

Health and Wellbeing Board

20 November 2025

Active Travel in Medway

Report from: Councillor Simon Curry, Portfolio for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration

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Summary

This report provides an overview of the current status and recent developments in Active Travel across Medway, with a particular focus on the indicator 'Percentage of adults walking for travel at least three days per week'. Medway continues to underperform on this indicator compared to national and regional averages, highlighting a critical area for improvement. The report outlines the strategic role of the Active Travel Group, recent delivery successes including Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) approval and school engagement and identifies opportunities for further collaboration to improve health and wellbeing outcomes through sustainable transport.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Board is asked to note the progress made in promoting Active Travel across Medway.
- 1.2. The Board is asked to support continued cross-sector collaboration to improve adult walking rates.
- 1.3. The Board is asked to encourage partners to promote and participate in Active Travel initiatives.
- 1.4. The Board is asked to consider how its partners can assist to identify opportunities to align resources and strategies to improve performance on the walking indicator.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. The initiatives described align with the Council Plan and Medway's Climate Change Action Plan, supporting the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 and the priority of creating safe, connected, and sustainable places.

3. Background

- 3.1. Medway's Active Travel Group provides strategic oversight and coordination of all active travel workstreams across the Council.
- 3.2. It supports the development and delivery of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), Climate Change Action Plan and other strategic frameworks.
- 3.3. The group has a decision-making role and brings together elected members (cross party) and council officers from Public Health, Transport, Climate Response, Education, and other services to align behavioural change and infrastructure delivery.
- 3.4. Highlights include:
 - Approval of the LCWIP (March 2025), identifying 14 priority walking routes and 10 cycling corridors.
 - Funding secured for the development of six high-priority conceptual schemes to detailed design, under the Active Travel Fund allocation.
 - Delivery of 7 School Streets (March 2024) with a further 5 School Streets due to launch (September to November 2025).
 - Engagement of 22 schools in the Big Walk and Wheel 2025, logging 48,588 journeys (84% increase).
 - 14,864 residents engaged in walking and cycling activities in 2024/25.
 - Recognition through national awards and best practice case studies.
 - Quarterly updates from the Council's Active Travel Group, summarising key activities and achievements. Please see Appendices B–E for a detailed overview of the progress made during the past year.
- 3.5. Despite these successes, Medway continues to underperform in the percentage of adults walking for travel at least three days per week.
- 3.6. This underperformance underscores the need for targeted interventions and stronger collaboration with partners to address barriers and promote walking as a viable mode of travel.

4. Options

- 4.1. Maintain current levels of support and activity.
- 4.2. Increase investment and partnership engagement to accelerate progress.
- 4.3. Develop targeted interventions to address barriers to adult walking for travel.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1. Active Travel reduces carbon emissions and supports climate goals.

- 5.2. It plays a critical role in addressing childhood obesity. School-based walking and cycling initiatives, such as School Streets and the WOW campaign, encourage physical activity from an early age and support long-term health outcomes.
- 5.3. Multi-sectoral collaboration between transport, education, and public health is essential to sustain and expand these efforts.
- 5.4. Programmes are inclusive, with accessible walking routes and school engagement.
- 5.5. Evidence shows that increased walking improves physical and mental health and reduces social isolation.
- 5.6. Given Medway's underperformance in adult walking for travel, there is a pressing need for targeted interventions, enhanced infrastructure, and community engagement to reverse this trend and align with national benchmarks.

6. Risk management

6.1. Risks identified are listed below:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Funding constraints	Limited resources for infrastructure and campaigns	Seek external grants (e.g. Active Travel Fund), align with planning/development funding	C III
Low engagement	Limited uptake of walking initiatives	Behaviour change campaigns, community engagement, school partnerships	B III
Infrastructure gaps	Incomplete or unsafe walking routes	Prioritise LCWIP delivery, phased improvements, stakeholder input	B II

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

7. Consultation

- 7.1. Ongoing consultation takes place through the Active Travel Group, Community Climate Working Group, and school engagement.
- 7.2. Public consultation took place in early 2024, in accordance with the LCWIP (358 survey responses, 64 emails, 500+ engagements)
- 7.3. Feedback has informed the development of initiatives and priorities.

8. Climate change implications

- 8.1. Active Travel initiatives contribute to reduced vehicle emissions and support Medway's Climate Change Action Plan, under Priority 3: Sustainable Travel and Transport.
- 8.2. Infrastructure improvements and behaviour change campaigns are key to achieving carbon neutrality.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. Programmes have been funded through external grants including the Active Travel Fund and the Active Travel Capability revenue grant. These funding streams have been combined from 2025/26 through the Consolidated Active Travel Fund.
- 9.2. Additional funding may be required for expanded initiatives and infrastructure delivery. This would need to be approved through the appropriate governance route.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix A - Active Travel Group – Terms of Reference 2025/26

Appendix B - Active Travel Updates - December 2024

Appendix C - Active Travel Updates - March 2025

Appendix D - Active Travel Updates - June 2025

Appendix E - Active Travel Updates - September 2025

Background papers

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/activetravel>

Childhood Obesity Five Year Plan

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=75885>