



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan



The following document addresses the following strategic outcomes outlined in Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Outcomes Framework:

	Customers say the councils listens and actively act on feedback
	- Residents are given the best possible environment and opportunities to improve their physical and mental health and well-being. - Babergh and Mid Suffolk's residents are supported to help us tackle our most pressing public health challenges.
	- Babergh and Mid Suffolk have a low carbon footprint. - Babergh and Mid Suffolk are healthier, safer and sustainable places. - Everyone in Babergh and Mid Suffolk can access and use green sustainable transport options. - Everyone in Babergh and Mid Suffolk understands the need to reduce carbon and makes the right choices.
	- Our businesses and places benefit from stronger connectivity and opportunities to be more environmentally sustainable. - Our places and spaces are well connected with green and sustainable travel infrastructure.
	- Local places are inclusive and accessible by walking and public transport. - People can safely walk and cycle in their communities.

Latest Revision of this document: August 2026.

Introduction

There are many health, well-being, environmental and economic benefits of encouraging people to walk and cycle.

The district councils' wider ambitions and key values around active and sustainable travel are outlined in our Sustainable Travel Vision, whereas the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) focusses specifically on active travel infrastructure.

LCWIP's, as set out in the [Government's Third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), are a new, strategic approach to identifying walking, wheeling and cycling improvements required at the local level. In this report, "wheeling" refers to the use of wheelchairs and mobility aids by people who may not identify as walking. The approach is also supported by [Active Travel England's Rural Design Guide](#), which provides guidance relevant to developing active travel infrastructure in rural areas.

LCWIP's can also help inform and support the planning of new development, in line with Policy TR1 (Vision-led approach to planning for transport) of the [2026 National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) to ensure active travel is *"considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that it is reflected in the vision for the plan area and its specific proposals, and forms an integral part of a plan's strategy for creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places"*. This is also supported by Policy LP29 (Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport) in the district councils' adopted Local Plan.

BMSDC have developed an LCWIP in order to identify and prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure improvements needed, ensure that consideration is given to walking, wheeling and cycling within both local planning and transport policies and strategies, and make the case for future funding for active travel infrastructure, which has benefits on improving accessibility, inclusivity, public realm, health, air quality and reducing road congestion by improving the attractiveness of active travel.

Developing a district level LCWIP also supports a number of other BMSDC strategies which aim to facilitate more sustainable and active travel, by focussing on what is required in terms of fit for purpose infrastructure throughout the districts, as well as informing and enhancing [the county level LCWIP](#), by providing consultation-based evidence to advise and support investment decisions.

The three key outputs of an LCWIP are:

- a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment
- a network plan for walking, wheeling and cycling, which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development
- a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network

This report - which is the third of the three key outputs of an LCWIP listed above - lays out the methodology used and the processes undertaken to develop the other two outputs of our LCWIP; the prioritised list of schemes, and the network zone mapping



Developing an LCWIP for Babergh and Mid Suffolk

This LCWIP has been produced, as far as reasonably possible, in line with the UK Government's LCWIP technical guidance. There have been some limitations to using this guidance, as the guidance tends to apply more to urban areas than rural settings. As such, there have been certain elements where the methodology has been adapted to better reflect local circumstances. This explained, where applicable, throughout the following report.



Determining the Scope

It is advised that the first stage of the LCWIP process is to determine the scope by establishing the geographical extent of the LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.

- **Geographical Context:** Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (BMSDC) share resources within the sustainable travel workstream, so it was most resource effective to undertake the LCWIP process for both districts at the same time, and produce a joint LCWIP. Therefore the geographical extent of the LCWIP is as per the boundaries of both districts.
- **Governing and preparing the plan:** Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are both district authorities working together inside the geographical boundaries of Suffolk County Council's Highways authority. Suffolk County Council have produced [a county-wide LCWIP](#), but welcome help and support from district authorities to identify and prioritise infrastructure priorities at a more local level. The plan - which lays out the ambitions and priorities of the district councils - has been prepared, and will be kept relevant and up to date, by the district councils. The processes and methodology used to develop the plan have been discussed with county council highways directorate officers throughout to ensure understanding and consistency at both levels of local authority. The plan will sit alongside the county wide LCWIP, providing evidence and advocacy for investment decisions.

Any implementation of the plan will be achieved via partnership working.

Gathering Information

As a starting point, the existing Suffolk County Council list of potential cycling and walking schemes was reviewed to establish which schemes already listed are located within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Whilst some valuable schemes had already been captured, it was acknowledged by both county and district councils that the list did not yet provide a holistic picture.

In order to gather more information about where and what kind of active travel infrastructure improvements are needed, BMSDC conducted a public consultation, allowing all local communities, residents, visitors and commuters who travel through, around or into the districts the opportunity to have their say.

This public consultation was hosted on a 'Commonplace' platform that provided an interactive map which included existing National Cycle Routes, as much of the Rights of Way network as was available via the mapping software used, and locations where a scheme had already been listed within the county council's list of potential cycling and walking schemes. Respondents could place a pin on the exact location they were commenting about, and answer the following questions:

The public consultation ran for 8 weeks from Thursday 11th May 2021 to Thursday 22nd July 2021.

The consultation had very successful engagement, with 1881 contributions submitted.

What is this place?

(open question)

If this place is covered by a route, what kind of route?

(response options were; Existing Cycling Route, Existing Walking Route, Potential Scheme/Route, or Location not currently covered by a route)

Why have you dropped a pin here?

(response options were; key destination, potential for more walking here, better route nearby, unsafe here, potential for more cycling here, safe here, not child friendly here, useful route, child friendly here, need a route here, low potential here or 'other' – which could be defined/expanded upon by the respondent)

How would you improve it?

(response options were; better pavements/improved surface, better segregation from traffic, cycle parking, space for cycling, better crossings, improved junction, maintenance, dropped kerbs, space for walking, less clutter/fewer obstructions, or 'other' – which could be defined/expanded upon by the respondent)

How important is it for this place to be served by an improved walking/cycle route?

(respondent asked to demonstrate on a sliding scale from 'very important' to 'not very important')

Do you have any other comments or suggestions to make about this place?

(open question)

Identifying Infrastructure Schemes

The community consultation undertaken was used as the core data and evidence base in identifying infrastructure schemes. Every consultation comment was reviewed, and an initial analysis categorised them into one of the following actions:

1. An issue (an immediate problem or defect) on existing cycling or pavement infrastructure that required reporting to the Highways Authority for repair or attention, which once addressed will restore the infrastructure to a fit-for-purpose standard.
2. An issue (an immediate problem or defect) on existing footpaths or bridleways that required reporting to the county council's Rights of Way team for repair or attention, which once addressed will restore the infrastructure to a fit-for-purpose standard.
3. An emerging or potential future issue around locations where future development or planning applications are being considered (for example, concerns about lack of active travel connectivity to sites currently of interest to residential developers) that were passed onto the local planning authority team.
4. An issue where something more significant is required in terms of infrastructure improvement, including, but not limited to, the building of new segregated cycle lanes or pedestrian pavements, the installation of new crossings, junction reconfigurations and road safety interventions. These comments indicated a potential LCWIP scheme.

Once comments were reviewed and categorised, those that had been identified as a potential LCWIP scheme were further investigated. Respondent's comments were translated into what interventions, infrastructure improvements or new infrastructure would be required to make the location or route more accessible to cyclists and pedestrians. These were then consolidated into a list of 195 potentially feasible schemes across both districts, and taken forwards to the prioritisation process.



Prioritising Improvements

In order to oversee the prioritisation of identified schemes, an internal LCWIP Task & Finish group was established, which consisted of officers and councillors from both districts, with cross-party and cross-ward representation.



The group developed and agreed a prioritisation matrix which enabled schemes to be scored according to a variety of different factors such as effectiveness, policy, economic factors and deliverability. The factors and criteria for scoring schemes utilised suggestions and examples laid out in the LCWIP technical guidance, although some were adapted to reflect local circumstances.

Each scheme was given a score of 1, 2 or 3 for each of the following variables:

- The forecast increase in the number of walking and cycling trips (established using [the Propensity to Cycle Tool](#) – a government recommended assessment tool)
- The population who directly benefit from the intervention
- Improvement in road safety
- Delivery against policy objectives, such as improvements to health and inclusion
- Importance of the intervention for particular target user groups
- Performance against the Suffolk Local Transport plan
- Performance against other local plan policies, including BMSDC strategies and Neighbourhood Development plans
- Value for money (based on an initial assessment/low level appraisal – scheme costs were estimated using suggested costing figures supplied by the county highways team and rights of way team)
- Potential to be funded
- Scheme implementation feasibility/deliverability
- Likelihood to enable/improve the feasibility of other schemes
- Dependency on other schemes
- Local desire (based upon the active travel public consultation)

The prioritisation matrix table including further detail on what defined a score of 1, 2 or 3 can be found in appendix 1.

Once scores for the above categories had been allocated, the total overall scores for each scheme were ranked from highest to lowest, and this provided the basis for allocating the schemes into short, medium, or long-term priorities.

The LCWIP technical guidance defines short term priorities as improvements which can be implemented quickly or are under development (typically <3 years), medium term priorities as– improvements where there is a clear intention to act, but delivery is dependent on further funding availability or deliverability requirements (typically <5 years), and long term priorities as long term– more aspirational improvements or those awaiting a defined solution (typically >5 years).

Although the scores from all categories were taken into consideration, the following review of the list to determine which schemes would be allocated as short, medium or long term priorities had a focus on the likelihood to secure funding required and the complexity of deliverability, as these factors in particular fortified a realistic approach.

The full list of schemes, including the allocated prioritisation scores and short, medium or long term categorisations can be found on the council's [Sustainable Travel webpage](#).



Network Planning for Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

The purpose of network planning mapping for active travel is to map out the desire lines and core zones for walking, wheeling and cycling, to aid decision making about infrastructure investment.

The LCWIP technical guidance gives some suggestions on how to undertake the network planning, and this has been the basis for how BMSDCs network planning mapping has been established, although the methodology has been adapted to better reflect the volume and geographical spread of settlement-to-settlement connectivity desired (as per our public consultation and prioritised list of schemes) within the districts.

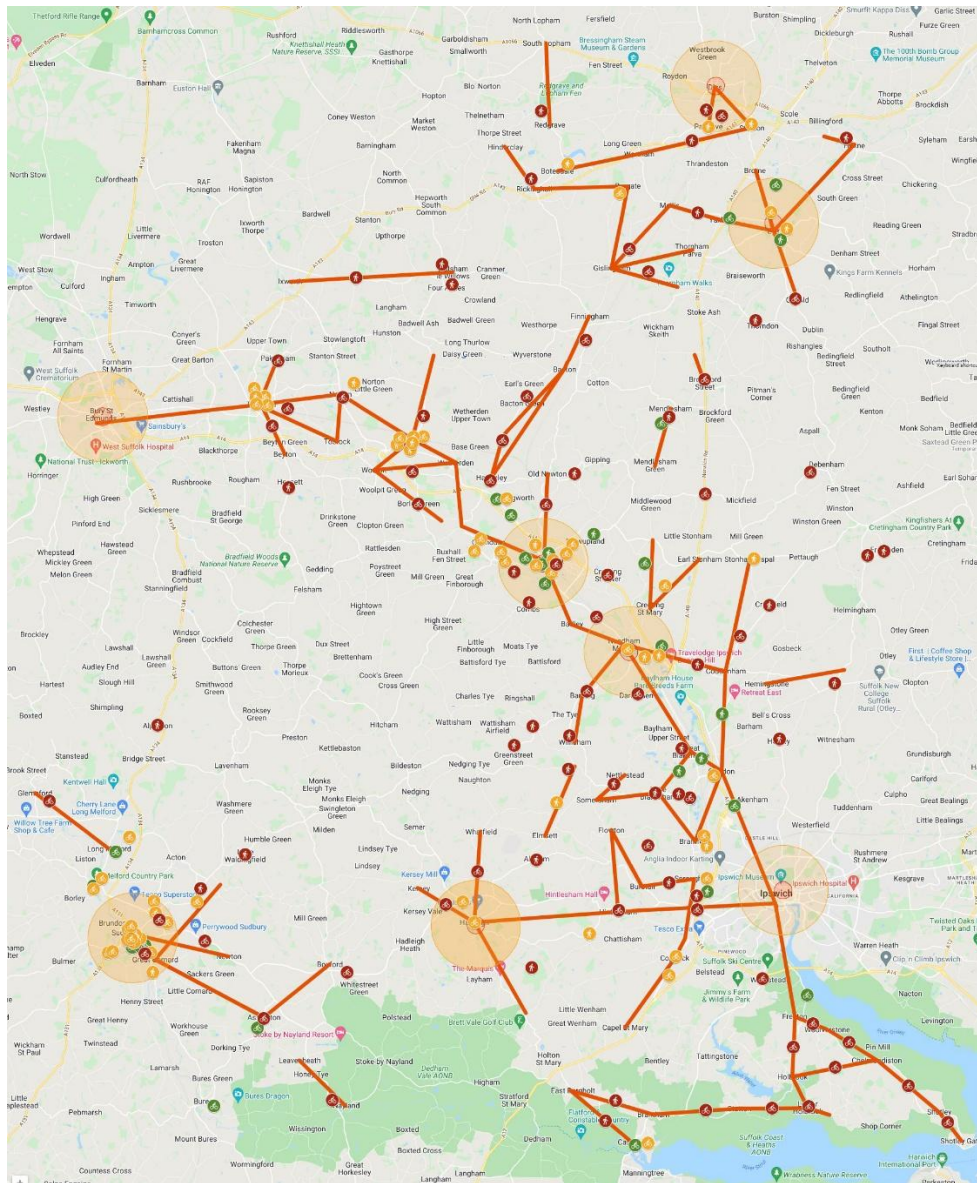


Firstly, all of the schemes identified through the previous two stages of the LCWIP process were plotted onto a map. Some of these appear as specific location within a settlement, and some appear as a line connecting two settlements or destinations together. These reflect the desire lines identified within the LCWIP, and are mostly aligned with network planning for cycling.

Secondly, to establish core walking zones and key walking routes, a radius of 400 metres (the recommended distance for a core walking zone) and 2 kilometres (the recommended distance to identify key pedestrian routes) was mapped around the town centres or places with key amenities for the districts' key active travel destinations. This identifies where investment for walking infrastructure could be most valuable.

LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The below diagram illustrates a rough summary and outline of the zone network mapping, but the full map can be found on the [Councils' Sustainable Travel webpage](#).



LCWIP scheme (Cycling/Walking): Short Term ambition



LCWIP scheme (Cycling/Walking): Medium Term ambition



LCWIP scheme (Cycling/Walking): Long Term ambition



Network Zone for cycling - core investment area



Network Zone for walking - core investment area



Desire lines for active travel route infrastructure improvements/investment

Utilising the LCWIP

Integration and application

As previously noted, a key function of the district level LCWIP is to inform, advise and enhance a county-wide approach to infrastructure investment. It is intended that the district-level LCWIP will be integrated into the county-wide LCWIP, therefore merging the prioritised list of schemes for Babergh and Mid Suffolk with the existing SCC list of potential schemes and adjusting it accordingly, in light of the more localised consultation evidence and the prioritisation process laid out in this report.

With regards to further progressing or 'bringing forwards' any of the schemes listed in BMSDC's LCWIP prioritised list of schemes, it is understood that whilst the prioritised list of schemes lays out local ambitions and provides a steer for where investment is required, further and more detailed feasibility investigation would need to be undertaken.



The LCWIP technical guidance advises that as well as the Propensity to Cycle tool (which has been used to determine one factor of prioritisation), a range of other tools should also be used to assess funding eligibility and decision making.



This is commonly referred to as 'AMAAT scoring'. The expertise and capacity to undertake AMAAT scoring for all the schemes identified is not currently resourced at district level, but instead sits within the highways directorate at the county council.

Other suggested applications of an LCWIP are;

- **Preparation of funding bids or business cases for future investment**
- **Allocation of funding within local delivery plans**
- **Preparation of Neighbourhood Plans**
- **Active travel 'proofing' of major schemes**
- **Identifying public realm design improvements that are safe and accessible for all (including considerations around road safety, and the safety of women and girls)**
- **Consideration of planning applications and other proposed land use changes**
- **Evidence to assist the preparation of the new Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan**
- **As a measure to help improve air quality in Babergh and Mid Suffolk**
- **Preparation of Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements**

BMSDC will ensure that all levels and relevant directorates of local authority are aware of the LCWIP, and utilise it as recommended above.

Making Changes

The LCWIP remains a dynamic strategic document, meaning that changes and amendments can be made as and when necessary.

As the prioritised list of schemes and network mapping elements of the LCWIP are published, shared and promoted, then the views of all parties who may be interest or impacted will be welcomed via feedback to officers, and amendments or adjustments can be made, where appropriate, with further discussion.

Amendments will also be made to the list of schemes and network mapping if there are significant changes in local circumstances, such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, or new sources of funding.

In line with other transport plans, the LCWIP will need to be reviewed and updated approximately every four to five years to reflect progress made with implementation.



Infrastructure Improvements beyond the LCWIP

It is understood that although every effort has been made to capture the requirements and desires of our residents and communities through consultation, it is likely that more issues around active travel connectivity may arise or come to be known about in the future. The LCWIP prioritised scheme list remains a dynamic document, and therefore additions can be made as and when relevant and appropriate.

It is also understood that within the implementation of LCWIPs, schemes offering the best value for money (a factor that is influenced by population density) are more eligible for investment than others. This can make it challenging to secure funding to deliver schemes in more rural areas such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

This is why some schemes, such as very high cost infrastructure to connect small villages and hamlets, are more aspirational. BMSDC has still included these on the list of schemes, as they are supported by local desire demonstrated via the active travel consultation. Even if these schemes are unlikely to be brought forwards as highways projects, BMSDC will advocate for, and help support local communities to find, fund and implement, alternative solutions.

For example, in areas where village-to-village walking, wheeling and cycle connectivity would be a complex and expensive implementation along existing highway, BMSDC will work with the county council's Rights of Way team to establish where footpath accessibility can be improved, or whether it would be appropriate or feasible (if desired) to consider allowing cycling on parts of the network where it is currently not permitted by changing designations.

Another solution the district councils' will explore is how the Quiet Lanes Suffolk initiative may help to deliver some of the desired connectivity improvements in a more cost-effective way.

The LCWIP process tends to focus on highways infrastructure, and the rural nature of many of the districts' settlements and destinations means that sometimes more viable off-road routes may be more achievable.

Around our local urban centres, we will work with the county council transport strategy team to implement other travel behaviour change incentives and offerings, such as 'Park and Cycle' offers at existing Park and Ride sites.

Appendix 1 – Scheme Prioritisation Matrix

	Criteria	Score		
		1	2	3
Effectiveness	Potential to increase walking and cycling trips	Location is NOT on a route that appears well used for active travel on Strava Heatmap, or has a low ratio score (between 0-2) on the PCT (if data available)	Location is on a route that appears moderately used for active travel on Strava Heatmap, or has a mid-range ratio score (between 2 - 4) on the PCT (if data available)	Location is on a route that appears well used for active travel on Strava Heatmap, or has a high ratio score (4+) on the PCT (if data available)
	Population who would directly benefit from the intervention	Linking a hamlet/small cluster of houses/one village to nearby services/neighbouring larger settlements. Or improving connectivity within a small village.	Linking a village to nearby services/neighbouring towns. Or improving connectivity within a large village.	Linking multiple villages or a large village to nearby services/neighbouring towns. Or improving connectivity within a main town.
	Improvement in road safety	There is currently useable provision, but it could do with improvement	There is currently poor provision	There is currently no provision at all
Policy	Delivery against policy objectives	This scheme does not relate to anything currently written in BMSDC strategies or neighbourhood plans	This scheme somewhat relates to/compliments ambitions currently written in BMSDC strategies or neighbourhood plans	This scheme strongly relates to/compliments ambitions currently written in BMSDC strategies or neighbourhood plans
	Performance against local transport plan - useful to look at town maps and rings for walking and cycling distances	This scheme does not relate to anything currently written in the local transport plan	This scheme somewhat relates to/compliments ambitions currently written in the local transport plan	This scheme strongly relates to/would help achieve ambitions currently written in the local transport plans

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	Importance of the intervention for particular user groups	This scheme does not enable active travel to a particular destination that a significant amount of people would likely regularly travel a walkable/cyclable distance to.	This scheme will provide a connectivity link to a small (or a small amount of) services/commuting destination (e.g. village to village, where one has a school/surgery/amenities)	This scheme will enable people to active travel to a significant hub of education/work places, or a large school/employer, or health services, transport stations,
Economic	Value for Money (an initial assessment/very low level appraisal)	Not many people would benefit, and investment needed is high	Some fairly significant investment is needed, but many people would benefit - OR - not many people would benefit, but not too much investment is needed	A lot of people would benefit, for not too much investment
	Potential to be funded	This scheme is unlikely to be eligible for investment from Active Travel Funding, and this scheme is not in an area where there is potential for developer funding.	This scheme could potentially be eligible and a realistic/modest investment from Active Travel Funding, or, this scheme is in an area where there is potential for developer funding.	This scheme would be eligible and a modest investment from Active Travel Funding, or, this scheme is in an area where there is strong potential for developer funding, or, only a very small amount of funding is required so there are high chances of sourcing funding elsewhere.
Deliverability	Scheme implementation feasibility	This is an extensive and complex scheme to implement (building new segregated cycle paths, reconfiguring junctions)	This scheme involves some fairly significant works (short lengths of surface improvements on footpaths/pavements, resurfacing, bring existing infrastructure up to new standards, adding pedestrian crossing)	This a relatively simple scheme to implement (dropped kerbs, widening footpaths by cutting back vegetation, changing designations, adding/changing signage)

	Likelihood to enable/improve the feasibility of other schemes	Implementing this scheme is NOT a 'gateway' for further infrastructure improvements (i.e. its a stand alone/independent piece of infrastructure)	Improving this section of route could prove beneficial for other/future schemes, but there is still some value if only this bit were to be implemented.	Implementing this scheme is a 'gateway' for further infrastructure improvements
	Dependency on other scheme	Improving this section of route would only be beneficial if other schemes are implemented first/at the same time. There are a significant amount of other improvements identified in the local area/on the same route.	Improving this section of route could be more beneficial if other schemes identified are implemented first/at the same time, but there is still some value if only this bit were to be implemented.	Improving infrastructure in this location would fix a 'missing link' or a specific stand-alone problem area.
	Local acceptability	This scheme would be controversial at consultation stage due to major changes to roads/parking.	This scheme could be controversial at consultation stage due to major changes to roads/parking.	This scheme is unlikely to be controversial at consultation as the changes would be minor and not impactful on current road/parking use.
	Local desire	This scheme had little support on the consultation - fewer than 5 comments/agreements.	This scheme had a fair amount support on the consultation - between 5 and 15 comments/agreements.	This scheme had a fair amount support on the consultation - 15 or more comments/agreements.