

Solihull Cycling Strategy 2010 – 2015

Executive Summary

There are few everyday activities, which have the potential to genuinely improve society and change the lives of individuals. Cycling is one of them. Whether it is through easing congestion, tackling traffic emissions or improving health, cycling can play a significant role in tackling some of society's biggest problems. It is clear that cycling is moving up the agenda both locally and nationally, as it is seen as a means to tackle larger social issues, including climate change and public health.

In 2003 the Council produced its second Cycling Strategy. This aimed to provide for the needs of cyclist's and make cycling a safer more attractive mode of transport for all. Since then the authority has worked with local cyclists to provide an expanding network of recommended cycle routes and infrastructure as shown in the Borough Cycling Map and Guide (2007).

With the creation of the National Cycling Strategy Body, Cycling England (2005) and the subsequent publications on the importance of cycling in relation to personal health, congestion and climate change, it has been necessary to review and update our own Strategy.

The Cycling Strategy forms part of the overall transport strategy for Solihull as set out in the second Local Transport Plan for 2006-2011 (LTP2) and elaborates the outline strategy for cycling contained within the LTP2. It sets the context within both national and local policy, as well as reviewing recent progress on increasing cycling and improving cycling facilities. Finally, it creates a framework for the implementation of measures to encourage cycling and to provide cycling infrastructure throughout Solihull. There will also be an opportunity in the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for 2011 – 2016 to outline proposals to develop our cycling strategy into the next decade. The Department for Transport in their guidance for LTP3 wishes to promote initiatives that can reduce congestion, improve local environments and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles

In order to create an effective framework that can provide a basis for action, the Cycle Strategy sets out policies on how implementation should be approached, within what

programmes and as part of which delivery responsibilities. These policies look at implementing green sustainable infrastructure with an emphasis on the quality and continuity of cycle routes, as well as coordinating improvements with mapping, signing and branding to improve publicity and increase the profile of cycling. They also outline our approach to prioritising types of infrastructure and design, improving monitoring and increasing cycle training.

The Strategy then evaluates Solihull's potential for greatly increasing the level of cycling. The proposals are summarised in an Action Plan where we identify the timescale and the resources required for delivery.

Finally, the proposals for ongoing monitoring are also updated in this Strategy, which recognises the importance of involving wider communities and incorporating cycling into the ongoing work of maintaining and improving the transport network.

The key measures within this strategy are:

- Reviewing and removing the barriers to cycling to Solihull centers.
- Increasing the numbers cycling especially to work, school and green spaces.
- The establishing of base line and the review of methods used for monitoring cycle use.
- A review of partnership working with organisations and companies based in Solihull, with a view to establishing programmes to encourage/provide for increases in cycling.

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1. Introduction

It is widely recognized that cycling is good for our health, good for getting us around, good for our public spaces and good for our society. For all of these reasons we need to persuade more people to choose to walk and cycle more often.

Solihull Council recognises the importance of encouraging and developing cycling opportunities within the borough and is committed to ensuring that Solihull embraces a culture where cycling is a mainstream mode of travel for local journeys.

Central to our vision of cycling in Solihull and a key aim of this Cycling Strategy is:

“To promote and increase cycle use throughout Solihull, by highlighting the benefits of cycling as a healthy sustainable mode of transport and through the development of green infrastructure which is safe, convenient, efficient and attractive for cyclists.”

The Cycling Strategy forms part of the overall transport strategy for Solihull. The document considers how we cycle and encourage cycling nationally, regionally and locally and examines the policy context associated with this. It outlines our plans and ideas for making Solihull a better place to cycle around and ensuring that cycling realises its potential.

At its heart are the links that the strategy and its associated Action Plan will need to make with current and future versions of the Local Transport Plan. These links will assist in the future delivery and funding of the measures and projects identified within the Strategy's Action Plan. The Cycling Strategy also has close links to the Local Development Framework and the joint Physical Activity Strategy.

Within the Strategy we have looked at the current state of cycling provision within the borough, the works currently ongoing as well as the steps we need to take to make further improvements. To achieve this we have set out a number of objectives and targets for cycling within the document along with specific proposals on how these could be achieved.

Section's 2 and 6 of this document sets out the Council's Strategy for tying together and implementing this Cycling Strategy. The specific detail within this section, which is supported by the Strategy's associated joint action plan, has been updated following public consultation with partners and stakeholders to ensure local ownership and that the highlighted themes link and support the good work already being undertaken across the borough.

The Actions identified within this plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's project team to ensure that, where feasible, the objectives and specific targets of the strategy are met.

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1 Vision

The overall vision for cycling in the Borough of Solihull is “**to promote cycling as a viable transport choice**”.

The objectives of this strategy have been developed to achieve this vision and therefore set out what the proposed strategy and measures should accomplish, we have developed policies to guide the implementation of the proposed strategy and measures in terms of how future measures for cycling should be accomplished.

It is recognised that there is a need for effective communication of the benefits of cycling to Solihull’s residents, to encourage people who do not currently cycle to change their travel mode for at least some of their local journeys.

The objectives for our Cycling Strategy are listed below. These objectives have been broken into 6 themes which are shared across the Walking Strategy as well as the joint Action Plan.

2.2 Themes and Objectives

• Education and Encouragement

- To publicise the health benefits and to facilitate a cycling culture in the borough.
- To make the cycling network more accessible by encouraging the development of *neighbourhoods which are easy and attractive to use.*
- *To ensure safer routes for play and better access to play spaces for children.*
- *It is proposed that the ongoing programme be adopted to create safe cycling facilities in Solihull’s Parks and green open spaces and that greater use be made of the extensive existing network of footpaths through conversion to shared use.*

• Infrastructure

- To make the physical cycling network more accessible and safer to all through the removal of barriers and co-coordinating and prioritizing works programmes.

- Cycling will be considered in the design of all new highway schemes.
- The provision of cycling specific facilities will consider the hierarchy of users and provision. This process will include a design review audit of all capital programme schemes from pedestrian and cyclist viewpoints.
- Specific attention will be given to the problems caused for cyclists by roundabouts and the creation of 20mph zones around schools and residential areas.
- **Environments**
 - To promote access to the countryside and green spaces, particularly around centers of population.
 - To make the physical cycling network more accessible and safer to all through the removal of barriers and co-ordinating and prioritizing works programmes.
- **Planning and Developments**
 - To encourage cycling as a prime mode of transport in new developments. Where feasible links in the wider cycle network will be secured through Section 106 developer funding.
- **Key Links**
 - Develop and implement with key stakeholders, the concept of Whole Route Studies (Smarter Routes) on principal routes within the borough.
 - Work with Sustrans and other key stakeholders to provide improved links to recreational routes.
- **Safety and Security**
 - Work with partners to improve safety and security for cyclists.
 - Improve cycle and cyclist security and reduce the fear of crime.

3. Why Cycle? – A National, Regional and Local Context

3.1 Why is cycling important

Cycling is today seen as a serious part of both national and local transport policy. An increased perception of cycling as a real alternative mode of transport to the car and a growth in cycling as a leisure activity has increased the demand for cycling. The message is quite clear that there is a need for more and better cycling facilities and that the time is now right to try and secure these facilities in Solihull.

For some, cycling is a cheap and independent way to get to work, school shops or college; for others cycling is chosen for health reasons, leisure or as a social activity. Whatever the reason, cycling has many direct and indirect benefits to both the individual and to our society as a whole.

The benefits to health, social inclusion, local businesses and the economy, and the potential reduction in pollution are covered in more detail in the remainder of this document. Section 6 of this document which includes the Action Plan, forms the core of this Strategy, goes in to further detail and sets out specific actions identified to facilitate these benefits.

3.2 Benefits of cycling

Cycling is a convenient, flexible, efficient, fast and environmentally friendly means of travel. It is very competitive in door-to-door journey times with other types of transport. Regular cycling can create many benefits to both the individual and the wider community. The benefits of cycling are:

3.2.1 Health

Cycling offers the opportunity to build moderate, pleasant exercise into people's routines. This kind of exercise can help us to counteract problems of overweight and obesity as well as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer in addition to improving mental well-being.

The Solihull Physical Activity Strategy aims to ensure that the Borough has the best chance, through working together, to increase levels of physical activity in the

population, and so realise the health, educational, crime reduction, and social community benefits which lead from this. Physical activity is defined in its broadest sense, covering all activities that require physical effort.

- The Strategy aims to provide a joined up strategic direction for the development of services and facilities for both providers and enablers of physical activity, in order to encourage increased participation levels in physical activity.
- The Strategy looks at the joined up approaches, which can be taken borough wide to promoting physical activity. This is based on an analysis on need, evidence of what works and its cost-effectiveness, and has ownership by a wide range of stakeholders.

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3.2.2 Social Inclusion and Quality of Life

Those who do not have access to a private car, or choose not to drive, or are unable to drive have become excluded from many aspects of normal social life. Increasing cycling levels will improve our public space and the social interactions we have. As such, they improve our sense of community. They also provide for more pleasant and sustainable public spaces and serve to support local facilities.

Improved opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside and opportunities for leisure and recreation, environmental education, helping to build healthier, safer and stronger communities

The integration of cycling with public transport enables longer distance journeys to be made by those who might otherwise be marginalised by not having access to a private vehicle.

3.2.3 Economic

Cycling is very cost effective and provides good value for money. Once cycle routes are in place, their maintenance costs are similar to footways and there are no additional fuel costs.

A healthier nation will also place less demands on the health service. It is a well known fact that regular physical activity could help reduce the number of people requiring health treatment, whilst reducing the number of days spent away from work due to ill health.

Cycling can also help to create new job opportunities, especially within tourism and leisure, where demand for cycling holidays and day trips also increases demand for tourism and leisure facilities and services.

3.2.4 Environmental

Growth in car traffic has increased road congestion and environmental pollution, particularly in town centers and urban areas. Promoting cycling in Solihull as a viable alternative for those trips where it is practical to do so, is an easy and effective way of helping Solihull's residents to make a contribution to achieve a reduction in CO2 emissions. The need for cleaner alternative means of gaining access to locations which generate trips must be viewed as a priority.

Such environmental priorities link directly to the recommendations made within (NICE) National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Guidance 'Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity'

The promotion and enhancement of the natural environment through the development of greenways would also provide opportunities for biodiversity improvements and its associated other benefits.

Solihull's Countryside faces unprecedented changes in recreation activity and pressure for access will increasingly affect the way it is managed. During the past two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the public's mobility through the private car and public transport network, popularity of new outdoor pursuits and demand for access to open spaces, particularly around centers of population.

Although leisure patterns change over time and are susceptible to short term trends, demands upon the countryside for leisure and recreation are likely to continue with consequences for the long term sustainability of the resource.

In accommodating legitimate leisure and recreation activities within the countryside, there are both conflicts and opportunities. Competing demands for land can result in conflicts between agriculture, leisure, nature conservation and other uses within the countryside. It should be emphasised that leisure and recreation pursuits within the countryside do not necessarily represent a cohesive and compatible range of activities. In addition, leisure and recreation as a whole and specifically within the countryside has

also been perceived as a source of conflict. Such conflicts emerge through the physical capacity of individual sites, attractions and infrastructure to absorb large numbers of visitors without a detrimental effect upon the environment and the quality of life of communities within such areas.

Whilst it may ultimately prove impossible to fully reconcile the perceived conflicts of leisure and recreation within the countryside, such activities need to be viewed positively overall. This is because such activities offer a legitimate and practical means of maintaining the openness and accessibility of countryside areas designated Green Belt, create opportunities for diversifying agriculture and in securing landscape enhancement. Effective visitor and site management techniques and environmental education are vital to reconciling existing and potential conflicts.

The desire to promote a countryside that is accessible to all for appropriate forms of formal and informal recreation is a key theme of the Countryside Strategy.

4. Policy Context

This cycling strategy acknowledges that considerable time and resources have been committed to the development of sustainable transport options including cycling on a national, regional and local level. These works, along with the work of the Solihull Cycle Steering Group and key stakeholders have assisted in the development of this document.

In order to be effective, the cycling strategy must be set within the context of other relevant plans and strategies at national and local levels.

This section details the way in which national, regional and local strategies feed into the actions proposed later in this document.

4.1 National Policy

4.1.1 The Future of Transport (2004): A network for 2030 (DFT)

This Department for Transport paper sets out the Government's strategy to improve transport by 2030. This includes "making walking and cycling a real alternative for local trips".

In order to help achieve this, there is a need to create a cycling culture and improve the quality of local environment so that cycling and walking are seen as an attractive alternative to car travel for short journeys, particularly for children.

Moreover, cycling would be encouraged by making conditions safer and more convenient, with an emphasis on journeys to work and school. The overall aim of the White Paper is to reduce car use, congestion relief, improve air quality, social inclusion, and health. Making use of school travel plans, workplace travel plans and personalised journey planning are also effective tools in helping to encourage people to consider alternative modes of transport to using their car.

4.1.2 The Solihull Local Development Framework and Core Strategy

The Solihull LDF will replace the UDP, which is due to expire in April 2011. The LDF together with the RSS will be the key policy documents that will shape the future of

Solihull to 2026. The LDF aims to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes.

The LDF is made up of a number of documents, the most important of which is the Core Strategy. At the time of writing, the Core Strategy is still in preparation; however, it will establish the key elements of the planning framework for Solihull and set out the vision for the future development of the Borough to 2026.

The need to provide safe, pleasant and convenient routes to encourage access to local services, facilities and employment opportunities by cycle has been identified as a key issue that the Core Strategy will need to address.

The development of the Core Strategy will be informed by the Cycling Strategy. The Core Strategy will seek to deliver the aims and objectives of the Cycling Strategy by providing an appropriate policy framework.

4.1.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy

The RSS is being partially revised in three Phases. Phase One covered the Black Country and was incorporated into the RSS in January 2008. At the time of writing, the Phase Two Revision is also nearing completion having gone through an Examination in Public and the publication of the Panel Report. With regard to walking and cycling, Policy T3 of the RSS sets out the ways in which greater opportunities for walking and cycling should be provided.

4.1.4 Walking and Cycling - An Action Plan (DfT 2004)

In 2004, the Government published a detailed package of measures to promote walking and cycling. The way forward for local authorities was seen as including a combination of local action planning, strong marketing, sharing good practice and national demonstration projects, with locally determined targets and encouragement to work in partnership with the Voluntary Sector.

4.1.5 Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier (White Paper) (DH)

The Government's Health White Paper, Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier, published in 2004, identifies that there are a number of areas where cycling and walking can help contribute to improving personal health. Getting people to exercise

more often is key to reducing obesity and tackling conditions like heart disease, diabetes and improving mental health. Encouraging people to include exercise in their daily routine, e.g. cycling to work, school and/or walking to the shops instead of driving can help to address the 'prevention is better than cure' agenda.

4.1.6 Review of the National Cycling Strategy (2005)

In 2005, the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) was reviewed and in the light of limited increases in cycling levels, the NCS board was restructured to enhance its role in programme delivery. A new body 'Cycling England' (CE) was created to work with local authorities to improve the delivery of cycling. CE will focus on four key areas that are considered crucial to cycling development, these being:

- Cycle training
- Integration of transport, health and education policies
- Training for transport planners and highway engineers
- Integration of cycling into Local Transport Plans

4.1.7 Manual for Streets (2007) (DfT)

The manual was published in 2007, with the aim of radically changing designers' and local authorities' approach to residential street design for the better. It emphasises that streets should be places in which people want to live and spend time in, and are not just transport corridors. In particular, it aims to reduce the impact of vehicles on residential streets by asking practitioners to plan street design intelligently and proactively, and gives a high priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.

The manual sets out a hierarchy of provision for pedestrians and cyclists. It is proposed that this will be widely applied in future improvement schemes implemented in the borough.

4.2 Regional Policy – the 2006/2011 Local Transport Plan

The West Midlands Local transport plan sets out transport infrastructure development plans for the seven metropolitan districts for the period 2006 – 2011. The vision for the sub-region is 'a vibrant, thriving community where everyone will be able to have a better quality of life that is not dependent on the availability of a car'.

In this vision, cycling would be common place in an environment where people can make direct, attractive, safe and comfortable journeys by bicycle. By creating the right environment, and with the right motivation, more people will be encouraged to cycle for utility journeys, for leisure and for tourism, helping to create a healthier, safer, more accessible and more sustainable society.

Cycling is an important element of the overall transport strategy for the Metropolitan Area. Currently, the level of cycling in the West Midlands is below the national average. However, many journeys within Solihull are only of a few miles in length, and there is the potential for the level of cycling to increase, if given sufficient priority. The 2001 West Midlands Transport and Travel Surveys Report indicated that 46% of respondents would cycle more if infrastructure conditions were improved.

The number of cycling trips has been considered a serious enough issue to warrant being one of the national core transport indicators. As a result of this, a review of the LTP2 target has been undertaken and it concluded that, given the declining trend, a 1% increase in the cycling index between 2003/04 and 2010/11 will be 'stretching'.

The index is made up of a number of cycling measures, including:

- Off road route counts
- On road counts
- Cycle parking levels at stations

This will be monitored by combining the available cycling datasets into an index (baseline of 100 in 2003/04) and updating the results regularly for the Annual Progress Reports.

The 2006-2011 LTP cycling target is a mandatory indicator and achieving the target has a bearing on future funding levels. A revised cycling strategy for Solihull will need to consider how it contributes to achieving LTP targets. That said, the Department for Transport would welcome other measures of success in raising cycling levels e.g. a rise in cycling levels to a particular destination. There should be clear evidence of LTP spending resulting in a measurable and sustained increase in cycling.

4.3 Local Policy

4.3.1 Council Vision – Outcomes

We place our customers at the heart of what we do and try to provide services that meet people's needs, are of a high quality and delivered in a cost effective way. We are clear about where we are heading, thanks to the involvement of local people and staff. This is set out in our **Vision**.

Our Vision was launched in May 2002 and refreshed in 2008 - and aims to make Solihull a place where well-being, pride and quality of life are enjoyed by all.

4.3.2 Customer Outcomes

Our Outcomes are the medium term goals for the Council. They are the key issues we are addressing as we work towards delivering the overall Vision.

- A Brighter Future for our Children and Young People
- A Sustainable Improved Quality of Life
- Closing the Gap of Inequality
- To be treated as an Individual
- Good Value Services

Within each of our Outcomes we have Priorities - areas where we are focusing our energy. We have chosen these priorities based on feedback from local people and staff. Cycling can deliver on all these fronts and the aims and aspirations of this strategy are consistent with the Council's vision and outcomes. Our specific priorities with regards to cycling are referred to in the Action Plan.

4.3.3 Solihull Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

The purpose of the UDP is to identify land within the borough to meet future housing and business needs. It contains policies to guide transportation, shopping, recreational development and measures to protect the Green Belt and countryside from speculative development, as well as ensuring that nature conservation interests are protected. The UDP is therefore an important document in terms of shaping future cycling and walking

provision as well as placing additional requirements on existing facilities and routes within the borough.

Cycling, walking and sustainable transport are identified in two of the eleven principal objectives (P14 – UDP 2006 written statement) included in the key development principal which sets out:

“To consider opportunities for the development and redevelopment of existing urban sites before further green-field land is released for development, and ensure that new developments are appropriately located and designed to minimise the need for travel and enable access by public transport, cycling and walking.”

Policies T1 – ‘An integrated and sustainable transport strategy’, T2 – ‘Accessibility to new developments’, T3 – ‘Design for all means of travel in new developments’ and policy T16 Cycling, all highlight the importance that the Council place on ensuring that the development and restructuring of sustainable transport links are seen as a core consideration of determining future planning and redevelopment applications.

The UDP sets out a commitment that the Council will support proposals that contribute to towards the achievement of the existing Cycling Strategy for Solihull and provide increased opportunities for people to cycle. This commitment will be extended in the Solihull Local Development Framework

4.3.4 Solihull Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Community Strategy/LA21 has been replaced by Solihull SCS. These outcomes are of particular relevance:

- We will conserve and enhance the local built and natural environment, and ensure that new development is well designed and enhances local distinctiveness.
- We will protect and promote high quality public places and spaces.
- We will seek to minimise and adapt to climate change by ensuring sustainable forms of economic activity and lifestyles which reduce carbon emissions and make more efficient use of natural resources.

4.3.5 Green Travel Plan 2000 – 2005

The Council as a major employer within the borough has developed a Green Travel Plan which intends to look at ways of reducing the impact that the council has on the environment in undertaking its function through identifying and implementing, where feasible, more sustainable modes of transport for its staff and the services it operates. The Green Travel Plan sets out that the Council will publish a Cycling Strategy and also reflect the aims of the National Walking Strategy.

It is further intended that the strategy will seek to put in place practical actions to remove obstacles faced by cyclists and make it easier to deal with the conflicts between cars and cyclists and will encourage cycling to work, which may be a realistic option for many people.

4.3.6 Solihull Walking Strategy (2001 – 02)

The objectives set out in the Walking Strategy are closely linked with those of the Cycling Strategy, and are complementary in their impact on cycling in Solihull. The contribution that these modes can make to improved health and social inclusion, as well as attainment of a more sustainable transport system is recognised.

The Strategy also highlights the need for strong links to school and business travel plan programmes which encourage both cycling and walking to school. Solihull's Walking Strategy will be reviewed and consulted on during 2009/10.

4.3.7 Rights of Way Improvements Plan (2008)

The Improvement Plan details the scope of rights of way facilities across Solihull, and identifies where cyclists' rights would be desirable and could be obtained. These are being sought where appropriate, where they correspond with gaps in our existing cycle network or where there are routes already in use by cyclists that need to be legitimised. The Plan includes an implementation action plan for delivering improvements.

4.3.8 School Travel Plans

The potential for increasing cycling trips to school could be significant. Results from questionnaires carried out with parents and children in Solihull indicate that cycling as a mode of transport is a popular choice for children but their opportunity to do so is often restricted.

There are a number of strong anecdotal reasons why so few pupils cycle to school. The main reason is road safety concerns from parents and the schools, followed by a lack of suitable secure bike stores on the school premises. Although the latter issue can be resolved relatively easily, the key barrier is child safety on the roads and the reluctance of parents and some schools to promote cycling.

This is an aspect which Solihull Council fully understands and appreciates. Moreover, as a result of this, this strategy will focus resources on working with schools, parents and pupils who are willing to cycle to school, in the belief that in the long term, more parents and schools across Solihull will take up cycling. It is therefore proposed that those schools that have highlighted cycling as the preferred mode for their children receive a cycling audit and feasibility study aimed at enabling more children to cycle to and from school.

Solihull Council will continue to try to address any particular safety issue at a school where engineering solutions and education can provide an 'answer' to concerns. This will be provided through the Safer Routes to Schools programme and Road Safety Awareness Campaigns.

Where possible the inclusion of 20 mph zones around the entrances of schools will be considered as part of the design process. The infrastructure created brings benefits to all road users, usually in promoting lower speeds and resulting in a reduction in accident numbers. A greater feeling of safety will increase the chances of encouraging more cyclists onto the network.

Suggestions are also made that being taken to school by parents can impede the development of children by restricting their independent mobility. Consequently Solihull MBC are working with schools to adopt School Travel Plans and promote Safe Routes to School with the aim that all state schools will complete a travel plan by 2010.

5. The Existing Cycling Environment

At present, Solihull does not have a high level continuous cycle network. There are a lack of direct signed routes to our borough's schools and major places of employment *and green open spaces*.

Various short sections of localised cycling infrastructure exist and one of the key priorities of this strategy is to identify how these sections of route and infrastructure can be best connected.

5.1 Regeneration Projects

Solihull Council is committed to close the inequality gap and improving the quality of life for everyone living and working in the borough.

One way that the Council is attempting to do this is through the implementation of large scale community and economic regeneration projects. These projects have significant implications on existing cycling routes and offer an important opportunity to redesign and provide improved cycling infrastructure in the identified areas on a much larger scale than would normally be feasible.

Consequently these areas offer prime opportunities to put in place show case cycling and sustainable transport links which are socially inclusive and meet the needs of current and future users travelling within and through the areas in question.

Currently there are three regeneration projects ongoing within the borough. These are:

- Regenerating North Solihull
- Chelmsley Wood Town Centre Refurbishment
- Shirley Town Centre

5.2 BIA/NEC Integrated Public Transport access Scheme

Birmingham International Airport / National Exhibition Centre Integrated Public Transport Access (ANITA) scheme commenced in 2009 with the aim of improving public transport links and to enhance connectivity to the East Birmingham North Solihull Regeneration Zone. The proposal is designed to encourage the use of public transport, increasing

public transport modal share and will improve access to/from/within the North Solihull Regeneration Zone for residents whilst providing improved access to employment.

The scheme includes a strategy to improve public transport connectivity in this area, which is of key regional significance due to the proximity of Birmingham International Airport, Birmingham International train station and the National Exhibition Centre. The scheme also has a strategy to improve both cycling and pedestrian access as well as user safety.

Given the importance of the area, developing sustainable transport links including cycling access particularly for local people to places of work is a priority. The development and implementation of the ANITA scheme is therefore an important objective for Solihull MBC.

6. Targets and Action Plan

The themes and objectives identified within this strategy have been used in conjunction with feedback from the consultation exercise on the strategy to develop an Action Plan.

The Action Plan sets out specific actions, on how the themes and objectives of the strategy will be targeted and achieved.

The primary focus of the action plan is on the provision of cycle routes linking to Solihull's various centers and addressing the main barriers to reaching these centers on bike.

A review of the boroughs cycle parking will be undertaken with the aim of increasing provision around town centers and key places and destinations such as shops, schools and all buildings regularly used by the public.

Within this focus on providing access to town centers will be a primary focus on completing the missing links in Solihull's cycling network.

In order to ensure joint working, the Action Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Walking Strategy. This joint Action Plan sets out Actions that benefit both forms of travel as well as joint initiatives to maximise efficiency.

It is proposed that the Action Plan will sit as an annex to each strategy. In this way, the Plan can be reviewed and updated annually as necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the objectives of both strategies and that resources can be appropriately targeted and priorities set.

Achieving the specific proposals set out within the Action Plan will be dependent on suitable funding being identified though primarily the Local Transport Plan budget allocation, but also through our ability to work closely with partners and to align our objectives and targets so that our joint resources can be used as efficiently as possible.

7. Monitoring

The strategy will be reviewed and updated within 5 years of publication. Feedback from the development of this Walking strategy and the new Cycling Strategy has identified that our key stakeholders wish to see increased joint working between the two strategies. We have attempted to create strong ties through the development of a joint Action Plan. It is proposed that future reviews of both documents will look at the feasibility of combining the two strategies and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan into one document which considers all elements of sustainable travel provision within Solihull.

The action plan contains timescales which set out when the various proposals within the plan will be actioned. This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that these timescales are achievable, and so that available resources can be appropriately matched to the actions to ensure that the principals of 'lean working' are met.