

Fenland District Council

FENLAND CYCLING, WALKING AND MOBILITY AID IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Version 2 – Adopted 2022

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Fenland Context

Location

Fenland is located in Cambridgeshire and is situated north of Cambridge and east of Peterborough. The area is approximately 200 square miles in total and features mainly agricultural fen land. It is a rural and sparsely populated district, famous for its flat landscapes and big skies.

Population

The total population of Fenland is around 102,500¹ with the majority residing in or near to the four Fenland market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. Fenland also has a high percentage of older residents with around 30% of the total population aged over 60.

Deprivation and poor health

Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Fenland is Cambridgeshire's most deprived district (ranking as 94th most deprived authority out of 326 nationally). Poor health is also a key issue for Fenland with the following key indicators significantly worse in Fenland compared to the England average:

- Life expectancy for men
- Levels of obesity amongst children
- Levels of physical activity amongst adults
- Levels of people diagnosed with obesity

Highway network

Due to the rurality of the area and the historic nature of the market towns that developed along the route of the river Nene, road links from town to village and onwards consist of a mix of fast and winding country lanes and busy (mostly) single carriageway A roads. Travel by road to connect to wider links is therefore often slow, especially in comparison to using rail.

Within towns the road network, particularly in the town centres, is also heavily constrained due to relative narrow streets, high parking demands and in some cases limited river crossings.

As a rural district there is a high dependency on motorised vehicles due to the agricultural nature of the local economy and dispersed village settlements between towns. Significant levels of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and longer distance journey requirements for a significant number of residents make opportunities to reallocate road space for walking and cycling more limited and challenging.

1.2 The need for a Local Strategy

Health Agenda & Climate Change

Encouraging more walking and cycling has long been recognised as a key objective to improving physical and mental health and to reducing carbon emissions to defend against climate change. However, Fenland has received limited funding for infrastructure provision to date and is therefore lacking a consistent walking and cycling network to build upon.

¹ Source [Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/population-and-household-estimates-england-and-wales-census-2021)

Piecemeal opportunities in the past have provided small scale route improvements across the district such as Elwyn Road (March) and Cromwell Road (Wisbech) shared use paths. However, these are few and far between and require more time and investment as well as further improvement to create a good quality network of routes enabling walking and cycling to all key locations in each town.

Strategically, we have identified an overriding need to provide viable off-road cycle routes between our four towns, and between Whittlesey and Peterborough.

Even with a high portion of residents having no access to a car (20%) journey statistics show that the portion of journeys undertaken by foot or by bicycle within each Fenland town is relatively low. This is despite most journeys within each town being less than 1 mile (average distance from outer residential developments to town centre). These figures suggest more work is needed to improve routes and encourage walking and cycling as the first choice of transport for short journeys.

Supporting Local Growth

Predicted growth for Fenland in the current Fenland Local Plan (May 2014) includes aims for around 11,000 new homes with large new housing areas on the edge of Wisbech, March, Chatteris and Whittlesey. Significant levels of housing development have been delivered since the plan was adopted especially in the villages and in Whittlesey. Plans for more new homes and increased employment opportunities are expected to be included in the emerging Fenland Local Plan to 2040. Detail regarding the emerging plan can be found here: [Emerging Local Plan - Fenland District Council](#)

With housing growth and development comes an increasing pressure on the highway network. Work is underway to understand and deliver necessary highway improvements to accommodate growing demand. Alongside this, it is an important priority to ensure that unnecessary travel by car is minimised wherever possible and encourage a shift to sustainable transport to reduce congestion and lower vehicle emissions in our area.

Covid Recovery – Green Restart

The 2020-2021 global COVID-19 pandemic saw the entire country lockdown, with every individual (with the exception of essential workers) required to stay home to save lives. Essential trips permitted solely to access food, medicine and healthcare and central government encouragement to make use of the maximum one hour outside the home for exercise per day saw a large rise in walking and cycling uptake across the country. This is a shift in travel behaviour that is important to maintain and continue.

During the pandemic, businesses have been put under extraordinary strain, with many, large and small, at risk of not surviving. To help support these businesses and to keep emissions low by discouraging longer journeys a key message is to 'shop locally'. Travel for such journeys is well suited to walking and cycling.

Funding Requirements & Criteria

To encourage and support the growing shift towards walking and cycling the DfT released a series of funds in 2020 to enable Local Authorities to improve cycling infrastructure. Criteria for this funding included prioritising road space for walking and cycling and the creation of off road, segregated cycling routes.

Fenland achieved limited funding from the 2020 Active Travel Fund due to a lack of options that prioritise road space. This highlighted the need to re-evaluate schemes identified for the area and ensure public support for recommendations.

It is the intention of this strategy to identify clear priorities and recommend schemes to address Fenlands previously low funding achievements for walking and cycling. However, due to the area's currently

unavoidable reliance on motor vehicles for access to key services and longer distance journeys, this strategy will not consider recommendations that would increase pressure on the existing highway network.

1.3 Related Plans & Strategies

There are currently a range of existing strategies and adopted plans relating to walking and cycling that are relevant to Fenland. This document considers and incorporates key priorities across a number of these strategies, particularly those that support the needs and aspirations of our rural district. Identifying and including related objectives that align to the purpose of this strategy is an important part of developing a clear plan for infrastructure improvements and provides a strengthened case for schemes that may otherwise be overlooked.

Summary of Plan and Strategy documents:

National Strategy	Published
National Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 1	2017
Gear Change: A bold vision for walking and cycling in England	2020
National Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2	2021
Local Transport Note – LTN 1/20 Cycle infrastructure Design	2020
Local Strategy	Published
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan (LTP)	2020
Cambridgeshire Local Cycling Walking Investment Plan	2021
CCC Transport Investment Plan	Annual
Fenland Local Plan (adopted)	2014*
Market Town Transport Strategies (MTTS):	
Chatteris (2010)	2010
March (2013)	2013
Whittlesey (2012)	2012
Wisbech (2014)	2014
Fenland Transport Strategy – adoption expected 2023	Development in progress
CCC Active Travel Strategy – adoption expected 2023	Development in progress
March Area Transport Study (MATS)	2013 & 2020
Right of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)	2016
Wisbech Access Strategy (WAS)	2017

More details regarding these strategies and key points relating to this strategy can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

* Detail regarding the emerging Local Plan can be found here: [Emerging Local Plan - Fenland District Council](#)

1.4 Strategy consideration of different modes of travel

The following sections set out the modes of travel considered within this strategy and the rationale behind this.

Walking and Cycling

Shifting travel trends away from the private car to walking and cycling is known to have numerous benefits including promoting healthier lifestyles, reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality².

Around 25% of all car trips across Fenland and Cambridgeshire are under 2km in length³ and yet walking and cycling accounts for only 1% of journeys in Chatteris, Whittlesey and Wisbech and around 2% of all journeys in March⁴.

Prior to the pandemic, Fenland had a relatively low uptake in walking and cycling at around 4.9% modal share in 2019. This is expected to have increased during lockdown due to the stay at home messages but more needs to be done to continue this shift and embed walking and cycling as the first choice for short journeys.

Electric-assisted pedal bicycles (e-bikes)

E-bike is the term generally used for pedal bicycles that include a small motor that provides additional power when cycling. In recent years, these have become increasingly popular and have been the subject of a number of trials introducing hire versions in towns and cities across the UK. This includes a current project in Cambridge and Huntingdon delivered by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).

E-bikes are particularly useful for local journeys as they can make cycling accessible to people who might otherwise find it difficult, such as the elderly and those with health problems. By providing motorised assistance an E-bike requires less physical effort to generate movement. This can enable cyclists to travel more quickly, reducing journey times, and make longer distance journeys more achievable.

A connected cycling network across Fenland could provide the opportunity for e-bikes to be used instead of cars for journeys between towns and villages. This potential is particularly strong in Whittlesey where the NCN63 provides an entirely off-road route to Peterborough Town Centre. A journey that can be completed by e-bike in as little as 20 minutes.

E-bikes, known as 'electric assisted pedal cycles' or 'EAPC's have the same legal standing as regular non-assisted bicycles - although users must be 14 years of age or over. There are specific criteria that separates EAPCs from other 'e-bike like' machines such as speed-pedelects or throttle controlled bikes. This criteria can be found at [Electric bikes: licensing, tax and insurance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/electric-bikes-licensing-tax-and-insurance).

Mobility Scooters

Life expectancy has been gradually increasing from around 75 years in 1990 to around 81 in 2020⁵. As a result the population across the entire country is growing and also getting older. This is especially the case in Fenland as people are attracted to move to or remain in the quieter countryside for their retirement. The aging population is one reason that mobility aid use, such as scooters or electric wheelchairs, is becoming increasingly prevalent.

² Source: https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/5949/bikelife19_greater-cambridge_web.pdf

³ Source: 2011 Census and Transport/Health JSNA

⁴ Source: CCC Traffic Monitoring Report 2019

⁵ Source: [U.K. Life Expectancy 1950-2021 | MacroTrends](https://www.macro-trends.com/uk-life-expectancy-1950-2021)

There are a wide range of different mobility aids available. These provide essential opportunities for people with restricted mobility whether due to age related infirmity, ill health or disability. Enabling people to retain independence and active living regardless of their physical circumstance.

A license is not required to drive a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair, but other rules may apply depending on the type of vehicle. These can be found at [Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs: the rules - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

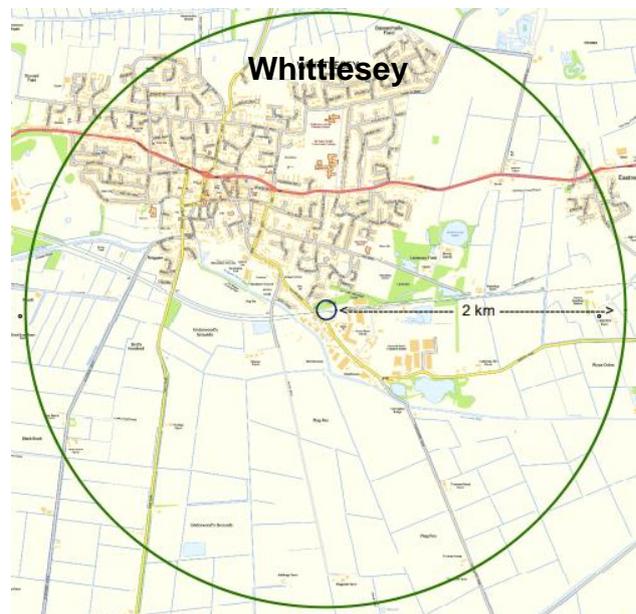
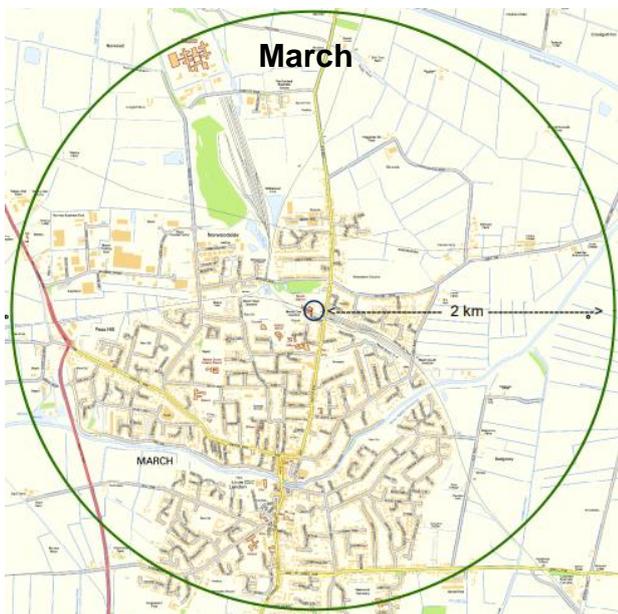
The flat landscape of Fenland makes mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs a very viable option for people with restricted mobility. This is something the strategy aims to support. To achieve this more work is needed to understand where improvements can be made to existing routes to create better access and opportunities for mobility aid use. Key considerations for this are the provision of dropped kerbs, level surfaces and path widths.

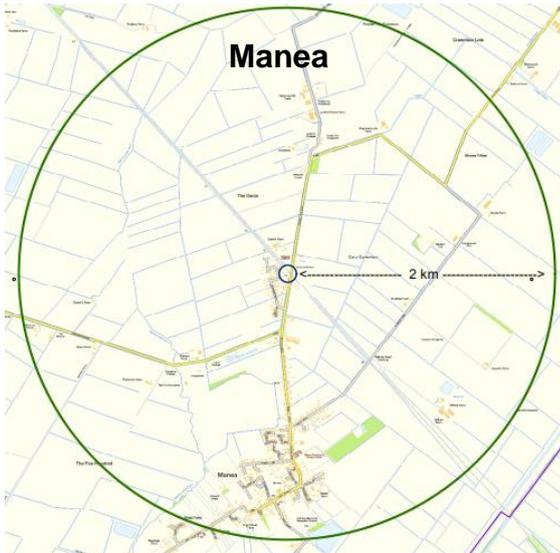
Railway Travel

Fenland boasts three local railway stations, Manea, March and Whittlesea. These are served by three Train Operating Companies providing hourly and bihourly services to Peterborough, Ely and Cambridge. Additional direct services also include Stansted Airport, Ipswich, Norwich, Nottingham and Birmingham.

Connection via the railway is a major asset for the area, enabling fast and effective commuter links to major employment hubs such as Peterborough, Cambridge and London. Improving walking and cycling access to these assets is an essential part of this strategy.

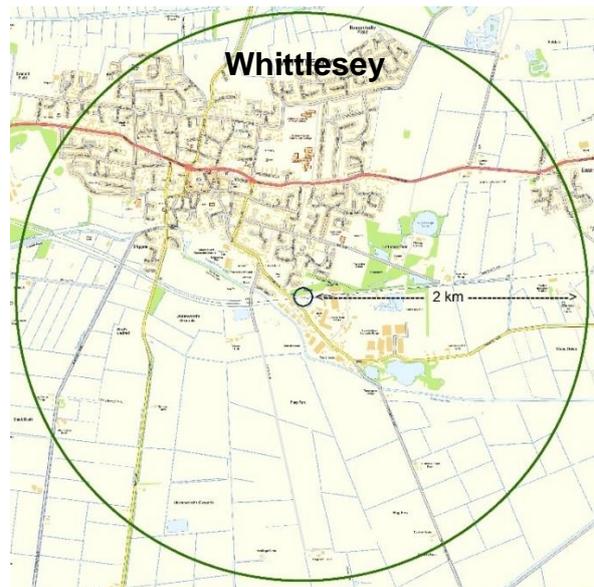
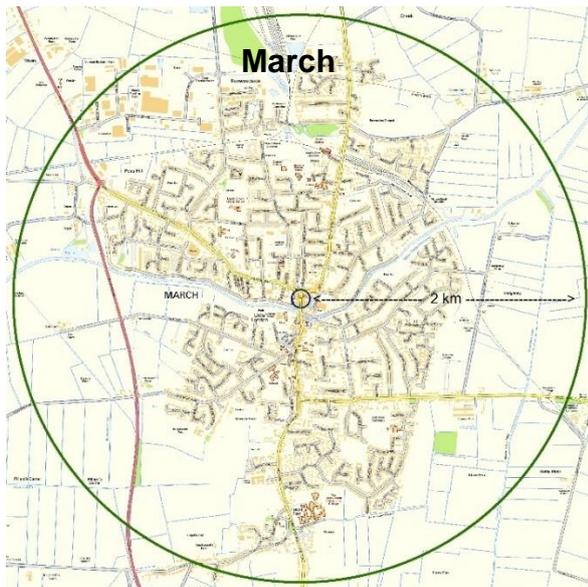
Improving routes and links to public transport such as Fenland's railway stations enables longer journeys to be undertaken more sustainably. Therefore, developing and improving connections to residential areas within 2km (5km for cycling) of each station is an important priority for this strategy.

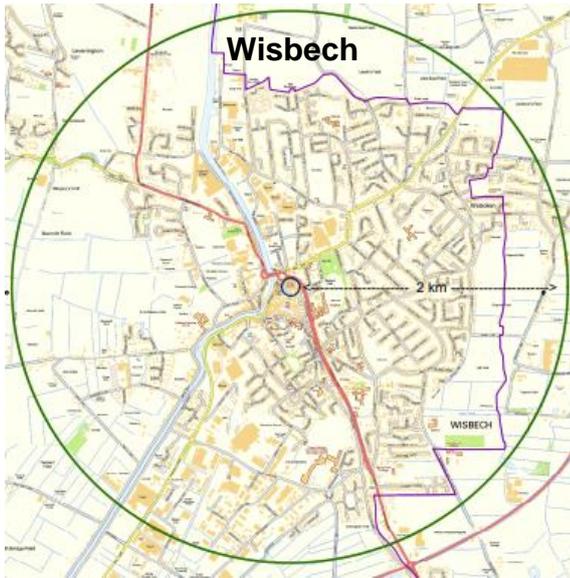




Bus Services

Key bus stops/stations are located within the town centres of Whittlesey and Wisbech with many routes also converging in the centre of March. These sites are all within 2km of the residential areas of each town.





Improving walking and cycling provision that links with these onward travel opportunities is vital to a successful strategy.

Other path users: Equestrians

Horse riding is not considered to be a method of travel to access places of education and employment and is therefore not a transport mode this strategy is aimed at. However, riding is a very important activity in the rural community and must be considered and accommodated within wider network links where byways and bridleways are in use. New links for connecting towns and villages to improve travel options on foot and by bicycle should consider adding value by including provision for other surface users such as equestrians.

Where improvements are recommended for routes that include equestrian use, their needs, particularly for surface types and available space must be carefully considered. This is especially important as walking and cycling improvements often require more solid, all weather surfaces which could be restrictive for horse riding. Equally, soft grass-based routes could be 'churned' by high levels of horse-riding use especially in winter months, making these inaccessible for walkers and cyclists. A clear understanding of all user requirements and a delicate balance of interventions is essential for the improvement or introduction of multi-user routes.

2. METHODOLOGY

Project Funding

In November 2020 FDC Cabinet approved development funding for a Fenland Walking, Cycling and Mobility Strategy incorporating the findings from the March Area Transport Study Walking and Cycling Strategy (April 2020). This included a financial contribution from the Hereward Community Rail Partnership to develop the strategy.

Fenland Transport and Access Group

The strategy project was overseen by the Fenland Transport and Access Group (TAG), with a Sub-Group of TAG members set up to review monthly progress. The TAG is made up of stakeholders from each Town Council, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, Sustrans and the Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum (LAF). Its aim is to ensure that there is one integrated approach for transport and accessibility in the Fenland area, one approach to address the challenges of a local rural transport network.

The TAGs involvement in the development of this strategy provided a wide-ranging representation of local transport and strategy experts to inform the strategy content. The input and insight provided by Town Council Members ensured that local needs remained the key focus of this document.

Route Review & Stakeholder Engagement

A desktop review was undertaken in early 2021 to determine key walking and cycling routes in Chatteris, Whittlesey and Wisbech. This was also informed by an online public survey carried out through February and March 2021 and continuous stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the strategy.

Feedback was gathered through the survey and engagement relating to how local residents currently travel for short local journeys and their views on walking, cycling and mobility aid use in Fenland. The survey achieved 734 responses (mostly cyclists) from residents, workers and students in and around Fenland. Stakeholder engagement also provided valuable insight from a range of areas including Cycling groups, young people in Wisbech and Equestrian representatives. Results from the survey were used to develop the strategy and identify best practice for route improvements.

Route Mapping & Audit

Routes linking main residential areas to places of education, health care and employment were mapped out for each Fenland Town. A high-level audit reviewing current provision in terms of path widths, lighting and opportunity for improvements was carried out on each section. The resulting scheme recommendations from this work are set out in Section 6: Action Plan & Recommendations.

Strategy Approval

The first draft of this strategy, Version 1, was adopted as policy by FDC Cabinet in September 2021. This document is the second version of the strategy, revised following a full public consultation.

Strategy Review – Public Consultation 2021/2022

A public consultation was undertaken in December 2021/January 2022 inviting views and comments regarding the adopted strategy content, action plan and recommendations. A total of 64 complete survey responses were received. The results of this survey and views provided were used to revise and update the document, creating Version 2 of the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy.

3.PROJECT DELIVERY

Initial Survey Work & Feedback

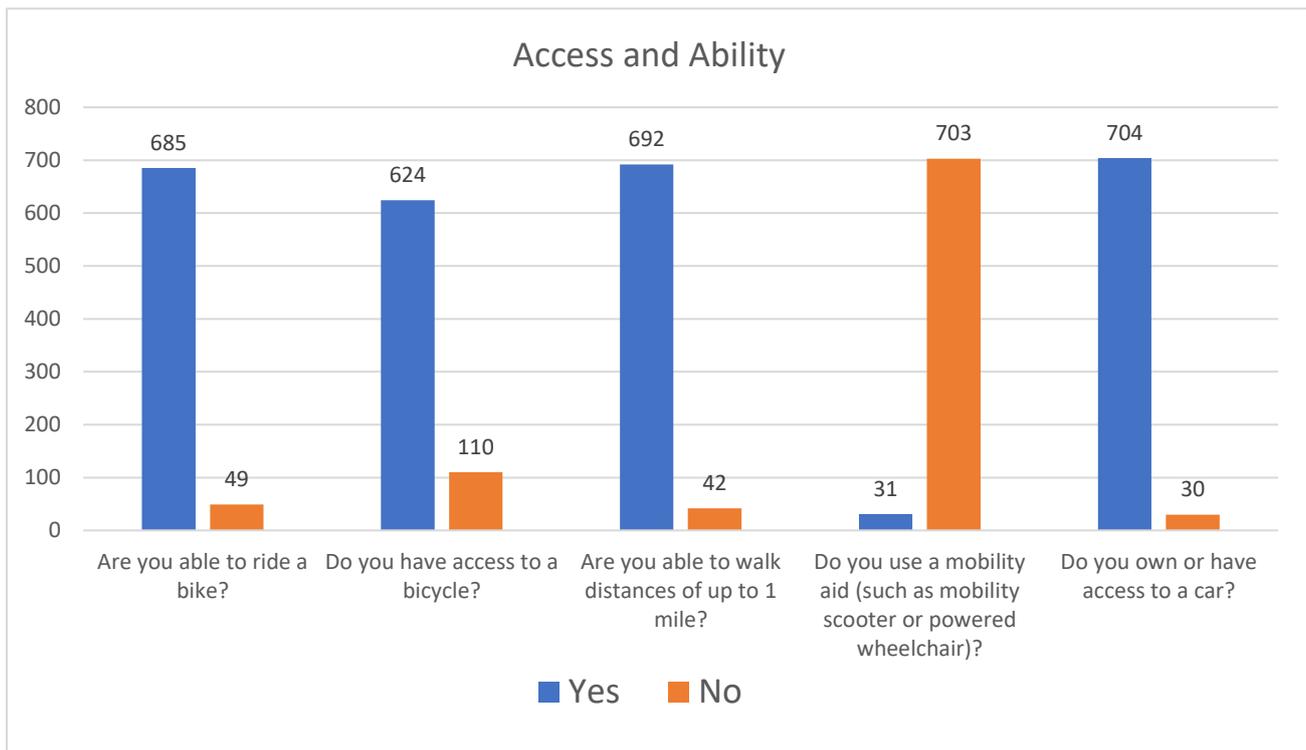
Initial survey work undertaken in early 2021 as part of developing this strategy asked local residents and visitors to Fenland key questions relating to walking, cycling and mobility scooter use. 734 surveys were completed in total.

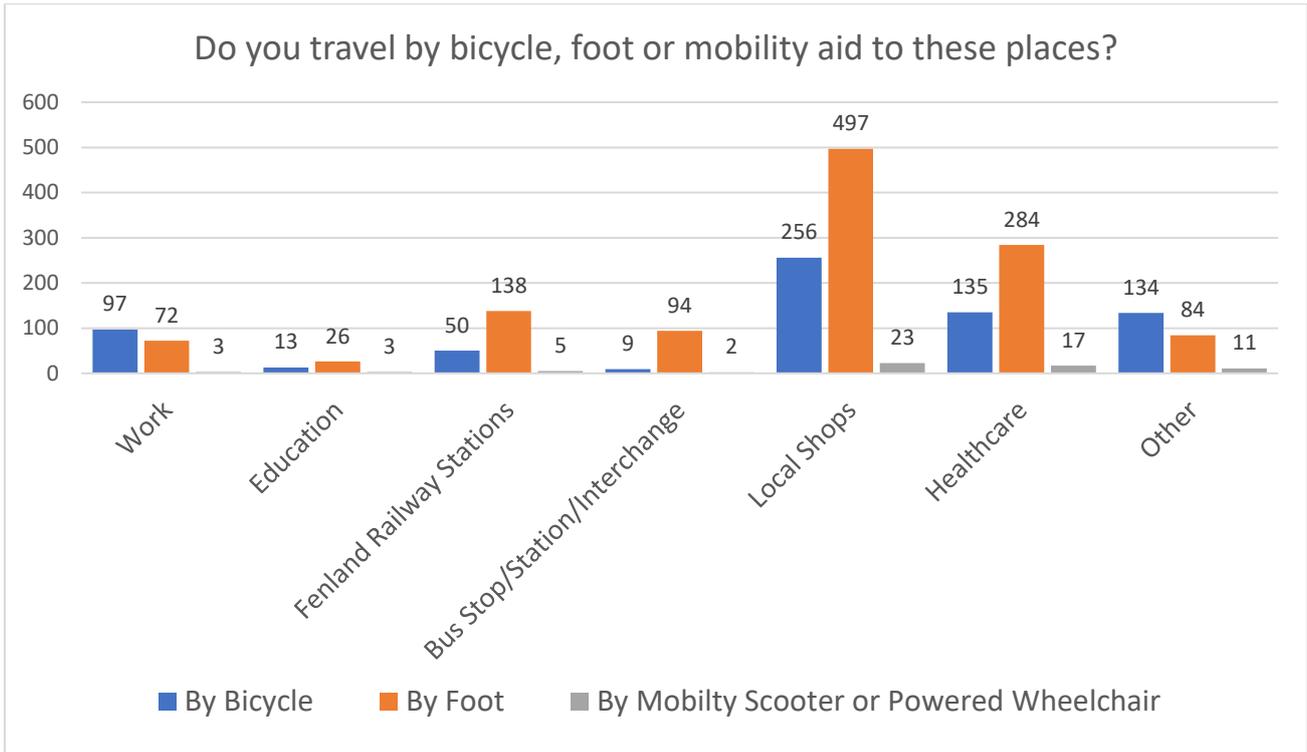
Almost all participants stated they either live, work or access education in Fenland with a few (1%) living/working nearby.

Questions asked in the survey included 'Do you travel to work/education/shops/Fenland Railway Stations on foot or by bicycle' and 'What would encourage you to walk/cycle more?'.

From the survey results 685 people stated they were able to ride a bike and 692 stated they were able to walk distances of 1 mile, with only 30 stating they did not have access to a car. Most participants stated they accessed some local services either on foot, by bicycle or using a mobility scooter with access to local shops being the most popular journey.

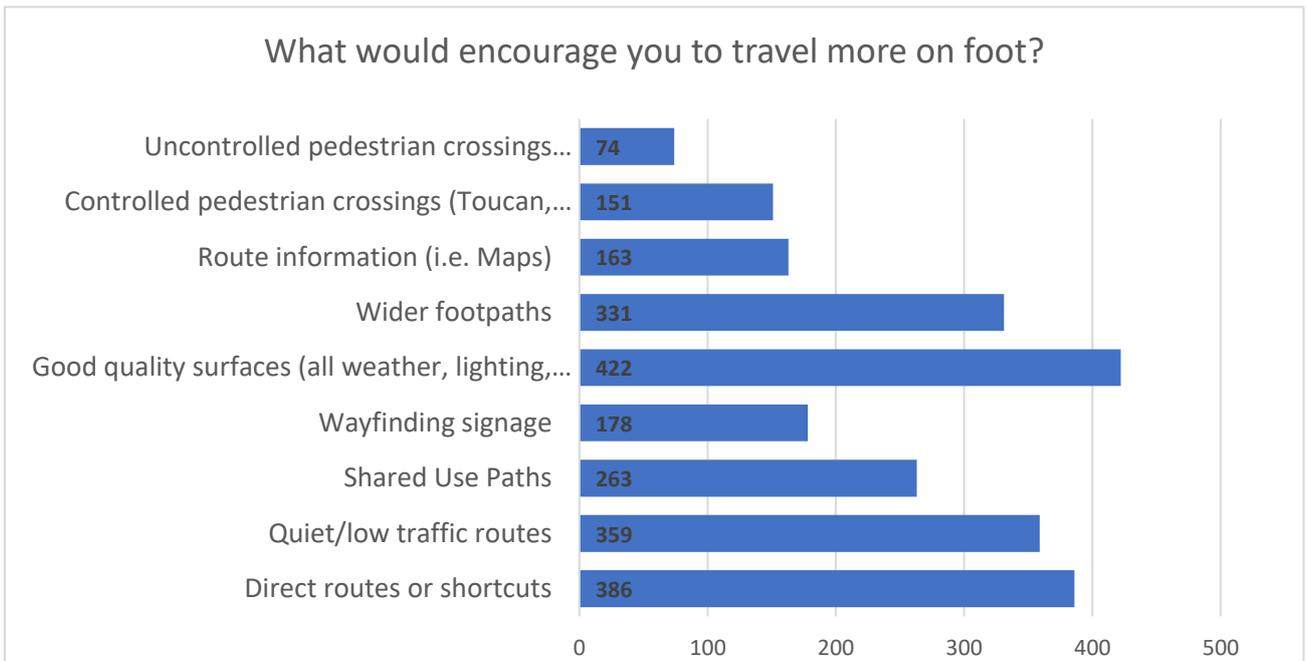
These results are set out in the tables below:



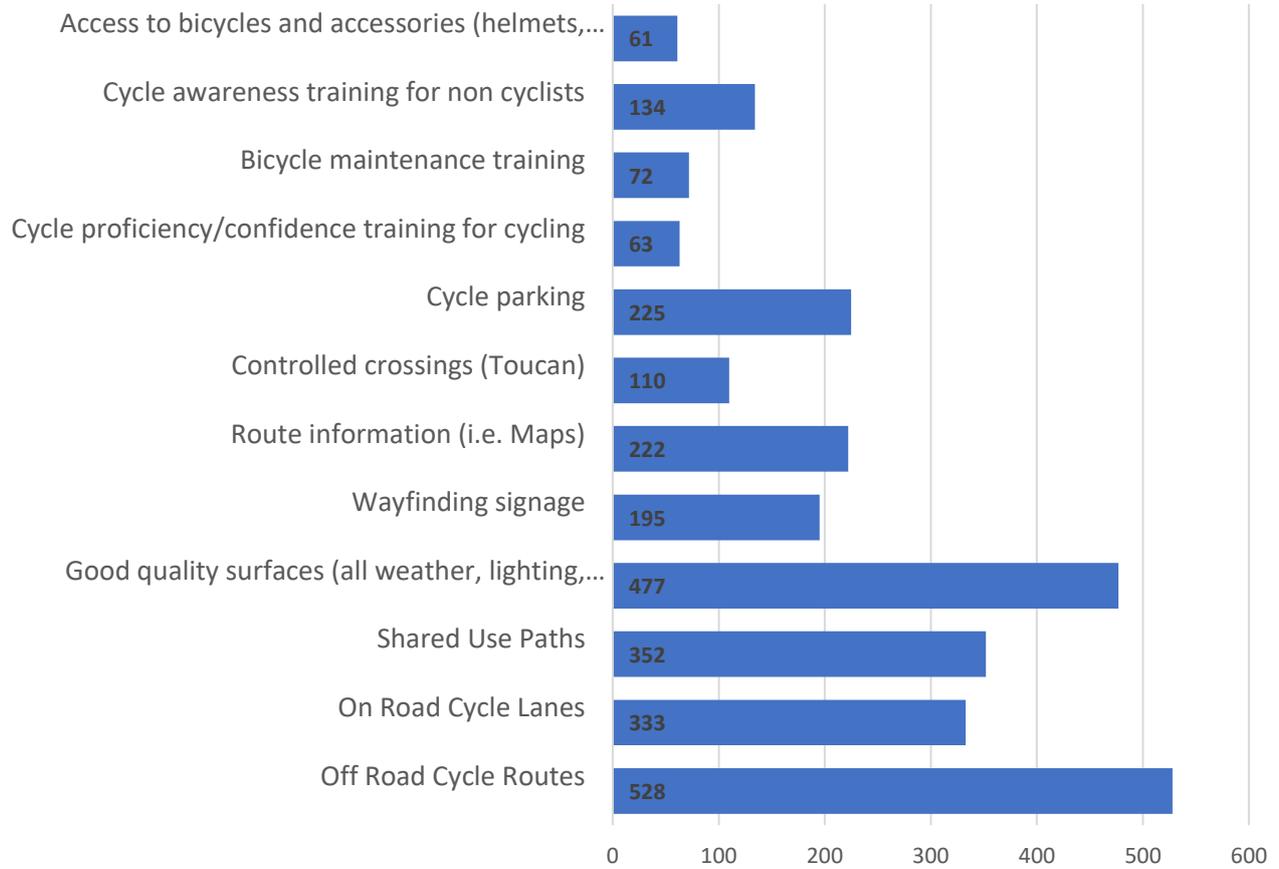


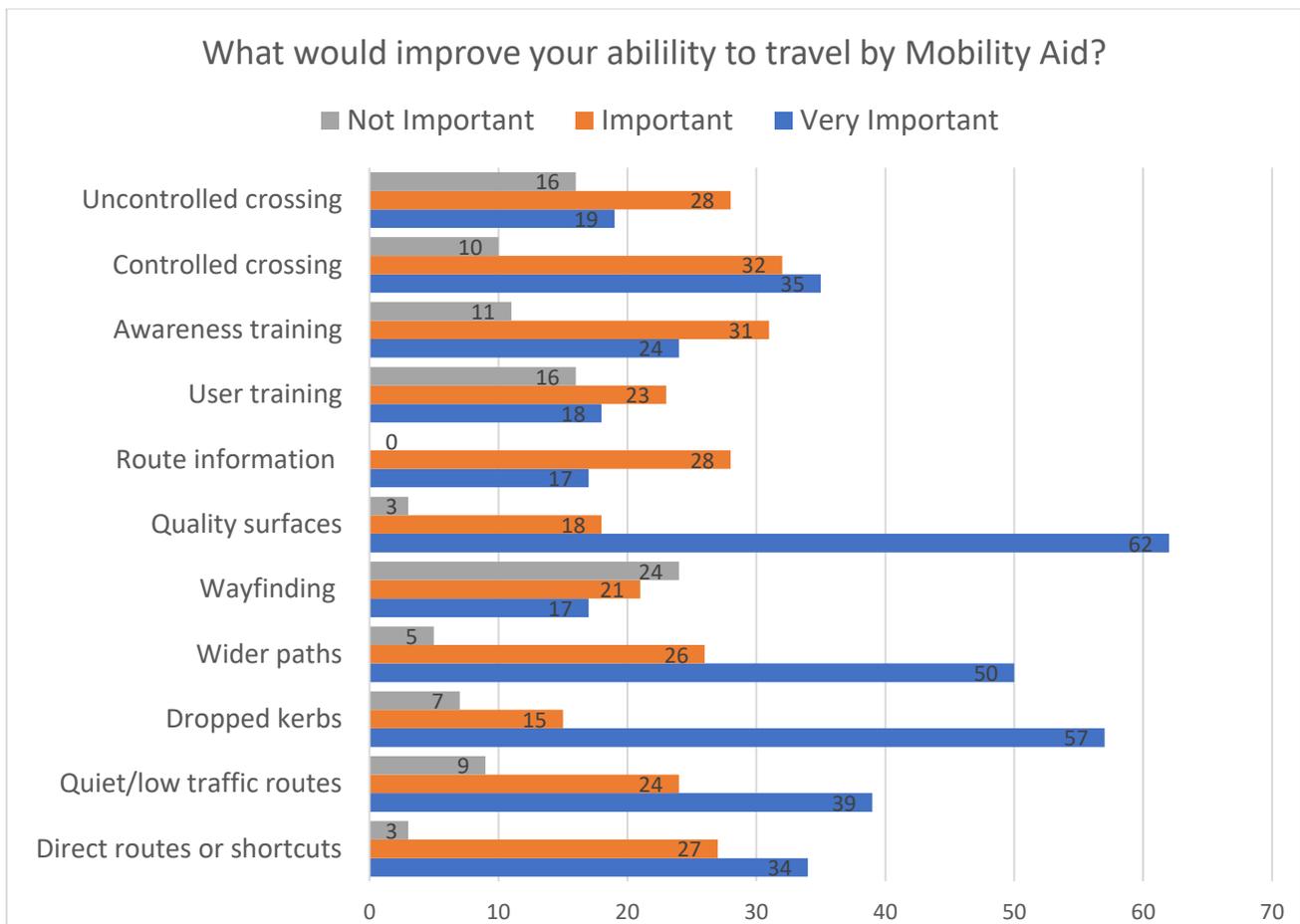
Preferred improvements for Fenland

Using the responses from the survey the following information has been collated to show the improvements local residents, workers and visitors feel would most help them choose to walk or cycle more or provide them with better mobility scooter access.



What would encourage you to travel by bicycle?





Route Mapping & Audits

Key routes were selected through a mapping exercise to identify the main connecting options for travelling between major residential areas and learning or employment zones within Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

Strategic links between settlements have also been identified using the existing National Cycling Network (NCN) routes and the A141 between Guyhirn and Chatteris. In addition, these routes have been linked in places to provide circular routes and improve the connection of the network.

A high-level audit was undertaken along each route mapped out for the four Fenland Towns. Each route was assessed for:

- opportunities to widen paths for pedestrians and mobility aid users
- missing sections of footpath
- dropped kerb provision
- potential for crossing improvements
- potential for segregated cycle lanes or shared use paths
- adequate signage

The routes identified and recommendations resulting from this audit are set out under each town in Section 6 Action plan & recommendations.

Strategy review and Public Consultation 2021/2022

Version 1 of the strategy was put to public consultation in December 2021/January 2022 inviting views and comments on the adopted strategy content, action plan and recommendations. The consultation was advertised online via Facebook, Twitter and the Fenland District Council website. A press article was also featured in the local newspapers and adverts displayed in key locations across each town and village.

A total of 64 complete survey responses were received. Of these responses 89% supported the overall approach to the strategy. With comments including “This is urgently required”, “I think the action plan is very well thought out”, “Some great suggestions to improve pedestrian access to schools”.

The remaining 7 respondents stated they were not in favour of the strategy approach for the following reasons:

- the content needs to provide more focus on villages,
- the schemes identified should be bolder and
- no focus on provision for equestrians within this strategy.

With the exception of specific provision for equestrians within the strategy (see 1.4 Strategy consideration of different modes of travel) the strategy document has now been revised to better incorporate views provided through this consultation.

The full consultation results will be made available on the Fenland District Council website.

4. STRATEGY

Introduction

It is recognised that across Fenland district there will be different requirements and different walking and cycling constraints. This means that there is not a 'one size fits all' solution for making walking and cycling the first choice for short journeys. However, there are key elements to creating consistency across all routes and successfully promoting sustainable travel.

This strategy sets out core objectives that can be applied in all instances. The objectives aim to provide enough flexibility to ensure that even challenging locations can achieve realistic improvements and are not left behind if resolutions are difficult. This high level, approved approach ensures identified schemes and projects are well supported and can compete for funding on a national level, with the intention of giving Fenland the best chance of overall success.

The following chapter sets out the strategic aims, objectives, approach and priorities for encouraging walking and cycling and developing a connected walking and cycling network in Fenland.

4.1 Aim

“To achieve a greater level of walking and cycling for people of all ages and abilities across Fenland. Through the development of a safe and integrated route network focussing on access between and into the market towns, to improve safety in both towns and villages and connect strategic corridors between major settlements.”

4.2 Objectives

These core objectives are essential to the success of this strategy:

Place

Create the best conditions and infrastructure for walking, cycling and mobility aid use across Fenland particularly for access to places of education, employment, health care and essential services.

People

Ensure everyone (all ages and abilities) has access to good quality routes that feel safe, giving them confidence to make walking and cycling their first choice for local journeys.

Promotion

Aid and encourage opportunities for access and mobility through a range of methods that demonstrate freedom, health and wellbeing through local travel.

4.3 Strategy Approach

Main focus

Initially, this strategy's main focus is to encourage more people to regularly choose walking and cycling as their first choice of travel for short journeys. It aims to improve core walking and cycling networks within each town and strategic cycle route across Fenland, linking its market towns and connecting Whittlesey to Peterborough. Additionally, it recognises that there are key areas of missing pavement, especially in the villages outside of the towns. These constitute both a safety hazard and a barrier to walking as opposed to driving for local journeys. The strategy seeks to promote route connections both for pedestrians and for cyclists to and from residential areas to key locations for health, education, employment and leisure including, where possible, improved connectivity to the three Fenland Railway Stations.

Phasing

To achieve meaningful improvement to cycling and walking routes, as well as providing missing pedestrian infrastructure, a phased approach and strategy review programme is needed. Phasing and reviews will be set out to expand on what has been completed to date as scheme delivery is achieved. *It is recognised that within all strategy phases route safety not only in towns but in villages must be a priority.*

Funding

A district network of walking and cycling routes is a purposefully ambitious long-term aim which will depend on available funding and the opportunities to deliver infrastructure schemes. It is not expected that Fenland District Council will achieve this alone as there is much work to be done to improve Fenland walking and cycling infrastructure to the same standards enjoyed by other parts of the country. It is therefore intended that this strategy and the recommendations within it are well supported and clearly align with existing local and national objectives. This will ensure the schemes and projects can be taken forward by Fenland District Council or any relevant authority or appropriate organisation. Working together to make use of every opportunity will be key to the success of this strategy.

4.4 Strategy Priorities

Access to key locations

To embed walking and cycling as the first choice for travelling short distances this strategy is specifically targeting access to health, education, employment and leisure. By encouraging walking and cycling into every-day essential journeys this strategy aims to reduce car reliance and increase healthier choices when it comes to all journeys. This focus also has the additional and equally important benefit of improving access for people without a car. With better access opportunities for working, learning and earning attainment can also be raised for more people.

Multi-mode journeys

Multi-mode journeys are undertaken by mixing walking and cycling with other forms of transport. This is significantly important to enable longer journeys to be achieved without the use of a car.

The three Fenland railway stations in particular link the district quickly and easily to major employment and education hubs like Cambridge and Peterborough as well as to the rest of England and the UK beyond. Train journey times are typically much faster than any road option across Fenland. With work underway to

improve the three Fenland stations to encourage greater use and better service frequencies, this travel option is expected to be even more important in the future.

As highlighted earlier in this strategy document, significant portions of Manea, March and Whittlesey's residential areas are within 2km of a Fenland railway station. As the remainder of both towns and the villages of Manea, Eastrea and Coates are within 5km of a station this also provides strong opportunities for cycling links.

Chatteris and Wisbech are less well connected to the Fenland railway stations with regards to walking and cycling opportunities due to the distances involved. For example, Wisbech Town Centre to March Station is 10 miles, Chatteris Town Centre is 8.5 miles to March Station or 7 miles to Manea Station. However, increasing use of e-bikes and their ability to make longer distances achievable for more people mean that longer cycling networks are becoming more viable. Improving longer distance connections between these towns and the railway by way of cycle route improvements to the NCN 63, A141 and between Chatteris and Manea is included within this strategy.

Access to bus services is also a key link for our rural towns, enabling onward travel to other destinations without the use of a car as well providing additional options for shorter journeys for those less mobile. Taking more cars off the road by using public transport not only reduces congestion but supports these often under used services which are essential for those without access to a private vehicle. An example of this for longer journeys is the Excel bus service. This provide links from Wisbech and Guyhirn to Peterborough and King's Lynn railway stations.

Promoting these sustainable transport modes is included in the action plan for this strategy along with route improvement recommendations to these hubs.

Developing a Fenland-wide walking and cycling network

This strategy and the recommendations within it aim to consider the network as a whole. It is purposefully ambitious but realistic in terms of what can (or cannot) be achieved at this time.

Improving existing infrastructure and addressing localised gaps in the network is the starting point, or building block, to creating a truly connected Fenland-wide network.

Strategic links between settlements have been identified using the existing National Cycling Network (NCN) routes and the A141 between Guyhirn and Chatteris. In addition, these routes have been linked in places to provide circular routes and improve the connection of the network.

It is important to note that while routes have been identified as the most likely desire lines within each town and for journeys between each this does not mean that every road or pathway is suitable for infrastructure improvements. Potential options for alternative route recommendations must be included where necessary.

Encouraging travel choice and reducing other travel barriers

A good quality connected network of routes is not the only provision this strategy recommends to support and encourage walking, cycling and mobility in Fenland. While infrastructure is the most prominent requirement, promotion and encouragement also play an important part in changing travel behaviours.

Wisbech Travel Choices, Hereward CRP promotion, Walk to School Week and other Personal Travel Planning projects have all been successful at achieving varying levels of modal shift. These methods should be part of a regular commitment in Fenland to embed walking and cycling as a priority for all. For cycling in particular, access to equipment is also key, as is provision of secure cycle parking facilities.

Issues around cycle theft and vandalism have been highlighted by a number of members of the public through the engagement exercises undertaken for this strategy. Public responses to the strategy engagement suggest this to be particularly prevalent in Wisbech.

This is supported by statics published at www.police.uk which shows the reported bike thefts are as follows:

Area	Total thefts reported between June 2020 and June 2021 (1 year)	Total thefts reported between June 2018 and June 2021 (3 years)
Wisbech	78	250
March & Chatteris	20	124
Whittlesey	4	23

This localised data shows that variations to the recommendations for a particular place based on specific needs, such as cycle pods rather than more standard cycle parking for Wisbech is an important part of this strategy.

5. POLICIES & DELIVERY APPROACH

Introduction

For the successful delivery this strategy needs to be underpinned with principles of action set out as policy. This chapter provides details of these policies and explains the delivery approach.

5.1 Core Policies

Place	
Create a high-level strategy for a consistent and connected network of cycling and walking routes between and into each Fenland town to link residential areas with places of education and employment. To address safety gaps in the rural network and develop a core route link across Fenland.	This will be achieved by the development of this strategy and include a regular programme of review to ensure policies and scheme recommendations remain up to date and in line with public requirements and related strategies such as the emerging local plan.
Develop walking and cycling exemplar infrastructure within our Market Towns, resolve safety gaps in villages and enhance core route links across Fenland.	This will be achieved by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify gaps in the network and recommendations for existing routes including improvements to facilitate better access for mobility aid users. • Addressing safety concerns for walkers and cyclists. • actively sourcing funding opportunities for scheme delivery • enabling supporting infrastructure such as cycle parking
Maintain a consistent and ongoing approach to network improvements relating to walking and cycling routes and access to places of education, employment and health.	This will be achieved by regularly reviewing route and network requirements and publishing a list of approved scheme recommendations. This list can be used by any relevant local authorities or highway providers for scheme funding.

People	
Enable walking and cycling in safety and confidence for people of all ages	This will be achieved by education and training, providing access to equipment such as bicycles or safety items such as hi-vis wear.
Facilitate opportunities to travel and	This will be achieved by supporting integrated transport

demonstrate making local walking and cycling journeys	journeys especially to railway and bus stations, promoting routes and providing cycling and walking maps.
Encourage mobility and walking and cycling as a first choice for local journeys.	This will be achieved by championing solutions to support the use of mobility aids, supporting walking and cycling for health schemes, access and links to green spaces and corridors and leisure routes

Promotion

Communication through a range of mediums and media to promote routes and opportunities for local travel	This will be achieved by cycling and walking map development, highlighting travel options for festivals and events and participating in local and national sustainable travel promotions.
Commission and deliver exemplar mobility projects and good practice examples	This will be achieved by the delivery of special projects to promote walking, cycling and mobility e.g. Whittlesey Heritage Walk, working with other projects to promote healthy living and activities to promote user safety, considerate behaviour and how to report highway/infrastructure faults
Evaluate cycling, walking & mobility aid requirements across Fenland and evidence progress against strategy targets.	This will be achieved by developing a customer centred evaluation and review process. To include discussion about progress with the community and local stakeholders, particularly understanding the needs of mobility aid users. This will provide ongoing opportunity for public focused support and responses, user feedback, route audits, and culminate in a published report to demonstrate progress

5.2 Funding and Scheme Delivery

Various levels of funding are required to deliver the work identified in this strategy. This strategy provides the baseline information needed to support schemes and proposals. This includes enabling funding applications and bids to be submitted to take work forward.

Network improvements

All works relating to the public highway and infrastructure must be planned and designed carefully. This process takes time.

The walking and cycling improvement schemes set out in this strategy will need to be delivered through the following phases:



The timeframes needed for each phase will be dependent on the size and type of scheme. This strategy categorises each scheme as either a short, medium or long term project with the scoping/feasibility and design work set into phases. The estimated dates this work will be achieved is set out below -

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Construction
Short Term	By 2027	N/a	2022 – 2028
Medium Term	By 2030	By 2034	2029 – 2035
Long Term	By 2034	By 2040	2036 – 2042

It is important to note that these are estimated timeframes which will be dependent on a variety of factors, including available resource and funding opportunities going forward. Business Case work for larger schemes may be needed to show value for money and scheme benefits to secure third party funding, in these instances this work will need to start well in advance.

The exception to these timeframes is the schemes being taken forward through the March Area Transport Strategy work. Cambridgeshire County Council has secured funding from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority for the completion of the short term schemes. Design work for these schemes is being undertaken in 2022 and construction is expected to follow shortly. Phase 2 work has also been costed and funding options are being explored to complete this through the MATS project.

Funding

For scheme delivery and other work such as engagement, community and education projects, initial and ongoing funding is also required. This is expected to be achieved through a number of routes including but not limited to:

- Capability Funding – this is administered by the DfT and replaces the LSTF and Active Travel Fund
- CCC Transport Investment Fund – this is an annual fund for local improvements listed within the CCC TIP
- Levelling up Fund – this is available for projects to improve of every-day life across the UK
- March Area Transport Study (CPCA Funding)
- Section 106 Developer Contributions
- Other funding opportunities – British Cycling, Active Travel, Community Rail, Growing Fenland (Civil Parking Enforcement) etc.

As stated earlier in this document, it is not expected that Fenland District Council will achieve the infrastructure schemes set out in this strategy alone. The recommendations and delivery phases identified

are therefore able to be taken forward by Fenland District Council or any other relevant authority or appropriate organisation.

5.3 Delivering the Strategy and Measuring Progress.

To maintain momentum and ensure this strategy continues to focus on developing a connected walking and cycling network in Fenland, detailed targets and measurables have been developed. These include:

Place

- Adopt an up-to-date and supported strategy for walking, cycling and mobility aid users that delivers change to increase levels of use.
- Influence the emerging Fenland Local Plan to ensure walking and cycling are at the centre of new developments.
- Enable, encourage and deliver new infrastructure and improvements to existing routes that improve safety and security for pedestrians, cyclist and mobility aid users and facilitates mobility aids users.
- Ensure minimum planning requirements for walking, cycling and mobility are incorporated in housing developments. Encourage enhanced provision where possible.
- Develop a governance and review structure for local transport strategies including the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy.

People

- Identify, cost and deliver education and training projects to improve walking, cycling and mobility confidence. Including opportunities for multi modal journey involving bus and rail travel to enable a wider reach using sustainable travel methods.
- Identify, promote and deliver schemes to support access to essential walking, cycling and mobility equipment such as bicycles, safety wear and mobility aids.
- Identify safety and security matters such as theft, antisocial behaviour and crime and direct these to the relevant authority. Highlight and promote infrastructure and route improvements to reduce issues and improve safety such as lighting provision and secure cycle parking.
- Engage with young people to promote walking, cycling and multi modal journeys.
- Facilitate integrated transport journeys especially to railway and bus stations.
- Engage with disability groups to explore options to encourage mobility and travel.

Promotion

- Highlight and promote walking and cycling as a greener, healthier modes of travel.
- Promote routes and opportunities for walking and cycling locally. Provide route information and wayfinding tools to enable more journeys on foot, by bicycle or using mobility aids.
- Identify and promote walking and cycling multi-modal journeys for special events and festivals.
- Deliver special projects to promote walking, cycling and to improve mobility e.g. Whittlesey Heritage Walk.
- Engage with partner organisations to support mobility projects. Highlight and promote good practice examples
- Continue engagement with members of the public and stakeholders regarding walking, cycling and mobility aids use in Fenland. Ongoing opportunity for public focused support and responses,
- Review and update recommended walking, cycling and mobility improvement schemes to ensure these best reflect the needs of users and available opportunities.
- Demonstrate progress and publish updates to the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy.

5.4 Strategy Review

As stated above, this strategy includes ongoing work to progress schemes and projects which will be monitored and reported to share progress. This will culminate in annual reports to be provided to FDC Cabinet and made available to the public.

The Fenland Transport and Access Group (TAG) will review progress against the strategy action plan quarterly at their Steering Group meetings.

Version 1 of this strategy was reviewed by public consultation in 2021. The revised document, (Version 2) will be submitted to FDC Cabinet in Autumn 2022.

A further full content review and next phase update will be completed on the strategy in 2032.

6. ACTION PLAN & SCHEMES

The projects and network schemes required to deliver this strategy have been set out in the following chapters.

6.1 Action Plan

A variety of activities are required to fully realise the objectives set out with this strategy. These range from influencing wider developments and delivering projects that support and encourage more walking and cycling to designing and implementing physical infrastructure improvements. The details of the specific activities identified for the delivery of this strategy are set out in [Appendix 2 – Strategy Action Plan](#).

The Strategy Action Plan includes targets and project milestones set against each item to ensure programme delivery and measure progress. Expected completion dates are provided although it is recognised that most aspects of each activity are an ongoing requirement if walking and cycling is to become and remain a priority for shorter journeys or journey links.

A comprehensive list of physical interventions has been identified within this strategy. The general delivery plan for these schemes is set out under item 2b of the Strategy Action Plan. The remaining chapters within this section set out the detail, approach and delivery phases for these schemes.

6.2 Physical Interventions

Preferred approach for physical improvements

An obvious barrier to walking, cycling and the use of mobility aids is lack of or low-quality infrastructure. Generally, options to improve infrastructure can be wide ranging and varied. However, this does not mean that any option is suitable or deliverable. The table below sets out the preferred interventions identified for Fenland. This list is based on the general cost and deliverability expectations of options and has been informed by responses to the 2021 survey to ensure they have public support:

Walking & mobility scooters (all routes)	Cycling	School areas
Provision of dropped kerbs at every junction and crossing point to enable mobility aid use.	Explore potential for segregated cycle lanes – providing infrastructure separated from road and footpath users.	Path widening to accommodate high footfall at peak times.
Path widening to accommodate increasing footfall and enable mobility aid use	Explore potential for shared use paths – providing safer cycling options away from the road.	20mph zones to slow traffic and improve safety.
Revision of junction widths or provision of pedestrian refuge to aid crossing for all users	Improve route signage, particularly along all NCN routes to promote use and improve wayfinding.	Off road cycle lanes providing safe routes to school away from traffic.

Provision of controlled crossings on busy routes & review of crossing timings to enable and prioritise crossing users.	Provide safe & convenient cycle parking to improve confidence in travel by cycling and protect property	Provide on road advisory cycle lanes where shared use or segregated paths are not possible – raising the awareness of other road users.

Surface Quality

Surface quality features highly across all the survey responses and is a regular topic for complaint for all road users. Upgrades to routes can resolve issues for an initial period of time, however, long term maintenance needs to be factored into each scheme. Opportunities to secure funding, relevant resources and a regular programme for the ongoing maintenance of new or improved infrastructure should be carefully considered within or alongside any funding bid. This is necessary for all sites regardless of whether they are on the public highway or in other ownership.

How each scheme is helping to deliver the strategy.

Scheme recommendations need to help deliver the overall strategy.

In order to demonstrate that each project supports the overall strategy, schemes will be categorised based on the following:



6.3 Recommendations for Chatteris

The main, or core, route links around Chatteris have been highlighted on the map on the right. These routes connect key places of employment, education and the town centre with residential developments across Chatteris. A route has also been highlighted towards Manea as this links to Manea Railway Station (6 miles) and should be considered for larger, long-term cycling improvements for multi-modal journeys using rail.

The routes highlighted on the map were audited in 2021 as part of the development of this strategy. The results of this audit along with input from the Town Council and members of the public through the consultation process have been used to inform the improvements recommended. These recommendations have been set out as individual schemes for Chatteris.

Each scheme has been identified for short, medium or long term design and delivery. This is based on the size of the project, the expected amount of time each scheme would take to deliver and the volume of work that could be realistically completed within each time frame. However, it is important to note that individual timeframes for each project may change depending on resources and available funding.

The full list and details of each scheme including delivery phases are set out in [Appendix 3 – Chatteris Schemes](#).

Each scheme has been set out as individual projects. Depending on available funding, these could be delivered individually or grouped together as packages. This could be based on location, linking a range of projects along one section of route or packages could be grouped together based on category. Possible categories that could be delivered as packages for Chatteris are:

- The installation of dropped kerbs
- Junction reviews
- Pedestrian crossings
- Missing footpaths

Grouped schemes or individual projects could also be package with similar or related projects identified for other towns or areas of Fenland. The potential for this option has been left open within this strategy document. This ensures flexibility to explore a range of large or small funding options as these come forward.



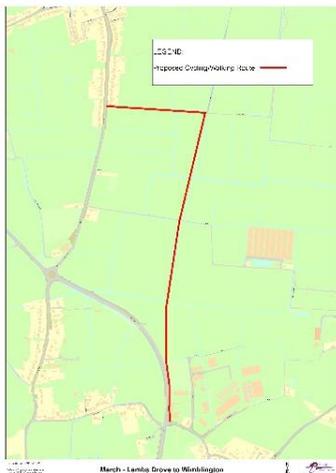
6.4 March Recommendations

The March Area Transport Study (MATS) walking and cycling report identified six key route corridors across March providing main links to employment areas and education. These routes have been highlighted on the map on the right. Audits of existing walking and cycling provision along each route were undertaken between October and December 2019 as part of this study to identify where improvements can be made to facilitate pedestrian and cyclist movement and promote sustainable travel options. This work was led by Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority with support from Fenland District Council and delivered by Capita.

The recommendations from the MATS walking and cycling work have been developed into a programme of schemes which are included in **Appendix 4 – March Schemes**. This sets out the detail of each scheme and the delivery expectation for each recommendation. As explained earlier in Section 5.2 of this document scheme delivery phases include Scoping and Feasibility, Design Work, and Construction.

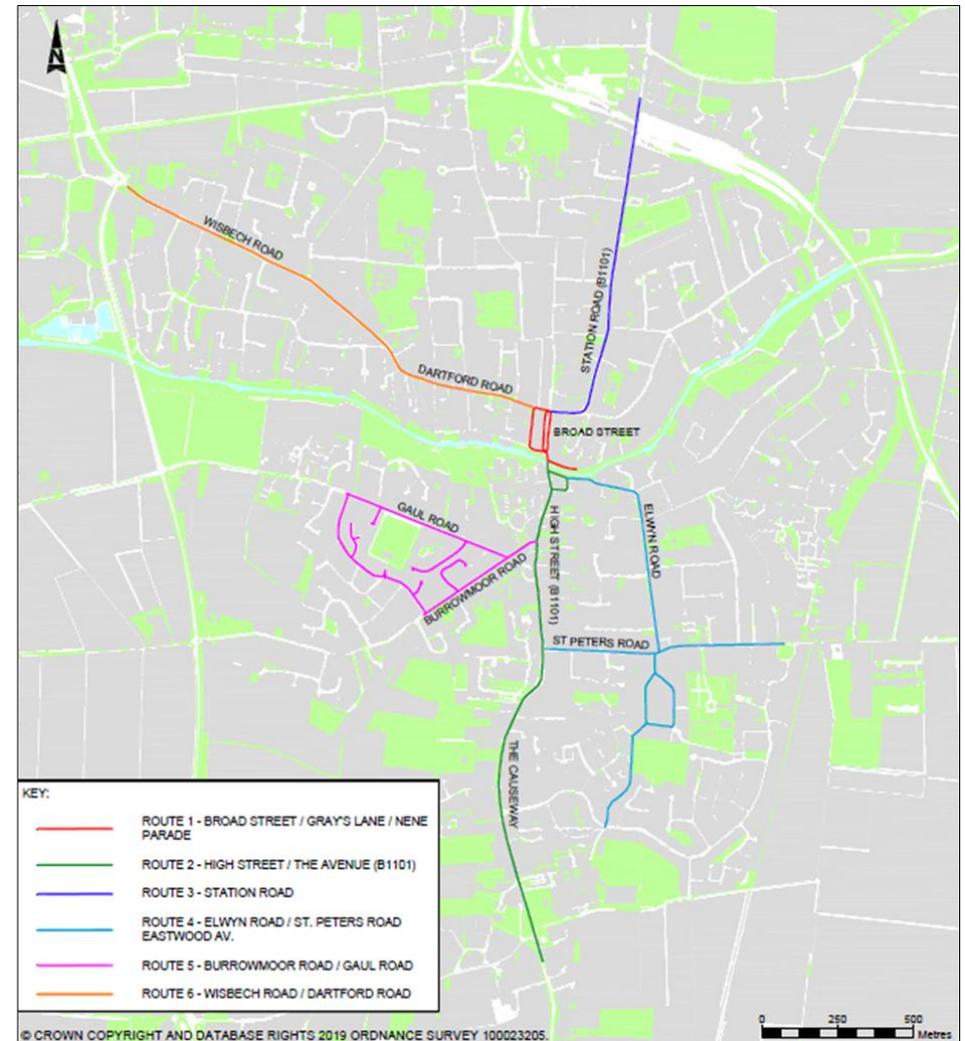
The delivery of the MATS schemes identified for March is being progressed by Cambridgeshire County Council with funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. Progress on this work will be monitored and supported as part of this strategy.

The MATS includes highway schemes to improve traffic congestion across March. One of these schemes, the Northern Industrial Link Road, incorporates provision of a segregated cycle way section forming part of the NCN63. This is an important inclusion to the highway schemes and strongly supported by this strategy.



In addition to the MATS schemes this strategy includes proposals to improve the off-road link along Lamb's Drove to Wimblington. This is a member prioritised scheme to create a multi-modal route suitable for all users in all weathers. This will require suitable surface provision for bicycles or e-bikes whilst retaining sufficient portions of softer surfacing needed for equestrian use.

The full details of the March Area Transport Study including the Walking and Cycling Audit Reports can be viewed online at [March Transport Study - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)



6.5 Whittlesey Recommendations

The main, or core, route links around Whittlesey have been highlighted on the map to the right. These routes connect key places of employment, education, healthcare and the town centre with residential developments across Whittlesey. Important links through Whittlesey include the National Cycle Network Route 63 and connections to Whittlesea Railway Station to the south of town providing important multi-modal travel options for longer journeys.

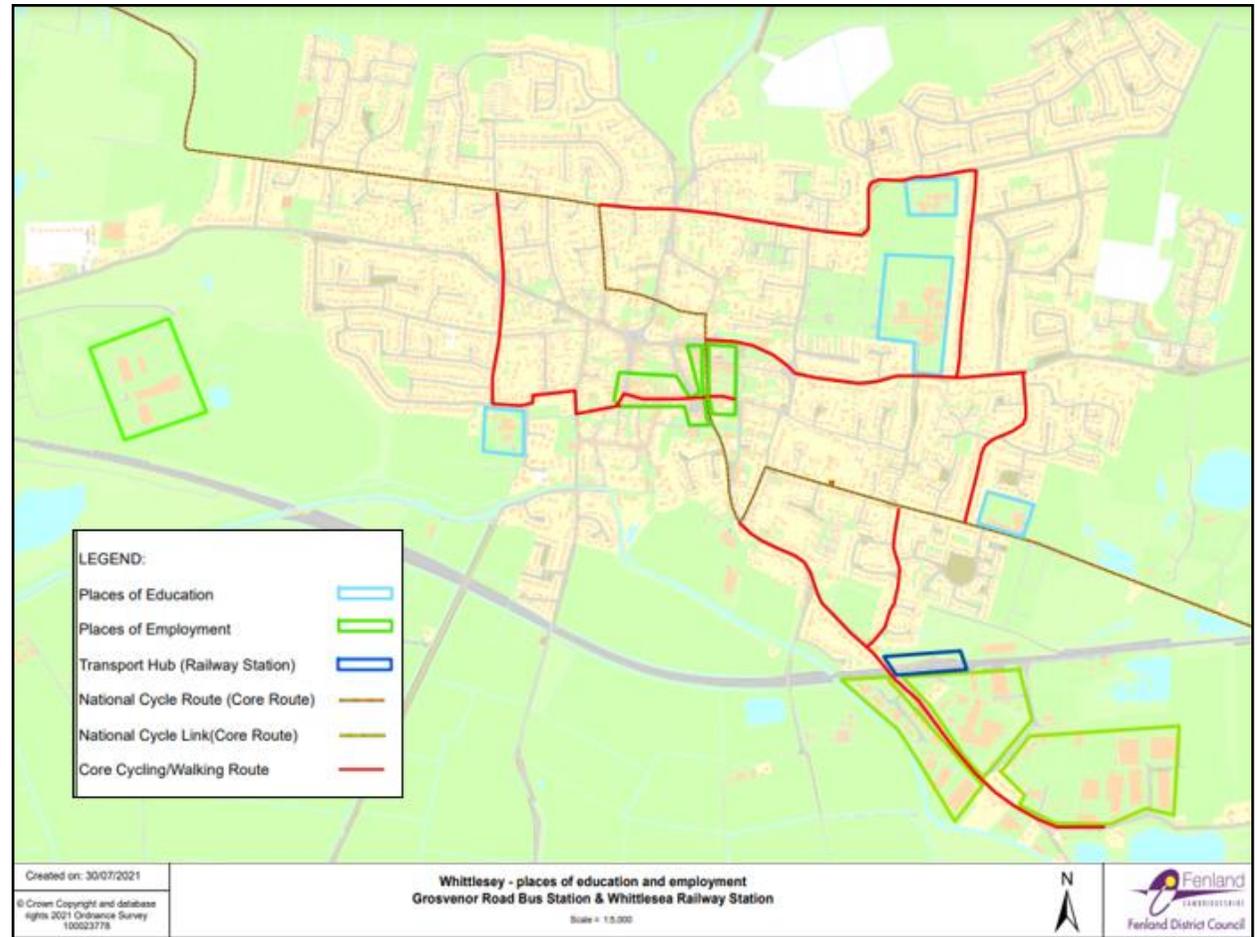
The routes highlighted were audited in 2021 as part of the development of this strategy. The results of this audit along with input from the Town Council and members of the public through the consultation process have been used to inform the improvements recommended in the table below. These have been prioritised based on the criteria set out on page 26.

Each scheme has been identified for short, medium or long term design and delivery. This is based on the size of the project, the expected amount of time each scheme would take to deliver and the volume of work that could be realistically completed within each time frame. However, it is important to note that individual timeframes for each project may change depending on resources and available funding.

The full list and details of each scheme including delivery phases are set out in [Appendix 5 – Whittlesey Schemes](#).

Each scheme has been set out as individual projects. Depending on available funding, these could be delivered individually or grouped together as packages. This could be based on location, linking a range of projects along one section of route or packages could be grouped together based on category. Possible categories that could be delivered as packages for Whittlesey are:

- Installation of dropped kerbs
- Introduction of advisory cycle lanes
- Junction width reviews
- New pedestrian crossings



- Signage and wayfinding

Grouped schemes or individual projects could also be package with similar or related projects identified for other towns or areas of Fenland. The potential for this option has been left open within this strategy document. This ensures flexibility to explore a range of large or small funding options as these come forward.

6.6 Wisbech Recommendations

The main, or core, route links around Wisbech have been highlighted on the map on the right. These routes connect key places of employment, education, healthcare and the town centre with residential developments across Wisbech. Links with the Town Centre, particularly Horsefair Bus Station are particularly important for multi-modal journeys. Wisbech also has two National Cycle Network routes, NCN 63 and NCN 1.

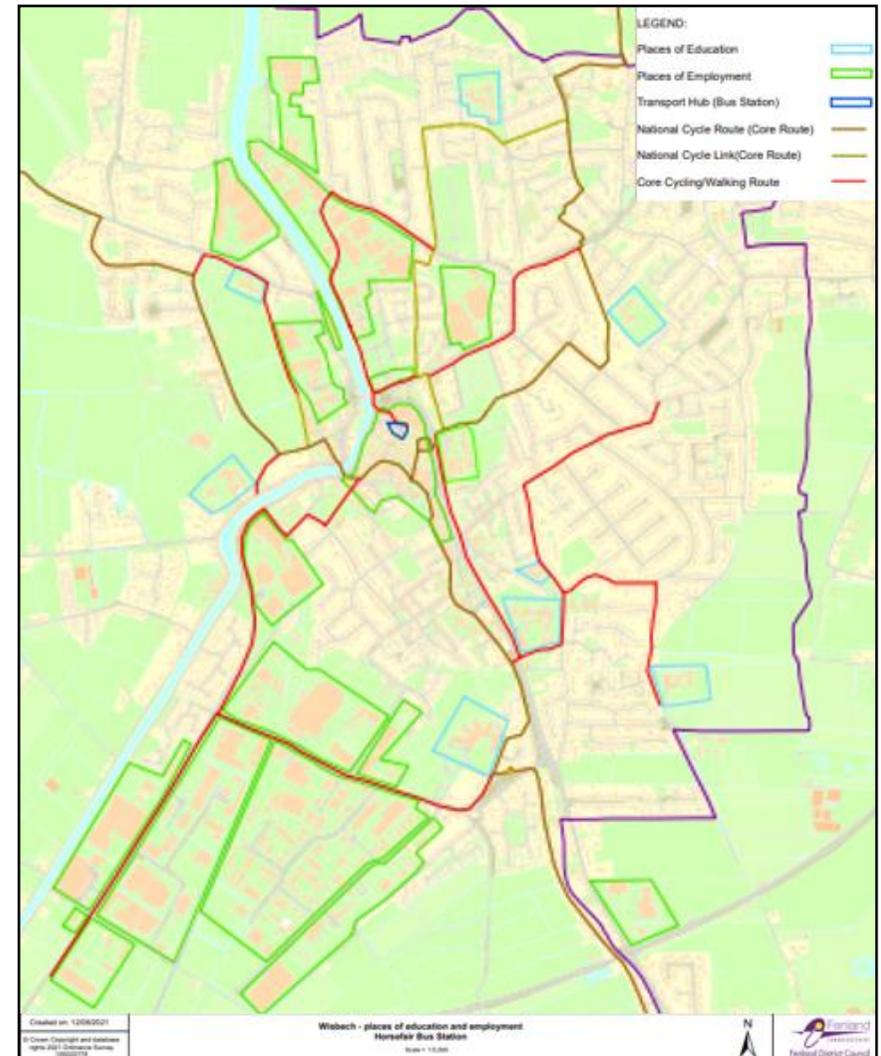
The routes highlighted were audited in 2021 as part of the development of this strategy. The results of this audit along with input from the Town Council and members of the public through the consultation process have been used to inform the improvements recommended in the table below. These have been prioritised based on the criteria set out on page 26.

Each scheme has been identified for short, medium or long term design and delivery. This is based on the size of the project, the expected amount of time each scheme would take to deliver and the volume of work that could be realistically completed within each time frame. However, it is important to note that individual timeframes for each project may change depending on resources and available funding.

The full list and details of each scheme including delivery phases are set out in [Appendix 6 – Wisbech Schemes](#).

Each scheme has been set out as individual projects. Depending on available funding, these could be delivered individually or grouped together as packages. This could be based on location, linking a range of projects along one section of route or packages could be grouped together based on category. Possible categories that could be delivered as packages for Wisbech are:

- Installation of dropped kerbs
- 20mph school zones
- Lighting improvements
- Signage and wayfinding
- Missing footpaths



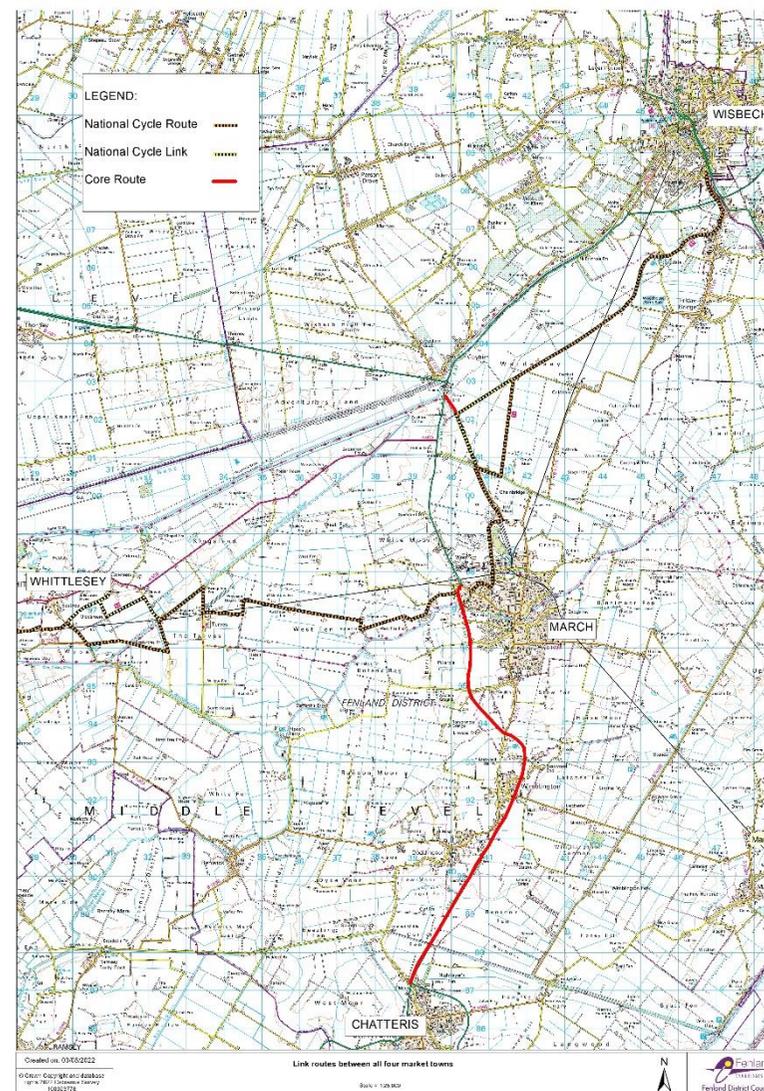
Grouped schemes or individual projects could also be package with similar or related projects identified for other towns or areas of Fenland. The potential for this option has been left open within this strategy document. This ensures flexibility to explore a range of large or small funding options as these come forward.

6.7 Strategic Corridors Between Major Settlements

This map shows the core routes linking all four Fenland market towns which will also be included within this strategy. One route follows the NCN 63 which bisects the district linking Whittlesey, March and Wisbech. The second route connects Guyhirn to March with the potential to link onwards to Chatteris via the A141 to complete the four town link.

Schemes to improve the A141 (Guyhirn to Chatteris) off carriageway provision for pedestrians and cyclists, and to improve the NCN63 from Whittlesey (and Peterborough) to Wisbech are strategic priorities within this strategy, although it is appreciated that these schemes are of such a size that they cannot be delivered within a single programme. The initial priorities for this strategy will be to focus on:

- (1) Peterborough to Whittlesey (NCN63 & Green Wheel).
These off-road walking and cycling paths provide significant opportunities for commuting between Whittlesey and Peterborough for work and education via bicycle or e-bike. Potential for surface improvements, safety cameras and lighting will require scoping and feasibility. Due to the length of route this will cover this will be a long term scheme.
- (2) Peas Hill Roundabout to Mill Hill Roundabout.
Provision of a safe walking and cycling route linking the north and south of March would connect large residential areas along the west of March. It will also support much longer commuter or recreational cycling routes between the market towns. This recommendation will explore the opportunity to provide new foot and cycle paths separated from the busy road using the grass verges.
- (3) Whittlesey to March (NCN63).
This section of the network avoids the busy A605 providing a rural road route linking the two towns. This recommendation will explore opportunities for improved signage, surface upgrades (dry route section).



6.8 Missing footpaths and Member priorities.

Missing sections of footpath can create major barriers to travel on foot. This is particularly problematic for villages where some lack of footpaths can also create safety concerns for the local community. To identify and address this across the district a programme of audit work is included in this strategy. A footpath audit will be undertaken for each Fenland village. This action is included in the Strategy Action Plan item 2.1. An example of how this approach may work are set out in the table below based on a simple alphabetical list of Fenlands villages. The timetable for these audits may be subject to change. Where possible this timeframe will be brought forward depending on available resources.

Village	Year	Village	Year	Village	Year
Benwick	1	Four Gotes	5	Parson Drove	9
Christchurch	1	Friday Bridge	5	Pondersbridge	9
Coates	2	Gorefield	6	Rings End	10
Coldham	2	Guyhirn	6	Thorney Toll	10
Doddington	3	Leverington	7	Turves	11
Eastrea	3	Manea	7	Tydd St Giles	11
Elm	4	Murrow	8	Wimblington	12
Foul Anchor	4	Newton	8	Wisbech St Mary	12

Missing sections of path or route links identified through village audits will be assessed and, where appropriate, worked into a scheme packages for feasibility, design and construction works. A contact process will also be established to enable residents to report missing footpath links to the FDC Transport Team via email. These reports will be reviewed as part of annual audit work.

Missing footpath provision identified and prioritised by members through the initial strategy development in 2021 include East Park Street, Church Lane and Doddington Road in Chatteris and along Cromwell Road in Wisbech (between the Tesco Supermarket and South Brink).

In Whittlesey, re-engineering the existing grass verge and footpath on the north side of the A605 between Crossway Hand and the Whitmore Street controlled crossing to make an all-weather route for pedestrians, mobility vehicle users and, potentially, cyclists is also a member prioritised scheme.

In March, there is member support for the Lambs Drove to Wimblington route to be prioritised for multi-modal active travel

New sites to be investigated based on public consultation recommendations (2022) include:

- Mayfield Road junction with Wype Road in Eastrea.
- March Road, Turves – linking residential properties to the post box, public house and bus shelter.
- Burnt House Road, Turves – linking residential properties to the post box, public house and bus shelter.
- Creek Road, March – connecting to level crossing.
- Hook Lane & Hook Road, Wimblington.
- Lerowe Road, Wisbech.

7. PROGRESS TRACKING AND REPORTING

A key message within this strategy is that the work identified to take forward is purposefully ambitious. Equally the volume of activity needed to realise the strategy vision is large. It is therefore not expected that Fenland District Council will deliver this work alone. Local Authorities, Developers and Transport Based Organisations will be able to use the content of this document and the recommendations within it to implement schemes or activities directly. It is only with this approach that the strategy can be taken forward. Despite this acknowledgement Fenland District Council is committed to delivering the actions and activities set out in the Strategy Action Plan (Appendix 2).

An annual report will record progress against the targets in the action plan which will be reviewed by the Fenland Transport and Access Group (TAG). The report will include updates relating to the following items:

- An annual review of the strategy and schemes,
- Village audit results,
- Public engagement and survey results,
- Progress on the delivery of schemes,
- Details of funding applied for,
- Education and training project updates,
- Details of routes promoted,
- Options and opportunities identified for mobility aid user improvements,
- Details of events attended
- An annual review of travel choice/modal shift data.

The Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy Report will be published on the Fenland District Council website.

With continued support this approved strategy and action plan will enable Fenland to ensure walking and cycling is the first choice for shorter journeys or as part of longer journeys to access employment, education and healthcare.

APPENDIX

(These will be links direct to the document once published):

Appendix 1 - Related Strategies

Appendix 2 – Action Plan

Appendix 3 – Chatteris Schemes

Appendix 4 – March Schemes

Appendix 5 – Whittlesey Schemes

Appendix 6 – Wisbech Schemes