

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 JUNE 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	19
TITLE:	CYCLING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2016/17		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	ALL
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Cycling Strategy 2014 forms part of the overall transport strategy for Reading as set out in the third Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-26. This report is the third Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan, setting out the programme for 2016/17 and reviewing progress towards delivery of the strategy objectives during 2015/16.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note ongoing monitoring and progress made in delivering the Cycling Strategy during 2015/16 as outlined in Appendices A as well as the location of serious accidents involving cyclists in Appendix B.
- 2.2 To agree the Cycling Strategy delivery programme for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix C.
- 2.3 That in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to carry out a statutory consultation to identify options for cycle use along the Thames Path.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document setting out the Council's transport strategy and policy. Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 was adopted by the Council on 29 March 2011.
- 3.2 The Cycle Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling, was adopted by the Council on 19 March 2014 as a sub-strategy to the Local Transport Plan. The strategy includes detailed policies regarding the design principles for delivering infrastructure and route improvements for cyclists on the public highway, as well as policies to encourage and promote cycling to different demographics.

3.3 The Cycling Strategy is aligned with wider local policy documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, contributing towards wider public health and air quality objectives.

4. CYCLING STRATEGY PROGRESS IN 2015/16

4.1 A range of schemes and measures have been implemented over the past year, contributing towards achieving the overall objectives of the Cycling Strategy. Delivery highlights in 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A include:

- The opening of the new pedestrian cycle bridge over the River Thames, providing a new route for cyclists from Caversham to Reading Station and the town centre.
- Completion of the A33 Pinch Point Scheme, including a new raised section of cycle route R1 between Rose Kiln Lane and Bennet Road to ensure it remains usable during times of flooding.
- The opening of the Napier Road underpass providing an additional north-south link under the Great Western railway line between Napier Road and Kenavon Drive.
- The replacement of bollard-style cycle stands in the town centre.
- The continuation of cycle training courses and events, including Bikeability, Bike It and the CTC cycling development programme.

4.2 Delivery of this wide range of cycling enhancements has encouraged increased levels of cycling throughout the Borough, including in the vicinity of the River Thames and Thames Path, where the pedestrian and cycle bridge and supporting connections have provided a new traffic-free facility. The annual cordon count conducted on 13th May 2015 that revealed a 0.3% increase in cycle modal share from 3.0% to 3.3% and an increase in the number of cycle trips into the town centre from 6,176 in 2014 to 8,280 in 2015. In addition, the number of bicycles parked in the town centre also increased from an average of 753 bicycles per month in 2014 to 783 bicycles per month in 2015 with an average capacity rate of 66%, despite a number of cycle parking locations around the station operating at above 100% capacity. The opening of the cycle parking hub at the Northern Interchange is expected to cause a shift in demand when around 600 cycle parking spaces become available in June.

4.3 Accident data below, recorded by Thames Valley Police, shows that 25% of killed and seriously injured accidents between January 2013 and December 2015 involved cyclists, all of whom were seriously injured. Whilst the number of cyclists involved in serious accidents remained the same as the previous three-year period, the overall number of accidents for all modes decreased by ten. Of the serious cycle accidents illustrated in Appendix B, ten occurred along the strategic road network where there are planned improvements as outlined in this implementation plan, including eight parallel to the planned NCN 422 route and two along the Oxford Road corridor. Proposals to reduce the number of road traffic accidents, particularly those involving vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, are reported separately to Traffic Management Sub Committee in the annual Road Safety Programme.

Severity	2011 - 2013		2012 - 2014		2013 - 2015	
	Total Accidents	Number & % cycles	Total Accidents	Number & % cycles	Total Accidents	Number & % cycles
KSI	130	31 (24%)	130	30 (23%)	120	30 (25%)
Slight	935	230 (25%)	925	243 (26%)	914	248 (27%)
Total	1065	261 (25%)	1055	273 (26%)	1034	278 (30%)

CYCLING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2016/17

- 4.4 The Cycling Strategy delivery programme for 2016/17, as set out at Appendix C, has been developed by assessing the level of available funding alongside an assessment methodology to prioritise projects which meet strategic objectives and deliver value for money.
- 4.5 The opening of the pedestrian and cycle bridge has led to an increase in cycle use in the vicinity of the River Thames and Thames Path, which is legally classified as a footpath over which the public has a right of way by foot only. Increased cycle use has been highlighted through site visits along the Thames Path and ongoing dialogue with the Cycle Forum that led to the decision to carry out informal consultation seeking the views of key stakeholders regarding the possibility of permitting cycling along the Thames Path between Reading and Caversham Bridge. It should be noted that the Council initiated the process to convert the section of the Thames Path between Reading and Caversham Bridge to a cycle track in 2007, which resulted in over 150 objections and 29 letters of support. Objections related to concerns regarding the width of the footpath, the perceived threat to wildlife and conflicts between different user groups. The consultation resulted in the Council seeking independent legal advice and taking the decision to not pursue the Order further.
- 4.6 Respondents were generally in support of opening up more traffic-free routes in order to avoid alternative busy roads and to encourage cycling amongst vulnerable groups or less confident cyclists, including the Thames Path Management Group that is reviewing cycle access across the whole Thames Path route. Half of the respondents also suggested the need to consider improved signing promoting considerate use, such as the slogan adopted by The Canals & Rivers Trust - 'share the space, drop your pace'. However a number of respondents raised concerns regarding the width of the towpath being appropriate for a shared facility, in particular the section of footpath between De Montfont Road and Reading Bridge was highlighted to be of insufficient width to accommodate dual-use. The majority of the Thames Path between Reading and Caversham Bridge has a width of between 2 and 2.6 metres. However, one short section of the Thames Path near Thameside measured 1.7 metres wide. National guidance recommends that unsegregated share-use facilities should ideally be 3 metres wide as reflected in our Cycling Strategy that also states that shared-use facilities will be a minimum of 2 metres wide. The Environment Agency requested that sections of failing river banks be taken into consideration should improvements be made to the path.
- 4.7 It is now recommended that a statutory consultation is carried out to seek the views of landowners to further identify options for cycle use along the full section of the Thames Path (Footpath 1) in Reading. The results from the consultation will be reported back to the Committee along with our recommendation taking into account feedback from the informal and statutory consultation.
- 4.8 Other key delivery objectives within the programme for 2016/17 include:
- Opening of the cycle parking hub at Reading Station Northern Interchange, including around 600 cycle parking spaces, maintenance area and lighting.
 - The commencement of Phase 1 of the NCN 422 scheme consisting of shared-use facilities along the Bath Road between Berkeley Avenue and the Borough boundary.
 - Town centre signing review and changes, and extension of branded signing.
 - Implementation of area study schemes, including 20mph scheme in east Reading and cycle facilities on Oxford Road.
 - Partnership working with Cycling UK to deliver a Big Bike Revival campaign upskilling volunteers to deliver cycle initiatives focused around deprived areas.

- Continuation of Bikeability Levels 2 and 3 and delivery of new Bikeability Plus modules.
- Ongoing provision of ReadyBike scheme, including relocation of several docking stations and search for scheme sponsor.
- Review access barriers along National Cycle Routes to ensure trailers and accessible bikes can access off-carriageway and leisure routes.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The delivery of the projects outlined in this report help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy..

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 A three-month consultation was undertaken between October 2013 and January 2014 as part of the development of the Cycling Strategy. This included an online and hardcopy survey, information on the Council and Travel Reading Live websites and promotion in the local media. In addition, transport officers contacted participants of various cycle initiatives including the Workplace Cycle Challenge and delivered presentations to local groups, including Neighbourhood Action Groups, the Older People's Working Group and the Transport Users Forum.

6.2 Schemes included in this Implementation Plan with continue to be communicated to the local community through informal and statutory consultation processes, Council meetings and Forums.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010, including Section 149, which requires the Council to have due regard to the needs of people with protected characteristics.

7.2 An equality impact assessment scoping exercise was carried out as part of the development of the Cycling Strategy 2014, and considered that the proposals outlined in the Strategy do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics. However, individual equality impact assessments will continue to be carried out for schemes developed further as part of the Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan and reported to this Committee separately.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Consultation will be carried out in accordance with our legal requirements and recommendations will be reported to a future meeting.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Implementation of the schemes as set out in Appendix C is dependent upon the availability of funding from a range of sources including LTP budgets, private sector contributions and other local revenue funding sources. The Big Bike Revival and NCN 422 scheme are externally funded by Cycling UK and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

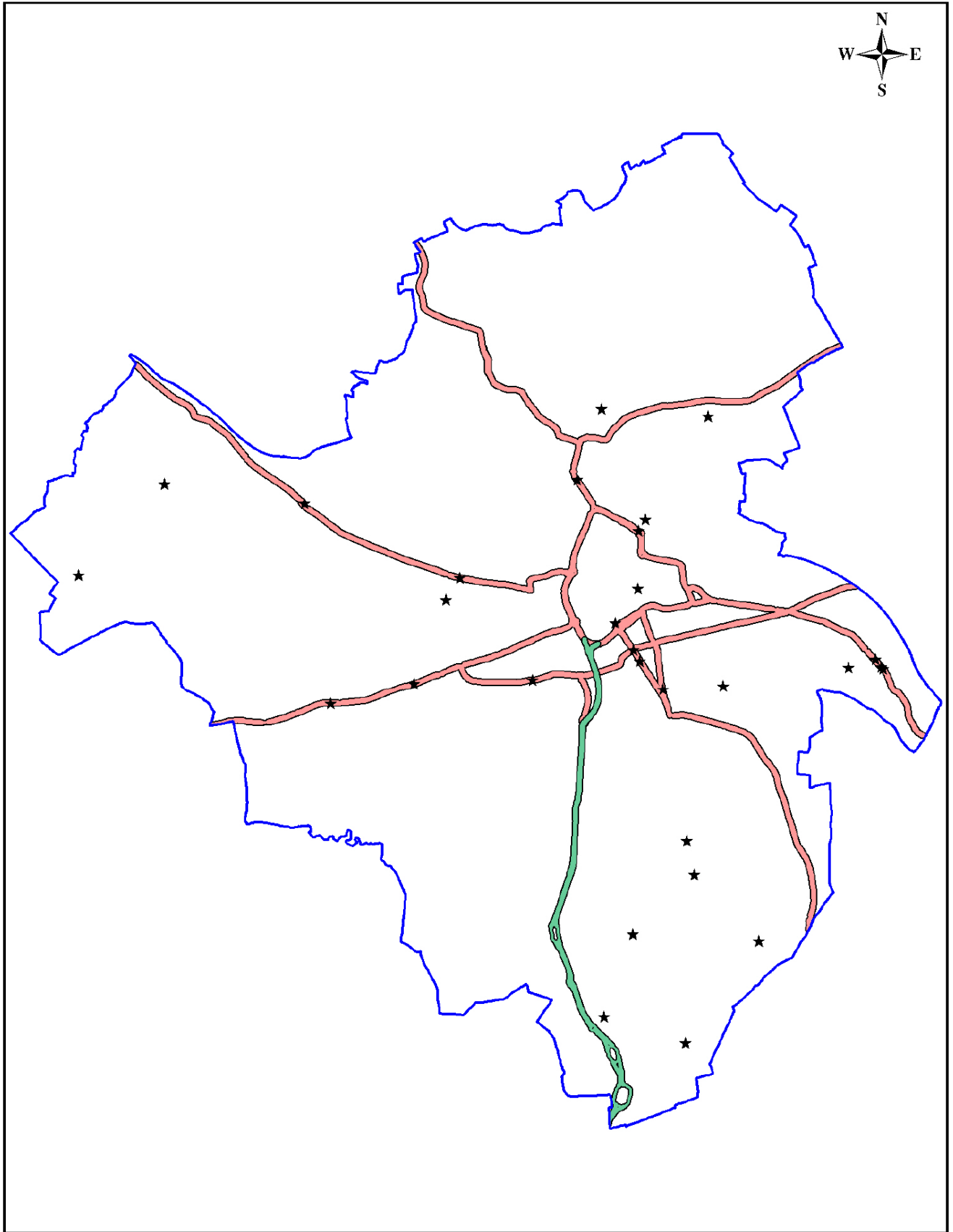
10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Cycling Strategy 2014 & Implementation Plan, Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee Report, 19th March 2014.
- 10.2 Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan 2015/16, Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee Report, 15th July 2015.

Appendix A: Delivery Highlights 2015-2016

Cycling Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling	STRATEGY THEMES						Key Achievements 2015-16
	Support the local economy	Deliver wider social benefits	Reduce carbon emissions	Improve safety	Promote increased physical activity	Improve air quality and wider environmental benefits	
Training & Skills							
Bikeability		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1296 children received Bikeability training.
CTC Community Club Programme		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Nearly 2000 beneficiaries attended sessions organised or delivered by CTC, including Dr Bike, led-rides, maintenance courses and adult cycle training.
Events & Campaigns							
Bike It	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Bike It delivered at primary schools including bike skills sessions and maintenance classes.
Bike Week	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Series of events held to promote cycling including taster sessions, free bike checks and publicity.
EMPOWER		✓	✓		✓	✓	100,000 Euros secured to deliver a range of new cycle activities supporting existing initiatives from June 2016 to June 2017.
Infrastructure							
Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Opening of the pedestrian and cycle bridge.
Napier Road Underpass	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Opening of underpass providing another north/south link.
A33 Pinch Point Scheme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Completion of scheme including new cycle facilities.
Cycle Parking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Replacement of bollard style stands in town centre and new cycle parking facilities at Tilehurst Local Centre.
Traffic Calming	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Continued development of proposals for a 20mph zone scheme in East Reading.
Street Lighting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	LED lighting is being rolled out across the borough.
Maintenance			✓	✓	✓		Annual resurfacing and potholes repair programme undertaken.
Monitoring & Evaluation							
Monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing monitoring undertaken as part of the LTP programme including the annual cordon count.
Partnership, Consultation & Community Engagement							
Engagement		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing engagement through various cycle initiatives and meetings held with local cyclists.
Funding							
Bikeability Grant		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Initial funding allocation secured from the Department for Transport to deliver Bikeability between April and August 2016.
Sustainable Travel Transition Year	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A bid was submitted to the DfT for a £435k programme delivering a range of revenue schemes from cycle initiatives to maintenance schemes.

Appendix B: Location Plan of Serious Cycle Accidents 2013-2015



Title: **Serious cycle accidents for the 3 year period 2013-2015**



Date: 03/05/2016 Scale at A4:1:46,000

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Ref: G:\MIND\CD\Env\Planning & Transport\Cycle Accidents\Cycle Accidents 2013-15

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Appendix C: Cycle Strategy Programme 2016/17

Note: All costs are indicative and draft programme is subject to change dependent upon funding availability.

Scheme Name	LTP Action Plan Area	Timescale
Southampton Street Shared-Use Facility	2 - Southern	Spring 2016
Cycling UK Big Bike Revival	0 - All	Spring/Summer 2016
Town Centre Signing Review & Improvements	1 - Central Area	Summer 2016
Bath Road Shared-Use Facilities Between Berkeley Ave and Coley Ave	3 - South-Western	Summer 2016
Cycle Facilities on Silver Street & Southampton Street	2 - Southern	Summer 2016
Consultation on Cycle Use Along the Thames Path	Multiple Areas	Summer 2016
Retendering Bikeability & Delivery Programme	0 - All	On-going - 2016/17
Annual Resurfacing Programme	0 - All	Summer 2016
East Reading Transport Study	6 - Eastern 7 - Southeastern	Summer 2016
Oxford Road Transport Study	4 - Western	Summer 2016
EMPOWER Programme	0 - All	June 2016 - June 2017
NCN 422 Scheme Development & Phase 1 Delivery	Multiple Areas	2016/17 & 2017/18
ReadyBike Cycle Hire Scheme & Docking Station Relocations	Multiple Areas	On-going - 2016/17
West Reading Transport Study	3 - South-Western	On-going - 2016/17
Cycle Facility Improvements	Multiple Areas	On-going - 2016/17
Cycle Route Improvements	Multiple Areas	On-going - 2016/17
LED Street Lighting Upgrades	Multiple Areas	On-going - 2016/17
Cow Lane Bridges	4 - Western	Spring 2017