



A cycling strategy for the Isle of Wight



First version

Autumn 2017 to Autumn 2019



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This document has been modelled on the Tonbridge and Malling Cycling Strategy 2014-2019,
with the permission of officers representing Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Kent County Council.

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SECTION 1: Introduction

This **Cycling Strategy** is a collection of principles, and proposals for the development of the cycle network, that work together to promote cycling and provide appropriate cycling facilities throughout the Isle of Wight. This first version of the strategy covers the period to Summer 2019, allowing for the work envisaged in Section 9 to identify realistic priorities for new inter-urban cycle routes and permeability improvements in the Island's towns.

The Strategy was drafted by **CYCLEWight**. Consultation with relevant representative bodies and amenity groups has been undertaken.

The vision of this strategy is to make the Isle of Wight a place where people of all ages and abilities feel able to cycle safely and easily and to enjoy the experience. We believe the Isle of Wight can be a beacon of good practice in creating an environment that encourages cycling. The Island has already received, in May 2012, the accolade of being named, by **Lonely Planet**, the No.1 place to explore by bike.

66% of all journeys made in England are under 5 miles. 77% of journeys between 2-5 miles long are made by car; these are trips too long for most people to walk but easily covered by bicycle. (Source: National Travel Survey, 2016). Trip distances on the Isle of Wight are likely to be shorter than many other parts of the country; this is reflected in the average commute distance which is 16% lower than the England and Wales average (Source: 2011 Census)



Cycling is reported to be worth £2.9bn to the UK economy (London School of Economics, 2011). On the Island the potential economic benefits of cycle tourism remain underdeveloped. Cycle tourists spend 9% more per trip than typical tourist spend, therefore an increase in cycling on the Island has significant potential to improve the local economy.

This strategy aims to release some of the suppressed demand to cycle. 28% of people say that whilst they don't currently ride a bike, they would like to (source: Sustrans Bike Life Report). Continuity of route is the key to getting more people to cycle safely and create a comprehensive network of cycle routes across the Island. An example of how such routes have already been created is the creation of the cross-Newport route linking existing off-road routes to Sandown and Cowes. This short section of route created much better access to, and across, Newport and makes cycling a viable option for many more journeys. This strategy seeks to build on that success and to apply the lessons learned Island-wide.

We need to improve conditions for people who cycle, enhance the safety of cycling, provide more cycle parking, and integrate cycling within other relevant initiatives. It will be important to focus attention on the major development areas, not least because proposals for new developments will have to demonstrate that walking, cycling and the use

of public transport are viable and realistic alternatives to private car use. In many cases, 'softer' transport infrastructure will be less expensive to provide than the kind of highway improvements that might lead to additional congestion elsewhere on the road network. There is great merit in providing the missing links identified in the overall network to encourage inter-urban travel and cycle tourism.

In a challenging financial climate, funding for new transport infrastructure is limited. However, opportunities will continue to present themselves, particularly where new developments are proposed, and it is vital to have a robust cycling strategy in place to enable us to take full advantage of them.

SECTION 2: National and Local Policy Overview

This Strategy is influenced by and interacts with a range of national and local policies and strategies. This chapter briefly outlines the current policy context within which the Strategy has been prepared.

National Cycling Policy Overview

The Department for Transport and Department of Health jointly published the **Active Travel Strategy** in 2009, which aims to put walking and cycling at the heart of the local transport and public health agendas. The strategy emphasises the importance and benefits of active travel, in terms of health, the environment and the economy. Its guiding principle is that walking and cycling should be the mode of choice for most local journeys. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) produced guidance in November 2012 (PH41 – **Physical activity: walking and cycling**) on local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation which has been taken into account within this strategy.

Building on the then Prime Minister's intention to "kickstart a cycling revolution which would remove the barriers for a new generation of cyclists" (announced 12th August 2013), the consultation draft of the Department for Transport's **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy** (March 2016) includes the headline ambition for England: "We want to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey."

To tackle the flat lining levels of sport participation and increasing levels of inactivity across the nation, the cross-governmental strategy **Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation** was published in 2015.

Local Cycling Policy Overview

Strategic Policy SP7 of the **Isle of Wight Core Strategy** (March 2012) includes the following:

The Council will support proposals that increase travel choice, provide alternative means of travel to the car and help reduce the impact on air quality and climate change.

As a development of the above, **Sustainable Travel Policy DM17** of the same **Core Strategy** includes the following:

The Council will support proposals that increase travel choice and provide alternative means of travel to the car. Development proposals will be expected to:

- 2. Provide and improve accessibility for pedestrian, cycling, equestrian and public transport, especially when they:**
- a. create sustainable routes between urban and rural areas;**
 - b. retain former railway line routes for future sustainable transport use;**
 - c. provide new cycle routes as part of the national and/or local cycle network; and**
 - d. provide safer routes to schools.**

Section A.5.2 of the Island Transport Plan (ITP) (LTP3, Strategy 2011-2038), **Walking and Cycling** reads:

Opportunities also exist to increase walking and cycling. The Island has over 827 km of designated rights of way providing not only urban links but also good access to the countryside. We have a high quality cycle network which has been recognised by Lonely Planet who, in 2010, named the Island as ‘one of the top 10 best cycling routes in the world’.

We are working with our Quality Transport Partners (QTP), transport operators, CycleWight, the Ramblers and others to help create a sustainable transport network, where journeys are simple, convenient and integrated and the mode of travel can fit the journey.

Objective F of the ITP includes the following under promotion of travel choice:

Walking and cycling:

- New and improved on and off-road routes and links in conjunction with both our Highway PFI and other funding opportunities.**
- Give full consideration of walking and cycling needs in highway improvements and new developments.**
- Provision of suitable infrastructure (eg dropped kerbs, pedestrian and cycle crossings, and cycle racks).**

Core Strategy and ITP policies and objectives also support cycling as a tourist activity. Furthermore, Objective D of the ITP seeks improvement of road safety and health, the former relating to one of the barriers to cycling and the latter to a significant benefit of cycling.

SECTION 3: Local Priorities

Why Cycle?

Health

The role of walking and cycling in helping to create liveable towns and cities and promoting health improvement and social inclusion has not always been fully acknowledged by government and the health authorities. Recently, however, the link between transport, physical activity and health has been highlighted in the Chief Medical Officer’s Annual Report for 2009 and by the British Medical Association (BMA) in its report, **Healthy Transport = Healthy Lives** (2012). Warnings about the health consequences of an increasingly sedentary society are now widely reported and it has been estimated that

the cost of transport-related physical inactivity in England costs the economy £9.8 billion per year. This is in addition to the estimated £2.5 billion annual healthcare cost of treating obesity.



The BMA outlines the recognised health benefits associated with active travel, which include:

- improved mental health
- a reduced risk of premature death
- prevention of chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, dementia, and cancer

Furthermore, walking and cycling are effective ways of integrating, and increasing, levels of physical activity into everyday life. However, the BMA suggests that there has been under-investment in walking and cycling infrastructure to date.

Start Active, Stay Active, A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical

Officers makes a clear case for investing in cycling infrastructure to support health: "Many cities in mainland Europe have demonstrated that, by investing in infrastructure for cycling and adopting strong pro-bike policies, levels of cycling can be increased so that over four out of 10 journeys are made by bike. Encouraging starts have been made in the UK too: programmes in England (Cycling Demonstration Towns), in Wales (Sustainable Travel Towns) and Scotland (Smarter Choices, Smarter Places) have all demonstrated that, working in partnership with willing local authorities, investment in cycling infrastructure and promotional programmes would lead to an increase in levels of cycling across towns. Central to this is the need for cycling to be prioritised as part of local authority transport plans."

Access for All

Cycling can improve accessibility and health for many people with disabilities, using specially adapted, electric, or normal bicycles as mobility aids.

Air Quality

Cycling in urban areas can improve air quality through reducing congestion and the local air pollution that comes with it, as well as reducing the carbon emissions that can cause climate change. It has been reported that air pollution reduces life expectancy by 7-8 months, which has the equivalent economic impact of £20 billion per year (**The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2007)**).



Local Economy and Tourism

2% of visitors state that cycling is their main mode of transport used to explore the Island. Direct revenue from all visitors in 2016 was £282 million, suggesting revenue directly related to visiting cyclists was £5.64 million. However, the actual figure is higher, because there is no allowance for cycles brought to the Island by car or (private) boat, neither does it take into consideration an anecdotal estimate of 10,000 cycle hires per year.

SECTION 4: Improving the Cycle Network

New Routes

New routes will be designed to provide safe, continuous links between communities and popular destinations such as shops, schools, leisure centres and work places.

To ensure the highest possible standards, the latest appropriate design guidance will be used for the design and construction of new cycle infrastructure. **London Cycling Design Standards** (Transport for London 2014, updated 2016) are widely regarded as the best current guidance, albeit their use requires interpretation into non-city situations. Of more limited value are Local Transport Note (LTN) 02/08 **Cycle Infrastructure Design**, LTN 01/12 **Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists, Manual for Streets 2** and Sustrans' **Handbook for Cycle-Friendly Design**. Although the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (Highways England) is not relevant to any roads on the Isle of Wight, HD 42/17 **Walking, Cycling & Horse-riding Assessment and Review** within that document demonstrates that even for motorways and trunk roads, designers must have regard for people who cycle. **A Guide to Inclusive Cycling** (Wheels for Wellbeing, 2017) provide useful guidance on ensuring people with a range of disabilities are able to cycle.

There is also a need for land use planning to enable users of new developments to undertake more journeys on foot or by bike. A hierarchy of users has been developed, which helps to prioritise the needs of different transport modes where there are conflicting demands on carriageway space, or there is incompatibility in the highway layouts suiting different modes. A set of minimum requirements must be adopted if the infrastructure is to be convenient, accessible, safe, comfortable and attractive for both pedestrians and people who cycle, as contained in the guidance referred to in the previous paragraph.

Cycling England's parliamentary inquiry report, **Get Britain Cycling** (2013), based upon evidence from continental Europe and the English Cycling Demonstration Towns, suggests



that a £10 per head investment is required nationally to significantly increase cycling. The results indicated that cycling levels rose by 10-50% after this level of investment coupled with a carefully considered strategy. The report also found that for every £1 invested in cycling, the value of decreased mortality is £2.59, which represents high value for money. More recently, The Urban Transport Group's Working Paper, **The Case for Active Travel** (October 2016), sets out the cost of inactivity to the local and national economy.

PRINCIPLE 1: A network of high quality routes will be completed throughout the Island, providing convenient and safe access for utility and leisure cycling. Where a desired route is currently designated as a public footpath, we will explore the opportunity to convert to a multi-user path or bridleway to permit cycling. Detailed recommendations for new and improved routes can be found in SECTION 9 of this strategy.

PRINCIPLE 2: Wherever possible measures will be provided which give people who cycle priority over motorised traffic in terms of accessibility and journey time.

Cycle Parking and facilities for people who cycle

Cycle parking needs to be convenient, safe and secure. For example, at a residential property, a cycle locked in a shed at the end of a garden is less likely to be used than one stored close to the front door. Therefore, it is vital that there is a secure storage area close to the usual exit of each property and that all new residential properties have sufficient storage for cycles. Garages built in new residential developments are often used for storage, including bicycles and motorcycles, rather than car parking. The provision of cycle parking should be addressed through the development management process.

Showers and changing facilities are important for employment destinations, and their provision demonstrates that the businesses in question are committed to transport choice.

Cycling can form part of longer journeys if there is good integration with public transport. High quality, secure cycle parking at Island Line railway stations and cross-Solent ferry terminals can help to promote this. The Council will work with public transport providers and cycling groups to identify priorities for additional facilities.

A key component of all public cycle parking facilities is that they should complement and enhance the local environment while remaining functional and within cycle parking standards.

Wherever possible, new cycle parking will be planned to meet these requirements and will ideally be sourced from local suppliers, designed by local artists making use of distinct yet functional designs.

Cycle Hubs have been provided in Cowes and Newport. Further sites across the Island will be identified. The provision of an Accessible Cycling Centre may encourage more people



with disabilities to cycle. In addition, the Council will continue to ensure that cycle parking is included in all new developments.

PRINCIPLE 3: Cycle parking, in accordance with the Council's adopted standards, along with appropriate facilities for people who cycle, will be provided in all developments (both new build and change of use) that result in the employment of people. Secure cycle storage will be provided in all new residential developments, and, where appropriate, at railway stations and ferry terminals. The provision of Cycle Hubs in all towns will be investigated.

Community-led Initiatives

Where the Council has limited capacity to develop new ideas, plans and projects to deliver cycling improvements, the creativity and passion of the local community can help deliver them. On a national level, the development of the National Cycle Network was led by a charitable organisation and similar successes could be achieved on a local basis. This may be through one community group taking a lead role, or through a network of community organisations partnering to deliver improved cycling infrastructure. Such an approach could lever new funding, volunteer effort and creative new approaches. Coupled with cooperation from the Council, great improvements could be achieved. Further partnerships could be developed with local town and parish councils.

In line with the **Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)**, there should be an active approach by all Town and Parish Councils to identify, within their rights of way network, existing off-road paths and potential new links which would improve movement within their own community and other nearby places.

Community-led initiatives could be on a variety of scales. They may be a short off-road link created by volunteer labour and donated materials, or a new route using existing highways and new construction, professionally constructed. Other initiatives may be focused on urban areas, developing ideas and consulting on plans to make changes to the highway network, which would then be undertaken by the Island Roads.

Funding for community-led initiatives could come from a variety of sources, including lottery funding, individual donations, government funding and charitable trusts. In partnership with the Council, Section 106 funding could also be used to support these initiatives.

SECTION 5: Maintenance of the Cycle Network

Unless new and existing cycle facilities are maintained to an appropriate standard they will quickly fall into disrepair and will not be used.

Structural maintenance on a cycle track is generally not as demanding as for a carriageway but it requires more regular and frequent cleansing and cutting back of vegetation. This includes ensuring that roads frequented by people who cycle are maintained, with whipping branches and vegetation kept cut back.

Alterations to highway layouts must have regard for all highway users, including people who cycle. It is important that the Council should engage with cycling infrastructure design professionals when Island Roads prepare alteration schemes, in order that such schemes are properly assessed. As with more significant highway schemes, the following should be used, as appropriate, by designers: **London Cycling Design Standards**, Local Transport Note (LTN) 02/08 **Cycle Infrastructure Design**, LTN 01/12 **Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists**, **Manual for Streets 2** and Sustrans' **Handbook for Cycle-Friendly Design**.

PRINCIPLE 4: CYCLEWight will encourage the Council to work with Island Roads and other relevant partners to ensure the regular and cycling-aware maintenance of all cycling infrastructure across the Island, and that highway alteration schemes have full regard for people who cycle.

SECTION 6: Safer Cycling

Good street design, improved highway layouts, high standards of maintenance and widespread traffic-free cycle infrastructure combine to increase the amount of cycling and to make it safer. In addition, cycle awareness campaigns and ongoing education serve to reduce the risk to people who cycle from other road users, especially motorised vehicles. Training for people who cycle completes the all-in approach to safer cycling, and will always be an element of school travel plans.

National Standard Cycle Training (Bikeability) is currently provided by The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service Road Safety Team, on a first come, first served basis. The scheme should be expanded to facilitate training for all who would benefit.

Bikeability comprises three levels of competency- based cycle training. Level 1 is aimed at the basic bicycle control skills that are required to cycle safely in any environment and is delivered in an off- road environment such as a playground. Level 2 is delivered on quiet roads and teaches participants the skills necessary to take a basic on-road journey and includes a variety of junctions. Level 3 tackles busy traffic situations and complex junctions. Importantly, participants must demonstrate competence at each level before they progress to the next.

Bikeability Plus is a set of additional cycling activities and extra training based around the core Bikeability course.

In 2016/17, the Island benefited from having four Sustrans officers who provided Doctor Bike, scooter and cycle skills training in schools. As part of the training, each school is expected to work on plans to make their school become more sustainable in its travel. In the 24 months of the Sustrans work 5,500 hour-long cycle/scoot to school skills session experiences were recorded.



For the next three years Wight Cycle Training are to build on this work working particularly with post 16 students and children in their transition years from primary to secondary education.

PRINCIPLE 5:

- a) All children will have the opportunity to participate in Bikeability training up to level 3.
- b) The feasibility of introducing Bikeability Plus will be investigated.
- c) Adult cycle training will be available through a range of initiatives including work place travel planning.
- d) There will be a pro-active approach towards educating drivers of motorised vehicles on sharing the roads with vulnerable users.

SECTION 7: Promoting cycling on the Isle of Wight

Without the promotion of cycling in the Isle of Wight the uptake of cycling and the use of cycle routes are unlikely to increase to their full potential.

Therefore, to make this strategy successful, cycling must be promoted in a variety of ways to a range of different audiences. First and foremost, the Council's, CYCLEWight's and Visit Isle of Wight's websites need to be kept updated to enable local residents and visitors to access the latest information on cycle routes and facilities. All cycle routes should be fully signposted for the benefit of new cyclists and those who are unfamiliar with the area. Cycling should form a key component of School Travel Plans and Workplace Travel Plans. Local clubs and cycle shops could help to promote cycling across the Island through active promotion and use of the local network. With the assistance of CYCLEWight, and other appropriate groups, the Council will continue to develop and maintain a range of publications that will cover the Island's cycle network, and the mainland routes that connect with Solent ferry ports. Successful recent initiatives, such as CYCLEWight's cycling map and Visit Isle of Wight's Green Star Toolkit, will be repeated wherever possible. Events such as the Cycle Festival and the annual Wayfarers' Randonnée should be supported to promote cycling locally and nationally.

Different riding surfaces encourage different types of usage, enabling targeted promotion to a variety of groups, including families, commuters, cycling clubs and mountain bike users.

PRINCIPLE 6: Cycle routes will be appropriately advertised and signposted across the Island and cycle maps will be available for all routes. Digital information will be kept up-to-date, utilising relevant new technology as well as established data sources.

SECTION 8: Evaluation of the Cycling Strategy

The relatively short life of this first version of the strategy, with the intention to adopt a second version with scheme prioritisation and costings as soon as is practicable, does not prevent evaluation of the impact of the measures being promoted.

Evaluation should be based on the outcomes of several forms of monitoring, including continuous automatic counters on cycle tracks and detailed route user surveys.

This will enable a detailed database to be established which in turn can inform economic appraisals and health impact assessments on the Island. All organisations that collect relevant sustainable transport data should be encouraged to share their data so as to assist in the attraction of additional funding.

PRINCIPLE 7: Automatic counters will be installed throughout the cycle network to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Each new proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process. All relevant sustainable transport data will be shared with the Council (and other relevant bodies) where possible.

SECTION 9: Proposed Development of the Cycle Network

There are two main aspects to the development of the cycle network:

- Inter-urban strategic routes
- Permeability of urban areas

Inter-urban strategic routes

The maps that follow show existing and proposed inter-urban cycle routes. The proposed routes have been discussed informally with officers of the Isle of Wight Council. The proposals are, however, only map-based indicative routes that will need to be raised to planning application stage to attract funding or be delivered in connection with new developments.

Pre-planning costing and prioritisation of proposed routes will involve the following:

- Discussions with landowners
- Feasibility studies
- Identification of obstacles to delivery
- Cost estimation

It is intended that this Cycling Strategy should be reviewed in line with the completion of costing and prioritisation, such that the next version includes the high priority schemes that have a reasonable prospect of being delivered within a defined timescale.

PRINCIPLE 8: All proposed routes shown on the Inter-Urban Strategic Route Maps will be investigated, with a view to the costing and prioritisation of those that have a realistic prospect of being delivered. The Strategy review will facilitate the inclusion of a detailed delivery plan in the second version.

Permeability of urban areas

The **Newport Cycle Permeability Review** will look for streets suitable for all levels of cycling ability. This will facilitate the preparation of a more detailed urban cycle route network for the town. It will also pave the way for similar reviews in all of the Island's towns.

Funding mechanisms for the inter-urban and permeability studies and delivery of schemes need to be identified, including the Local Economic Partnership and development related delivery (Section 278, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy).

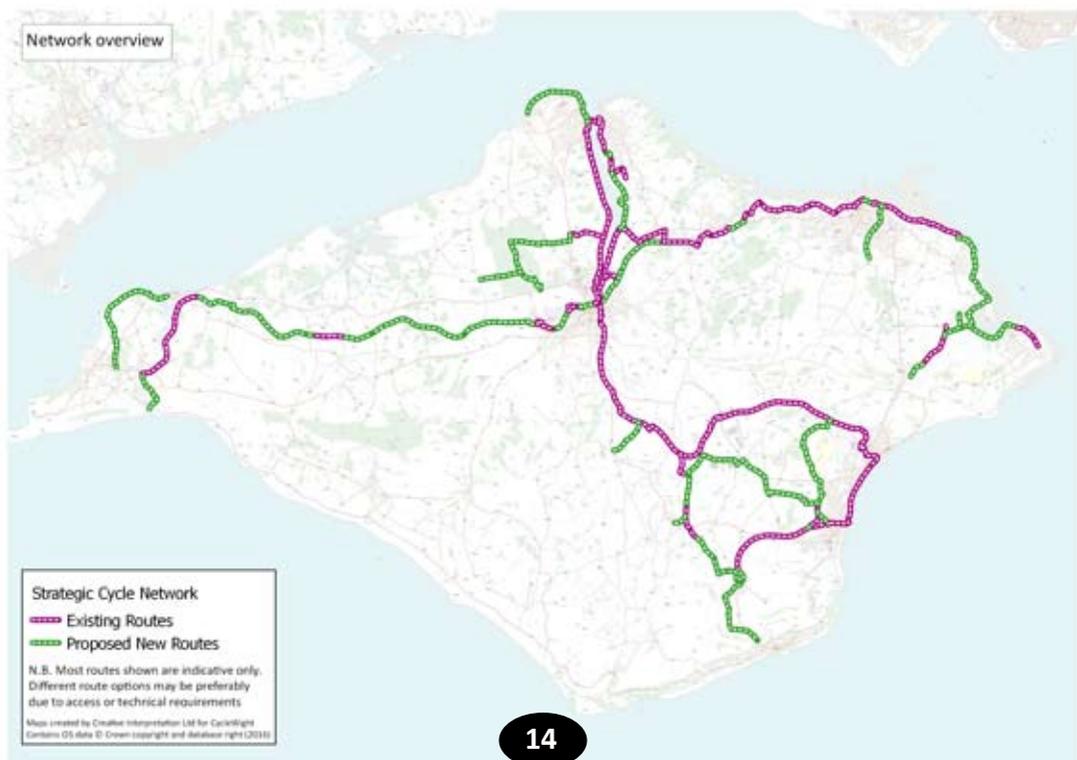
PRINCIPLE 9: Permeability reviews will be carried out for Newport first, and then all of the Island's towns. The detailed outcomes will be included in the second version of the Strategy.

Inter-Urban Strategic Route Maps

The routes shown do not indicate any current right to cycle, though this does exist in some places. Many of the indicative routes pass across private land and their inclusion does not suggest that these routes have been agreed or even discussed with landowners, such discussions would take place at an early stage in developing proposals for any route. The maps generally indicate the desire line or most pragmatic route and in practice alternative routes may be more appropriate for various reasons.

Routes are highlighted as existing or proposed, though in practice the distinction between these is not always clear-cut. Some routes exist but need such significant upgrade works they have been highlighted as new. For convenience and clarity on road sections are sometimes included in proposed route even though they require no upgrade.

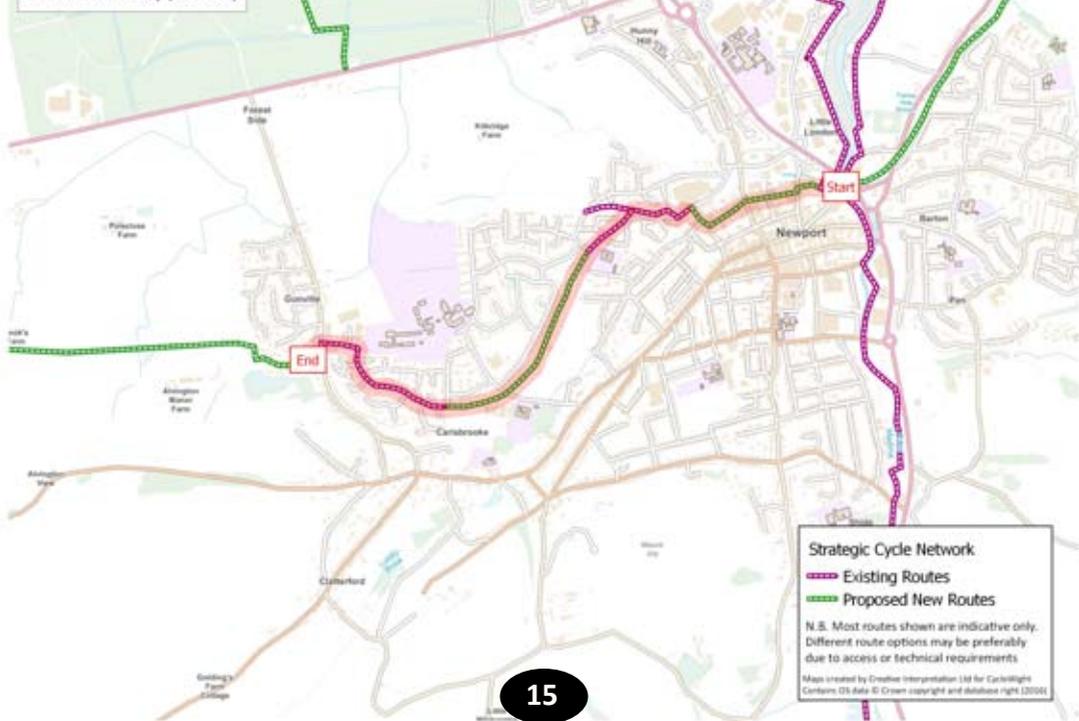
The maps also do not attempt to present a detailed view of all the interventions required, rather the overall nature of a proposed route. The routes on each section map are highlighted in red.



West Wight Greenway (NCN 22)



Gunville Greenway (NCN 22)



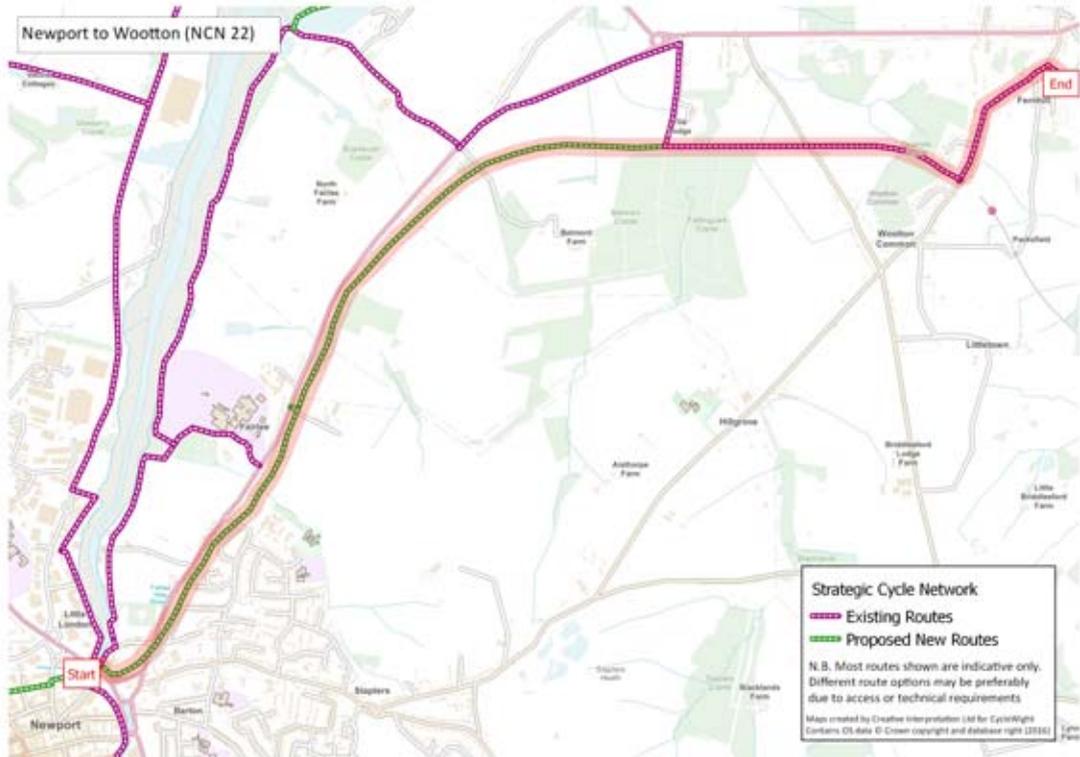
Spur from NCN 23 to Cowes and Gurnard



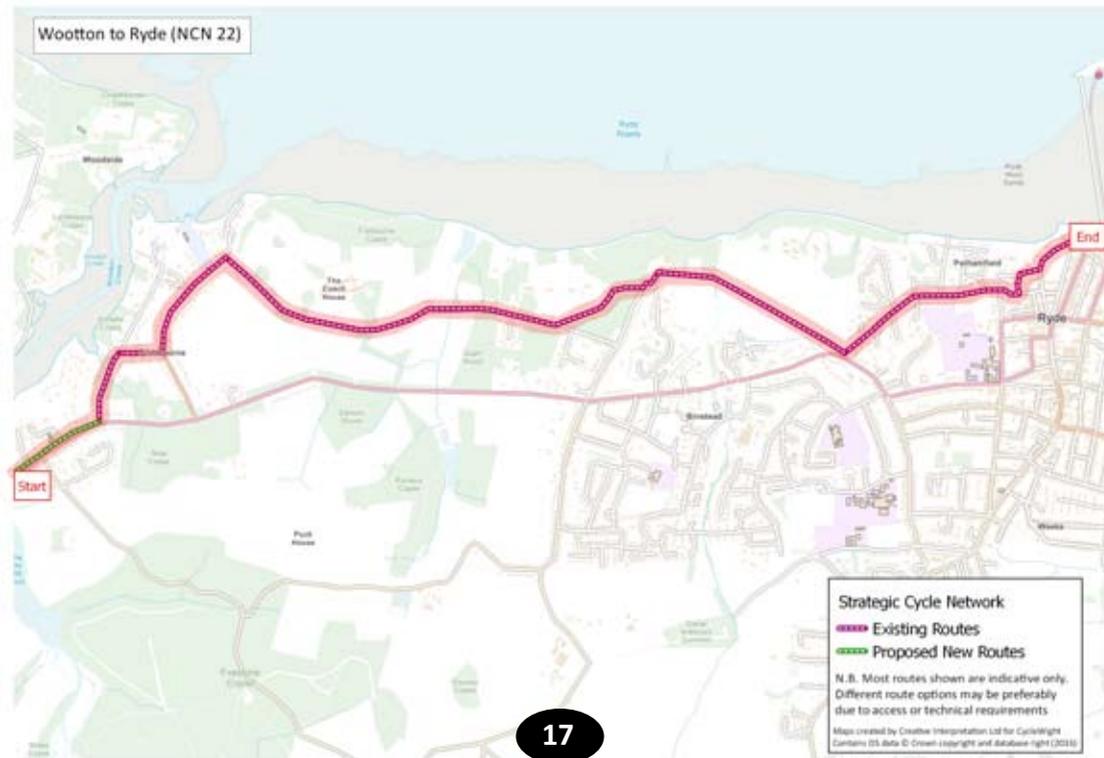
Merstone to Shanklin

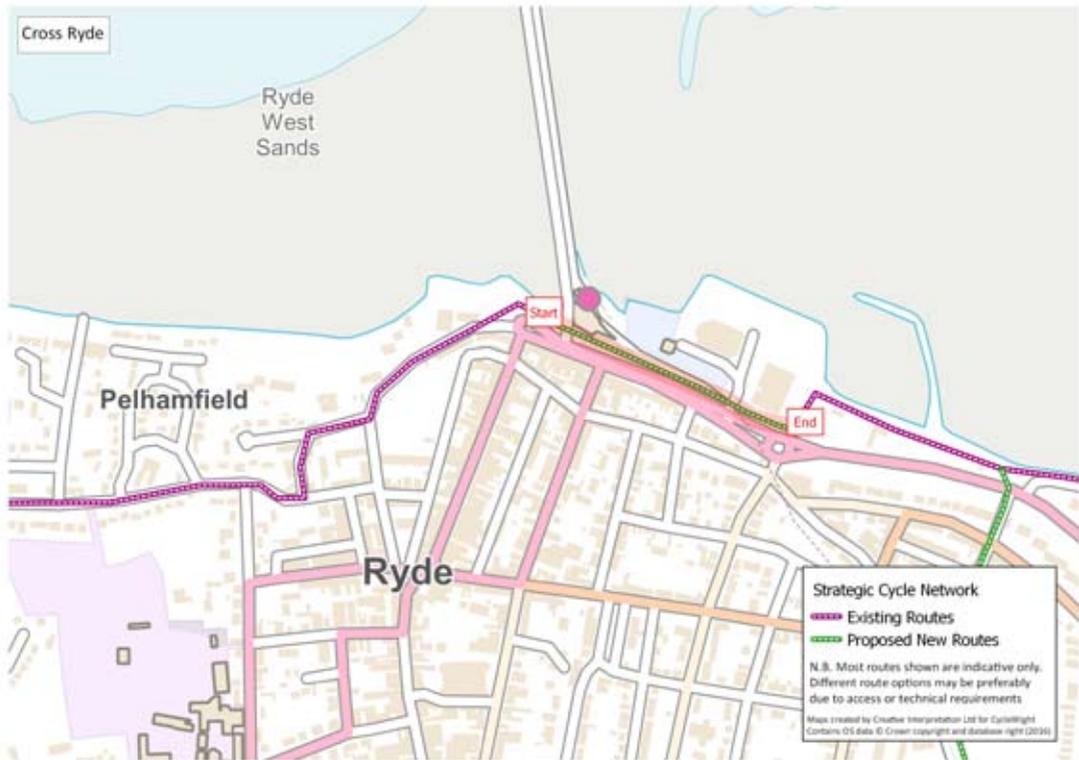


Newport to Wootton (NCN 22)

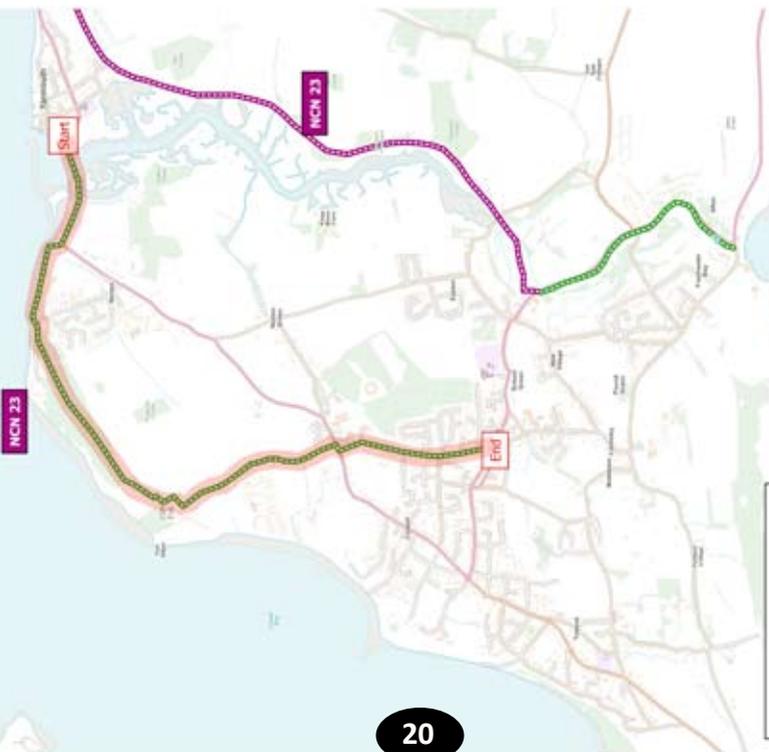


Wootton to Ryde (NCN 22)





Yarmouth to Freshwater Coastal Route



Strategic Cycle Network

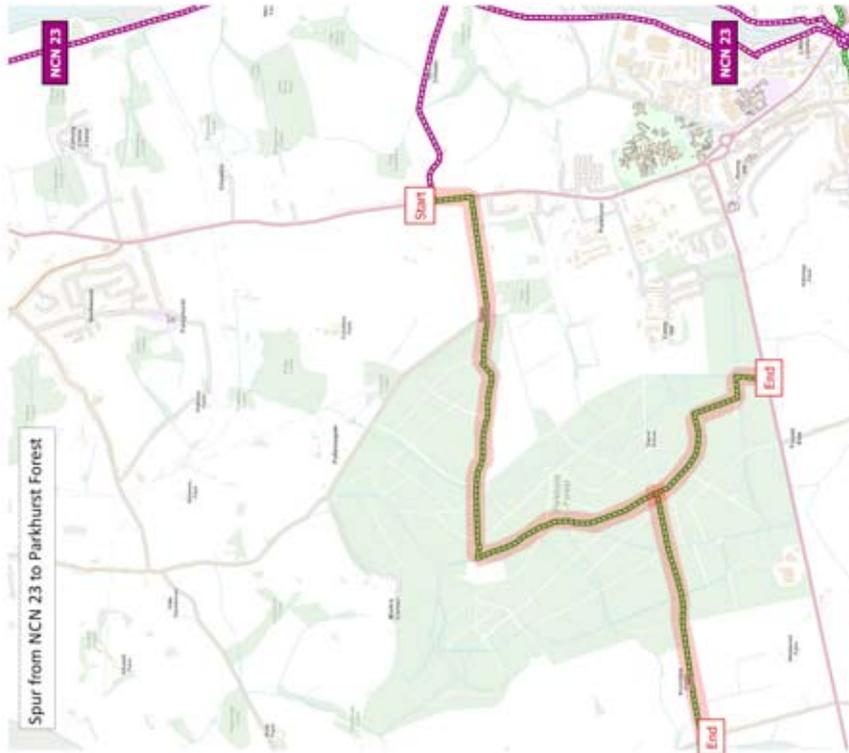
 Existing Routes

 Proposed New Routes

N.B. Most routes shown are indicative only. Different route options may be preferable due to access or technical requirements.

Map created by Greater Southampton City Council, Southampton City Council, and the Southampton City Council Strategic Planning and Information Unit (2018)

Spur from NCN 23 to Parkhurst Forest



Strategic Cycle Network

 Existing Routes

 Proposed New Routes

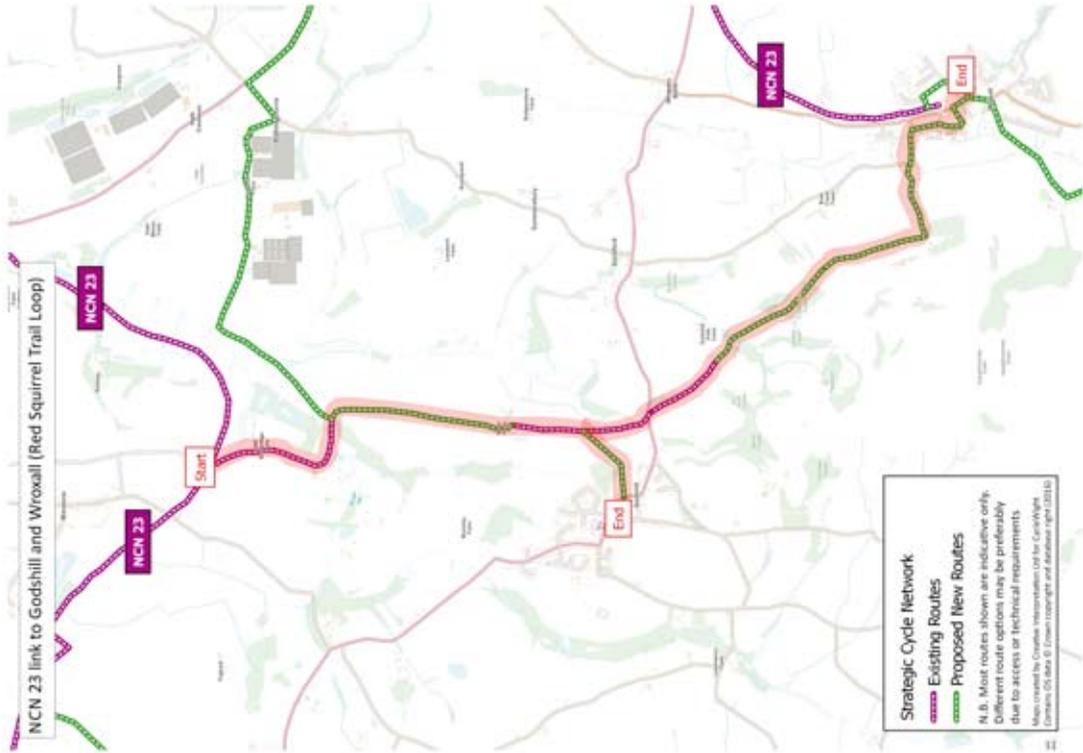
N.B. Most routes shown are indicative only. Different route options may be preferable due to access or technical requirements.

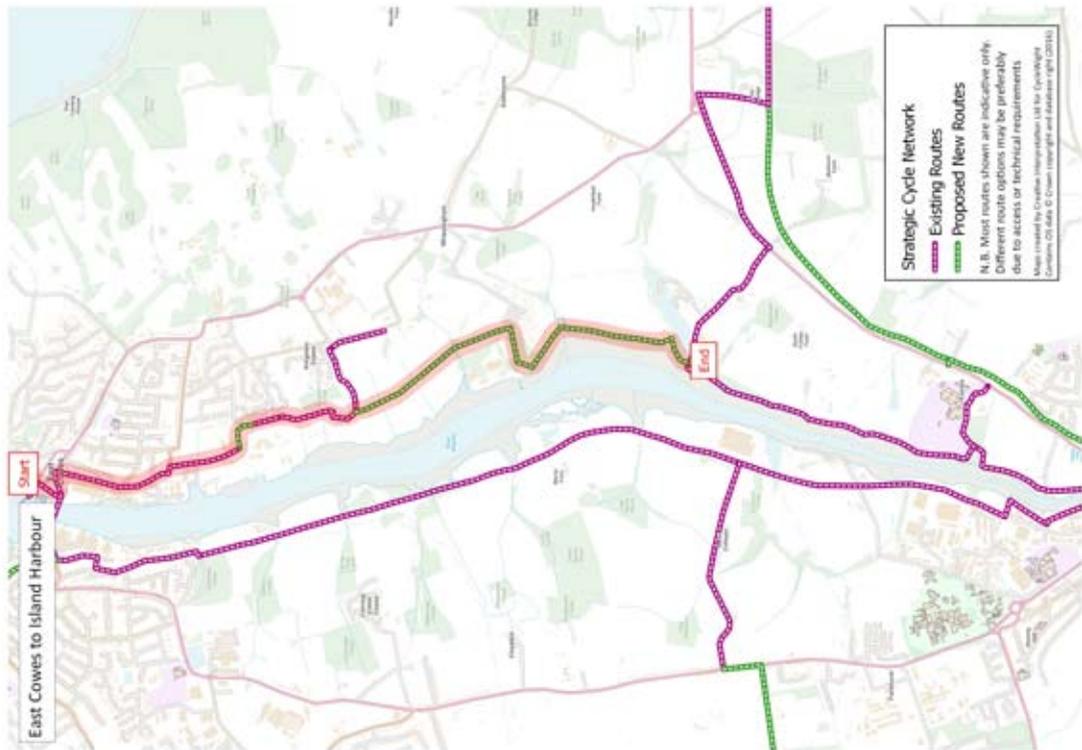
Map created by Greater Southampton City Council, Southampton City Council, and the Southampton City Council Strategic Planning and Information Unit (2018)

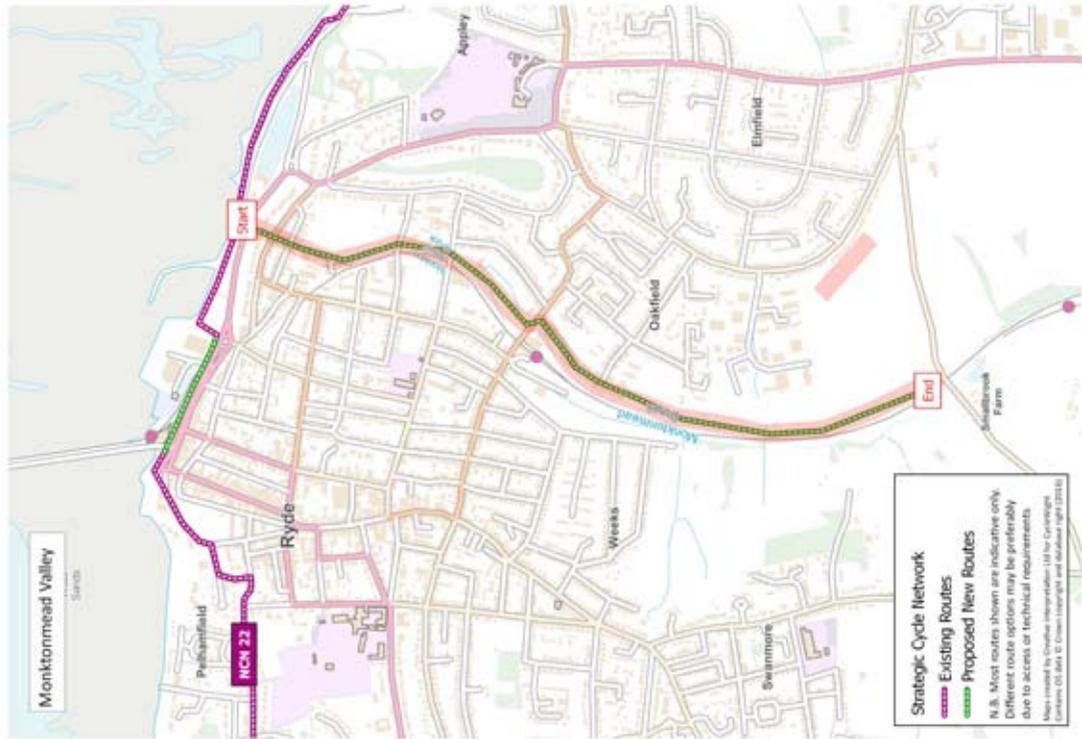
Spur from NCN 23 to Rookley



NCN 23 link to Godshill and Wroxall (Red Squirrel Trail Loop)









CycleWight

