



Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy – Annual Report Year 1: 2023/2024



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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the first annual report for the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy. It sets out details of the progress made during April 2023 to March 2024 against the actions and recommendations in the strategy.

This report sets out work that has been undertaken by Fenland District Council and others during 2023/2024 to provide an overall picture of progress to improve walking and cycling across the district.

For full details of the Strategy and Action Plan please visit: [Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy - Fenland District Council](#)

Schemes and Projects

Work includes improvements to highways and roads which can have a positive effect on the walking and cycling environment, such as slowing traffic, improving driver awareness, and removing inappropriate car parking. Schemes have been progressed and delivered by a variety of partners and stakeholders including Fenland District Council (FDC) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC).

The March Area Transport Strategy (MATS) project has been ongoing since 2017 with the aim to identify and deliver transport interventions to address existing capacity and safety problems whilst mitigating for future growth in the demand from transport resulting from increases in housing and employment opportunities. Interventions to improve walking and cycling delivered through this project in 2023/2024 include option studies for paths and crossings, preliminary designs for junction improvements and delivery of relining and new wayfinding signage.

Feasibility studies and scoping studies have been undertaken through other funding project. These include surfacing and lighting improvements to existing routes, traffic calming and crossing improvements. Local Highway Improvement Schemes have also been approved for Guyhirn, Elm, Wimblington, Doddington, Gorefield and Tydd St Giles through the Parish Councils.

Audits have been undertaken in Elm and Wisbech St Mary to identify missing sections of path or disconnected walking and cycling links. This included a review of dropped kerb provision in each village. The findings of these audits will be discussed with the relevant Parish Councils to ensure local knowledge and resident need informs the resulting scheme recommendations. These recommendations will be added strategy to enable funding for the delivery of this work to be explored. Full details of the audits can be found here: [Village Audit Footpath Report Audit 2024 \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

A series of 10 mini maps to promote routes around Fenland were produced by Fenland District Council on behalf of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and funded by East Midlands Railway (EMR), Community Rail Network (CRN) and Hereward CRP. These are currently available online here [Walking & Cycling Maps | Hereward Community Rail Partnership \(herewardcrp.org\)](#)

Funding

The development of a district network of walking and cycling routes set out in the strategy is a purposefully ambitious long-term aim. This requires significant funding and opportunities to deliver infrastructure schemes. Funding allocations for 2023/2024 and other funding that has been explored during the same period include the Integrated Transport Block, Local Highways Initiative (LHI) Fund, Active Travel Fund and S106 Developer Funding. It is also noted that, in response to the ongoing issues and challenges caused by potholes, the CPCA has allocated additional funding for road patching and resurfacing across Cambridgeshire.

Engagement

An online survey was set up in June 2023 to capture the public's views and experiences of walking, cycling and mobility aid use in Fenland. A total of 476 responses were received between June 2023 to March 2024. These results can be viewed here: [Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Results 2023-24 \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

Fenland District Council's Transport Team also met with a wide range of organisations to discuss issues, raise awareness and seek support for walking and cycling improvements in Fenland. This included Active Travel England, Sustrans and CamCycle.

During 2023 two cycle challenges were run by Love to Ride, an online cycling platform. Fenland District Council supported these promotions by sharing leaflets, posters and social media posts to encourage residents and businesses in Fenland to take part. Results of the challenges can be viewed on the Fenland Transport and Access Group webpage: [Fenland Transport and Access Group - Fenland District Council](#)

Strategies

The Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy considers and incorporates key priorities across a range of existing strategies that are relevant to Fenland, particularly those that support the needs and aspirations of the rural district. During 2023/2024 the CPCA Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and the CCC Active Travel Toolkit were updated or published. These both align to the purposes of the Fenland Strategy. Full details can be viewed on the following links: [CPCA-LTCP-Strategic-Document.pdf \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](#) and [Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Statistics

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) collects, analyses, and disseminates official statistics related to the UK's economy, society and population. This is helpful to create a picture of how people live, including the way people travel. This data provides us a valuable snapshot of how far people in Fenland travel for work (as of 2021) and how this relates to their method of transport.

Understanding current travel trends and transport choices is needed in order to monitor levels of active travel and establish the impact of walking and cycling improvements on people's travel choices. Current data sources that can be considered to track changes in travel behaviour have been set out to establish a baseline for walking and cycling that can be used to track changes in active travel uptake.

Conclusion

This report shows that significant progress has been made with scheme delivery and the audit work set out in the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy.

The volume of responses and quality of feedback received through the survey work has been excellent and continues to develop our strong evidence base, helping us make a strong case for funding further schemes and improvements. This is excellent news for Fenland and a really good start for the development of a cohesive, connected and accessible walking and cycling network.

The successful first year following the adoption of the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy is certainly very welcome. Yet, there is still much more that needs to be done. We will work to ensure this momentum is carried forward into the coming years as we continue to deliver the strategy action plan, progress schemes to improve the network and seek out funding opportunity for more. We will continue our engagement with partners and to emphasise the fundamental need to address the walking and cycling infrastructure deficit that remains across the Fenland district.

2. Introduction

This is the first annual report for the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy. It sets out details of the progress made during April 2023 to March 2024 against the actions and recommendations in the strategy.

Encouraging more walking and cycling has long been recognised as key to improving physical and mental health and to reducing carbon emissions to defend against climate change. However, Fenland has received limited funding for infrastructure provision to date and is therefore lacking a consistent walking and cycling network to build upon. Therefore, significant time and investment is needed to create a good quality network of routes enabling walking and cycling to all key locations in each town.

To create a network and increase the take up of active travel the strategy has set out purposefully ambitious actions and recommendations to achieve the strategy aim:

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

And deliver the following objectives:

- **Place - Create the best conditions and infrastructure for walking, cycling and mobility aid use across Fenland particularly for access to places of education, employment, health care and essential services.**
- **People - Ensure everyone (all ages and abilities) has access to good quality routes that feel safe, giving them confidence to make walking and cycling their first choice for local journeys.**
- **Promotion - Aid and encourage opportunities for access and mobility through a range of methods that demonstrate freedom, health and wellbeing through local travel.**

The volume of work needed to achieve this is significant. It is therefore not expected that Fenland District Council will deliver this work alone. Other Local Authorities, Developers and Transport Based Organisations are also able to implement schemes or activities directly.

This report sets out work that has been undertaken by Fenland District Council and others during 2023/2024 to provide an overall picture of progress to improve walking and cycling across the district.

3. Schemes and Project Delivery

This section sets out the progress on the delivery of infrastructure schemes and projects that support and encourage walking and cycling. This includes works to highways and roads which can have a positive effect on the walking and cycling environment, such as slowing traffic, improving driver awareness, and removing inappropriate car parking. This work has been undertaken by a variety of partners and stakeholders including Fenland District Council (FDC) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC).

3.1 Infrastructure Schemes

3.1.1 March Area Transport Strategy (MATS):

MATS project has been ongoing since 2017 with the aim to identify (and deliver) potential transport interventions to address existing capacity and safety problems whilst mitigating for future growth in the demand from transport resulting from increases in housing and employment opportunities. This includes interventions to improve walking and cycling.

MATS work undertaken by CCC during 2023/2024 relating to walking and cycling includes:

- Completion of relining and marking schemes including parking restrictions, shared use paths and cycle paths. Including one zebra crossing and hatching outside March Fire Station.
- Installation of improved town wide wayfinding signage (blue signs) highlighting routes to the town centre, Neale Wade Academy and March Railway Station. Additional NCN 63 route signage at West End and to/from March Railway Station.
- Preliminary design for crossing improvements at Elwyn Road/High Street junction, Dartford Road (Lidl), Dartford Road/Westwood Avenue junction, Wisbech Road/Elliot Road junction, Wisbech Road pelican upgrade.
- Option studies for crossing improvements at Market Place/High Street junction, High Street opposite Chapel Street, Station Road/Creek Road junction, Cavalry Drive at rear entrance to Neale Wade, County Road near to All Saints School, Burrowmoor Road near to Burrowmoor School.
- Option study for missing footpath on High Street at Chapel Street shared use path entrance.
- Option study for shared use path along Wisbech Road.

3.1.2 Other schemes (FDC, CCC and Town Council):

- Feasibility Studies:
 - NCN63 (Whittlesey to Shanks Millenium Bridge) – surface, lighting and safety improvements. This project is being delivered by FDC and is due to complete in July 2024.
 - NCN63 (March, Whitemoor Nature Reserve to Guyhirn, via Rings End Nature Reserve) – surface improvements for active travel. This project is being delivered by CCC.
 - A605 Cemetery Road roundabout, Whittlesey – pedestrian/cycle crossing improvements. Completed June 2023.
 - Doddington to March – traffic calming, crossing improvements, shared use path, solar studs. This is a LCWIP scheme currently in development by CCC.
- Scoping Studies (Completed January 2023):
 - Chatteris missing footpaths (East Park Street, Church Lane, Doddington Road).
 - Wisbech missing footpath (Cromwell Road).

- Approved Local Highway Improvement Schemes July 2023 (Town & Parish Council):
 - Guyhirn, High Road - traffic calming and 30mph extension.
 - Elm, Main Road - traffic calming.
 - Wimblington, Doddington Road – road markings (children crossing).
 - Gorefield, High Road (near Gorefield Primary School) – parking restrictions.
 - Doddington, Benwick Road, – footpath widening.
 - Tydd St Giles, High Broadgate and Broad Drove East – installation of dropped kerb crossings.

3.2 Village Audits 2023/2024

A series of audits are recommended in the strategy to identify missing sections of path or disconnected route links in villages around Fenland. The first of these audits were completed in March 2024 and focussed on the largest villages by population, namely Elm and Wisbech St Mary.

In addition to identifying missing paths, the audits also included a review of dropped kerb provision in each village. The locations where dropped kerbs are missing have been mapped and set out into a scheme package.

The findings of the 2023/2024 audits will be discussed with the relevant Parish Councils during 2024/2025 to ensure local knowledge and resident need informs scheme recommendations for new or extended footpaths identified in the audit. This will ensure that recommendations are suitable for those they aim to help and are supported by the local community. Schemes identified through this exercise will be added to the strategy recommendations along with locations requiring dropped kerbs.

The full audit report can be viewed here: [Village Audit Footpath Report Audit 2024 \(fenland.gov.uk\)](https://fenland.gov.uk/village-audit-footpath-report-audit-2024)

3.3 Walking and Cycling Resources

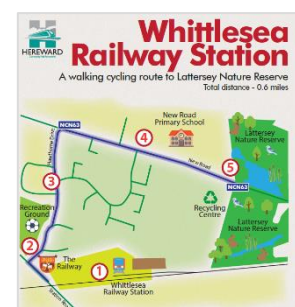
3.3.1 Manea Walking and Cycling Map

The Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP) was awarded funding from East Midlands Rail (EMR) and Community Rail Network (CRN) to develop a walking and cycling map for Manea. This map supports walking, cycling and multi-modal travel linked with Manea Railway Station.

3.3.2 10 mini maps for routes around Fenland

As part of the project to deliver the Manea Walking and Cycling Map, a series of 10 mini maps for routes around Fenland was also produced. This work was undertaken by Fenland District Council on behalf of the Hereward CRP and funded by EMR, CRN and Hereward CRP.

The mini maps and the walking and cycling maps for all four Fenland towns and Manea can be found at [Walking & Cycling Maps | Hereward Community Rail Partnership \(herewardcrp.org\)](https://www.herewardcrp.org/walking-cycling-maps)



4. Funding

The development of a district network of walking and cycling routes set out in the strategy is a purposefully ambitious long-term aim. This requires significant funding and opportunities to deliver infrastructure schemes. Continuous effort to secure available funding from all sources is essential to the success of this aim. Opportunities to apply, or bid, for funding are available annually from some funding streams, while others are available on a more ad-hoc, opportunistic basis. Examples of funding allocations for 2023/2024 and other funding that has been explored during the same period is set out in this section.

4.1 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Highway Maintenance Budget

Potholes and poor-quality surfaces are one of the most mentioned issues for walking, cycling and mobility aid access.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has allocated an additional £4.6 million to CCC for additional resurfacing and other road maintenance in the county. This funding has been unlocked from the Government's Network North Plan, made possible by reallocated HS2 funding.

From this additional funding £2.1mil has been added to CCCs planned road patching and surfacing programme for Cambridgeshire (including Fenland). £400k of the fund has been allocated to a number of parishes, including March, Wimblington and Doddington, to improve highway drainage to reduce flooding and remove surface water from the roads.

Other planned maintenance for Fenland included footway resurfacing at London Road and Wenny Estate, Chatteris, Fen Close and Seventh Avenue, Wisbech, Murrow Bank, Murrow and High Road Guyhirn. Carriageway resurfacing was also included for Freedom Bridge, Wisbech and Fenland Way, Chatteris. ¹

4.2 Integrated Transport Block Funding

The Integrated Transport Block (ITB) is a capital grant awarded to CPCA from the Department of Transport (DfT). The CPCA then passes the grant to CCC and Peterborough City Council to spend in their role as the Local Highway Authorities.

Each financial year CCC sets out how the ITB will be allocated, including schemes that will be taken forward with the funding. The scheme details for 2023/24 (year 1) and proposals for 2024/25 (year 2) can be found here:

- 2023/24 [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)
- 2024/25 [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

4.3 Local Highway Improvement initiative

The Local Highway Improvement (LHI) initiative provides the opportunity for local community groups, including Parish and Town Councils to promote local highway improvements that would not normally be prioritised or funded by CCC.

CCC provides around £820,000 per annum for these schemes across the county which is allocated proportionately across each district. For 2023/2024 the budget for Fenland was £131,200.

¹ Source: [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Details of schemes currently in progress through this initiative can be found here: [Local Highway Improvement Delivery Programme - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

4.4 Active Travel Fund

The Active Travel Fund has been provided in 4 tranches since 2020, with tranche 4 extended into 2023 to 2024. The fund supports local transport authorities with developing and constructing walking and cycling facilities.

Walking and cycling schemes for Fenland have been included in each Active Travel Fund bid which has enabled the development of walking and cycling maps for each Fenland town and funded the NCN63 feasibility study currently underway.

Love to Ride promotion in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has also been funded through the Active Travel Fund. Details of this work can be found in chapter 5.3.

4.5 Section 106 Developer Funding

Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, contributions can be sought from developers to cover the costs of providing community and social infrastructure that arises due to new development. This can include improvements to, or creation of new, walking and cycling infrastructure.

FDC Transport Officers review large planning applications submitted to the authority and provide consultation responses requesting these contributions where appropriate. These requests are linked to current and future walking and cycling need and existing scheme recommendations within the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy to enable schemes to come forward.

5. Engagement and Communication

5.1 Walking, cycling and mobility aid use survey

An online survey was set up in June 2023 with questions about walking, cycling and mobility aid use. This aims to capture the public's views and experiences of walking, cycling and mobility aid use in Fenland. The responses continue to be gathered on an ongoing basis to build user data and inform the recommendations and schemes progressed in the strategy.

A total of 476 responses were received between June 2023 to March 2024, although some have not been included in the survey report as they were either incomplete or the respondents had no local connection to Fenland.

370 respondents live, work, attend education or have a connection to Fenland. Of these, 335 can ride a bike, 287 can walk up to 5km or more and 349 have access to a car. 24 respondents use a mobility aid, although 60 respondents told us what they felt would improve travel by mobility scooter or wheelchair for local journeys.

More people travelled by foot or bicycle for leisure or pleasure compared to travelling for other purposes such as to work or to access education. Poor surfaces were one of the main barriers to walking and cycling more, alongside missing paths, concerns over safety (conflict with traffic/traffic volumes/traffic speeds) and the need for more dropped kerbs and crossing points. Surfaces, path widths and dropped kerbs was cited as main barrier for mobility aid users.

The full report of survey responses can be viewed here [Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Results 2023-24 \(fenland.gov.uk\)](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/walking-cycling-and-mobility-aid-results-2023-24)

5.2 Events & stakeholder engagement

Promotional business cards to promote the walking, cycling and mobility aid use survey were distributed to event attendees at March Railway Station Coffee Morning, Chatteris Midsummer Festival and Manea Gala. These cards and promotional posters were also shared or displayed at key locations in Fenland such as shops, community sites and other railway stations.

Fenland District Council's Transport Team also met with a wide range of organisations to discuss issues, raise awareness and seek support for walking and cycling improvements in Fenland. These organisations include:

- Active Travel England, an executive agency set up by the Government as an inspectorate and funding body for walking and cycling.
- Sustrans, a UK based walking and cycling charity responsible for the National Cycling Network.
- CamCycle, a charity aiming for safer, better and more cycling in the Cambridge area.
- Anglian Water, the water company for the East of England proposing a new reservoir in the Fens. These proposals include potential walking and cycling opportunities that will be important for the area.

5.3 Love to Ride

Love to Ride is an online platform that supports and encourages more people to cycle. During 2023 two cycle challenges were run by Love to Ride, Cycle September and Winter Wheelers (December). Fenland District Council supported these promotions by sharing

leaflets, posters and social media posts to encourage residents and businesses in Fenland to take part.

In total Fenland riders logged 7,086 cycling miles with a saving of over 60kg CO2 and 400+ car trips taken off the road during the two months of promotion. Data from both challenges can be found on the Fenland Transport and Access Group webpage: [Fenland Transport and Access Group - Fenland District Council](#)

6. Strategy Updates

The Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy considers and incorporates key priorities across a range of existing strategies that are relevant to Fenland, particularly those that support the needs and aspirations of the rural district. This section sets out strategy updates and emerging strategies that have since been published and that align to the purposes of the Fenland Strategy.

6.1 Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)

The LTCP was approved in November 2023 and is the CPCA's long-term strategy for transport in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It aims to make transport better, faster, greener, and more accessible for everyone including better buses, more train services less pollution and carbon emissions, and helping more people to cycle and walk. This document replaces the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan (LTP) published in 2020.

[CPCA-LTCP-Strategic-Document.pdf \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

6.2 Active Travel Toolkit

Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments was adopted by CCC on 5th March 2024. The toolkit aims to provide planning authorities, County Council and developers with comprehensive guidance through the planning process, ensure the prioritisation of active travel in new developments.

[Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

6.3 Fenland Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy Summary

To support and promote the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy FDC has developed a Summary document as an engagement tool outlining the key points and purpose of the strategy. This document will be shared with partners and funding decision makers to raise the profile of the strategy and encourage investment in walking and cycling improvements in Fenland.

Link to be added.

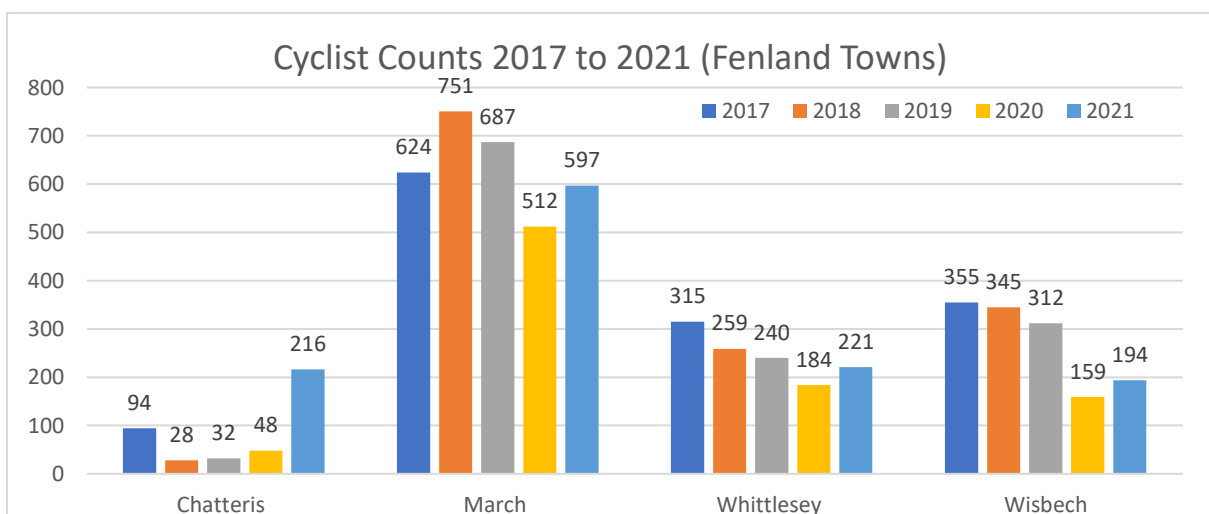
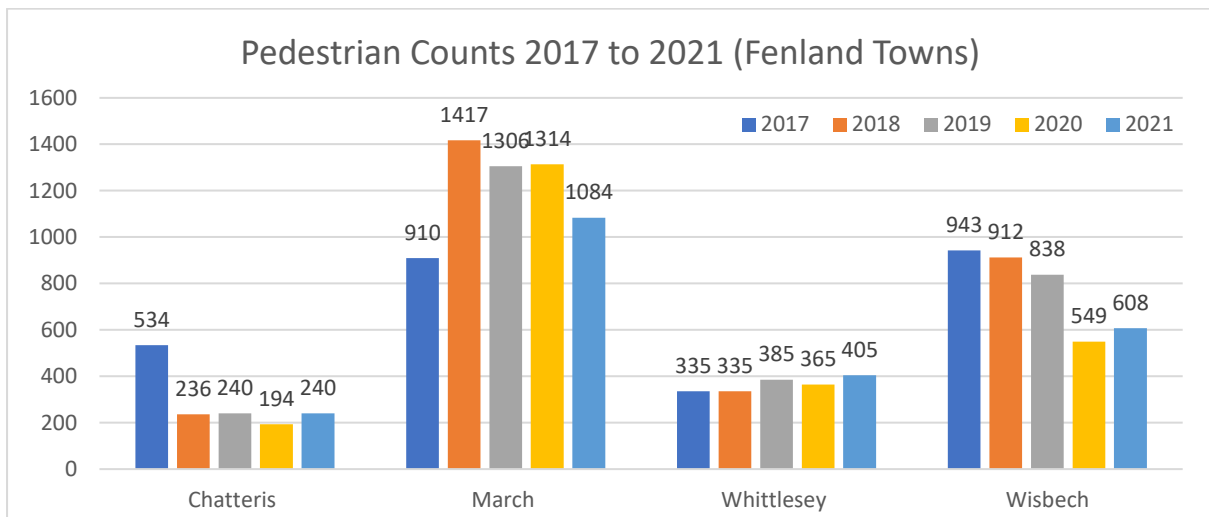
7. Walking and Cycling Statistics

Understanding current travel trends and transport choices is needed in order to monitor levels of active travel and establish the impact of walking and cycling improvements on peoples travel choices. This section sets out current data sources that can be considered to track changes in travel behaviour.

7.1 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Annual traffic counts

CCC undertake annual traffic surveys every October which monitor the number of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle movements in locations across the county. This includes Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech in Fenland. This data is set out into a Traffic Monitoring Report which presents the weekday count data as two-way 12-hour flows (7am to 7pm). The purpose of this is to monitor long term trends.

The tables below show the pedestrian and cycle volumes from this data prior to the adoption of the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy. This provides us with a baseline of information relating to active travel trends which can help us to monitor changes in active travel uptake as a result of increased investment and the delivery of improvements set out in the strategy.



To view the CCC Traffic Monitoring Report 2021 and the full data visit <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/road-traffic-data>

It is worth noting from this data, that the count points are mostly on the routes into and out of each town. Activity in between the count sites, which in many instances is where more walking and cycling is likely to take place, has not been included.

Travel trends during 2020 and 2021 were also greatly affected by the Covid 19 Pandemic and resulting lockdown. Due to the two years of restrictions during this period, longer term changes to behaviour (working from home, mode choice, reduced travel) may continue to be seen for many years to come. The data therefore only provides a snapshot of walking and cycling activity and caution is advised when interpreting observed changes in activity from one year to the next.

7.2 Census data 2021

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) collects, analyses, and disseminates official statistics related to the UK's economy, society and population. This is helpful to create a picture of how people live, including the way people travel.

Every 10 years, over the course of a single day, the ONS completes a count of all people and households in England and Wales. This census asks the same core questions of every respondent at the same time, this provides an overview or snapshot of activity and behaviour trends for certain topics. It also makes it possible to compare local data with other parts of the country.

The ONS census data is an important tool to help us show disparities between Fenland and other areas in relation to educational attainment and access to employment. We often use this information to evidence issues of deprivation in Fenland caused by lack of infrastructure and restricted opportunities due to lack of investment, especially compared to other areas of Cambridgeshire.

This census data provides us a valuable snapshot of how far people in Fenland travel for work (as of 2021) and how this relates to their method of transport:

37,640 people in Fenland travel to their place of work
40% travel less than 10km - 19% travel less than 2km
10% travel by foot
4% travel by bicycle
30% travel less than 10km private motor vehicle

This data shows us that there are significant number of people who live within walking or cycling distance of their place of work. However, only a relatively small percentage of people chose these methods as their means to commute.

This information is a useful tool to provide a snapshot view of peoples travel habits. This data is though, only collected every 10 years and therefore does not provide a constant source of information. The date of last consensus was also during the Covid 19 pandemic and therefore affected by the related restrictions (working from home, mode choice, reduced

travel). Additional or alternative survey work will therefore be needed to establish changes to the travel behaviours demonstrated in the census data.

8. Conclusion

This report shows that significant progress has been made with scheme delivery and the audit work set out in the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy. The volume of responses and quality of feedback received through the survey work has been excellent and continues to develop our strong evidence base, helping us make a strong case for funding further schemes and improvements. This is excellent news for Fenland and a really good start for the development of a cohesive, connected and accessible walking and cycling network.

A number of organisations, locally and nationally, are stepping up efforts to support, enable and encourage active travel. This is demonstrated through the development and adoption of the CCC Active Travel Strategy and the CPCA Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, and investment from the Local Integrated Transport Block and Local Highway Improvement initiative. Funding is being secured for small clusters of schemes, all of which will help improve connectivity and enable more people to choose active travel.

The responses gathered in the surveys and engagement work undertaken this year have shown us that the schemes and recommendations set out in the strategy clearly reflects people's needs and wishes. The issues and concerns raised will continue to help us highlight priorities, support funding applications, and encourage action in Fenland.

The successful first year following the adoption of the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy is certainly very welcome. Yet, there is still much more that needs to be done. We will work to ensure this momentum is carried forward into the coming years as we continue to deliver the strategy action plan, progress schemes to improve the network and seek out funding opportunity for more. We will continue our engagement with partners and to emphasise the fundamental need to address the walking and cycling infrastructure deficit that remains across the Fenland district.