

Footpaths, cycleways and bridleways

Strategic policy S12, Strategic footpath, cycleway and bridleway links

1. The Borough Council in partnership with the highway authority will seek to create new, and improve existing, footpath, cycle and bridleway links throughout the Borough, connecting key destinations including the country parks, increasing access along the coast and to the South Downs National Park and improving connections between the parishes and Eastleigh Town Centre. The Council will seek the provision of the following new and strategic footpath/cycleway/bridleway routes as shown on the key diagram and the policies map:
 - a. Forest Park to Otterbourne via Chandler's Ford;
 - b. Chandler's Ford to Chilworth;
 - c. Lakeside Country Park to Forest Park;
 - d. Eastleigh to Botley via Bishopstoke, Horton Heath and Hedge End;
 - e. Eastleigh to Hedge End parallel to the railway line;
 - f. Eastleigh to Southampton via Stoneham Lane;
 - g. Itchen Navigation to Stoke Park Woods;
 - h. Eastleigh/Bishopstoke to Itchen Valley Country Park and Mansbridge via the Itchen valley;
 - i. Bishopstoke to Fair Oak via Stoke Park Woods and on to the South Downs National Park;
 - j. Itchen Valley Country Park to Manor Farm Country Park;
 - k. Manor Farm Country Park to Forest of Bere via Botley and on to the South Downs National Park including the Botley to Bishop's Waltham Rail Trail;
 - l. Boorley Green to Hedge End railway station;
 - m. Botley to Fair Oak and on to the South Downs National Park;
 - n. Botley to Hamble via Manor Farm Country Park;
 - o. Botley to Southampton;
 - p. Southampton to Hamble via the Royal Victoria Country Park and Netley.
2. All of these routes will avoid conflict with established nature conservation interests and where possible be coupled with green links for biodiversity. Working in partnership with the highway authority to agree and create highway including footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways will ensure that all new highway accords with appropriate design and construction standards to enable its adoption by the highway authority and so secure its long-term maintenance.
3. New development should integrate with existing routes and public rights of way and wherever possible maintain, protect and enhance their function. Development that would sever, obstruct or otherwise have a detrimental impact on the existing or proposed network of green routes as shown on the policies map will not be permitted.

4.71 As part of its cycling and walking strategies (subject to future update), the related work to encourage use of alternative transport modes as part of the climate change strategy, and its contribution to the PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Borough Council wishes to improve the network of multifunctional non-vehicular routes in the Borough, including footpaths and cycleways. Given the importance of recreational horse-riding in the Borough, bridleways also form an important part of recreational provision, as well as contributing to road safety. (Note, however, that it will not always be possible to upgrade existing footpaths for use as cycleways or bridleways). The PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy includes proposals for a network of green routes through south Hampshire that serve both recreational and alternative transport purposes. In addition, the Borough Council has had regard to the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan proposals for the Forest of Bere, the Solent and the Test and Itchen areas. The Borough Council will be preparing new walking and cycling strategies in future to provide further detail on the Council's priorities for infrastructure for these modes. Within the Borough, the Council has identified priority routes that:

- link the main urban areas;
- link the Borough's country parks, to enable longer-distance circular routes;
- link to strategic areas of green space beyond the Borough's boundaries, in particular the Forest Park in southern Test Valley and the South Downs National Park; and
- take advantage of the Borough's coastline, including working with partners to ensure that the England Coastal Path follows the most suitable route in the Borough.

4.72 The Borough Council will seek to secure these routes by ensuring the provision of new spaces and routes in association with new development, improvements to existing routes and countryside access agreements. The approach will follow a 'link and place' approach, recognising the dual functions of streets and routes as both part of the transport network and as places in their own right and how these roles may vary along a route. Hampshire County Council in its role as highways authority also has a role implementing these footpath and cycleway improvements. In securing these routes, the Council will ensure that they do not have adverse impacts on nature conservation interests, including those on the coast, and wherever possible will ensure that they help to manage recreational pressures on such areas whilst the routes themselves may act as corridors for biodiversity. The Council also wishes to protect this network of routes from development that would harm or disrupt it.

4.73 Details of the costs and timing of these proposals will be included in updates to the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The precise line of a route can be altered as an integral part of the design of development provided its function is still served.

Key diagram

4.74 The Key Diagram illustrates the Council's strategy for the location of new development in the Borough, related transport improvements and the protection of the countryside and coast (Figure 3). The Local Plan is also accompanied by a Policies map with an Ordnance Survey map base.

Figure 3: Key Diagram

