

# Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

## Active Travel Strategy



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# 1 What is Active Travel

Active Travel is the term given to any mode of travel which involves a degree of physical activity. This includes Walking and Cycling, and in West Berkshire Equestrian activities.

The national Active Travel Strategy published in February 2010 has three main aims to:

- Promote better public health and well-being by increasing levels of physical activity, particularly among the most inactive people in our society
- Increase accessibility and reduce congestion
- Improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions

The UK has one of the lowest levels of walking and cycling in Europe, although there is huge potential to increase the levels, as shown by the Cycling demonstration towns<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.1 Active Travel and links to the Local Transport Plan

The Local Transport Plan has a vision to “Deliver effective transport solutions for all by increasing choice and minimising congestion.” Within this vision is there is the desire to improve facilities and opportunities for Active Travel and well as increase the number of people undertaking active travel as part of their everyday routine.

As part of increasing Travel Choice the LTP has a walking (AT1) and a cycling (AT2) policy. It also highlights horse riding which, in many parts of the District, is a significant leisure activity. The Health and Leisure policy (LTP K14) discusses the need for the maintenance, promotion and improvement of the Rights of Way Network and other routes for horse riding, walking and cycling and also links to promoting the health benefits of active travel. This Active Travel strategy outlines what West Berkshire Council will do to deliver these policies and promote travel choice. Active travel also has a positive knock-on effect on many of the other policies included within the LTP such as Minimising congestion (LTP K2), Accessibility (LTP K2/3), Carbon Reduction (LTP K5), Air Quality (LTP K6), Road Safety (LTP K8) and School Travel (LTP K10).

Delivery of the Active Travel Strategy will be through a number of mechanisms. The Implementation Plan for the LTP brings together the key elements of delivery within its Active Travel table. Delivery is also supported through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, travel plans for schools and workplaces, the work of the West Berkshire Cycle Forum and that of other partners working in the District such as the NHS (Berkshire West).

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<sup>1</sup> DfT, 2010, ‘Making a Cycling Town: a compilation of practitioners’ experience from the Cycling Demonstration Towns Programme 2005-2009’

## **1.2 The potential for Active Travel**

Walking and cycling, and to a certain extent horse riding, have a number of benefits. These include:

- Improving health and well-being, by encouraging people to include physical activity as part of their everyday routine
- Improving access to jobs and services
- Reducing emissions and supporting climate change targets
- Improving local air quality
- Reducing congestion and improving road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- Promoting enhanced mobility and independence for vulnerable groups

Walking and cycling are not suitable for all journeys, but are very effective modes of travel for local journeys and those journeys under 5 miles.

Whilst Horse riding is currently infrequently used for utility travel, horse riding and equestrian activities make a significant contribution to the national and local economy. Horse riding provides access to the countryside, both for riders and the horses themselves who need to be ridden out (known as Hacking) as part of their training and fitness programmes.

## **1.3 Barriers to Active Travel**

There are a number of barriers to people walking, cycling and hacking more. There can be physical barriers as well as personal ones.

Physical barriers include factors such as location, topography and design. For example, a workplace destination might be located on an edge of town site and be considered too far to walk or cycle to from main residential areas or transport hubs. Or another destination may be located on a busy main road where crossing facilities are scarce. Often destinations have ample car parking, but a lack of facilities for securely parking a bike or enabling people to take a shower after their journey. Poorly maintained, incomplete or narrow pavements or cycle lanes can also be a barrier to people walking or cycling. With small levels of investment it is possible to improve the physical environment to facilitate increases in walking and cycling, by removing or overcoming these barriers.

Personal barriers can be more difficult to reduce as they are often due to habit and personal perception. Over estimating the distance, difficulty or time involved can prevent people from walking or cycling. For cycling, confidence can be a big factor preventing adults, and some children, from cycling. Personal security concerns can also be an issue, especially when being out in the dark is necessary.

In order to improve levels of walking and cycling these barriers need to be overcome either through physical engineering works, or through education and encouragement.

Barriers associated with horse riding in the countryside (hacking out) are mainly suitability and linking of routes and safety while using the road network. The confidence to ride out is mainly affected by the concerns around safety. Overcoming these barriers will need a site-specific approach to be taken with the equestrian community to address physical improvements on routes and connectivity of routes to improve safety. Campaigns to raise awareness and educate drivers in areas where there are safety concerns will also assist in building confidence.

## **1.4 Links to other documents**

### **1.4.1 Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)**

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan has a vision to “enhance the opportunities for society, and its environment, to benefit at all levels from the public access network in West Berkshire”.

Public rights of way include public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways. Although cycle tracks can form part of the public access network they are considered part of the road network rather than the public access network.

### **1.4.2 Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy) – Transport Policy (CS 13)**

Improving travel choice is key when working towards modal shift away from single occupancy car use in favour of more sustainable travel (walking, cycling, bus, rail, car sharing). There is a focus on sustainable travel within and between main urban areas and rural service centres of West Berkshire to help facilitate regular journeys to work or education.

Reducing the need to travel reflects a desire for people to be able to live in places where there are local facilities and services, but also reflects the changing nature of technology and how this can facilitate working from home and access to services through the internet.

### **1.4.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is required to be undertaken for key plans and strategies. The Local Transport Plan (which this Active Travel Strategy supports) has undergone a detailed SEA. Active Travel promotes sustainable modes of travel and aims to work with the environment, therefore the policies relating to Active Travel come out strongly within the SEA.

## **1.5 Strategy Outline**

Walking and Cycling are the main modes of travel which make up Active Travel, and, along with equestrian activities, they form an important leisure and business activity in West Berkshire. These topics will be dealt with in individual chapters. Each chapter will outline the importance of the mode of travel, outline the current position of that mode within West Berkshire and finally outline the approach to be taken to achieve delivery of the relevant LTP policy, along with the monitoring required to measure progress.

## 2 Walking

Walking is a key mode of transport within West Berkshire. It is the most sustainable form of transport making a major contribution to improving accessibility, air quality and reducing congestion when it is used as an alternative to the car as well as being free and requiring no specialist equipment. Walking is also an important mode of travel for certain demographic groups, such as the young or older people.

Walking also has a positive effect on personal health and well being, especially when people take part in this physical activity as part of their everyday routine.

As walking requires no specialised equipment almost the entire population could use this mode of travel for accessing key services and facilities such as work, school and leisure (given suitable locations and travel distances).

Acceptable walking distances have been devised by CIHT<sup>2</sup>. The distance a person can walk obviously varies depending on a number of factors including physical fitness and ability, availability of alternatives and carrying requirements. Table 2-1 sets out acceptable walking distances for pedestrians, without a disability that affects their ability to walk.

	Town Centres	Commuting / School	Elsewhere
Desired	200m	500m	400m
Preferred	400m	1000m	800m
Preferred maximum	800m	2000m	1200m

### 2.1 Benefits of walking

There are many benefits of walking. It is completely free and requires no specialist equipment, meaning that the majority of people can participate. Other benefits include economic impacts through contributing to addressing congestion and reducing personal fuel or transport costs, improving accessibility and improving health and well being through increased physical activity.

### 2.2 Current condition of walking in West Berkshire

In West Berkshire there are a number of initiatives already in place to promote and encourage walking.

#### 2.2.1 Walking to School

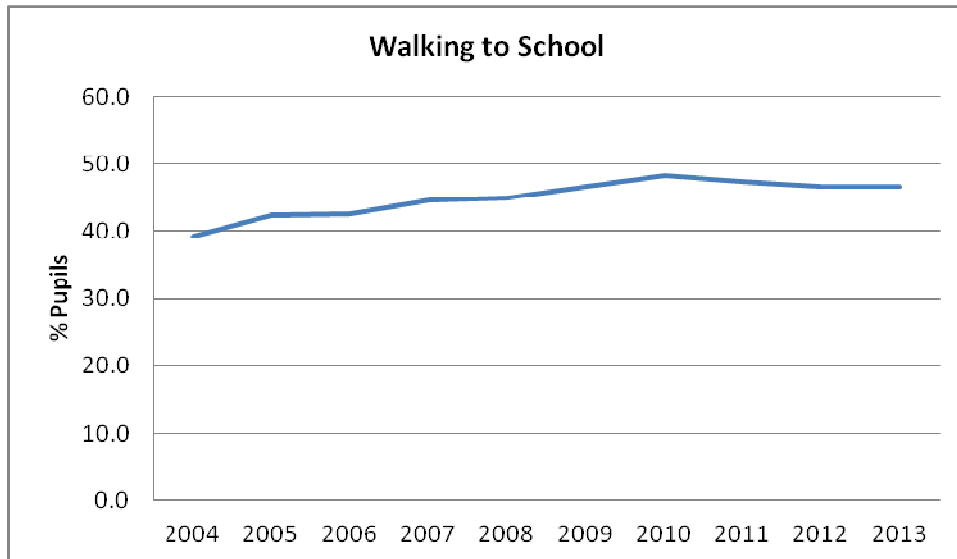
The proportion of pupils walking to school has been increasing each year from 2004 to 2010 and has remained at over 47% or over since 2009 (figure 2-1). In 2006 walking overtook car use as the primary mode of travel to school.

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<sup>2</sup> Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation

Scooting has become an increasingly popular mode of travel to school, with many infant aged pupils (aged 4-7) choosing to scoot rather than walk. For the purposes of collecting information scooting is included with walking.

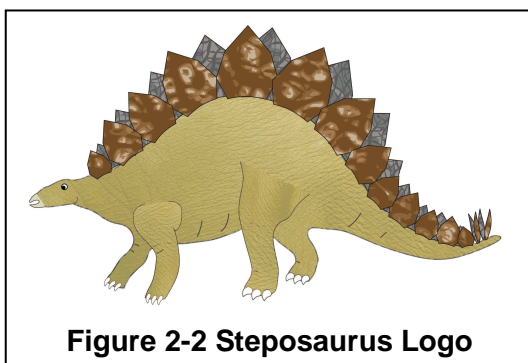
**Figure 2-1 - Percentage pupils walking to school**



### Walk to School Reward Schemes

As part of School Travel Plans, and to promote walking to school, schools can offer reward schemes to encourage walking to school.

The reward schemes developed in West Berkshire are 'Steposaurus' aimed at the under 5s, and 'Go Kinetic' aimed at Primary Schools. Both schemes provide pupils with a passport on which their walking journeys are recorded with a sticker or a stamp. At set numbers of walks to school (e.g. achieving 15, 25, 35 and 50 sustainable journeys) pupils are rewarded with hi-vis zip tags, pencils and free activity sessions from a local leisure centre.



Approximately 30 schools are participating in Go Kinetic at any one time, and both WBC Nursery schools are running Steposaurus with other nurseries and children's centres interested in running the scheme. Currently WBC do not have a secondary school specific walking reward scheme although a scheme has been piloted in one school and another school is running the national

WOW (Walk once a Week) scheme developed by the charity Living Streets with their year 7s.

Research into the impact of Go Kinetic shows that walking reward schemes are very successful at encouraging walking to school, with 18% of children walking to school doing so because of the scheme. The reasons for walking to school vary, with pupils wanting to collect the rewards and parents enjoying the health benefits walking to school gives them and their children. Schools see the benefits of reduced congestion outside the school gates and pupils being more alert when they arrive at school.

**Figure 2-4 Walking Bus**



### **Walking Buses**

Several schools in West Berkshire run walking buses. Children are dropped off by parents at a designated location and then they are walked to school by volunteer parents.

### **Park and Stride**

Park and stride is an initiative used by many schools to reduce congestion outside school and encourage pupils and parents who live too far away from school to walk the whole way to school to walk some of the way. A site is set for parents to park, usually a village hall or pub car park, and then walk their children to school.

## **2.2.2 Public Rights of Way**

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan was adopted in May 2010 and sets out how the rights of way network will be maintained to meet the present and future needs of the public both for accessing services and facilities and for leisure and recreation purposes. The ROWIP also assesses the accessibility of the ROW network to blind or partially-sighted people and others with mobility problems. The ROWIP vision is 'To enhance the opportunities for society, and its environment, to benefit at all levels from the public access network in West Berkshire.

Currently there are 1178 km (732 miles) of public rights of way in West Berkshire, forming both rural and urban networks.

**Table 2-2 Make up of Rights of Way Network in West Berkshire**

61% public footpaths
17% public bridleways
8% restricted byways
14% byways open to all traffic

## **2.2.3 Health walks (Public Health led)**

The 'Walking the Way to Health Initiative' enables people to explore the countryside while benefiting their health and making new friends. All walks are led and levels range from a general stroll to longer walks ensuring there is a walk to suit everyone. People are encouraged to participate to help improve



their health but also as a stepping stone to changing travel habits to incorporate walking for short every day journeys rather than using the car.

#### **2.2.4 Pedestrianisation**

Newbury Town Centre's pedestrianised zone (Northbrook Street) currently operates between 10am and 5pm. Between these times Northbrook Street is only open to pedestrians and cyclists, with buses using Parkway.

#### **2.2.5 Travel Planning**

In addition to school travel plans West Berkshire Council requires businesses and large residential developments to submit a travel plan as part of their application for planning permission. These travel plans include measures to promote walking to work, or for short local journeys. Travel Plans have other benefits for both the businesses community and for individuals.

**Figure 2-5 Newbury Town Centre pedestrianization zone**



The opportunities for walking vary depending on the area within the District. The two urban areas (Newbury and Thatcham and The Eastern Area) have great opportunities which are not at present in the AONB and the East Kennet Valley due to the more rural nature of these areas. This does not mean that walking is not possible; there are just different focuses that can and should be taken. In the rural areas walking for leisure purposes is more likely than walking as part of the daily commute. Despite these differences promoting and encouraging walking is still important in all areas of the District.

### **2.3 Improving walking opportunities across the District**

The walking policy set out in the LTP is given below. This aims to encourage walking as a mode of travel particularly for local journeys.

**Figure 2-6 LTP Walking Policy**

**Policy LTP SC1**

**WALKING**

**The Council will work towards increasing the use of walking as a mode of travel for local journeys and as a means of accessing other sustainable travel modes for longer journeys. To achieve this, the Council will focus on the following:**

- i. Maintaining and, where possible, improving the condition of footways and pedestrian crossings.**
- ii. Facilitating safe and prioritised pedestrian access to key destinations**
- iii. Delivering the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and improving the links between public rights of way and local networks of footways**
- iv. Promoting the benefits of walking for health and well being.**

To encourage more people to walk, a number of footway and rights of way schemes (improvement and maintenance) are included in the LTP implementation plan and within the Council's capital programme. There will also be other projects and initiatives that will be aimed at increasing walking levels and improving health in West Berkshire. These are also detailed in the Active Travel section of the LTP Implementation Plan (appendix 1 shows the first three years of the Active Travel section from the LTP IP).

New development can play a part in influencing how people travel. If housing (and other development) is located within easy walking distances of key facilities people will be more likely to walk to those facilities. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy and associated Development Plan Documents (DPDs) will help to ensure that walking distances are considered as part of accessibility and sustainability considerations when planning permission is granted.

The Smarter Choices Strategy will help to support the promotion of walking by setting out how Travel Planning will be delivered in West Berkshire. Travel Planning forms an important part of promoting and encouraging walking, by providing sticks and carrots to business, schools and individuals.

When accessibility is being considered preferred walking distances should be rather than maximum walking distances. Maximum walking distances are only likely to be walked by those who already walk regularly; where as preferred walking distances are likely to be acceptable distances to most people even if they do not usually walk. This needs to be considered when new development is planned, both residential and business/retail development.

## 2.4 Targets and Monitoring

### 2.4.1 Targets

Targets have been set to help monitor the progress of the Active Travel Strategy. They will take into account levels of resources and funding available for delivery and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still appropriate.

AT1.1	To increase walking to school from 48% (2010) to 55% by 2016.
AT1.2	Complete 5 projects per year that increase the length and / or quality of the ROW network / footways

### 2.4.2 Monitoring

#### **Walking to School**

Walking to school is monitored by the Annual School Travel Survey.<sup>3</sup> This provides an annual figure of how many pupils are walking to school, as well as how many pupils would like to be walking to school.

#### **Rights of Way Network**

As part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan the length and quality of the rights of way network is monitored.

#### **Travel Plans**

Businesses report on general levels of walking through their travel plan monitoring and reviews.

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<sup>3</sup> Carried out during the first week of the summer term. All schools participate by carrying out a 'Hands Up' survey during registration and returning it to the Council.

### 3 Cycling

Cycling has positive economic and social impacts, as well as improving accessibility, by providing a choice of mode of travel, improving road safety, air quality and congestion by reducing the number of cars on the road. Cycling can also benefit personal health and well being through increasing levels of physical activity.

West Berkshire Council aims to provide improved cycle links between where people live, work, socialise and receive education to make cycling a realistic option for people.

The West Berkshire Cycle Forum, made up of members of local cycling campaign/interest groups, has played an important part in the development of this strategy and the cycling policy.

#### 3.1 Benefits of cycling

Cycling has many benefits. It is free and, although some specialist equipment is needed, this can be a much lower cost measure than other modes of transport, and requires minimal ongoing costs. Cycling can cover distances much quicker than walking and the majority of people can participate, especially with cycle training. Other benefits include economic impacts through contributing to addressing congestion and reducing personal fuel or transport costs, improving accessibility and improving health and well being through increased physical activity.

For children, learning to ride a bike can help to increase independence and reduce reliance on parents for lifts everywhere. In turn this can help to promote social inclusion and reduce child poverty.

#### 3.2 Current condition of Cycling in West Berkshire

##### 3.2.1 West Berkshire Cycle Forum

The West Berkshire cycle forum meets four times a year to discuss cycling issues across the District. The forum is made up of council officers, WBC cycling champion and members of local cycle campaign groups and businesses with an interest in promoting cycling.

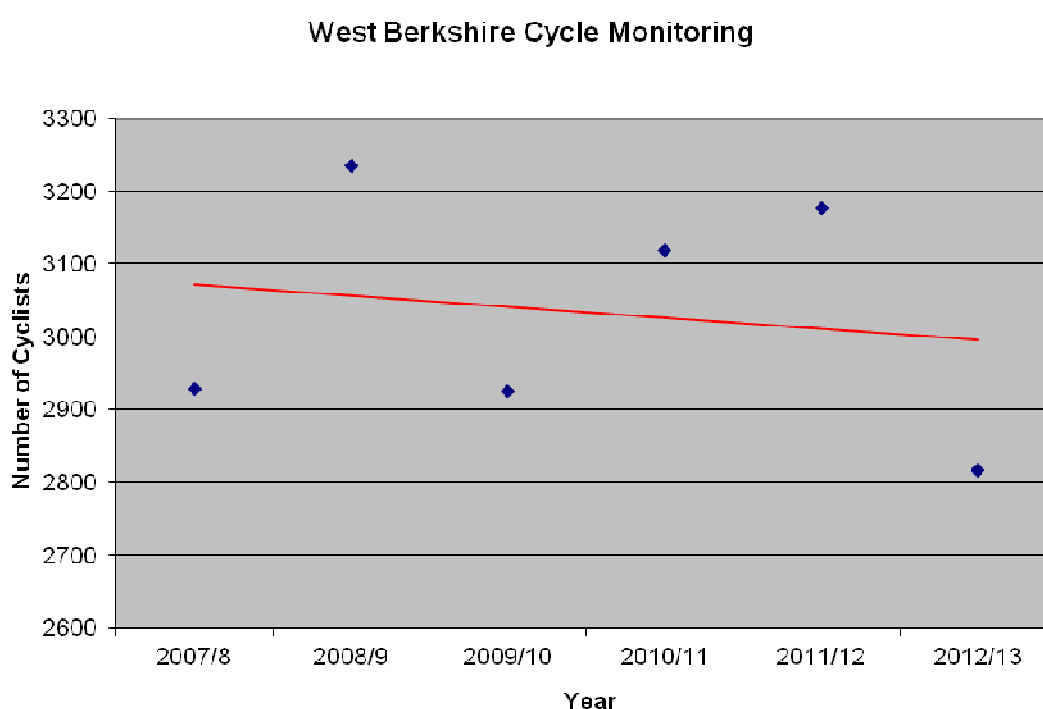
Figure 3-1 Cycle Forum logo



### 3.2.2 Cycle monitoring

Cycle monitoring is carried out in West Berkshire on an annual basis taking a snap-shot three times a year (June, October, and February). The results shown in figure 3-2 demonstrate that the figures have varied between approximately 2800 and 3200 over the 6 year period. This can often be due to weather conditions and better ways of monitoring trends are being considered by the Cycle Forum. The impact of the weather highlights the need to facilitate cycling in all weather by encouraging businesses and workplaces to provide covered cycle parking, lockers and changing facilities, including showers for staff.

**Figure 3-2 West Berkshire Cycle Monitoring Results**

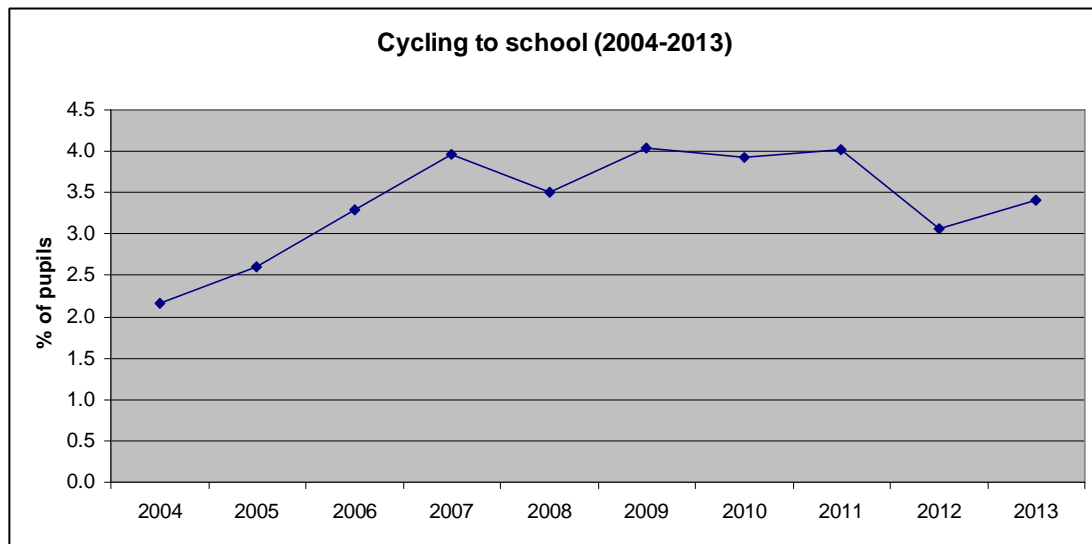


### 3.2.3 Cycling to school

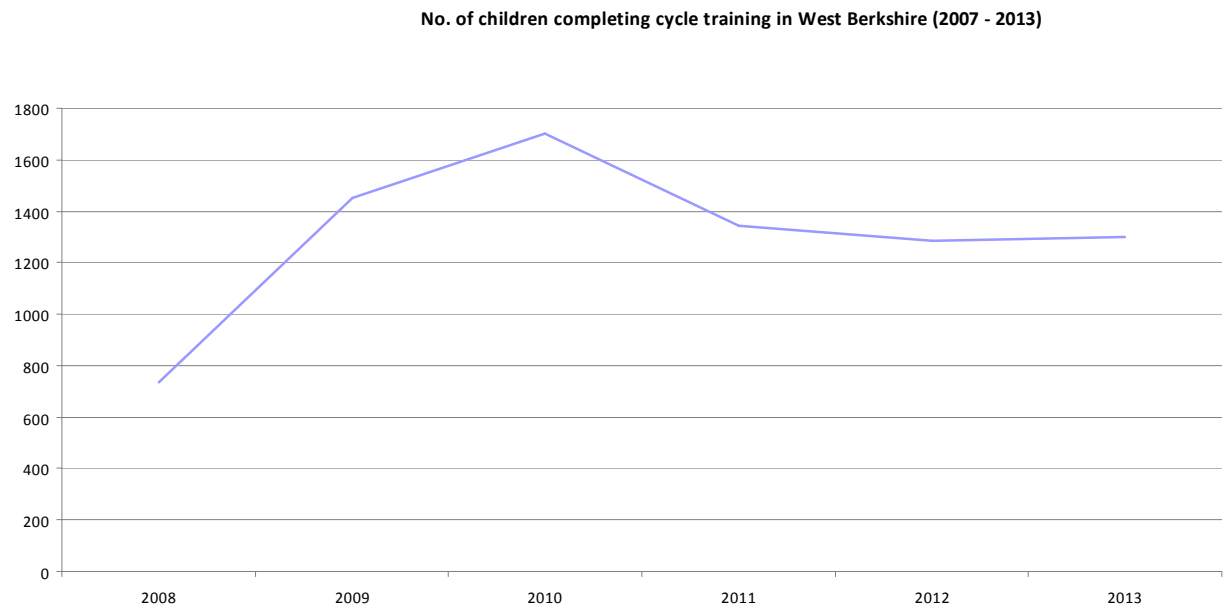
The proportion of pupils cycling to school (see figure 3-3) increased from 2004 through to 2007 and then remained at about 4% through to 2011. After 2011 the cycling figures have dropped despite cycle training continuing. Projects are underway to try and encourage the pupils to put their cycle training into practice immediately after their courses and also to try and address the parental fear around allowing pupils to cycle to school. These projects (Bikeability Challenge and Adult Cycle Training) along with promoting the reward schemes such as Go Kinetic and Steposaurus (mentioned in section 2.2.1) aim to increase cycling levels for the school journey.

Schools that completed their School Travel Plans prior to April 2009 received a grant from the government to help with the purchase of equipment or facilities to help implement their STP. Many Schools used this money to purchase new cycle storage, which also helps to facilitate a greater number of children cycling to school.

**Figure 3-3 Percentage of pupils cycling to school**



**Figure 3-4 Young people completing cycle training courses**



## **Cycle training**

Cycle training is available to pupils once they are 10 years old. Until 2007 West Berkshire ran its own cycling proficiency scheme. In 2007 the Council successfully applied for a grant to pilot 'Bikeability', the new national standard cycle training scheme. Numbers for completing cycle training courses increased through to 2010 but have dipped since then and levelled off (see Figure 3-4). The challenge is to get into the schools and fit within their busy timetable.

### **WBC Training Scheme**

This is delivered to pupils who are 10 and older (or will be 10 during the academic year) with most schools opting to offer the training to their year 6 pupils. Trained volunteers work with individual schools, usually a school where they have a connection, such as having a pupil in the school. Training begins in the school playground to build confidence before progressing on to a quiet junction to practice the skills needed to ride on the road. Pupils take a short written as well as practical test at the end of the training and receive a WBC cycle training scheme badge if they pass.

### **Go Ride**

In 2010 'Go Ride' was launched as an off-road fun cycle training scheme developed by British Cycling. The scheme is aimed at year 3 and 4 pupils. The aim of it is to develop cycling skills in a fun and exciting way. It promotes cycling as a sport, but also develops skills key for progressing on to on-road cycling. Some schools are interested in using the Go Ride scheme in their physical education lessons and are seeking to train staff accordingly. Teachers are currently being trained ready to deliver Go Ride, although the uptake from schools has been slow.

### **Bikeability**

Bikeability was developed by Cycling England to replace the cycling proficiency test. The scheme is designed to provide pupils with government approved, national standard cycle training. There are 3 different levels of Bikeability. Level 1 covers off-road confidence building and bike handling skills. Level 2 covers the essential skills needed for making cycling trips in today's road conditions which is the level aimed at year 5 and 6 pupils. Level 3 is aimed at those pupils who have achieved level 2 and would like to continue developing their skills. This is an area which West Berkshire Council would like to develop further. Bikeability is also used to deliver the cycle training on school holiday courses. These courses

**Figure 3-5 Bikeability Cycle Training**



are run for children and young people who may have missed out on the course run by their school. As the training is national standard those offering the training are national standard trained instructors, who then register as Bikeability instructors. Since the first successful grant bid in 2007 West Berkshire Council has continued to be successful in bidding for funding to continue running Bikeability.

### **3.2.4 Cycle routes/cycle parking**

Infrastructure improvements have mainly focused on improving links within the urban areas of the District. The A4 route has received particular investment especially linking Newbury and Thatcham. Another important infrastructure improvement is the provision of cycle parking in key locations.

An important development in 2008 was the publication of cycle parking guidance for West Berkshire. This was developed to provide guidance for developers and businesses on providing cycle parking facilities for staff, visitors and residents. As part of the development of the LTP for 2011-2026 and this Active Travel Strategy, this guidance has been updated to include motorcycles as well as bicycles.

### **3.3 Improving Cycling opportunities across the District**

The cycling policy set out in the LTP is given below. This aims to encourage cycling as a mode of travel particularly for local journeys.

#### **Policy LTP SC2**

##### **CYCLING**

**The Council, in partnership with West Berkshire Cycle Forum, will work towards increasing cycling in West Berkshire. To achieve this, the Council will focus on the following:**

- i. Establishing, improving and promoting a network of routes (strategic, local and recreational) for cycling.**
- ii. Ensuring that all new developments make cycling at least as desirable as any other transport mode choice by connecting with the local network where possible and following the West Berkshire Council Cycling Guidance.**
- iii. Ensuring that Children, Young People and Adults are equipped with the knowledge, skills and training to cycle more often.**
- iv. Promoting the benefits of cycling for health and well being.**

Given the unique mix of areas that exist in West Berkshire, a 'one size fits all' approach for improving cycling is not appropriate. Priorities for each area need to be and are different. Improvements can be in the form of cycle specific infrastructure, or through provision of information or signage.



In urban areas improvements will be to provide links to work, education and retail, where as in rural areas links will be mainly for leisure purposes, with some localised routes and improvements within villages to facilitate access to local services.

The Cycle Forum was asked to prioritise areas of cycling improvements/work for the first phase of implementation for this strategy. These areas in the order of priority are shown below in Table 3-2.

1	Cycle Training
2	Cycle Parking (particularly at Railway Stations and Local Centres)
3	Route extension and Improvement
4	Travel Plans
5	Publicity and Marketing
6	Other... (WBC Cycling officer, Reduced speed limits, provision of off-road cycle corridors)

### **3.3.1 Cycle Training**

Cycle training is seen as a vital way of increasing levels of cycling across the District. West Berkshire Council offer a range of different training courses for children and young people to improve confidence and skills while riding a bike. These are described in section 3.2.4.

An area of cycle training West Berkshire Council would like to develop is that of Adult cycle training. For many adults they rode a bike as a child but have not been on one since. Training aimed specifically at adults would work with those who want to get back to riding a bike to build confidence and remember the skills they once knew. Training would also be available to adults who have never learnt to ride a bike but would like to start riding.

West Berkshire Council have been awarded a Bikeability grant since 2007 enabling pupils to be trained. Indications are that this funding will continue but without this grant West Berkshire Council would be unable to offer National Standard Bikeability training.

There is potential to develop cycle training for adults. National Standard cycle training (Bikeability) is suitable for both children and adults, although usually adult training is delivered on a 1-2-1 basis.

Cycle training will be further considered in the Road Safety Strategy.

### **3.3.2 Cycle Parking**

The provision of cycle parking can be an important factor which encourages people to cycle. Particular key locations were identified by the Cycle Forum as Rail Stations and Local Centres. West Berkshire Council have published guidance on providing cycle parking for new development. This guidance requires that Sheffield stands are used; stands are covered and, for long term parking, are secure.

**Figure 3-4 Cycle Parking in Newbury Town Centre**



### **3.3.3 Cycle Routes**

A combination of Strategic, Local and Recreational routes will continue to be developed. This could include signage or infrastructure provision.

- Strategic routes - linking employment sites, schools and key local facilities, where cycling is a realistic option for the journey. These could be off or on road, and could use the PROW network where appropriate.
- Local routes – within urban areas and villages, providing links between where people live to local facilities. These could be off or on road and could use the PROW network where appropriate.
- Recreational routes – mixture of rural roads and PROW for recreational cycling.

A map (in appendix 1) shows the desired cycle links prioritised into short (priority 1), medium (priority 2) and long term (priority 3) for delivery. The map shows the desire to provide links between locations rather than showing specific routes. The deliverability of the desired routes has not been considered in all cases at this stage; therefore, some routes may not be deliverable in part. This will be considered through and planned through the LTP Implementation Plan. Where the PROW network is used, routes may need to be upgraded to facilitate cycling.

Although many of the routes provide links into and between the main urban areas in the District, it is important that rural cycle links are also improved as this can help to improve accessibility to the services that may be offered within the villages. It can also provide children and young people with independence and freedom that they may otherwise not have.

### 3.3.4 Year of Cycling

2012 was a year of cycling run and organised by the West Berkshire Cycle Forum, to tie in with the Olympics. During this year events and promotions were organised to encourage people to start cycling more, and to get more physically active.

One promotional event was held each month. Events included family bike rides, cycle maintenance courses, adult cycle training, advice days and inter school competitions (through the Go Ride cycle training programme).

Each event provided those attending with skills, advice and confidence to get on their bike and cycle more often for whatever purpose was most relevant to them – commuting, leisure or to improve their health.

## 3.4 Targets and Monitoring

### 3.4.1 Targets

Targets have been set to help monitor the progress of the Active Travel Strategy. They will take into account levels of resources and funding available for delivery and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still appropriate.

AT2.1	To increase 2010 levels of cycling by 10% by 2016
AT2.2	To increase cycling to primary school from 4% (2010) to 6% by 2016
AT2.3	To increase cycling to secondary school from 4% (2010) to 7% by 2016.
AT2.4	To increase the number of pupils receiving cycle training each year to reach 2000 pupils trained to level 2 in 2014/15

### **3.4.2 Monitoring**

#### **Annual Monitoring**

Cycle monitoring is carried out in a number of ways. As described in 3.2.2, the West Berkshire cycle count takes place three times a year (June, October and February) with the results averaged to give an annual figure for cycling. The sites where the monitoring takes place are shown in appendix 2.

As well as the number of cyclists the survey collects data on Gender (male/female), Age (school age (under 18), young adult (18-30), middle adult (30-60), older adult (60+)), what they are travelling on (Pavement/Road), what they are wearing (sporty or normal clothes) and whether they are wearing a helmet.

#### **Cycling to school**

Cycling to school is monitored through the annual school travel survey. This has been carried out since 2001 during the first full week of the summer term. All schools are asked to carry out a short 'hands up' survey during registration and return it to the Council. Since 2006 the council has had a 100% return from all West Berkshire schools.

## 4 Equestrian Activities

Equestrian activities, including racehorse breeding and training, sport/competition riding, leisure riding and carriage driving are common in West Berkshire. They make a significant contribution to the national and local economy.

There are between 1 and 1.3m horses in Britain, with the national horse industry being worth £7b<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the horse industry supports a range of ancillary businesses including vets, farriers, feed merchants, tack and riding clothes shops, many of which are located in West Berkshire. The LDF Core Strategy (Policy CS13) recognises the importance of the horse industry, stating that opportunities to enjoy the countryside will be supported.

West Berkshire is serviced by at least four British Horse Society (BHS) affiliated riding clubs, branches of the Pony Club and branches of Riding for the Disabled Associate (RDA). There are also several riding schools / hacking centres and numerous livery yards. Horses are also kept at private premises.

Equestrian activities usually take place in the rural areas but equestrian establishments on the urban fringe are popular as many horse riders live in urban areas. Equestrians prefer to travel using the Rights of Way Network (bridleways and byways), rather than the road network. However, in many areas the ROW network is fragmented meaning equestrians are required to use the road network as a link between bridleways and byways.

**Figure 4-1 Horse Riders in Lambourn**



### 4.1 Benefits of equestrian activities

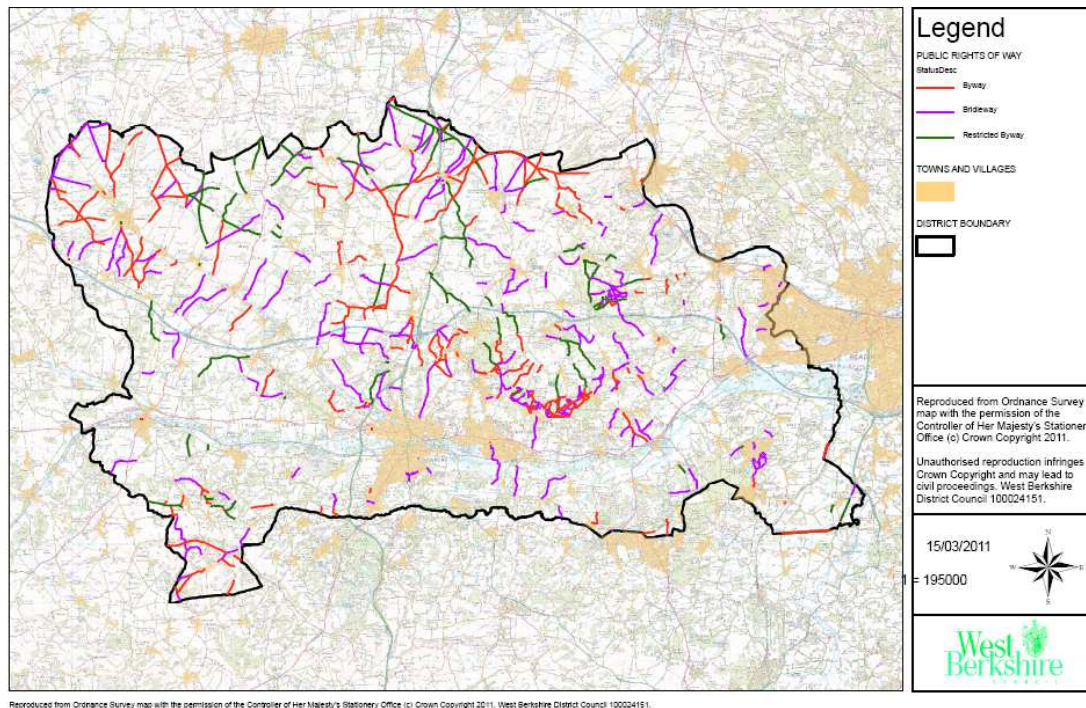
Horse riding has been shown to help people meet the public health guidelines for moderate intensity activity to benefit health<sup>5</sup>. Riding has been identified as a good way of encouraging physical activity generally with owning, or being responsible for a horse cited as a strong motivating factor for participating in physical activity, as well as having a positive impact on mental health and general well-being.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.bhic.co.uk](http://www.bhic.co.uk)

<sup>5</sup> Plumpton College and University of Brighton research to be published April 2011

**Figure 4-2 Equestrian Rights of Way Network**



## **4.2 Current condition of equestrian activities in West Berkshire**

As with pedestrians and cyclists, equestrians have statutory access to use all roads except motorways, and are able to use bridleways, restricted byways and byways (part of the ROW network). The amount of the ROW network available to equestrians in West Berkshire is greater than the national average (39% compared to the national average of 22%). However; the off-road riding network is fragmented in most parishes (see figure 4.1). The quality of some of the ROW network available to be used by equestrians has been highlighted as a problem by users. Natural and man-made barriers (such as the Kennet and Avon Canal, and the railway line) can also be a potential issue for riders.

Given the choice equestrians would rather use minor roads to complete routes than 'A' or 'B' class roads. However even minor roads can cause problems for riders and their horses, common problems experienced by horse riders are:

- Levels of traffic
- Traffic Speed
- Visibility in narrow rural lanes

Given this there have been a number of campaigns by equestrians to try to raise awareness of the potential for horse riders to be using local rural roads.

The off-road riding network varies greatly depending on the parish in which the rider wishes to ride. The graph below (Figure 4.2) shows the parishes with the greatest length of bridleways, restricted byways and byways. This does not however necessarily mean that all these routes are suitable for equestrian uses.

**Figure 4-3 - Km of Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways per parish (top 6)**

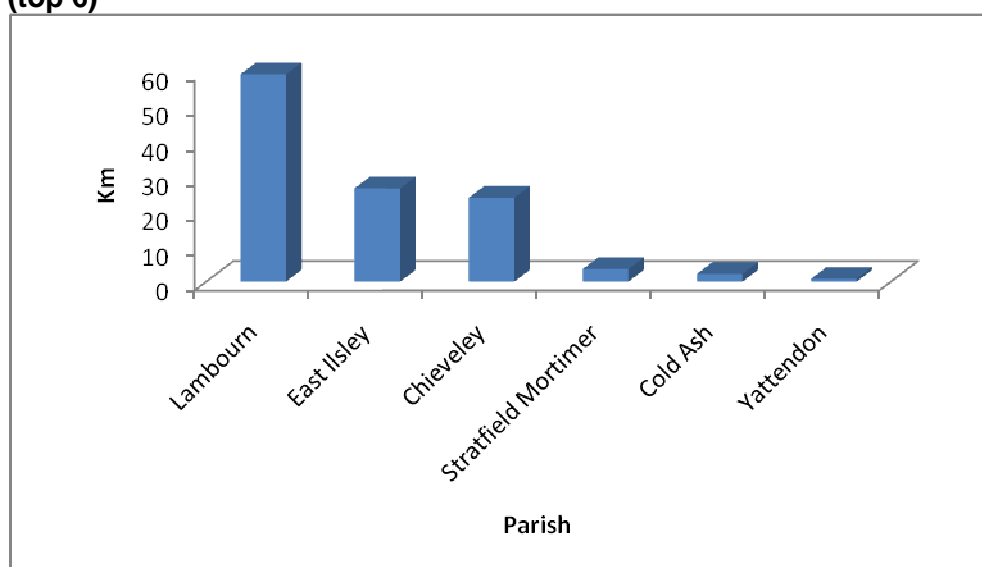


Figure 4.2 shows that the provision of off road routes for equestrians is focused in the rural parishes, mainly linked with the horse racing industry. Other areas of West Berkshire have less provision.

### **4.3 Improving equestrian activities across the district**

The LDF Core Strategy and the LTP (2011-2026) both recognise the importance of these activities for West Berkshire. As well as Policy CS13 in the LDF Core Strategy, the LTP, through Policies LTP K14 – Health and Leisure and K8 – Road Safety include horse riding as set out below.

**Figure 4-4 LTP Policies relating to Equestrian Activities**

#### **Policy LTP K14 Health and Leisure**

The Council will work towards the promotion of transport as a means of improving health and access to leisure for all. To achieve this, the Council will focus on the following:

- i. Maintenance, promotion and improvement of the rights of way network and other routes for walking, cycling and horse riding

#### **Policy LTP K8 Road Safety**

The Council, as the responsible local Highway Authority, work towards creating a safer road environment for all. To achieve this, the Council will work in partnership where appropriate and focus on the following:

- ii. Improving safety for vulnerable road users of all ages, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, and equestrian users.

Many of the improvements that would benefit equestrians would also benefit walkers and cyclists.

#### **4.3.1 Route Improvements**

Improvements to the public rights of way network will enable equestrian users to access a more comprehensive network of routes, but will also benefit walkers and cyclists. Where route improvements to by-ways and bridleways have been carried out consideration should be given to the availability of parking for horse boxes to allow riders travelling to use the facility the chance to park.

Where improvements are made to a route they need to take into consideration all potential users and provide the best improvement for all users to maintain using the route as they wish.

Where cycle tracks are provided, these should be made available to equestrian users as well.

Where new routes are developed specifically with equestrian users in mind, maps and promotional material should be provided to help make equestrian users aware of the new facility.

#### **4.3.2 Equestrian Safety**

Safety is an important issue for horse riders. In areas where there are equestrian establishments or a high proportion of horse riders warning signs should be erected to warn other road users of the potential of horses and riders also using the road.

The Quiet Lanes scheme, implemented successfully in Bucklebury, could be used in other rural villages to help all Active Travel modes in their use of the countryside. The Quiet Lanes scheme tries to give equal rights to all potential users of the road. They are used in areas where rights of way cross country roads to help show drivers that there are likely to be walkers, equestrians and cyclists using the road.

**Figure 4-5 Bucklebury Quiet Lanes**



Other elements of equestrian safety, as vulnerable users, will be considered further under the Road Safety Strategy.

#### **4.4 Targets and Monitoring**

Targets have been set to help monitor the progress of the Active Travel Strategy. They will take into account levels of resources and funding available for delivery and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still appropriate.



**Figure 4-6 Equestrian Targets**

- AT3.1 Complete 2-3 projects per year that increase the length and / or quality of the ROW network available for horse riding
- AT3.2 Investigate further Quiet Lanes projects to support active travel by 2016

Monitoring of equestrian activities will be done through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## 5 Monitoring of the Active Travel Strategy

The Active Travel Strategy is one of a number of strategies that supports the delivery of the LTP. The Active Travel Strategy will be monitored annually through the rolling Implementation Plan and will be reviewed after 5 years to ensure that it is still relevant and working towards delivering the LTP policies.

Promotion and Marketing aspects of Active Travel are covered in the Smarter Choices Strategy (Chapter 5). It is key that good marketing and promotion accompany any physical works to raise awareness of Active Travel.

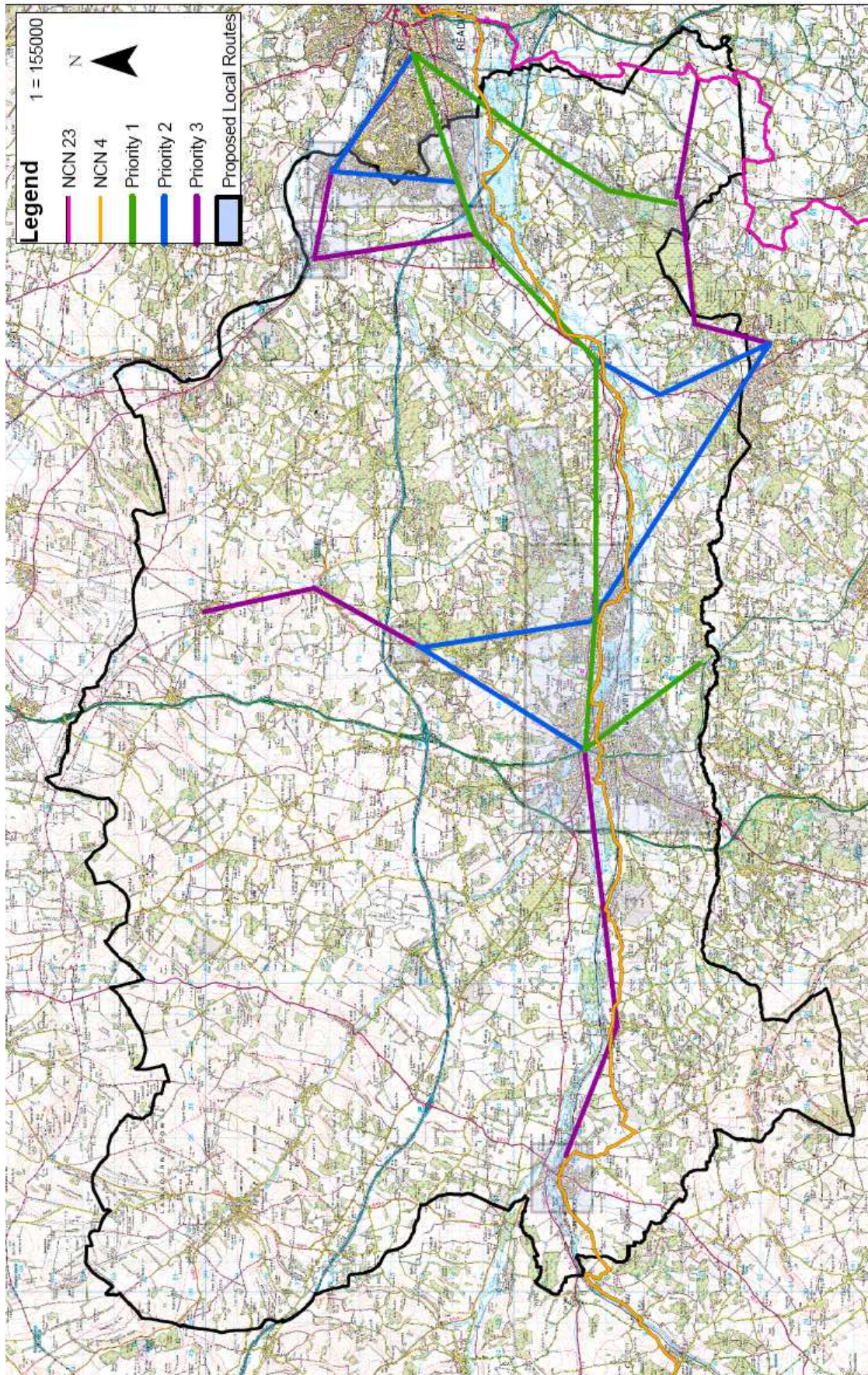
### 5.1 Summary of Targets

<b>Figure 5-1 - Targets</b>	
AT1.1	To increase walking to school from 48% (2010) to 55% by 2016
AT1.2	Complete 5 projects per year that increase the length and / quality of the ROW network / footways
AT2.1	To increase levels of cycling by 10% from 2010 to 2016
AT2.2	To increase cycling to primary school from 4% (2010) to 6% by 2016
AT2.3	To increase cycling to secondary school from 4% (2010) to 7% by 2016
AT2.4	To increase the number of pupils receiving cycle training each year to reach 2000 pupils trained to level 2 in 2014/15
AT3.1	Complete 2 – 3 projects per year that increase the length and / or quality of the ROW network available for horse riding
AT3.2	Investigate further Quiet Lanes projects to support active travel by 2016

### 5.2 Monitoring and Indicators

<b>Figure 5-2 Indicators and Data collection</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Data collected</b>
Mode of Travel to School	Hands Up survey of usual mode of travel to school
Length and Quality of the ROW network	Distance of new ROW and
Active Travel infrastructure delivered	Projects delivered (footpath/cycle path/rights of way improvements)
Workplace Travel Plans	Workplace travel plan monitoring reports
Cycle Training numbers	Number of children trained to Bikeability Level 2
Cycle Monitoring	Number of cyclists in am peak
Cycle Parking provision	Number of cycle stands used

# Appendix 1 – Strategic cycle routes



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### Route Prioritisation

Strategic routes have been proposed (shown on map x). Feasibility studies and delivery of these routes has been prioritised into three categories (priority 1 – short term, priority 2 – Medium term, priority 3 – long term). Feasibility studies (practically or financially) of each route have not been considered in this prioritisation exercise. Routes will need to be shown to be feasible before they are taken forward into the delivery stages.

Where PROW network may be used this could involve upgrading the PROW to be suitable for cyclists.

#### Newbury and Thatcham

Route	Timescale			Notes
	Short	Medium	Long	
A4 (Newbury – Thatcham – Theale - Reading)	/			Newbury-Thatcham section largely complete
Newbury – New Greenham Park	/			
Signage in Newbury and Thatcham	/			Complete the signed route
Newbury and Thatcham (Local Routes)		/		
Cycle parking	/	/	/	Waitrose Thatcham, Wash Common Shops, Newbury Library As required

#### Eastern Area

Route	Timescale			
	Short	Medium	Long	
Purley-on-Thames to Calcot		/		Use of Pincents Lane
Purley-on-Thames to Reading		/		
Pangbourne to Theale			/	Leisure route using Nunhide lane
Theale to Calcot (over M4)	/	/		Relies on HA
Purley-on-Thames (Local Route)			/	
Tilehurst (Local route)		/		
Calcot (Local Route)			/	
Theale (Local Route)		/		

## AONB

Route	Timescale			
	Short	Medium	Long	
Thatcham to Aldermaston		/		Raising awareness of cyclists through campaigns may be more appropriate than infrastructure.
Aldermaston to Tadley		/		
Hermitage to Newbury		/		
Pangbourne to Purley			/	
Hungerford – Kintbury – Newbury			/	Upgrading the towpath
Compton to Hermitage			/	
Hungerford (Local Route)		/		
Hermitage (Local Route)			/	
Pangbourne (Local Routes)	/			Route maps and some infrastructure improvements
Bucklebury (Local Route)	/			Infrastructure improvements to bridleways
Cycle Parking	/			Hungerford

## East Kennet Valley

Route	Timescale			
	Short	Medium	Long	
Burghfield - Reading	/			May need to use PROW network (links to major employment site)
Mortimer to Reading links with NCN23			/	
Mortimer to Tadley			/	
Burghfield (local route)		/		
Burghfield Common (Local Route)		/		
Mortimer (Local Route)		/		

## Appendix 2 – Cycle monitoring locations

Site	Location	Detail
1	Newbury	Kennet and Avon Tow Path (Beneath A339)
2	Newbury	A339 (on railway bridge)
3	Newbury	Robin hood West Arm (London Road)
4	Newbury	Kiln Road / Walton Way
5	Newbury	Junction of Northcroft Lane & path to Monkey Bridge
6	Newbury	Love Lane
7	Newbury	Andover Road (North of St Bartholomew's School)
8	Newbury	Junction of Valley Road and Fifth Road
9	Newbury	Junction of Battery end with Wash Common Recreation ground
10	Thatcham	A4 West of Lower Way
11	Thatcham	Thatcham Station
12	Thatcham	Corner of Bath Road Green Lane
13	Theale	Junction of High Street / Waterside Drive
14	Hungerford	High Street
15	Calcot	Junction of Langley Hill / Bath Road
16	Tilehurst	Junction of Dark Lane / Overdown Road
17	Purley	Junction of Knowsley Road / Oxford Road