

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

MINI-HOLLAND

EXPRESSION OF
INTEREST

JULY 2021





INTRODUCTION

In February 2020 the Government announced £2bn of funding for active travel to support its aim to double cycling and increase walking by 2025. This was followed by the publication of Gear Change: A bold vision for walking and cycling and Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) in July 2020. The two documents set out the standards and ambition expected from Local Authorities to help deliver new and improved active travel infrastructure that benefits individuals, communities and wider society.

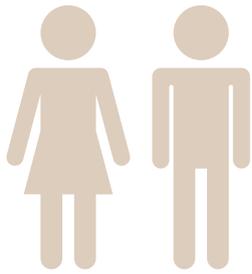
As part of the third phase of the Active Travel Fund, Suffolk County Council has been invited to submit an expression of interest for 'intensive investment' in a Mini-Holland scheme. These schemes intend to transform our streetscapes over time to make them as cycle and pedestrian-friendly as their Dutch equivalents by the installation of high quality segregated cycle lanes on main roads, low traffic neighbourhoods and high streets and greater roadspace allocation for pedestrians. Evidence has shown that Mini-Holland schemes can increase walking and cycling levels considerably while having minimal impact

on the surrounding roads over the longer-term. If we can implement schemes of this nature, we can put walking and cycling at the core of local communities.

In establishing potential locations for a Mini-Holland scheme, the County Council has drawn on Transport for London's Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme Guidance and the Healthy Streets Approach as well as best-practice from successful schemes such as, that in Waltham Forest. The methodology analyses a range of demographics and travel behaviours including current levels of cycling that indicates where the most benefit can be achieved. The evidence has been assessed against other factors such as local political support to determine deliverability as well as planned changes to the highway network and forecast changes in demand to provide a holistic approach to our assessment.

Having assessed various locations across the county, we strongly believe that the market town of Woodbridge, linking with the built-up areas of Melton, is best-placed to capitalise on the huge benefits of a Mini-Holland scheme.

WOODBIDGE



POPULATION APPROXIMATELY

7,749
RESIDENTS



56%

**OF INTERNAL
COMMUTER TRIPS
IN WOODBRIDGE**

are undertaken by
motorised transport



21.4%

**OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN THE
AREA ARE EITHER
OVERWEIGHT OR
OBESE**

Source: The Woodbridge, Melton
& Deben Peninsula Community
Partnership profile



44%

**ADULTS
DO NOT EXERCISE**

contributing to a
prevalence of

OBESEITY OF 9.9%
in the Clinical
Commissioning
Group area



JUST

2%

**OF PEOPLE IN
WOODBIDGE
CYCLE TO WORK**

IN THE DEBEN PENINSULA



8.3%

**OF WORKING
AGE PEOPLE**

are affected by
employment deprivation

8.5%

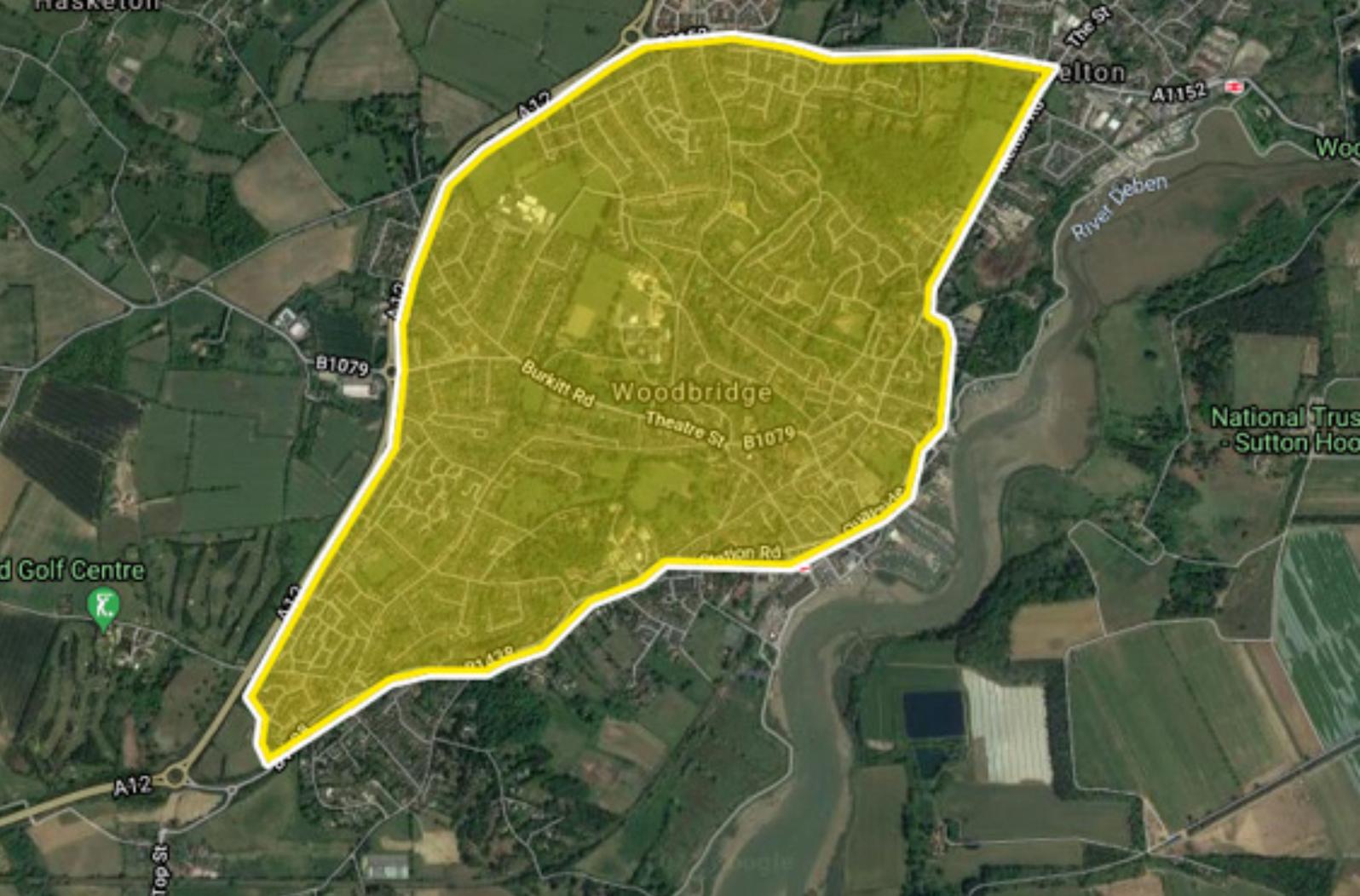
OF CHILDREN

are affected by
income
deprivation

7.8%

**OLDER AGE
GROUPS**

are affected by
income deprivation



GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Woodbridge is a medium-sized market town in East Suffolk situated approximately 9 miles from the county town of Ipswich. It is bordered by the partially dualled A12 to the west and the River Deben to the east. The area proposed includes the built-up area of Woodbridge and Melton.

While the town is surrounded by a largely rural landscape, there are good sustainable transport links nearby. The two rail stations provide 32 services to Ipswich per day with a journey time of 24 minutes. Alternatively, the Park & Ride site at Martlesham is within a 20-minute cycle ride from the centre of Woodbridge and provides regular direct services to the centre of Ipswich. The active travel provision linking Woodbridge to the Martlesham Park & Ride site and the existing network in Ipswich is planned to be improved as part of the A12 Major Road Network Proposals.

Woodbridge has good provision of local services including Farlingaye High School and Woodbridge School with a combined count of over 3,500 pupils. The town is served by five primary schools which generate a significant number of pupil, parent and staff movements during the peak periods. There are a range of other everyday services in the Woodbridge area including two GP surgeries, retail and leisure services and employment most notably at the nearby BT Adastral Park where there are approximately 3,000 employees.

The local amenities in Woodbridge reduces the need to travel long distances to access everyday services meaning that more trips can be undertaken on foot or by bike. However, the walking and cycling infrastructure currently available does not support people to make positive travel choices.

DEVELOPMENTS

There are three sites allocated within the East Suffolk Local Plan and the Melton Neighbourhood Plan that have the potential to have a significant impact on demand on the transport network and travel patterns.

LAND OFF WILFORD BRIDGE ROAD:

The development consists of 9.7 hectares of land allocated for mixed use development of employment and residential units. This includes the provision of 9,000m² of floorspace and up to 55 dwellings of mixed size.

LAND AT FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES:

The development encompasses 1.33 hectares and is allocated for the development of approximately 100 dwellings.

LAND AT WOODBRIDGE TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB:

The development encompasses 4.16 hectares of land and is expected to provide 120 dwellings.

These sites all have the potential to cause severe impacts to the highway network and it is essential that they can be made sustainable through mitigation measures including walking and cycling improvements.

Further afield, there is a significant opportunity to link the to the new development at Brightwell Lakes (SCLP12.19) to help support the sustainability of the site of up to 2,000 new homes.

EXISTING WALKING & CYCLING NETWORK

The town has a mixed quality network of walking routes with Public Rights of Way providing direct links between different parts of the town. Routes can be improved by reducing through-traffic on residential streets and in town centre locations as well prioritising pedestrian movements at crossing points and across side roads. The County Council is progressing a Traffic Regulation Order to introduce a 20mph zone covering many of the routes across the town which will help to improve safety for pedestrians.

Although National Cycle Route 1 passes through the town from the west, there is limited infrastructure dedicated to cycling. Opportunities have been identified to reallocate roadspace and improve infrastructure through Suffolk's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), including routes that indicate considerable latent demand for commuter cycling.



TRAVEL BEHAVIOURS

Isochrone data indicates that the vast majority of destinations within the Woodbridge area are within a 15-minute walk or cycle from trip origins within the same area. However, Census 2011 data shows that 56% of internal commutes are undertaken by motor vehicles and in Woodbridge itself only 2% of commuters cycle to work.

The Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) provides scenarios for potential levels of cycling if appropriate infrastructure and adequate behavioural changes can be achieved. The 'Go Dutch' scenario has been used to predict the impact of a Mini-Holland scheme in the Woodbridge area. PCT suggests that if a Mini-Holland scheme were to be delivered in the Woodbridge area, the proportion of commuters who cycle to work could rise from as low as 2% to between 12% and 16%.

Currently the percentage of children traveling to school by bike is as low as 3% but PCT predicts levels could rise to over 50% with the delivery of a Mini-Holland scheme.



WHAT IS ALREADY HAPPENING IN WOODBRIDGE?

There are a number of initiatives that already take place or are in development that demonstrate the towns desire to see a dramatic change in the way people move around the town. A selection of these are as follows:

- Car free days are arranged by the town council
- Town wide 20mph zone to be implemented
- Changes to Thoroughfare - Extension to motorised restrictions.





WHAT WOULD A MINI-HOLLAND LOOK LIKE IN WOODBRIDGE?

A combination of physical and soft measures would facilitate a dramatic change in travel behaviours in the town. There is clearly a desire at a local level to see significant change and so it will be important that any physical infrastructure is underpinned by a detailed and sustained programme of behaviour change support to empower the local community.

Based on our experiences of delivery below is an outline of the measures we are considering and developing for this project:

SOFT MEASURES:

- Marketing campaigns to encourage people to walk and cycle more
- Free cycle training for all
- Engagement with schools and creation of school streets
- Updated town cycle maps and include walking routes
- Frequent Dr Bike sessions and training for people to maintain their own bikes
- Incentives for businesses to support staff to active travel
- Car clubs
- Cycle, ebike and ecargo bike hire schemes.

PHYSICAL MEASURES:

- Creation of low traffic neighbourhoods through a range of trials leading to permanent changes based on the outcomes
- Delivery of high priority segregated walking and cycling routes to neighbouring communities such as Martlesham, Melton and Grundisburgh
- Redesign of key junctions to place pedestrians and cyclists as the highest priority road user
- Further pedestrianisation of the main retail area in the town centre
- Reallocation of roadspace to widen footways for pedestrians particularly on main direct routes into the town centre
- Improved and secure cycle parking at all key destinations in the town as well as working with estates within the town to create similar in residential areas

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- Conversion of short journeys by motorised use to walking and cycling in line with the evidence base set out
- Improved Road Safety - between 2015-2019 there were 15 slight accidents involving cyclists and 14 involving pedestrians - in the same time period there was one serious accident involving a pedestrian and two fatalities involving pedestrians
- Improved air quality - reductions in private car use that contributes to poor air quality
- Reduced congestion - people have better certainty over journey times
- Improvements to health and wellbeing - people becoming healthier and fitter as a result of more active travel, reducing the impact on the NHS
- Economic - a more vibrant and improved town centre





WHY OFFER SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL THE OPPORTUNITY?

Our track record of delivering Active Travel has been excellent. We were successful in both our Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) bid and our Active Travel Fund 2 (Tranche 2) bids. On both occasions we received in excess of our allocation, EATF increased by 11% and Tranche 2 increased was 25%. This put us as the highest-ranking authority in England in terms of percentage increase. The feedback we got from Department of Transport was that this was based on our strong and ambitious bids.

Through both these funding sources we have delivered a wide range of walking and cycling improvements from pop-up cycle lanes, new segregated cycle lanes, improved walking routes and several motorised traffic restrictions (modal filters) to improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Many of these were initially installed on experimental traffic orders and we are now moving towards making these changes permanent. We have continued to keep within budget and have set up excellent local governance so that we can manage and deliver projects in a timely manner.

We have an excellent understanding of the mini-holland concept with officers having visited both Waltham Forest (2018) and Kingston (2019) to understand the challenges and what has been achieved.

Further information on our Active Travel Fund schemes, including our Transport Recovery Plans, can be found here: www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-on-travel/active-travel-improvements-for-cycling-and-walking/

LOCAL COMMITMENT

We recognise the importance in having local support for the proposal. To that end, accompanied to this expression of interest is a letter of support from the Leader of Suffolk County Council, Matthew Hicks.

We have support from the local County Councillor, the District Council and Woodbridge Town Council.

NEXT STEPS - CONSULTATION

The County Council recognises the need to include local residents, businesses and other stakeholders throughout the development of the scheme and the design process. The concept of 'co-design' is critical to our ability to develop a scheme that achieves the key benefits we are striving for and addresses issues at a local level.

We intend to build stakeholder engagement groups to ensure everyone has the opportunity

to engage with the process and help to shape their community.

We expect to be in a position to engage stakeholders to assess options upon acceptance of the Business Case. We intend to engage stakeholders through different means for a full year through initial option assessment through to detailed design.

We then expect to be in a position to deliver a scheme of intensive investment that provides broad strategic benefits and satisfies the needs of the local community.

An indicative programme is available below.

STAGE	2021				2022												2023				2024																
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb							
Preparation of Business Case	Active																																				
Consultation							Active																														
Detailed Design													Active																								
Delivery																				Active																	

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It will be imperative that to underpin the evidence base we already have submitted we identify at an early stage and gaps in that the data we collect and put in place measures to allow us to obtain

it in order that we can fully assess and record the success of the scheme as it develops and is implemented. A key activity will be to work with stakeholders and the Department for Transport on what this would be, and it would be expected that this piece of the project needs to run continuously alongside other consultation and engagement activities outlined in the overall programme.