

Medway Council - Active Travel Updates [March 2025]

Big Walk and Wheel 2025

Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel is the largest inter-school walking, wheeling and scooting challenge in the UK. It inspires pupils to make active journeys to school, improve air quality in their neighbourhood and discover how these benefits change the world.



This year, the Transport Initiatives Team are encouraging our Medway Schools to join the campaign, which will be running between 24 March and 4 April. On each day of the challenge, schools compete to see who can record the greatest proportion of pupils walking, using a wheelchair, scooting or cycling to school. A school's best five days will determine their final position, but schools can log journeys on all ten days if they wish.

Twenty schools across Medway have registered to take part to date, with a press release having been drafted and continued promotions on the run up to the campaign.

Travel Planning

Updates have been made to the Council website, including further information on Travel Plans. This includes a School Travel Plan webpage, as well as new sub-pages dedicated to Residential Travel Plans, Workplace Travel Plans and Medway Council's Travel Plan. For further details, please see <https://www.medway.gov.uk/travelplans>.

Positive work is being undertaken regarding the Travel Planning Section 106 contributions. Officers have been in contact with the Travel Plan Coordinator for the development at Chatham Docks and have reviewed their Monitoring Report and Resident Welcome Pack. A contact has also been made, and positive work will continue in line with the available developer-led funding contributions.



Work has also commenced on the development of an Area-Wide Travel Plan for Medway. This has included a meeting with the Council's Data and Design Team, to determine the data already in place and what questions should be asked in accordance. Officers will be in further communication with the team throughout the next couple of months to draft an appropriate engagement survey for Medway residents to complete.

Modeshift STARS engagement

Modeshift STARS is an online platform, providing a template to help schools generate a national standard School Travel Plan (STP). It is free to use by Medway schools and is the government endorsed national award scheme that recognises schools for taking steps to promote safer, greener, healthier travel.



Following on from the promotion of this scheme, 7 schools in Medway have registered to develop their STP through the Modeshift Stars platform, which can be accessed [here](#).

The Transport Initiatives Team will be offering Modeshift Stars workshops to any school wanting support, offering advice on how to use the system and the initiatives available to help gain accreditation. Officers will be encouraging registered schools to strive for 'good' accreditation level over the course of 1 year. This will involve completing a hands-up survey and planning and completing various initiatives to help support the aims and objectives, as set out within their STP.

Further conversations have recently taken place with Modeshift, with a free workplace site on Modeshift STARS having been obtained for Medway Council. This will assist the local authority with developing their own Workplace Travel Plan, including an opportunity to achieve national best practice accreditation as an organisation.

School Streets monitoring



To coincide with the one-year milestone since Medway's first School Streets went live, officers are progressing a monitoring and review exercise with the 7 participating schools, to establish whether the implementation has been well-received over the duration, including success measures and suggestions to help improve things going forward.

Schools have been provided with parent / carer surveys for completion, including opportunities for staff feedback. The feedback from these surveys will form part of the review report, alongside other data collected such as traffic count data and PCN data. A further 9 School Streets locations have been proposed in Medway, in line with a second tranche of schools, with further statutory consultation to take place shortly.

The Department for Transport and Active Travel England have also recently issued national guidance on how to set up and manage School Streets, including relevant case study examples, which can be accessed [here](#).

International Walk to School Month Winners

Two competitions, 'Little Trekkers' and 'Striders', took place during International Walk to School Month in October for primary and secondary schools across Medway.

The challenges encouraged pupils to travel to and from school in an active and fun way, helping to create long-term green travel habits. During the event, there were a total of 33,241 active travel journeys made by the 14 participating schools in Medway.



In the primary school 'Little Trekkers' category, St Margaret's at Troy Town CE Primary School in Rochester saw the highest number of pupils use active modes of travel during the challenge, with an impressive 84.6 per cent, winning the top prize of a £500 Halfords gift voucher.

Oasis Academy - Skinner Street School in Gillingham clinched second place, winning a £300 Halfords gift voucher, and Miers Court Primary School in Rainham secured third place, winning a £200 Halford gift voucher.

In the 'Striders' category for secondary schools, The Victory Academy in Chatham recorded the highest percentage of active travel journeys and won a £500 Halfords gift voucher.

Presentations were recently made by officers to winning schools in Medway, as illustrated below.



School presentations: The Victory Academy, Chatham (above left) and St Margarets at Troy Town CE Primary school (above right) receiving their winner's prizes and framed certificates.

Public Health - Active Travel Programmes

Medway's Health Walks Co-ordinator has been collaborating with the Wild with Wheels, Kent programme to obtain accreditation and create a range of accessible walks in Medway. Further details can be accessed [here](#). The partnership aims to deliver walking groups that redefine the concept of accessible walks. Walks will be free of charge, thoroughly risk-assessed, delivered on non-challenging terrain, guided, and interactive with nature, providing a meaningful experience for individuals with disabilities and impairments.

Over the past year, Medway's co-ordinator has participated in Continued Professional Development (CPD) workshops to gain a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the challenges that may arise. An initial pilot walk will be accompanied by a mindful booklet that explores, documents and helps understand the human senses. Alongside this booklet, officers have also incorporated enrichment activities for participants who wish to engage hands-on with nature, such as creating paintbrushes from sticks and leaves.



It is anticipated that this offer, which part of our Medway Health Walks programme, will launch in Spring 2025. These walks will form part of the Walk in the Park, Spring/Summer series of shorter walks, to complement Medway's long-standing volunteer led Health Walks programme.

Limehouse Wharf improvements



In line with the Council's emerging River Strategy, the boarding platform at Limehouse Wharf in Rochester will be installed by the end of March 2025.

The purpose of the platform is to enable safe access on and off visiting ships and bring passenger ships back to Rochester.

The first sailing from Southend to Rochester is expected to be late Spring 2025 and will be operated by Jetstream Tours.

The Waverley paddle steamer will make three visits to Rochester in late September, sailing from London and Gravesend and will be the largest ship steam ship to visit the river Medway in over a decade.

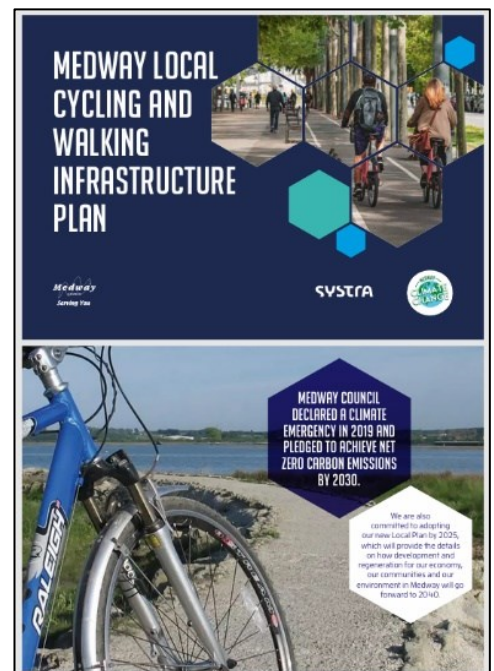


Above: Recent project works to introduce a new boarding platform at Limehouse Wharf, Rochester

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Medway's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was agreed by the RCE Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January and will be taken to Cabinet on 11 March to formally approve the adoption of the plan. The LCWIP provides a ten-year investment plan for the delivery of cycling and walking interventions and infrastructure improvements, that will maximise the uptake of active travel, building upon the 80+ miles of cycle network and encouraging further increases in active modes of travel.

Pending Cabinet approval, the plan will then be published on the Council website and promoted accordingly. The high-level interventions set out in the LCWIP will then be subject to further development and detailed design, and it is possible that measures proposed at the concept stage will be refined, modified or removed from the final schemes.



Further consultation and engagement will be undertaken as part of the detailed design process and residents will be encouraged to take part in developing the schemes in their communities. This work will also be supported, in part, through the Consolidated Active Travel Fund, announced by central government in February 2025, including a £568K grant allocation to Medway for 2025-26.

The LCWIP aligns with national legislation and guidance and supports the principle of sustainable growth that underpins Medway's emerging Local Plan. It supports Medway's local policies and strategies in relation to transport, active travel and climate change. It will also contribute positively to our Child Friendly Medway principles, through creating a safe environment for walking and cycling for our children and young people in Medway, alongside other programmes including School Streets, active travel to school initiatives and School Travel Plans and contribute directly to the One Medway Council Plan sub-priority, to: *Provide improved opportunities to walk, cycle, use public transport and electric vehicles, reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.*

Medway Free Bus Travel Weekend

FREE BUS TRAVEL WEEKEND

Enjoy what Medway has to offer and travel for free by bus.

Whether you're off to visit one of our great attractions, friends or shops, just hop on the bus.

All bus operators in Medway are taking part in the free bus travel weekend on: **Saturday, 21 and Sunday, 22 June 2025.**

You'll be able to hop on any bus from Medway and travel for free.

[Medway.gov.uk/Buses](https://www.medway.gov.uk/Buses)

Following the success of Medway's Free Bus Travel Weekend promotions in December, which saw 65,959 people travel free in Medway and an overall passenger uplift of 38% across the two weekends, a further initiative is being proposed for the weekend of 21-22 June 2025. This conveniently coincides with this year's Better Transport Week campaign, which runs between 16-22 June. All bus operators participated in the two Free Bus Travel Weekends in December, where free bus travel applied to any journey starting in Medway until 8pm each day.

The promotion will continue support our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) outputs and Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators, whilst encouraging residents and visitors to Medway to travel by bus, perhaps for the first time.

Further promotional banners and graphics will be displayed across Medway in advance of the initiative, including the Council's social media newsfeeds and Medway Matters publication.

Living Roof Bus Shelters



Medway's Public Transport Team are currently collaborating with Clear Channel and other businesses, with input from the Climate Change Team, on a project to upgrade a couple of bus stop shelters in Medway to Living Roof Bus Shelters, with plans to potentially expand the initiative in the future.

The project focuses on areas identified within the Medway Air Quality Action Plan. These shelters will be powered by solar panels, contributing to renewable energy use and reducing carbon emissions.

Additionally, the living roofs will attract and support local wildlife, enhancing biodiversity in urban areas. The project not only aims to improve air quality but also to create greener, more sustainable public spaces for the community.

Medway Local Bus Infrastructure Plan

Project Centre has been appointed by Medway Council to prepare Local Bus Infrastructure Plan [LBIP] which builds on Medway's Bus Service Improvement Plan [BSIP].

The LBIP will act as an evidence base for the development of a corridor-based bus infrastructure plan across Medway, using DfT funding allocations from the BSIP, as well as other sources which may become available, e.g. developer contributions. The LBIP will detail the evidence base, drawing on the content of the BSIP and any other supporting evidence, and include plans for a series of corridor-based infrastructure improvements.

It is intended that the LBIP will set out the Council's long-term vision and proposals for investment in improving journey times on the bus network. It is expected that the improvements will include:

- Changes to bus stop layouts, including the provision of new or modified clearways.
- Bus priority, and amendments at traffic signals, primarily by utilising vehicle GPS.
- Changes to parking restrictions, possibly only at peak times.
- Possible introduction of yellow box junctions.
- Bus gates.
- Other road layout changes, to improve the operation of bus services.
- Bus lanes, where impacts on other traffic can be minimised.
- Further Red routes.



These initiatives will help achieve the ambitions outlined in the BSIP, through enhancing bus journey times and reliability on the Core Network. To ensure successful implementation, initially with the 132 service, the proposals will include consultation with stakeholders and be backed by a strong evidence base. The programme is overseen by Medway's Enhanced Partnership, aligning with Medway's broader bus vision. LBIP will primarily focus on high-frequency corridors to maximise impact and will be discussed further at the Council's RCE Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 25 March.