

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee

11 March 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Active Travel Task and Finish Group – Update Report
Purpose of the report	To present an overview of the latest position with the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Chris Maddocks, Strategic Transport Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Council priority	Deliver a sustainable & healthy environment & reduce Reading's carbon footprint
Recommendations	1. That the Committee notes the latest position with the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group as set out in the report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview on the latest position with the recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group. The recommendations were approved by this Committee in November 2025, subject to an evaluation of each recommendation being brought to a future meeting.
- 1.2. In addition, the report provides context to the delivery of active travel schemes and initiatives in Reading over recent years, the outcomes that have been achieved to date and future plans; alongside a summary of our partnership and stakeholder working which is a key element of the Council's work in this area.
- 1.3. The latest position with each recommendation of the Task and Finish Group is set out in Appendix A, which reflects the input of a number of different teams and service areas from across the Council involved in the delivery of active travel work. The full recommendations from the Task and Finish Group are set out at Appendix B.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council adopted its new Local Transport Plan (LTP), the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, at the meeting of full Council on 15 October 2024. The Strategy sets out a vision to create healthier, greener and more equal communities through the future provision of travel choices in Reading. The Strategy is focused on promoting sustainable transport options as a realistic alternative to the private car, setting out how transport facilities and services will be developed to 2040 to help achieve the Council's wider objectives for the town as set out in the Council Plan.
- 2.2. The LTP sets the overarching vision for future transport provision in Reading, with sub-strategies providing more detailed implementation plans for specific topics. These include the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan,

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

- 2.3. In line with the Council's overview and scrutiny procedure rules, the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (SEPT) Committee established a Councillor-led Task and Finish Group on 12 March 2025, and approved the recommendations of the Group at its meeting on 19 November 2025.
- 2.4. Active Travel refers to modes of travel that involve a level of physical activity, such as walking, wheeling (e.g. using wheelchairs, mobility scooters) and cycling, as alternatives to private cars.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Councillor-led Active Travel Task and Finish Group prepared a series of recommendations for the delivery of the Council's Active Travel Strategy and objectives. The recommendations were approved by this Committee in November 2025, subject to an evaluation of each recommendation being brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.2. The Council has a strong track record of delivering an ambitious programme of active travel schemes and initiatives, focused on achieving its overall aims and objectives in relation to both active travel and wider sustainable transport objectives. This programme of work is set in the context of the Council's adopted Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), a sub-strategy to the Reading Transport Strategy 2040.
- 3.3. The LCWIP was prepared jointly with neighbouring Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils, to set out plans for a joined up active travel network for the wider Reading urban area. The sub-strategy provides an agreed basis for future enhancements to improve active travel routes as part of a wider network, although it is fully acknowledged that delivery will be incremental as funding for different elements of the overall network is secured.
- 3.4. In line with the proposals set out in the LCWIP, the Council has prepared a branded walking and cycle network for the urban area, providing materials for residents and visitors which highlight key active travel routes throughout the urban area. The branded materials produced by the Council include an overall network plan and individual route maps, wayfinding boards at key destinations and signage, stickers and on-carriageway markings to highlight each route.

Infrastructure Enhancements

- 3.5. The Council has secured significant external investment in Reading and delivered an ambitious programme of active travel infrastructure enhancements in recent years, with some examples highlighted below:
 - Reading Station Interchanges – pedestrianisation of the interchange areas to the north and south of the station and more recently secured further improvements as part of the Station Hill development including the pocket park and new shared pedestrian cycle route between the station and town centre.
 - Reading Station Subway – reduced a significant barrier for active travel through securing public access through the Reading Station subway, initially for pedestrians and more recently for cyclist through refurbishment works.
 - Napier Road Underpass – introduced public access through the underpass from Napier Road to Kenavon Drive, providing a missing link to the active travel network linking Newtown to the River Thames for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Christchurch Bridge – provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Thames, providing a missing link to the active travel network linking Caversham to the station and wider town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

- National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 422 – provision of a new national cycle route between Newbury and Windsor, including a section within Reading providing enhanced east-west cycle infrastructure between Calcot, Reading town centre and East Reading.
- London Road Shared Path – provision of a shared path enhanced facility between London St / Silver St, Royal Berkshire Hospital and Cemetery Junction, including side road priority measures for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reading Bridge Cycle Lanes – provision of advisory cycle lanes on Reading Bridge, reprioritising capacity away from general traffic on this key pinch point on the network.
- Oxford Road Cycle Lanes – provision of advisory cycle lanes on Oxford Road between Norcot Road roundabout and Tilehurst Station, providing a safer facility on this key arterial route as part of the overall network.
- Shinfield Road Active Travel Route – provision of segregated cycle lanes and enhanced pedestrian facilities as part of this key route between Reading town centre / Silver Street / Southampton Street / Christchurch Road and the University of Reading and beyond.
- A33 Shared Path – provision of a dedicated bridge for pedestrians and cyclists over the River Kennet as part of the bus rapid transit scheme, to maintain a shared facility on this key arterial route.
- Pedestrian Facilities – on-going programme of enhancements to pedestrian facilities throughout the borough, with recent examples including the new shared path facility on Portman Road, and shared crossings on Gosbrook Road, Upper Redlands Road, London Road and Richfield Avenue, providing access to key local amenities.
- Cycle Parking – on-going programme of cycle parking provision including the Reading Station cycle parking hub which has recently been refurbished, and more secure ‘cyclepod’ style cycle parking installed at key locations throughout the town centre.
- Highway and Footpath Resurfacing – on-going programme of road and pavement resurfacing which provide improvements for all modes including active travel.

Initiatives, Training and Incentivisation

3.6. The Council has complemented these infrastructure enhancements with a comprehensive programme of initiatives to encourage the uptake of active travel, with some recent examples highlighted below:

- Bikeability Cycle Training – provision of cycle training in schools with approximately 1,800 children taking part each year in schools throughout the borough.
- Learn to Ride Cycle Training – provision of initial cycle training for younger children and/or less confident cyclists, with approximately 200 children taking part each year.
- Road Safety Education – provision of road safety education workshops to 35 primary schools in the borough last year.
- Adult Cycle Training – provision of adult cycle training courses, with over 230 participants last year.
- Cycle Repair Events and Maintenance Training – provision of Doctor Bike pop-up cycle repair events, and bicycle maintenance workshops to provide residents

with the skills to maintain their bicycles, including a series of women only sessions.

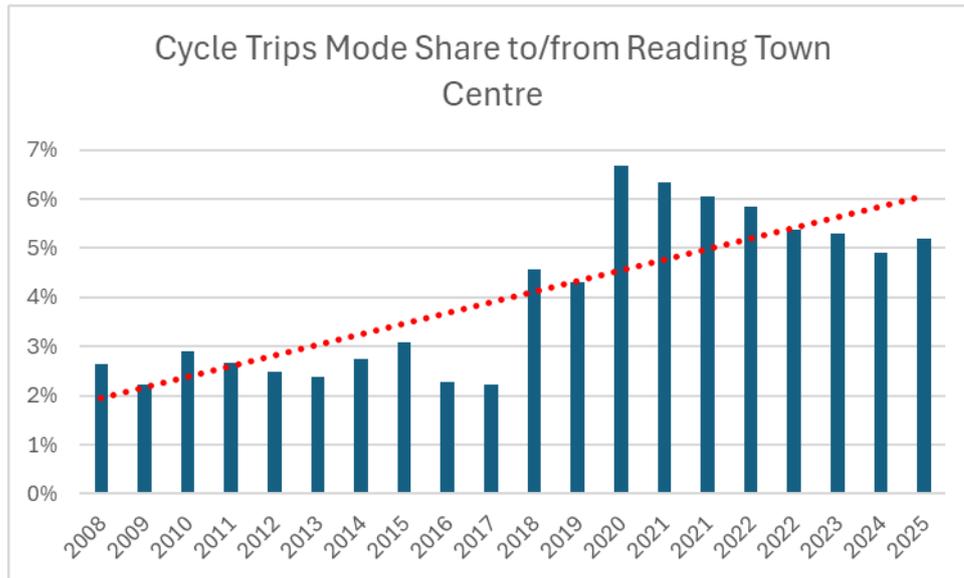
- School Street Schemes – on-going programme of working with schools to delivery school street schemes, with seven schools currently covered by a scheme in the borough.
- Walk to School Week – working with Living Streets to promote walk to school week, with 26 primary schools participating in the borough in 2025. A further 21 schools and nurseries participated in the Little Feet initiative during Walk to School Week last year, designed for younger children.
- School Active Travel Officer – working with Sustrans to provide specialist support for schools to promote sustainable travel, including materials provided through the Modeshift STARS travel planning portal.
- Beat the Street – walking and cycling challenge for schools which was initially provided through an external transport grant secured by the Council with subsequent challenges funded by Public Health.
- Wellbeing Walks – promotion of local walks in Reading to promote both physical and mental wellbeing through provision of a leaflet to complement the local cycle network and route maps.
- Community Events – participation and provision of funding for community events including the East Reading Festival, Children’s Festival, Climate Festival and Reading Cycle Festival.
- Maintenance Activities – on-going programme of maintenance of the walking and cycle routes in the borough, including the rights of way network.

3.7. In many cases ongoing provision of these initiatives is subject to continued funding being allocated by the Council for these activities.

Partnership Working and Outcomes

- 3.8. The Council has worked positively with partners in order to deliver active travel schemes, with the objective of achieving better facilities for residents. We have worked closely with a wide range of key stakeholders and delivery partners on the active travel programme, alongside learning from best practice and sharing our experiences with others.
- 3.9. Recent examples of close partnership working include work with neighbouring local authorities to develop joined-up active travel networks and deliver cross-boundary schemes such as the NCN 422 route and the Woodley to Reading cycle route; working with local schools to deliver School Street schemes and other initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to school; working with Government and Active Travel England to secure grant funding and design approval for our Active Travel Fund schemes; and working with private developers through the planning process to secure improvements to the local walking and cycle networks as part of new developments.
- 3.10. In addition, Officers have worked extensively with local interest forums, groups and stakeholders to seek input to schemes as they are being developed and to seek feedback to improve future schemes. This includes local Councillor working groups for specific schemes, the Cleaner Air and Safer Transport (CAST) Forum, Cycle Forum, Access and Disabilities Working Group, Older Peoples’ Forum and the Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum (LAF).
- 3.11. The outcomes that have been achieved through this work have resulted in Reading having amongst the highest mode-share of sustainable travel in the country, outside of London, with a considerable shift to the use of sustainable travel modes in recent years.
- 3.12. An example of this progress is the travel trends highlighted by the annual cordon counts undertaken by the Council to monitor trends in trips to/from Reading town centre. These

highlight that approximately 55,000 walking trips and 11,000 cycle trips are undertaken every day, with the trend for cycle trips shown below:



- 3.13. The graph highlights the considerable progress that has been made with increasing levels of cycling to/from the town centre, from a mode share of 2-3% between 2008-17 to a mode share of 5-6% in recent years. However, the peak in mode share of over 6% in 2020 during the pandemic highlights there is still further potential for growth, and that active travel has an important role to play to help deliver the Council's objectives. In overall terms, the mode share for travel to/from the town centre by taxi and private car is approximately 23%, with the vast majority by public transport and active travel.

Task & Finish Group Recommendations

- 3.14. The work of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group and their recommendations as set out in appendix B will help the Council build on the considerable success achieved to date.
- 3.15. There are a number of workstreams currently underway which align with and will help deliver some of the recommendations of the Group. This includes work which has been undertaken to reprioritise the Council's Waiting Restrictions Review Programme, and on-going work to clearly map the process from scheme request to implementation, specifically focused on the Council's Requests for Traffic Management Measures List.
- 3.16. In addition, there is an opportunity to further consider a number of the recommendations through future work being undertaken by the Council. This includes the design of the active travel scheme for Bath Road / Castle Hill which is currently being updated with input from Councillors and local stakeholders, and through an update of the Council's LCWIP to refresh our future active travel delivery plans, for which a number of the recommendations are particularly pertinent.
- 3.17. The greater flexibility recently provided by Government for future year active travel funding provides an opportunity for the Council to consider its priorities moving forward. For instance, the focus may be on packages of smaller active travel schemes as part of the wider network.
- 3.18. The longer-term recommendations of the Group, such as investigating the potential for banning pavement parking and the investigation of further demand management measures, will require further work at the appropriate time to understand resourcing and funding requirements. Any decisions regarding progression of these recommendations will be made through the appropriate Council decision making process at that time.
- 3.19. The Council remains keen to learn from best practice and to improve outcomes, an example of this being the on-going work with the University of Reading and Reading Cycle Campaign to undertake a joint research project focused on learning lessons in the

delivery of active travel infrastructure, which can then be applied to the delivery of schemes and initiatives in Reading.

- 3.20. The current status of each of the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group is provided at Appendix A, including a number of factors to be considered as workstreams are taken forward. Next Steps
- 3.21. The proposed next steps for the Council's active travel programme are set out as part of the overall Local Transport Delivery Plan report to this Committee. Government has recently announced annual active travel funding allocations for Local Authorities for both capital grant (until 2029/30) and revenue grant funding (until 2028/29). Whilst this does represent a reduction on previous levels of funding secured by the Council for active travel, due to the move to allocating funding by a standard formula rather than a competitive process, it does provide longer-term certainty and greater flexibility for the Council to take decisions on how best to utilise this funding in the future.
- 3.22. Future plans include delivery of active travel infrastructure enhancements such as the Bath Road / Castle Hill and Sidmouth Street schemes, alongside working with Wokingham to deliver the Woodley to Reading active travel route. In addition, it is proposed to continue delivering the comprehensive programme of initiatives, training and incentivisation which we believe is critical to maximising usage of infrastructure enhancements and increasing levels of active travel in the borough and beyond.
- 3.23. The proposed Delivery Plan also includes an ambitious programme of wider sustainable travel enhancements for public transport as part of the Council's future plans. Therefore, there will be a need to carefully manage and prioritise the finite resources available to the Council, both financial and staff capacity, to effectively deliver this overall programme and ensure best use of available resources.
- 3.24. As a core element of this future work, it is proposed to continue working closely with partners and stakeholders. This will ensure the Council continues to build on past successes and maximises the effectiveness of the schemes and initiatives contained within the Delivery Plan. This would include continuing to both learn from best practice and share our experiences with others, to enable us to further develop and enhance active travel options in the most effective way for residents and visitors to Reading.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The delivery of the programme of active travel schemes and initiatives as set out within this report will help to deliver the five priorities in the Council Plan to promote more equal communities in Reading; secure Reading's economic and cultural success; deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint; safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children; ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.2. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website. These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around one quarter of total carbon emissions, therefore significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council.
- 5.2. The Climate Impact Assessment tool has been used to assess the full programme of works as set out within this report, resulting in an overall Net Medium Positive impact. This is due to the programme being focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. The programme will enhance facilities to encourage more use of sustainable transport and active travel options, therefore reducing the use of the private car and resulting

congestion, carbon emissions and other air quality issues. There are inevitably emissions associated with the construction of some schemes, although the Council is working to reduce these short-term impacts in order to achieve the longer-term modal switch benefits.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The active travel schemes and initiatives included within this report have and will be communicated to the local community through public exhibitions, consultations and Council meetings.
- 6.2. Statutory consultation will be conducted as appropriate in accordance with legislation, including Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate. Notices will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected area.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2. At its meeting on 12 March 2025, SEPT Committee agreed to amend the Task and Finish Group's Terms of Reference to include "inclusion and equality of access" as a key consideration within the scrutiny exercise.
- 7.3. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not considered applicable to the recommendations contained within this report.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are none.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. There are none.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. A number of the recommendations from the Active Travel Task and Finish Group have financial implications as set out in the current status and considerations for next steps at Appendix A.
- 10.2. It should be noted that specific grant conditions are attached to the individual external grants which have been secured to fund the delivery of the programme of schemes and initiatives as set out within this report. These conditions relate to both the type of works that the grants can be used to fund and the timescales within which the funding needs to be spent. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Council being required to repay the grant funding, either in part or in full.
- 10.3. The availability of funds for any Active Travel schemes is limited to Active Travel Grants, S106 and CIL funding, there are no other sources of funding available.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. Next steps and further considerations are set out in Appendix A.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group – Current Status

Appendix B: Recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group – Full Report