to create a legacy for the project and give the pupils some ownership over the spaces outside their schools – with 89 entries received.

Urban Design teams also carried out site visits to analyse the surrounding areas for walking and cycling potential and current challenges, leading on to the development of ideas for improvements to the urban realm for active travel.

5.2.2. Working with partners on project delivery will remain a key theme throughout active travel scheme delivery under this strategy.

5.2.3. We wish to nurture a culture that reduces car trips for the journey to and from school and increases levels of walking, wheeling, and cycling. Most of our schools have enforceable school keep clear markings to manage parking near school entrances and support safety, together with school safety zones that encourage 20mph limits at drop off and pick up times.

5.2.4. We place great emphasis on developing schemes and initiatives that enable active travel as a realistic alternative to car trips. In addition to our 'School Streets' trial scheme, we will build on previous work to develop an area-based approach that considers LCWIP routes, casualty hot spots, new residential developments, bus routes and interchanges, railway stations and natural walking desire lines.

5.2.5. We will continue to encourage schools to develop, review, and manage Travel Plans and promote active travel within their community.

5.3 Targeted communications and promotion

5.3.1. The council has continued to invest in developing new and enhanced approaches to communications that actively promote walking and cycling. This has included embracing the role of social media platforms to reach wider audiences across our communities.

In 2021 the council delivered '**Think Green, Think Health – Think Active Travel**' – a campaign promoting the benefits of active travel across West Sussex to support positive changes in travel choices. Funded through the Government's Active Travel Fund this campaign developed and delivered target messaging through a variety of channels, including engaging with audiences on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Delivered in partnership with WSP and Air Social, the six-week social media campaign posts received over 1,700,000 impressions with almost half a million users across a wide cross-section of our communities. Engagement in the messaging was strong, with over 25,000 'click throughs' on campaign content.

5.3.2. This form of targeted engagement provides a cost-effective approach to providing essential information on the benefits of active travel, with the potential to tailor messaging to different audiences to ensure relevance.

5.3.3. Going forward we will continue to develop targeted communications and undertake promotional work to raise awareness around active travel and to complement and maximise the benefit of related infrastructure investment across the county.

5.4 Delivering training and skills development

5.4.1. Developing people's cycling skills and confidence at an early age remains a high priority, and through our Bikeability programme we will continue to offer free cycle training to national standards (Bikeability levels 1-3) to all Year 6 pupils through ongoing partnerships with schools.

5.4.2. We will also continue to offer adult cycle training to employees through planned employer engagement programmes to promote active travel.

5.5 Travel Plans for new developments

5.5.1. Travel Plans are tools that can help to minimise the number of vehicle trips generated by new development sites, by reducing the need to travel by car and promoting and incentivising active travel and public transport.

5.5.2. We will continue to secure Travel Plans through the planning process for commercial and residential developments that are required to produce Transport Assessments. These sites will be required to achieve (or improve upon) a maximum 12-hour weekday vehicle trip rate and must be monitored in accordance with the TRICS UK Standard Methodology for Travel Plans.

5.6 Demand management

5.6.1. Demand management is perhaps best understood when described in terms of the 'carrot and stick' approach to transport planning. Improving travel alternatives and encouraging people to make sustainable travel choices is the 'carrot' part of demand management.

5.6.2. There is widespread agreement that transport capacity is increasingly a scarce resource and an argument that private car use, which is virtually free at the point of use, can be controlled best by charging. Many people believe that with traffic levels rising significantly, charging is preferable to the costs of ever-increasing congestion. This is the 'stick' part of demand management.

5.6.3. The County Council's approach to managing demand utilises a mix of 'soft' measures, such as road improvements and bus priority schemes, and 'harder' measures, such as some form of road user charging. This is outlined in the [Integrated Parking Strategy 2022-2027](#) (IPC), which provides the platform for introducing 'harder' type demand management measures. Comprehensive parking strategies for a number of towns make clear how the provision, charging, and enforcement of on-street parking are part of a local demand management strategy. Demand management can ultimately increase passenger throughput, increase roadway capacity, and reduce local parking demand by spreading demand to other facilities/locations.

5.6.4. The IPC includes three specific policies that can support active travel by facilitating pedestrian and cycling movements:

- Policy 4 explains how parking policy can promote alternative forms of transport
- Policy 7 sets out how (in the longer term) greater control of parking on footways could promote pedestrian movements
- Policy 9 sets out how the council will consider additional enforcement powers, which could potentially include utilisation of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to manage parking across dropped kerbs on busy pedestrian corridors and parking on 'School Keep Clear' markings

6. Theme 4 - Embedding our strategy

6.1 A dynamic and responsive approach to scheme delivery

6.1.1. We commit to embedding this Strategy as an integral part of our transport programmes throughout the period of the West Sussex Transport Plan.

6.1.2. Given the lifetime of the Strategy we can reasonably expect new issues and opportunities to emerge over time, and therefore our active travel investment programmes will need to be dynamic and responsive to change. We therefore consider this Strategy will operate in a cyclical fashion, as outlined in Figure 6.1.

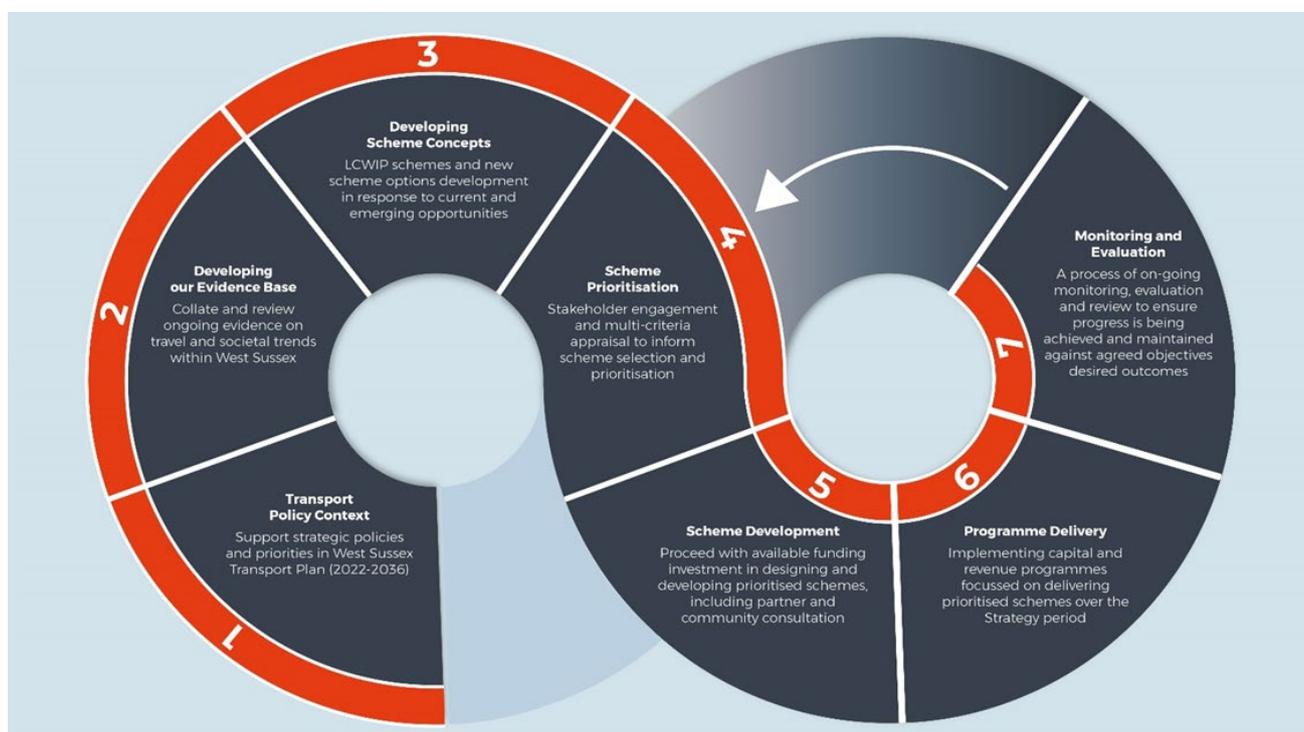


Figure 6.1 Active travel scheme development process

6.1.3. We will adopt a process of building and maintaining our understanding of transport needs, travel patterns and changing trends, ensuring the programmes of investment delivered through this Strategy are grounded in a clear evidence base.

6.1.4. Through regular and ongoing dialogue with our Borough and District partners, and community stakeholders, we will then also ensure new scheme concepts are identified and considered as part of an overall rolling prioritisation and selection process.

6.1.5. Once schemes have been identified, prioritised, and delivered they will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure the intended outcomes and benefits are being realised. This process will then flow back into our consideration and prioritisation of future schemes, allowing us to build an increasingly evidence-based approach over time to ensure investment in active travel achieves the best outcomes for all.

7. Strategy delivery

7.1.1. Delivering the aspirations and approaches outlined in this strategy will span a variety of current and future investment programmes within the council. Crucially, active travel will become increasingly embedded within all transport and highways schemes that we develop through the period of our Local Transport Plan.

7.1.2. In this section we summarise some of the main sources of funding that we anticipate being available to support delivering this strategy, and the main investment programmes.

7.2 Strategy funding and delivery programmes

Highways, Transport and Planning delivery programme

7.2.1. The council is committed to an ongoing ambitious programme of investment in the county's highways and transport infrastructure. Most recently, the council agreed a £32.2m package of highways and transport spending for the financial year 2024/25, with an extra £21m from the council's capital budget over the five-year period 2022/23 to 2026/27. The council will deliver transport improvements through its Highways, Transport and Planning Delivery Programme, which is reviewed annually.

7.2.2. For active travel there is a clear commitment that all our major road schemes will include facilities for cycling and affected communities will be consulted on schemes at an early stage as they are developed. This enables views to be considered before schemes are implemented and informs the design process.

7.2.3. When designing schemes care will be taken to ensure opportunities to reduce embodied carbon through the construction process are identified alongside approaches to reduce the need for future maintenance.

Contributions from future planned development

7.2.4. Embedding high quality active travel infrastructure within and connecting with future development in the county will be a key means of fulfilling the objectives within this strategy. As a local transport authority, the council is a consultee in the land use planning process. To this end the council will continue to liaise with district/borough council partners to review and negotiate planning applications and ensure high quality provision is reflected within development masterplans and that sufficient contributions towards public highway improvements are secured. When responding to planning applications the county council will highlight opportunities to safeguard land for potential active travel routes. Opportunities to safeguard land should also be considered when county council property is disposed of.

Active Travel Fund, Active Travel England

7.2.5. The government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) was introduced in 2020 to support local authority investment in walking and cycling facilities. An initial tranche of funding supported the installation of temporary projects for the COVID-19 pandemic response, with a second tranche being made available to support the development and delivery of longer-term projects.

7.2.6. The county council secured £2.35 million in funding in the second tranche to deliver priority schemes to improve active travel choices with permanent walking and cycling improvements across the county. In 2024 Active Travel England awarded the council a further £1.014m from the Active Travel Fund 4 Extension. The authority also secured £275,000 from the Capability Fund in 2021, £356,500 in 2023, and a further £475,000 in 2024 for revenue-funded activities, including developing concept designs for priority LCWIP schemes.

7.2.7. Future annual funding rounds through ATF would provide an on-going opportunity for the council to apply for similar such funding towards current and emerging active travel scheme priorities.

7.2.8. In determining scheme priorities for future government funding, we will engage and consult as appropriate with partner organisations including, but not limited to:

- The West Sussex district and borough councils
- Parish councils
- South Downs National Park Authority
- National Highways
- Neighbouring local highway authorities
- The rail industry
- West Sussex Cycle Forum
- West Sussex Local Access Forum
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Cycle retailers
- Tourism operators
- Ramblers groups
- Transport organisation, such as Sustrans, CyclingUK and Living Streets
- Vulnerable road user group
- Active Travel England

We will also aim to engage with hard-to-reach groups.

Transport for the South East

7.2.9. Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the sub-national transport body for the South East of England area, which encompasses West Sussex and the South Downs National Park. TfSE has published an ambitious 30-year Transport Strategy, which outline a vision for a net-zero carbon South East by 2050, supported by promoting active travel and healthy lifestyles as a social priority.

7.2.10. TfSE aspires to become a statutory body with the power to allocate funding towards achieving the Transport Strategy vision. Throughout the period of our Active Travel Strategy the council anticipates working closely in partnership with TfSE, and the Coast to Capital LEP Transport Body, to explore investment opportunities for active travel infrastructure and promotion within West Sussex.

8. Measuring our performance

8.1 A commitment to monitoring and strategy review

8.1.1. As we deliver this Strategy throughout the period of the West Sussex Transport Plan, we recognise the need to monitor progress and consider how the strategy may need to evolve and change over time. This will ensure our approach to investment in active travel remains targeted in achieving the desired outcomes and remains dynamic and responsive to new issues and opportunities that emerge in the coming years. The WSTP will be reviewed every 5 years and monitoring reports produced annually. Monitoring reports will be published on the county council's website.

8.1.2. To support this process, and inform future decision-making, the council will embed best practice approaches to monitoring and evaluating active travel investment, including both capital schemes and revenue-funded information and promotional activities. We will employ appropriate quantitative and qualitative means to capture and quantify benefits, including baseline and post-scheme monitoring to see how schemes have delivered on their intended outcomes. As stated in the WSTP the county council will monitor long term usage trends and assess scheme benefits for at least five years after opening to manage the revenue implications of monitoring equipment.

8.1.3. This will become a rolling process employed as standard and used to inform continuous improvement and provide evidence to our formal decision-making bodies on future active travel scheme investment priorities in the county.

8.1.4. In recent years Our Council Plan included a target to implement 7.5km of new cycling infrastructure annually. Whilst this has been helpful in tracking our performance in terms of scheme delivery the target did not capture any associated increase in use. We will therefore work towards replacing the target with one that relates to increased active travel at sites where new infrastructure has been introduced. Recent advances in movement sensor technology have improved the type and accuracy of data that can be collected, and we have recently deployed this technology at a small number of sites. We do not currently have enough data to enable a usage target to be determined but will look to develop such a target as soon as this is practicable.

8.1.5. Information and evidence gathered through our monitoring processes, and engagement with our communities, will also be used to inform future reviews of this strategy.

8.2 Benchmarking

8.2.1. Table 8.1 shows that the proportion of West Sussex adults who walk or cycle for any purpose is higher than the average for England and similar to the regional average. We will seek to at least maintain this position.

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| West Sussex | 75.7% | 75.9% | 76.2% | 73.0% | 77.2% | 74.3% |
| South East | 74.2% | 74.4% | 75.6% | 72.4% | 74.7% | 74.1% |
| England | 71.8% | 71.7% | 73.2% | 69.3% | 71.2% | 70.6% |

Table 8.1 Proportion of adults who walk or cycle for any purpose at least once a week (source: Department for Transport)