



# 18. Walking Supporting Statement

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## 1. Setting the Scene

- 1.1 Nationally the level of walking has been decreasing. This can be set against a background of increasing journey lengths but also increasing car use for shorter journeys. This national trend is reflected in our JLTP area. Significant efforts have been made by all four Councils to reverse this trend. Continued programmes of improving infrastructure and the pedestrian environment, promoting walking, and accessibility planning to reduce the need for longer journeys will be carried out during the Plan period to increase levels of walking.
- 1.2 The emerging Rights of Way Improvement Plan will play a key role in ensuring integration with the Walking and Cycling Strategies, developing a coherent network of multi user routes meeting the needs of all walkers.

## 2. Vision

Walking will become the first choice for local journeys and together with public transport, a positive part of longer ones. Children will be regularly walking along safer routes to school and as a result there will be a noticeable increase in levels of fitness.



## 3. Walking and the Shared Priorities

### Congestion

Journeys on foot instead of by car for short journeys (up to 2km), particularly during peak times, can help to ease congestion in key locations such as near schools, offices and city/ town centres. Walking is key to delivering this Shared Priority.

### Road Safety

Implementation of traffic calming measures and crossings can improve the level of safety for pedestrians and encourage more walking.

### Accessibility

In the Greater Bristol area 21% of households do not have access to a car. This represents a sizeable number of people who are reliant on public transport, cycling and walking in order to carry out their daily business. Making facilities and services easily accessible on foot is vital to creating an inclusive society. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will provide a network of routes offering a variety of safe and attractive sustainable travel opportunities. Walking is also key to delivering this Shared Priority.

### Air Quality

Encouraging walking for short journeys can improve air quality as short car journeys cause a disproportionate amount of pollution. Targeting walking for specific areas and trips, for example to and from and outside schools in Air Quality Management Areas, will improve local air quality and create a more attractive environment.

### Other Quality of Life issues

Encouraging walking is also an important factor in wider health issues, particularly for young people and in increasing people's physical activity and general health.

## 4. Issues

- 4.1 Whilst congestion continues to get worse, the 2001 Census highlights that in the JLTP area, 21% of journeys to work are under 2km. This is within potential walking distance and yet 45% of these trips are made by car.
- 4.2 The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study shows that about a fifth of work, shopping and leisure trips are on foot or by cycle. This goes up to a third for trips to school and college. Data from the 2001 Census show that over 40% of residents in some inner urban areas walked to work but the average for rural areas was less than 5%.
- 4.3 Clearly it is important to maintain and increase the role of walking, especially for short journeys (up to 2km). A small shift away from car use for both trips to school and work would see a substantial increase in walking with consequential health benefits. By targeting children we can seek to foster a cultural change in future generations' travel habits.
- 4.4 There is considerable scope for walking to provide a healthy and emission-free alternative to the private car. To achieve the vision set out above, this Walking Supporting Strategy sets out three broad aims:-
  - To maximise the role of walking as a key transport mode, and to assist in reducing the use of private cars, by raising the status of walking and promoting it as an economic, healthy and energy efficient means of transport.
  - To improve the walking environment by reducing danger from speed and volume of traffic.
  - To encourage more children to walk to school using safer routes.
- 4.5 There are many opportunities that can be taken and mechanisms implemented to work towards these aims. These mechanisms are set out under Section 7 below:
- 4.6 As part of the JLTP we are developing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). It recognises the important role that the public rights of way and the wider access network has to play in facilitating sustainable transport in both urban and rural areas.
- 4.7 The ROWIP vision is to increase the use of the Local Rights of Way (LROW) by developing a network of safe and attractive routes which:
  - Improves opportunities for sustainable access to essential services and facilities; and
  - Meets the present and future recreational needs of all members of the community, including those with visual impairment or mobility problems.

## 5. Delivery Programme in the Plan Period 2001/02 to 2005/06

- 5.1 In the period of the last LTPs the four Councils have:
  - implemented extensive pedestrian improvements. For example footway widening in Walcot Street, Bath has provided an enhanced access and walking route from the city centre to the "Artisan Quarter". In addition the Northgate Street priority access scheme achieved a reduction in central area traffic, greatly improving the pedestrian environment.
  - implemented the Way Marking project in Bradley Stoke to improve the pedestrian environment and encourage walking for shorter journeys.
  - improved seven public footpaths in Bristol, fully meeting accessibility guidelines.
  - provided High Street shuttle signal system in Paulton incorporating wider footways greatly improving pedestrian access to the village centre.

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- Implemented the Legible City Initiative in Bristol, providing high quality signing and information to enhance the pedestrian environment. Benefits tourists and visitors, enabling them to explore the city on foot.

## 6. Good Practice

In Weston-super-Mare, LTP and revenue funding have pump primed pedestrian improvement projects that have then attracted substantial funding from the South West of England Regional Development Agency. In total £11million is currently being invested in Weston's town centre in removing private cars from key pedestrian areas, developing key transport interchanges and installing the highest quality paving, street furniture and signage.

## 7. The Strategy

- 7.1 In the period of the JLTP we will work with partners to increase walking through the various mechanisms and initiatives set out below.

### A. Working with Partners

- A1. Use Local Plans, Local Development Documents, Section 106 agreements, Rights of Way Improvement Plan, corporate strategies and programmes to ensure priority is given to walking.
- A2. Work with health initiatives, health authorities, schools and employers to ensure walking is an attractive option and to promote its health benefits.

### B. Infrastructure

- B1. Develop, promote and maintain safe, convenient, efficient and attractive infrastructure, which encourages walking and the use of public transport to aid the reduction of the need to travel by car, and meets the needs of sustainable communities.

- B2. High quality routes and facilities will be provided which:
- provide access to local, town and city centres for goods, services and community facilities.
  - remove barriers to provide accessible, direct and convenient routes.
  - where space is constrained encourage the shared use of footways between pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, reassigning carriageway space to shared use footway where possible.
  - improve access to public transport facilities and ensure accessibility for disabled people.
  - are well signposted.
- B3. Continue to provide new, and modernise existing, controlled Pedestrian Crossing Facilities (includes pelicans, puffins, zebras and toucans). Puffin crossings will be the standard at new sites.
- B4. A network of 'Greenways' linking together open spaces and development areas will continue to be protected and implemented through Local Plans and Local Development Documents.
- B5. Continue to develop, protect, promote and maintain the Public Rights of Way Network through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).
- B6. Continue to improve highway and footway maintenance through an Asset Management Strategy and footway improvement schemes.



- B7 The following road user hierarchy will be used in considering needs for all transport, land use and planning decisions:
- Pedestrians (including disabled people and public transport passengers)
  - Cyclists
  - Public transport users
  - Disabled car users
  - Commercial and business vehicles
  - Car borne shoppers
  - Car borne commuters and visitors
- B8 Pedestrian access audit procedures will be standardised across the four Councils. They will form part of Transport Assessments for new developments and improvements to existing pedestrian routes and spaces.

## 8. Targets

The outcomes of investment to increase walking will be monitored by its impact on other key targets (see Chapter 12 of the JLTP), such as:-

LTP4: Mode share of journeys to school

LTP6: Changes to peak period flows to urban centres