

Appendix 1: Sustainable Transport Priorities for Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish

1. Background & scope

Gloucestershire County Council not the parish council is the local highways and transport authority in this area. Residents of Leckhampton and Warden Hill nevertheless asked during the 2021 consultation on this Neighbourhood Plan for the plan to more clearly support sustainable transport in the Neighbourhood Plan area. As our consultation report states:

“Sustainable Transport – It was widely stated that the Draft Vision should focus on developing sustainable transport solutions and not on traffic networks and commuting. This should translate into aims and objectives and policies currently lacking within the NDP to secure a sustainable travel network-based opportunities to secure, develop and promote cycling and walking, particular to and from new developments, key services and schools. Disability access should be address as part of further work to develop a NDP policy on sustainable transport.

Managing Traffic Networks – Notwithstanding the comments related to sustainable transport, it was felt that the Draft Vision does not follow through to traffic management proposals to improve the Neighbourhood Area environment for non-car users through more effective control of traffic speeds including low speed zones, physical measures to manage road space and parking, particularly at key facilities and schools. These measures would be complementary to improve the environment for bus services.”

We are therefore adding as an appendix to the plan this set of sustainable transport priorities to set out the transport and travel principles and steps we expect the parish council to support in its role as a consultee on local transport plans, planning applications, traffic regulation orders and other measures which together shape the nature of travel and transport in our area.

This echoes the Connecting Cheltenham strategy report produced in 2019 by Cheltenham Borough Council in an influencing and guidance role on transport and travel policy and indeed this set of priorities shares and supports many of the principles and ideas for more sustainable transport set out in that report and particularly the urgent need to reduce from 78% the proportion of journeys into and out of Cheltenham that are currently undertaken by private car.¹

This set of priorities is limited to the Leckhampton with Warden Hill Neighbourhood Plan area although the nature of transport and travel connectivity means that it inevitably refers to onward connections outside the NP area.

2. General principles

We agree with the ‘drivers for change’ set out in the Connecting Cheltenham report². In our local context this means:

¹ Connecting Cheltenham strategy report, Systra for Cheltenham Borough Council September 2019, p28

² *ibid*, p5

- **Accommodating growth.** In an area with significant car congestion already, and with significant development planned in the Neighbourhood Plan area itself under Policy MD4 of the Cheltenham Plan and in the local travel area under the Joint Core Strategy, we want travel and transport planning, infrastructure planning and the planning of new development *co-ordinated* to discourage further congestion and encourage alternative modes of travel and transport including walking, cycling and mass public transport.
- **Climate change.** We face a climate emergency. So there is an urgent need locally as everywhere else to discourage transport that creates greenhouse gas emissions and encourage modes of travel and transport that are cleaner and more sustainable, including walking, cycling and cleaner, low carbon forms of transport such as electric vehicles.
- **Liveability, health and wellbeing.** Although our social and demographic profile for this Neighbourhood Plan reports generally good health outcomes, it does show Warden Hill in particular has an older population with rather worse health outcomes and higher levels of disability. Leckhampton has also now added a secondary school to our two local primary schools. We want both old and young to be able to travel locally on safe roads, pavements and footpaths, to gain the health benefits of walking and cycling and the social and mental health benefits of safe local travel to shop, socialise and access services and community facilities. This also means respecting and protecting green and blue infrastructure that benefits wellbeing in so many ways.
- **Equitable and inclusive access to transport.** As an area on the edge of town and with Warden Hill in particular having an older population with relatively high levels of disability, equitable access to public transport is very important to reducing the number of journeys by car and both new development and public transport planning needs to be supported when it is planned with equitable access in mind.
- **Local environmental impacts.** Leckhampton in particular is rich in biodiversity and has a significant Local Green Space providing a multitude of ecosystem services. Development and travel and transport planning must respect and protect this, for instance preserving hedgerows, watercourses and nature connectivity. But air quality and particulate pollution affect the whole NP area and are particularly significant in the most urban parts of the NP area like Warden Hill, Shurdington Road and Leckhampton Road where commuter traffic causes significantly higher levels of pollution and needs to be reduced.
- **Townscape quality.** As an area that transitions between the urban area and the rural and semi-rural - including areas of real tranquility - Leckhampton and Warden Hill offers a variety of distinctive landscapes and street scenes and characters. Transport and travel planning should constantly increase the quality of these areas for instance in the sensitive and appropriate use of signage, the cautious use of intrusive lighting and 'urban' features in otherwise rural settings.

3. Specific recommendations

To further these principles, this set of priorities supports the following specific recommendations:

1. Development of better walking and cycling connections. More walking and cycling is central to many of the principles above. We offer the map of desirable walking and cycling connections (Figure 10 in the Neighbourhood Plan) as a guide for authorities, planners and developers to the broad routes that we support in principle in the Neighbourhood Plan area to facilitate more walking and cycling, improve health and wellbeing and discourage private car use, congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and particulate pollution. The arrows and routes are not intended to be prescriptive of exact routes but show the connections that need to be made and improved.

Extending beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area but also benefitting it, this set of priorities further supports connections from the Neighbourhood Plan area onward to the town centre, the railway station and other transport hubs, major work destinations such as GCHQ and the Golden Valley / Cyber Central development, Cheltenham General Hospital and the Leckhampton Surgery, shopping facilities such as the supermarket in Hatherley and the Bath Road/Suffolk Road area.

2. Better cycle paths. Cycle paths should everywhere meet the minimum standards for safety and accessibility and should where possible be of the highest standard and separate or physically distinct from the road and footpath for both actual and perceived safety. We support permanent and longer-lasting investment in cycle infrastructure including through developer contributions.

3. Lower speed limits. For safety and wellbeing, nowhere in the Neighbourhood Plan area should have a speed limit above 30mph. Wherever possible, we support 20mph speed limits, especially on minor residential roads, in the vicinity of schools and nurseries and where walking on the road

4. Improvement of existing footpaths. In the interests of safety and to encourage more walking, local footpaths and pavements should be constantly improved. We recognise that budgeting for maintenance is a constant issue and outside the scope of this document, but this set of priorities nevertheless supports investment in permanent and longer-lasting footpath improvements, including through the use of developer contributions. Footpaths should meet the minimum standards for accessibility and equality everywhere in the built up area including for those with visual impairment. Dropped kerbs and other measures should facilitate crossing points and complete routes for wheelchair users.

5. More sustainable use of roads. Significant routes such as the Shurdington Road, Leckhampton Road, Old Bath Road, Church Road, Up Hatherley Way, Salisbury Avenue and Farmfield Road should be improved to encourage more sustainable use. While specific proposals must be looked at on a case by case basis, measures supported in principle include (but are not limited to): giving priority to alternative travel such as walking and cycling, bus stops integrated into the road and carriageway design, controlled choke points and other speed-limiting measures, the use of smart technology as it develops to ease traffic flows and restrict some access to residents and public transport.

6. Support for community facilities. Elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan, we support planning for new development with access to community facilities such as grocery shops so that new developments do not further encourage local car use. This is also supported by these transport priorities.

7. Public transport. While every measure needs to be examined on a case by case basis, we support in principle measures to better facilitate the use of public transport including new and improved bus and coach stops, the planning of road improvements and new development with bus and coach routes and stops in mind and infrastructure necessary for bus routes and future mass transit including well-designed shelters and smart signals, signage and information displays. This must always be appropriate and sensitive to its location, to local natural assets and beauty in more rural parts of the NP area, to heritage assets and to the local landscape or street scene.

4. Delivery

We recognise that delivery of these principles and recommendations is not possible by the parish council alone but we commend them to all the stakeholders who can influence local travel and transport:

- The local highways authority Gloucestershire County Council, particularly in their development of Local Transport Plans (LTPs), its consideration of and highways advice on local planning applications and in its use of developer contributions
- Local schools and school trusts and Gloucestershire County Council in its role as local education authority
- The principal local planning authority Cheltenham Borough Council in its consideration of planning applications and in its use of developer contributions
- Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council in its advice as a statutory consultee, in its own land use and in its use of developer contributions
- Private developers and planning permission applicants in the drafting of their plans and applications
- Householders, local land users and owners and the wider community

[See also Neighbourhood Plan Figure 10 - Priorities for Walking and Cycling Connections](#)