

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee



Reading
Borough Council

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19 November 2025

Title	Report of the Active Travel Task & Finish Group - Findings and Recommendations
Purpose of the report	To present the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	N/A
Report author	Andrew Wood, Principal Committee Administrator
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the findings and recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Scrutiny Group Report, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;2. That officers review the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and provide an evaluation report to a future meeting of this Committee.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group, established by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (SEPT) Committee on 12 March 2025 ([Minute 26](#) 2024-25 refers). The Group's scrutiny exercise has concluded and its report is provided at Appendix 2.
- 1.2. It is recommended that relevant officers review the report's findings and present an evaluation of the Scrutiny Group's recommendations to the SEPT Committee meeting on 11 March 2026.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. 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 motorised vehicles.
- 2.2. On 15 October 2024, the Council adopted the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 as the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the Borough ([Minute 21](#) 2024-25 refers). The LTP encompasses the Council's Active Travel strategy and its associated sub-strategies, including the Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- 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 to scrutinise and review the implementation of Reading's Active Travel strategy. The Committee also approved the Group's Terms of Reference, its cross-party membership and Chair (Councillor Cross).

2.4. The Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group, as agreed by the SEPT Committee are listed below and can be viewed in full at Appendix 1:

Terms of Reference:

- 1) To undertake member-led scrutiny of the design, funding and delivery of the Council's cycling and walking network schemes.
- 2) To enable increased member understanding of the Council's approach to active travel schemes.
- 3) To take evidence from internal and external stakeholders.
- 4) To identify areas of best practice and areas for improvement.
- 5) To assess how the implementation of active travel schemes is meeting the Council's Local Transport Plan objectives especially inclusion and equality of access.
- 6) To make recommendations to be considered by a subsequent meeting of the SEPT Committee.

Policy and Financial Considerations:

- 7) To note the existing process for the allocation of CIL monies to fund active travel schemes.
- 8) To note the need to balance the Council's limited resources for Strategic Transport, including active travel, in terms of both funding and staff, alongside the other schemes and initiatives required to deliver the LTP objectives.
- 9) That acceptance and/or priority given to recommendations will be taken following consultation with the Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services and in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport.
- 10) To make recommendations that feed into the LCWIP update alongside other consultation input from stakeholders and the Lead Councillor.
- 11) To note that any recommendations with financial implications would need to be reviewed by the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services and S151 officer.
- 12) To note that resourcing of the overview and scrutiny exercise will be managed from within existing budgets.

3. Summary of Scrutiny Activity

3.1. The Active Travel Task and Finish Group undertook its scrutiny review through a series of meetings and evidence-gathering activities. The Group's activity is summarised in the table below:

Date:	Activity:
12 March 2025	Active Travel Task and Finish Group established by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (SEPT) Committee.
3 April 2025	Initial meeting of the Task and Finish Group. Agreement to submit written questions to RBC officers and to distribute a stakeholder questionnaire.
12 April 2025	Written questions submitted to RBC officers.
25 April 2025	Stakeholder questionnaire issued by Committee Services.

29 May 2025	Task and Finish Group met to review RBC officer and stakeholder written responses. Agreement to hold evidence-gathering sessions with RBC officers and Reading Cycle Campaign and to contact other Local Authorities with strong records of delivering successful Active Travel schemes.
30 June 2025	Meeting to refine follow-up questions to ask RBC officers at in-person evidence gathering session.
3 July 2025	In-person evidence gathering session held with RBC officers at Civic Offices.
Post 3 July 2025	Additional written questions submitted by the Chair to RBC officers. Responses collected and circulated by Committee Services.
7 August 2025	Online evidence-gathering session held with Reading Cycle Campaign.
29 August 2025	Questionnaire sent to selected Local Authorities. Responses collated by Committee Services and shared with Group members.
19 September 2025	Final meeting to discuss findings and agree recommendations. Chair tasked with drafting the final report.

4. Findings and Recommendations

- 4.1. The Active Travel Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendations report can be found attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.2. Officers have provided a significant amount of information to the Task and Finish Group throughout this process, covering a wide range of areas including Central Government guidance and funding, the Council's statutory duties, roles and capacity of teams within the Council, previous decisions taken by Members at Committees, and detailed information regarding specific designs of active travel schemes. There is an opportunity to implement recommendations from the Group through a refresh of the Council's adopted Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP), which will be reviewed in the context of the challenging financial circumstances facing the Council and the need to prioritise available resources (both financial and staffing) in the most effective way to meet our overall objectives as set out in the Reading Transport Strategy 2040.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 5.1. Scrutiny of the Council's Active Travel strategy contributes towards achieving the Council's wider Strategic Aims by supporting healthier lifestyles, reducing environmental impact, and promoting inclusive access to transport.
- 5.2. Through evidence-led review and stakeholder engagement, the Group's work will help ensure that the Council's Active Travel strategy is aligned with the Council's commitments to public health, climate action, economic growth, and social equity.
- 5.3. The scrutiny process also strengthens governance by promoting transparency and cross-party collaboration, while helping to shape infrastructure that is accessible, sustainable, and responsive to community needs. This work supports the delivery of the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 and reinforces the Council's vision for a thriving, connected, and resilient Borough.

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers)

- 6.2. Active Travel contributes directly to the Council's environmental and climate goals by encouraging walking, wheeling, and cycling as alternatives to private car use.
- 6.3. Active Travel schemes help to reduce emissions, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve air quality. By scrutinising the implementation of the Council's Active Travel strategy, the work of the Task and Finish Group will help to ensure that these important goals are achieved.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1. As part of its scrutiny exercise, the Task and Finish Group engaged with a range of stakeholder organisations with an interest in Active Travel. This included regular participants of the Cycle Forum and attendees of the Cleaner Air Safer Transport (CAST) Forum, ensuring that a broad spectrum of community perspectives were considered.
- 7.2. To explore examples of best practice, the Group also surveyed a number of Local Authorities, among them several London boroughs and selected county and city councils known for their successful delivery of Active Travel schemes. These insights helped inform the Group's understanding of effective approaches and potential opportunities for improvement within Reading.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not considered applicable to the recommendations contained within this report.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. There are none.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. Reading Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the [Constitution](#), pages 125–127) set out how the Council's scrutiny functions operate.
- 10.2. This review has been carried out in line with Scrutiny Procedure Rules for setting up and appointing task and finish groups to undertake overview and scrutiny exercises and report back to the appointing Committee.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. Continued support for the Task and Finish Group will require officer time to facilitate the scrutiny process and to prepare the report reviewing and responding to the Group's findings and recommendations. These resource requirements will continue to be managed from within existing budgets.
- 11.2. In accordance with the Group's Terms of Reference, any recommendations with financial implications are required to be reviewed by the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services and the Section 151 Officer. These financial

considerations will be addressed in the officer report recommended for submission to the SEPT Committee in March 2026.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1. It is proposed that a report be prepared by officers reviewing the Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendations to be submitted to the next meeting of SEPT Committee on 11 March 2026.
- 12.2. Subject to the decision(s) made by SEPT Committee on 11 March 2026, an action tracker could be developed to monitor the implementation of the Group's recommendations. Alternatively, a report could be submitted to a future meeting of SEPT Committee updating on progress made towards the implementing of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference and Membership of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group (as agreed by SEPT Committee on 12 March 2025).

Appendix 2: Active Travel Task and Finish Scrutiny Group Report.