

Northamptonshire Walking Strategy

Fit for Purpose



January 2013



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Northamptonshire Walking Strategy

Contacts and Further Information

This is Northamptonshire County Council's Walking Strategy.

It sets out the overarching vision for walking within Northamptonshire and sets out our strategy to achieve it. This strategy is one of a series of thematic daughter documents to the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan that was adopted in April 2012.

Consultation on the first batch of the thematic strategies, including this Walking Strategy, took place between 3rd September and 19th October 2012. A summary of the consultation responses can be found on our website at:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Transport/TP/Pages/NTP-thematic-strategies.aspx>

If you have any problems accessing Northamptonshire County Council's website or do not have access to the internet, please contact us using the details below.

This strategy was approved and adopted by Northamptonshire County Council's Cabinet in December 2012.

This strategy together with the other Batch 1 daughter documents and the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan itself can be viewed on the County Council's website at:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Transport/TP/pages/northamptonshire-transportation-plan.aspx>

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Northamptonshire Walking Strategy

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Introduction

This draft Northamptonshire Walking Strategy was prepared post consultation; this strategy is a supporting document to the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012), which established the County Council's strategic aims and objectives for transportation within Northamptonshire. This walking strategy will set out our aspirations and approaches to making walking a more attractive option as a travel choice for short journeys in Northamptonshire. It sets out the policies that will help us encourage more people to choose to walk and guide future walking action plans.

A walking strategy is necessary to co-ordinate the approach, and the shared commitment of all the parties involved, in delivering walking improvements within the county.

Walking is a healthy, low-cost, non-polluting mode of transport that is available to most people, regardless of their age and income. A quarter of all journeys are less than 1 mile and a quarter of car trips are less than 2 miles, walking should be the mode of travel chosen for these short journeys.

Walking has a significant role to play within an overall integrated transport system, both as a mode of transport in its own right and in conjunction with other modes. Almost all journeys involve an element of walking; the average car driver will make a proportion of their total trip walking to and from the car.

Walking is the nearest activity to perfect exercise and is the cheapest and simplest form of transport. Not only does it keep the walker healthy but it keeps the planet healthy too by cutting down on harmful air pollutants. The benefits of a cleaner environment not only offer health benefits it can often be a catalyst for improving the economy. Better levels of personal fitness result in less stress and less absenteeism from work and, in local retail areas where quality pedestrian facilities are provided, increased retail turnover directly benefits businesses.

The County Council is determined to take practical steps to promote and encourage walking as a viable and healthy means of short distance travel. This commitment is shown in this strategy and associated strategies that form the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012).

This document focuses on walking infrastructure as a means of transportation on the highway network from point A to B to access employment, education, and retail, and leisure opportunities. Walking along Rights of Way is covered under policies within the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2007). When this document refers to "Pedestrians" or "walking" it is intended that, unless otherwise stated, this refers to all users of the footway including wheelchair users, prams and pushchairs, roller skates etc.

Northamptonshire

In Northamptonshire over the next 25 years, there will be growth in both housing numbers and employment, with up to 100,000 new people living in towns and villages of Northamptonshire. This will lead to a significant increase in the numbers of people wishing to travel around the county.

Without intervention, traffic levels on the county's roads could be expected to double over this period, even with network improvements congestion is likely to get worse, leading to poorer air quality. To try and reduce the impact of the growth the County Council is committed to promoting sustainable travel with walking being favoured for short journeys.

The County Council has produced maps to promote walking for leisure, these are available on the County Council website however its recognised more needs to be done to encourage walking for the day to day journeys to work, school and the shops to reduce traffic levels and promote healthier lifestyles.

As part of the second Local Transport Plan, in September 2007, the County produced its Transport Strategy for Growth document. This set in context the prioritised projects that resulted from the strategic prioritisation framework and the associated Modal Shift Strategy. This set the County Council two new specific targets for modal shift which forms Strategic Policy 2 within the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012).

Northamptonshire Transportation Plan: Strategic Policy 2:

We will support the introduction of effective and attractive sustainable transport options that will encourage lasting modal shift in Northamptonshire. We have set two targets for modal shift based on 2001 Census journey to work data to achieve by 2031.

- A reduction of 5% in single occupancy car journeys to work from the existing built up areas of town
- A reduction of 20% in single occupancy car journeys to work from new developments

2. Policy Framework

Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012)

The current local transport planning system was introduced in the late 1990's, to provide a longer-term framework and more integrated approach to planning transport at the local level. This Town Transport Strategy forms part of the Local Transport Plan for Northamptonshire published in April 2012 as the 'Northamptonshire Transportation Plan'.

Transportation is not an end in itself. The movement of people and goods takes place not for its own sake, but to fulfil the diverse needs and desires of the public. Therefore the County Council's transport policies are similarly promoted for their effect on other specific goals, priorities and objectives, rather than as an end in themselves.

Northamptonshire Transportation Plan Vision:

For Transport and Travel to contribute towards making Northamptonshire a great place to live and work, through creating tangible transport options to satisfy individual needs and to encourage more sustainable travel. The transport system will provide fast and efficient movement of people and goods, and will be accessible for all. Expanding networks and capacity of networks in Northamptonshire will be fully integrated into new developments and regeneration areas to support more sustainable communities.

Economic growth and prosperity is a top priority for Northamptonshire and connectivity has a vital role to play in encouraging businesses to locate to the area, and getting people to work and services such as education and health, as well as to leisure activities and for shopping. Improved technology and local accessibility will reduce the need to travel, whilst supporting economic growth, within a low carbon environment and Northamptonshire will become an exemplar for the latest developments in information technology, fuel technology, and new forms of transport.

The county council will work in partnership with all stakeholders and the wider community to deliver this transport vision and strategy.

The transportation plan is both aspirational and realistic at the same time. Current economic climates mean that transport is certainly in a more austere time than in the last 15 to 20 years and the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan reflects that but at the same time plans for future growth.

The overall aim for this Transportation Plan is:
'Northamptonshire Transportation - Fit for..... Purpose'

The aim 'fit for purpose' means creating a network that delivers exactly what Northamptonshire needs to be able to function plus what it needs to be able to grow, no more and no less.

This overarching aim can then be broken down into six objectives that have been chosen to guide the Transportation Plan. These objectives have been drawn up to reflect the issues which have been identified as locally important through consultation, while at the same time reflecting wider national and local policy context. These objectives have been deliberately chosen to reflect the main impacts that transport can have on the wider community, rather than being linked to particular schemes or measures. They form the basis upon which the policies and programmes contained in this Plan have been developed.

1. **Fit for.....the Future** – creating a transport system that supports and encourages growth and plans for the future impacts of growth, whilst successfully providing benefits for the County.

2. **Fit for.....the Community** – through the transport system help to maintain and create safe, successful, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities where people are actively involved in shaping the places where they live.

3. **Fit to.....Choose** – ensuring that the people of Northamptonshire have the information and the options available to them to be able to choose the best form of transport for each journey that they make.

4. **Fit for.....Economic Growth** – creating a transport system that supports economic growth, regeneration and a thriving local economy and successfully provides for population and business growth.

5. **Fit for.....the Environment** – to deliver a transport system that minimises and wherever possible reduces the effect of travel on the built, natural and historic environment.

6. **Fit for.....Best Value** - being clear about our priorities for investment and focusing on value for money by prioritising what we spend money on and how it can be beneficial for the county as a whole and search for alternative sources of funding.

Daughter Documents

The Walking strategy is one of a series of daughter document to the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012) see figure 1. This suite of documents will include strategies or plans covering a range of transport themes and also detailed geographic strategies or plans for the Northamptonshire's main towns and will contribute solutions towards the achievement of the overall objectives of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012)

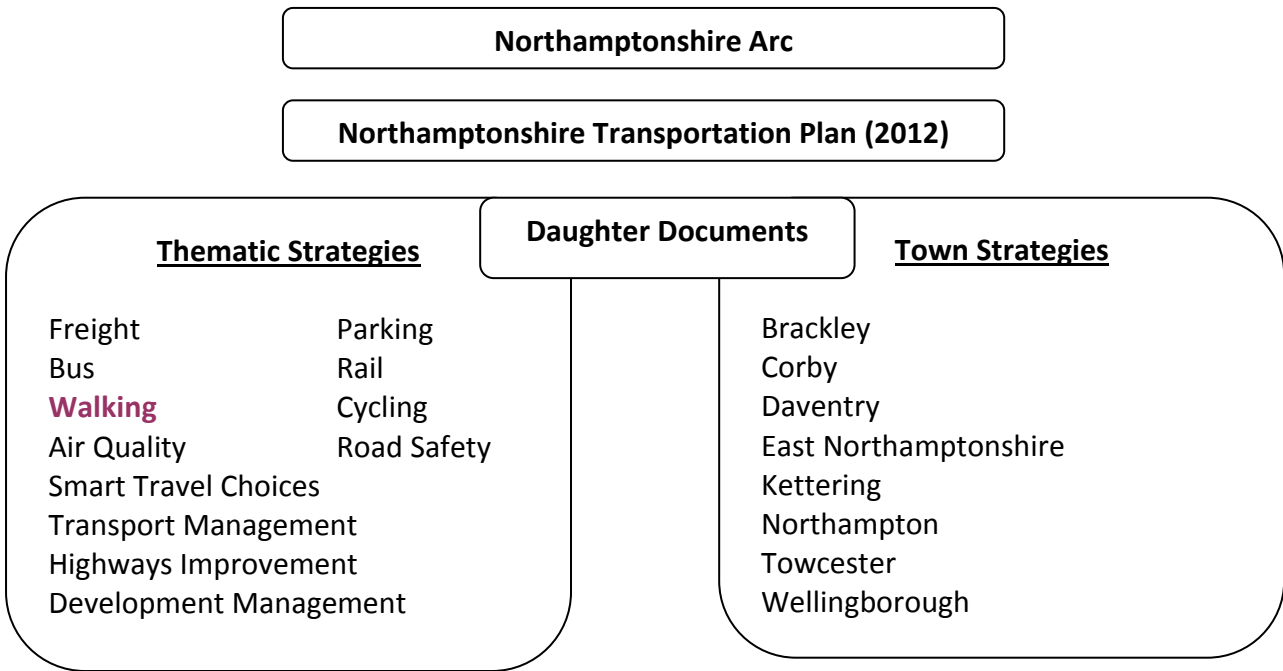


Figure 1: Northamptonshire Transportation Plan Document Framework

The Walking Strategy is intended to help to deliver modal-shift as part of the North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategies; and by improving the connectivity of the county can help the work of the Local Enterprise Partnerships. Improved walking infrastructure can also have advantages in terms of equalities and quality of life, particularly for those who do not have access to a car.

2.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012) is to ensure transportation is ‘fit for purpose’ this means creating a network that delivers exactly what Northamptonshire needs to be able to function plus what it needs to be able to grow, no more no less. This walking strategy links to the Strategic Objectives of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (see table 1)

Encouraging more walking will require a combination of physical improvements to the walking environment and promotional initiatives to foster behavioural change, and this is reflected in the overall aim of the Walking Strategy:

Walking Strategy Aim:
To improve the pedestrian environment to encourage more people to walk for short utility journeys and recreation to enable modal shift

	Fit for..... the Future	Fit for..... the Community	Fit to..... Choose	Fit for..... Economic Growth	Fit for..... the Environment	Fit for..... Best Value
Walking Strategy	Increasing the number of short trips that are made on foot will help us achieve the modal shift targets that will support growth.	Encouraging local people to make more trips on foot helps communities take ownership of their streets,	Improving the pedestrian access to local facilities gives people more options when choosing how to travel for a short journey.	Improving pedestrian access to employment sites allows more people to access jobs and benefits business by reducing the need for car park space.	Improving the walking environment reduces the impact of people making short trips and reduces carbon emissions.	Walking improvement schemes are relatively low cost compared to schemes for other modes.

Table 1: How Objectives of Northamptonshire Transportation Plan links to Walking Strategy

The Walking Strategy will contribute towards delivery of the Objectives for the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012) whilst helping to achieve the following objectives for walking within Northamptonshire;

Objective 1

Provide pedestrians with safe and direct routes to local services, facilities and workplaces.

Objective 2

Improve the quality and attractiveness of the pedestrian environment by removing barriers and obstacles to minimise route severance and enable uninhibited movement of pedestrians.

Objective 3

Reduce pedestrian road casualties and make walkers feel safer and more secure.

Objective 4

Improve accessibility to the transport system in order to promote a fairer, more inclusive society while ensuring new developments, and ensure all transport and highways schemes adequately cater for pedestrians and mobility impaired people.

Objective 5

Provide suitable promotional and marketing of the benefits for health, the economy, the environment and communities of walking, while improving opportunities for recreational walking across the county.

3. Context

There are many shorter trips made by car which could be made on foot, but are not. In some instances, this is because footpaths have not been provided where people wish to walk. Such instances can often be recognised by a muddy track worn into the road verge. In other cases, the walking environment is poorly maintained, unattractive, perceived as unsafe and compromised by motorised vehicles. Busily trafficked roads can create severance either by physically preventing or severely impeding walking routes.



Walking should be the mode of choice for journeys under 1 mile, as it is the most sustainable means of transport and the one that has the least impact on the environment.

- Walking is available to almost everyone for free, as everyday walking need not require any special equipment.
- Walking is safe. Unless you walk in very difficult conditions, you don't need any special training. Walkers also pose less of a danger to other people than users of mechanised modes of transport.
- People in cars regularly suffer three times as much pollution than pedestrians because they are sitting in the line of the exhaust fumes from the car in front.

Walking is very important as a mode of transport, especially over short distances and for accessing public transport.

- 25% of all journeys in Great Britain are made entirely on foot
- 78% of journeys under 1 mile (1.6km) are made entirely on foot.
- In addition to journeys entirely on foot, the average British adult makes 78 journeys per year combining walking with public transport, 42% of these are mainly by bus (DfT 2003)
- The most popular reason for walking is to go shopping (23%), followed by personal business or accompanying another person (21%) and leisure or social purposes (20%) (DfT 2003).

However, walking is in decline overall.

- In the ten years to 2003, the number of walking trips fell by 20% (National Statistics 2004).
- Total distance walked per person per year fell from 390km/244 miles to 302km/189 miles between 1986 and 2001.

Walking to school

- 79% of primary school students live within walking distance (less than 2 miles/3.2km) of school, but only 54% of children walk to school (DfT 2003).
- Walking to school has health, educational and social development benefits for children; it improves their sense of independence and confidence and could help tackle the growing problem of childhood obesity as well as combating the congestion of the school run.
- At its peak around 08:50 on schooldays, the school run accounts for 17% of traffic in urban areas. Parents are still spending about £300 and driving 960km/600 miles annually on easily walkable journeys, equal to two thirds of the way from Land's End to John O'Groats (DfT).



Walking to work

- Currently 2.6 million people walk to work, only 10.8% of the total number in employment.
- Walking at least part of the way is a good way of building exercise into your everyday routine.
- Encouraging staff to walk to work also has benefits for employers. The vast majority of workers travel to work by car, 70% in 2000. A single car parking space can cost an employer at least £500 a year (Department of Health 2002).

Decline of walking in Northamptonshire

The 'Travel Diary Survey' 2010, about the trips of residents across Northamptonshire provides a picture of travel habits of the county. The Survey showed that the proportion of trips made by walking went down between 2007 and 2010 from 25% to 20%. Walking as a subsidiary mode, where walking made up a subsidiary part of their trip e.g. walking to/from the bus stop, was about 6% of trips between 2005 and 2008 but in 2009 and 2010 it was much lower (see figure 2).

Walking as a means of transportation reached a peak in 2007 but are now on the decline, use of walking to access education has the highest level of walking (about 40%) although this is still less than the number of people using a car to access education. Walking to access employment or whilst making work journeys was the lowest recorded use of walking as a means of transport.

The total walking time per person per day for all walking trips in 2010 was 8.5 minutes. This was lower than the previous year. The average walking trip duration was 18.4 minutes, more than in previous years. Number of walking trips per person per day has gone down as has walking time per person per day (see figure 3).

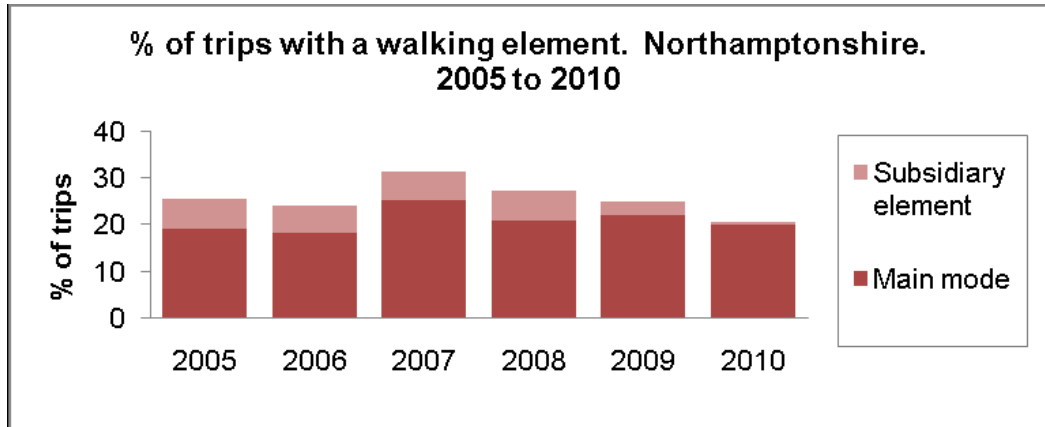


Figure 2: % walking trips in Northamptonshire 2005-10 (Travel Survey Report 2010)

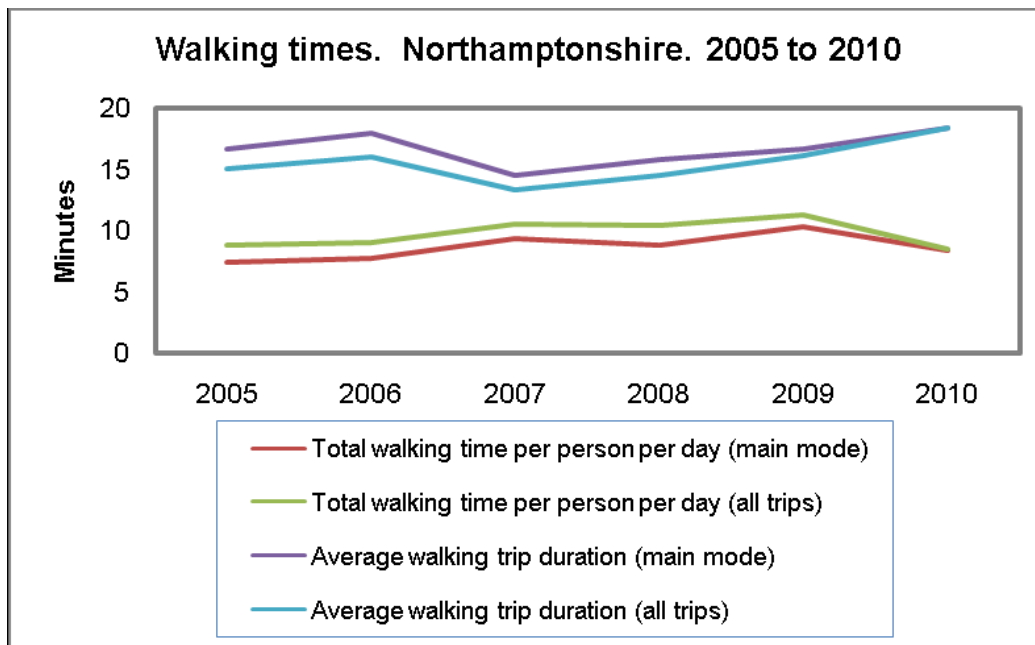


Figure 3: Walking times in Northamptonshire 2005-2010 (Travel Survey Report 2010)



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4. Benefits of Walking

Walking is not just about getting from A to B, it is a highly effective form of exercise, with little impact on the environment, Walking has benefits for;

- Health
- The Environment
- The Economy
- The Community

Health Benefits

The Chief Medical Officer recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, on five days a week for adults, and at least 60 minutes every day for children. For most people, walking is the easiest way to meet physical activity recommendations. Inactivity is a key factor in the growth of obesity, 61% of English adults and 30% of children are overweight or obese, and walking could help people reduce their weight.

All walking is beneficial, but for the greatest benefits to heart, lungs and blood pressure, brisk is best. You should be breathing a little faster, feeling a little warmer and can feel your heart beating a little faster, but you still feel comfortable and are able to talk. Regular brisk walking will:

- Improve performance of the heart, lungs and circulation.
- Lower blood pressure.
- Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and strokes – inactive and unfit people have double the risk of dying from Chronic Heart Disease.

Walking regularly at any speed will:

- Help manage weight
- Reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes
- Reduce the risk of certain cancers such colon, breast and lung cancer
- Improve flexibility and strength of joints, muscles and bones, and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Increase “good” cholesterol.
- Boost the immune system.
- Improve mood, reduce anxiety/stress, aid sleep and improve self-image by providing an opportunity to escape from the pressures of modern living to relax.

The Environmental Benefits

If we all swapped one car journey a week for walking, car traffic levels would reduce by at least 10% (Sustrans 2009). By walking rather than driving people are not producing excess carbon

dioxide or noxious fumes or causing noise pollution which benefits the local and global environment. The local environment also benefits visually from less congestion.

Walking is the most natural and inclusive means of transport, and doesn't involve the use of vehicles, machinery, fuel or special equipment that would otherwise need to be manufactured, transported and disposed of which therefore limits the impact on the environment.

The Economic Benefits

Walkers' offers economic benefits nationally from cutting the health bill costs associated with health conditions which could be reduced/minimised by walking. Whilst locally walkers provide economic benefits along walking routes, as people on foot tend to linger longer, spend more and utilise local facilities which offers income to businesses and jobs to local people.

- Physical inactivity currently costs the NHS in England between £1billion and £1.8billion a year, and around £8.3billion to the wider economy in sick days and premature deaths.
- Obesity alone already costs the economy £16billion. If current trends continue, this may rise to £50billion by 2050.
- Walkers in the English countryside spend around £6.14billion a year, supporting up to 245,000 full time jobs.
- The South West Coast Path generates £307million a year for the economy of the region, supporting over 7,500 jobs.
- The West Highland Way, Scotland's most popular official long distance route attracts 75,000 visitors a year, generating £3.5million and supporting around 200 local businesses.



The Community Benefits

Walking is sociable, improves our sense of community and can help tackle crime and the fear of crime.

- Walking in your neighbourhood helps local residents take ownership of their streets and increase surveillance that deters crime.
- Improving walkability of the local environment also improves liveability by facilitating not only walking but social interaction, play, relaxation, discovery and enjoyment.
- Opportunities for social interaction, meeting new people and groups helping to enhance sustainable communities.

5. Barriers to Walking

There is the potential for more trips to be made by walking so it is important to consider what barriers exist that deter people from walking.

Local policy agendas

Walking can play an important role in achieving a range of policy priorities, for example, increased physical activity has significant health benefits, and improvements to the walking environment can contribute to the regeneration of an area. This should mean that measures to improve walking are high on lots of different agendas but it can mean that everyone assumes that it is someone else's responsibility and it is not given the priority it deserves.

Planning and the need for integrated funding for walking improvements

Planning of new developments must consider the connectivity between it and the surrounding area, the 1980's and 90's growth of cul-de-sac development led to severance of routes and often missing links in footway and crossing provision. Development layout can cause an increase in the distortion of perceived distance between places or an unwillingness to travel if multiple roads have to be crossed. To encouraging a significant increase in walking will require tackling both the actual infrastructure barriers such as missing footway and dropped kerbs and people's perceived infrastructure barriers.

Provision of new walkways may open up new accesses. However, unless people are advised of the new infrastructure and encouraged to use it, they may still consider there is a barrier stopping them walking. To enable greater uptake of walking requires a combination of measures, such as fully connective infrastructure alongside initiatives such as personalised travel planning and promotional material to ensure that the available walking infrastructure is promoted and people are encouraged to try walking. Funding therefore needs to be secured to deliver both elements of the walking improvement.

Safety Concerns

Safety concerns relate to both road safety and associated causalities and personal safety fears. People consider that walking is dangerous due to concerns of crossing roads even where crossing facilities are provided and also the proximity of footways to roads where fast cars and large vehicles such as HGV's and buses are considered to be a distraction and an immediate danger. Fear for personal safety can also deter people from walking in certain locations or at certain times of the day.

Perceptions of personal safety can act as a deterrent to walking with many people being deterred from making journeys, particularly at night, as they fear being attacked. A vicious cycle arises with

people not walking in an area perceived to be unsafe, which by having fewer people around makes an area feel less safe.

Misperceptions of distances and walking speeds

People often perceive that it takes longer to walk somewhere than it does in reality, especially if they are unfamiliar with an area. One of the main barriers to walking is related to distance and time constraints, previous research has suggested that perceptions of the distance barrier are distorted by two factors; uncertainty over distances; and misperceptions of walking speeds.

A lack of knowledge about how long it will take to walk and which route to take underlies the distance barrier. A number of different systems are in operation which can sometimes lead to inconsistent or unnecessary signage in a particular area. This can be confusing for pedestrians as well as adding to street clutter, detracting from the attractiveness of the public realm. It should be as easy to find your way around an area as a pedestrian as it is by car or public transport.

Unattractive walking environment

Features of the local environment may act as a deterrent to walking for those with alternatives available to them or make the experience less pleasant for those who have to walk.

These include:

- Air quality
- Pollution and Noise
- Unevenness of pavements
- Routes where pedestrians are expected to detour or change level in order to cross roads.
- Unauthorised pavement parking
- Lack of dropped kerbs
- Presence of street clutter
- Poor surface drainage resulting in surface water



All these will act as deterrents for people choosing to walk especially those with disabilities or those with children in pushchairs; however infrastructure improvements in these areas will benefit all those walking and may encourage people to opt to walk.

Existing travel habits

The habitual nature of most travel can act as a significant barrier to walking for those who currently drive (or use public transport) for all or most of their journeys. People may be unfamiliar with alternatives to their regular mode of transport and may be deterred from walking, even for relatively short journeys, by the kind of barriers identified in this document.

6. Policies for Walking

The differences across Northamptonshire, from the different towns to the rural areas, mean that a relatively broad strategy will best suit the varying needs of the county. People need to be given information on walking options and shown that it is an attractive alternative to the car through promotional activities and improvements to connectivity and aesthetics of routes. This Walking Strategy aims to address the prevalent issues that affect walking in Northamptonshire through a series of Objectives and Walking Policies, specific walking needs will be assessed within the Town Strategies and localised neighbourhood plans.

The Walking Strategy will contribute towards delivery of the Objectives for the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012), to achieve these objectives the County Council must;

- Maximise the role of walking as a transport mode, by ensuring that policies to increase walking, and meet the needs of pedestrians, are fully integrated into wider transport policies and other development related strategies including the Joint Core Strategies.
- Develop a safe, convenient and efficient transport infrastructure which achieves an equitable balance between the interests of all users of the highway including pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and motorists.
- Promote walking as a healthy means of travel and as an effective means of reaching local destinations, including shops, the workplace and the public transport network, as well as a means for exercising to achieve health improvements.
- Improve pedestrian safety through improved engineering and education.
- Work in partnership with other local agencies including borough, district and parish councils to develop plans (i.e. neighbourhood plans) that encourage walking.



Figure 4: Approaches to Walking Policies

Influencing walking through planning & integrated funding for walking improvements

The easiest way to manage transport problems is to minimise them at the outset. Decisions on the locations of key destinations and major developments are an important determinant of their long-term sustainability. The Joint Core Strategies set out these appropriate locations based on transport evidence bases and modelling, this will ensure new development is considered at appropriate sites within Northamptonshire.

Developers need to ensure new developments provide new or connecting infrastructure for walking (and cycling) between the development and key amenities and places of work. This will ensure that walking becomes a viable option for people to make short journeys and be an aide to mitigating climate change and the transport impacts of new developments.

Provision of connected walking routes should be embedded in the planning process for all developments, including: Housing sites, Employment sites, Education facilities, Retail developments and Transport Interchanges. Planners and developers should work closely with transport officers to ensure the existing and future developments has a walkable infrastructure networks, and to ensure that design and layout of new developments cuts out barriers to walking such as severance and missing links.

Walking Policy 1

We will continue to liaise with Local Planning Authorities, the Joint Planning Units and developers to ensure connectivity between new developments and existing infrastructure to ensure Walking Infrastructure is integrated into new developments.

One of the key challenges in terms of promoting walking and improving pedestrian facilities, is that despite far more people walking than travel by bus, train or cycle, it receives very little attention from policy and decision makers. In one sense, this is because walking is so easy and in many cases requires little in the way of facilities. However, the barriers that can be formed to walking can be just as much an impediment and deterrent to people choosing to walk.

To overcome barriers to walking there needs to be better walking infrastructure and wider promotion of available infrastructure, as such greater flexibility within the funding structure should be provided and ensure that funding is available in a way that allows proactive delivery of pedestrian infrastructure improvements and promotional activities. This should include the opportunity to provide pedestrian improvements as part of wider area or corridor-based schemes, including improvements alongside cycling schemes, to create greater connectivity as well as enabling complementary travel awareness campaigns.

Given that every road, footpath and right of way forms part of the walking network, it is so dense that to consider it as a whole for even one of Northamptonshire's smaller towns would be a

mammoth task. Given that simple things like the absence of a short stretch of footpath or a missing set of dropped kerbs can be impediments to people walking, it needs to be considered on a very localised basis. The neighbourhood level – which could comprise a village or a part of a town – therefore seems the appropriate level at which to plan walking.

To assist this process, we have developed a Neighbourhood Walking Plan toolkit, which could be used within local areas to identify local walking priorities. The use of the toolkit will help to generate a full and accurate picture of where pedestrian infrastructure is required to improve the existing provision and support the growth agenda. This toolkit will enable communities to assess and prioritised improvements based on the following three criteria:

1. Improving accessibility
2. Promoting and encouraging modal shift
3. Identifying existing problems or deficiencies in the network through local knowledge

Audits should be undertaken to identify current or potential desire lines and instances where footways or footpaths need to be provided or improved. Local knowledge is a valuable asset in identifying any infrastructure that could be implemented which would have a positive effect on a community. Working with local authorities and community groups will form part of these plans, to ask people where existing deficiencies are in the network (based on key attractors). This in turn will enable consideration of the type and levels of funding that need to be sought to deliver the improvements required.



We foresee that priority neighbourhoods for using the toolkit will include town centres, major trip attractors, and areas close to major new developments and locations where there is a need for major traffic reductions to accommodate growth. However, in taking this strategy forward we will welcome approaches from any local organisation which sees either problems with current walking provision or a need to increase the number of people walking.

Figure 5 - The Neighbourhood Walking Plan Tool Kit

- Identify which areas to concentrate on, via consultation with residents.
- Undertake walking audits to, need to consider:
 - Current guidance on acceptable walking distances to further determine study area (i.e. distance from key attractor).
 - Local Amenity Plan – where do people want to walk to?
 - Walking times- to key amenities – 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes
 - Pedestrian Accident Data – to identify any patterns/issues
 - Assessment to include:
 - Safety
 - Infrastructure
 - Signing
 - Dropped kerbs
 - Footways/footpaths
 - Pedestrian Crossings
 - Lighting
 - Obstructions
- Design and cost improvements identified;
- Prioritise schemes; using three criteria
 1. The distance of the scheme from the attractor;
 2. The number of people that will benefit from the scheme; and
 3. The difficulty of the alternative that is currently available.

Criteria	Score	Explanation of Score
Distance from Attractor	1	The scheme is far from the attractor
	2	The scheme is a medium distance from the attractor
	3	The scheme is close to the attractor
Number of people that will benefit from the scheme	1	A low number of people will benefit from the scheme
	2	A medium number of people will benefit from the scheme
	3	A high number of people will benefit from the scheme
Difficulty of the alternative that is currently available	1	The current situation is good
	2	The current situation is acceptable
	3	The current situation is poor

- Produce an implementation Plan;
- Collect monies and implement schemes;
- Produce promotional information to inform local residents of improvements. Promotions to include personal safety on journey to work

Walking Policy 2

We will work with local community groups, parish councils as well as borough and district councils, and developers to initiate and produce Neighbourhood Walking Plans to map walking infrastructure and identify missing links and areas for investment.

Once infrastructure is provided it is important that some money is also provided to enable promotional work to highlight the available infrastructure, provide personal safety information and information on how to plan your journeys on foot. Promotional activities and materials should be produced and distributed via travel centres and Smart Travel Choices road shows/marketing events.



Walking Policy 3

Funding will be sought to provide promotional material to inform communities of access to new walking infrastructure.

Improving the attractiveness of the walking environment

Particular attention should be paid to the needs of pedestrians when improving the walkable environment, while some features of the environment can deter people from walking, other types of street furniture can encourage people to walk. By improving the attractiveness of the walking environment, such as street art and benches people are likely to be encouraged to walk. Benches offer places to sit or rest which can be important for the elderly and those with mobility difficulties who may not be able to walk far without a break.



It is important that when planning new infrastructure attention is paid to the needs of pedestrians, so the design of the new pedestrian infrastructure needs to ensure we; create attractive, high quality seamless routes avoiding diversions of routes off the desire lines, they must also be unhindered by unnecessary clutter and free draining to avoid surface water pooling. Undesirable infrastructure such as underpasses should only be installed where strictly necessary while use of at grade crossing and pedestrian phased signalised junctions should become the benchmark for alteration/addition to the walking network.

Priority should be given to infrastructure measures which improve access and connectivity between local shops, schools, places of work, healthcare and public transport stations. Walking is a key mode of travel for short trips but also holds importance in linking with other transport modes such as the bus and train therefore it is important to consider routes which encourage people to use walking as an alternative to short car journeys or to access public transport.

Walking Policy 4

When undertaking work to improve the walking infrastructure priority will be given to schemes that improve access to services, education and employment sites, and transport interchanges.

Walking Policy 5

Where possible underpasses will be avoided on walking routes in favour of surface level crossings.

To ensure that poor quality surfacing does not deter people from walking, footways will be designed and built to a high quality standard that is 'fit for purpose' yet minimises the long term maintenance liability. Verges alongside footways will be kept in a safe condition to ensure visibility is not impaired, whilst clearing of encroaching edges will be carried out to maintain usable width.

The County Council will utilise footway maintenance standards set out in the Highways Maintenance Plan, which will be amalgamated into the Asset Management Plan, to ensure a consistent approach is taken to maintenance of the highways footway network.

Walking Policy 6

Footways will be designed and built to a standard that provides quality footways so it does not deter people from walking on the footways whilst achieving value for money and minimising the maintenance liability.

Addressing Safety Concerns

To tackle road safety concerns requires evidence of the levels of walking, alongside details of what pedestrian related incidents occur and where. This would enable the County Council to ascertain the extent to which interventions are necessary to the pedestrian environment to tackle a problem, i.e. is there a need for education or physical infrastructure to tackle the problem spots.

A comprehensive and ongoing monitoring regime is in place for vehicular traffic across most counties and a similar system should be introduced for walking.

Northamptonshire County Council will work with partners and walking organisations to agree a consistent methodology for monitoring levels of walking, whilst continuing to collect and collate accident data. The County Council will then be able to focus road safety improvements on measures which reduce pedestrian casualties, targeted at problem areas.

Personal Safety concerns can be addressed in a number of ways, such as allowing for informal surveillance in the design/ location of buildings meaning that walking routes are overlooked, this will in turn help address pedestrian's concerns about personal safety and should also reduce anti-social behaviour in those areas. This should also result in a more attractive walking environment.

Parental concerns for journeys their children take mean that they often choose to drive for what can often be short journeys to schools. As such the County Council has a Safer Routes to School initiative that delivers infrastructure measures to help to address safety for pedestrians on journeys to school. Such initiatives promote safety measures to enable people to make the decision to walk.

Promotional activities need to be carried out alongside provision of new pedestrian infrastructure, this should be done with local Community groups to ensure that people get a heightened sense of personal security and feeling of safety in a place where they live, work, or spend leisure time to encourage more use of walking.

Simple personal safety tips include:

- Try walking in groups.
- Never take short cuts at night, stick to well lit or populated areas.
- Walk facing the traffic to avoid 'kerb crawlers'.
- Spread your valuables around your body.
- If you use a wheelchair keep your things beside you not on the back of the chair.
- Try to look and act confidently – look like you know where you're going and walk tall.
- Avoid using your phone or MP3 devices to avoid distraction



Walking Policy 7

We will seek to ensure new developments and redevelopments provide attractive walking infrastructure that makes people feel safe and want to walk.

Influencing Local policy agendas

Walking needs to be given greater priority at a higher level in all the institutions involved in local policy, in particular in partner organisations such as the NHS. Northamptonshire County Council should work with our partners to develop Active Travel Strategies for Northamptonshire which incorporate the prioritisation for funding alongside other measures to encourage active travel.

Measures to encourage walking need to include some infrastructure improvements and maintenance of current infrastructure but this will only be successful overall if attention is paid to walking by policy makers. The low profile for making walking policy across the County can mean that maintenance is not given a high priority when decisions are made on spending priorities.

Our partners for ensuring walking is captured within local policy includes local user groups and community groups, Borough and District Councils as the local planning authority, Developers through good planning applications and local businesses.

Walking Policy 8

We will work with partners to develop strategies to encourage active travel in Northamptonshire.

Readdressing perceptions of distances and walking speeds

It is hoped that better practices in the planning of new developments will ensure that barriers and severance which increase perception of distance will be removed and people will be provided with well connected network of footways that will enable them to walk with ease.

However it is not always immediately apparent where walking routes are so it is important to ensure that it is as easy for people to find their way around an area as a pedestrian, as it is by car or public transport, by providing information on walking routes on maps, signage and other relevant marketing. This should include measures to improve consistency in signage across boundaries and to ensure that superfluous signs are removed where new signs are introduced.

This means ensuring that maps and other relevant information, such as journey planners provide information that is appropriate for pedestrians; this should include an indication of the walking time, and include routes that are not obvious to drivers.

Maps of walking routes in Northamptonshire can be found on the Council website as PDF copies or on the Interactive mapping pages www.northamptonshire.gov.uk Information includes details of short and longer routes in Northamptonshire.



There is the potential to update and review mapping within Northamptonshire towns to show the walking infrastructure available to access key destinations. These maps could also contain information that could provide motivation to walk such as health benefits of walking, such as distance walked and calories burned that may evoke decisions to walk.

Directional signage should be provided within towns to provide people with the information on the ability to walk to key attractors with an indication of the distance and average time to the destination. This would allow people can assess their capability of walking to their destination.

Walking Policy 9

We will improve the quality and consistency of information and signage of walking routes that is available for pedestrians, including route maps and marketing of routes not obvious to drivers.

Overcoming existing travel habits

Overcoming habits requires people to be provided with information on alternatives, this can be done through implementation of Travel Plans and Travel Centres to hold awareness campaigns which promote alternative travel options and raise the profile of walking to help initiate behaviour change.

The County Council work with local businesses and educational establishments to develop and implement Travel Plans in order to reduce the number of car journeys and promote walking.

There are a number of initiatives aimed at businesses and schools which try to address travel choices and initiate behaviour change; these include national events such as;

- Walk to Work campaigns aimed at working with employers and employees to promote walking and identify barriers to walking to work.
- National 'Walk to School week' to try and address travel habits which are often formed early in life, in recent years there has been a lot of work undertaken on school travel planning, and concerted walking promotion activity.



In recent years, there has been increasing concern about the impact of people's lifestyles on their health and particularly about the rising levels of obesity with the associated costs to the NHS and society generally. Adopting more active travel habits means that people undertake increased levels of physical activity as part of their daily routine rather than it being an extra activity that they have to fit in. There are therefore strong links between transport choices and health

outcomes and it is clear that the health sector should have a key role to play in supporting and encouraging people to adopt active travel habits.

Walking Policy 10

We will work with the NHS and other significant employers in the Northamptonshire to create schemes which reward and support employees who choose to walk to work and while on business.

Walking Policy 11

We will support schools who wish to promote walking as a means of travel to schools.



7. Delivery Summary

The previous section outlines the walking policies included in the strategy.

The table below demonstrates how these policies contribute to the objectives of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan and the corresponding six objectives of the walking strategy.

NTP Objectives	Walking Strategy Objectives	Policies
Fit for...the Future	Increasing the number of short trips that are made on foot will help us achieve the modal shift targets that will support growth.	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
Fit for...the Community	Encouraging local people to make more trips on foot helps communities take ownership of their streets	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
Fit to...Choose	Improving the pedestrian access to local facilities gives people more options when choosing how to travel for a short journey.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
Fit for...Economic Growth	Improving pedestrian access to employment sites allows more people to access jobs and benefits business by reducing the need for car park space.	1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12
Fit for...the Environment	Improving the walking environment reduces the impact of people making short trips and reduces carbon emissions.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12
Fit for...Best Value	Walking improvement schemes are relatively low cost compared to schemes for other modes	1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12

Table 2: Walking Strategy Objectives links to Walking Policies

8. Funding

The Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (2012) objective of 'Fit for.....Best Value' established the need to be clear about investment, focusing on achieving value for money while seeking alternative sources of funding. This means managing our budgets within the current challenging financial and funding position, and planning for the future., securing 'Best Value' will be key to deciding which approach is taken to deliver the improvements.

Funding for walking schemes come from a number of different sources such as:

- The Integrated Transport Block (Northamptonshire Transportation Plan)
- Central government grants

Reductions to the Integrated Transport Block means that there will be less funding available specifically for walking, but increases to the maintenance budget will directly benefit pedestrians. The Local Enterprise Partnerships, Regional Growth Fund and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund could offer real opportunities for the Council to take forward projects over the next few years.

However we can not rely on traditional funding sources to provide the budgets for improving the current pedestrian infrastructure or to support development of walking routes. As such the County Council will seek new and innovative sources of funding to deliver transport schemes such as;

- Third party (match) funding such as Sustrans
- Section 106 Agreement contributions from developers
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Developer led Infrastructure delivery secured through Section 278 agreements
- Localism
- Match funding from the public sector (including the National Health Service)
- New sources of grant funding from public bodies.

With a series of independent funding sources, a coherent strategy is required to achieve the most equitable and efficient use of limited resources. One example of delivering best value is by joining smaller schemes together to gain economies of scale in terms of design and implementation.

Walking Policy 12

Where possible we will increase the flexibility of our funding structures to allow delivery of pedestrian infrastructure improvements that provide value for money.

With an increased pressure on resources prioritisation should be given to schemes to improve accident rates, deliver accessibility to education, healthcare and employment locations as well as

to growth areas such as sustainable urban extensions. However, in taking this strategy forward we will welcome approaches from any local organisation which sees either problems with current walking provision or a need to increase the number of people walking.

The following general prioritisation for schemes may be useful in determining between schemes:

- 1) New developments
- 2) Town centre
- 3) Intra-urban links
- 4) Inter-urban
- 5) Rural/Leisure

However availability of funding and other factors mean that decisions on undertaking walking improvements will be taken on a case by case basis.



Appendix 1 - Summary of Policies

Walking Policy 1

We will continue to liaise with Local Planning Authorities, the Joint Planning Units and developers to ensure connectivity between new developments and existing infrastructure to ensure Walking Infrastructure is integrated into new developments.

Walking Policy 2

We will work with local community groups, parish councils as well as borough and district councils, and developers to initiate and produce Neighbourhood Walking Plans to map walking infrastructure and identify missing links and areas for investment.

Walking Policy 3

Funding will be sought to provide promotional material to inform communities of access to new walking infrastructure.

Walking Policy 4

When undertaking work to improve the walking infrastructure priority will be given to schemes that improve access to services, education and employment sites, and transport interchanges.

Walking Policy 5

Where possible underpasses will be avoided on walking routes in favour of surface level crossings.

Walking Policy 6

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Northamptonshire Walking Strategy

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