

Somerset County Council

Transport Policies

Active Travel Strategy



August 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. POLICY CONTEXT	8
3. WHY WE NEED AN ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY	9
4. OUR APPROACH TO ACTIVE TRAVEL	16
4.1 Our Strategy for Walking	16
4.2 Our Strategy for Cycling	17
4.3 Our Strategy for School Travel	19
4.4 Our Strategy for Information and Communication	21

Executive Summary

The Active Travel Strategy has been written to inform Somerset County Council's Future Transport Plan and brings together the individual modal strategies for cycling, walking, information and communication with a shared vision for Somerset residents to cycle and walk more often and more safely.

The aim for the strategy is to enable the population of Somerset to make active travel choices by making these options easier to access and more attractive to use. The strategy has the potential to:

- Improve people's health and wellbeing through more active lifestyles.
- Maximise access to local services without increasing congestion.
- Reduce transport carbon emissions and support climate change targets.
- Reduce harmful emissions and improve local air quality.
- Make Somerset a more attractive and safer place to live.
- Enhance mobility and independence for vulnerable groups (such as older people and those social excluded).
- Reduce congestion and facilitate economic growth.

The strategy contains an overview of active travel options for walking, cycling and also for information and communication and school travel. It highlights the benefits that could be achieved alongside why we need to consider our wider travel options. It also indicates the value for money and economic impacts of healthier travel.

The four individual strategies that sit behind this document⁽¹⁾ go into more detail regarding preferred options and the means to achieve the desired outcomes for all residents of and visitors to Somerset and can be found in the following pages.

1 comprising Walking, Cycling, School Travel and Information and Communication

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Active travel options, such as walking and cycling, have the potential to improve the health and accessibility of individuals as well as contributing to the wider objectives of reducing congestion and pollution. Somerset County Council, in partnership with NHS Somerset, recognises the importance of these transport modes in delivering national transport, environment and health objectives and has developed this Active Travel Strategy (2011-2026) to support the delivery of its' Future Transport Plan.

The strategy sets out a coherent set of focused policies and proposals that aim to improve provision for pedestrians and cyclists and increase the proportion of active travel undertaken in Somerset. We also provide a specific focus on travel to school. The priorities in the strategy will provide both essential guidance for developers and information for residents, partners and other stakeholders.

The Active Travel Strategy brings together the individual modal strategies for Cycling and Walking in addition to the Information and Communication and School Travel Strategies.

1.2 Vision and Aim

Vision: For Somerset residents to cycle and walk more often and more safely.

The aim for the strategy is to enable the population of Somerset to make active travel choices by making these options easier to access and more attractive to use. The strategy has the potential to:

- Improve people's health and wellbeing through more active lifestyles.
- Maximise access to local services without increasing congestion.
- Reduce transport carbon emissions and support climate change targets.
- Reduce harmful emissions and improve local air quality.
- Make Somerset a more attractive and safer place to live.
- Enhance mobility and independence for vulnerable groups (such as older people and those social excluded).
- Reduce congestion and facilitate economic growth.

1.3 Structure of the Strategy

The following four strategies have been developed as part of the overall Active Travel Strategy. This section outlines their individual aims and how they contribute to the wider strategy.

1.3.1 Walking Strategy

Walking is an important means of travel, particularly for shorter trips. However, as data gathered in the 2011 National Travel Survey illustrates, in recent years the overall number of walking trips has been declining. The survey noted that 20% of trips under a mile in length were made by car. This suggests there is considerable potential for increasing walking activity and, as the 2005 British Social Attitudes Survey indicates, there is strong public support for measures that increase walking.

The wide range of benefits for walking includes improved accessibility (access to services) and improved physical and mental health; it is environmentally friendly and socially inclusive. Recognition of this potential for improving quality of life and social inclusion and, more recently, encouraging healthy living has resulted in walking becoming an important element of government aspirations for sustainable development.

The Walking Strategy is strongly influenced by Somerset County Council's Sustainable Community Strategy which aspires to sustainable and healthy lifestyles for Somerset residents. It is hoped that increases in the levels of walking will be one of the factors that contributes to the county's targeted reductions in CO₂ emissions and child obesity. The aim of the Walking Strategy is to contribute to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles by increasing levels of walking in Somerset for both utility and leisure purposes. This will be achieved by increasing the number of people walking, the number of pedestrian trips that are made and the overall distances that are walked.

1.3.2 Cycling Strategy

We are fortunate in many parts of Somerset to have an excellent environment for cycling with relatively compact towns and large areas of flat topography. The 2001 census showed that 5% of workers in Somerset cycle to work (7 – 9% in urban areas like Taunton and Bridgwater) compared to the national average of just 3%. The general trend in Somerset was that cycling trips had been growing steadily by around 0.8% each year, set against a national backdrop of gradual decline. Unfortunately, over the last two years, Somerset is now also showing a gradual decline.

Cycling has the potential to support many of the County Council's aims such as tackling health issues, improving accessibility and living sustainably. Cycling benefits from being viewed as a simple and straightforward way of making a journey and with increasing bike ownership it has the potential to be a substantial form of transport.

The links between even moderate increases in physical activity and improved health have been well documented over recent years and one study shows that regular cycling decreases the risk of premature death by 40%. This is higher than for almost any other readily accessible activity⁽²⁾.

2 Anderson, L. et al 2000 All-cause mortality associated with physical activity during leisure time, work, sports, and cycling to work, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 160: 1621-1628.

The aim of the Cycling Strategy is to contribute to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles by increasing levels of cycling in Somerset for both utility and leisure purposes. This will be achieved by increasing the number of people cycling by focusing on short trips, supporting the development of recreational cycling and improving the conditions and safety for cyclists.

1.3.3 Information and Communication Strategy

Increasing active travel depends on changing people's behaviour. There is increasing evidence that information and promotion is key to encouraging the use of different modes of transport. The 2011 White Paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: making sustainable local transport happen'⁽³⁾ sets out the Government's vision for sustainable transport systems at a local level and encourages local government to help people make transport choices that are good for society as a whole. The DfT publication 'Active Travel Choices' (2010) endorses the use of softer measures to achieve these goals.

Smarter Choices is the programme of work which concentrates on 'softer measures' i.e. non-infrastructure measures which can be employed to change people's attitudes to the way they travel. We know from a range of sources such as the Department for Transport, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), Moving Forward Tracking Survey etc. that most people recognise the need to, and are open to, changing the way they travel for a number of different reasons.

The aim for the Information and Communication Strategy is to provide information and support to enable people to use a wider range of transport options for some of their journeys, particularly healthy and sustainable alternatives to the private car.

1.3.4 School Travel Strategy

The Education and Inspections Act of 2006 imposed a duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to schools. The Act defined sustainable modes of travel as being anything that improved one or both of:

1. the physical wellbeing of school children; and
2. the environmental wellbeing of all or part of the local authority area.

Active travel though walking or cycling fulfils both these objectives and is essential in delivering the long term goals of a sustainable transport network and a healthier and more active population. The strategy aims to improve the physical well being of Somerset's children and young people and improve the safety of travelling to school while encouraging sustainable travel and life skill development.

3 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/making-sustainable-local-transport-happen/>

2 Policy Context

2.1 National Policy and Guidance

Somerset's Active Travel Strategy has been prepared within a framework set by national guidance and the overarching aims of the council's Future Transport Plan. The promotion and enabling of active and sustainable forms of transport has emerged as a central policy theme. Each of the four individual strategies will outline relevant policies and guidance; however some of the key national guidance is listed below:

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 06/02 – Inclusive Mobility (DfT, 2002)
 Walking and Cycling – An Action Plan (DfT, 2004)
 Towards a Sustainable Transport System (DfT, 2007)
 Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DfT, 2009)
 Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future (DfT, 2009)
 Active Travel Strategy (DfT, 2010)
 Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen (DfT, 2011)
 Strategic Framework for Road Safety (DfT, 2011)
 Education and Inspections Act (DFES, 2006)
 Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives (DoH, 2008)
 Be Active, Be Healthy (DoH, 2009)
 National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)

2.2 Somerset Policy

Key Somerset policy documents influencing the Active Travel Strategy are listed below:

Somerset County Plan (2011-2013)
 Future Transport Plan (2011-2026)
 Urban Safety Management (2007)
 Sustainable Community Strategy for Somerset (2009-2026)
 Transport Asset Management Plan (2010)
 Rights of Way Improvement Plan First Review (2011-2026)
 Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington Future Transport Strategy (2011-2026)
 Somerset's Travel Planning Guidance (2011)
 Somerset's Parking Strategy (2012)

3 Why we need an Active Travel Strategy

We want to encourage more of Somerset's residents to cycle and walk more often and more safely. There are a number of strong reasons why we should seek to achieve this. Cycling and walking are a very simple way for people to incorporate more physical activity into their lives and for many people they are very important for increasing access to jobs and services. In addition, when replacing trips by car, they can also help reduce emissions, ease local motor traffic congestion and improve the overall quality of life in local communities.

3.1 Being Healthy - The Long-Term Health of Our Population

Somerset County Council recognises that one of the biggest negative health impacts of motorised road transport is sedentary lifestyles. In Somerset obesity in adults is higher than the national average at 25.9% and most adults do not meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommended physical activity targets on a regular basis⁽⁴⁾. Obesity brings with it the risk of major health problems including diabetes and a likely reduction in lifespan of as much as 10 years. Without action it is predicted that nine out of ten adults and two-thirds of children could be obese by 2050⁽⁵⁾. Somerset Primary Care Trust estimates that the cost relating to diseases associated with this type of sedentary population was £133.8m in 2007 and is expected to be £148.4m in 2015.

Walking is, and is likely to remain, the main option for increasing physical activity in sedentary populations and active travel is a simple way to incorporate additional activity into a busy lifestyle. Replacing short car trips by walking is an easy way to help achieve this and can also help improve air quality by reducing emissions.

Evidence demonstrates that improvements to the local environment such as lower traffic speeds and safe and attractive routes are important contributions to increasing active travel. Even those not disposed towards active lifestyles are more likely to become active if such environmental conditions exist. Many of Somerset's towns and villages already benefit from good quality paths, parks and open spaces in addition to low motor traffic speeds (30mph or below) making conditions favourable for walking. Further improving these conditions will better enable people to choose to be physically active.

In 2010, the Department of Health and Department for Transport jointly published an Active Travel Strategy⁽⁶⁾ which highlights plans to put walking and cycling at the heart of local transport and public health strategies over the next decade. The guiding principles for the strategy are that walking and cycling should be everyday ways of getting around – not just for their own sake but also because of what they can do to improve public health, tackle congestion, reduce carbon emissions and improve the local environment.

4 www.apho.org.uk, Somerset Community Health Profile, 2011

5 Foresight, 2007 Tackling Obesities: Future Choices – Project Report, Government Office for Science.

6 <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/activetravelstrategy/>

Children's Health

Nearly 10% of children in the UK are obese and physical activity through active travel has an important role to play in weight management as well as overall health and fitness. Evidence has demonstrated that children who travel to school actively undertake more moderate and vigorous activity across the day⁽⁷⁾ and are fitter than those driven to school⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾⁽¹⁰⁾. In accordance with such evidence NICE advises walking or cycling on school journey under two miles⁽¹¹⁾.

As this period of life is also important for establishing healthy habits it is important that children are able to cycle in safety. Social factors and physical environmental characteristics are often the most important predictors of active commuting in children and adolescents. Where parents perceive that traffic lights and pedestrian crossings in their neighbourhood are sufficient it is more likely that their children will increase their active commuting. This is also the case where parents are more familiar with people in their local community⁽¹²⁾. For children's health it is important to ensure that they and their carers feel able to make the healthy choices when travelling.

3.2 Ensuring Economic Wellbeing

Reduction in Absenteeism

In an economy struggling to deliver growth we need to ensure maximum productivity with a healthy workforce and low levels of absenteeism. There is robust evidence that walking and cycling can have a major positive impact on absenteeism. An increase in physical activity of more than one hour per week, easily achieved by walking or cycling to work, can lead to a measurable reduction in levels of

-
- 7 Saksvig, B. et al 2007 Travel by Walking Before and After School and Physical Activity Among Adolescent Girls, *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*,;161:153-158.
 - 8 Cooper, A. et al 2005 Physical activity patterns in non-obese and obese children assessed using minute-by-minute accelerometry, *International Journal of Obesity*, 1–7.
 - 9 Cooper, A. et al 2010 Mapping the Walk to School Using Accelerometry Combined with a Global Positioning System, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*,;38(2):178 –183.
 - 10 Voss, C., Sandercock, G. 2010 Aerobic Fitness and Mode of Travel to School in English Schoolchildren, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, DOI: 10.1249/MSS.0b013e3181b11bdc
 - 11 NICE, 2008 *Promoting physical activity, active play and sport for pre-school and school-aged children and young people in family, pre-school, school, and community settings*, Public Health Guidance 17. London: NICE.
 - 12 Hulme, C. et al 2009 Walking and Cycling to School Predictors of Increases Among Children and Adolescents, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*,;36(3):195–200.

absenteeism. There is clear commercial benefit to employers and, whether through a workplace travel plan or through other means, active travel as part of the daily commute should be encouraged⁽¹³⁾.

Ensuring Value for Money

There are strong economic reasons for making the environment perceivably better and safer for walking and cycling and, according to the Department for Transport's economic assessment procedure, the value for money from active travel interventions is very high. As is discussed in both the walking and cycling strategies, for every pound invested there is often a greater than ten pound return on investment.

Cost-benefit ratios play a central function in determining a proposed scheme's viability and although all schemes with a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) greater than 1 (i.e. for every pound invested more than a pound is gained through investment e.g. in health care savings) may be worth pursuing, financial constraints mean that it is necessary to prioritise some schemes above others. The Department for Transport's Webtag Guidance categorises value for money, as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Value for money

Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	Value for Money
Less than 1	Poor
Between 1 and 1.5	Low
Between 1.5 and 2	Medium
Over 2	High

(Source: Webtag 2.6.4)⁽¹⁴⁾

A recent review of investment in walking and cycling schemes concluded that:

"Investment in infrastructure to facilitate increased activity levels amongst local communities through cycling and walking is likely to be a 'best buy' for our health, the NHS at large in terms of cost savings, as well as for the road transport sector"⁽¹⁵⁾.

13 <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/Physical-activity-absenteeism-and-productivity-summary.pdf> accessed 9th August 2010.

14 See <http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/topics/cost.php> accessed 8th December 2009.

15 Davis, A. 2010 *Value for Money: An Economic Assessment of Investment in Walking and Cycling*, GOSW/Dept Health www.healthyweight4children.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=90422 accessed 10th August 2010.

Increased use of public health evidence and continued working with health partners will help to ensure that policies are supported and become embedded into day to day practice.

Improving Accessibility

For those people who do not own a car, cycling and walking can be an important method of gaining access to services either as a direct journey or as a way of accessing the public transport network. Poor walking or cycling conditions or lack of travel information can act as a barrier to people accessing services and can lead to social exclusion. The Active Travel Strategy aims to help reduce social exclusion by addressing many of the potential barriers associated with accessing services without access to a car. In addition, encouraging active travel, in particular cycling and through linkage with the public transport network, can help to broaden journey horizons and therefore potentially provide access to a wider variety of services. We will seek to improve access to information by enhancing broadband connection through the joint Devon and Somerset broadband project ' Connection Devon and Somerset'. In addition, we will continue to investigate ways of providing information to communities through local hubs and access points.

Access to school

As a local authority the Council has a duty, under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, to provide free home to school transport for children who meet certain criteria. Children of statutory school age have to be provided with suitable transport to make sure that they can access an appropriate school and attend regularly.

In 2003, the Department for Transport and the former Department for Children, Schools and Families launched a joint initiative to tackle rising trends in car dependency for school journeys. The Travelling to School Initiative (TTSI) set out a range of measures to increase the use of healthy and sustainable modes of travel to school, including a target for all schools to develop a travel plan by 2010. School travel plans are management strategies for travel to/from a given school. They are specific to that school – identifying barriers and opportunities particular to the school location and needs, then determining what measures will be most effective in encouraging and enabling sustainable travel to that school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 conferred on local authorities a duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport, and to publish a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS). There are five main elements to the duty:

1. An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people;
2. An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure used within the authority when travelling to, from or between schools, colleges or other places of education;
3. A strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for;

4. The publication of the strategy on the authority's website by the 31st August each year
5. The promotion of sustainable travel and transport on journeys to, from or between schools and other places of education.

3.3 Living Sustainably

There are multiple benefits from active travel when its impact on local air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, energy security and improved quality of the environment is considered.

Emissions

Although large reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions are needed to prevent serious climate destabilisation, emissions from transport are rising faster than from other energy-using sectors and predicted to increase by 80% by 2030. An increase in active travel and less use of motor vehicles can make a significant impact to reduce carbon dioxide emissions⁽¹⁶⁾.

Peak Oil

The threat of peak oil is becoming a real concern and many businesses and local government representative bodies⁽¹⁷⁾ are now pressing government to take preventive and cost effective action to accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy. Peak oil is a situation where oil resources diminish and become difficult to extract, leading to a dramatic worldwide rise in the price of oil. Peak oil focuses attention on the need for a planned reduction in fossil fuel use and increased efficiency and high oil prices favour a more localised economy.

3.4 Staying Safe

The major factors that most influence active travel are largely not active travel interventions themselves. The amount of motorised traffic and the speed it travels at, the degree of segregation, the total volume of space for motorised traffic (both moving and parked) all influence the active travel modes. This is more pronounced for cycling since those cycling often share a carriageway with motorised traffic. As the Department for Transport and Department of Health Active Travel Strategy states:

16 Woodcock, J. et al 2009 Public health benefits of strategies to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions: urban land transport, *The Lancet*, [Vol. 374, Issue 9705](#), pp 1930 – 1943.

17 Local Government Association, 2008 *Volatile times. Transport, climate change and the price of oil*, London: LGA.

“It is not appropriate to improve road safety by the discouragement of active travel mode as the health benefits of active travel significantly outweigh the risks by as much as 20:1⁽¹⁸⁾⁽¹⁹⁾. There is clear evidence that local Councils do have an influence on an individual’s mode choice when considering short journeys (short journeys by bicycle generally means up to 5 miles (8km)⁽²⁰⁾⁽²¹⁾. Where additional funding has been forthcoming from Government for cycling, such as in Exeter, cycling has risen by 30%, albeit from a low level of <5% of commute trips⁽²²⁾.“

Safety remains the biggest concern and barrier to active travel, more so than distance to a destination. Some urban and rural streetscapes are dominated by motorised traffic often to the detriment of the pedestrians and cyclists. If there is to be an increase in active travel then perceived and real barriers will need to be reduced.

Required action will include a number of elements:

- Specific walking and cycling measures such as routes and enhancements to existing facilities.
- All traffic management interventions need to be assessed as to whether they promote walking and cycling and if not, why not.
- Collision statistics should be regularly evaluated for the causes as research suggests that many collisions are caused by careless driving.

An historic emphasis on training children to cope and adapt to road traffic situations should be balanced through greater emphasis on adults and the everyday ‘normal’ danger that driving a motor vehicle imposes on others.

3.5 Delivering Through Smarter Choices

In order to encourage active travel there is a need to address the personal, psychological and social reasons why people choose not to walk or cycle, as well as the physical infrastructure needs. Behavioural research overwhelmingly suggests the use of a particular form of transport (especially the car) is often a matter of habit rather than being the “best” option for the individual or the community. A lack of understanding of alternative options, lack of information about how to plan non-car journeys, concerns about safety and capability and lack of incentive/encouragement to try other modes of transport all contribute to the routine use of the car.

18 Department for Transport/Department of Health, 2010 *Active Travel Strategy*. London: DfT.

19 Hartog J., Boogaard H, Nijland H, Hoek G. 2010. Do the Health Benefits of Cycling Outweigh the Risks? *Environmental Health Perspectives* 118:1109-1116. doi:10.1289/ehp.0901747

20 Fietsberaad, 2006 *Continual and integral: The cycling policies of Groningen and other European cycling cities*. Rotterdam: Fietsberaad.

21 Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, 1995 *Cities make room for cyclists*. Den Haag: MTPWM.

22 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns/results/> accessed 9th August 2010.

Smarter Choices is a programme of activities that seeks to help people understand the transport choices available to them and gives them the information, skills and encouragement needed to choose alternatives to the car for some of their journeys. This may incorporate things like better information provision, help planning journeys, training (e.g. cycle training) and incentives to encourage people to try different options, as well as working with developers, planners and organisation managers to create an environment and culture that supports active travel.

The 2004 government paper “Smarter Choices – changing the way we travel”⁽²³⁾ identified that car travel could be reduced by 10-15% simply through Smarter Choices activities. In Somerset 59% of people already think they should take some personal action to reduce their use of the car, so Smarter Choices could help deliver real, inexpensive benefits to our health and our environment by supporting those people to change their travel behaviour.

Information and marketing activities also make infrastructure investment more cost effective by raising awareness of new services and facilities and encouraging people to use them.

23 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/smarter-choices-changing-the-way-we-travel-main-document/#>

4 Our Approach to Active Travel

The individual strategies that sit behind the Active Travel Strategy⁽²⁴⁾ go into more detail regarding preferred options and the means to achieve the desired outcomes for all residents of and visitors to Somerset. These strategies are all outlined within associated technical documents, which have been summarised in the following pages.

Each strategy has been assessed using Somerset County Council's Modal Strategy Appraisal Tool (MSAT) which looks at the predicted costs and benefits of each measure. Based upon the outputs of this appraisal an action plan has been prepared and is provided in each Technical document.

4.1 Our Strategy for Walking

Walking is the most healthy, sustainable, accessible, flexible and cost effective mode of transport available. It is an excellent form of free exercise that can form part of daily activity. Walking has the least adverse impact on the environment of all the modes of transport. A modal shift from car use to walking for short journeys would help to ease congestion and parking problems and improve journey times as well as deliver environmental benefits. Furthermore pedestrian activity can provide opportunities for social interaction, building a sense of community and better quality of life.

Although walking offers many clear benefits the National Travel Survey 2011 indicates that the average number of walking trips per person has declined by 28% since 1995/97 and the average distance walked per person fell by just over 10% between 1995/97 and 2010.

The Walking Strategy aims to improve provision for pedestrians in Somerset and increase the proportion of travel that is undertaken on foot. It will provide essential guidance for developers and information for residents, partners and other stakeholders.

Aim

To contribute to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles by increasing levels of walking in Somerset for both utility and leisure purposes. This will be achieved by increasing the number of people walking, the number of pedestrian trips that are made and the overall distances that are walked.

Objectives

The Walking Strategy objectives are to:

Objective 1: Ensure walking networks provide accessibility for all;

Objective 2: Improve the quality of the walking environment;

24 comprising Walking, Cycling, School Travel and Information and Communication

Objective 3: Improve safety and security for pedestrians; and

Objective 4: Ensure the planning process delivers high quality walking environments.

The aim and objectives of the walking strategy are in line with national and local policies. By investing in walking Somerset County Council will help to overcome the barriers to walking and deliver health, environmental and economic benefits to Somerset's residents and businesses.

The strategy outlines a number of policies and associated interventions to achieve the objectives listed above. The policies developed as part of the walking strategy and their alignment to the objectives are listed below:

Policy	Description	Supports Objective:
WS1	We will seek to improve the pedestrian network taking into account all types of user	1, 2, 3
WS2	We will support the integration of the pedestrian network with all modes of travel	1, 2
WS3	We will support the development and delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan	1, 2
WS4	We will support the improvement of the pedestrian environment to encourage an increase in walking in Somerset	1, 2
WS5	We will maintain the pedestrian network to the highest possible standard given the available resources	1, 2, 3
WS6	We will seek to reduce the number of pedestrian casualties within Somerset and to provide an environment that reduces the perception of personal safety issues	2, 3
WS7	We will ensure developers fully consider the needs of all pedestrians within their development design and any improvements associated with the development	1, 2, 4

In terms of the measures proposed to summarise the Walking Strategy, they can be outlined as follows:

- Encourage developers to more to increase walking through site design, pedestrian movement and Travel Planning;
- Ensure walking is considered during the development of new or existing highways infrastructure; and
- Work with others (e.g. Parking Enforcement, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Health) to improve conditions for walkers and to promote walking as an alternative to the car.

4.2 Our Strategy for Cycling

Cycling has the potential to support many of the County Council's aims and objectives, not simply transport objectives. It covers the period 2011 – 2026 and will be delivered through implementation plans.

The strategy will be a reference point clearly stating the County Council's policies, aims and objectives for cycling. It will provide council officers and members of the public with a clear understanding of what we would like to achieve, the approach to achieving it and what we believe success will look like. The aim and the objectives of the cycling strategy are stated below.

Aim

To contribute to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles by increasing levels of cycling in Somerset for both utility and leisure purposes. This will be achieved by increasing the number of people cycling, the number of cycling trips that are made and the overall distances that are cycled.

Objectives

Objective 1: To improve the cycle network and make conditions more favourable for cyclists.

Objective 2: To promote the benefits of cycling and increase the number of people across the age spectrum travelling by bicycle particularly for short trips and journeys to work.

Objective 3: To identify opportunities for, and support the development of, leisure and recreational cycling to support our residents to be healthier and to raise the profile of Somerset as a destination for cycle tourism.

By prioritising and investing in cycling Somerset County Council will support delivery of a wide range of objectives ranging from transport improvements to having a more active, healthier population and generating economic growth.

We are fortunate in many parts of Somerset to have an excellent environment for cycling e.g. relatively compact towns and large areas of flat topography. The 2001 census showed that 5% of workers in Somerset cycle to work (7 – 9% in urban areas like Taunton and Bridgwater). This high baseline is encouraging and this strategy seeks to build upon this.

The strategy outlines a number of policies with associated measures to achieve the objectives listed above. The policies developed as part of the cycling strategy and their alignment to the three objectives are listed below.

Policy	Description	Supports Objective
CS1	We will improve cycle linkages and networks through-out Somerset taking into account the location.	1, 2, 3
CS2	We will support increased community and stakeholder involvement in the development of the cycle network	1, 2, 3
CS3	We will ensure developers fully consider the needs of cyclists within their development design and any associated improvements	1

CS4	We will support and promote campaigns to increase cycling across all segments of the population within Somerset	2, 3
CS5	We will support the use, and help to develop, the leisure cycle network to realise its economic potential for Somerset	1, 2, 3

In terms of the measures proposed to support the delivery of the Cycling Strategy, these can be summarised as the following:

- Developing design guides and other literature to help deliver more cycling routes in Somerset;
- Support the implementation of Travel Plans and marketing materials to raise awareness of cycling; and
- Work with others (e.g. Rights of Way, Tourism, Health) to deliver cycling initiatives in Somerset.

4.3 Our Strategy for School Travel

School travel is not just a transport issue – it is a vital element of ensuring children are able to access suitable schools and therefore plays a part in supporting a huge cross-section of the Council's aims and objectives, including education provision, economic development, health and community development. However, school travel can be problematic – the infamous “school run” responsible for around 20% of cars on the road during the morning rush hour. Many of these car journeys are unnecessary and this strategy aims to identify and support those who have other viable transport options to make a switch.

The strategy ties in closely with our education policies and takes account of the recent (ongoing) reviews of education transport provision (a statutory requirement). The council also has a duty to produce an annual Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy. This over-arching strategy sets the transport policy framework for this annual review and delivery plan. It also makes provision for a review of how our statutory and non-statutory services can be delivered most effectively, making the best possible use of limited funds.

Forthcoming changes in national education policy – notably the shift to Academies and FreeSchools and the extension of the school leaving age from 16 to 18 – also necessitate a strategic review of travel impacts, policies and practises.

95% of LEA schools in Somerset (86% of all schools) now have a travel plan, developed with assistance from the Council's School Travel Adviser team over the period from 2006- to 2011. Over this time, single-occupancy car use for school travel dropped from 29.2% to 25.3%. This strategy aims to expand on that success as we move from an era of travel plan development to implementation.

Local and national reviews of school travel plan effects and success factors over the last 5 years have been used to inform the development of this strategy.

Aim

We will help people walk and cycle to Somerset's schools and make the school transport services and infrastructure we provide more efficient.

Objectives

Objective 1: Help everyone take part – provide information, advice and resources that can be easily access, adapted and implemented by schools in a manner appropriate to their individual circumstances

Objective 2: Focus additional resources where the is most potential for change – in addition to the countywide support provided under Objective 1, deliver additional change by working more intensively with schools where there is greatest potential for change, or problems to be tackled.

Objective 3: Make the most of what we have - ensure the transport services we provide are as efficient as possible and target our work at what pupils need, using the techniques that deliver the best results.

Objective 4: Work with a changing environment - Ensure school travel provision and the travel planning process are able to respond to changes in the way education is provided and meet the challenges of a new, more flexible school environment and changing resource availability

School Travel Policies

The policies proposed for effective delivery of the objectives are:

Policy	Description	Supports Objective
STS1	We will empower schools to improve opportunities for sustainable travel	1, 2, 4
STS2	We will provide effective advice and guidance	1, 4
STS3	We will evaluate and, where appropriate, implement measures to overcome specific barriers and enable sustainable transport choices	1, 3
STS4	We will work intensively with selected schools to deliver additional travel change	1, 2

The main ways we will achieve these policies are by

- Providing resources and support to schools in implementing their travel plans and to achieve best practice;
- Engaging the planning process to bring about change and using all available means to monitor travel to school patterns;
- Finding practical solutions to infrastructure improvements and seek opportunities to deliver cycle training to schools; and
- Identifying and working with those schools offering the greatest potential for changing travel behaviour.

4.4 Our Strategy for Information and Communication

When information is readily available and in formats that are easy to read and understand, it can help residents and visitors in Somerset to consider new ways to access the things they need. This strategy will help to promote and clarify people's choices as they change in the coming years and will help people to understand the benefits of using alternative modes of transport to the car.

The Aims and Objectives for the Strategy are as follows:

Aim

To provide information and support to enable people to use a wider range of transport options for some of their journeys, particularly healthy and sustainable alternatives to the private car.

Objectives

Objective 1: Provide more opportunities for people to use more sustainable transport choices, including reducing travel

Objective 2: Help people understand their transport options and make informed choices.

Objective 3: Make it easier for people to find their way around by walking, cycling and public transport

Objective 4: Support other organisations to manage their own travel better and improve travel opportunities for staff, customers, residents and visitors, including through the planning process.

The strategy includes barriers to achieving our desired outcomes, aims and objectives, achievements to date and future options. It also introduces several new policies:

Policy	Description	Supports Objective:
ICS1	Ensuring more opportunities for people to use sustainable transport	1
ICS2	Making sure people know about sustainable transport options	1
ICS3	Making sure people can use sustainable transport	1
ICS4	Helping people understand transport options	2
ICS5	Helping people decide the best choice of transport and assess the options	2
ICS6	Helping people find accurate information whilst on the move	3
ICS7	Continue to work with schools and businesses to develop travel plans	4

The preferred approach over the Future Transport Plan period is that Somerset County Council and partners should seek to deliver the following elements of the Information and Communications Strategy:

1. Increase resources to support travel planning activities. This should include work to further strengthen travel planning requirements for new developments by enshrining those requirements in a Supplementary Planning Document within each District Council Local Development Framework. It should also include identification of resources to further support other organisations, including businesses, schools, communities and residential developments to develop and implement travel plans to increase active and sustainable transport in their local area;
2. Make it easier for people to find their way around when walking, cycling and using public transport. This should include improved information at transport hubs, better network maps and comprehensive signage in urban areas and around key destinations. We must ensure that these things are put in place as standard in new developments and that they include improved information for people with disabilities;
3. Implement Personal Travel Planning (PTP) projects in selected areas. Some initial assessment work has already been completed to identify suitable locations in some urban areas. New, large residential developments may also offer good opportunities for PTP as incoming residents will be seeking information on their new community and how to get around;
4. Extend and expand our practical training programmes, such as cycle training (adults and children), road safety education, bike maintenance, route planning and bicycle loans;
5. Continue to maintain, add to and improve our website to provide information to help people plan their journeys by foot, bicycle and public transport, including finding cheaper and more convenient fares/routes. Expand our capacity to offer advice and respond to specific enquiries through a wider range of channels, including an investigation of the opportunities offered by new technologies and media;
6. Undertake selective marketing to make people aware of the support services and transport help we can provide; and
7. Seek opportunities to collaborate with other organisations, e.g. health and social care providers, on joint projects to bring more activity into the daily lives of the community, including specialist support for selected groups.

www.somerset.gov.uk

“Working together for equalities”

This document is also available in Braille, large print, tape and on disc and we can translate it into different languages. We can provide a member of staff to discuss the details. Please contact 0845 345 9166.



RNID typetalk

