

1. Foreword

- 1.1. Active Travel – journeys made through physical activity of the human body – can bring many benefits to health and wellbeing, the economy and the climate. Kent faces a number of challenges in coming years, and declining levels of physical activity and an increase in traffic on the roads are two that will have a major impact on the life of residents in the county. This Strategy sets out Kent County Council’s vision for making cycling and walking the preferred option for residents taking short journeys, or as part of longer journeys that include public transport.
- 1.2. Kent already has a number of cycling and walking routes across the county, from those with international and historical significance to the local routes that provide a connection between Kent residents and local shops, parks and services. These include the picturesque North Downs Way, Greensands Way, the historic Crab & Winkle trail, the Viking Coastal Trail and the Saxon Shore Way, the national cycle routes connecting the UK to the continent, and the miles of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes that provide a vital transport network for local journeys.
- 1.3. This Active Travel Strategy proposes how we will build on these assets, maximise use of the existing network, and address the challenges we face in increasing the number of us walking and cycling in a population with a growing reliance on cars. A range of infrastructure and behaviour change projects will contribute towards achieving success, and an action plan accompanies this Active Travel Strategy to deliver the ambitions and objectives outlined within.
- 1.4. This Strategy also sets a direction for partnership working across the county, as public sector spending cuts mean that this Strategy needs to maximise current investment, deliver value for money and realise benefits across a range of partners.
- 1.5. The development of this Active Travel Strategy has been informed by engagement with stakeholders, communities and the Kent Youth County Council, and by following recommendations set down by health bodies, charities and government departments among a range of sources. It has also been guided by cross-party elected Members of Kent County Council. I am grateful to all those who have helped to inform the content of this Strategy.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Kent County Council’s (KCC) Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent. By developing and

promoting accessible, safer and well-planned active travel opportunities, this Strategy will help to establish Kent as a pioneering county for active travel.

Active Travel means walking or cycling as a means of transport, in order to get to a particular destination such as work, the shops or to visit friends. It does not cover walking and cycling done purely for pleasure, for health reasons, or simply walking the dog¹.

- 2.2. Active travel can be for complete journeys or parts of a journey, and more people in the community making more active travel journeys can lead to a range of positive individual and shared outcomes. These include improved health, reduced traffic congestion, reduced pollution and financial savings to the individual and businesses.
- 2.3. Active travel should be a routine form of travel for short journeys, but distances walked have fallen by over 30% in the last 40 years as increased provision for motorised road transport has affected our neighbourhoods and the wider public realm. The relative affordability and convenience of car travel has informed the modern design of towns, cities and rural communities, including the decentralisation of services such as out-of-town shopping centres, hospitals, business parks and leisure facilities. The result is an increasing need to travel by private car to access employment and services².
- 2.4. This increasing reliance on privately-owned cars to access services is a contributing factor to the health inequalities gap in Kent – the difference in health between the most affluent and most deprived parts of society. Nationally, the most affluent 10% of the population receive almost four times as much public spending on their transport needs as the poorest 10%³, whilst the most deprived areas tend to have a higher density of main roads, poorer air quality, higher noise levels and higher collision rates⁴. Residents of deprived communities travel less than residents in more affluent areas, but feel the impact of other people's travel.
- 2.5. This strategy will provide a basis on which KCC will be able to prioritise internal resources, influence how new communities are developed and inform bids for

¹ Welsh Government (2014) Active Travel: Walking and Cycling www.gov.uk/government/statistics/active-travel-financial-year-ending-march-2015

² Public Health England (2016) Working Together to Promote Active Travel https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf

³ Sustainable Development Commission (2011) Fairness in a car-dependent society http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/fairness_car_dependant.pdf

⁴ Faculty of Public Health (Undated) Transport and Health Briefing Statement <http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/briefing%20statement%20transport%20V2.pdf>

external funding for a range of active travel measures. It will also underpin local initiatives to promote active travel within the county⁵.

3. Benefits of Active Travel

- 3.1. Being more physically active can benefit everyone and can lower the chances of developing diabetes, heart disease and other preventable conditions⁶. Active travel gives people an opportunity to be physically active as part of their daily routine and incorporating physical activity into everyday tasks reduces the need to find extra time, money or motivation for exercise. It can also make it cheaper to travel by saving on fuel, vehicle running costs and parking charges.
- 3.2. Making short journeys using active travel helps to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and improves air quality. It can also be quicker, as in urban areas journey times are often shorter when walking or cycling as users can take advantage of routes not accessible to motor vehicles.
- 3.3. Investment in active travel can also deliver economic benefits; in a time of restricted public spending active travel is affordable and delivers value for money in achieving health, transport and wider policy objectives. Studies on the economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions revealed an average return of £13 for every £1 invested and in the UK, returns as high as £19 for every £1 invested⁷.

4. Barriers to Active Travel

- 4.1. Feedback from Kent residents and organisations⁸ shows that the main reasons for not making short journeys using active travel are a perceived lack of suitable continuous routes between homes and community services, workplaces or schools, and not enough promotion of existing routes. Other issues include a lack of facilities such as lockers and secure bicycle parking, obstacles in cycle lanes and in footways, and perception of safety when walking and cycling. Another barrier to active travel is the convenience of using a car, especially to carry heavy or bulky loads, and the need to make linked trips such as a school drop-off on the way to work. As part of this Strategy, KCC will work to overcome these barriers to ensure that active travel is easy, safer and more accessible in Kent.

5. What works

- 5.1. Well designed, accessible streets can encourage people to walk or cycle as part of their daily routines. People walk more in places with a mix of residential buildings

⁵ **Annex 1 Policy Context** provides further details

⁶ **Error! Reference source not found.** provides further details.

⁷ Active Living Research (2015) Designed to Move: Active Cities.

<http://www.designedtomove.org/resources/active-cities>

⁸ **Error! Reference source not found.** provides further details

and shops⁹ and people cycle more when there is dedicated cycle infrastructure and separation from traffic¹⁰. Town-centre streets that encourage safe pedestrian movement can provide economic benefits to local shops and restaurants. The Design for Crime Prevention guidance document can be used to influence the design of active travel routes to encourage use.

- 5.2. Promotion of active travel should be delivered through multiple organisations including schools, workplaces, health bodies and local government, as well as through media¹¹.
- 5.3. Many people use active travel for part-journeys that also use public transport, for example walking or cycling to the station or bus stop. Therefore, transport measures to shift private car journeys to public transport can lead to increases in rates of active travel¹².
- 5.4. There is growing public interest in 20mph speed limits in residential streets¹³ and a growing evidence base to support the benefits of lower speed limits on active travel¹⁴, including a positive effect on casualty reduction¹⁵.

6. KCC Policy Context

- 6.1. This Active Travel Strategy supports the ambitions within the Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. It sits alongside a number of other plans and policies within KCC and both complements and strengthens the commitments already being worked towards. A few of the main related policies are outlined below. In addition to these, this strategy will help to support District Council Plans such as Cycling Strategies and Air Quality Management Plans.

6.2. *Local Transport Plan 4*

Sets out Kent's ambition for transport across the county. Active Travel is a Kent-wide priority which will be supported by this Active Travel Strategy as a daughter document to the LTP4.

⁹ Sinnett, D et al. (2012) Creating built environments that promote walking and health: A review of international evidence. *Journal of Planning and Architecture* 2012: 38

¹⁰ Fraser S & Lock K (2010) Cycling for transport and public health: a systematic review of the effect of the environment on cycling. *The European Journal of Public Health*, 21, (6), 738-743.

¹¹ Ogilvie et al (2007) Interventions to promote walking: systematic review. *BMJ*.9;334(7605):1204

¹² Besser L & Dannenberg A (2006) Walking to public transit. Steps to help meet physical activity recommendations. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 29(4): 273-280

¹³ University of the West of England (2013) 20mph: A survey of GB attitudes and behaviours. Bristol: UWE.

¹⁴ Cairns J, Warren J, Garthwaite K, Greig G & Bambra C (2014) Go slow: an umbrella review of the effects of 20mph zones and limits on health and health inequalities. *Journal of Public Health*,

¹⁵ Grundy C, Steinbach R, Edwards P, Wilkinson P and Green J. (2008) *20 mph Zones and Road Safety in London: A report to the London Road Safety Unit*. London: LSHTM

6.3. *Road Casualty Reduction Strategy*

Commits to deliver further reductions in people killed and seriously injured on Kent's roads. It advocates more active travel including through 20 mph zones in residential areas. It acknowledges that the health benefits of regular cycling and walking outweigh the additional risks, quoting the NHS Cycle Safety – Special Report (2014) which shows that the benefits of regular cycling equated to a 14 months increased life expectancy compared to a 1 month reduction due to road risk¹⁶.

6.4. *Updated Policy for 20mph limits and zones on Kent County Council's roads*

Seeks to implement 20mph schemes when there are clear road safety or public health benefits. It acknowledges the potential for 20mph schemes to encourage healthier transport modes such as walking and cycling, citing the example of Bristol where preliminary results indicate increases in levels of walking and cycling of over 20%¹⁷.

6.5. *Countryside & Coastal Access Improvement Plan*

Aims to increase the use and enjoyment of Kent's public rights of way and open green space. At the heart of the plan therefore is the goal of increasing walking and cycling along public rights of way.

6.6. *Kent Design Guide*

Aims to encourage well considered schemes that create developments where people really want to live, work and enjoy life. It gives guidance on designing new developments for walkers and cyclists, such as natural overlooking for safety, direct routes for convenience and tactile paving for the visually impaired.

6.7. *Kent Environment Strategy*

Highlights the importance of increasing active travel to reduce congestion and improve air quality. Active travel is a key part of the 2nd theme, to 'Support sustainable access and connectivity for businesses and communities'.

6.8. *KCC Environment Policy*

Kent County Council's activities and services have an impact on the environment. This includes business travel and this policy commits to continuing to work to reduce our members' and employees' need to travel. This includes promoting healthier options and opportunities to work in new ways.

7. *Current state of Active Travel in Kent*

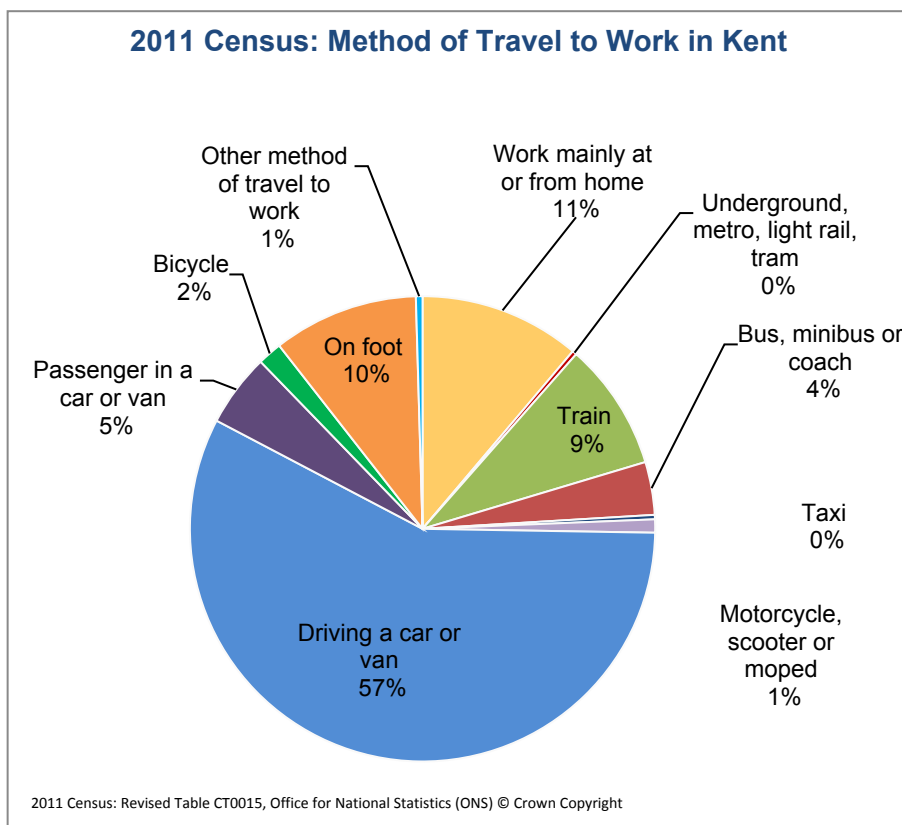
¹⁶ NHS (2014) Cycle Safety – Special Report. Available from:

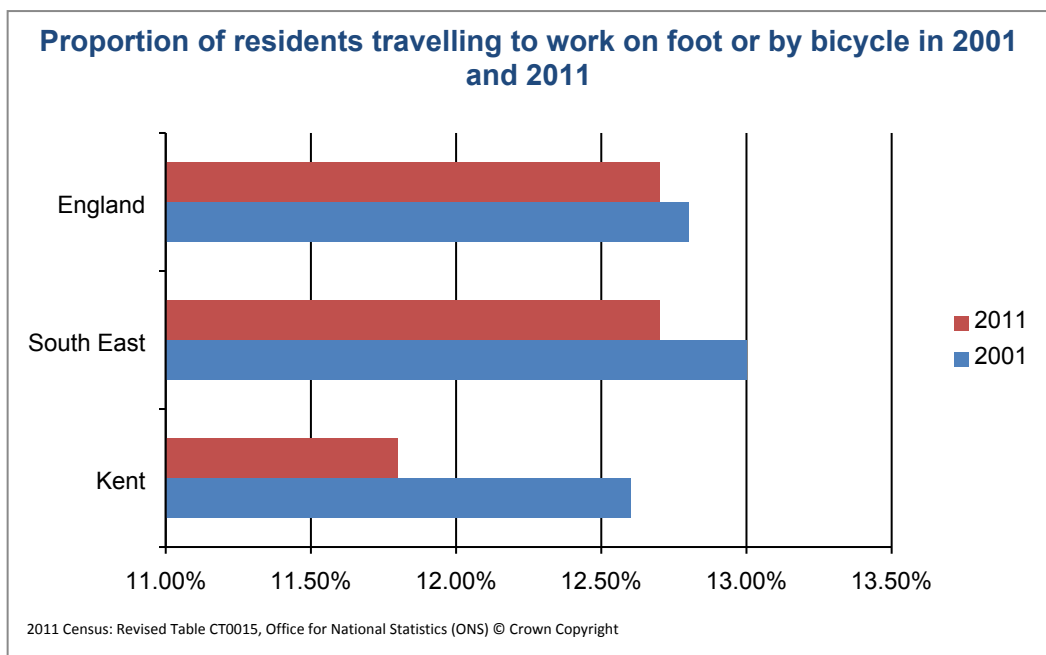
www.nhs.uk/news/2014/02february/pages/cycling-safety-a-special-report.aspx

¹⁷ Kent County Council (2014) Updated Policy for 20mph Speed Limits and Zones on Kent County Council's Roads, 5.

7.1. Travelling to Work

7.1.1. At the time of the 2011 Census there were 688,434 Kent residents aged 16 to 74 who were in employment, with the majority of the working population travelling to work by driving a car or van. Just over 10% of Kent's resident workers walk to work, which accounts for the third highest proportion of Kent's resident workforce, and is higher than both the national and regional average of 9.8%. Only 1.7% of people in Kent cycle to work, in comparison to 1.9% in England and 2.0% in the South East.

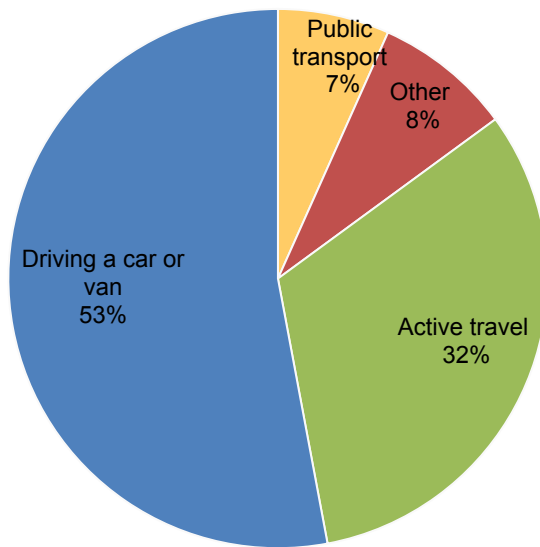




7.1.2. The proportion of people actively travelling to work has declined over the past decade. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of people who walk or cycle to work in Kent has decreased by -0.8%; this is in line with decreases recorded nationally and regionally. In the UK, decreases in active travel have coincided with increases in the distance travelled to work. Larger urban areas and services located out-of-town have led to increased journey distances which may help explain the decline in active travel, in particular walking¹⁸. In 2011, commuters in Kent travelled to work an average distance of 1.9km further than in 2001.

¹⁸ Pucher, J. and Buehler, R. (2010) Walking and Cycling for Healthy Cities. *Built Environment*, 36(4), 391-414. Available from: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.233.2005&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

2011: Method of travel to work in Kent, for residents who live within 5km of their workplace

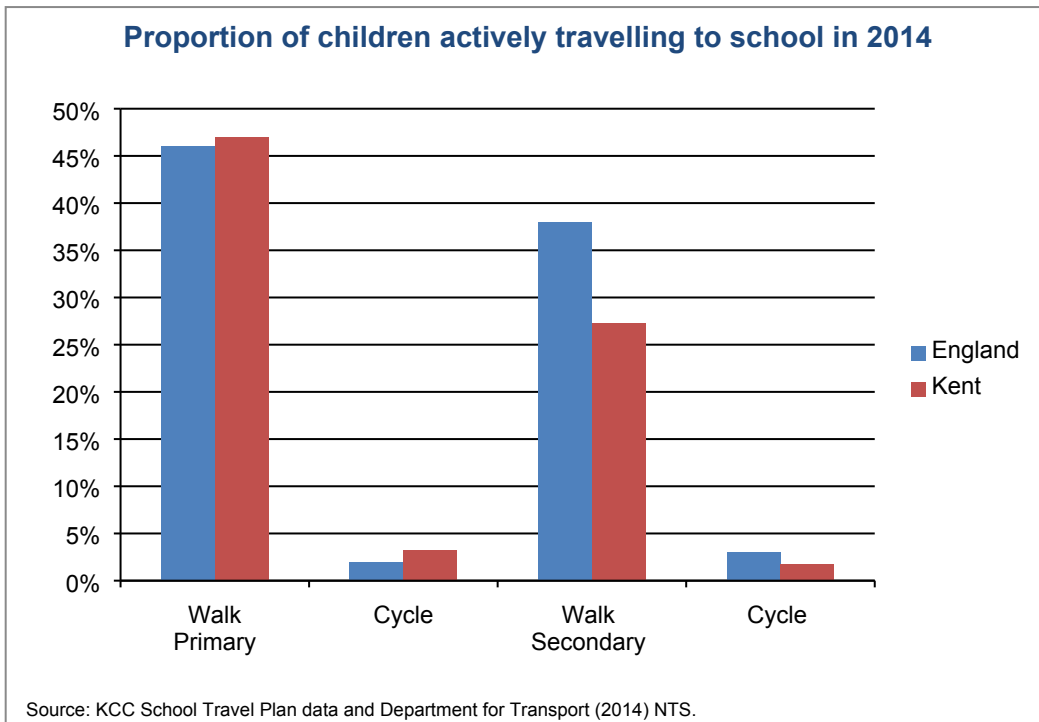


2011 Census: Revised Table CT0015, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright

7.1.3. The proportion of people that live within 5km of their workplace who actively travel to work in Kent was 32% in 2011 in comparison to the 53% by car or van.

7.2. Travelling to School

7.2.1. A comparison of KCC school travel plan data with National Travel Survey figures for 2014 showed that Kent was above the national average (50% compared to 48%) for the proportion of primary school children actively travelling to school, and significantly below the national average for secondary school children (29% compared to 41%).



7.2.2. Since 2015, KCC school travel plans now include data on scoot/skate, and park and walk (parking at a distance from the school and walking the remainder of the journey), in addition to walking and cycling. Latest KCC data for 2016 shows that 59% of primary school children and 28.2% of secondary school children actively travelled to school in Kent, which included walking, cycling, park and walk, and scoot/skate. These figures will be used as the baseline for future comparison and have been used to create the respective 2021 target.

7.3. *Public Rights of Way and Cycle Routes*

7.3.1. At 4,200 miles (6,700 km), KCC manages the longest public rights of way network of any county in England and Wales, providing routes to shops, schools and workplaces, as well as leisure routes for gaining access to the County's countryside and coast¹⁹. Kent has approximately 415 miles (670 km) of cycle routes, of which 96 miles (155 km) are off road.

8. Our Ambition

8.1. Our overarching ambition of this Active Travel Strategy is to:

Make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent

¹⁹ Kent County Council (2011) Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016.

Delivering on this ambition will lead to more people walking and cycling, contributing to the following outcomes:

- Improved health through an increase in physical activity
- Reduced congestion on the highway network by providing better travel choices
- Safer active travel

These outcomes will be realised by delivering the following actions:

8.2. Action 1: Integrate active travel into planning

This Strategy will influence commissioning decisions and ensure active travel is prioritised in future planning processes. In addition, the Strategy will encourage active travel to be better integrated with other types of transport e.g. walking to the bus stop or cycling to the train station. This will be led by current commissioning guidance and best practice, existing KCC policies and strategies, and key partners' policies and strategies with a commitment to encouraging active travel.

8.3. Action 2: Provide and maintain appropriate routes for active travel

Kent needs fit-for-purpose active travel routes that people want to use. Kent's existing cycling and walking routes have developed over time as resources have allowed. They are not always continuous or direct, and may not serve important community services, which means that some people who would like to actively travel are unable to do so. There is a need to provide facilities such as safe crossings along routes and secure cycle storage at destinations. It is also important that these routes are well maintained and designed to be as inclusive as possible.

8.4. Action 3: Support active travel in the community

There is a need to encourage and promote active travel in our community. People need the skills, confidence, information and, most importantly, the motivation to make active travel their preferred choice. Initiatives needed to support this change include pedestrian and cycle training, road safety campaigns, projects to encourage active travel to schools and work, and promotion of available routes.

9. Targets by 2021

9.1. We have set the following targets to help us achieve our overall ambition:

9.1.1. 2 in 3 primary children and 1 in 3 secondary children will travel actively to school.

This will be monitored annually using KCC data collected by the Transport Innovations team in School travel plans.

9.1.2. The proportion of people that work within 5km of their home and actively travel to work in Kent, to increase to 40%.

This will be monitored using Census data (which is why km is used). The baseline data is taken from the 2011 Census and the next data set will be taken in 2021. It may be a couple of years after this point that the data required is made available from the 2021 Census.

9.1.3. The number of people cycling along key routes monitored by the Department of Transport in Kent to increase by 10%.

This will be monitored annually using Department for Transport traffic count data.

10. Delivering the actions

10.1. Integrate active travel into planning

- 10.1.1. Inform the development and application of the County Council's transport policies through the Local Transport Plan
- 10.1.2. Support district and borough councils to ensure that active travel is used to deliver sustainable growth and development through local plans and in determining planning applications
- 10.1.3. Use the principles and ambitions of KCC's Active Travel Strategy to influence partner policies and strategies
- 10.1.4. Work with developers to ensure active travel routes are a priority, both within developments and linking sites to other services, community facilities and transport hubs
- 10.1.5. Work with developers to secure sufficient areas within developments for green spaces and attractive routes and environments that encourage active travel
- 10.1.6. Work with strategic transport providers to deliver infrastructure that supports active travel.

10.2. Provide and maintain appropriate routes for active travel

- 10.2.1. Give appropriate consideration to active travel when designing new routes and maintaining highway assets
- 10.2.2. Maintain the public highway, Public Rights of Way (PRoW), and active travel resources such as signage to enable safe and effective active travel
- 10.2.3. Work in partnership with key organisations both within and neighbouring Kent to identify and prioritise new active travel routes and any maintenance issues on the existing active travel network
- 10.2.4. Ensure that active travel improvements to the highway and PRoW network are made in places where there is an evidenced need and where they are supported by local demand and resource
- 10.2.5. Make reasonable adjustments to active travel route design to maximise the inclusivity and accessibility to all users

- 10.2.6. Support improvements to the local environment in and around schools, hospitals and other public buildings to provide opportunities to cycle or walk all year-round, including appropriate surfacing, cycle storage and lockers
- 10.2.7. Evaluate funding for active travel infrastructure and maintenance and proactively seek additional funding
- 10.2.8. Support Kent's Casualty Reduction Strategy in delivering key routes to address road safety issues for vulnerable road users.

10.3. Support active travel in the community

10.3.1. In schools, further and higher education:

- 10.3.1.1. support initiatives including School Travel Plans and other active travel programmes
- 10.3.1.2. support training for pedestrians and cyclists and support the development of independent travel training programmes.

10.3.2. In workplaces:

- 10.3.2.1. support businesses in developing active travel plans and provide information to support active travel in the workplace
- 10.3.2.2. develop active travel provision within KCC to enable active travel by council staff; KCC should lead by example.

10.3.3. In health services:

- 10.3.3.1. work with health professionals to promote active travel and provide support to increase levels of active travel
- 10.3.3.2. develop methods of including information on active travel in all physical activity advice given by health professionals
- 10.3.3.3. integrate walking and cycling for travel purposes into public health services and commissioning processes.

10.3.4. In communities:

- 10.3.4.1. develop and maintain recreational routes as a means of introducing people to active travel²⁰.
- 10.3.4.2. support road safety initiatives for all road users, especially the most vulnerable such as cyclists and pedestrians

10.3.4.3. promote locally-based programmes to encourage walking and cycling, and integrate active travel as part of longer journeys involving public transport.

11. Funding and Partners

- 11.1. Active travel initiatives are funded from a number of different sources and budgets, with priorities set within the Local Transport Plan for Kent and other corporate strategies. Government funding allocated to KCC has decreased and is likely to continue to do so as government budgets are also under pressure. Previously KCC has been successful with bids for specific Government grants such as to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, through which grants have been made to schools and businesses. Funding streams include Bikeability; the Access Fund; the Local Growth Fund and the Integrated Transport Block. This Strategy will also support the proposed development of Ebbsfleet as a Healthy New Town.
- 11.2. This Active Travel Strategy will be key in securing Government flagship external funding to promote active travel in Kent as well as seeking active travel network improvements when new developments are built. The Propensity to Cycle Tool identifies areas with the greatest potential for increases in commuter cycling levels, based on Census data²¹. The tool will be used to help ensure our investment is effective and targeted, and help support funding bids to attract more investment. Other sources of funding will continually be reviewed and include Combined Member Grants.
- 11.3. This strategy will also provide KCC with a platform to engage with partners and extend and support public/private partnerships that aim to promote and support active travel initiatives and investment. Working in partnership will be vital to the success of this Strategy.

²¹ Propensity to Cycle Tool. Available from: <http://www.pct.bike/>