EEH Active Travel Strategy: The Ambition

Ambition Document (Phase 1)

08/02/2022

ATKINS
Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group

ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND

EEH Active Travel Strategy: The Ambition

08/02/2022

Atkins Job Number: 5210602	Document Reference: 01

Printing	A4 Double Sided

Revision	Purpose Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
P01	First draft for Client review	RF/SJ/GS	SJ	JFC	CR	07/01/2022
P02	Final draft	RF/SJ/GS	RF	JFC	CR	08/02/2022

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1.Introduction

England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is the ideal location for growing active travel for all journey purposes.

The region has many towns and cities with dense populations that support the ability to walk and cycle. It also has a varied and attractive rural landscape with the potential to grow both longer distance leisure and everyday shorter utility trips. It has the world-famous cities of Cambridge and Oxford, both beacons of active travel excellence with well-established active travel cultures and visitor economies.

The region has a well-developed public transport network with growing connections that afford opportunities for integration with active travel in the form of first mile and last mile trips. In addition, the scale of new development in the region offers exciting opportunities for new active travel infrastructure and 'locking in' sustainable travel behaviours from the outset.

Image 1. A cyclist in Cambridge

Towards the development of an active travel strategy for EEH

Phase 1 – development of high level ambition for active travel (this document)

Phase 2 – Ambition developed further to provide a full strategy

Publication of an active travel strategy, which will be reviewed and monitored through an active travel forum for the Heartland

This document describes a high-level ambition for active travel in England's Economic Heartland and is the first phase in developing a full active travel strategy for the region. This first phase sets out the active travel ambition for the Heartland based on a review of key European, national, regional and local policies and ambitions and the views of active travel officers across the region. The graphic above sets out the stages in the development of an active travel strategy. Many of the region's local authorities are already delivering active travel programmes, the plans for which are set out in their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

The benefits of growing active travel are clear. As people become more aware of the health and wellbeing benefits of regular exercise, active forms of travel for short trips for all journey purposes are becoming more popular. Active travel can help to replace a proportion of short trips currently made by car, which contribute to road congestion and high emissions in the region.

The economic benefits of active travel, in helping to create liveable places where people can shop, work and spend leisure time locally are well documented. It also contributes to tourism and the associated economic benefits that brings. Finally, active travel will also play a significant role in the region's pathways to decarbonisation as part of its commitment to delivering a net zero transport system by 2050 (with an ambition by 2040), a key theme explored further in this ambition.

Image 2. Canal Towpath near Leighton Buzzard (Source: Buzz Cycles)

Introduction

This ambition document contains the following chapters:

Introduction
Active travel context
Challenges and Opportunities
Developing the ambition
The ambition
Measuring success
Next steps

Image 3. Willen Route 51

1.1 Growing active travel in the Heartland

The ambition draws on strategies at the national level, such as the 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy', and 'Gear Change: a bold vision for walking and cycling', as well as at the regional level, such as the EEH's Transport strategy 'Connecting People, Transforming Journeys' and 'Pathways to Decarbonisation', and the 'Running out of Road' report for the National Infrastructure Commission. The ambition also incorporates aspirations and objectives currently set at the local authority level to provide a realistic, achievable and relevant approach for the region. The principal inputs to developing this phase one high level ambition have been a comprehensive literature review, research into best practice and case studies, and a workshop with active travel representatives from the region's local authorities.

This ambition will be used as a template for regional and local policy development, setting a framework for active travel investment at a regional and local level and helping to engage local authorities in a coordinated way relating to the growth of active travel in the region. Having an active travel ambition at a regional level will help to 'join the dots' between different national policy objectives (health, decarbonisation and transport) shaping active travel delivery across the region.

In developing this ambition, reference to active travel includes trips made by cycles and scooters (both self-powered and electric) and walking. The ambition is built around supporting trips made wholly by these modes from origin to destination and also where combined with other modes, where walking, cycling and scootering represent the first/and or the last 'mile' of a journey. It also aims to support and encourage an accessible and inclusive network and culture that caters for all modes and users.

Image 4. Oxford City Centre

2. Active Travel Context

This section represents a snapshot of current walk and cycle usage and trends. This overview does not include data on new forms of mobility, such as scootering. This is because there is very limited robust national data, at present. However, this is expected to change as these modes become more established in future.

This phase one report presents evidence on the roles of walking and cycling across England and in the region, and then sets out the national, regional and local policy context for active travel.

Phase two will develop the ambition further. The details of exactly what it will include will be agreed with the active travel strategy steering group in due course.

2.1 Walking and cycling travel trends

Active travel plays a key role in how people travel for all journey purposes across the UK. The Department of Transport's (DfT) National Travel Survey (NTS) gives a useful overview of some of the key trends in walking and cycling.

Within England, 26% of all trips, for all journey purposes are currently made by walking and 2% of all trips are made by cycling (2019).

(Source: Department for Transport National Travel Survey 2019 data)

Active Travel Context

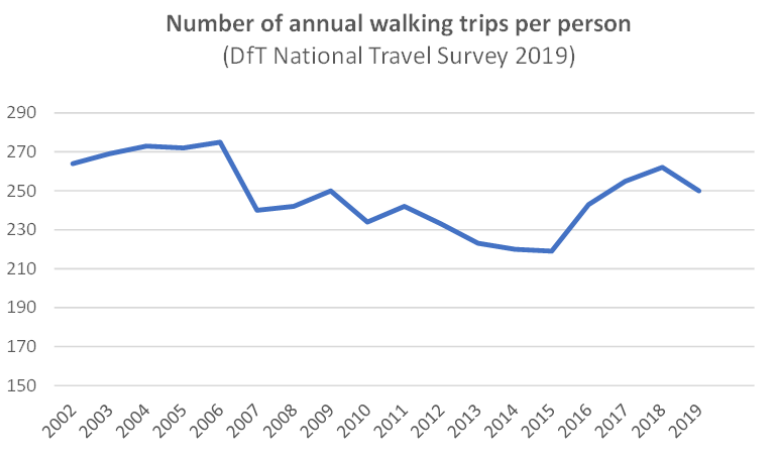
Levels of walking and cycling have dropped slightly overall over the last 20 years.

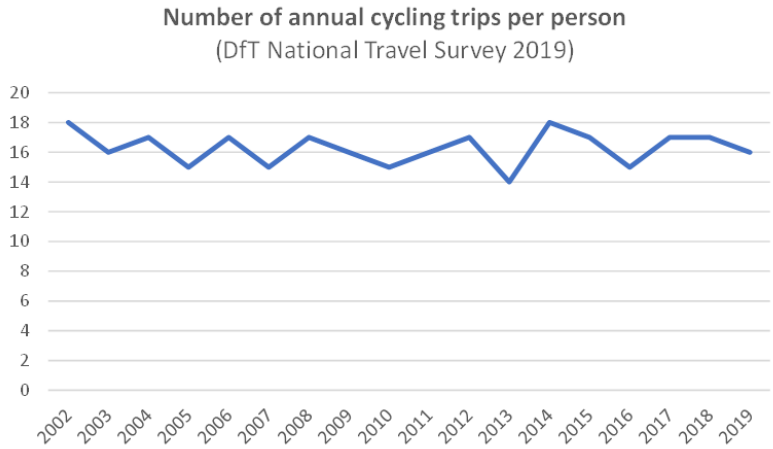
Between 2002 and 2019 there was a 5% decrease in the number of walking trips per person and a 10% decrease in the number of cycling trips per person.

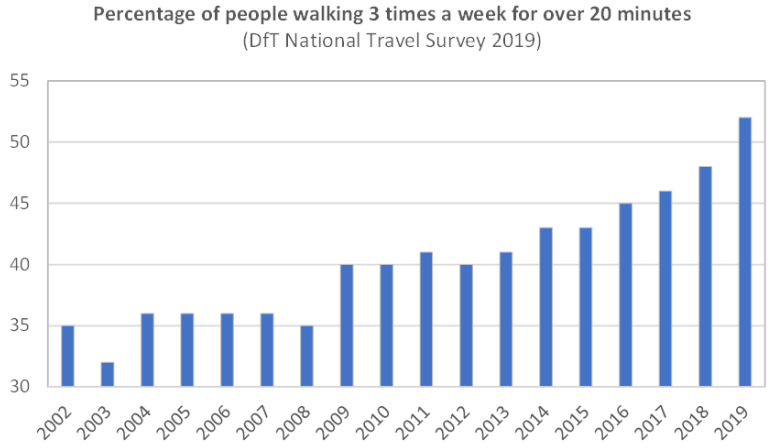
People are walking and cycling further.

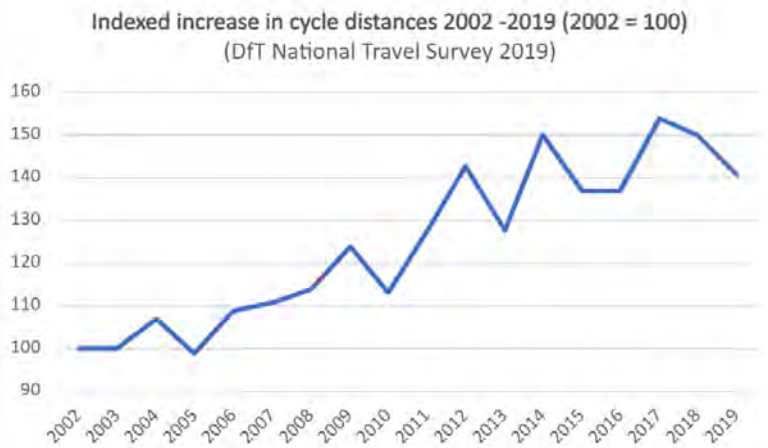
However, people are walking and cycling further. There has been a 17% increase in people walking 3 times a week for over 20 minutes since 2002, and the average distance cycled has increased by 50% since 2002.

DfT data indicates that use of cycling as a mode of transport has increased during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic with an average daily increase of 11% over the period from March 2020 to January 2022 when compared to levels in the 1st week of March 2020 (no equivalent data is available for walking).









Active Travel Context

The information in **Table 1** represents snapshots of active travel across the EEH region. As the data is from the 2011 Census, which is the only consistent data for comparison across all authorities, it needs to be treated with some caution, but shows the considerable variance in current rates of walking and cycling to and from work across the EEH region.

Table 1. Walk and cycle journey to work rates in selected Local Authorities (2011 Census)

Location	Cycle to Work Percentage	Walk to Work Percentage
Bedford	1.6%	3.1%
Buckinghamshire	0.6%	2.8%
Cambridge (City)	12.0%	5.6%
Cambridgeshire	4.2%	3.0%
Central Beds	0.7%	2.3%
Hertfordshire	0.8%	2.9%
Luton	0.6%	3.9%
Milton Keynes	1.5%	2.8%
Northamptonshire	0.9%	3.0%
Oxford (City)	7.2%	6.3%
Oxfordshire	3.3%	4.2%
Peterborough	2.6%	2.9%
Swindon	2.2%	3.7%

At least 12% of Cambridge commuters cycle to work. This is much higher than the national average at 1.3%.

Image 5. A cyclist in Cambridge

2.2 The Policy and Programmes Context

In developing this active travel ambition, a comprehensive review of around 50 national, regional and local policy and programme documents has been undertaken. Some of the key strategies shaping the form of the EEH Active Travel Strategy: The Ambition are set out below.

Active Travel Context

2.2.1 National level

Gear Change (2021) sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make England an active travel nation, grouped under four themes:

- Better streets for cycling and people;
- Cycling at the heart of decision-making;
- Empowering and encouraging local authorities;
- Enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do.

The plan sets out the future of active travel in England in terms of tackling physical inactivity, road congestion and supporting liveable places. It seeks to place active travel at the heart of all decision making around transport and development investment, health policy and through a wide range of guidance and standards relating to the built environment. Gear Change sets out a vision that by 2030 half of all journeys will be made by active travel within towns and cities. It also sets out the extent of investment; an initial £2 billion between 2020 and 2025.

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017) outlines at a national level the government's ambition to make active travel the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) sets out targets up to 2025 including the following:

- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025.
- Aim to increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 300 stages per person per year in 2025.
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025.
- The CWIS also provides guidance on the preparation of LCWIPs.

Active Travel Context

Cycle Infrastructure Design, Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) (2020): LTN 1/20 provides guidance and good practice for the design of cycle infrastructure, in support of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The scope of the document is limited to design matters. The guidance contains tools that give local authorities flexibility on infrastructure design and sets a measurable quality threshold to achieve when designing cycling schemes.

Decarbonising Transport – A better, greener Britain (2021) sets out the role of transport in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, and for each mode (including delivering goods and services), it describes: the current position of the sector versus historical emissions; current government aims and targets and current policies to deliver the targets and planned future work. The document identified six strategic priorities to deliver a vision of a net zero transport system:

- Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport (this reinforces the commitment to walking and cycling targets as set out in Gear Change);
- Decarbonisation of road vehicles;
- Decarbonising how we get our goods;
- Place-based solutions;
- UK as a hub for green transport technology and innovation; and
- Reducing carbon in a global economy.

National Highways programmes and active travel:

RIS2

National Highways is increasingly involved in delivering and helping to fund active travel schemes as part of its Road Investment Programme 2 (RIS2) and other responsibilities. RIS2 which covers the period 2020 – 2025 sets out the strategic vision and programme for investment in the Strategic Road Network. It also includes the fact that the Designated Funds Programme provides a source for various opportunities including active travel schemes. The Designated Funds Programme aims to provide investment in the road network and its surroundings in a way that addresses social and environmental issues and adds value to society.

Active Travel Context

Designated funds were established to support delivery of National Highways' Vision for the network in 2050, as set out in RIS2:

- A network that supports the economy;
- A greener network;
- A safer and more reliable network;
- A more integrated network; and
- A smarter network.

There are four funding areas:

- Users and Communities;
- Environment and Wellbeing;
- Innovation and Modernisation; and
- Safety and Congestion.

Each funding area is split into a number of themes that provide further guidance on the types of initiatives that National Highways aim to invest in. For example, the Users and Community Plan is split into six themes including 'Integration', 'Communities' and 'Walkers, Cyclists and Horse Riders'. This represents a significant opportunity that can be used by local authorities and others for the funding of active travel schemes in the region.

RIS3

RIS3 is still being developed and will cover the period 2025 – 2030. However, one of the objectives is 'Improved environmental outcomes' and within this, it identifies that action on the SRN will, for example, support the use of a decarbonised vehicle fleet and make active travel and public transport easier and more attractive to use as part of decarbonisation plans to meet net zero by 2050.

2.2.2 Regional level

Overview of the Heartland – some context

In order to develop a meaningful and relevant ambition for the Heartland it is important to consider the regional context for active travel, including its people and places. This initial draft of the ambition focuses on a high level assessment of regional context based on places, whilst phase two will also consider its people in more detail. EEH's regional evidence base and technical studies have informed the EEH transport strategy policies and priorities. The 'Heartland in Coxtext' document sets out the economic, demographic, geographic and environmental context for the region.

Active Travel Context

A region of contrasting places

The Heartland is a region of contrasts with large rural areas and a significant rural population as well as cities/large towns (referred to as primary economic centres) and a large number of small and medium-sized market towns. These three place typologies (cities/large towns, market towns and rural areas) are used as the basis for developing the ambition. The biggest population centres are Milton Keynes, Northampton, Luton, Swindon, Peterborough, Oxford and Cambridge, followed by a number of larger towns such as Bedford, High Wycombe, Stevenage, Watford, Aylesbury and Hemel Hempstead. A quarter of the population live in rural areas, within settlements containing fewer than 10,000 people (Defra definition). This is significantly higher than the England and Wales average of 18.5%. Analysis in the Heartland in Context document states that around 34% of the population live in rural areas or rural hubs (small and medium sized market towns), compared with 23% in the rest of England and Wales.

Image 6 to the right taken from the Heartland in Context document shows the rural / urban classification and rural hub towns.

The active travel ambition for the Heartland needs to be relevant to the different place typologies. Whilst some key national issues and objectives are relevant across the region and need to play into the ambition it will also be important to reflect the different local characteristics and challenges of the Heartland's places when developing the ambition. This is explored further in the next section of this report.

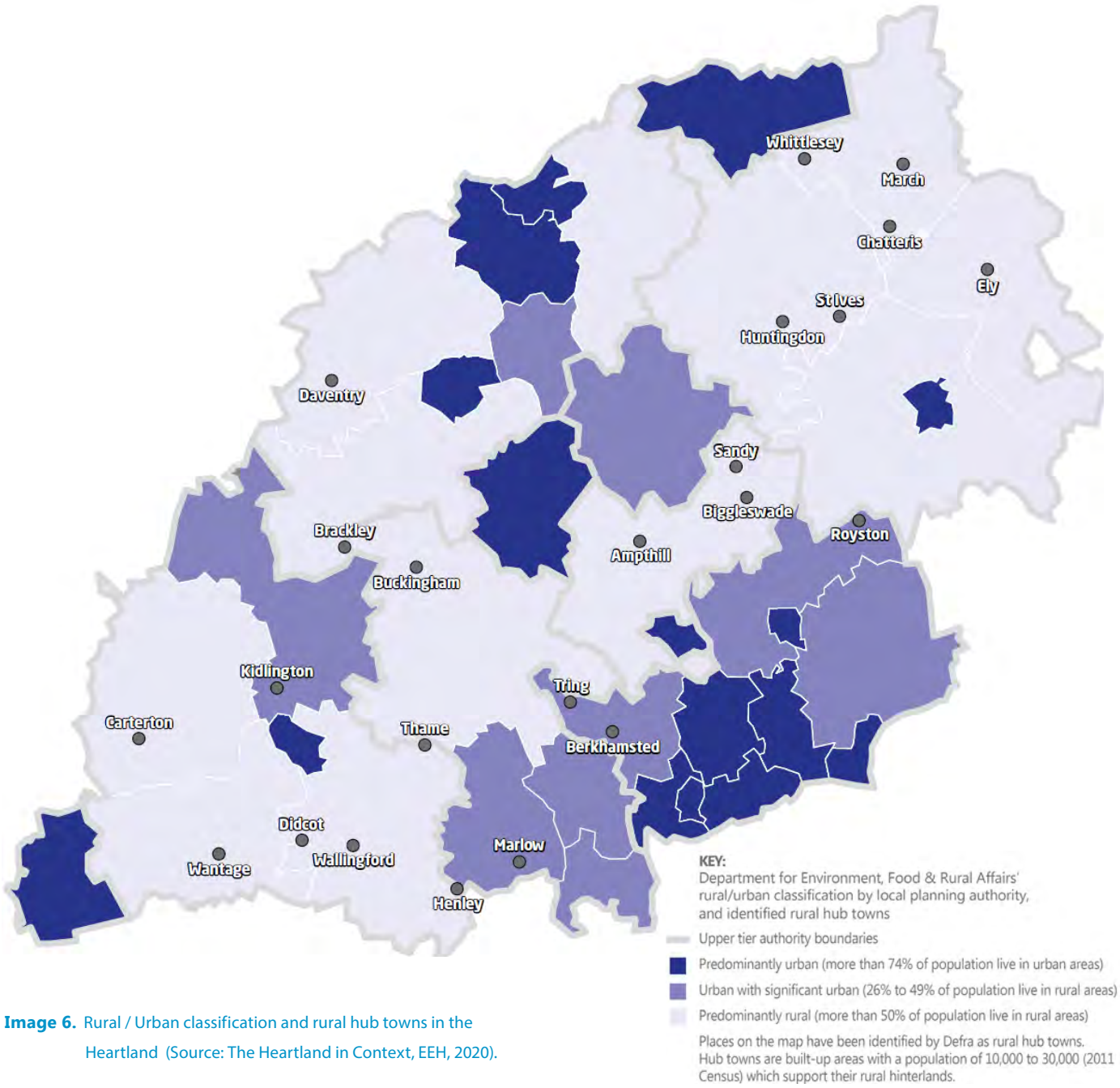


Image 6. Rural / Urban classification and rural hub towns in the Heartland (Source: The Heartland in Context, EEH, 2020).

Active Travel Context

Connecting People, Transforming Journeys: EEH regional transport strategy (2021) Sets out how the region can reduce its reliance on the private car by investing in strategic public transport infrastructure, alongside investment in digital infrastructure to better connect our communities, and how that needs to be complemented by investment in active travel measures locally. The five-point plan of action includes the following:

1. Focus on decarbonisation of the transport system by harnessing innovation and supporting solutions that create green economic opportunities;
2. Promote investment in digital infrastructure as a means of improving connectivity;
3. Use delivery of East West Rail and mass rapid transit systems as the catalyst for the transformation of our strategic public transport networks;
4. Champion increased investment in active travel and shared transport solutions to improve local connectivity to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential; and
5. Ensure that our freight and logistics needs continue to be met whilst lowering the environmental impact of their delivery.

Image 7. Oxford Railway Station - Bus Terminus

EEH Pathways to Decarbonisation (2021): This is not a policy document, but is designed to shape policy. It investigates the impact of different sets of options, or 'pathways', to help achieve the zero-carbon target for transport in EEH by 2050, given expected population growth in the region. This report shows that delivering a zero carbon transport system by 2050 is a challenging target. Measures to change travel behaviour, through increased costs or promotion of sustainable transport modes could help reduce the overall demand on the transport network, but it will require effort through governance, legislation and public will to effect such changes.

Running out of road - Investing in cycling in Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford - A report produced for the National Infrastructure Commission: This report considers transport within, and immediately around, the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford growth corridor, focussing on the three main urban areas. It highlights that they are constrained in transport with roads already at or near capacity and further demand forecast. The report identifies cycling as one of the answers, making cities safer, cleaner and quieter, with the associated benefits for health and happiness and the economy. It recommends a series of cycle-specific changes that could increase cycling and reduce traffic as part of a broader package to help bus users and pedestrians, enable motorists to drive less, and keep the roads clearer for users, including many freight users, who have no alternative.

With the head start Oxford and Cambridge have with cycling, it sees them as potential trailblazers for the nation and the best places to show how the UK can follow the lead of other nations moving into the future. While there is still capacity on Milton Keynes' roads, it is forecast to grow and there is an opportunity to make a pre-emptive change to keep it ahead of the game so it does not end up with the same issues.

Active Travel Context

HS2 and active travel in the Heartland

In 2016 HS2 published a feasibility study into a National Cycleway associated with the alignment of HS2. Several alignments and delivery methods were explored. Within the Heartland the route crossed Buckinghamshire on an alignment between Uxbridge and Silverstone. Subsequently the project has been taken up by Buckinghamshire Council as the Buckinghamshire Greenway (**see page 19**). The northern section of the Buckinghamshire Greenway will be future-proofed by HS2 as it intersects with the HS2 route in several locations. Buckinghamshire Council has successfully secured agreement with HS2 Ltd and the DfT for the Greenway to be incorporated into the HS2 design at these intersection points.

The DfT has commissioned an LCWIP at Brackley (draft issued Nov. 2021) to explore opportunities for new cycling routes in and around the town as well as connections with nearby centres, focused on the A43 corridor.

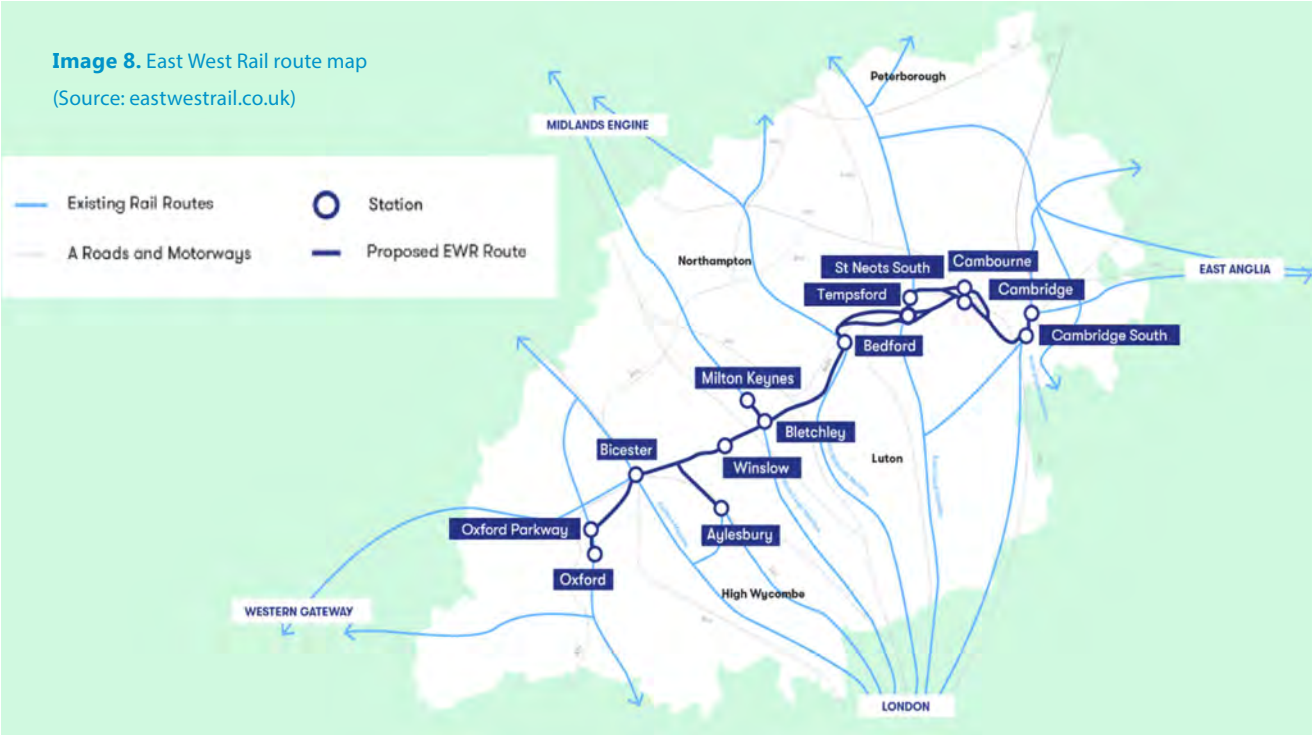
East West Rail (EWR)

The EWR project will provide the key public transport connection in the arc between Oxford and Cambridge. Whilst the section between Oxford and Bicester has been completed, other sections of the line to the east are in construction and planning stages.

An East West Rail active travel strategy is in development. The strategy will outline the opportunity for enhanced First Mile Last Mile (FMLM) connections from new and upgraded stations along the route, as well as enhanced customer experience from an active travel perspective.

As part of the consultation on EWR, local authorities within the Heartland have been seeking specific commitments on enhanced active travel connections into new and upgraded stations, new cycle parking provision and new routes where level crossings are closed as part of the EWR proposals.

Image 8. East West Rail route map
(Source: eastwestrail.co.uk)



Active Travel Context

Longer distance cycling and walking routes in the Heartland

Cycling for leisure and recreational purposes is a popular and growing activity within the EEH region. The spatial characteristics, landscape and historic places of the EEH region lend themselves well to these longer-distance routes which include many traffic free sections. Longer distance cycling is supported through the National Cycling Network (NCN) which offers some existing routes in the Heartland as shown in **Image 9**. The EEH transport strategy makes clear its support for the creation of a pan-regional network of greenways which enhance opportunities for active travel. It is important to note that these routes connect urban and rural areas within the Heartland and are not exclusively for leisure trips. Many shorter trips could be made using these routes for utility active travel purposes and should be a key part of the ambition.

Several other longer distance cycling routes already exist or are being planned in the Heartland. These include the following:

Varsity Way

Route 51 of the NCN, also known as the Varsity Way, is a 124 mile long key existing route forming a cycling spine through the Heartland linking several towns and cities between Oxford and Cambridge via Milton Keynes and Huntingdon. There is considerable scope for this longer distance route to be used for shorter, utility walking and cycling trips and helping to better connect rural areas with market towns and villages and provide access to opportunities. The EEH regional transport strategy supports "maximising the potential of an Oxford – Cambridge 'Varsity Way' segregated cycling and walking route as a 'green spine' across the Heartland: one that can act as a focal point for developing a region wide network of greenways across the region".

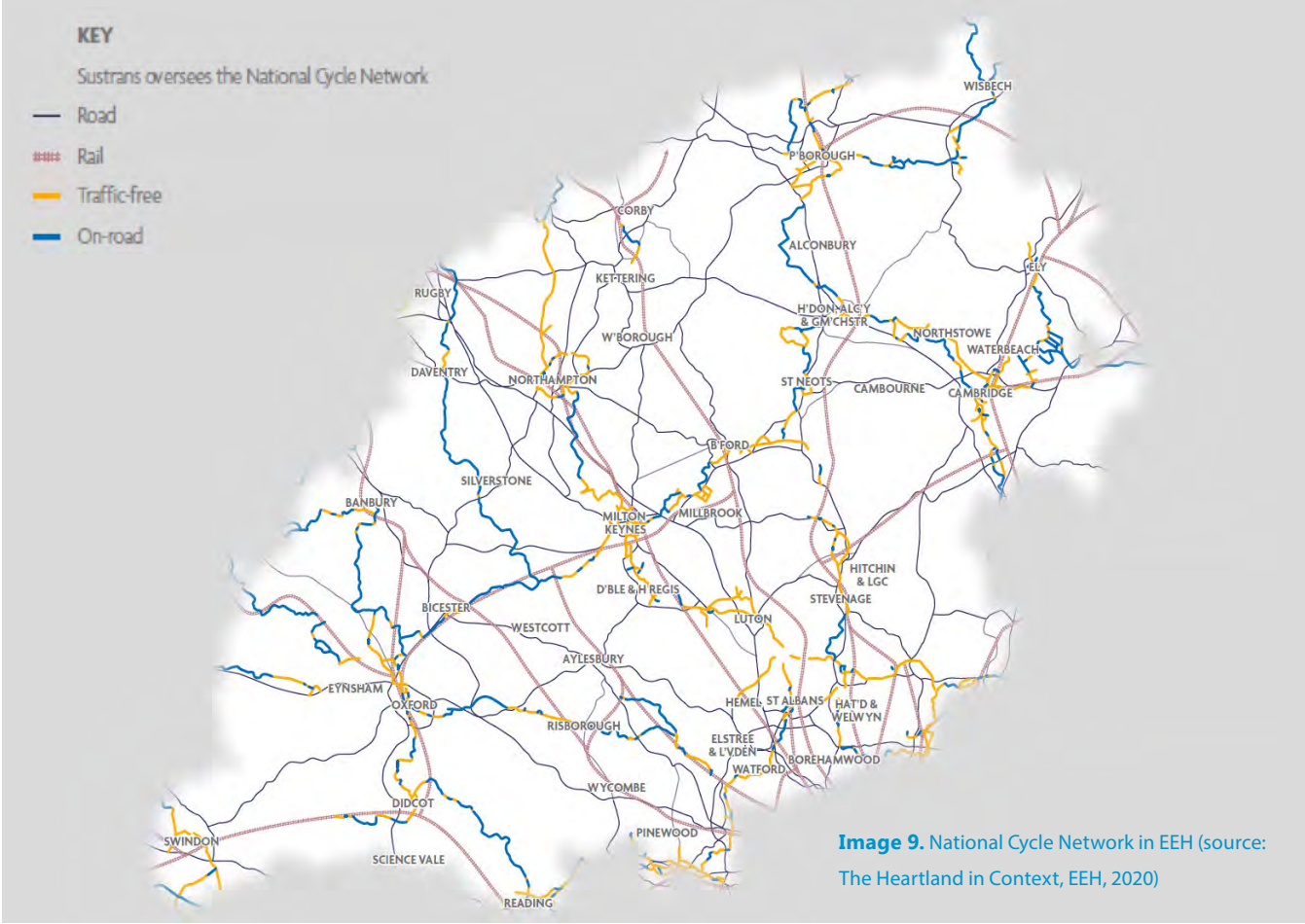


Image 9. National Cycle Network in EEH (source: The Heartland in Context, EEH, 2020)

Active Travel Context

The Buckinghamshire Greenway: A Case Study

The Buckinghamshire Greenway has been conceived as an accessible, high-quality active travel route that will connect people and communities running the full length of the county. It will connect Uxbridge (London) to Silverstone and Brackley (both Northamptonshire). The intention is that this route will connect communities and local active travel networks and be used for leisure, tourism and everyday utility active travel trips. **Image 10** shows the planned Buckinghamshire Greenway route with the box on the left to the image showing cycling journey times in minutes between key destinations. The Greenway will be delivered in a number of phases:

Phase 1 – The 4km Waddesdon Greenway route which runs between Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station and Waddesdon Manor has been completed. There has been a 165% uplift in walking and cycling usage during the period 2019 – 2021.

Phase 2 – The Misbourne Greenway runs south from Wendover connecting with Great Missenden and has received planning approval although is not yet built.

Phase 3 – The Colne Valley Greenway is the final link in the southern section connecting Great Missenden through to the Colne Valley via various towns and villages in the Chilterns.

Northern Phase - HS2 interface

Buckinghamshire Council has secured agreements with HS2 for the delivery of the northern section of the Greenway to Northamptonshire.

The Buckinghamshire Greenway could become one key route in a wider network of Greenway routes across the Heartland with spurs to less well connected villages.

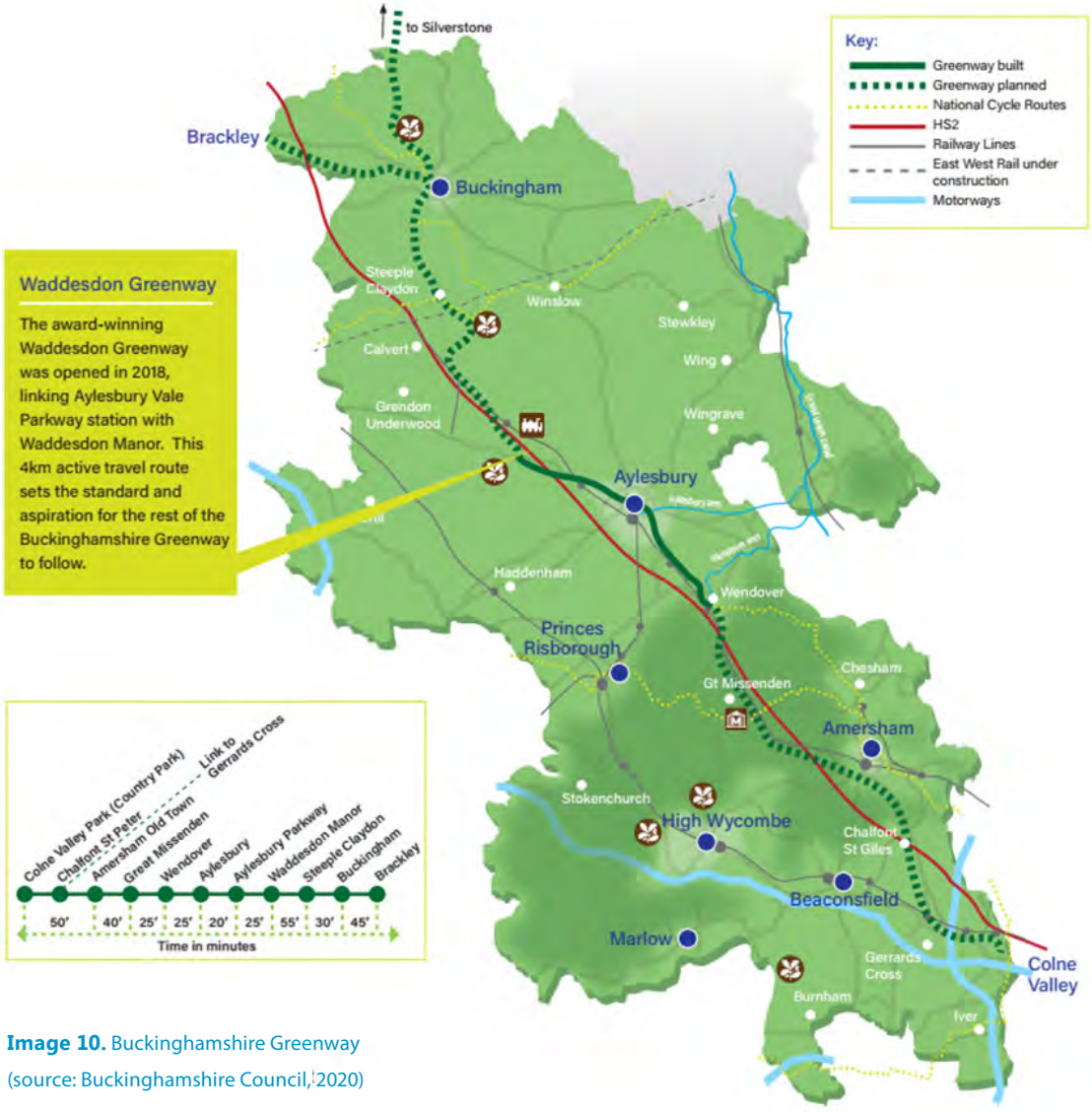


Image 10. Buckinghamshire Greenway (source: Buckinghamshire Council, 2020)

Active Travel Context

2.2.3 Local Level

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) set out plans for walking and cycling networks at a strategic level and improvements within the relevant local authority area. LCWIPs set out an evidence-based approach to the strategic identification of networks, missing links and specific scheme improvements. A key output is developing a prioritised programme for investment in active travel infrastructure that can be utilised in funding bids.

Across the EEH region, the development of LCWIPs has mainly been focused on cities and urban areas to date, although some countywide LCWIPs are in progress, such as Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire.

Image 14 on **page 21** shows the current LCWIP coverage across the Heartland. LCWIPs or equivalent network plans will be completed for all the local authority areas within the Heartland over the next few years. This will enable a comprehensive strategy for investment in walking and cycling infrastructure and ensure a well-connected network across the EEH area. EEH will have a key role in active travel going forward in helping to ensure a joined-up approach to network connectivity across LCWIP boundaries. This will require an exercise to identify gaps in the region's cycling networks.

Image 11 (Top left). Milton Keynes – Major town and primary economic centre (Source: The Heartland in Context, EEH, 2020).

Image 12 (Top Right). Coombe Hill - Vale of Aylesbury, one of EEH's rural areas (Source: Unsplash)

Image 13 (Buttom). Thame – Rural hub / small market town (Source: Unsplash)

Active Travel Context

As part of correspondence to local authorities in 2021, the DfT has made clear the important role that LCWIPs have in network planning and prioritisation of schemes. To qualify for funding in 2021/22, the DfT has indicated that local authorities are required to commit to "network planning to inform prioritisation of future schemes, in the form of LCWIPs or similar local strategies". A review of all existing and emerging LCWIP's across the region has been undertaken.

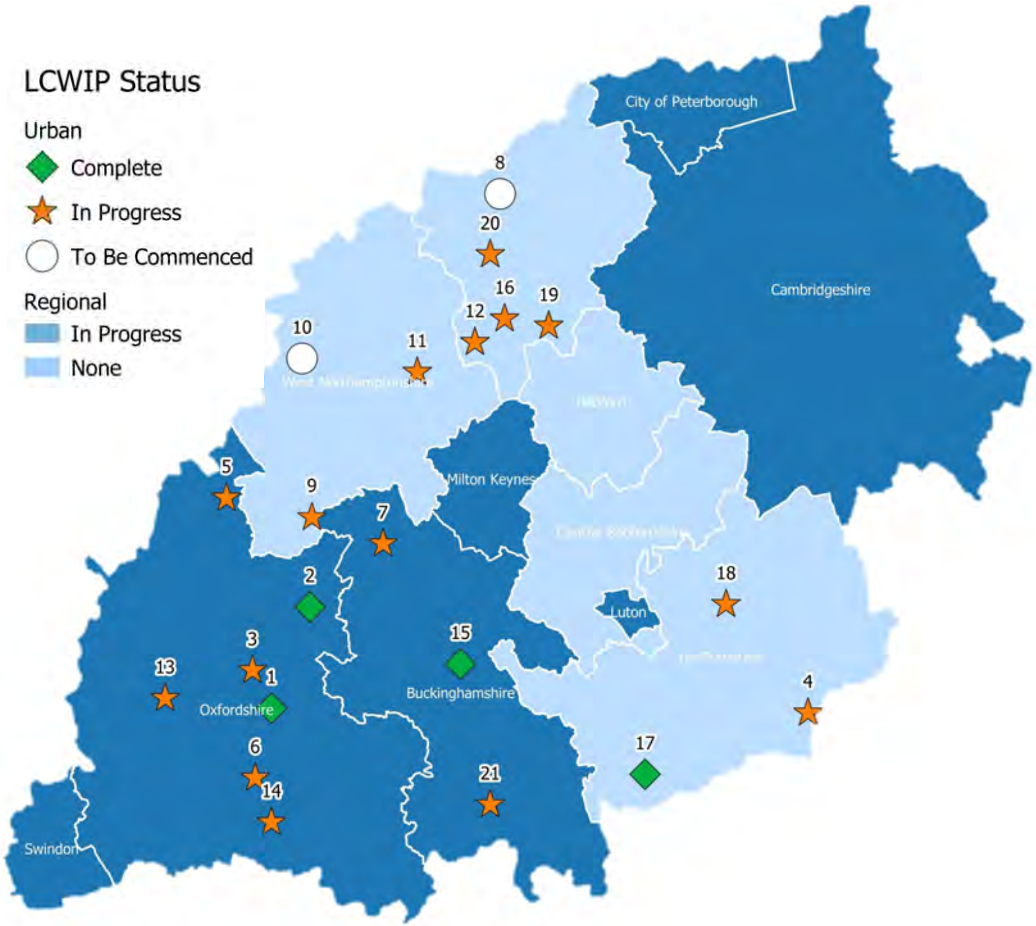


Image 14. LCWIPs coverage map for EEH

Table 2. LCWIP Name and Status as of February 2022

ID	Name	Progress
1	Oxford	Complete
2	Bicester	Complete
3	Kidlington	In Progress
4	Broxbourne	In Progress
5	Banbury	In Progress
6	Abingdon	In Progress
7	Buckingham	In Progress
8	Corby	To Be Commenced
9	Brackley	In Progress
10	Daventry	To Be Commenced
11	Northampton	In Progress
12	Wellingborough to Northampton	In Progress
13	Witney	In Progress
14	Didcot	In Progress
15	Aylesbury	Complete
16	Wellingborough	In Progress
17	Watford	Complete
18	Stevenage	In Progress
19	Rushden and High Ferrers	In Progress
20	Kettering	In Progress
21	High Wycombe	In Progress

Active Travel Context

Table 3 below provides an overview of local challenges and priorities / approaches taken in selected LCWIP's and other relevant transport policy documents in the Heartland. Note this table does not cover all completed LCWIPs and LTPs in the region, but is rather a cross section to demonstrate the issues being dealt with and the approach.

Table 3. Summary of local challenges, context and priorities as set out in selected LCWIPs and transport plans and strategies across the Heartland

Local Authority Area	Summary of local context and challenges	Local priorities, targets and objectives
Swindon LCWIP Swindon LTP3	• A rapidly growing population; • Significant physical road and rail barriers to movement; • Gaps in the existing cycle and walking networks.	• Provide high quality infrastructure to support our transition to a town where active travel is the preferred choice for shorter trips.
Oxford LCWIP	• Despite good existing levels of active travel there are some gaps in cycling network provision and examples of poor infrastructure for pedestrians; • Socio-economic and cultural barriers to cycling in some wards in the City.	• A city-wide cycle network, a cycle friendly public realm, traffic restraint, a cultural norm of cycling and Council commitment. The LCWIP schemes will potentially raise around half of all routes to an acceptable level of cyclability.
Aylesbury Transport Strategy Aylesbury Garden Town LCWIP and Masterplan	• High volumes of traffic in urban area; • Current low but growing levels of cycling; • Major roads present barriers to active travels.	• To increase the level of cycling in Aylesbury beyond the Government's current target for cycling growth, attracting commuters, schoolchildren, families, and other users; • In 2033 people choose to walk, cycle, or use public transport for everyday journeys within Aylesbury, because it is easy to navigate and has an integrated and inclusive transport system. Residents benefit from active lifestyles and streets are people-friendly places. By 2050 at least 50% of trips originating in the Garden Town will be made by sustainable modes (AGT Masterplan ambition).
Brackley LCWIP	• Corridors are poor quality from a cycling perspective; • Some areas in the town centre encourage through traffic; • Existing highway infrastructure design discourages walking.	• Long-term strategic approach for developing walking and cycling measures based on extensive desktop analysis and site auditing. Wider connectivity to towns and villages around Brackley for active modes.
Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy	• Considerable population and development growth; • Existing traffic congestion; • Active travel infrastructure network gaps and varying quality.	• To make active travel the default choice for Milton Keynes residents for the majority of trips less than 3 miles; • To make the cycling infrastructure of Milton Keynes the best cycling infrastructure of any UK city, which is accessible to all residents regardless of their cycling proficiency; • To deliver improvements to our streets that are accessible; • To provide walking and cycling links between key services that are safe, convenient, direct, and prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

Active Travel Context

Table 3. Summary of local challenges, context and priorities as set out in selected LCWIPs and transport plans and strategies across the Heartland.

Local Authority Area	Summary of local context and challenges	Local priorities, targets and objectives
Peterborough LCWIP	• Road congestion and delay are forecast to increase, particularly in peak periods; • Difficult to take carriageway space for segregated cycle facilities.	• Serving the highest possible levels of active travel; • Facilitating the highest possible levels of short journeys to be made by active travel; • Provide for areas with high levels of growth and development.
Bicester LCWIP	• Traffic congestion and rising traffic levels; • Lack of carriageway space for segregated cycling facilities.	• At least a 200% increase in cycling (tripling) and 50% increase in walking trips.
Cambridgeshire LCWIP	• Safety for cyclists and perceived safety problems; • Traffic congestion in Cambridge as well as Market towns; • Lower levels of active travel (relative to Cambridge) in some Market towns.	• Support an increased number of walking trips by establishing safe, interconnected pedestrian connections between key destinations across our cities and towns; • Increase the number of cycling trips through establishing safe and interconnected cycling links across the region's cities, towns and settlements.
Luton Transport Strategy and Local Transport Policies	• Increases in commuting which are resulting in increases in congestion; • More Road Traffic Collisions (disproportionately high number of pedestrian casualties); • Worsening air quality; • Higher than average levels of obesity and coronary heart disease in adults.	• Implement a high quality, direct, convenient and safe cycle and pedestrian network of both on- and off-road routes in areas where: terrain is flat, efforts are being made to reduce congestion, areas with high levels of deprivation or housing growth, low levels of physical activity; • Achieve a tenfold increase in cycling and double walking by 2040, which is anticipated will result in a 40% reduction in car travel to work.
Broxbourne LCWIP (Hertfordshire)	• Hazardous walking and cycling conditions: the volume and speed of traffic on a number of local roads gives the perception that walking and cycling is not safe; • Fragmentation of existing walking and cycling routes: local improvement schemes have not been coherent to form a proper cycling network.	• Improve walkability at town centres and focal points; • Provide a network of priority cycle corridors to make cycling a safe and convenient alternative to car driving; • Identify and remove physical and behavioural obstacles to active travel.

Although there are differences in approaches to targets and priorities within the Heartland, largely driven by differing local contexts, challenges and issues, all LCWIPs are in line with policy set out in CWIS, Gear Change and LTN 1/20.

Active Travel Context

2.3 Case studies

This section outlines three case studies of good practice in active travel relevant to the three different place typologies within the region.

2.3.1 Case study - City / large town context

Copenhagen has set itself the goal of becoming 'the world's best bicycle city by 2025' as outlined in its 'Good, Better, Best' Bicycle Strategy 2011 – 2025'. Copenhagen's successful strategy is built on a comprehensive planning approach, the delivery of simple, good quality infrastructure and political commitment. Whilst the continued success of Copenhagen's cycling strategy is often attributed exclusively to an existing cycling culture, many of the approaches taken in Copenhagen are directly transferable to the cities and larger towns in the Heartland. In this sense it is a good case study with direct relevance to this ambition.

Copenhagen is a city of 799,000 people (2021) covering an area of 180 sq km, making it much larger than any city in the Heartland. Data from 2018 showed a 49% modal split for cycling to work and education trips (up from 35% in 2008) against 6% walking, 18% public transport and 27% car. Copenhagen's approach focuses on enabling cycling for all people, at all times of year and for every type of activity. 150,000 people cycle each day to work or educational institutions in the City of Copenhagen. Copenhagen's plan for achieving a greater modal share for bicycles includes increasing the capacity of the cycle lanes into the city centre, in order to accommodate an additional 60,000 cyclists by 2025. Achieving this goal is a key part of the city's health plan, to the objective of making the city carbon neutral by 2025, and to enhancing the liveability of the city. The two cornerstones of Copenhagen's success have been effective planning and good quality infrastructure.

Image 15 'Copenhagen's Bicycle Strategy, 2011-2025

Image 16 Cycling over Dronning Louise's Bridge, Copenhagen (Source – Visit Copenhagen)

2.3.1.1 Planning

Cycle planning is built into every aspect of development, public infrastructure investment and municipal governance. The following are key plans

- the Copenhagen Cycle Policy (2002-2012)
- the Copenhagen Transport and Environment Plan 2004
- the Copenhagen Bicycle Strategy (2011-2025)
- the Copenhagen Cycle Priority Plan (2006-2016)

2.3.1.2 Infrastructure

In planning and designing infrastructure, three main principles are followed, alongside significant levels of investment:

1. Simple, uncomplicated design approach including

- Traffic calmed roads, segregated high-capacity cycle tracks, simple painted lanes and greenway type routes;
- Slower speeds and downgrading the role of the car in residential areas.

Active Travel Context

2. Safe design principles

- Junction design is not over-engineered and prioritises cyclists and pedestrians in residential areas;
- Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) rates have been falling.

3. Connectivity

- A comprehensive approach to planning a joined up network for the whole city and plugging gaps.

2.3.1.3 Lessons to be learnt and relevance to the Heartland

The design and planning approach to infrastructure for cycling taken in Copenhagen is in many ways similar to that now seen in the UK's cities and larger towns, especially post the introduction of LTN 1/20 guidance. The main differences are the scale of infrastructure and funding, the extent of political commitment and public support. LCWIPs provide a sound basis for network planning akin to the Copenhagen experience and lessons have already been learnt in the design of cycle schemes in UK cities from Copenhagen.

Perhaps the key lessons to be learnt from Copenhagen of relevance to the Heartland's cities and large towns are approach to governance for cycle planning and bold political leadership and commitment. This commitment is demonstrated in this line from the Copenhagen Bicycle Strategy: 'Cycling is not a goal in itself but rather a highly prioritised political tool for creating a more liveable city'.

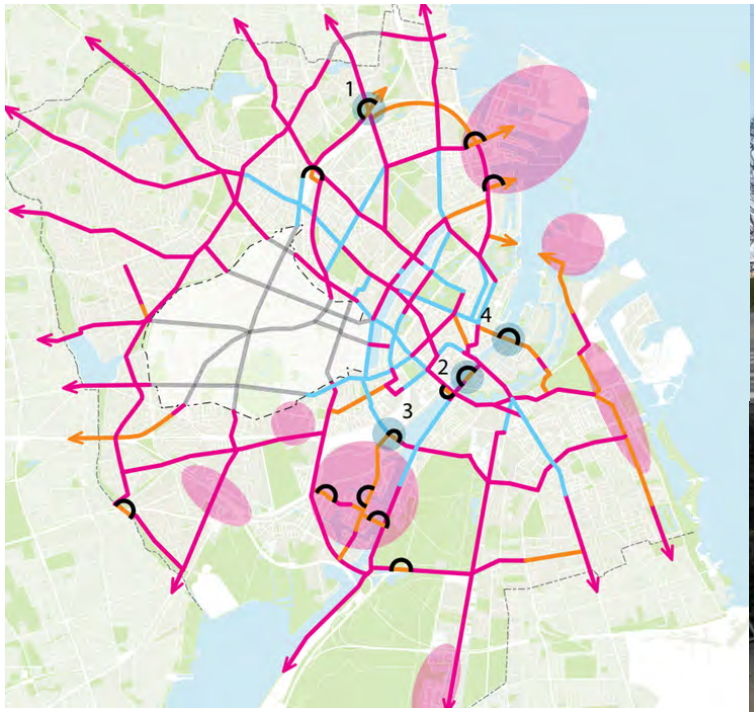


Fig. 17

Fig. 18

Fig. 19

Image 17 - Simple representation of Copenhagen's cycle network (PLUSnet) proposals, (Source , 'Copenhagen Bicycle Strategy')

Image 18 - Simple, high quality infrastructure has increased demand for everyday cycling trips

Image 19 - Traffic calming in residential areas

Active Travel Context

2.3.2 Case Study - Market Town Context

Leighton Buzzard - Linslade, Bedfordshire

Leighton Buzzard and Linslade (population c40,000) is a traditional market town in Bedfordshire with a historic core and High Street that still retains many historic buildings, narrow alley ways and the character of its long history. In many ways, it is representative of other similarly sized market towns in the Heartland, facing challenges of high car ownership and parking issues, traffic congestion, narrow streets and poor air quality in some locations. However, like other market towns in the Heartland, the key features of the town and its growth plans offer tremendous potential for switching the high number of short trips, currently made by car, to active travel.

2.3.2.1 Context

In 2008 Leighton Buzzard / Linslade became one of 17 Cycling Demonstration Towns across the country. The Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) programme sought to prove that increased funding and delivery of infrastructure and bespoke, community-scale projects can have a significant impact upon cycling rates. Over the 3 years 2008 - 2011, Leighton-Linslade Town Council and Go Cycle Leighton-Linslade worked with the local community and stakeholders to develop the cycle network in the towns. It also worked with schools, employers, commuters, and a number of local, regional, and national groups to promote the benefits of cycling. A total of 4.7km of cycle paths and 1.2km of on-road facilities were developed during this period alongside smaller scale improvements to the cycle network including crossing improvements, tripling provision of cycle parking and the installation of dropped kerbs. An increase in cycling levels across the town, especially in trips to school was experienced during this period (Source: Evaluation of Cycling City and Towns, Sustrans, 2017).

2.3.2.2 Infrastructure

Investment in cycling and walking routes and infrastructure has continued, led by Central Bedfordshire Council since the end of the CDT programme in 2011. Walking and Cycling Strategies for Central Bedfordshire for the period 2011-2026 continue to shape the development of new infrastructure and travel behaviour programmes in the towns. An active local cycling group BuzzCycles has, in conjunction with the District and Town Councils developed a Leighton - Linslade 'Green Wheel' Masterplan shown in **Image 20** below. This sets out a network concept for multi use access routes and green spaces around the community of Leighton-Linslade. The concept has been developed around inner and outer concentric rings and spokes connecting key locations in the towns.

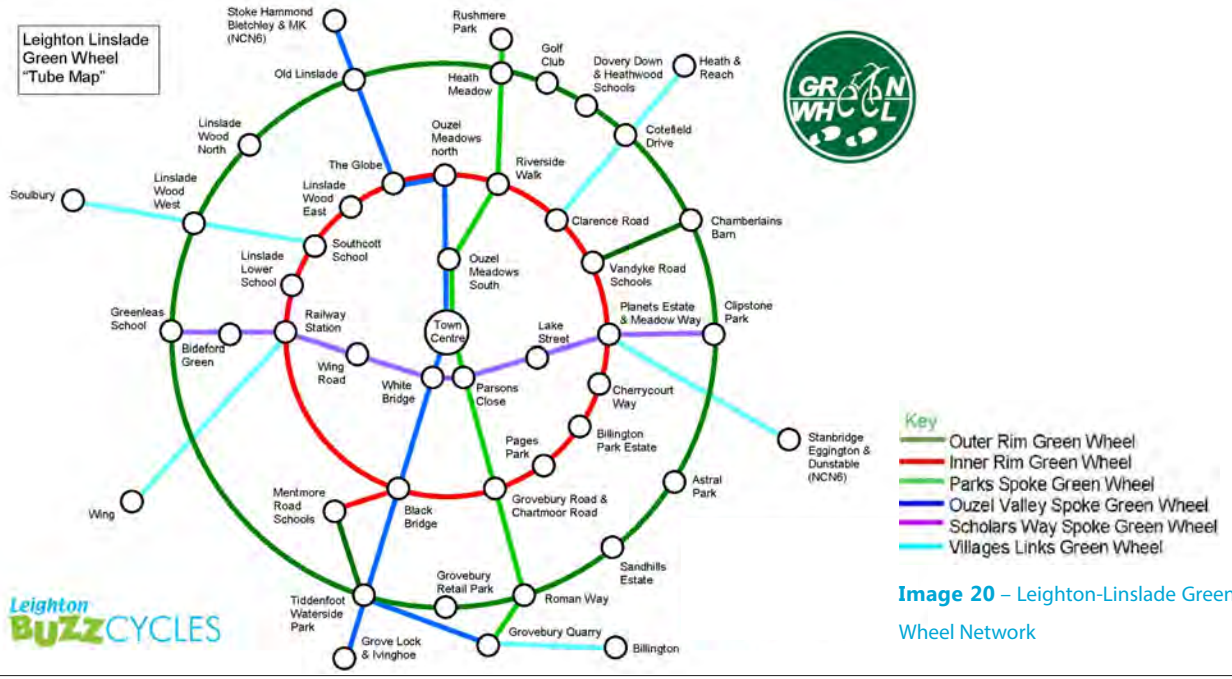


Image 20 – Leighton-Linslade Green Wheel Network

Active Travel Context

The local town council and Central Bedfordshire Council (Highway Authority) have signed up to the simple concept as the basis for a comprehensive network and it enjoys good local support. Several of the routes, particularly the spokes in the wheel, are already in place, having been delivered as part of the ongoing investment programme, whilst other missing links represent priorities for future investment to be included in future programmes. One challenge is the design of some sections of the network, as the concept was developed pre LTN 1/20 but new design guidance does not support shared use paths, meaning new approaches to design are required in order to source funding.

Central Bedfordshire Council and the town council have delivered a scheme to pedestrianise part of the High Street based on an experimental traffic order. This has been popular with local residents and businesses, and a decision on whether this will become a permanent scheme is expected later this year.

2.3.2.3 Supporting programme

In addition to the planning and delivery of new infrastructure, supporting programmes has been rolled out by local groups. The role of local activists in Leighton-Linslade in helping to deliver aspects of this programme has been particularly impressive. This includes Smart Travel initiatives with cycle and walking maps, route information, Bikeability training, measures to promote walking and cycling to schools and Dr Bike events run by Buzz Cycles.

Image 21 – Cycle parking at Leighton Buzzard station

Image 22– Dr Bike event, Leighton Buzzard (Source: Buzz Cycles)

Image 23– Leighton Buzzard High Street

Image 24 - New cycle facilities on Meadway, Leighton Buzzard, part of the Green Wheel inner rim

Active Travel Context

2.3.3 Case Study – Rural context

Strategy for the Blenheim Estate, Oxfordshire Produced by Velo-City (2019)

(Source: Blenheim Estates Oxfordshire Open Thought Submission)

2.3.3.1 Introduction to Strategy

The Blenheim Estate is a major privately owned estate in Oxfordshire on the edge of the Cotswolds. It comprises a stately home, Parklands, a working farm and 810ha of land extending to eight villages on its fringes. A number of these villages are isolated in nature and could benefit from improved connectivity to help grow a thriving, more inclusive and sustainable community.

The Blenheim Estate appointed Velo-City to develop a number of the spatial concepts for its land strategy. This is part of an initiative the estate has been working on with Oxfordshire Open Thought (www.oxfordshireopenthought.org), an open platform led by six local authorities in Oxfordshire, designed to stimulate and develop ideas as part of the Oxfordshire 2050 plan.

The Estate is seeking to develop a long term sustainable placemaking strategy, with good connectivity through active modes and the well-being of its residents and businesses at its heart. The connectivity and mobility component of this strategy sets to develop an exemplar for rural communities that could be used as a model for other rural communities within the Heartland.

The strategy, known as 'Villages within a Garden' is based on a polycentric cluster of new and expanded villages, connected to one another by a network of safe cycle only or cycle priority routes and within cycling distance of new/existing rail stations/ public transport interchanges. Whilst the strategy is a comprehensive attempt to shape key policy themes of land use, health and well-being, transport and employment, its active travel component is of focus here.

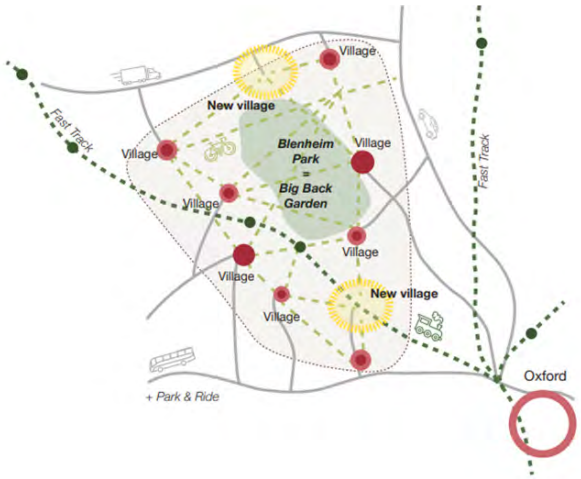
2.3.3.2 Active travel at the heart of Connectivity Strategy

The strategy sets out connectivity objectives which are outlined on the right.

Image 25 – Active travel at the heart of the Velo-City and Blenheim Estates Strategy

- To provide a realistic alternative to movement, other than by car, particularly last mile journeys;
- To encourage people to choose to move by modes other than the car;
- To reduce traffic movements, particularly HGV movements into and through the area;
- To ease traffic congestion and improve air quality;
- To improve safety on rural roads for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- To reduce the impact of the car on the future planning of our places.

The strategy sets out the following specific elements relating to active travel and micro mobility.



Active Travel Context

- Implementation of a network of new and upgraded cycle/ pedestrian routes using existing Public Rights of Way, footpaths, bridleways, segregated routes and marked routes, which link each village, transport hubs, employment locations and longer distance/ national cycle network.
- Gradual re-prioritisation of traffic, traffic re-assignment and road closures such that HGV traffic and through traffic is reduced within the Village Cluster and movements by cycle/ walking/ electric vehicles are prioritised.
- Introduction of maximum 20mph speed limits, quiet zones and re-prioritisation of existing routes across the Village Cluster.
- Implementation of local delivery service from 'hub to home/ shop' via electric vehicle/ cargo bikes.
- Introduction of local village 'work places' providing centralised facilities and an alternative to working from home.
- Introduction of a bike/ e-bike hire scheme, which includes electric bikes.
- Provision of high quality bike parking at park and ride and stations.
- Introduction of a series of measures to encourage all employers and schools to promote active travel.
- Promotion of new development that actively discourages car ownership.
- All new housing to be car free.
- Introduction of village car hire/ car share schemes.
- Generous and secure bike storage within the home.

2.3.3.3 Lessons to be learnt and relevance to the Heartland

Whilst this is a conceptual strategy and vision rather than a delivered project, the active travel components of this project are highly relevant and transferable to other rural locations within the Heartland. Indeed a number of the strategy components are already being actively considered and planned for in other rural locations in the Heartland. It is noted that components of the LTN 1/20 Cycle design guidance may be difficult to apply in rural contexts. It is likely that the high movement function and narrow nature of many rural roads will make mixed use of the carriageway only suitable for a relatively few routes. As such reducing the volume and speed of traffic in rural routes need to be the focus, as well as looking to utilise off road active travel opportunities. The Blenheim Estate strategy provides an overarching context for how and where such measures could be introduced.

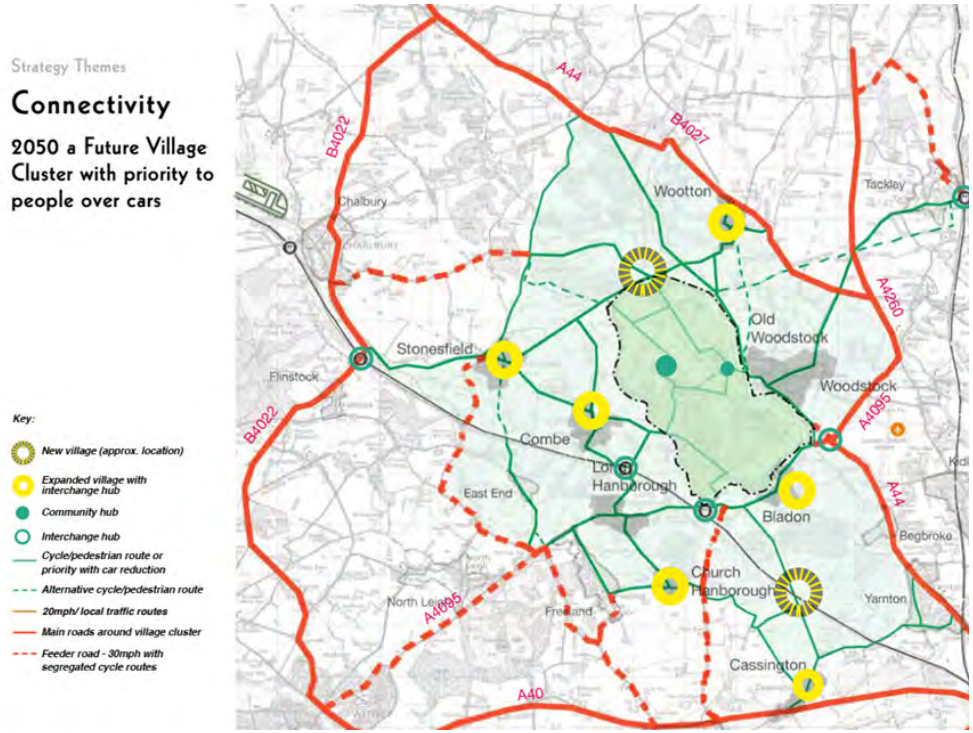


Image 27 - Strategic plan for active travel to be at the heart of enhanced connectivity proposals for the future Blenheim Estate. (Source: Velocity vision for Blenheim Estate)

Image 28. Canal towpath Leighton Buzzard

3. Challenges and Opportunities

The information collated through the literature review and stakeholder workshop has been reviewed to identify the key issues, challenges and opportunities in the EEH region.

The region faces a number of issues with associated challenges and opportunities, some in keeping with national trends and others more related to the specific circumstances of the region. However, it is also important to consider the many opportunities that the region's characteristics provide for growing levels of active travel. The issues, challenges and opportunities in the EEH region are outlined in the table below. These revolve around existing travel patterns, cultural constraints, infrastructure constraints and outcomes.

In terms of existing travel patterns, there are high levels of car use in the EEH region (higher than national average), while the geography of the region with large rural areas between larger settlements mean that some areas/residents experience limited/poor connectivity to key destinations. This is exacerbated by cultural constraints with significant areas of social and economic inequality and deprivation. The outcomes of this include physical inactivity and obesity, road congestion, poor air quality and high emissions, with the associated challenge of decarbonisation and national target of becoming Net Zero by 2050, with the regional ambition of becoming Net Zero by 2040. In terms of cultural constraints, there has been a historical focus on highways with lack of active travel culture, although this has started to change as a result of government policy and COVID. In terms of infrastructure constraints, existing infrastructure is often not set up for active travel (either because it is not provided or because provision is poor) while the challenging requirements of LTN 1/20 can make it difficult to retrofit such infrastructure in some environments. The region is also experiencing high levels of growth in terms of population and housing, with associated increases in travel demand on existing infrastructure. There is also a perceived lack of safety, both in terms of cycling and personal safety.

Table 4 - Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in EEH region

Issue	Challenge	Opportunity
Existing Travel Patterns		
Settlement patterns/ connectivity	• Spatial development is somewhat dispersed between urban areas (larger towns/cities and market towns) and large rural areas with low population, which means active travel involves longer trips; • A quarter of the population live in rural areas (higher than England and Wales average of 18.5%), with 34% living in 'rural or rural hub' areas, compared with 23% in England and Wales; • Within rural communities, the connectivity options, both physical and digital, available to residents and businesses are often limited.	• There are many larger towns/cities and dense urban areas in parts of the region that would lend themselves to greater numbers of short trips being made by active travel; • An integrated active travel/public transport network could help improve connectivity for residents and businesses in rural areas.

Challenges and Opportunities

Table 4 - Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in EEH region

Issue	Challenge	Opportunity
Existing Travel Patterns		
Topography	• In some areas of the region, the hilly geography is a barrier to active travel.	• Many areas of the region are relatively flat, which lends itself to active travel; • Electric cycles and scooters can make hillier areas more accessible by active travel.
Mode share	• On average, over 67% of the EEH workplace population travel to work by car compared to 60% nationally, while it is likely to be higher in some areas.	• Potential for active travel ambition to drive shift in mode share from car to active travel to bring EEH region in line with national mode share or better.
Journey purpose	• Active travel lends itself to some journey purposes more than others; • Traditional focus on promotion of active travel for commuting.	• Promotion of active travel for all journey purposes, including leisure, not just commuter journeys is an opportunity for more journeys to be made by active travel.
Logistical complexities	• Time constraints and/or the need to escort others can constrain mode choice (e.g. parents escorting children to different schools).	• A safe and easy to use active travel/public transport network provides the opportunity for as many journeys as possible to be made by active travel.
Cultural Constraints		
Social and economic inequality and deprivation	• Those without access to a vehicle disproportionately suffer or miss opportunities such as obtaining jobs that are considerable distances away; • Significant areas of social and economic inequality and deprivation, where opportunities for individuals to realise their full potential are limited. More than 800,000 people in the Heartland are currently living in the top third most deprived planning authority areas in England, accounting for 15% of the total population. Associated with: - poor connectivity, access to jobs, services, and opportunities - relatively low disposable incomes limit the choices available • Higher propensity for mobility difficulties.	• An integrated active travel/public transport network could help people who are economically deprived or less likely to cycle increase their access to a wider range of opportunities. • This could also include measures to achieve behaviour change among the groups of users identified, such as bike grants for those on low incomes and targeted bicycle training.

Challenges and Opportunities

Table 4 - Issues, challenges and opportunities in EEH region

Issue	Challenge	Opportunity
Cultural Constraints		
Active travel culture/ behavioural change	• Historical focus on investment in highways infrastructure for many years; • Challenges in achieving behaviour change and an active culture with buy-in from different parties; • Other than a few notable exceptions (Oxford and Cambridge in particular plus Leighton-Linslade), there has not been a strong culture of active travel across the region's towns and cities, although that is changing; • Some groups of people may be less likely to cycle (e.g. women or certain religious groups).	• Growing political and social awareness of the benefits of active travel and a desire to improve the liveability of towns and cities and personal health (National level: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy; Gear Change: a bold vision for walking and cycling. Regional level: EEH Regional Transport Strategy and Pathways to Decarbonisation); • The fact that Oxford and Cambridge are within the region, with their high levels of active travel and existing well developed active travel cultures, provides good examples of local best practice, inspiration and what can be achieved; • Many EEH Local Authorities are already delivering active travel programmes; • An integrated active travel/public transport network could help people who are less likely to cycle increase their access to a wider range of opportunities. • Opportunity to build on the increase in active travel seen with COVID.
Infrastructure constraints		
Housing/population growth	• Significant growth in the form of housing development and new towns is planned across the region (the current Local Plans will deliver 535,000 new dwellings, increasing the region's existing housing stock by around 25%. Local Plan growth equates to 27,800 new homes per year); • High population growth - between 2012 and 2018 the region's population grew by 5.5% (269,700 people) compared to the UK average of 4.3%, while the region's population is still due to grow significantly.	• New development provides an opportunity to secure new infrastructure with the quantum of new development also offering the opportunity for significantly larger developer contributions, although this could result in disparity/inconsistency between old and new infrastructure; • New movers provide opportunities for behaviour change.

Challenges and Opportunities

Table 4 - Issues, challenges and opportunities in EEH region

Issue	Challenge	Opportunity
Infrastructure constraints		
Existing Transport Network	• The existing transport network can make active travel difficult, while it can be difficult to accommodate new infrastructure on existing networks; • Major roads and rail lines present barriers to active travel; • Creation of segregated cycle facilities can reduce highway capacity for motor vehicles; • Possible lack of accessible infrastructure/space to accommodate wheelchair/adapted cycle users; • Many parts of the region's towns and district centres are in need of regeneration.	• Improvement of the existing network in line with new facilities would provide a consistent standard of facilities across the network; • A good existing public transport network and plans for future investment offer opportunities for more active travel under first mile/last mile trips; • Opportunity to create accessible active travel network where users can travel comfortably, including when using a variety of adapted cycle/wheelchair/mobility scooters, which may be longer or wider than average, with suitable surfacing, benches and accessible toilets en route; • Embedding principles of good urban design into regeneration will encourage use of active travel.
Safety	• Perceived lack of safety with cycling with road traffic/traffic congestion/ high motor traffic speeds/ narrow lanes; • Perceived lack of safety when walking (e.g. alley ways/built up areas with lack of natural surveillance and/or lack of lighting etc); • Perceived lack of personal security; • Poor road surface quality with pot holes and debris can create hazards and discourage active travel.	• Cycle/safety training would provide people with more confidence to use the active travel network; • Creating an active travel network where all users, from 8 to 80 years old, feel, and are, safe, with segregated facilities, slower traffic, safer crossing points, good lighting, effective surveillance etc; • Everyone follows the recent updates to the Highway Code (Jan 2022), which includes a 'Hierarchy of Road Users' to place those most at risk in the event of a collision at the top, to give them more protection, and rules on giving way to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
LTN 1/20	• The requirements of LTN 1/20 can be challenging to accommodate in some environments.	• Striving for high quality infrastructure that has common standards will provide a consistent network that provides confidence in its use and encourages more active travel journeys.
Cycle Parking	• Lack of secure cycle parking provision.	• Improved provision of secure and convenient cycle parking provision at homes, workplaces and key destinations could help encourage more active travel journeys.

Challenges and Opportunities

Table 4 - Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in EEH region

Issue	Challenges	Opportunity
Outcomes		
Road congestion	• Growing road congestion in towns/cities with lots of short trips made by car.	• Mode shift to active travel could help alleviate congestion, with a significant opportunity to influence short trips.
Health	• Physical inactivity and obesity are worsening.	• Active travel allows people to easily connect with the outdoors and incorporate physical activity into their daily routine, which plays a big role in improving physical and mental health.
Air Quality/ the environment/ emissions / Net Zero target	• Poor air quality (around 80 Air Quality Management Areas within the region); • EEH accounts for approximately 10% of the UK's carbon emissions (road and rail) and emissions are rising; • Carbon emissions from transport are higher than the national average and increasing at a faster rate (rising 10% between 2012-2017, compared to 5% nationally. In 2017, the Heartland's transport emissions equated to 47% of the Heartland's total carbon dioxide emissions, compared with 37% nationally); • Delivering a zero-carbon transport system by 2050 will require significant effort through governance, legislation and public will.	• Mode shift to active travel could help reduce emissions; • Net Zero legislation will help to increase the support for active travel. • Local Authority 2019 Car and LGV emissions indicate that 15% of emissions are from journeys between 0 and 5 miles. There is therefore great potential to reduce this through active travel.
Economy	• Active travel is not seen as a key economic driver.	• Active travel can bring significant economic benefits, helping to create liveable places where people can shop and work locally; • Active travel is a cheap form of travel. • Active travel has leisure and tourism potential that could benefit the economy (there are tourist attractions across the region while Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty cover 10% of the region, including the Chilterns, North Wessex Downs and Cotswolds, which networks/routes could link with.

Image 29. Cyclist in Oxford (Source: Unsplash)

4. Developing the ambition for EEH

Having identified the key challenges and opportunities for the EEH region from information collated through the literature review and stakeholder workshop, the key 'drivers of change' for the region have been identified below that the active travel ambition will seek to address.

Key Drivers of Change:

1. Challenge of decarbonisation and the net zero agenda (regional ambition of 2040; national ambition of 2050)
2. Levels of physical inactivity and obesity are increasing
3. Areas of rural, social, and economic inequalities with limited connectivity
4. High levels of car use leading to road congestion and poor air quality
5. Forecast economic, population and housing growth leading to increases in travel demand.

4.1 Logic Mapping

The key drivers of change have been used in a logic mapping process to set the context and basis on which the ambition has been developed. The Tavistock Institute Definitions have been used for the logic mapping and applied as shown below.

Table 5. Logic Mapping 1

Context	Input	Output	Outcomes	Impact
Issues addressed and context in which it is taking place	What is invested, e.g. money, skills, people activities	What has been produced?	Short and medium term results	Long-term outcomes
Key drivers of change identified from literature review and stakeholder worshop	To be developed in Phase 2	The direct outputs from the investment	Outcomes (what the outputs will achieve)	Our long-term outcomes which feed into ambition

Developing the ambition for EEH

This approach has been used to create high-level logic mapping showing the key drivers of change alongside a corresponding long-term outcome. These have then been combined to create the EEH active travel ambition, as shown below.

Table 6. Logic mapping 2

Context (Driver of Change)	Impact	EEH Active Travel Ambition
Challenge of decarbonisation and the net zero agenda	Rapidly reduce carbon emissions, ensuring that EEH is on track for net zero ambition by 2040	To create an exemplar active travel network and culture that encourages mode shift for both shorter journeys and for the first and last mile of longer journeys. This will help to reduce our carbon emissions; improve air quality; support our residents' physical and mental health; improve safety for users; reduce inequalities; decrease congestion; enhance the built environment and support sustainable growth across the region.
Levels of physical inactivity and obesity are increasing	Create thriving communities across the region with improved levels of physical activity, health and wellbeing	
Areas of rural, social and economic inequalities with limited connectivity	Provide well-connected communities that facilitate safe and equal access to all	
High levels of car use leading to road congestion and poor air quality	Encourage modal shift away from car use to reduce congestion and ensure clean air across the region	
Forecast economic, population and housing growth leading to increases in travel demand	Support sustainable growth through high levels of active travel within existing and new developments	

Developing the ambition for EEH

4.2 Key Phrases

Alongside the logic mapping, a word cloud was used to identify key phrases for inclusion and emphasis within the ambition as shown below.

Image 30 - Ambition Word Cloud

Image 31- Milton Keynes Walking and Cycling

5. The ambition

As outlined in the "Developing the ambition for EEH" section, EEH's active travel ambition is:

"To create an exemplar active travel network and culture that encourages mode shift for both shorter journeys and for the first and last mile of longer journeys.

This will help to reduce our carbon emissions; improve air quality; support our residents' physical and mental health; improve safety for users; reduce inequalities; decrease congestion; enhance the built environment and support sustainable growth across the region."

This section considers the ambition in further detail, including:

- Level of aspiration and timescales;
- Levels of service required; and
- Making the ambition relevant to the different places in the Heartland.

Level of aspiration and timescales

EEH's aim is to be net zero by 2040. As such, as per the outcomes identified in the "Developing the ambition for EEH" section, by 2040, EEH's active travel ambition will help EEH to:

- Have rapidly reduced carbon emissions towards achieving net zero;
- Have thriving communities across the region with improved levels of physical activity, health, and wellbeing;
- Have well-connected communities that facilitate safe and equal access for all;
- Have improved links and connectivity with travel interchanges thus encouraging active travel for first/last mile journeys;
- Have encouraged modal shift away from car use to reduce congestion and ensure clean air across the region; and
- Have supported sustainable growth through high levels of active travel within existing and new developments.

The ambition

To achieve this, EEH has identified the following initial draft short (2022-2025), medium (2025-2030), and long-term (2030-2040) objectives and associated activities. Phase two will develop this further and in more detail:

Short-Term (2022-2025)

Outcome: Increase proportion of short, leisure and first mile/last mile journeys made by active travel.

Activities:

- Further research to understand the key drivers of travel behaviours and factors that matter across the region (recognising there are different places and personas);
- Further research to understand active travel demand/origins/destinations (i.e. where people need or want to get to/from, including for leisure cycling) to inform where the gaps are in existing networks (at a strategic level);
- Identify gaps in active travel policy to ensure active travel is a priority issue, thus encouraging behavioural change.
- Identify key issues that need to be addressed to enable the identification and delivery of active travel infrastructure. This could include making the case for investment, application of design standards and baselining active travel data;
- Work with partners to identify regionally significant opportunities for further study or pilot projects;
- Identify "core" active travel network and facilities.

Medium-Term (2025 - 2030)

Outcome: Further increase proportion of short, leisure and first mile/last mile journeys made by active travel.

Activities:

- Monitor, evaluate and learn lessons from short-term activities and outcomes to:
  - enable wider implementation of infrastructure, culture, policy and behavioural change;
  - develop towards progressively more ambitious schemes;
  - assist in ramping up implementation across all areas;
- Develop a prioritisation framework/programme for implementation based on need (e.g. number of users or need);
- Facilitate installation of pilot schemes and learning from/refining them.

Long-Term (2030 - 2040)

Outcome: Further increase proportion of short, leisure and first mile/last mile journeys made by active travel.

Activities:

- Continue to implement infrastructure, culture, policy and behavioural change across the region to fill in the gaps and create a network that can be used by anyone from 8 to 80 years old;
- Facilitate wider application of pilot schemes.

The ambition

Levels of Service Required

An effective active travel ambition will drive the uptake of active travel in the region. In this section, "levels of service" refers to the performance of active travel provision in the region in terms of what matters to the users to help achieve this ambition. It is useful to define the required levels of service for various criteria as objectives for the ambition and as a measure of success. As such, EEH has identified the levels of service required for different criteria in the table below. This will be developed further in phase two.

Table 7. Levels of Service Required

Criteria	Levels of service required
Infrastructure, networks and facilities	• An active travel network is created that provides direct routes, which are quick and easy to use by all from 8-80 year olds; • An active travel network is created that adheres to LTN 1/20 standards or better where possible, including above minimum widths, and segregation from motor vehicles, and between pedestrians and cyclists, where appropriate and in line with demand; • Active travel users have plenty of space and are prioritised over motor vehicles. • An active travel network is created that connects/improves connections to the National Cycle Network
Journey purposes and linked journeys	• People regularly choose active travel for short journey purposes for which a larger vehicle would not be required, or as first mile/last mile trips to reach public transport for longer journeys as part of an integrated transport system.
Motivation, encouragement and support	• People are motivated and encouraged to use active travel as the easy and natural choice for short and first mile/last mile journeys (recognising that motivation will vary between different places and personas within the region); • Support on active travel is readily accessible to everyone to help them make more journeys by active travel.
Promotion and information provision	• Active travel is promoted as a fun, rewarding and sensible mode choice, while the benefits of active travel to individuals are well promoted and clear to all; • Information that is up to date, relevant, and easy to understand, is readily available and accessible for everyone regarding how to use active travel for journeys, including route planning. • Easy to understand signage is available to guide people whilst on their journey, and also at key origin points such as bus and rail stations.
Directness	• Active travel is afforded the highest priority within the modal hierarchy and network planning; • Active travel journeys are the most direct route in terms of modal hierarchy and are as direct as possible both on existing and planned/future networks/developments.

The ambition

Table 7. Levels of Service Required

Criteria	Levels of service required
Inclusivity and accessibility	• All people, from 8-80 years old, from from all backgrounds, and regardless of physical and mental disabilities, feel able to make journeys by active travel; • There is ample space for active travel users to travel comfortably, including when using a variety of adapted cycle/wheelchair/mobility scooters, which may be longer or wider than average; • Parking is spacious and secure, so that a variety of adapted cycle/wheelchair/mobility scooters can safely and easily use them.
New mobility, innovation and digital	• The latest forms of digital technology, including Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS), are available and easy to use for everybody, so that active travel is viable and attractive to all.
Improving public realm and neighbourhoods (e.g. 15-minute neighbourhoods)	• Liveable streets are created, where the look and feel of public spaces is improved, with shelter and places to sit and rest, making the public realm an attractive place to be for a variety of people; • Active travel users are prioritised via the provision of sufficient space with lack of barriers, including footways/cycleways free of parked cars and other obstacles, with high quality, smooth surfaces, making it easier, safer and more convenient to get around by active travel; • Everyone can access services within a short distance via active travel in their neighbourhood thus reducing motorised trips.
Safety	• People are physically safe, and importantly also feel safe, making journeys by active travel; • Routes are designed for 8-80 year olds, adhering to LTN 1/20 standards or better, and prioritise people over motor vehicles. A partnership approach (Local Authority, EEH and DfT) will be taken where there are physical or practical barriers to the application of LTN 1/20; • This means people are separated from fast flowing motor traffic, have plenty of space, and routes are overlooked and lit where appropriate for personal safety. • Everyone follows the recent updates to the Highway Code (Jan 2022), which includes a 'Hierarchy of Road Users' to place those most at risk in the event of a collision at the top, to give them more protection, and rules on giving way to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Visual representation of the ambition

The images over the next three pages are high level visual representations of key elements of the ambition, represented in the three different place contexts (larger town/city, market town and rural locations). Whilst these visuals are illustrative, the intention is that they help provide a glimpse of the future of active travel in the Heartland.

5.1 Larger Town/ City

The Heartland's larger towns and cities are ideal locations for developing active travel infrastructure to enable more of the shorter intra urban trips currently being made by private car, to be switched to active modes. This visual captures some of the key elements of the active travel ambition we would expect to see being delivered, including:

- Mobility hubs (including facilities for bike and e-bike hire, cycle parking and repair facilities);
- High quality cycle parking and other infrastructure (including mobility hubs) close to rail and bus interchanges to support first mile / last mile trips;
- High quality cycle and crossing infrastructure, segregated from traffic and pedestrians, delivered to LTN 1/20 standards facilitating greater numbers of cycling trips, including cargo bikes;
- Well-designed places and public realm schemes in the City Centre as well as comfortable pedestrian facilities and crossings on all roads, which meet inclusive and accessible design standards;
- Safe use of e-scooters and other new forms of micro-mobility.

Image 32. Larger Town / City

5.2 Market Towns

The Heartland has many market towns, often with historic cores that have busy, narrow (often one-way) streets, competing kerbside uses and space constraints. The exception is in areas of growth, usually on the edge of market towns, where space is less of a premium. Some of the key features of the ambition we would expect to see in market towns are:

- Smaller mobility hubs and high quality cycle parking at stations and other interchanges to promote both first mile / last mile trips and trips made wholly by active modes, including bike/e-bike hire and travel information;
- Cycle lanes and associated infrastructure are delivered to LTN1/20 standards, with a partnership approach (Local Authority, EEH and DfT) being taken where there are physical or practical barriers to application of LTN1/20 to encourage more everyday cycle trips within market towns;
- Well-designed accessible places and public realm schemes in town centres and shopping streets, including wider pavements, balancing the needs of vehicle access with pedestrians;

Image 33. Market Town

5.3 Rural Areas

Much of the Heartland is rural in nature and communities are often relatively poorly connected and dependent upon the private car for everyday trips. New technologies, changing travel demands and increasing pressure on the highway network are enabling new opportunities and emphasis on active travel for rural communities. Some of the key features of the ambition for rural areas are:

- Reduce traffic volumes and existing traffic speeds in villages and small towns, especially where space constraints mean new cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is difficult to introduce;
- Introduce public realm and placemaking schemes in villages where possible to encourage more everyday walking;
- Where possible, consider the introduction of new pavement infrastructure, road crossing infrastructure and appropriate cycle facilities, recognising that well designed and connected traffic free routes are likely to be more appropriate in rural areas. Ensure these local traffic free routes connect with longer distance regional / national active travel networks and take into account the relevant design guidance including LTN 1/20;
- Use the least restrictive access option for rural routes, including by removing stiles and barriers where appropriate, in line with the British Standard for gaps, gates and stiles (BS 5709:2018);
- Ensure provision of cycle parking at suitable locations in rural areas to encourage short and first/last mile trips, including at mobility hubs, village/town centres, and key shopping/ leisure destinations.

Image 34. Rural Areas

Image 35. Rushmere Country Park

6. How we will measure success

This section sets out how progress can be monitored towards achieving the long-term outcomes of the ambition. The type of data collected includes: surveys, traffic counts and air quality monitoring. **Table 8** below sets out how we can measure success against each outcome. These are pan-regional measures which are applicable to measure success in all contexts and are based on our wide-ranging literature review and workshop findings. It should be noted that the measures outlined below, if implemented, would require a partnership approach, with EEH working with local authorities, as some measures involve data that local authorities would collate and hold.

Table 8. Measurement of success

Element of Ambition		Measures
Context (Drivers of Change)	Impact (Long Term outcome)	
Challenge of decarbonisation and the net zero agenda	Rapidly reduce carbon emissions, ensuring that EEH is on track for net zero ambition by 2040	• DfT motor vehicle and cycle traffic statistics; • Local walk and cycle counts.
Levels of physical inactivity and obesity are increasing	Create thriving communities across the region with improved levels of physical activity, health and wellbeing	• Surveys on wellbeing which measure attribution to changes in active travel; • Local walk and cycle counts; • Activity surveys e.g. Sport England's Active Lives Survey.
Areas of rural, social and economic inequalities with limited connectivity	Provide well-connected communities that facilitate equal access for all	• Surveys to understand whether take-up of active travel is evenly balanced across all demographics in the region, and what barriers different groups face in taking them up; • NHT Public Satisfaction Survey (cycle routes/lanes, pavements, local rights of way network, safety on roads); • Length of new cycling infrastructure that adheres to LTN 1/20; • Length of 20mph/ low traffic neighbourhoods.
High levels of car use leading to road congestion and poor air quality	Encourage modal shift away from car use to reduce congestion and ensure clean air across the region	• DfT motor vehicle and cycle traffic statistics; • Local air quality monitoring; • Local walk and cycle counts.

How we will measure success

Table 8. Measurement of success

Element of Ambition		Measures
Forecast economic, population and housing growth leading to increases in travel demand	Support sustainable growth through high levels of active travel within existing and new developments	• Monitoring presence of active travel infrastructure in new developments e.g., cycle parking or pedestrian access; • Travel Plan Surveys on take-up of active travel where new residential developments have come forward; • Local walk and cycle counts.

Image 36. St.Albans City Station

7. Next steps

This phase one report sets out a high-level ambition for active travel in England's Economic Heartland and is the first phase in developing a full active travel strategy for the region. The ambition is based upon a review of European, national, regional and local policy, and the views of active travel officers across the region. It tackles the key drivers of change including decarbonisation, health, inequality and economic growth, and paves the way for further development in phase two.

The details of phase two will be agreed with the steering group in due course; it will be an opportunity to define in more detail what the region should be aiming to achieve in terms of excellency in active travel, as well as, critically, what needs to happen to achieve it.

Image 37. Segregated cycle track and pedestrian crossing