

Appendix 8 – Progress to date with cycling & walking facilities and initiatives

Similar to other 'New Towns', the development of the Telford urban area in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the construction of the M54, A442 and other major roads, created a transport network with segregated and traffic free walkways and cycleways with underpasses and bridges across the major roads. This has many advantages in terms of providing traffic free routes but many of these are poorly lit and are not well used in the evenings and early mornings. This will discourage people from using these as routes to and from work or school etc. and measures need to be considered to improve lighting, maintain vegetation and improve natural surveillance.

Many of the housing estates created in the 1960s and 1970s are of a 'Radburn style' design where there are no through-routes for cars but a series of footways and cycleways providing connectivity through the estates, overlooked by surrounding houses. In this sense, there is a distinct advantage for journeys to be undertaken by cycling and walking as the routes can be much more direct than driving. However, as with the wider highway and walkway network, having segregated routes can raise safety and personal security issues if they are not well used, overlooked or well lit.

Types of Infrastructure

There are predominately two types of infrastructure provided across the Borough for cycling and walking; shared use paths with line markings delineating use between pedestrians and cyclists and shared use paths with footways slightly elevated.

	
Shared Use Path with Elevated Footpath	Shared Use Path with Line Markings

In addition to the shared paths for walking there are pedestrianised areas within the local centres and footpaths bordering the pre 'New Town' roads and those recently built. There are also off-road walking paths in more rural areas such as the 'Shropshire Way' walking route that provides pleasant leisure routes. A number of routes in Telford are classed as 'shared-use', being suitable for both walkers and cyclists. The cycle routes are broadly categorised as;

- National Cycle Network routes
- Strategic Cycle Routes



- Local (Other) Cycle Routes

The infrastructure of the National Cycle Routes (45, 55, 81, and 552) varies between on-road routes and traffic free cycle paths. The vast majority of Route 55 (The Silkin Way) is traffic free shared-use, whilst large proportions of the NCN 81 and NCN 45 are on-road.

Strategic Cycle Routes provide connections between the national cycle routes. These are varying quality with some being unmetalled tracks, some being rural lanes and roads and others being tarmacked, and shared use facilities.

Local Cycle Routes are mostly within residential and industrial estates and are shared use paths and quiet ways that provide access to a strategic or national route.

The recently improved Silkin Way National Cycle Route provides a high quality traffic free route for both walkers and cyclists through the Telford urban area with access to Telford town centre, Telford Town Park and a number of residential areas to the south. This provides a 'backbone' route through the Borough and in many respects can be viewed as a 'showcase route'; although the route audit undertaken for this strategy highlighted that there are opportunities for further improvements along some sections and to better integrate and make more accessible. Those sections which are deemed to be of a high quality and provide clear connections set the bar for the quality of future routes.

A review of the current infrastructure was been undertaken for the existing routes across the Borough. As the majority of routes are shared use, it also provided a review of many of the walking routes. The routes have been scored on their importance in terms of connectivity and access to attractors, and the quality of the surfaces and maintenance, the width of the routes, and the number of conflicts and wait times at junctions, through the use of a systematic 'Quality of Service' checklist approach.

With regards to assessing walking-specific routes, a site visit and audit was also conducted. The sites were selected for an audit based on a review of walking routes identified in OpenStreetMaps, taking into account also the locations of the market towns, district centres and rural settlements. This work assessed the present use and purpose of each route, whether it be for recreational, commuting or as a shared-use route.

The cycling routes in the borough are mostly shared-use. Barriers along these routes include a lack of crossing facilities or poor quality crossings over the motorway and other busy highways and major road traffic junctions. The railway line also creates a barrier in a few locations.

	
<p>Overall rating of Grade A based on the QoS ranking (Silkin Way, Telford Town Park to Sutton Hill)</p>	<p>Walkway with no signage and blocked path (East of Newport region)</p>

Review Findings overview

Cycling

✓	There is an established network, with a number of routes that are generally pleasant to use
X	Sections of the network need improvements with regards to maintenance, safety (in particular the need for lighting and cutting back vegetation) and signage.
Concluding remark	Whilst there is a network for cyclists which is considered to be broadly acceptable, the network needs to be developed to achieve greater densities and to provide more connectivity to reach DfT Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy standards as well as the quality of the route and facilities such as parking improved.

Walking

✓	There is good provision of pedestrian facilities for both leisure and commuting routes, particularly in the urban areas.
X	Some of the routes are segregated rather than alongside the carriageway which, with reduced opportunities for natural surveillance and poorer lighting levels, could impact on user's perceptions of personal safety. There were also some maintenance issues in relation to cutting back of vegetation and surface quality noted in the audits.
Concluding remark	Whilst some routes are advertised as tourist attractions, some of the routes offered a relatively poor environment which could deter people from using these, especially out of season and early or late in the day. There is significant potential to integrate tourism more effectively with a well-maintained, more connected network.

