



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

A Vision for Sustainable Travel



Introduction

This Sustainable Travel Vision aims to outline Babergh and Mid Suffolk joint councils’ ambitions around sustainable travel within our districts. It will lay out why it is important and beneficial for our communities to travel more sustainably, and how we will support and encourage this.

This document addresses the following strategic outcomes outlined in Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils’ Outcomes Framework:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers say the councils listens and actively act on feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are given the best possible environment and opportunities to improve their physical and mental health and well-being. • Babergh and Mid Suffolk's residents are supported to help us tackle our most pressing public health challenges.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babergh and Mid Suffolk have a low carbon footprint. • Babergh and Mid Suffolk are healthier, safer and sustainable places. • Everyone in Babergh and Mid Suffolk can access and use green sustainable transport options. • Everyone in Babergh and Mid Suffolk understands the need to reduce carbon and makes the right choices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our businesses and places benefit from stronger connectivity and opportunities to be more environmentally sustainable. • Our places and spaces are well connected with green and sustainable travel infrastructure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local places are inclusive and accessible by walking and public transport. • People can safely walk and cycle in their communities.

Background and Context

Transport caused 41% of carbon emissions across the East region in 2018, which is two thirds more than the national average, and 96% of transport emissions in the East are from road vehicles. [These statistics](#) demonstrate the need to increase sustainable travel if we are going to reach decarbonisation targets and help mitigate climate change.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's have included their ambitions around sustainable travel within several strategies and plans in the past, such as the 'Sustainable Modes of Travel' section within the Councils' Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and the 'Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport' section in the emerging Joint Local Plan (pre-submission document, November 2020).

The Council's also understand the important role that sustainable travel will play within COVID-19 recovery, with the emerging Recovery Plan 2021 including the key theme of 'connected and sustainable'.

The Councils are now working to refine and consolidate these ambitions into two focused documents; this Vision for Sustainable travel, and a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.



Active Travel

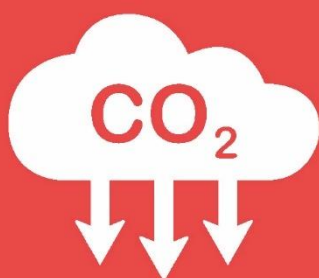
Why cycling and walking are so important:

Good for our health

Research shows that keeping physically active can reduce the risk of heart and circulatory disease by as much as 35% and risk of early death by as much as 30%, and that both walking and cycling are beneficial for our cardiorespiratory fitness.

Cycling and walking can be great for our mental health too. They both release our 'feel-good' hormones known as endorphins, which help to relax our minds and make us feel happier – boosting our mood. Research shows that exercise like cycling can lower the levels of your body's stress hormone, cortisol, and that people who regularly cycle have a significantly lower risk of feeling stressed.

By swapping short car journeys with cycling or walking, we can easily build exercise into our daily routines and reap the health benefits for both body and mind.



Good for our environment

Cycling and walking are both non-fuel-consuming and non-polluting forms of transportation. If you choose to walk or wheel just one mile a week instead of driving, you'll save 26kg of carbon dioxide a year.

The more that we cycle and walk, instead of drive, the lower our carbon footprint will be, and the cleaner our air will be.

The cheapest way to travel!

Walking is a completely free method of travel, and cycling (aside from the initial cost of your bike and helmet, and some occasional maintenance) is a very cheap method of travel.

Active travel is much cheaper than car ownership, and that gym membership too! If there is good infrastructure and encouragement for people to walk and cycle for their short journeys, this will enable the most financially disadvantaged people to get around and reap all of the benefits of active travel.

For our enjoyment...

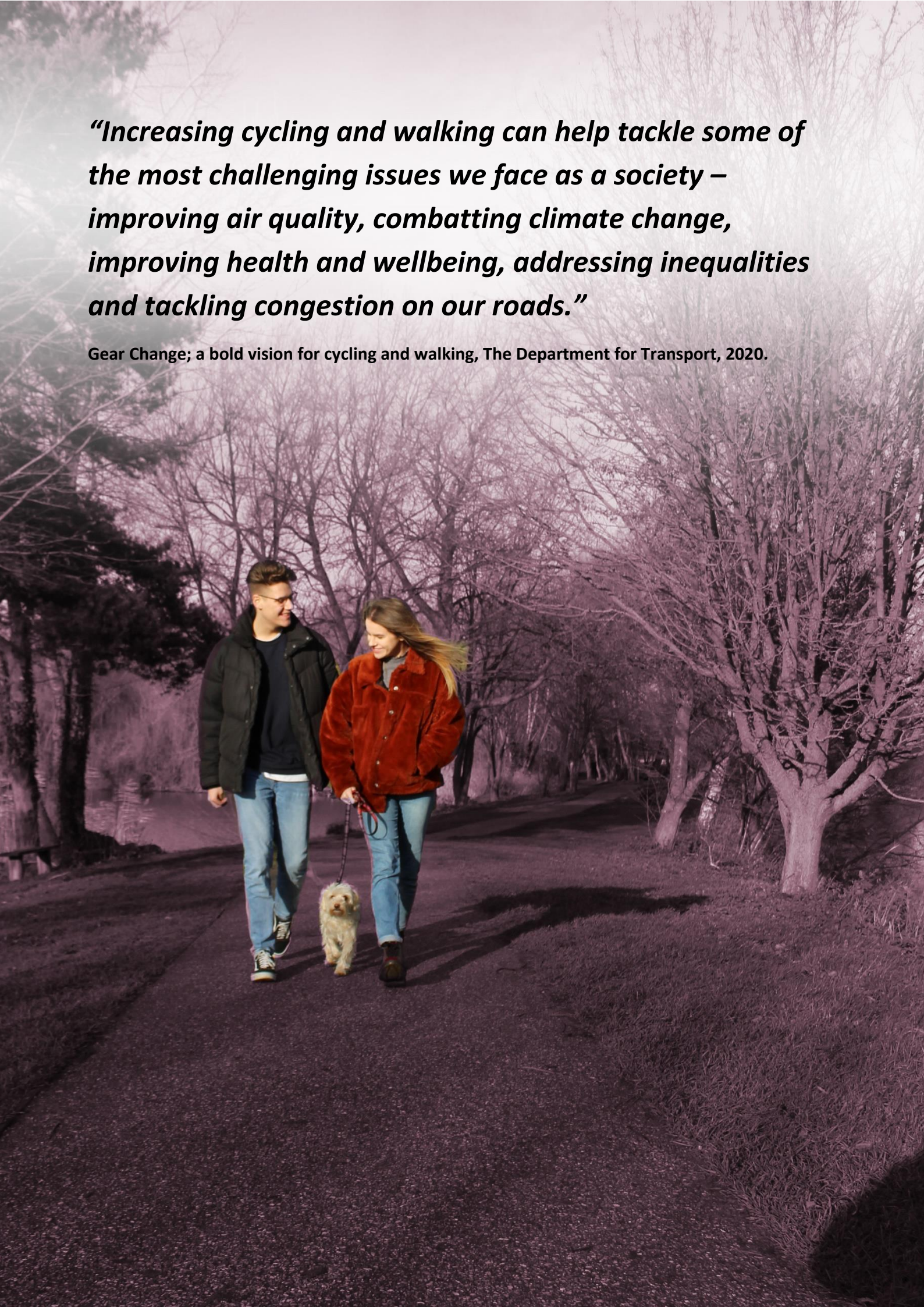
Active travel can be social! Going on cycling trips or walks with friends and family, across town or into the countryside, can be a fun and rewarding way to spend time together.

It's also a great way to discover, explore and enjoy new places.



“Increasing cycling and walking can help tackle some of the most challenging issues we face as a society – improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities and tackling congestion on our roads.”

Gear Change; a bold vision for cycling and walking, The Department for Transport, 2020.



Where we are now

The most recent government statistics ([published in September 2020](#)) show that the proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for any purpose in our districts is as follows:



This suggests that, approximately, between 17-20% of people are not undertaking any regular active travel at all, and that there is a very low percentage of population within the districts who are either walking or cycling for their regular, everyday journeys.

The [2021 Suffolk Travel Survey](#), which asked 4,260 employees from across the county how they currently travel to their place of work, showed that although more people are now working from home, driving as a single car occupant remains the most popular mode of transport when people do commute (54% of all respondents).

Of people still regularly travelling to a workplace, only 8% walk as their primary mode of transport and even though over 20% of those surveyed owned a bicycle, only 5% of people cycle as their primary mode of transport.



Our vision for Active Travel

National government targets state that by 2030, cycling and walking should be the natural first choice for many journeys, with half of all journeys in towns being cycled or walked.

We will support this vision, adapting it to be relevant to the more rural nature of our districts and setting measurable targets. We will be working to achieve the following scenario:

- **More people choosing to walk or cycle for their regular short journeys – whether this be within or in between our towns and villages - instead of getting in the car**
- We will see a significant increase in the frequency of active travel and people walking or cycling to work, year on year, captured in the statistics above.
- **More space for safe, comfortable and appealing cycling and walking routes will have been created, and more active travel facilities installed**
- We will see the implementation of schemes identified within our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including safe road crossings, segregated or off road cycle and pedestrian paths and bicycle parking.

How we'll get there...

We want to make a walk or cycle ride the most attractive option for short journeys. To realise our vision, we will work on the following key objectives:

Improve safety and accessibility

- We will work closely with the relevant teams at Suffolk County Council to improve our cycling and walking infrastructure
- We will develop and regularly review our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for our districts – based on information gathered through our active travel community consultation which informed us about where and how improvements are needed.
- We will seek funding for, and advocate for, investment in infrastructure improvement schemes
- identified and prioritised within our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Encourage people to swap the car for a walk or cycle ride
- Keep communicating the benefits of active travel to our communities
- Work with businesses and places of education to encourage active travel commuting
- Support existing, and develop new, behaviour change campaigns and incentives
- Facilitate initiatives that provide education and training in cycling safely

Public and Community Transport

We understand that not every journey can be taken by walking or cycling. Sometimes the distance is too far, the weather too disruptive, or perhaps the person making the journey has physical barriers to active travel.

However, we want to help improve the accessibility to other forms of transport that are still more sustainable than single person car travel, and promote and encourage its use. This includes rail, bus, car-sharing and community transport services and initiatives.



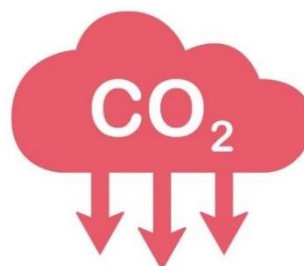
Why is public and community transport so important?

Public and community transport is essential in keeping people who do not drive or own a car, and those who are less physically mobile, connected the places they want to travel to.

But we also want our communities to view public and community transport options as an appealing choice for all, not just a necessity for some.

This is because when active travel is not possible or practical, any form of communal or shared transport is the next most environmentally sustainable way to make a journey.

In terms of greenhouse gasses, the average petrol car or diesel car on the road in the UK produces the equivalent of 173-180g of CO₂ every kilometre. In comparison, the average local bus produces the equivalent of 82g of CO₂ per kilometre.



Another way to look at the environmental sustainability of communal transport is that a bus with seven passengers on it is more fuel efficient than one car, generating only about 20% of the carbon monoxide and just 10% of the hydrocarbons per passenger-mile.

How we will support public and community transport at the District Councils

In order to make public and community transport an appealing option for anyone and everyone undertaking longer journeys:

We will represent our residents and communities, and ensure their priorities and desires are heard by relevant authorities and operators and within county and regional forums for public and community transport.

We will work with, and advocate within, Suffolk's Enhanced Partnership for bus travel improvements for passengers and rural connectivity within our districts.

As key stakeholders in the partnership, we will also support Suffolk County Council and local Bus Operators wherever possible in helping to deliver on the Suffolk Bus Service Improvement Plan.

We will communicate our districts' needs to regional transport bodies including Transport East and the East West Rail Consortium..

We will advocate, and seek funding, for investment in public and community transport connectivity for areas that are lacking.

We will develop and support behaviour change campaigns around switching single passenger car journeys for more sustainable shared or communal forms of travel.

We will communicate the availability, offers and benefits of public and community transport to our residents and visitors.

We will practice what we preach, by developing opportunities for reduced carbon commuting within our own workforce.