



## SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT

### CYCLING & WALKING

JULY 2015



Photo courtesy of Thinktravel.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** A review of cycling and walking in Cheltenham was initiated by Overview and Scrutiny in September 2014 in response to a request by Councillor Max Wilkinson. Cheltenham is well placed to foster a cycling and walking culture. There is also an acute need to reduce congestion and improve air quality within the borough. A shift from driving to cycling or walking will benefit the health and fitness of residents and help to tackle health inequalities.
- 1.2** The review supports Cheltenham Borough Council's Corporate Strategy outcomes that:
- Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced; and
  - People live in strong, safe and healthy communities.
- And the Cheltenham Partnerships' action plan<sup>1</sup> priority:
- We will work to promote healthy lifestyles across all communities in Cheltenham.
- 1.3** Nationally, there is a commitment to investment in promoting cycling, with the Department for Transport (DfT) publishing a Cycling Delivery Draft plan for consultation in October 2014<sup>2</sup> (despite the name, it did also include mention of walking). The government has pledged to double the number of journeys taken by bicycle and pledged £200million to making cycling safer<sup>3</sup>. The Infrastructure Act 2015<sup>4</sup> has committed the government to producing a cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS).
- 1.4** This report sets out the findings and recommendations arising from the scrutiny review by the scrutiny task group.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1** Membership of the task group:
- Councillor Max Wilkinson (chair);
  - Councillor Tim Harman;
  - Councillor Adam Lillywhite; and
  - Councillor Suzanne Wilkinson.
- The group also included co-optees who fully participated in the review, producing and evaluating evidence, and they have demonstrated the value they can add to the scrutiny process:
- John Mallows of Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign (C&TCC);
  - Bronwen Thornton of Walk21; and
  - John Newbury of Living Streets.
- 2.2** Terms of Reference agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Develop a wish list of improvements to cycle provision in Cheltenham;\*
  - Submit proposals that will enhance the cycling and walking provision in the town centre for consideration by Gloucestershire Highways as part of the town centre development;
  - Promote cycling and walking in the town and the associated benefits (including health);
  - Consider opportunities for walking and cycling as part of a Borough Council staff green travel plan;
  - Submit proposals to the Borough Council and County Council for policy development in both planning and transport;
  - Submit proposals on street design principles to help promote cycling and walking; and
  - Feed into the Cheltenham Plan.

\* As the task group covers walking as well as cycling, there should also be a wish list of improvements to the walking environment.

### 3. METHOD OF APPROACH

- 3.1 The task group met on eight occasions and a site visit was undertaken to Bristol to see examples of good practice in cycling infrastructure and promotion. Some members went on a walkabout in Cheltenham to look at the walking environment from a pedestrian point of view, in the manner of a street audit. Members of the task group also attended presentations on 20's plenty (a national campaign to reduce speed in urban areas) and the Gloucestershire local transport plan consultation.
- 3.2 The group heard evidence from a range of people, namely:
- Chris Riley from Gloucestershire Highways;
  - Howard Barber, Public Space Designer at Cheltenham Borough Council;
  - Mark Power, Gloucestershire Highways Development Manager;
  - Martin Chandler, Planning Applications Team Leader;
  - Sue Bushell from Guide Dogs;
  - Marc Gulwell from Insight; and
  - Rowena Tassell, Healthy Lifestyles Development Officer at the Cheltenham Trust.
- We were supported in the review by the following officers:
- Tess Beck – Democratic Services Assistant : Facilitator for the task group
- 3.3 Members would like to thank all of the officers who attended meetings and contributed to the review, especially Wilf Tomaney, Townscape Manager, Rhonda Tauman, Transport Projects Officer, James Brain, Senior Planning Policy Officer, Malcolm Walls, Community Parks Officer, and Richard Cornell and Thomas Evans, Gloucestershire Local Sustainable Transport Fund Programme Managers.
- 3.4 Members would also like to thank Gloucestershire County Councillor Iain Dobie for his updates on progress with the County Council's work on barriers to cycling.
- 3.5 The task group reviewed a variety of evidence including:
- Baseline figures for walking and cycling to help set the local and current context;
  - Current initiatives in Cheltenham to support walking and cycling;
  - Barriers to walking and cycling in Cheltenham;
  - Consideration of walking and cycling by Gloucestershire Highways;
  - Consideration of walking and cycling in the planning process;
  - The needs and concerns of blind and visually impaired people;
  - Policy options for walking and cycling; and
  - Promotion of walking and cycling.

### 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 It may be helpful to clarify the roles and responsibilities of those mentioned in the report in the context of this review
- 4.2 **Gloucestershire County Council** has responsibility for Highways design and maintenance in Cheltenham.
- 4.3 **Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)** is funded from the Department for Transport. This is

delivered locally through Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with other local authorities and organisations. Projects funded include the Thinktravel initiative promoting smarter travel choices and the Cheltenham Transport Plan.

- 4.4 The Cheltenham Trust** was created in October 2014. It is a charitable trust contracted to promote physical recreation and healthy lifestyles on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. The Trust's Healthy Lifestyles team works across the borough encouraging people of all ages to be more active.
- 4.5 Cheltenham Borough Council** has responsibility for planning decisions within the borough, townscape design in the town centre, and Development Plan Documents such as the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the Cheltenham Plan. As a commissioning council it sets objectives for the Cheltenham Trust to deliver. It works with Gloucestershire Highways to commission improvements to roads and pavements in Cheltenham.
- 4.6 Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign (C&TCC)** is a local group campaigning for improved cycling provision within and around Cheltenham. It works closely with the local authorities identifying barriers and opportunities for improvement. The Campaign is a member of UK's Cyclenation, of which John Mallows is a director.
- 4.7 Walk21** is an international organisation promoting walking around the world, chiefly through a series of international conferences and policy projects. We are fortunate that one of its directors, Bronwen Thornton, lives in Cheltenham and has given us her time and expertise.
- 4.8 Living Streets** is a national charity campaigning to make streets better for pedestrians, and leads on national campaigns such as 'Walk to School Week'

## **5. OUR FINDINGS**

### **5.1 The reasons why Cheltenham Borough Council should promote walking and cycling.**

- 5.1.1** Cheltenham suffers from high levels of congestion especially at peak times, and the whole borough has been designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to the pollution levels from vehicle emissions. Cheltenham has a higher proportion of adult deaths attributable to air pollution from traffic than the UK average. Although the proportion is lower than cities like Bristol and Swindon, it is still higher than any other local authority area in Gloucestershire and third highest in the South-West region<sup>5</sup>. Encouraging residents to make short trips by bike or on foot rather than in the car would help to reduce both congestion and pollution. It will also reduce road danger and traffic noise
- 5.1.2** Cheltenham is a town which lends itself to cycling and walking on a number of levels. The historic town estates create an urban form which is easily walkable for fit adults, thanks to a permeable street layout, manageable distances and a relatively easy topography. The town as a whole should be easily capable of supporting cycling for similar reasons.
- 5.1.3** Cheltenham is often described as a 'town within a park' with many green spaces which create a pleasant environment for walking and cycling. Walking and cycling enable everyone to participate in and enjoy the outdoor environment and maintain independent mobility, especially young adults and older residents.
- 5.1.4** Cycling and walking help to sustain and grow the local economy. Walking and cycling have been shown by a number of studies to contribute to local spend<sup>6</sup>, with walkers and cyclists making more frequent visits to shops and spending more in the local economy.

- 5.1.5** A switch to more active forms of travel such as walking and cycling of travel will improve the health and physical fitness of individuals. Increasing physical activity levels reduces the risk of many diseases and disorders as well as promoting mental wellbeing. For older people, it helps to maintain cognitive function, bone density and independence.
- 5.1.6** Walking and cycling provide more opportunities for social interaction and help to reduce social exclusion, as well as putting more 'eyes on the street' that contributes to crime reduction and community safety.
- 5.1.7** Local authorities are expected to take an active role in promoting walking and cycling on the recommendations of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)<sup>7</sup> and Gloucestershire NHS<sup>8</sup>

## **5.2 Base Line Data**

- 5.2.1** Bi-annual surveys of cycling levels carried out by Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign (C&TCC)<sup>9</sup> and ongoing monitoring of key cycle routes by the LSTF indicate no significant overall change in cycling levels between 2002 and 2012. Anecdotally, cycle parking is well used.
- 5.2.2** Figures from the Department for Transport 2013-2014 Walking and Cycling Statistics<sup>10</sup> (see Appendix 3) show 26% of Cheltenham adult residents cycle at least once a month which is in the top ten of local authorities nationally, and shows a significant increase on previous years. The proportion of people cycling more frequently and for utility purposes is lower and has not shown similar levels of growth, so there is room for improvement.
- 5.2.3** The number of residents who walk at least once a month (definition of walking is for more than 10 minutes) is 90% which is above the national average, and which indicates that most people who can walk do walk at least once a month. 53% of Cheltenham residents walk at least five times a week, which is also higher than both the national and the county average<sup>11</sup>.
- 5.2.4** Parking reviews in South Cheltenham in 2011<sup>12</sup> showed that 20% of car journeys started and finished in a c.1km radius. As a result the LSTF commissioned a personal travel planning (PTP) intervention which consisted of a combination of face to face travel planning advice and the provision of travel information literature. This resulted in a net reduction in the number of car journeys, with walking being the most popular alternative<sup>13</sup>. This demonstrates there is the opportunity to encourage more residents to walk and cycle in Cheltenham.

## **5.3 Barriers to cycling in Cheltenham identified by C&TCC**

- 5.3.1** John Mallows was able to update the group on the summary of barriers to cycling which had recently been compiled by C&TCC for Gloucestershire County Council. This contributed to the county council's report on Barriers to Cycling in Gloucestershire, published in November 2014<sup>14</sup>. A significant amount of funding has since been secured within the county council for more in depth feasibility studies and potential delivery of priority arterial cycle routes in Gloucestershire. Cheltenham would be the ideal location to trial the delivery plan before rolling it out to other areas.
- 5.3.2** Principal barriers in Cheltenham include roundabouts, particularly those at Kingsditch (A4019), Princess Elizabeth Way (A40), Westall Green, Old Bath Road (x2), Hatherley Way (A46) and the Racecourse (A435). Also various one way streets which mean cyclists cannot go by the most direct route.
- 5.3.3** Policy barriers to cycling included the priority given to motor vehicle movements. The increasing



volume and speed of motor vehicles make cycling less attractive and less safe. The location of housing in relation to services creates distances and routes that are beyond most people's cycling range. There is insufficient integration with public transport.

- 5.3.4** Key barriers to cycling in the town centre have already been addressed in the Cheltenham Transport Plan which was recently approved by Gloucestershire County Council. This lifts restrictions on cycling in traffic free areas of the High Street and Promenade and has introduced a number of contraflow cycle routes, both of which will improve permeability.
- 5.3.5** The group believed that depiction of cycling in promotional material could be a potential barrier for people choosing to take up cycling. Depiction of walkers and cyclists should emphasise the positive aspects of cycling and walking. Cyclists should be wearing normal clothes rather than lycra and helmets. Terms to avoid include: safety, congestion, pollution, helmets, sports, special clothes and equipment, and even the word cyclist.
- 5.3.6** The group agreed that images of walkers should not be limited to ramblers in hiking boots, the very young and very old, but should show a range of ages and abilities, and the interactive, social dimensions of walking, not just putting one foot in front of the other.
- 5.3.7** Publicity for both modes should focus on convenience, health, fun and reliability. Although cost-saving is relevant, cycling and walking should be seen as aspirational activities rather than a necessity for the less well off.

#### **5.4 Barriers to walking in Cheltenham identified by Bronwen Thornton of Walk 21**

- 5.4.1** In Bronwen's view Cheltenham has the advantage of being very walkable due to its scale and geography. The attractiveness of its architecture, tree lined streets and parks, shops and public art all help to enhance the walking experience. However, especially outside the town centre, pedestrian movement is often compromised in favour of vehicle movement.



pedestrian and cycle crossing at junction of Lansdown Road, Hatherley Road and Queens Road. Pedestrians and cyclists are corralled into a narrow fenced off area and have to cross on two phases of lights.

- 5.4.2** Walking is a very important local means of transport. Almost everybody can walk, and walking forms a part of most journeys. Walking is also the most popular modal shift for shorter journeys, as evidenced by the south Cheltenham PTP intervention. However, cars dominate the physical landscape, and their needs tend to be prioritised making drivers complacent. Bronwen gave Westall Green junction and crossing as an example of this. If you are inviting people to walk you

need to give them at least the same level of service as motorised traffic and not just in the town centre.

- 5.4.3** Many pavements are in poor condition, with uneven surfaces, often too narrow and without drop kerbs. This is a particular barrier to older people and those with reduced mobility, as well as parents with small children. These are the groups who more often rely on walking to maintain independent mobility.
- 5.4.4** It was felt that newer housing developments have failed to deliver walkable neighbourhoods. Especially on the outskirts of Cheltenham, loops of cul-de-sac development, ring roads and big box stores have promoted the idea that a vehicle is needed to reach your destination, even when the geographical distance is not great.
- 5.4.5** The school run creates a lot of short car journeys, and provides an opportunity to promote the health and social benefit of walking to school. Ironically, fear of traffic is one of the reasons many children do not walk to school<sup>15</sup>. Possible solutions include vehicle exclusion zones, more positively marketed as park and stride.
- 5.4.6** Cycling and walking are often jointly promoted, both being banded together as active travel<sup>16</sup>. They do both share the advantages of a low environmental impact and reducing congestion, as well as increasing physical activity levels. But thinking of them together leads to similar physical provision, often causing provision for cycling to impede on pedestrian space. The committee were agreed that walking and cycling are not the same and need to be treated differently. Local transport plans and strategies should have specific and separate sections and policies for walking and cycling.
- 5.4.7** The committee are agreed that, with very few exceptions, cycles should be on the carriageway, not on the footway. The committee also recognised that to encourage more cycling, provision on the highway needs to be clear and safe space for bicycles.

The group has made a number of recommendations to facilitate pedestrians in response to the Local Transport Plan consultation:

- That pavement railings are removed where possible to encourage the free movements of pedestrians;
- Pedestrians should be enabled to cross roads in places they find convenient rather than being considered as a secondary thought after the convenience of traffic;
- Pavement parking should be discouraged as this discourages walking and is particularly discriminatory to those who use wheelchairs or have other mobility problems, as well as parents with prams;
- For pensioners, the condition of pavements is a key factor in influencing both sustainable transport use and also social inclusion. Poorly maintained pavements discourage the elderly from walking which in turn can lead to exclusion; and
- The St Margaret's Road traffic light trial should be reconsidered, as anecdotal evidence suggested that it was a success from a pedestrian perspective.

## **5.5 20's Plenty**

- 5.5.1** Members of the group, other Members, officers and members of the public attended a presentation by Rod King of the 20's Plenty Campaign. Research has shown a significant increase in both walking and cycling in 20mph zones. A study in Bristol showed an average increase of over 20% in both cycling and walking<sup>17</sup>. The group recommends that Cheltenham

follow the example of several other towns and cities and introduces a default 20mph speed limit. Higher speeds are then sign-posted only where appropriate.

**5.5.2** Cheltenham's AQMA Action Plan supports the reduction of the urban speed limit to 20 mph in some areas to improve air quality<sup>18</sup>. As the 20 mph speed limit has benefits for public health from both improved air quality and increased physical activity levels, it has been funded from local public health budgets in some parts of the country. Some major arterial roads would be exempt from this default. Other roads, such as the High Street, would have an even lower speed limit. In practice, the actual change in traffic speeds may not be as much as prescribed, but there will be some reduction, and the reduced speed limit would give reassurance to cyclists and walkers. It should also lead to a reduction in acceleration which has a negative effect on both air quality and noise.

**5.5.3** This recommendation was included in the group's response to the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan consultation which was agreed by Cabinet in April 2015.

**5.5.4** The group realises that to achieve compliance and acceptance of a lowered speed limit, there should be local buy in. Therefore they believe there should be public consultation before any imposition of the lower speed limit. In other parts of the country, where a 20 mph limit has been implemented, it has not been lifted and where trials have taken place, the limit has not been raised at the end of the trial (except for individual roads).

## **5.6 Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan Consultation**

**5.6.1** Members of the group attended a Members' Briefing on the Gloucestershire County Council Local Transport Plan in March 2015. The group's response to that consultation (see appendix) was included in the Cheltenham Borough Council response<sup>19</sup> to the consultation agreed by Cabinet in April 2015. A revised Local Transport Plan will be put out for a second round of consultation in November 2015, with plans for its eventual adoption in May 2016.

## **5.7 Highway design**

**5.7.1** Chris Riley from Gloucestershire Highways came and met with the group to discuss highway design and how that could facilitate cycling and walking.

**5.7.2** Any major improvements such as pavement widening could only be undertaken as part of a wider scheme as there is no funding available otherwise. But some minor changes such as road markings could be possible, and it is possible to do trials as was done at the top of Bath Road. Group members suggest that the use of white paint to 'remake the space' could be a powerful and cost-effective means of addressing some critical concerns in the short term.

**5.7.3** The move for cycle provision has moved away from containment to including cycle provision in the overall design. Gloucestershire County Council has already resolved that cycling and cycle parking is considered as part of all highways schemes.

**5.7.4** The aim to facilitate pedestrian movement and road crossings has been taken into account in the Cheltenham Transport Plan. The favoured approach is to look at where people want to cross and see what can be done to facilitate that. There are still a number of railings around Cheltenham for historic reasons, which no longer required by DfT guidelines. Where there is no safety argument for retaining the railings, someone needs to have the courage to initiate their removal.

## **5.8 Shared spaces**



- 5.8.1** The removal of the ban on cycling on pedestrianised parts of the High Street and Promenade is essential to enable cycle permeability of the town centre, and underpins the Cheltenham Transport Plan and LSTF bid.
- 5.8.2** The task group met with representatives of Insight Gloucestershire and Guide Dogs. Walking is an essential method of transport for blind and visually impaired people and the walking environment is fundamental to independent mobility. The needs of this group include clearly demarcated footpaths and controlled crossings. There is understandable concern by this group about sharing space with cyclists. The group agrees that with limited exceptions, cycles should be on the carriageway, not on the footway.
- 5.8.3** There is potential for conflict in the non-motorised areas of the High Street and Promenade. The Promenade does have a marked space for vehicle movement which could possibly be employed in the High Street. The movement of most shoppers is not linear, though that of cyclists is likely to be. Decisions over demarcation of space in these areas should take into account the needs of blind and visually impaired people. Cyclists should be made aware of the needs of other users – though this will not mitigate for anti-social cyclists.
- 5.8.4** The group heard from Howard Barber, CBC Public Space Designer, that there has been a move away from fully shared space without demarcated areas for traffic. This has been in response to the needs of people with disabilities. However shared space is still attractive to developers who mistakenly perceive it as a means to create less public space.
- 5.8.5** Howard Barber has established an accessibility working group who are assembled on an adhoc basis to give their views on major projects. Marc Gulwell of Insight who attended the scrutiny committee is part of this group. Projects the group have been involved in include plans for the town centre and Lower High Street, and more recently the group went to the railway station to look at access and signage. Wilf Tomaney would like to create an equivalent working group of walking and cycling experts.
- 5.8.6** At the start of any major project an Equality Impact Assessment is carried out. Howard Barber suggested that the needs of cyclists and walkers (as two separate groups) could be considered at the same time, and this was agreed by the group.

## **5.9 Creating Streets for Cycling and Walking**

- 5.9.1** Wilf Tomaney, Townscape Manager, emphasised that attractive streets were essential to encouraging more people to walk and cycle. People are attracted to beautiful and interesting places, which are safe - both from crime and traffic danger; they shy away from ugly, dangerous places. Cheltenham has tree-lined streets, lined with buildings which overlook them and a selection of attractive parks and gardens strategically located around the town. This gives it a head-start in delivering a place to walk and cycle around. The values of creating beautiful streets and spaces should not be underestimated in delivering walking and cycling to the town - we should be creating streets and places where people want to be and where they want to linger. Planting, surface materials, public art, benches, attractive buildings, shade, water, visual stimulation are all valuable tools in delivering this
- 5.9.2** Street and space design must be supported by a multi-disciplinary approach and ongoing maintenance. This requires collaboration between engineers, architects, landscape architects, police, and local authorities in delivering street-scene and highway design. The group members who went to Bristol saw the results of this collaborative approach.

## **5.10 Planning**

- 5.10.1** The group met with Mark Power of Gloucestershire County Council Highways and Martin Chandler, Cheltenham Borough Council Applications Team Leader.
- 5.10.2** Mark Power's role is to respond to significant planning proposals on behalf of Gloucestershire Highways as a statutory consultee. He stated that highways have the power to suggest improvements or conditions, but that all conditions must be reasonable, related and viable. He considers that large developments give more opportunity for improvements and imaginative thinking as there is more money to spend. In his view, in smaller developments, the money and attention needs to go to the mode of transport that will cause most (negative) impact (i.e. motorised vehicles).
- 5.10.3** Responses have to be in the context of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and any local policy documents such as the Local Transport Plan, JCS and the Cheltenham Plan. The more current a document, the more weight it will carry. Any policies must stand up to legal scrutiny.
- 5.10.4** Influencing developers remains a challenge. Although Highways are not involved until later in the process, there is the possibility of Cheltenham Borough Council having some influence at the pre-planning stage. Martin Chandler is re-introducing the 'Design Surgery', and has invited John Mallows to join the panel on a trial basis.
- 5.10.5** The group had concerns about the permeability of many residential developments, especially on the outskirts of Cheltenham, e.g. Up Hatherley and Warden Hill. These areas tended to be very car-centric, as the direct routes preferred by walkers and cyclists were not available. Martin suggested that the police would be concerned about open-ended street layouts that hinder enforcement. Building in permeability would require attention to Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and building out this concern.
- 5.10.6** Both CBC planning and Highways consulted with C&TCC on plans with regard to cycling. There is as yet no equivalent organisation for them to consult with on walking.
- 5.10.7** Wilf Tomaney suggested that the hierarchy proposed by policy SD5<sup>20</sup> of the JCS be applied to all policy and planning decisions, and the needs of walkers and cyclists should be considered before other road users. Walking should come before cycling in the hierarchy because almost everyone walks at some time, and most people will do part of any journey on foot.

Hierarchy of Transport Modes	
Highest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pedestrians and people with mobility difficulties</li> <li>2. Cyclists</li> <li>3. Public transport and social/ community services</li> <li>4. Access by commercial vehicles</li> <li>5. Ultra-low emission vehicles</li> </ol>
Lowest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Other motorised vehicles</li> </ol>

**5.10.8** The group agreed that the hierarchy of planning adopted for the JCS should also be adopted by the Cheltenham Plan.

## 5.11 Planning Policy

**5.11.1** James Brain, Senior Planning Policy Officer, has attended almost all the meetings of the scrutiny task group and taken note of what has been discussed. He considered that the proposals made

are achievable within the Cheltenham Plan and will consider the inclusion of separate walking and cycling policies. When the policy has been drafted, he would like to reconvene the group to review it.

**5.11.2** James suggested that a corporate strategy or suite of strategies would help support the Cheltenham Plan. A strategy would lend more detail to the policies contained in the plan, and would provide significant weight to the direction and content of planning policy as well as support wider spatial strategies (networks) for walking and cycling. He suggested the group looked at creating separate cycling and walking strategies as have been done in Bristol, and possibly an additional public realm strategy to cover the town centre. Specific strategies could also form the basis for future funding bids. The group supported this proposal

**5.11.3** Gloucestershire County Council's Cycling Strategy for Gloucestershire is currently at the draft stage. It is likely to be finalised and adopted in 2015/16.

## **5.12 Cheltenham Borough staff green travel plan**

**5.12.1** Money raised from CBC staff parking charges is collected to fund a green travel plan and officers have been assigned to develop it. A green travel scheme could include the provision of facilities and incentives or personalised travel planning. The results should be monitored. In the event of moving out of the Municipal Offices, it should be ensured that any new premises provides suitable facilities for walking and cycling, and can be easily accessed by residents, members and staff on foot or by bike.

## **5.13 Promotion of walking and cycling.**

**5.13.1** Rowena Tassell from the Cheltenham Trust told the group about the success of the Walk Well Health Walks. These are volunteer led, very popular and very sustainable, the main costs to the Trust being that of producing and printing the walk programmes. The Trust is attempting to introduce the same sort of scheme for cycling, but that is still at an early stage and so far take up has been slow. Both schemes are promoted through the exercise on prescription scheme and are open to all.

**5.13.2** The Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) currently has responsibility for promotion of sustainable transport in Gloucestershire. Its current emphasis is on travel planning, with workplaces and around stations. They support national promotions such as walk to school week and bike week. Active travel is promoted through the Thinktravel website [www.thinktravel.info](http://www.thinktravel.info) They have funding until March 2016, when ownership of the Thinktravel brand will pass to the Integrated Transport Unit for maintenance.

**5.13.3** In the group's opinion, there was a missed opportunity to promote walking on the Cheltenham.gov.uk website which, apart from the health walks, mostly refers to walking outside Cheltenham. There is also currently no walking map of Cheltenham, though this could be a possibility in the future with plans for a new suite of maps (in partnership with the Tourist Information Centre). A partnership with the Walkit website could be considered as this would also be used to promote health walks and themed walks on behalf of the Trust.

**5.13.4** Open Streets events where an area of the town is closed to traffic on one Sunday a month were discussed, similar to Open Streets events in London or Make Sunday Special in Bristol. This would encourage people to walk and give an opportunity for traffic-free cycling.

## **5.14 Fieldtrip to Bristol**

**5.14.1** Members of the group took a trip to Bristol to meet with cycling campaigners and council officers responsible for cycling. Many of the infrastructure changes are fairly recent as Bristol has benefitted from funding from Cycling City designation (2011) and the Cycle City Ambition grant which has made a number of improvements possible. Before this there was a tolerance of cyclists using shared traffic free spaces which enabled permeability and offered the opportunity to cycle away from motorised traffic. Bristol City Council has a dedicated cycle team. The group were impressed by the number of people riding bikes, most of whom did not wear helmets, and the respect shown to cyclists by other road users. The recently introduced 20 mph speed limits meant roads were calmer and members felt more comfortable cycling in traffic.

## **5.15 Funding**

**5.15.1** The LSTF has no funding for infrastructure and most of its funding has already been allocated. At the time of writing there was £5-10K available to be spent by March 2016 but that is likely to be gone soon. There are also small pots of funding held by the Townscape department at Cheltenham Borough Council. Many County Councillors had funding available from their Active Together funds, and they also had small Highways budgets. Another potential funding source was the Health Inequalities Funding administered by Richard Gibson. The CBC Environmental Fund had also been used to fund some cycling projects.

**5.15.2** Wilf Tomaney pointed out that projects needed to be sufficiently funded. If there is insufficient budget, the project should be cut to match the budget. Adequate maintenance budgets also need to be in place.

## **6. CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK**

**6.1** Walking and cycling straddle a number of Cabinet portfolios: Healthy Lifestyles; Leader; but chiefly Development and Safety. The group chair kept the Cabinet members updated throughout the process.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** This has not been straightforward as many of the issues discussed have not been within Cheltenham Borough Council's remit. For this reason, and for budgetary reasons many of our recommendations have concentrated on influencing policy rather than infrastructure.

**7.2** Taking all these findings into consideration, the task group are making the following recommendations to Cabinet:

**i. Rec 1: Identify opportunities for improving cycle route permeability and cycle parking in areas outside the town centre.** A lot of work has been done on removing barriers within the town centre and most of these proposals have been included in the Cheltenham Transport Plan. There is still work to be done outside the centre.

i. Cheltenham Borough Council should endorse Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycling Campaign's wish list for improvements to Cheltenham's cycle network. Once agreed, the authority should put aside funds each year to pay for the items suggested, or proactively identify and bid for funds to pay for the suggestions and encourage the

County Council to do the same. These could be added to a costed wish list of improvements, which could then be added to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 123 lists or included in funding bids.

- ii. **An equivalent exercise should be undertaken for walking.** Councillors should work with residents and walking experts to draw up a wish list of improvements for residents. Locations should be identified for benches and funding identified for maintenance.
- ii. **Rec 2: Gloucestershire County Council should investigate and engage with Cheltenham residents in order to promote a borough wide 20mph default speed limit to make the environment safer and more attractive to walkers and cyclists.** A default speed limit does not mean that all roads will have a 20mph limit. Selected roads will have a higher speed limit, and a few may have an even lower limit. The Council should also investigate the possibility of securing additional funding for this from public health budgets.
- iii. **Rec 3: Gloucestershire County Council should undertake an assessment aimed at removing guard rails, which are a key barrier to walking and encourage faster vehicle speeds.**
- iv. **Rec 4: Benches should be strategically positioned along routes to allow people to rest – on inclines, at attractive view points, at nodal points on the street and transport network (bus stops in particular.** Benches are an important part of any walking strategy, for elderly and disabled people in particular. They need to be well maintained and comfortable.
- v. **Rec 5: Cheltenham Borough Council should work with the Cheltenham Trust and Gloucestershire County Council to promote cycling and walking within Cheltenham, especially once Thinktravel loses its LSTF funding in 2016.**
  - i. Images of cycling and walking in Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Trust promotional material should depict them as attractive and normal activities for everybody.
  - ii. The Cheltenham.gov.uk page: *Walking in Cheltenham* should be improved to promote walking within the borough.
  - iii. Cheltenham Borough Council should work with Cheltenham Trust to create maps of walking routes within the town.
- vi. **Rec 6: The needs of walkers and cyclists should be considered before other road users when making policy and planning decisions, and their needs should be considered at the start of any major planning project.**

- i. At the start of any major project when the equality impact statement is carried out, the needs of cyclists and walkers should be considered (as two separate categories).
- ii. Cycling and walking are not the same mode and their needs should be considered separately in all policies and plans.
- iii. The planning hierarchy of transport modes adopted by the JCS should also be adopted by the Cheltenham Plan and applied to planning and policy decisions.

Hierarchy of Transport Modes	
Highest	1. Pedestrians and people with mobility difficulties 2. Cyclists 3. Public transport and social/ community services 4. Access by commercial vehicles 5. Ultra-low emission vehicles
Lowest	6. Other motorised vehicles

- iv. Increased cycling provision should not be at the expense of walkers. Ideally cycle provision should not be on the footway. Where traffic speeds make it necessary, good quality segregation should be provided for bikes on the highway.
- v. If people are to be encouraged to walk, pedestrians need to have an at least equal level of service as other methods of transport and positive provision of space and safe crossing points. Their needs should be considered in the design of all public space including car parks.
- vi. Walking is a particularly important mode of transport for some groups of people such as those with visual impairment or other disabilities. The needs of these groups should be considered in planning and policy decisions.
- vii. The Cheltenham Plan will consider the inclusion of separate walking and cycling policies.

**vii. Rec 7: A cycling and walking working group should be created to provide input into projects.** This could operate in a similar way to the access working group with Wilf Tomaney as the facilitator.

**viii. Rec 8: Cheltenham Borough Council should endorse the Gloucestershire County Council Cycling Strategy and draw up its own walking strategy.** The Gloucestershire County Council Cycling Strategy is likely to be adopted this municipal year. Cheltenham Borough Council could resolve to endorse it and take on some of its recommendations. There is no equivalent County Council strategy for walking, which strengthens the case for CBC producing its own walking strategy.



- ix. **Rec 9: Cheltenham Borough Council should select a cycling and walking champion from its members.** This member could represent CBC on the GCC Cycle Forum.
- x. **Rec 10: Cheltenham Borough Council should lead by example by devising and implementing its own green staff travel plan.**
- xi. **Rec 11: Cheltenham Borough Council should consider the introduction of Car Free Sundays.** This would involve the shutting of defined town centre streets to traffic one Sunday per month to allow for community events, following the example of successful schemes elsewhere.
- xii. **Rec 12: Cheltenham Borough Council should push for a more collaborative approach on street design, working across disciplines and departments and also across councils (County and Borough).**

## 8. TAKING FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY

### 8.1

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Tess Beck , tess.beck@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264130</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One page strategy agreed by O&amp;S committee</li> <li>2. Group response to Local Transport Plan consultation</li> <li>3. Walking and cycling statistics</li> </ol>
<b>Background information</b>	



## SCRUTINY REVIEW – ONE PAGE STRATEGY

FOR COMPLETION BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Broad topic area	Cycling and Walking
Specific topic area	To review the facilities for cycling and walking in the town.
Ambitions for the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish existing provision for cycling and walking in the town</li> <li>• Identify any areas for improvement</li> <li>• Establish how best to influence the decision makers</li> <li>• Determine means by which the council could help to promote cycling and walking</li> <li>• Consider if there are any wider 'integrated transport' issues</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a wish list of improvements to cycle provision in Cheltenham</li> <li>• Submit proposals that will enhance the cycling and walking provision in the town centre for consideration by Gloucestershire Highways as part of the town centre development</li> <li>• Promote cycling and walking in the town and the associated benefits (including health)</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for walking and cycling as part of a Borough Council staff green travel plan</li> <li>• Submit proposals to the Borough Council and County Council for policy development in both planning and transport</li> <li>• Submit proposals on street design principles to help promote cycling and walking</li> <li>• Feed into the Cheltenham Plan</li> </ul>
How long should the review take?	It is suggested that this review will take six months
Recommendations to be reported to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee and CBC Cabinet
FOR COMPLETION BY OFFICERS	
Members	Tim Harman Dan Murch Suzanne Williams Max Wilkinson Adam Lillywhite

Officers experts and witnesses	Wilf Tomaney, Rhonda Tauman Rowena Tassell, Malcolm Walls, James Brain
Sponsoring officer	Tbc
Facilitator	Bev Thomas/Tess Beck
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member Development & Safety and Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles
<b>FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP</b>	
Are there any current issues with performance?	
Co-optees	John Mallows, Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycle Campaign Bronwen Thornton, Walk 21 John Newbury, Living Streets, GCCllr Iain Dobie
Other consultees	Other interest groups to be consulted as and when throughout the review period
Background information	Tess Beck is maintaining a useful list of web sites to circulate. Local cycle leaflet; pedestrian phase information; local cycle groups
Suggested method of approach	structured programme timetable for next 6 months
How will we involve the public/media? Or at what stages	

## Appendix 2

### Cycling and Walking STG response to Local Transport Plan consultation

The Cheltenham Borough Council Walking and Cycling Scrutiny Task Group is concerned with an investigation and analysis of the issues around and promotion of walking and cycling as a transport choice within Cheltenham.

The group notes and welcomes the fact that in LTP3 almost the entire area of the borough of Cheltenham is designated a 'place for people' in the vision for 2031. However, if the borough of Cheltenham is to become a 'place for people', rather than a place beholden to traffic, significant changes to encourage active travel choices will need to be enabled.

Evidence presented to the group by Rod King, of the 20s Plenty campaign, suggests that introducing default lower speed limits in urban areas encourages the development of spaces in which people use sustainable transport rather than cars. We would encourage the county council, if it is truly seeking to create a 'place for people', to pursue a policy of introducing a default 20mph limit in the borough. The group would recommend that, in line with practice elsewhere, the county seeks funding from health authorities to help pay for a scheme.

The group has heard evidence that positive promotion of cycling should be used to encourage a change in mindset. The choice of cycling should be made to look attractive and normal, rather than a niche pursuit.

Having heard evidence from county council officers, the group would question why the trial scheme for removing traffic lights in St Margaret's Road was not made permanent. Anecdotal evidence suggested the trial was a success from a pedestrian perspective, regardless of the apparent lack of car journey time improvement. However, it should be considered that a solution to the problem of a reduced cycle links resulting from the trial would need to be solved.

The group would encourage the removal of as many pavement railings as possible, to encourage the free movement of pedestrians across the town. Pedestrians should be enabled to cross in places they find convenient, rather than being considered as a secondary thought after the convenience of motorists. As part of this, we must seek to discourage pavement parking, which discourages walking and is particularly discriminatory to those who use wheelchairs or have other mobility problems, as well as parents with prams.

For pensioners, the condition of pavements is a key factor in influencing both sustainable transport use and also social inclusion. Poorly maintained pavements discourage the elderly from walking, which in turn can lead to exclusion.

The full findings of the scrutiny task group are due to be completed this summer, but we hope these interim thoughts will help inform the county council's LTP3.

Max Wilkinson

On behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council Walking and Cycling Scrutiny Task Group

## Appendix 3

### Department for Transport statistics

Walking and Cycling Statistics (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/walking-and-cycling/>)

#### Proportion of residents<sup>1</sup> who do any walking<sup>2</sup> or cycling<sup>3</sup>, at least once per month: England, 2013/14

	% Walking	% Cycling
<b>Cheltenham</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>26.1</b>
Gloucestershire	88.5	19.1
Bristol	87.4	25.9
South West	87.3	18.2
England	86.3	14.971

#### Proportion of residents<sup>1</sup> who walk<sup>2</sup> or cycle (any length or purpose) at a given frequency: England, 2013/14

	Walking				Cycling			
	1xper month	1xperweek	3xperweek	5xperweek	1xper month	1xperweek	3xperweek	5xperweek
<b>Cheltenham</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Gloucestershire	88.5	81.1	59.0	47.8	19.1	11.5	4.9	2.6
Bristol	87.4	78.8	59.1	46.1	25.9	17.0	9.4	5.0
South West	87.3	80.0	59.2	48.2	18.2	11.6	5.5	3.1
England	86.3	78.9	57.9	47.2	15.0	9.5	4.4	2.5

#### Proportion of residents<sup>1</sup> who walk<sup>2</sup> or cycle (any length) for utility purposes<sup>5</sup> at a given frequency: England, 95% CI refers to the 95% confidence interval<sup>4</sup>

	Walking				Cycling			
	1xper month	1xperweek	3xperweek	5xperweek	1xper month	1xperweek	3xperweek	5xperweek
<b>Cheltenham</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Gloucestershire	56.7	47.8	30.2	20.2	7.9	5.3	2.6	1.6
Bristol	70.9	59.5	36.5	25.4	15.5	12.4	7.2	2.8
South West	55.9	47.2	29.5	19.4	7.8	5.4	3.0	1.8
England	58.7	50.1	33.0	22.3	6.5	4.5	2.6	1.6

#### Proportion of residents<sup>1</sup> who walk<sup>2</sup> or cycle (any length) for recreational purposes at a given frequency; Eng

	Walking				Cycling			
	1xper month	1xperweek	3xperweek	5xperweek	1xper month	1xperweek	3xperweek	5xperweek
<b>Cheltenham</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>
Gloucestershire	60.3	47.8	27.5	19.2	13.3	6.6	2.2	0.7
Bristol	51.0	37.3	18.3	11.7	13.9	5.8	1.5	0.7
South West	60.5	48.7	27.8	19.8	12.7	7.0	2.2	0.8
England	55.4	42.2	23.1	16.2	10.3	5.7	1.7	0.7

#### Cycling to work: Data from the 2011 Census<sup>6</sup>,

Proportion of adult residents who usually cycle to work, as at March 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census)

	%
<b>Cheltenham</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Cotswold	1.4
Forest of Dean	0.8
Gloucester	3.5
Stroud	1.5
Tewkesbury	3.1
Gloucestershire	2.6
Bristol	5.0
South West	2.3
England	1.9

##### Comments:

Cheltenham shows a significant increase in the number of adults walking 5x a week or more (up from 44.6% to 53.1%) with increases in the numbers walking at all frequencies. This correlates with significant increases in utility walking.

Cheltenham shows a significant increase in the numbers cycling 1x a month (up from 20% to 26%) and increases in the level of recreational cycling. Cheltenham is one of the top 10 local authorities nationally with the highest % of adults cycling 1x a week. There has, however, been a decrease in the numbers cycling 5x a week or more and no significant changes in utility cycling levels.

Nationally, there is a distinct gender difference in cycling uptake, with men outnumbering women 2:1 across all ages. Although cycling levels decline with age, there is also a decline in the 25 - 34 age band with numbers increasing again in the 35-44 age band.

For walking, there is no significant gender difference, and smaller differences between age groups, although there is a decline with age, especially in utility walking.

People who walk and cycle regularly are also more likely to be physically active in other ways.

##### Notes

1. Residents based on a sample of adults aged 16 up surveyed by Sport England's Active People Survey (APS)
2. Walking refers to a continuous walk of at least 10 minutes and can be any type of walk, although 'walking around shops'
3. Cycling can be any distance and any type of cycling.
4. The APS data is weighted and has a 95% confidence interval.
5. Estimate of number of days of utility walking = Total number of days walking – Number of days
6. The census only asks about cycling to work, so would exclude other journeys and those not working, e.g students,

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- <sup>1</sup>Cheltenham Partnership action plan  
[http://www.cheltenhampartnership.org.uk/cheltenhampartnership/info/21/project\\_information/2/partnership\\_action\\_plan](http://www.cheltenhampartnership.org.uk/cheltenhampartnership/info/21/project_information/2/partnership_action_plan)
- <sup>2</sup> DfT Cycling Delivery Plan Draft October 2014  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/364791/141015\\_Cycling\\_Delivery\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/364791/141015_Cycling_Delivery_Plan.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015 <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/manifesto2015/ConservativeManifesto2015.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> Infrastructure Act 2015 part 2 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/7/part/2/enacted>
- <sup>5</sup> Public Health England (2014) Estimating Local Mortality Burdens Associated with Particulate Air Pollution.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/332854/PHE\\_CRCE\\_010.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332854/PHE_CRCE_010.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> e.g. Transport for London: Town Centre Study 2011: Economic contribution made by walkers, cyclists and other transport users to retail centres. <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/town-centre-study-2011-report.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> NICE local government briefings: Walking and cycling (2013) <http://publications.nice.org.uk/lgb8>
- <sup>8</sup> Ballantyne, R & Blackshaw, N (2014) Active Planning Toolkit 2. Gloucestershire NHS  
<http://www.gloucestershireccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Active-Planning-Toolkit-2.pdf>
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.cyclecheltenham.org.uk/counts.html>
- <sup>10</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/walking-and-cycling-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/walking-and-cycling-statistics)
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Cheltenham Parking Review Phase II – Southern Review Area June 2011: Gloucestershire County Council
- <sup>13</sup> Steer Davies Gleave (2014) Cheltenham PTP 2013 Executive Summary Report February 2014  
[http://www.thinktravel.info/files/uploads/Executive\\_Summary\\_Cheltenham.pdf](http://www.thinktravel.info/files/uploads/Executive_Summary_Cheltenham.pdf)
- <sup>14</sup> <http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s23808/Barriers%20to%20Cycling%20Report.pdf>
- <sup>15</sup> <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/time-to-target-the-walk-to-school-says-living-streets>
- <sup>16</sup> As they were in the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan consultation
- <sup>17</sup> [https://bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/ua/ua000/0726\\_7.pdf](https://bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/ua/ua000/0726_7.pdf)
- <sup>18</sup> Cheltenham Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan April 2014  
[http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3780/air\\_quality\\_action\\_plan\\_2014](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3780/air_quality_action_plan_2014)
- <sup>19</sup> [https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s15154/2015\\_04\\_14\\_CAB\\_LTP3\\_Appendix\\_2\\_CBC\\_comments.pdf](https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s15154/2015_04_14_CAB_LTP3_Appendix_2_CBC_comments.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> Joint Core Strategy – Gloucester – Cheltenham- Tewkesbury Submission Version November 2014  
<http://www.gct-jcs.org/Documents/Publications/Submission/JCS-Submission-Version-November-2014a-corrected.pdf>