

2023



Enabling Active Travel in Warrington

Annual Delivery Report

December 2023



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this progress report on the work my officers have been undertaking on improving active travel in Warrington.

The Warrington Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was published in December 2019 and followed the guidance laid down by government in requiring local authorities to produce such a plan. We approached the task with relish as we knew from our work on the Local Transport Plan and from talking to local residents that many people want to walk and cycle more yet they were frustrated by the lack of safe routes and pleasant places to walk.

The LCWIP however is more than just a strategy and an aspirational network. It is also a statement of intent and a declaration to the government that Warrington was ready to receive extra funding to make the LCWIP a reality.

Since 2019 we have been successful in attracting over £5 million of new funding for active travel projects and delivered many of them. There are new cycle routes in Great Sankey, between Omega and Burtonwood, the Trans Pennine Trail has seen significant investment, and many miles of paths in Sankey Valley, Woolston Park, and Victoria Park have been upgraded and widened. We have also removed many A frame access barriers which have prevented the elderly and people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters from accessing our open spaces showing that we are a caring organisation.

Our most recent achievement is the delivery of an innovative Cyclops junction in Bewsey using funding from the government funded Active Travel Fund programme. This allows segregated and safer journeys by people wheeling, walking and cycling through the junction without any impact on traffic. I am delighted that we are looking at such innovative solutions, researching best practice to help design and deliver this scheme, which should pave the way (hopefully with more government funding) for other similar schemes elsewhere in Warrington.

The question I am always asked is whether these new schemes is making a difference. This report answers this. It sets out the comprehensive monitoring that we carry out of how people travel and it shows very clearly that more people are walking and cycling and more people are satisfied and happier with the outcome. This can only have a positive impact on people's health, on their wellbeing, and on the environment.

I would therefore like to thank all those involved in the writing of this report.



Councillor Hans Mundry
Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member
Highways, Transportation and Public Realm

Introduction

Our [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) sets out how the borough will be improved through a network of dedicated spaces for active travel by creating corridors to enable the highest levels of walkable and cycleable trips to be realised. We plan to:

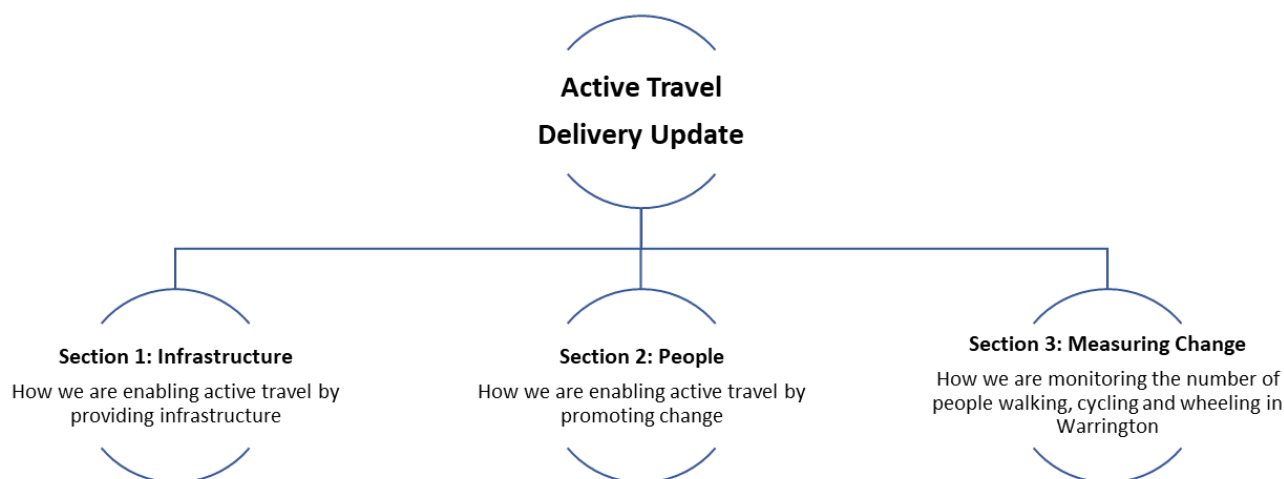
Deliver a network of primary, neighbourhood and strategic greenway active travel corridors

Improve the 'last mile' of journeys into the Town Centre

Protect and enhance our networks of quieter streets

As a living document, it was intended that the LCWIP will be either supplemented by update reports or reviewed regularly.

The 3 sections within this note provides an update on our efforts to deliver the LCWIP.



- In recent years, we have delivered a range of active travel projects from a wide range of funding sources, which benefit people who wish to walk or cycle across Warrington. **Section 1** focuses on these completed schemes and explains how this momentum will be maintained with further improvements.
- Our LCWIP makes clear that improvements to infrastructure alone will not be sufficient to get the maximum number of people out of their cars on school trips, work trips and leisure outings. Behavioural change interventions are an important part of our support for walking and cycling. **Section 2** features our work with local schools, businesses and the wider community.
- Monitoring the benefits of investment will enable us to make the case for future investment in our streets. **Section 3** considers how we measure the number of people cycling and walking in Warrington and how we utilise data to predict and provide interventions to enable active travel.

Section 1- Enabling Active Travel: Infrastructure

Work to improve our streets for people walking and cycling has been ongoing for decades in Warrington. This update gives a summary of recently completed and upcoming delivery of schemes focusing on 5 keys areas of our work.

**Revitalising our
greenway network**

**Enabling access
for all**

**Enabling active travel
in our communities**

**Upcoming
schemes**

**Emerging
schemes**

This however is by no means a comprehensive breakdown of active travel scheme delivery in recent years, let alone of the wider programme of transport improvements that has improved conditions for people walking and cycling.

- **Revitalising our greenway network**

Greenways are a key element of our walking and cycling network and has been the focal point of much recent active travel investment. Much of this network, which opens key open spaces and connects communities, already exists, albeit the quality and level of maintenance in places has been indifferent.

In recent years we have delivered a multi-million pound investment in our existing greenway network to enable access travel.

Case Study 1. Forming part of the National Cycle Network (NCN) and providing a long-distance signed route from Southport to Hornsea, the **Trans Pennine Trail** is a key route in Warrington cutting through the borough. Over time the quality of the route has diminished and in many places the surfacing was poor and vegetation a major constraint.

The route has been transformed thanks to external funding secured in recent years for major improvements in Lymm, Latchford and Stockton Heath.

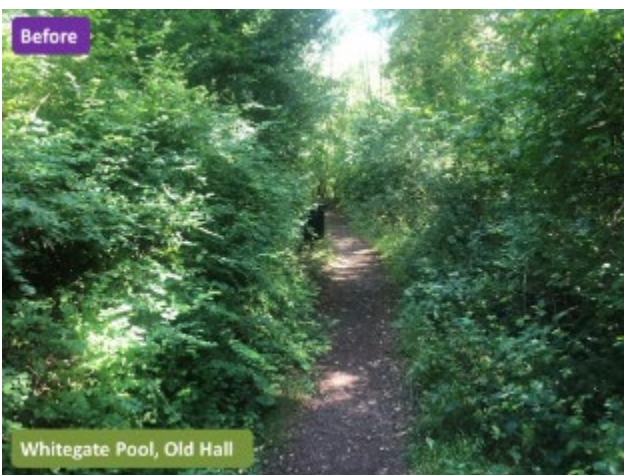




Case Study 2. Sankey Valley Park, a traffic free strategic greenway which runs between Widnes and St Helens, is one of Warrington's most popular cycle routes with over 1,000 daily trips in the summer months. It is the fastest and most direct option for many local trips, particularly those crossing east west, such as to/from the Hospital. Over the past few years, the path has been widened, pinch points removed, and visibility improved.

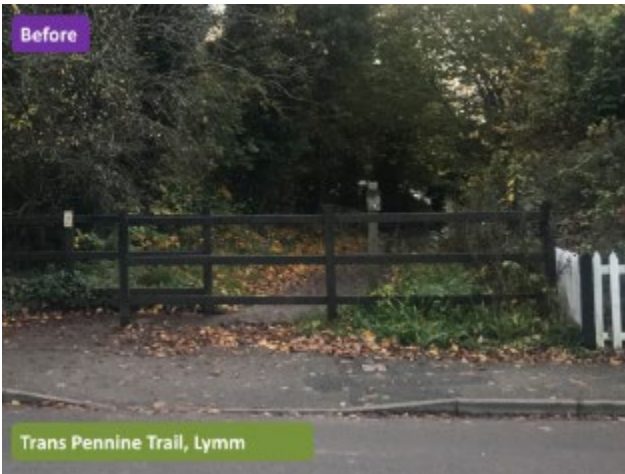


Case Study 3. Miscellaneous Schemes- Not all schemes require significant investment. We have delivered several small schemes on our greenway network which although are low cost can play a significant role in improving accessibility and enabling local trips to be made by active travel. Examples include Woolston Park, Victoria Park, New Cut Trail and Appleton Thorn.

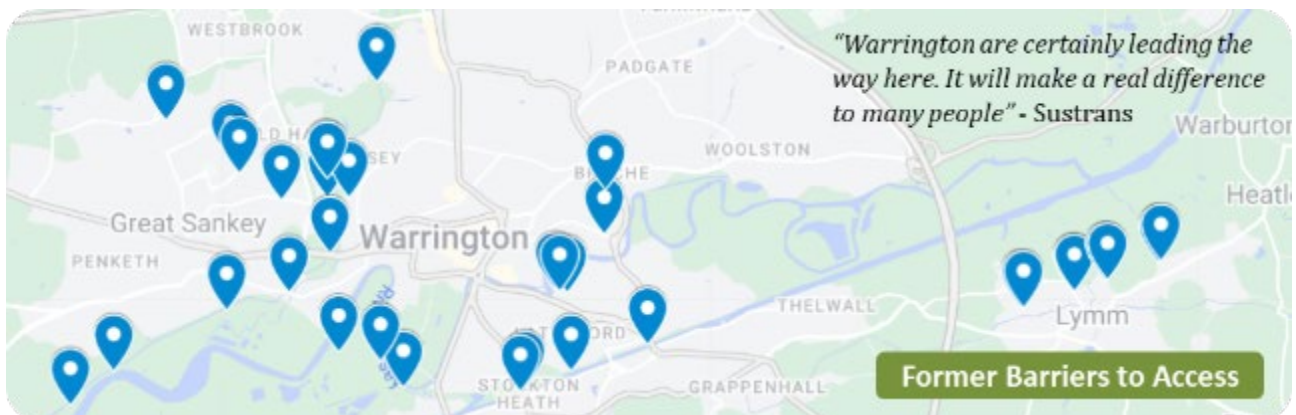


- **Enabling access for all**

Our greenway network has many examples of infrastructure that prevents people from utilising and benefitting from otherwise accessible paths. In recent years we have enabled access for all through schemes of all sizes.



Working with Warrington Disability Partnership and other stakeholders including Sustrans, since 2020 we have removed over 30 restrictive barriers from our network. We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that our entire network is accessible and attractive to all.

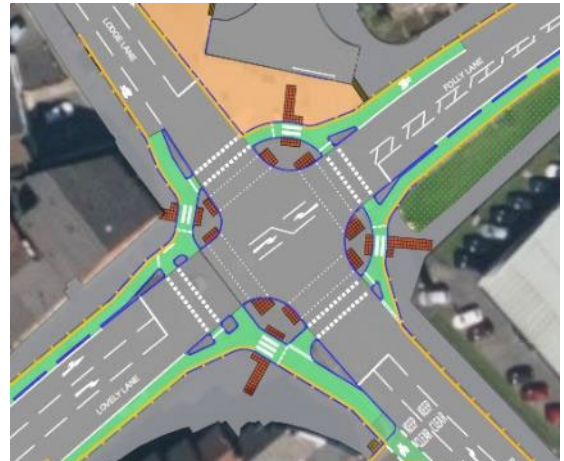


- **Enabling active travel in our communities**

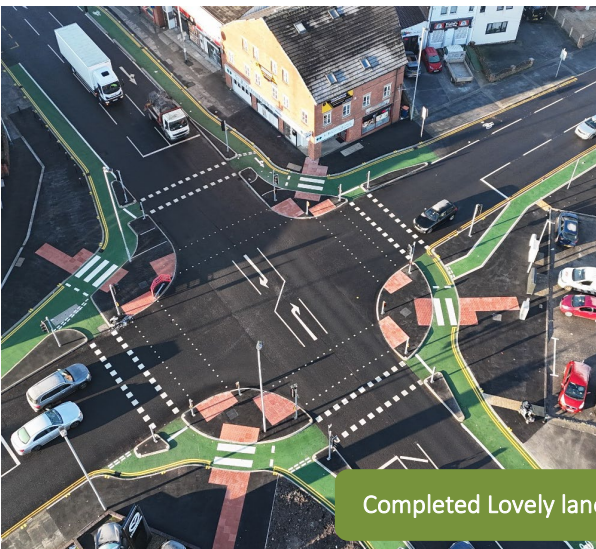
Case Study 1. Cyclops- We were awarded funding from the Active Travel Fund for the delivery of a scheme to provide protected cycle infrastructure at the junction of Bewsey Road and Lovely Lane in Bewsey.

The scheme to provide a Cycle Optimised Protected Signals junction is now complete. Commonly known as 'CYCLOPS', this is a type of junction which separates people walking, cycling and wheeling from motorised traffic, reducing the risk of collisions or conflict between users.

We have completely resurfaced the junction, which was previously in poor condition, and upgraded the traffic signal equipment that was approaching 20 years old with new, more advanced equipment.



Given that it is the first scheme of this nature in Warrington, and relatively new to the UK in general, we engaged widely with local residents/businesses and those who use the junction. Construction commenced in August 2023 and was completed in November.



Completed Lovely lane Cyclops Junction



Case Study 2. Burtonwood- A new 1.5km shared use path adjacent to Burtonwood Road/Clay Lane was provided in Spring 2021 between the village of Burtonwood and Junction 9 of the M62 to reduce settlement severance and improve access to and from the Omega employment site. A complex compulsory purchase order was enacted to obtain control of plots of land from seven landowners to deliver the scheme.

Where there was once not even a footpath, Burtonwood is now connected to the network of cycle infrastructure in west Warrington. Upon completion the route was named as Terry O'Neil Way in memory of the former council leader.



Case Study 3. Active Travel in our Town Centre- As part of the Council's Active Travel Fund delivery, several measures were provided within Warrington town centre to enable walking and cycling. It is hoped that these measures will be the first step towards a more extensive improvement scheme within the town centre as set out in the Warrington First and Last Mile Masterplan to support the increase in town centre living and support the regeneration.



Case Study 4. Accessible Neighbourhoods – Street layouts that create slow speed, low traffic environments are good for people wishing to cycle or walk. Across Warrington there are many existing high-quality examples of places where a direct route for walking and cycling is not open to motor traffic.



We have a programme underway to retrospectively alter the layouts at various existing modal filters to enable cycling. These improvements are an example of the low-cost intervention that collectively help to create a coherent network of quiet streets.



Case Study 4. Footway Accessibility Improvement Programme - Many streets across Warrington lack basic accessibility features which can cause major issues for people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters and those with pushchairs and prams.

For many years, we have used a small allocation from the LTP programme to undertake a programme of carrying out minor footway improvements such as the provision of dropped kerbs, accessibility enhancements and the provision of short sections of 'missing footway'. Although the works are minor, we are aware of the huge positive impact they can have for many in our community.

Despite the programme delivering substantial improvements in accessibility across the borough over recent years, there are still many locations yet to be addressed. We will continue our longstanding work with stakeholders to identify and prioritise routes with a view to securing additional external funding.



The past few decades have seen several public realm schemes delivered in the town centre which have improved accessibility in the town centre. But there were many places which were left unresolved. As part of the Warrington Town Deal a baseline audit was conducted to identify locations where people were hindered by the existing layout to inform a programme of improvement works.

Phase 1 is now complete and included around 20 locations where simple improvements were made through providing dropped crossings or minor alterations to existing footways.

We have started design work for a Phase 2 package to commence early in 2024 which includes more comprehensive works such as raised tables, continuous footways and kerb build outs.

- **Upcoming Schemes**

Several sustainable transport projects have been allocated significant funding from the Warrington Town Deal (www.warrington.gov.uk/sustainable-travel-programme). Plans for these developments are currently in design development, with construction expected to take place over the next two years.

Sankey Street

Scheme to provide high-quality public realm, including widened footways, more frequent crossings, high-quality materials and new trees; and safer facilities for cycle movements.

This scheme is part of our delivery of the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan.

Bewsey Road

Scheme to provide a protected cycle facility between Lovely Lane and Froghall Lane

The scheme would complement two schemes at either end of the corridor, funded through ATF3 and ATF4.



Kingsway Bridge

Scheme to provide a protected cycle facility between Farrell Street and Kingsway South, via the A50 (Kingsway Bridge).

This is a key part of the Warrington cycle network with connections to other routes. Current levels of cycling in the area are high, with surveys showing 800 – 1,200 cycle trips on the bridge per day.



The Warrington Town Deal also includes a scheme to establish a Community Cycle Hub in the town centre, including at various stages, bike hire facilities, a repair workshop, maintenance courses, recycled bike offers and secure cycle parking.

Funding is also in place through the Town Deal to provide secure cycle parking facility to be located at a key gateway location in the town centre. Their design will be like a secure shelter recently built at Warrington Bank Quay station with access controlled by fob access.



We were successful in obtaining funding from Active Travel England to provide a protected junction at the southern end of the Bewsey Road Town Deal scheme at Froghall Lane. This is complimentary to the proposed Bewsey Road improvements and the CYCLOPs. Consultation on the proposal will take place later this year.

- **Emerging Schemes**

We have also been successful in obtaining funding from Active Travel England to help develop plans for future schemes. To develop plans for two key junctions next to the town centre, we will shortly hire consultants to provide design and business case support.



This work is the next step in delivering our First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan. The masterplan was developed to tackle core issues- such as severance, ‘rat-running’, road safety, air quality and underwhelming public realm – but also support growth and regeneration. Its core deliverable is creating streets that better cater for people.

In late November 2023, we learnt that our Leveling Up Round 2 bid, Warrington North – Reconnecting the Settlements had been successful. This award includes around £7m funding to deliver walking and cycling improvements connecting the villages of Burtonwood, Winwick and Culcheth to the urban core of Warrington. The projects will be delivered by March 2026.

- **Active Travel Design Capacity Building**

In the summer of 2022 Active Travel England asked all of England’s councils to assess their ability to deliver on all things active travel. The assessment required us to rate ourselves between 0 and 4 against criteria including local leadership, supportive transport policy and our track record on delivery.

0

1

2

3

4



Following a review by Active Travel England and consideration of past performance data held by the Department for Transport we were rated as a **Level 2 authority**. This rating demonstrates our strong local leadership and clear plans that form the basis of an emerging network. For comparison, most authorities were rated in category 1 and 2, with very few higher 1.

The ratings will be used to guide the allocation of funding and other resources from Active Travel England.

A key theme in the assessment process was the need to demonstrate a commitment to increase our capability to deliver high complexity scheme.

We have worked hard to develop our active travel design capability across the past year. A total of 20 officers from across the council have attended LTN1/20 training and multi discipline team visits have been made to authorities, including Manchester and Leicester, to gain an understanding of best practice.

Section 2- Enabling Active Travel: People

A Smarter Travel Choices team sits within the wider Transport Planning service, whose role is to engage with businesses, schools and residential communities to develop Travel Plans to promote and support a reduced use of car travel.

This section provides a snapshot of the work undertaken over the past year by the team and shows how progress is being measured.

- Cycling and Walking Maps** - The online (Google) Cycle maps were created in 2021. This year we have seen over 100,000 views. We have also created 2 new leisure routes and added a page which highlights access barriers to help those with nonstandard bikes. The paper version, now in its 8th edition, remains a much valued and used resource.



Guided Bike Rides – In the past year, our guided ride programme has delivered 34 rides, with a total of 178 attendees cycling almost 1,700 miles. With starting points across Warrington this programme brings cycling to the community.



Social media – We make regular social media posts, spreading the word about routes, events and advice. On average each post generates 18 engagements and 471 views.



Community Events – We deliver community engagement events across the Borough. Events range from Dr Bikes to bike light give away to bike security marking. This year we have delivered 6 events, engaging directly with local people. In total we have engaged 190 people and families. The team have serviced / safety checked 87 bikes and security marked 60 bikes.

Enabling the next generation- School Bikeability training has been delivered in Warrington since 2007, with the government grant being fully utilised each year to train as many pupils and students as possible.



Supporting commuters - We work directly with local, regional, national and international companies to encourage active travel throughout Warrington. The Active Travel Team have delivered 29 events with 110 hrs of engagement. The team have engaged 822 people (commuters) about their travel habits. To encourage people to cycle, we have also serviced / safety checked 227 bikes.

Share with Care Campaign – A significant part of our network is shared between a variety of users including those walking, cycling, wheeling, and occasionally horseriding.

Known levels of ‘actual’ interactions or conflicts between users on our shared network is extremely low. The ‘perceived’ risk is however routinely made known to officers by some residents.

We have begun a subtle 'nudge' campaign to reinforce positive behaviour across our shared network. We will do this by signing along the greenway routes and through social media. As representation matters, we have incorporated a wide range of users, including those who use adapted cycles.

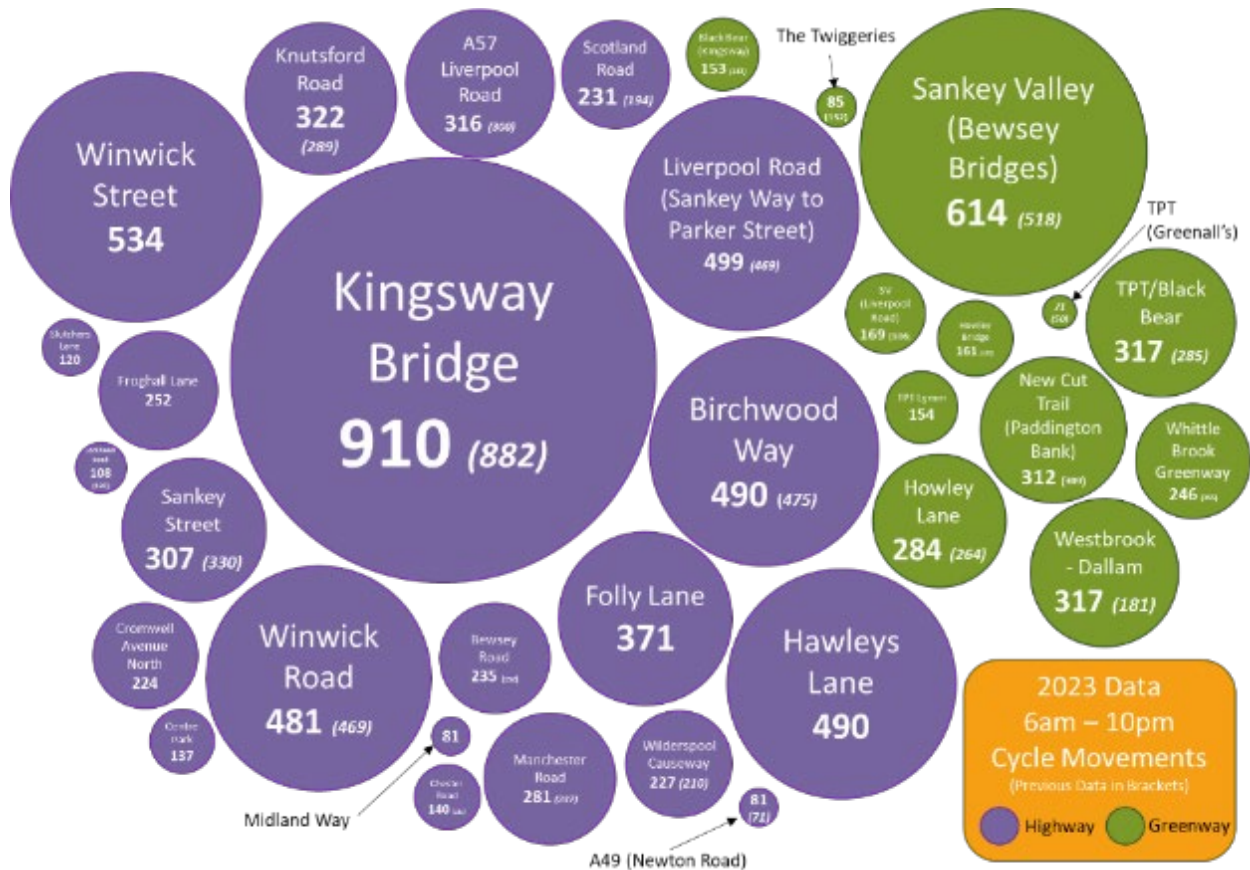


Section 3- Measuring Change

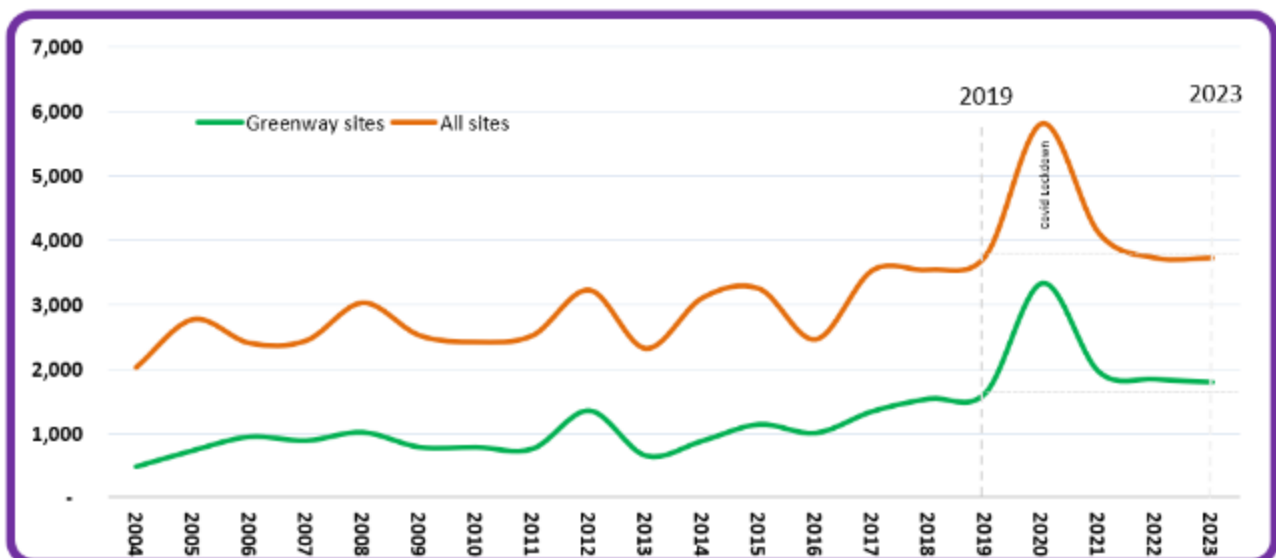
Annual Walking and Cycling Surveys

Cycling and walking flow trends in Warrington are monitored annually by using data recorded at several survey locations across the Borough. The latest surveys were undertaken in July 2023 at over 40 'Greenway' and 'Radial' locations. They contribute to a time series of data going back to 2004.

The July survey highlighted that on many key routes in Warrington, the level of cycling is already at a significant level.



The data from the past surveys show a steady increase in cycling since 2004:



The 16 monitoring sites are shown below:



We have developed three screenlines across the River Mersey, Manchester Ship Canal, and West Coast Mainline to better understand the spatial distribution of people cycling in Warrington. Routes such as Kingsway Bridge (910), Bridgefoot (788) and Liverpool Road (499) show high daily usage.



Permanent Walking and Cycling Surveys- In summer 2021 Warrington became one of the first authorities to install LiDAR counters to collect data on those cycling **and** walking.



Monitoring of active travel will continue as new schemes are provided and the network of permanent counters is being upgraded.

	July 22 – July 23	Peak Day	Average Day
Westbrook to Dallam Greenway	75,194	382	206



New Cut Trail	88,212	494	242
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National Data

The annual Active Lives Survey is the best opportunity to compare to other areas. On all indicators, Warrington exceeds the national and regional average.



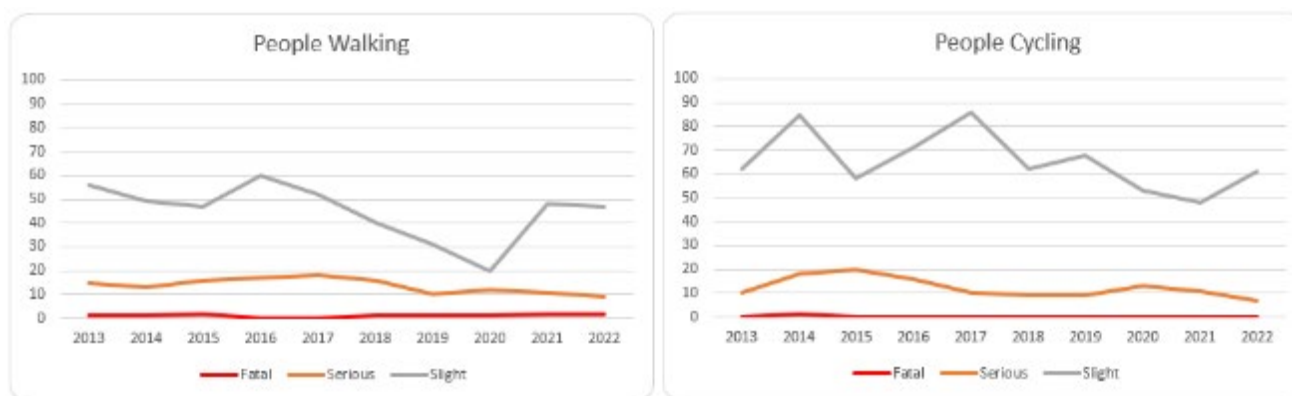
Warrington is also much higher than most of our neighbouring authorities. With ‘infrequent’ cycling (once per month) Warrington (15.4%) is only beaten by Lancaster (16.5%) across the North West. Across the entire north of England, Warrington is in 5th place behind York, Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire.

The data, from our own monitoring and national datasets, is hugely promising. It reiterates that a massive area of potential is to enable, through infrastructure, those already cycling to cycle more.

Casualty Data

The safety of people cycling, in terms of actual (number of collisions) and subjective (how safe a journey feels) clearly have an impact on the attractiveness of walking and cycling in Warrington.

Warrington has seen improvements in reducing the number of people injured whilst walking and cycling.



A key point to emphasise is that the data does not pick up junctions and routes which are potentially hostile to people walking and cycling or there is a perception of danger, to the effect that people avoid using them.

Using Data to Identify Opportunities

As helpful as it is to use data from existing walking and cycling routes, we also need to consider where people would like to travel but are unable to do so due to a lack of attractive routes. It is here that we should focus our efforts from the standpoint of providing infrastructure and behavioural change.

Previously, much of the efforts in identifying propensity to walk and cycle has been focused on the journey to work. However, we need to consider the everyday transport needs of people including the journey to school, leisure or shopping trips.

School-related travel generates a significant number of trips during school days. It is crucial to increase the number of these that can be made using active modes. Not only would it mean that more children can get their daily dose of physical activity without even thinking about it, just by walking or cycling their journey, the effect it has on the wider journeys of parents through 'trip chaining' could be transformational.

Using data we can count the number of people making short journeys to schools in cars. Those are the people we need to serve.

