

Draft Supplementary Planning Document November 2024

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

East Cowes and Whippingham 2022-2032

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1 Introduction

In 2017, the Department for Transport published the first statutory [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), committing it to public spending on new infrastructure of this type in England for the years to 2021. In July 2020, national government restated its intention to substantially increase the role that active travel plays in local communities, in the policy paper '[Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking](#)'. Increased public spending on cycling and walking infrastructure included £257 million of funding allocated for the year 2021-22 in the government's Spending Review announced in October 2020. A subsequent four-year statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy ([CWIS 2](#)) was announced by the Department for Transport in March 2021, with this document expected to be published in the spring of 2022.

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy introduced the concept of [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans](#) (LCWIPs), documents which identify potential improvements in specific local authority areas which are intended to enable higher rates of walking and cycling for everyday transport needs.

This approach to developing sustainable transport networks to support a modal shift away from motor vehicle use is distinct from earlier initiatives aimed at recreational walking, such as the [England Coast Path](#) project, or the Isle of Wight [Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018](#). However, the ambitions of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan can coincide with recreational walking or rural access strategies when 'desire lines' which indicate daily transport needs for local people align with recreational routes. For example, the established shared use cycling and walking path from Arctic Road in West Cowes to Newport Harbour is both a strategic transport route for cycle commuters and an access to the west bank of the River Medina for leisure walkers and cyclists.

A Walking and Cycling Environment Report for Wootton Bridge and Whippingham was [published in 2018](#). The first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan on the Isle of Wight, covering the towns of Newport and Ryde only, was [published in May 2020](#). An infrastructure plan for West Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood on the west side of the River Medina is [currently in preparation](#).

This document is a complementary Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for East Cowes and Whippingham which covers the east side of the River Medina, including onward connections to Newport via Binfield, Ryde via Wootton Bridge and river crossings to West Cowes. This plan is based on a public consultation with over five hundred households in the East Cowes and Whippingham area, a detailed survey of existing cycling and walking routes, the use of route planning tools and analysis of the desire lines which indicate the need for daily transportation in those communities.

This plan proposes a range of measures compliant with current highways standards including [Local Transport Note 1/20](#), which if implemented would be expected to significantly increase sustainable transport use in the local area, by creating cycling and walking routes which are safe, convenient and accessible. These details of the infrastructure required can be used in bids for a share of government funding from future active travel investment schemes, and can also be used to inform developers of land and buildings in the East Cowes and Whippingham area of sustainable transport potential for these communities.

This plan supports the Isle of Wight Council's delivery of economic regeneration, housing, public health and environmental policies, including its ambition to make the Island 'carbon neutral' by the year 2035.

2 Determining scope

The geographic extent of this Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is the combined boundaries of East Cowes and Whippingham. This area has been determined by an agreement between East Cowes Town Council and Whippingham Parish Council to work together on strategic walking and cycling routes connecting trip attractors, including the route between the key interchange of the East Cowes ferry terminal and the key employment site of Newport. The area also includes several industrial employers and three schools, which are significant trip attractors in their own right.

This area was selected as a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan zone because it is a small peninsula with relatively short travel distances between trip attractors and residential dwellings. It is also one of the areas experiencing the highest population growth on the Isle of Wight, according to the 2001 and 2011 census returns. Near the northern limit of this area, the East Cowes ferry terminal is 5 miles (8 kilometres) from Newport town centre along a relatively flat route, within the range of distances generally considered feasible for regular cycling by able-bodied people. Point 3.4 of the Department for Transport's [technical guidance for local authorities](#) on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (April 2017) states that up to 10 kilometres is a feasible distance for cycling, although some cyclists will travel further. Point 3.14 onwards of this guidance also states that effective engagement with stakeholders is critical to ensuring the quality of an infrastructure plan, which local councils embedded in the community are well-placed to carry out.

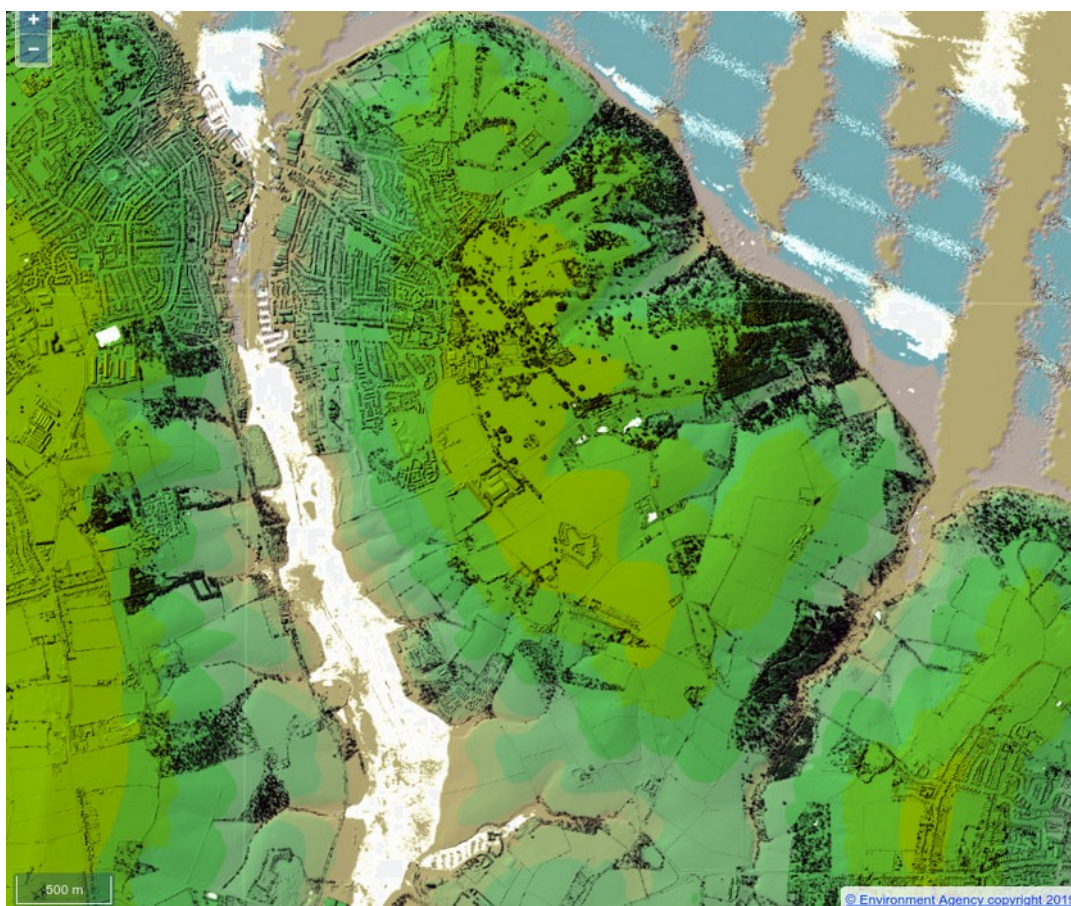


Figure 1: A lidar map of the East Cowes and Whippingham peninsula shows that the topology is relatively flat, making cycling more attractive for everyday journeys. The highest land is in the central area (light green), less than 60 metres above sea level.

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3 Gathering information

In order to gain the most accurate view of cycling and walking in the plan area, primary and secondary sources were utilised, including a survey of local residents, a photographic survey of specific roads, paths and junctions (appendices 24 to 37), the East Cowes Town Plan, the Walking and Cycling Environment Report for Wootton Bridge and Whippingham, the census and other data.

In the 2011 census return, the population of Whippingham and Osborne ward was 3,818 and the population of East Cowes ward was 3,956, for a total of 7,774 residents. In the 2021 census return, due to be published in the summer of 2022, this combined population would be expected to grow past 8,500 residents, based on previous aggregate population growth between 2002 and 2010 of 9.6%. There are also a large number of non-resident users of the local transport network, due to the key transport interchange of East Cowes ferry terminal, which carries [2.2 million passenger journeys per year](#) according to Red Funnel, equivalent to 6,027 resident and visitor journeys per day for all modes.

The need for more cycle paths was identified by 65% of local resident respondents in the most recent East Cowes Town Plan consultation (2020), returned by 698 households (a response rate of 18% of households in the town). This data is evidence of demand for safe and convenient routes which could convert more East Cowes and Whippingham residents away from motor vehicle use for daily journeys.

While pavements on the Victorian avenues of East Cowes generally appear wider than the Isle of Wight average, some roads in the town have no pavements at all, which is also the case in the parish of Whippingham. The area has only one long-distance walking route and no motor-vehicle-free cycle paths for travel into and out of the peninsula, except via the ‘floating bridge’ which is frequently out of service. The traffic-free footpaths that exist do not meet contemporary standards. For example, there is a footpath from East Cowes town centre to Hendy Road, but it is narrow in places and has steps, making it inaccessible to residents with impaired mobility. The East Cowes and Whippingham area could therefore derive significant benefit from targeted active travel infrastructure improvements.

3.1 ‘Round the Island’ cycle route and National Cycle Network

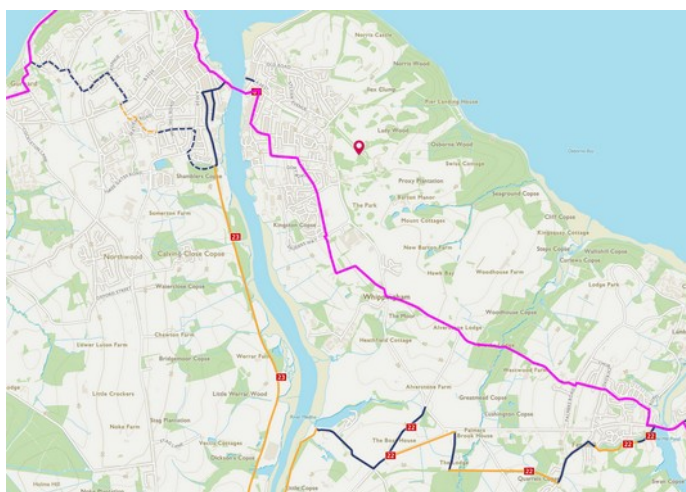


Figure 2: The popular Round the Island leisure cycling route heading south-east through East Cowes and Whippingham (pink) does not connect to the Newport route (blue/orange) until Wootton.

Map data courtesy of Sustrans/OpenStreetMap.org contributors

Both Whippingham and East Cowes are part of the ‘Round the Island’ road cycling route, but there is very little specific cycling infrastructure on this route at present, other than some signage. This route does not connect directly to the Island’s county town of Newport, as it is aimed at tourists and leisure cyclists who wish to follow the coast.

The Round the Island route includes a dangerous junction between disjointed Alverstone Road and Beatrice Avenue sections where cyclists must cross a busy 40mph road, the A3021. A shared-use cycle and pedestrian path has been built at this junction, on the west side of the highway, but it is very narrow and does not meet current design standards for cycle routes.

If using Alverstone Road and East Cowes Road to reach the existing cycle path towards Newport and Ryde at Racecourse (National Cycle Network Route 22), cyclists must cross the A3021 Whippingham Road at a blind junction which has been the location of recent fatal motor vehicle collisions.

A very short section of National Cycle Network Route 23 exists in Castle Street and Dover Road in East Cowes, for ferry connections from the mainland and the ‘floating bridge’ to West Cowes and its cycle path to Newport and beyond.

3.2 Access to and along the coast

Part 9 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 builds on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to improve public access to the English coastline, by creating public rights of way for open-air recreation on foot (The England Coast Path). This legislation enables existing coastal access to be improved and new access to be created in coastal places where it did not already exist, subject to various restrictions and exceptions.

The currently promoted Coastal Path route at East Cowes is inland along roads, due to industrial development on waterfronts and the lack of rights of way across the large private estates of Norris Castle, Osborne House and Barton. The grounds of former royal palace Osborne House are open during limited hours to ticket holders only, and Barton Manor is a private residence. The Norris Castle estate has been proposed for redevelopment for some years, and a planning application has recently been made for this purpose.

England Coast Path routes from IOW 2 to [IOW 10: The Medina](#) (from West Cowes south to Newport, and then north to East Cowes ferry terminal) are at an advanced stage of preparation (Stage 4: Determine). Unless the England Coast Path follows an existing public bridleway, public rights by bicycle and on horseback are not provided by this scheme, but these rights may be exercised with the explicit permission of landowners. The England Coast Path project does not in principle oppose cycling on shared paths should rights for cycling exist, but it has no funding for the provision of cycling infrastructure. Any infrastructure funded by grant aid would be to ‘[national trail](#)’ standards, which are intended for walkers, not cyclists.

A map for the section of IOW 10 on the east side of the River Medina is attached to this document as Appendix 18.

The proposed route IOW 1 from East Cowes chain ferry terminal going north, running clockwise around the peninsula to Wootton Bridge, is the only one of the ten routes proposed for the England Coast path on the Isle of Wight which has not reached the detailed design stage. This route is currently at England Coast Path stages 2 and 3 (Develop and Propose), led by Natural England who are entering into discussions with landowners. Publication of a route for IOW 1 is expected in winter 2022/23.

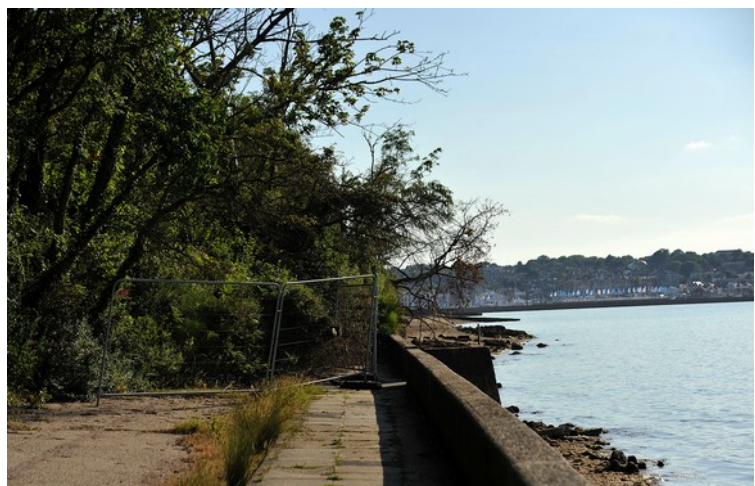


Figure 3: The seafront landslip in 2014 closed level walking access and cycling access to the north side of the peninsula. Photo courtesy of Michael Paler

In order to achieve the stated aspiration of following the English coastline as closely as possible, this route might have to cross the significant landslip on the East Cowes Esplanade. An inland alignment to avoid this area is under consideration.

The coastal area on the north side of the peninsula has not had level access for pedestrians or cycles since this major ground movement in 2014 closed a section of public highway along the Esplanade. 77% of East Cowes Town Plan survey respondents (2020) reported that they no longer walked as often in the area, which is now fenced off with warning signs, compared to before the landslip. Some residents reported being afraid to walk in the adjacent woodland in this survey, especially those with impaired mobility who fear falling over and injuring themselves. A community group of volunteers is currently working to make the woodland adjacent to the coastal landslip safer and more accessible, with ambitions to create a wooden walkway through this area.

For the purposes of this Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, an England Coast Path route IOW 1 which followed the eastern perimeter of the peninsula would have negligible relevance, as it would not connect 'trip attractors' except via a very indirect route which would be unlikely to be of practical use for the everyday transport needs of local people.

The existing footpath on the eastern bank of the River Medina which forms part of England Coast Path route IOW 10 has greater potential for sustainable transport, as it connects trip attractors in East Cowes with the county town of Newport. This route in Whippingham starts from St. Mildred's Church, going past the Folly Inn and the disused Folly Works where a new hotel is planned, towards Island Harbour in Binfield, across farm fields containing livestock and through woodland.

This footpath is unsurfaced and especially boggy in winter, to the extent that it can be unsafe or impassable at some times of the year. This section of route IOW 10 contains several stiles and is not currently permitted for cycling from St Mildred's Church to Island Harbour. An alternative route has been proposed west of the church, heading south from Saunders Way (Appendix 19). After crossing the lock gates at Island Harbour, route IOW 10 continues towards Newport via Medina College and Seaclose Park on the 'Medina Greenway' which is surfaced with plastic mesh. This route is explicitly open for cycling from the boardwalk on the south side of Island Harbour heading southwards to Newport, but heading north the cycle path ends abruptly at a concrete revetment there.



Figure 4: Part of public footpath CS24 from St Mildred's Church to Folly Inn, part of route IOW 10. Photo taken in January 2022, when mud on the slope into the woods made the path treacherous

Cyclists following signage to East Cowes from Island Harbour are diverted towards the A3021 Whippingham Road which carries heavy goods vehicle traffic to and from the Red Funnel ferry, a route of 2.4 miles (3.8 kilometres) from Island Harbour to St Mildred's Church. The footpath along the riverbank between these points is 1.4 miles (2.3 kilometres) long. The detour therefore adds 0.9 miles (1.5 kilometres) to the route from the Medina Greenway, partly due to turning south-east along Mill Lane. However, cyclists using Fairlee Road to reach St Mildred's Church from Hillside in Newport's harbour (3.2 miles, 5.2 kilometres) travel similar distances to those using the Medina Greenway (3.1 miles, 5.0 kilometres). The inland route along Fairlee Road has the benefit of avoiding the water obstacle of Island Harbour, so that a crossing of the harbour's lock gates is not required.

3.3 Equestrian potential

There are no known public bridleways or byways in the East Cowes and Whippingham area. Horses are not permitted to use the Medina Greenway which connects Seaclose Park in Newport with Island Harbour at Binfield, due to that path's plastic cellular surface designed to protect tree roots. While horses are not typically used for everyday transport, they frequently travel on shared use paths in other parts of the Island. Some respondents to the survey of local residents for this plan stated that they own horses and expressed the desire to ride them on local routes.

3.4 Interaction with dogs, farm animals and wildlife

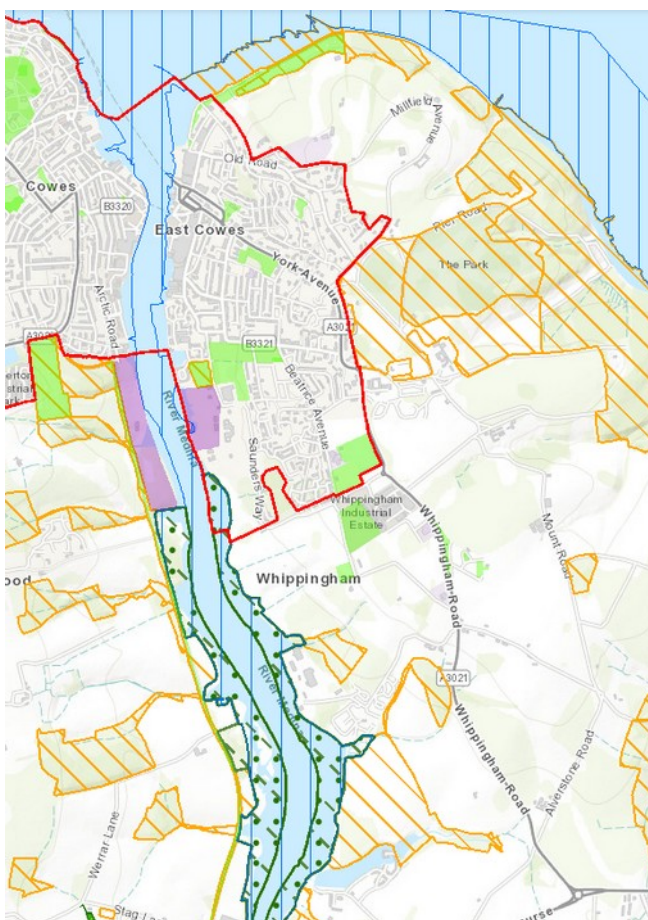


Figure 5: Wildlife designations in the River Medina area include SAC (blue vertical lines), Ramsar and SSSI (green dots) and SINC (yellow diagonal lines)

Dog walking is a popular form of recreational activity on the Isle of Wight, especially in scenic areas which contain public footpaths and shared use cycling and walking paths. Dogs can create conflict with cyclists, especially when the dogs are off the lead, or are on long leads which can present a hazard. In addition, wildlife is subject to pressure from domesticated dogs, particularly the migratory birds that visit coastal areas.

On the England Coast Path, dogs must be under effective control at all times, which means either on a lead or within sight and capable of being recalled. Dogs must be on a short lead at all times near livestock, and can be subject to additional restrictions in sensitive wildlife areas.

The England Coast Path project has proposed an inland route around a field used by birds at Whippingham, and infrastructure to mitigate bird disturbance on the section of path just north of the Island Harbour marina.

The Isle of Wight Council is a member of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership's 'Bird Aware Solent' consortium of local authorities in the region, which attempts to limit disturbance to over-wintering migratory bird species caused by walkers and their dogs. Some parts of the existing footpath on the east bank of the Medina pass through open farmland which is used by livestock such as sheep, which are also vulnerable to attack by dogs.

The River Medina estuary, as far south as Seaclose Park in Newport, is part of the [Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation](#). The Joint Nature Conservation Committee record for this designation states: "The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their hydrographic regime of four tides each day, and for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present within the area."

Both banks of the River Medina from Saunders Way in East Cowes to Seaclose Park in Newport have the [Solent & Southampton Water 'Ramsar'](#) international designation for wildlife protection. The listing for this designation states: "The site is comprised of estuaries and adjacent coastal habitats including intertidal flats, saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reefs, saltmarsh, and reedbeds, damp woodland, and grazing marsh. The site exhibits an 'unusual strong double tidal flow' and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It supports internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl (51,361 over the winter) including *Charadrius hiaticula*, *Anas crecca* and *Branta bernicla* *bernicla*, important breeding gull and tern populations, and an impressive assemblage of rare invertebrates and plants." The same area forms the Medina Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Adjacent to the east riverbank of the Medina, designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation include Padmore Fields, Heathfield Copse and Heathfield Meadows in Whippingham, the Island Harbour saltmarsh and Blackbush Copse in Binfield. Springhill Wood, Shrape Muds and Western Copse on the East Cowes Esplanade are also recorded Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Therefore this plan will consider the potential impact of dogs on the proposed walking and cycling routes, and the implications for wildlife and farm animals of any new routes or existing routes which could be intensified in use by the provision of new walking and cycling infrastructure. A [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#) would be needed to establish if a coastal cycling and walking route would significantly harm the designated features of the protected wildlife sites.

3.5 Cycle speeds, signage and safe interaction with pedestrians

Some earlier cycle path designs have directed cyclists on to pavements and footpaths apparently in order to reduce obstacles to motor vehicles, rather than to benefit cycle travel. This is perhaps why current government guidance emphasises that new active travel infrastructure should be designed by people who cycle. Older shared use path designs sometimes feature solid white lines to divide walking and cycling modes, leading to conflict with pedestrians who walk on the 'cycle' side of the line, and vice versa. An example of this legacy cycle path design can be found between the east ends of Beatrice Avenue and Folly Lane, on Whippingham Road. This type of white line marking is now deprecated in UK government guidance Local Transport Note 1/20.

The marking of most shared use cycle and walking paths in the East Cowes and Whippingham area is restricted to some very small signs on certain bollards, and a few signposts. Cycle symbols painted on the path itself are non-existent in East Cowes, although some appear on a cycle path in Whippingham. Pedestrians can therefore be forgiven for not knowing that they are walking on a shared use path, especially one which appears almost identical to a conventional pavement.

The recent development of faster electric bicycles and the re-emergence of cycle sport as a group leisure pursuit have made shared-use paths inadequate for the needs of all types of cyclist. While in theory electric bicycles are speed limited by UK and EU law to 15.5 miles per hour (25 kilometres per hour) and no more than a 250 watt motor, in practice electric bicycles can be ‘derestricted’ or modified by their owners to go much faster, and motors of up to 1000 watts are available.

Even when good quality and direct shared-use paths are available, some cyclists are likely to choose road routes for higher speeds and the avoidance of pedestrians, dogs or slower cyclists. The distinction between routes suitable for low-speed cycling for families with small children, disabled people or less confident cyclists, and faster cyclists or large cycling groups, is not made in the current path network, which uses similar signage for all cycle routes. This approach contrasts with the signage intended to inform drivers of motor vehicles, which has colour-coded backgrounds according to the classification of the road: blue for motorways, green for ‘primary route’ A roads, and white for other roads.

Cycle route signs typically feature a blue background and footpath signs a green background, although the Medina Greenway on the east side of that river uses a green background for its metal signs despite being a shared use cycling and walking route. The Medina Greenway also uses some carved wooden signs, which are not readily legible after a few years, particularly in low light conditions.



Figure 6: Legacy shared use path with solid white line design on A3021 Whippingham Road is not compliant with current cycle path standards in Local Transport Note 1/20

This plan will consider the contribution that clearer and more plentiful signage, appropriate for the mode used, could make to the utility of existing and proposed cycling and walking routes in the plan area.

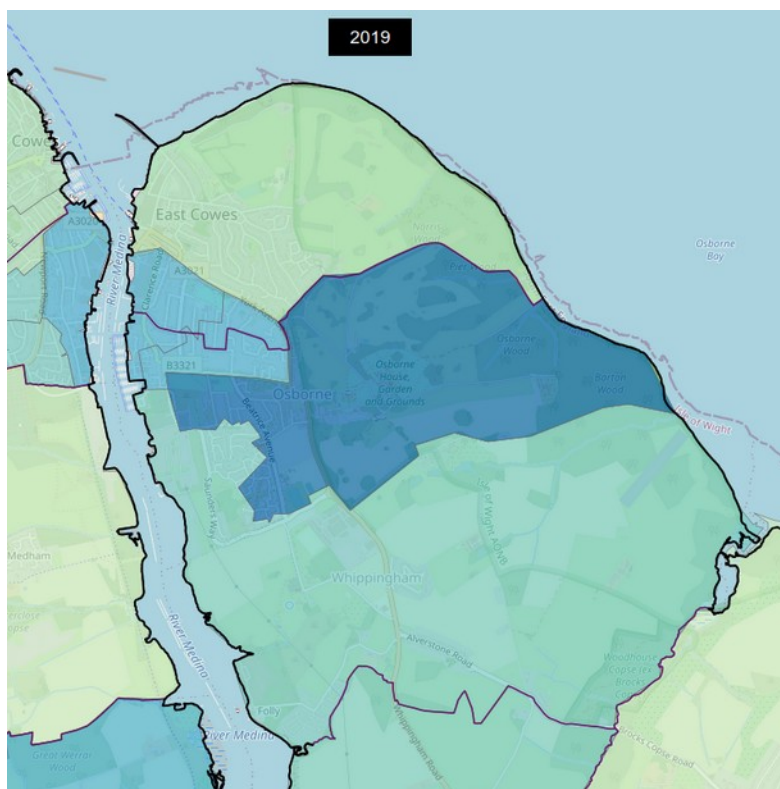
3.6 Indices of deprivation

Indices of deprivation can be used to identify areas which would benefit particularly from increased walking and cycling rates, as these are affordable modes for access to education and workplaces. The [2019 index of deprivation statistics](#) for the three Lower-Super Output Areas in East Cowes, ranked among the 32,844 areas in England where a rank of 1 is the most deprived, include:

Area name	Overall	Income	Jobs	Skills	Health	Child poverty
001E	11,355	10,578	13,271	8,387	14,878	10,489
003A	16,430	14,544	10,902	8,880	16,486	11,722
003B	12,656	10,095	10,363	12,116	11,272	14,352

The 2019 index of deprivation statistics for the two Lower-Super Output Areas in Whippingham and Osborne include:

Area name	Overall	Income	Jobs	Skills	Health	Child poverty
003D	16,193	16,928	13,759	13,381	20,363	15,234
003E	3,942	2,566	2,392	2,480	8,524	2,060



These statistics indicate that area 003E is among the 12% most deprived communities in England overall, and among the 8% most income and skills deprived, 7% most employment deprived, and 6% most affected by child poverty.

This area is slightly better for health statistics, being in the 26% most deprived English communities in that respect, but still far worse in health performance than neighbouring areas, and the Isle of Wight overall rank of being within the 40% most deprived local authorities for health.

Figure 7: Map of overall indices of deprivation, where a darker colour indicates higher levels of deprivation. Source: Department for Communities and Local Government

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

3.7 Public consultation events

Public events consulting local residents on this Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan were hosted at East Cowes Town Hall on the 24th and 25th February 2022.

One afternoon and one evening event were offered to ensure that people with work or caring responsibilities had the chance to attend at least one of the sessions. Potential walking and cycling routes were printed onto maps for these consultation events, and a photographic survey of existing cycle routes was provided to attendees for discussion.

3.8 Online and phone survey of local households

In January and February 2022, residents living within the East Cowes Town Council and Whippingham Parish Council boundaries were surveyed via an anonymous questionnaire on the [journeysurveys.com](https://www.journeysurveys.com) website. Publicity for this survey was provided by local media including the Isle of Wight County Press and Isle of Wight Observer newspapers, and the On the Wight news website.

A phone number was also provided for residents to leave voicemail messages, as an alternative to using the online survey. Residents were requested to make one response per household. 532 households responded to the survey online, and one household used the voicemail option to provide their response.

Optionally, respondents could provide their postcode to indicate the geographical spread of households responding from different parts of the area.



Figure 8: Blue markers indicate geographical spread of unique postcodes from the online survey.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

343 of these respondents provided a complete, valid postcode (64%). Unique postcodes from this data set were identified and plotted on a map of the area. The geographical spread of respondents who provided a postcode is indicated by markers in the figure above. As this was a self-selecting sample, a bias in favour of respondents who already choose to walk and cycle would be expected. The findings of the 2021 Census, currently due to be published in June/July 2022, would be more reliable.

3.9 Consultation survey responses

The following graphs and word clouds were compiled from the survey data obtained online and by telephone from local residents. Qualitative responses are found in appendices 20 to 23.

3.9.1 Transport choices

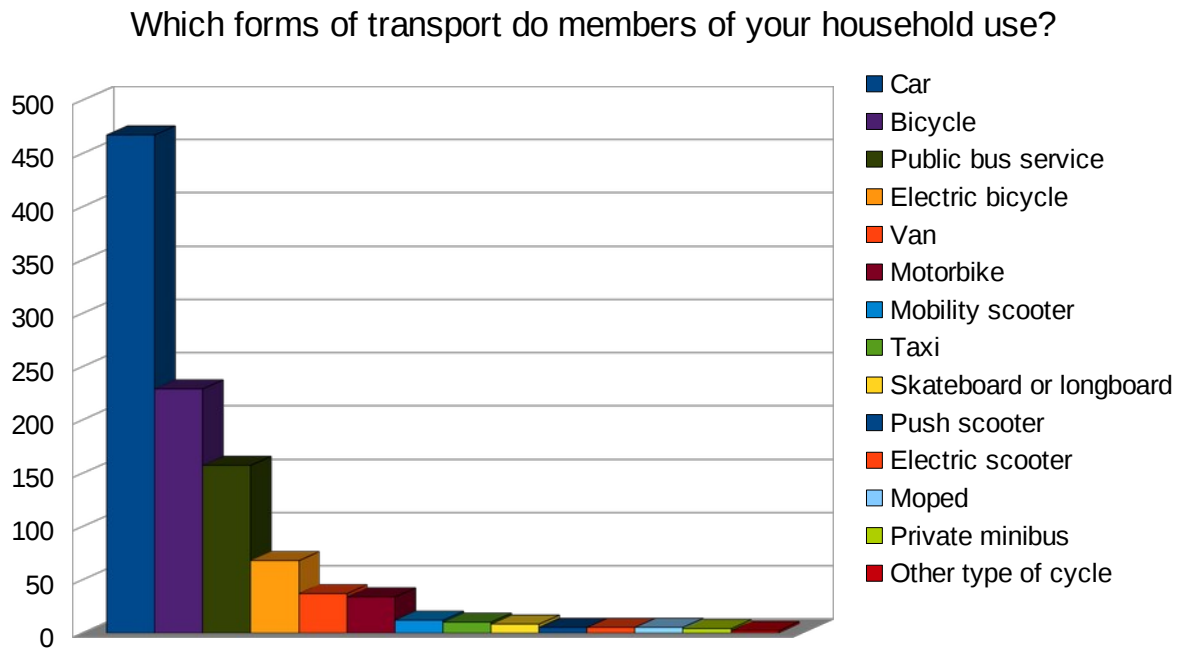


Figure 9: Transport modes used by households of survey respondents indicated that cycling is more popular than public transport, even though provision for cycling is minimal in the area

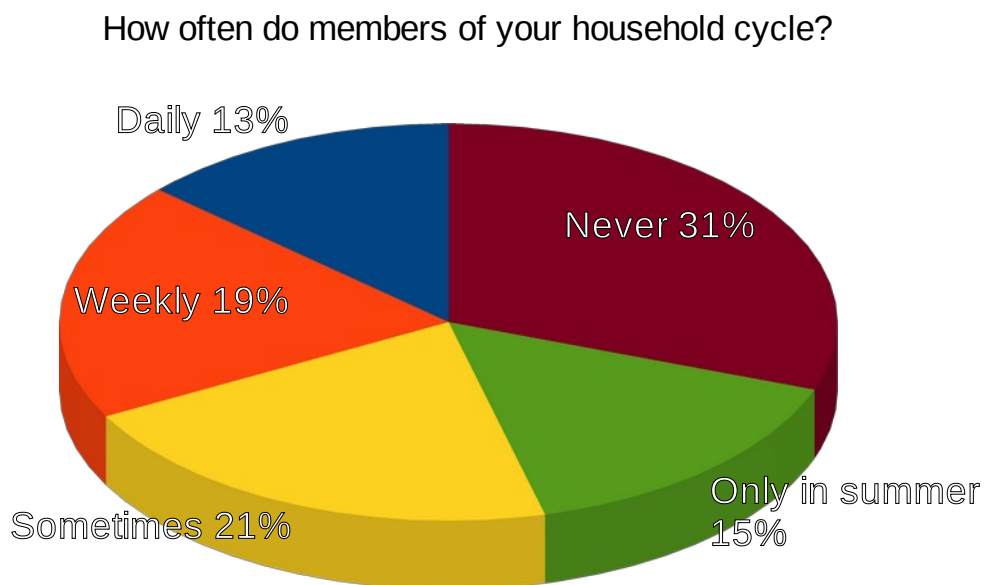


Figure 10: Frequency of cycling among survey respondent households indicated that the majority of residents cycle at least some of the time, but regular cyclists are in the minority

If you only occasionally or never cycle, what are your reasons?

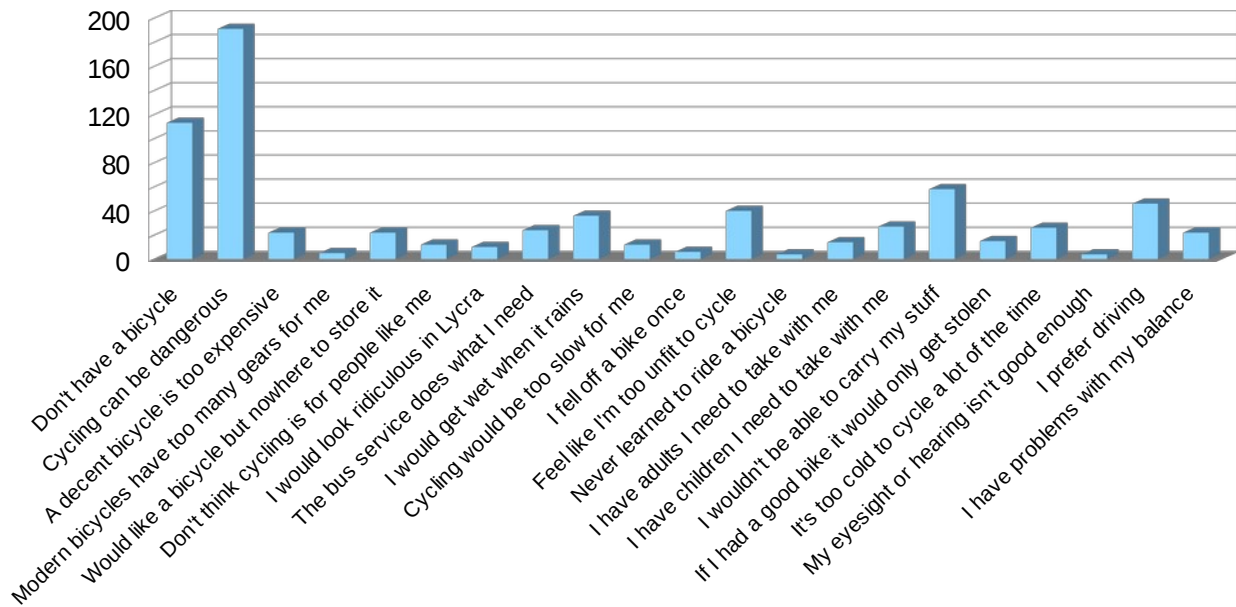


Figure 11: Department for Transport guidance states that reasons for not cycling are important data in the production of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Primary reasons for not cycling among survey respondents were danger and lack of a bicycle

3.9.2 Disability and accessible cycling

Do members of your household have any disabilities that have discouraged them from cycling?

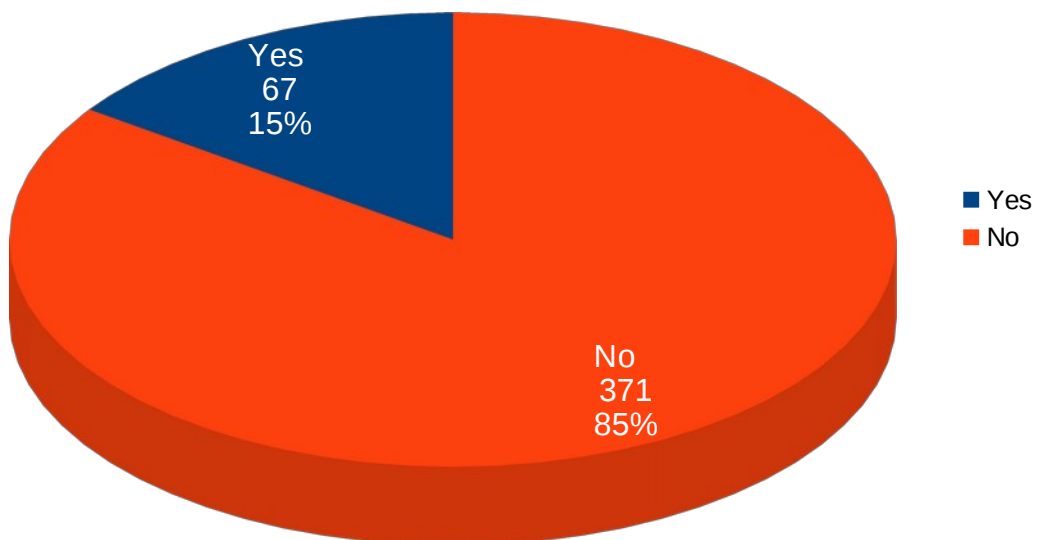


Figure 12: Survey respondents indicated that most households were not discouraged from cycling by disability, but a significant minority of households were

3.9.5 Demographics of survey respondents

Please enter the number of people in your household in each age group

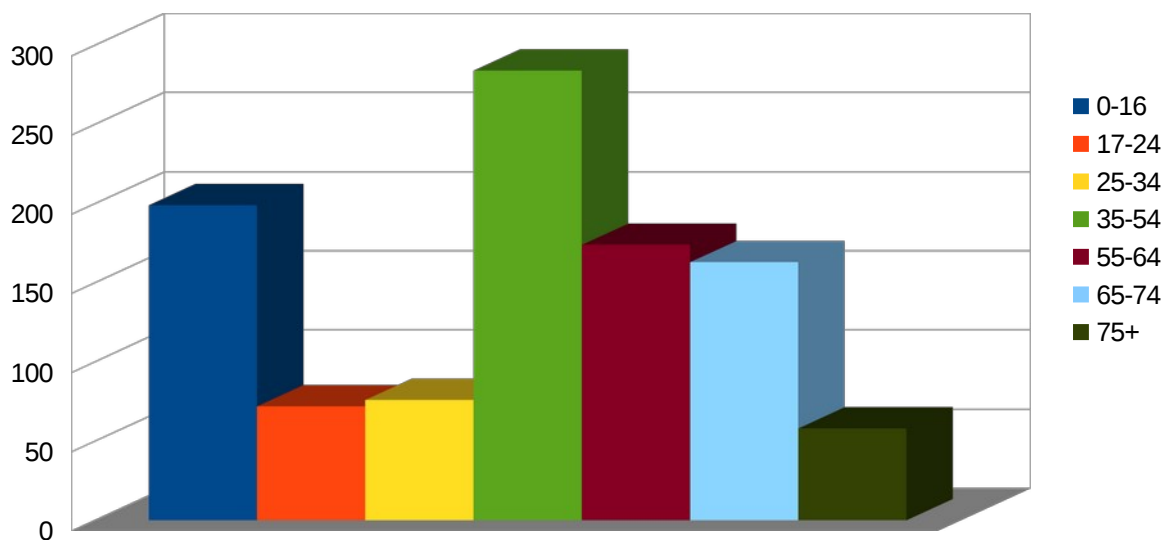


Figure 17: Demographics of the households of survey respondents

The reported demographics of the survey sample appear to have been biased towards families with children, middle-aged and younger retired people. An online survey would be expected to have lower participation in the over 75 age group, but participation was also lower in the 17 to 34 age group, where opportunities to study and work on the mainland could be a factor. A comparison with the demographics for the area when the 2021 census return is published would indicate if these results are representative compared to the general population.

3.10 Propensity to Cycle tool

The online [Propensity to Cycle Tool](#) is designed to assist transport planners and policy makers to prioritise investments and interventions to promote cycling ([Lovell et al. 2017](#) and [Goodman et al. 2019](#)). 'Desire lines' generated by this tool from the 2011 census data indicated that the top cycling destination for East Cowes and Whippingham residents would be Newport, which corroborates the findings of the survey carried out for this plan and earlier data from the East Cowes Town Plan.

Desire line maps do not take physical boundaries such as rivers into account. Residents in the southern area of Whippingham might travel to Wootton High Street to use its amenities such as a medical centre, shops and public houses, facilities which East Cowes also has, but Whippingham generally lacks.

Two maps of the northern Isle of Wight obtained using this tool are shown below. The West Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood area had the highest rates of cycle commuting on the Isle of Wight in the 2011 census. The most popular commuting routes recorded at that time were via the chain ferry to East Cowes and the A3020 road to the south of West Cowes which leads to Newport.

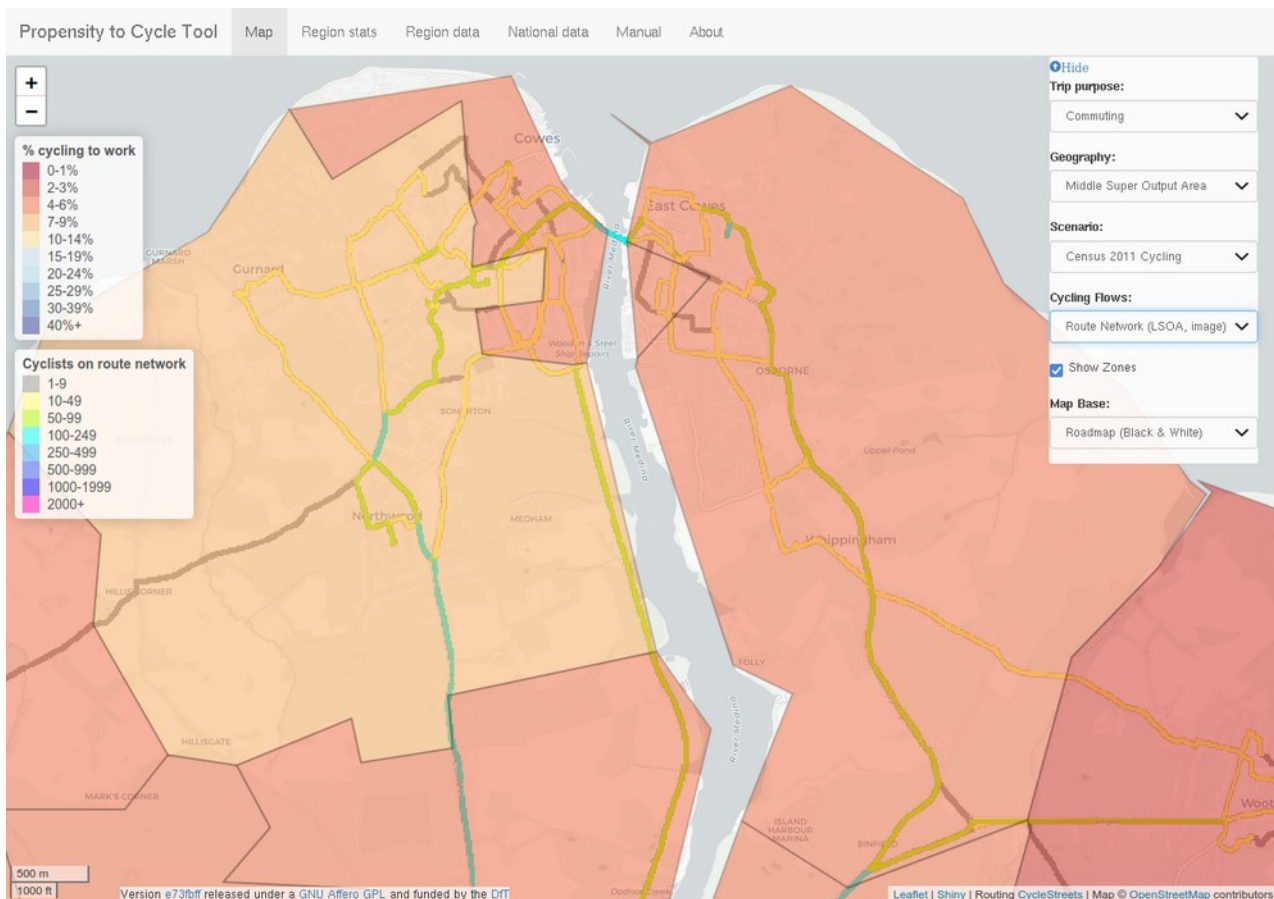


Figure 18: Cycle commuting map based on the 2011 Census, suggesting that this activity is more common on the west side of the Medina. The most popular routes are the A3020 south of West Cowes and the chain ferry to East Cowes. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors



Figure 19: School pupils waiting to cross from East Cowes to West Cowes on the chain ferry.

Census data for school journeys by cycle suggested that this mode of transport had almost ceased by 2011. Photographic survey evidence collected for this plan in early 2022 indicates that some teenagers currently cycle to school from East to West Cowes via the chain ferry, although in this limited sample they appear to be outnumbered significantly by the pupils who walk or are driven to school.

Since the end of the three-tier school system on the Isle of Wight announced in 2009 and the closure of the short-lived Isle of Wight Studio School in East Cowes (2014-2018), there are no state secondary schools on the peninsula east of the River Medina. State school pupils from age 11 upwards who live in Whippingham or East Cowes must travel to Newport, West Cowes or further afield on a daily basis to access secondary education.

Priory School in Whippingham (165 pupils: Ofsted) is a small independent school with both primary and secondary pupils. Holy Cross (169 pupils: Ofsted) and Queensgate (410 pupils: Ofsted) are both state primary schools in East Cowes.

All three of these schools are marked with blue dots on the map in the figure below. Based on the size of this primary school demographic, it is reasonable to estimate that there might be in excess of 500 secondary and sixth-form pupils travelling out of and back to the peninsula on a daily basis, with the majority likely to be using a form of motorised transport to access their education. Post-16 vocational education offered by the Isle of Wight College is mostly based in Newport, although this college has a satellite campus at CECAMM on the A3021 in Whippingham.

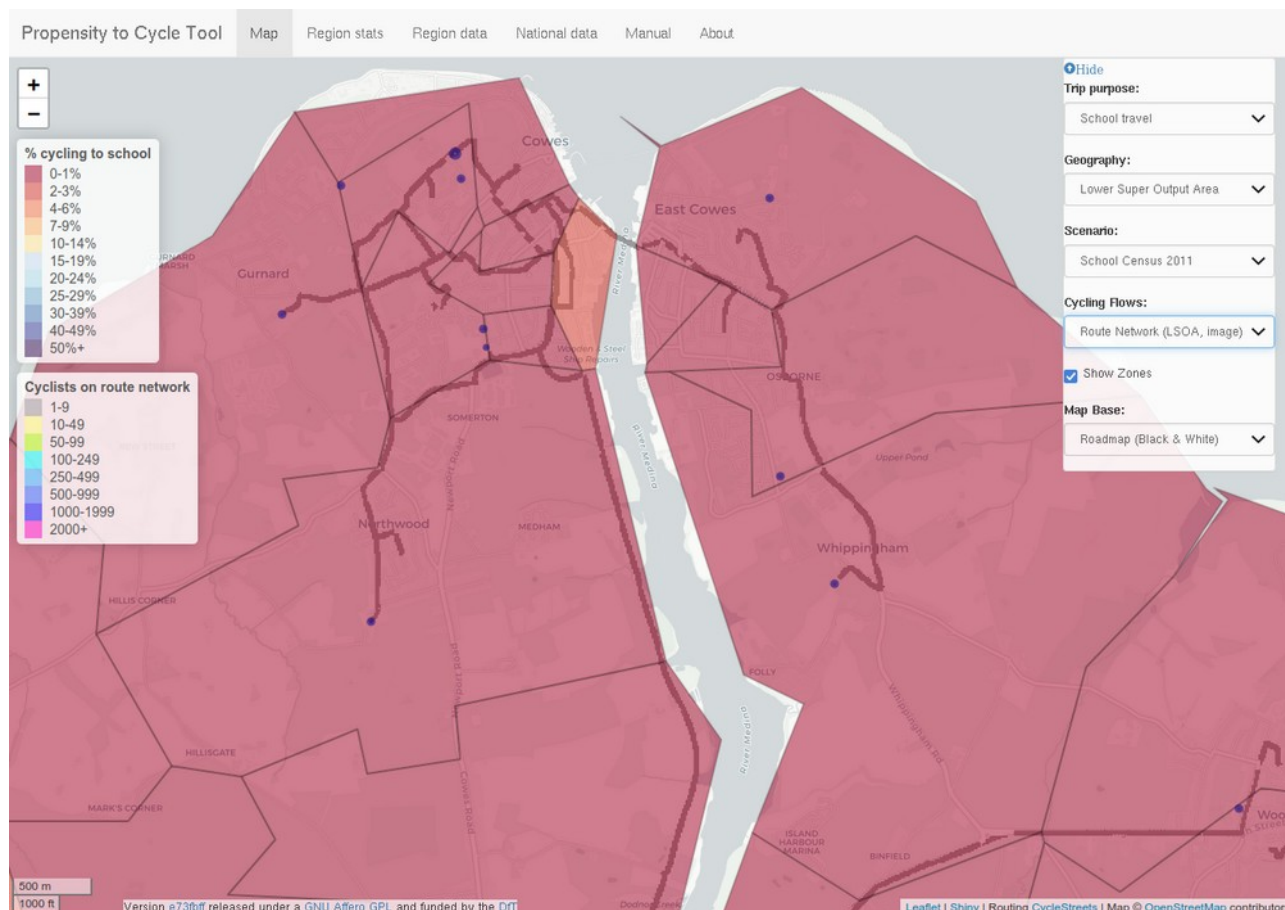


Figure 20: School journeys by cycle were recorded as close to zero at the time of the 2011 census, except in one area of West Cowes. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

3.11 Safe routes to schools and other workplaces

In 2021, the Isle of Wight Council reported 593 pupils in East Cowes schools, with 499 of these pupils living within one mile of their school. This suggests a high potential for active travel for able-bodied pupils and carers or staff. According to [research published by Living Streets](#) (The Pedestrian’s Association) in 2018, walking to school has been in decline for decades, with “negative consequences for mental and physical well-being, children’s independence and road safety skills, traffic speed and volume, parking near schools, congestion and air pollution.” This report stated that “Distance, time and safety are the most significant barriers to children walking to school, as many parents do not feel confident allowing their children to walk alone but also report not having time to walk with them.”

However, the ‘Transforming Travel on the Isle of Wight: Transition to Transformation’ programme which ran between April 2017 and July 2021 was intended to reverse this trend. The [Access Fund Programme Evaluation 2019/20 document](#) produced as part of this programme claims significant improvements in active travel for school pupils on the Island overall, but does not break down the data by specific schools or areas.

The Isle of Wight Council publishes [guidance for active travel in schools](#) on its website, and also collects mode share data for each school which could be used to inform further research. During the photographic survey for this plan, it became evident that pupils who walk to Holy Cross primary school via Old Road and Millfield Avenue must do so by walking in the road, as there are no pavements in the area.

Queensgate primary school on Beatrice Avenue has pavements and a shared-use cycling and walking path on the opposite side of the road, but pupils and their carers who walk to this school must cross a number of wide avenues, not all of which have provision for crossings to current safety standards. Secondary school pupils and students living in Whippingham or East Cowes have no guarantee of a safe walking or cycling route to schools and colleges in Newport when the 'floating bridge' is out of service. The Medina College secondary school is situated on the east side of the river, travelling to which currently involves a detour for any users of the existing West Cowes to Newport shared-use path starting from East Cowes or Whippingham.

Larger trip generating employers in the plan area include GKN, Red Funnel and Wight Shipyard. Workplace travel plans can be used to obtain data on the modes used by employees. Current opportunities for active travel to work from outside of the immediate area are limited by the lack of a safe route between Whippingham and the wider world, and the chronic unreliability of the 'floating bridge'.



Figure 21: Millfield Avenue, which leads to Holy Cross primary school, has no pavement and could be designated as a low traffic neighbourhood to provide a safer cycling and pedestrian route

4 Network planning for cycling

Network maps for existing and potential active travel routes to, from and within the East Cowes and Whippingham peninsula are shown in appendices 1 to 17 of this plan. This chapter of the plan sets out the rationale for this proposed programme of cycle infrastructure improvements.

4.1 Historical railway routes on the Isle of Wight

Many of the Isle of Wight's most popular cycle paths follow the track beds of historic railway routes, including the Red Squirrel Trail which extends from West Cowes on the north side of the Island to Shanklin and Sandown on the south-east side. In the online survey of East Cowes and Whippingham residents for this infrastructure plan, some local people reported putting their bicycles on a car in order to drive them to the start of these routes. East Cowes was perhaps the only town on the Isle of Wight which never had a railway station. Whippingham once had a railway station, but it was south of the A3054 Lushington Hill on the southern perimeter of the parish. Therefore there is no disused track bed east of the River Medina which could form the route of a motor-traffic-free path.

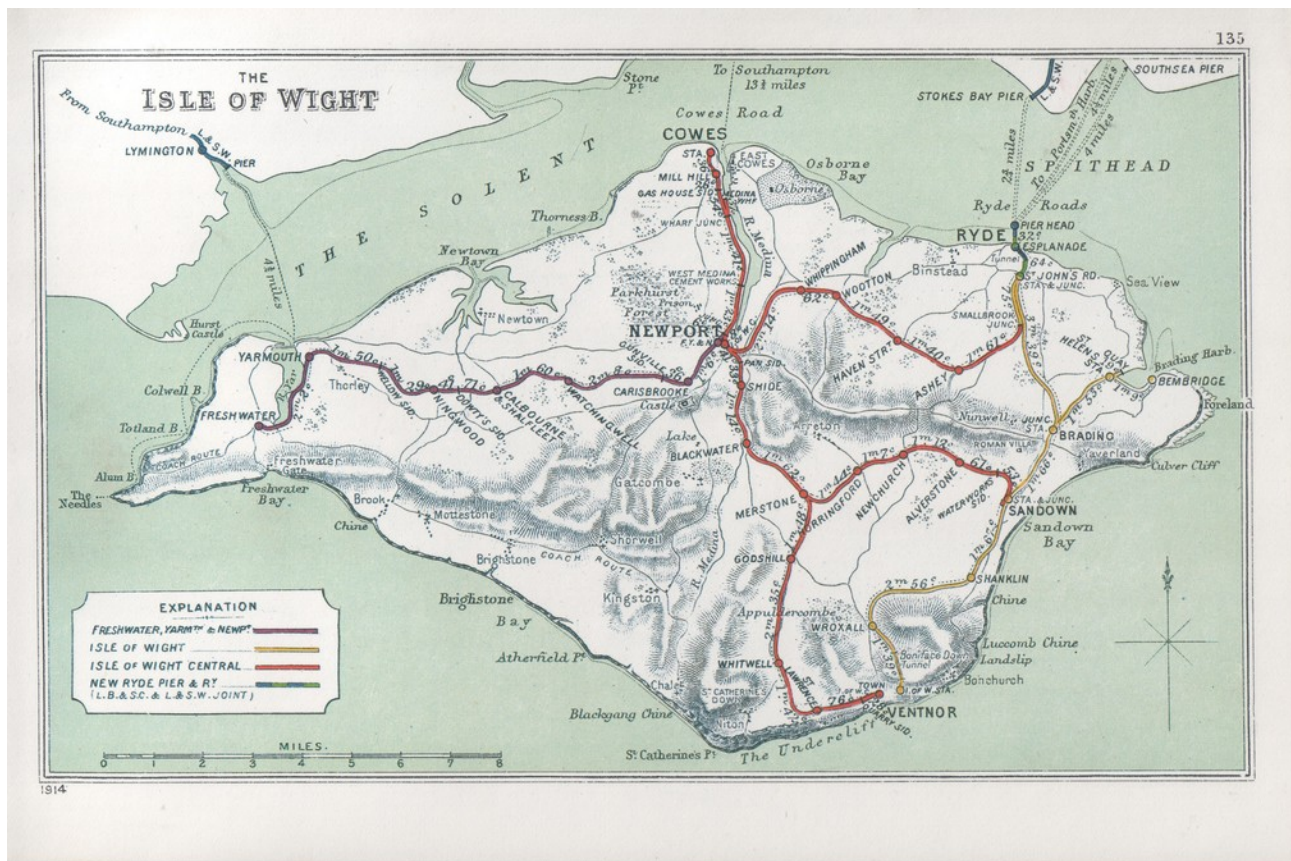


Figure 22: A map of historic railway routes shows that East Cowes does not have a disused railway line of the type repurposed for shared use walking and cycling paths in other parts of the Island

South of Binfield, part of the former railway line route which runs east of the Fairlee Road section of the A3054 and parallel to the Medina Greenway has recently been upgraded to a high standard cycle path. The section recently upgraded is wider than the Greenway and features a far superior sealed surface for cycle travel to and from Newport. In the area of the Medina College secondary school, the former railway line is approximately 0.4 miles (0.7 kilometres) to the east of the Medina Greenway.

This route offers a potential high quality shared use path connection between Whippingham and Newport town centre, subject to the remainder of the route being completed to the same standard. For the time being, the north section of this route uses the existing pavement along the east side of Fairlee Road. This pavement route is of substandard width for a shared use path but does not appear to feature high pedestrian footfall, as it is outside of the Newport town boundary.

Running to the east, parallel to Lushington Hill, an existing shared-use cycle path on the south side of the main road diverts from the track bed to continue on the highway as it approaches Wootton Bridge. The continuation of the former track bed to the east, heading towards Havenstreet, is still in use as a heritage railway offering tourists and local enthusiasts rides on steam trains, and is therefore not available for a shared use cycling and walking path.

4.2 Connecting Whippingham to the existing shared use network

When the existing shared use cycling and walking path from Newport reaches the Racecourse roundabout at the junction of Fairlee Road and Lushington Hill on the A3054, East Cowes Road has some cycle provision indicating a route to the north, yet there is no cycle provision beyond the junction of East Cowes Road and Whippingham Road. This means cyclists are directed to use a 0.9 mile (1.4 kilometre) section of the A3021 Whippingham Road until they reach Beatrice Avenue. The A3021 is an arterial route to the East Cowes vehicle ferry terminals and has speed limits of up to 60 miles per hour. There is no cycling provision at all on this section of the route, but the grass verge on the west side of the highway appears to have sufficient width in places for the provision of a standards compliant shared use cycling and walking path up to three metres wide (route B, appendix 4).

A shared use path on the east side of this highway could take advantage of a verge which is wider in places than on the west side. This east side path would have the disadvantage that for the principal desire line running from East Cowes to Newport, two crossings of the A3021 would be required for residents who live west or south of that road.

An alternative to a shared use path along the A3021 would be to extend the Medina Greenway from where it currently terminates at Island Harbour to the area of St Mildred's Church in Whippingham (route A, appendix 3), where it would connect to Beatrice Avenue or Saunders Way. Considering factors including the technical standards in Local Transport Note 1/20 which require high-quality surfaces on well-engineered paths, extending this route to Whippingham would present challenges.

The current footpaths along this section of the river including CS24 and N112 are unsurfaced, poorly drained and cross the property of several different landowners, including farms with livestock. There is also a redevelopment proposed at the Folly Works on the riverside which has planning permission but has not yet started in earnest, creating uncertainty over whether a route through this area will be feasible. In favour of this route is that there might be new residents at the Folly in future who could make use of this path, in addition to the existing residents of the Medina Park caravan site on Folly Lane.

The creation of a surfaced route away from the public highway would require the support of these landowners, in a location which has never featured a railway route or highway. This route might therefore require a significant amount of engineering work to create a solid surface which met current cycle infrastructure standards, and might have to be fenced or hedged along its roughly one-mile length to separate cyclists and walkers from livestock. In addition, crossing the mouth of Island Harbour requires walking over the top of the existing lock gates, which are narrow with steep access.

Therefore the access over these lock gates would have to be re-designed to create a standards-compliant route from Island Harbour to St Mildred's Church.

The third option for creating a link between Whippingham and the north side of Newport is to create a new crossing over the River Medina, so that residents on the east side of the river can reliably access the existing shared use cycle and walking path which begins at Arctic Road in West Cowes (an example crossing is shown in route C, appendix 5).

A swing bridge has operated in the West Wight to provide yacht access to the River Yar for many years, and there are several examples of new pedestrian bridges built in London and other parts of the UK in recent decades. While this solution would have to be engineered to ensure it would not impede the progress of tall boats up and down the river, it could offer access to Newport via the former railway line track bed on the west bank of the Medina, a direct route which has already proven its utility.



Figure 23: Steps to the lock gate access at Island Harbour



Figure 24: The Royal Victoria Dock Pedestrian Bridge in London was completed in 1998 at a cost of £5 million. This bridge has a span of 127.5 metres, comparable to the width of the River Medina.

Photo credit: Senseiich CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15722145>

Statistics from the 2011 Census indicate that West Cowes has the highest level of cycle commuting of any community on the Isle of Wight, which might well be the result of this shared use path to the county town of Newport being available. The existing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Newport and Ryde proposed a new bridge crossing in the area of Newport Harbour at a projected cost of £5 million, so there is a precedent for this type of proposal.

Potential locations for a cycle and pedestrian bridge across the River Medina include the wharf currently used by the chronically unreliable chain ferry, which is reportedly now [subject to a legal dispute](#). The chain ferry has right of way in the river, and therefore (when running) provides an obstacle to boats travelling north and south, to and from the Solent.

Another potential location for a bridge is in the area of East Cowes Marina, where existing pontoons stretch almost half way across the river towards the Arctic Road area on the far bank. While the river is narrowest in the area of the chain ferry, the popularity of the River Medina for mooring boats means that the navigable width of the river is no greater at the marina than it is at the chain ferry. If a new river crossing could be designed which provided convenient access to West Cowes for boat owners and potentially added mooring capacity to the marina, it might be supported by river users.

Should that river crossing be designed in the form of lock gates or a tidal barrage, an associated benefit would be that water level on the south side of this infrastructure could be actively managed. This intervention could potentially prevent flooding in the Newport Harbour area of the town centre, in an era when rising sea levels are predicted. The appropriately named Sea Street in Newport is in flood zone 3, yet currently has no sea defences, according to the UK government's [Flood Map for Planning](#). Newport Harbour is tidal and regularly inaccessible to larger boats because of low water. However, it is unlikely that the water level in the Medina could be kept artificially high on a permanent basis because the mudflats along the river are an internationally recognised bird habitat, under the Ramsar convention.

4.2.1 Crossing of North Fairlee Road at Mill Lane junction



Figure 25: The grass verge on the west side of North Fairlee Road could be made into a cycle path

Currently, cyclists heading from Newport to East Cowes who use the Medina Greenway must turn south-east along Mill Lane when they reach Island Harbour. At the junction of Mill Lane with North Fairlee Road, they must cross to the far side of the A3054 to continue using the signposted cycle route, at a point where the main road is wide and the vehicle traffic fast-moving. Upon reaching the junction of East Cowes Road with Racecourse, they must cross the A3054 for a second time to access the signposted cycle route. An intervention suggested by Whippingham Parish Council is that the grass verge on the west side of North Fairlee Road is surfaced as a cycle path so that users of Mill Lane can cycle to East Cowes Road fully segregated from motor vehicles, without having to cross the A3054 (route N, appendix 16). There is evidence of an informal footpath on this verge, but not a cycle path. This intervention might require the relocation of some of the hedgerow, as there are a number of street lights installed on the verge which limit the available width for a standards-compliant cycle path or shared use path.

4.3 Summary of options linking Whippingham to Newport

The following table is intended to assist evaluation of the three routes A to C presented in this plan for connecting the existing shared use cycling and walking paths in Whippingham with the shared use paths on the north-east side of Newport. For cost reasons, they are likely to be exclusive options.

Route and map	Route option	Pros	Cons
(A) Appendix 3	Extend the Medina Greenway northwards on the eastern river bank	<p>Relatively flat route to East Cowes town centre, compared to A3021 option.</p> <p>Support in public consultation survey from local residents for a riverside route.</p> <p>Would be more convenient for residents of Medina Park and the west side of East Cowes.</p> <p>Could connect to town through East Cowes Marina and waterfront employment area.</p>	<p>Route not as direct to Newport’s main employment area as the west side of Medina path.</p> <p>All current land owners in the area would have to support the route.</p> <p>Redevelopment of the Folly Works is uncertain; completion of the route might depend on it.</p> <p>Not as close to the main residential areas of East Cowes and schools, uphill from the river.</p> <p>A lot of engineering work would be required to create stable and level surfaces on the route.</p> <p>Route would pass through legally protected wildlife areas vulnerable to dogs and people.</p> <p>Lock crossing at Island Harbour would need to be upgraded.</p> <p>Pedestrian-only revetment at Island Harbour would need to be widened to enable shared use.</p> <p>Plastic cell surface of the existing Medina Greenway doesn’t meet cycling standards.</p>

			Medina Greenway is closed to cyclists and walkers when ticketed events take place in Seaclose Park, in particular the annual Isle of Wight Festival.
(B) Appendix 4	Follow the A3021 main road	<p>Some of the land is already part of the public highway, cutting costs.</p> <p>Convenient for Osborne, GKN factory and CECAMM college.</p> <p>Route heads towards the main residential area and town centre.</p> <p>Closer to connections to Wootton Bridge and on to Ryde.</p> <p>Construction might be relatively straightforward, as the route is adjacent to an engineered highway.</p> <p>Could connect to Esplanade area and Red Funnel terminal with an inexpensive path along York Avenue's very wide pavements.</p> <p>Could connect to the proposed football stadium which has planning permission at Racecourse.</p>	<p>Some land owners might be needed to sell highway frontage.</p> <p>Not as peaceful as a riverside path, due to traffic adjacent.</p> <p>Higher land elevations inland mean more hills to cycle up.</p> <p>Slightly longer journey to Newport for residents on the west side of East Cowes.</p> <p>Some hedgerow might need to be replanted along the route to make space for a shared use path.</p>
(C) Appendix 5	New river crossing	<p>Would connect residents to existing Newport cycle path on west side of the Medina, but also to West Cowes, Gurnard, Northwood and West Wight.</p> <p>Might offer a more reliable river crossing than the chain ferry.</p>	<p>Boat users would have to be sure that they could have free access up and down the river in order to support the scheme.</p> <p>Could cost more than cycle path options on the east side of the river.</p>

* The route shown for option C in appendix 5, crossing the Medina at the existing chain ferry location, is for example purposes only, as the specific location of a new river crossing would require further evaluation.

4.4 Using existing pavements and footpaths as shared use paths

While some existing urban pavements and footpaths could potentially be widened, and steps replaced with ramps to create a shared use cycling and walking path, this would of course require funding for construction work, and in some cases land purchases. For example, the footpath between Sylvan Avenue and Vereker Drive not only features a series of steps, it is too narrow for safe cycle use due to boundaries with private gardens either side of it. Land height differences would mean that a step-free path would be non-compliant in places, although it might be more accessible than it is at present to people who are physically impaired and cannot use steps, such as users of mobility scooters.

A further consideration is that some properties have doors that open directly adjacent to pavements, and so converting these pavements to shared use cycling and walking paths risks collisions between these modes, due to a lack of visibility. People with visual or hearing impairments are particularly vulnerable to conflict with cyclists on shared use paths, since they will not always perceive the danger before stepping onto the path.



Figure 26: Steps on footpath between Sylvan Avenue and Vereker Drive in East Cowes



Figure 27: The two-way section of Castle Street leaves insufficient space for a cycle lane at present

Therefore in urban areas where the external doors of properties are sited directly adjacent to the pavement, physical segregation between cycling and walking modes, such as a stepped kerb, will be required. That would require more space for cycling and walking modes than is often available.

Some roads do not have enough width available between buildings to accommodate a sufficient width of shared use path to meet the Local Transport Note 1/20 minimum specification of three metres width, in addition to the road itself and perhaps a pavement on the other side of the road. An example can be found at Castle Street in East Cowes town centre, where vehicles turning right after exiting the Red Funnel ferry create two-way traffic in a street which is otherwise one-way. These vehicles are enabled to take a short cut via the lower part of York Avenue to access the 'floating bridge' chain ferry to West Cowes. However, Local Transport Note 1/20 makes it explicit that motor vehicles can be required to take longer routes around one-way systems in order to create better routes for walking and cycling.

In that case, motor vehicles exiting the Red Funnel ferry would have to continue along Well Road rather than turning right at the roundabout adjacent to Waitrose, going around the one-way system past East Cowes Town Hall and then taking the left lane to access the chain ferry. This modification could potentially create space for a dedicated cycle path along the full length of Castle Street, providing access to the Red Funnel ferry and onward via Columbine Road to East Cowes Esplanade.

4.5 Making roundabouts safer

It would appear that the few roundabouts in East Cowes and Whippingham have not been designed with cycle or pedestrian access in mind. In particular, the roundabout on Castle Street in East Cowes, at the junction of Well Road and Dover Road, adjacent to the exit from the Red Funnel ferry terminal, has minimal facilities for pedestrians to cross despite being in the heart of the town. Neither does it have any facilities for cycling, even even though it is a key transport interchange for the Island.

A shared use path along Well Road could traverse this roundabout by means of a cycle and pedestrian crossing which provides a safer exit from the Red Funnel ferry for these modes, and also improve safety for pedestrians crossing from Castle Street to Columbine Road.



Figure 28: Roundabout on Castle Street

4.6 Low traffic neighbourhoods



Figure 29: An existing modal filter in Oak Tree Way, East Cowes

Low traffic neighbourhoods have been proposed as a solution to ‘rat running’, motor vehicles using side streets and residential areas to avoid delays caused by heavy traffic on main roads. Satellite navigation systems exacerbate this problem, as they are designed to direct drivers to use short cuts and avoid signposted main road routes, particularly when traffic congestion occurs.

Rat running has been noted as a problem by local residents in East Cowes during high traffic flows after the arrival of vehicle ferries, particularly in the peak summer season when ferries can be full to capacity.

Designated local traffic neighbourhoods use ‘modal filters’, bollards or planters which allow cycles, mobility scooters and pedestrians to pass, but restrict through-road access to four-wheeled vehicles including cars, vans and heavy goods vehicles. An example of a modal filter can be found in Oak Tree Way in East Cowes.

This plan proposes that additional low traffic neighbourhoods could be created in areas affected by ‘rat running’, subject to consultation with local residents.

This consultation would include the desirability and precise location of potential modal filters. During public consultation for this plan, a low traffic neighbourhood was suggested for Hefford Road in East Cowes, a residential street which forms a short cut parallel to Old Road. A number of ‘rat runs’ have been identified on the map for this plan as potential low traffic neighbourhoods (Appendix 2). Other potential low traffic neighbourhoods in the area could be identified by local residents for consideration.

4.7 Potential quiet lanes and home zones

The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006 set out how a local authority should proceed if it wishes to alter the speed limit or use of an existing road, including the public consultation process it must follow. In addition to reducing speed limits to make specific roads safer for walking and cycling, a road can be converted to a recreational or other community space on either a temporary, occasional or permanent basis. Changes of use can be planned in tandem with low traffic neighbourhoods to redesign routes and prevent rat-running.

An example of an area which could benefit from a redesign is in the section of Beatrice Avenue between Victoria Grove and Crossways Road in East Cowes. This is a residential area but also the route to Queensgate primary school, the largest school on the peninsula. This section of the road is very wide in places, but narrows significantly past Crossways Road, where there is a slight bend and also a line of vehicles parked on the east side of the highway, particularly during school run hours. The existing shared use cycling and walking path (known as Monks Walk) which heads north from Saunders Way stops abruptly at the junction with Harvey Close, where cyclists heading in this direction must swerve to enter the roadway just at the pinch point created for pedestrians to cross.

During the photographic survey for this plan, a vehicle heading south on Beatrice Avenue was witnessed crossing from one side of the carriageway to the other at speed, to face oncoming vehicles, and had to brake suddenly. This incident took place in the area where pedestrians were crossing to access the school.

There is ample space in this section of Beatrice Avenue to extend the existing shared use cycling and walking path to Victoria Grove, without reducing the number of on-street parking spaces for local residents. This route would also provide access to the open space on the corner of Meadow Road and Beatrice Avenue, and the local shops there.

The 20th century housing on Beatrice Avenue mostly features front gardens with an open aspect, except for the dwellings at the north end of the road, which have railings and steps. Therefore this potential shared use route does not have the pedestrian safety issues which affect neighbourhoods where front doors exit directly on to the pavement.



Figure 30: Beatrice Avenue in East Cowes has ample space to continue the shared use path north to Victoria Grove, and for pedestrian safety improvements

4.8 Summary of options for urban cycling routes

The following table is intended to assist evaluation of the eleven options D to N presented in this plan for routes connecting East Cowes town centre and residential areas with Whippingham and the waterfront along the Esplanade. These routes are potentially complementary.

Route and map	Route option	Pros	Cons
(D) Appendix 6	Saunders Way Kingston Road Clarence Road	<p>Would align with a riverside shared use cycling and walking path from Island Harbour (Route A).</p> <p>A small part of the route already has a shared use cycling and walking path.</p> <p>Flattest of the route options in the town.</p> <p>Would connect to riverside employment sites and marina.</p>	<p>Potential interaction with heavy goods vehicles in Kingston Road.</p> <p>Existing Saunders Way shared use path crosses back and forth.</p> <p>Doesn't pass many houses in the Saunders Way area (yet).</p> <p>Residential parts of Clarence Road might be too narrow for a shared path.</p> <p>Not close to the residential areas on the east side of town.</p>
(E) Appendix 7	Beatrice Avenue Victoria Grove Adelaide Grove York Avenue	<p>Part of the route already exists as a shared use path, at Monks Walk.</p> <p>Central route in the southern residential area, passing more houses than others.</p> <p>Would connect to the largest school in the area, at Queensgate.</p> <p>Roads are wide and have plenty of space for creating new paths.</p>	<p>Victoria Grove and York Avenue are moderate hills.</p>
(F) Appendix 8	Beatrice Avenue Victoria Grove Adelaide Grove Yarborough Road Clarence Road	<p>Variation of route (E) from Beatrice Avenue to riverside area, avoiding narrow part of Clarence Road.</p>	<p>Yarborough Road has pavement parking for vehicles, which might need to be reconfigured to create space for a shared use path.</p>
(G) Appendix 9	Beatrice Avenue Mayfield Road Oakfield Road Connaught Road York Avenue	<p>Variation of route (E) from Beatrice Avenue to the north side of town, avoiding hill on Victoria Grove.</p>	<p>Not as much space for a shared path on Mayfield Road/Oakfield Road/Connaught Road.</p> <p>York Avenue section is uphill when heading south-east.</p>

(H) Appendix 10	Beatrice Avenue Mayfield Road Oakfield Road Connaught Road Kent Avenue Princess Close Sylvan Avenue Hefford Road	Variation of route (G) from Beatrice Avenue to the north side of town, following an existing footpath from Princess Close which leads across York Avenue to connect with Sylvan Avenue.	The footpath from Princess Close heading north would need to be widened, which would require land acquisitions. Section on York Avenue would still be required to connect to town centre.
(I) Appendix 11	Whippingham Road York Avenue	Would connect to shared use path to Newport and Wootton along A3021 Whippingham Road (Route B). Pavements are wide on York Avenue, and could be converted to shared use inexpensively.	Hilliest of all potential routes. Some pavements on Whippingham Road would need to be widened. Doesn't pass many houses on Whippingham Road (yet).
(J) Appendix 12	Newbarn Road Old Road Albany Road Esplanade	Would create a safe route to Holy Cross school and for Old Road residents.	Some private land would need to be acquired in places along Old Road where there are no pavements.
(K) Appendix 13	Ferry Road Castle Street Well Road	Would create a safe route between ferries and the Esplanade area without sending cyclists around the entire one-way system.	One-way system would need to be revised in lower York Avenue and pavements realigned.
(L) Appendix 14	Footpath from Beatrice Avenue to Whippingham Road	Upgrade to a sealed surface shared-use cycling and walking path would connect the St Mildred's Church area with CECAMM college and GKN works as a cycle commuting route	Land might need to be acquired and hedgerow or trees replanted to create a shared-use path of standards compliant width.

(M) Appendix 15	Footpath on south side of Lushington Hill	Upgrade to a shared-use cycling and walking path would create a more direct route to Wootton Bridge and dwellings on Lushington Hill, avoiding sub-standard cycle lane on Crematorium road.	Pavement space available for shared-use conversion narrows significantly east of 87 Lushington Hill. Uphill gradient heading east to Wootton Bridge.
(N) Appendix 16	Mill Lane to East Cowes Road, Whippingham	Conversion of grass verge to shared-use cycling and walking path and better crossing of Fairlee Road would greatly improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from Newport.	A lamp-post or hedgerow might need to be relocated.

4.9 ‘Round the Island’ route

The Round the Island cycle route could be upgraded to provide better provision, including safer junctions, more legible routes from the centre of East Cowes through Whippingham towards Wootton Bridge and Ryde, and a connection to Newport. Some of the sections of this route overlap with the route options shown in the table above. Improvement of the Round the Island route is a policy of the East Cowes Town Plan 2021-2036.

5 Network planning for walking

This chapter of the plan sets out the rationale for the proposed programme of walking infrastructure improvements. Existing and proposed active travel routes are shown in appendices 1 to 17 of this plan. In most cases, active travel interventions which support cycling also support walking, as the principal type of route planned is the shared use cycling and walking path. However, there are specific cases on the East Cowes and Whippingham peninsula where walking infrastructure is inadequate for current users, let alone projected future needs and aspirations.

5.1 Walking for transport in East Cowes

East Cowes is generally well provided for with urban pavements, except for two sections of Old Road and the adjacent unmade road Millfield Avenue which leads to Holy Cross primary school. This junction with Old Road is on the outside of a bend, with poor visibility to the south-east. A photographic survey during the morning ‘school run’ of the 3rd March 2022 indicated that many pupils have to walk on the highway in order to access this school.

On occasions when roadworks are taking place or there are other disruptions to traffic in East Cowes town centre, significant flows of motor vehicle traffic including HGVs have been diverted via Old Road in the past. Should these vehicles be using Old Road during school run hours, the danger to pedestrians would be even greater than usual.



Figure 31: Old Road in East Cowes, where a warning sign is the only provision made for children walking to Holy Cross school

During one of the public consultation events for this plan, a local resident commented regarding Old Road:

“Whilst walking home from East Cowes seafront, in the road, as there is no footpath, I was hit by a car travelling way too fast. This occurred right on the corner of Old Road where the road to the primary school is situated. I am totally horrified to think parents and children have to walk in the road to actually reach the school. There's not even any calming measures. Therefore, this road must be a priority when it comes to a foot/cycle path before something very serious happens.”

[Research published by Living Streets](#) in 2018 suggests that a safe pedestrian route to Holy Cross School, utilising a new shared use path along Old Road and a low traffic neighbourhood approach in Millfield Avenue, would not merely reduce the risk of child and carer accidents and fatalities. Active travel interventions of this type would be expected to improve the health and well-being of pupils and the local residents that take them to school, particularly of those pupils who are currently driven to school on a daily basis.

5.1.1 Core walking zone in East Cowes

A core walking zone is an identified area where pedestrian transport is expected to take priority. It is typically a town centre area of high footfall with convenient access to key amenities and retail buildings, and might feature pedestrianised areas. East Cowes does not have a large pedestrianised area, due to being one of the Island's major transport interchanges between road and ferry traffic. 'A' roads traverse the town centre area, dividing amenity areas and preventing the typical high street layout which exists in other English towns. Pedestrians must cross two major roads to walk the short distance from the Town Hall to the small pedestrian area on Well Road adjacent to the Waitrose supermarket and Medical Centre, for example.

Going clockwise, the core walking zone in East Cowes has been identified as extending to the rear of the Town Hall and the new Community Hub and library in York Avenue, turning north along the parade of shops at the eastern end of Clarence Road, south-west to the 'floating bridge' on Ferry Road, north around the Red Funnel terminal, east around the Waitrose supermarket and Medical Centre, and turning south-south-west after St James's Church to return to York Avenue. This zone is shown on the map which is Appendix 1 to this plan.

5.1.2 Improving pedestrian safety in the core walking zone



Figure 32: The re-alignment of York Avenue has left an area of no use to pedestrians or vehicles

At the part of York Avenue near the Co-op supermarket in East Cowes, where the pavement widens to create a pedestrian area with cycle parking stands, the main road narrows significantly at the junction with Clarence Road and Ferry Road. It would appear that an earlier highway re-design encouraged vehicles to bear left as they head downhill in the one-way system, steering them away from the lower part of York Avenue which is now one-way in the opposite direction. However, the part of the roadway which is now unusable was not reclaimed for pedestrian use, as it remains at highway level.

As vehicles enter Ferry Road and drivers must choose either the left or right lane in the one-way system, a pinch point at the zebra crossing restricts the width of the highway so that there is insufficient room left for a shared-use cycling and walking path connecting York Avenue or Clarence Road with Ferry Road. As this junction is a key interchange for routes through the town and to the wider world, a solution is needed for cycling and walking which can meet the Local Transport Note 1/20 standard.

If the pavement in this part of York Avenue was re-aligned, a larger pedestrian area could be created, and potentially a crossing to the Town Hall complex installed. Currently, pedestrians walking down the north side of York Avenue cannot cross this wide highway safely until they reach the zebra crossings at the entrance to Ferry Road.

At these zebra crossings, the pavement could be re-aligned so that there is more space for a shared use path on the corner of Clarence Road and Ferry Road. As there are retail shops and some dwellings with doors which open directly onto the pavement on this corner, a cycle path that was physically separate from the pavement would be required to avoid creating conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

5.1.3 Potential new pedestrian route

The lane south of Harvey Close in East Cowes runs west to the former Kingston Farmhouse, which it is understood now operates as a care home. This lane connects to Beatrice Avenue at the east end, but at the west end has no access to Waterside Close or the existing shared use path on the east bank of the River Medina, which runs along Saunders Way at that point.



Figure 33: A pinch point at the entrance to Ferry Road in the one-way system leaves little space for a shared use cycle path



Figure 34: Lane south of Harvey Close in East Cowes is currently a dead end, preventing access to the riverside area of the town

The feasibility of connecting this lane to Waterside Close with a short section of shared-use cycling and walking path or a modal filter could be investigated, subject to the support of the relevant landowners. The lane itself, which might be unadopted by the local authority, could potentially be designated as a ‘quiet lane’ with a speed limit of 20mph or less.

5.2 Walking for transport in Whippingham

As a rural parish, many of Whippingham's lanes have no pavements at all. Other than residents of farms and local estates, most of Whippingham's residents are clustered in the following hamlets:

Campfield Road/River View/Barton Close – These residents have access to existing footpaths on Whippingham Road, leading into East Cowes (1.6 miles/2.6 kilometres to the town centre).

West end of Alverstone Road – These residents have no pavements. There is an intermittent grass verge, so that residents must walk on the road in some places. Pedestrian safety in Alverstone Road would therefore benefit from this route being designated as a 20mph 'quiet lane'. It is a 1.7 mile/2.7 kilometre walk from there to East Cowes town centre. This quiet lane designation would also benefit the Round the Island cycle route, which includes this part of Alverstone Road.

Medina Park – these residents have no pavements along Folly Lane. In theory they can walk to East Cowes via the footpath which connects them to St Mildred's Church on Beatrice Avenue, but as previously noted this path is often impassable. Folly Lane could therefore be designated as a 20mph 'quiet lane'. It is a 2.4 mile/3.9 kilometre walk from Medina Park to East Cowes town centre via the main A3021 Whippingham Road.



Figure 35: Mill Lane is a designated public footpath, but pedestrians must walk in the road

Island Harbour – these residents have no pavements along Mill Lane, which is also public footpath N121. There is a narrow grass verge, but it is intermittent, so pedestrians must walk in the road in places. In theory, residents can walk to East Cowes (3.3 miles/4.8 kilometres) via the footpath which connects to Folly Lane and on to St Mildred's Church, when passable. Mill Lane could be designated as a 20mph 'quiet lane' in order for residents to walk more safely to Newport (2 miles/3.2 kilometres), or Wootton Bridge (2.3 miles/3.7 kilometres).

Southern end of East Cowes Road – These residents have no direct pavements to Whippingham or East Cowes, although they can walk on a grass verge on the west side of North Fairlee Road and along Mill Lane to access the Medina Greenway riverside path to Folly Lane and St Mildred's Church on Beatrice Avenue, when passable. They would be expected to benefit from a shared use path towards East Cowes town centre (2.9 miles/4.7 kilometres). Residents living in East Cowes Road have access to a pavement along Racecourse in the direction of Wootton Bridge (1.9 miles/3.1 kilometres) and to Newport (2.0 miles/3.2 kilometres).

5.2.1 Core walking zone in Whippingham

Due to the layout of Whippingham parish, a rural settlement comprised of the separate hamlets listed above, a core walking zone was not identified in this area. There are no known pedestrianised areas in the parish.

6 Prioritising Improvements

This plan prioritises improvements for the infrastructure of East Cowes and Whippingham according to the principles set out in national government's latest available Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. This strategy supports transformation which will tackle traffic congestion, extend opportunity for residents, improve their physical and mental health, and support local economies.

6.1 Targets for walking and cycling

The following targets were set in the national 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) for the year 2025:

- to aim to double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025
- to aim to increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 300 stages per person per year in 2025
- to increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025

It is clear that it is the cycling target of the strategy which is the most ambitious of the three in terms of percentage change, but if cycling for transport currently has a lower baseline than walking for transport, relatively small percentage increases in walking journeys could still have a significant effect overall. In particular, an increase in walking to school could have a noticeable effect on peak-time traffic congestion, as well as the health of pupils and their carers.

Department for Transport statistics from the National Travel Survey (NTS) appear to demonstrate that short-distance walking is on the increase year by year nationally, but long-distance walking is in decline. Written evidence [submitted to Parliament by Living Streets](#) (ATR0062) stated that “There was an 11 per cent rise in the number of stages walked in 2016 compared to 2015, and a further 3 per cent rise in 2017 (the NTS quotes the equivalent figures for walking trips – 15 per cent and 2 per cent). It is not clear whether the 2015–16 increase represents people making more short walks because of a behaviour change; the NTS suggests that the further increase in 2017 may support that interpretation. Nevertheless, the past three years also show a continuing trend of falling numbers of journeys of more than one mile.”

Changes in methodology mean it is harder to determine whether the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy walking target of 300 stages per person per year has already been met, or remains outstanding. The evidence submitted by Living Streets to Parliament continued: “The 2016 and 2017 NTS used an improved methodology for counting walking stages per person per year, and the reports also included adjusted data for previous years. The adjustment increased the 2002–2015 figures by 20–25 stages per person per year, meaning that the CWIS target has been met in 15 out of 16 years since 2002.” Nevertheless, the intention of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was that walking for transport purposes should be sustained and continue to grow.

6.2 Summary of intervention priorities

The following table prioritises potential walking and cycling investments in East Cowes and Whippingham according to the criteria in the latest available Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

Priority number	Route	Intervention	Rationale
(1)	Old Road	Two sections of new shared use cycling and walking path, existing pavement converted to shared cycling and walking use along the remainder of the road's length via route (J).	Increase the percentage of children and their carers that can walk or cycle to Holy Cross primary school safely, improve safety for Old Road residents.
(2)	Beatrice Avenue north of Crossways Road	Extend the shared use cycling and walking path to the north end of the avenue, reduce the road width and provide pedestrian refuges as part of one of the routes (E) to (H).	Increase the percentage of children and their carers that can walk or cycle to Queensgate primary school safely, improve safety for Beatrice Avenue residents.
(3)	Ferry Road, Castle Street and Well Road	Create a two-way cycle path in the ferry terminals area which connects to the Esplanade via route (K), improve the roundabout on Castle Street for cyclists and pedestrians.	Double cycle use on the chain ferry and Red Funnel ferry, improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians in the East Cowes one-way system.
(4)	Whippingham to Newport	Connect the existing shared use paths in Beatrice Avenue and Saunders Way with a cycle route to Newport via one of three optional routes (A) to (C).	Double cycle use for commuting and school journeys to the Newport area. Double cycle use for journeys to Wootton Bridge. Improve safety for cyclists who currently can only use the A3021.
(5)	Within East Cowes	Connect the existing shared use paths in Beatrice Avenue and Saunders Way to the town centre and northern residential area via one of six optional routes (D) to (I).	Double cycle use for commuting, shopping and access to public amenities within East Cowes.

(6)	Within East Cowes	Replace steps with ramps on urban footpaths in the Sylvan Avenue area.	Improve accessibility of walking routes for pedestrians and mobility scooter users.
(7)	Within East Cowes	Low traffic neighbourhoods in potential rat run areas.	Increase safety of walking and cycling in residential areas to increase local usage of these modes.
(8)	Within Whippingham	Designate rural lanes as quiet lanes.	Increase safety of walking and cycling in rural areas to increase local usage of these modes, enhance safety of Round the Island cycle route.
(9)	Mill Lane to East Cowes Road, Whippingham	Convert grass verge on west side of North Fairlee Road to shared use cycle and walking path via route (N). Improve safety of crossing of Fairlee Road at junction with Mill Lane.	Increase safety of walking and cycling on this 'missing link' between the Medina Greenway and Whippingham.
(10)	Lane south of Harvey Close, East Cowes	Connect to Waterside Close with shared use path or modal filter, reduce speed limit with quiet lane designation.	Provide new cycling and walking route from Crossways Road area to increase local usage of these modes.
(11)	Whippingham Road between Beatrice Avenue and Alverstone Road	Remove white line from existing shared use path, widen path to 3 metres, add cycle refuge to aid crossing, reposition bench seating.	Bring this link in the Round the Island route up to current cycle path standards to avoid conflict with motorists and pedestrians at this key junction.
(12)	Beatrice Avenue and upper Alverstone Road	Designate Beatrice Avenue and upper Alverstone Road as quiet lanes.	Reduce speed limits on the Round the Island route to enhance cyclist safety.
(13)	Beatrice Avenue and Saunders Way	Paint cycle symbols on existing shared use paths to alert pedestrians to potential cycle use.	These paths currently have minimal signage to indicate that they are shared with cycles, causing a safety risk.

(14)	Junction of East Cowes Road and Alverstone Road with Whippingham Road	Create pedestrian/cycle refuge in Whippingham Road for crossing from East Cowes Road to Alverstone Road.	This dangerous junction links the Round the Island cycle route to the Newport shared use paths.
(15)	Lower Alverstone Road and East Cowes Road	Designate lower Alverstone Road and East Cowes Road as quiet lanes.	These roads link the Round the Island cycle route to the Newport shared use paths.
(16)	Racecourse at the west end of East Cowes Road	Widen the existing pedestrian refuge for crossing Racecourse so that a cycle can fit within it.	This refuge is too small for a cycle to fit in at present, presenting a danger to road users.
(17)	Road to crematorium south of Racecourse	Remove non-compliant cycle lane marking, increase cycle lane width.	Current path in west side gutter is unusable due to overgrowth and lack of maintenance.
(18)	Throughout Whippingham and East Cowes	Install new, more visible cycle route signs which indicate complete routes through the area.	Current cycle route signage is small, sporadic and sometimes implies that dedicated cycle routes exist that do not.

7 Integration and Application

The next edition of the Island Planning Strategy is expected to be adopted by the Isle of Wight Council in 2022. Drafting of the East Cowes Neighbourhood Plan is expected to follow the adoption of that local plan, leading to opportunities to integrate the routes and interventions in this Local Cycling and Walking Plan into a document which would be material in town planning determinations. Whippingham Parish Council would also have the option to consider opening public consultation on a potential neighbourhood plan at that time.

The Isle of Wight Council is pursuing regeneration initiatives in the East Cowes waterfront area, including new development projects which can potentially deliver or contribute to infrastructure improvements for walking and cycling in the town. Because the East Cowes and Whippingham peninsula is one of the Isle of Wight's fastest growing areas for development, forthcoming large-scale planning applications can support the aspirations of this Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan. For example, new planning applications would be expected to come forward at Venture Quays and Albany Road, the Red Funnel terminal, the Folly Works, Norris Castle and for residential development in general.

The local authority also publishes a range of other relevant documents, future editions of which can incorporate material from this plan, including the Local Transport Plan, Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Physical Activity Strategy, Public Health Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and detailed plans for the Medina Greenway.

Further study is required to identify more of the individual road junctions at which pedestrian or cycle crossings can be made safer, for example with the installation of refuges or the narrowing of side roads. This type of survey was carried out in the Walking and Cycling Environment Report for Wootton Bridge and Whippingham, which was [published in 2018](#). It is unknown whether a similar report has been produced for East Cowes in recent years.

7.1 Costing the proposals, and other risk factors

Estimates of cost for the potential routes (A) to (N) and the other infrastructure improvements proposed in this plan have not been made at this time, due to uncertainty in multiple variables including the cost of potential land acquisitions, legal access agreements and wildlife mitigation measures, volatility in the cost of building materials and the local availability of skilled construction labour. Detailed design work for specific routes, crossings and junctions would be required to accurately estimate the cost of materials and construction for each of the proposed routes.

As such, any cost estimates based merely on the length of routes would be unreliable and potentially misleading. Some routes might prove undeliverable at any cost if the local authority is not minded to use its compulsory purchase powers in the case of a lack of cooperation from the relevant landowners.

Nevertheless, the status quo also has a cost in health outcomes from a lack of safe active travel opportunities, including the risk of preventable accidents in collisions between motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.