

Active Travel Capability Ratings 2025 - Local Authority Self-Assessment Survey

Introduction

Please provide your contact details:

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Role: Strategic Transport Planner

Section 1 - Organisational Context

1) What is the name of your authority?

Southampton

2) What is the total budget (£) your authority holds for transport this financial year?

19700000

3) What is the total budget (£) your authority holds for Active Travel this financial year?

3600000

4) What is the total Full Time Equivalent staffing working on transport at your authority?

41

5) What is the total Full Time Equivalent staffing working on Active Travel at your authority?

11

Section 2 - Leadership and organisational capability

1a) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in leadership support (including leader and transport portfolio lead) for active travel policies:

Level 3 - Has members who are strong proponents of ambitious, LTN1/20-compliant active travel schemes, making it a top transport priority

1b) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in adoption of appropriate design quality standards and assurance systems:

See here for descriptions of levels of complexity.

Level 3 - Has documented design quality approaches and a track record of completing high complexity LTN1/20 / MfS compliant active travel schemes. Uses ATE design assurance toolsets or equivalent locally for key schemes, eg as part of a Design Review Panel.

1c) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in breadth of policies and approaches (as outlined in the introduction to Section 2 above):

Level 3 - Has policies and approaches in place to support and deliver an increase in active travel, covering between 8 and 12 of the policies and approaches listed

1d) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in assessing the value for money of capital schemes:

Level 3 - Facilitates production of VFM analysis for active travel capital schemes in which both costs and benefits are expressed in monetary terms. Uses appraisal tools such as AMAT, the DfT uplift tool, or other similar tools and approaches, augmented by locally specific evidence.

1e) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in assessing the monitoring and evaluation of capital schemes:

Level 2 - Facilitates production and delivery of M&E Plans for all active travel capital schemes >£2m. Aligned with good practice from the ATE M&E guidance or similar guidance (e.g. Magenta Book)

1f) Please choose the level that best represents your authorities commitment to relevant officers and elected members participating in active travel training delivered by/on behalf of Active Travel England or equivalent training:

Level 2 - Officers working in relevant active travel roles or elected members with portfolios or membership of relevant transport and planning committees are encouraged to attend active travel training delivered by Active Travel England or other training provider, and participation is recorded.

1g) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in use and dissemination of active travel guidance during the development management process:

Relevant toolkit and guidance are listed below. Please refer to these when assessing the statements for each authority level below.

Local highway adoption standards which incorporate the principles set out in Manual for Streets Local Travel Plan guidance Local Transport Assessment guidance and advice or signposting Local cycle parking standards/supplementary planning guidance ATE's planning application assessment toolkit LTN 1/20 (or relevant local guidance that is equivalent to, or stronger than) Inclusive Mobility Manual for Streets 1 and 2

Level 3 - Uses between 6 and 8 of the guidance listed above when assessing planning applications and reaching decisions on post planning highway matters. Proactively develops and uses other local guidance to support and deliver an increase in active travel through the planning process. Guidance is used by a majority of developers when submitting planning applications for significant developments.

2) Based on your responses to Q1a to Q1g, please select an overall level for leadership and organisational capability that best represents your authority.

Level 3

3) Please describe the evidence you have to support your assessment in Q2. Maximum 750 words.

A fifth of our 2025/26 £19.7M transport & highways budget is allocated to active travel - 20.2% (or £3.6M).

The Southampton Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out seven Big Ideas to transform how people and goods move around the city, including creating a Liveable City Centre and delivery of the Southampton Cycle Network. To work towards achieving these ambitions, the City Council has co-designed area-wide traffic management schemes known as Active Travel Zones in areas including, St Denys, Woolston, St Mark's and the Polygon. A new area-wide traffic management scheme is currently being developed with the local community around Southampton Outdoor Sports Centre (a Levelling Up Fund scheme).

The City Council utilises a wider range of powers set out in transport legislation to make active travel in Southampton an attractive and safe choice. In 2023, SCC was granted powers to enforce Moving Traffic Offences, including School Streets, bus lanes and gates, and yellow box junctions. Since then, we have delivered several transport schemes, including East Park Terrace bus, cycle and taxi only street, Portland Terrace bus gate and Violet Road bus gates to prioritise public transport movements and create attractive spaces for walking, wheeling and cycling.

To support further roll out of School Streets, new guidance has been prepared on our approach to issuing permits and permitting access during School Street operational times. Consultation and engagement on amend existing School Streets guidance will take place in the Autumn.

Two administrations have supported plans for the roll out of 20mph speed limits on residential roads across the city since 2022. 20mph speed limits now cover 274 miles of the city's streets maintained by Southampton and physical improvements continue to be rolled out as part of active travel schemes, including area-wide traffic management schemes and safer routes to schools.

ATE and Healthy Streets tools are routinely used during the development process to assess current active travel facilities and the potential impact of changes. These assessments are presented to the Integrated Transport Programme Board as part of 'Gateway' reports seeking internal approval to develop and deliver transport schemes. As part of this process schemes are taken through an internal Design Review Panel attended by a range of transport officers from policy, delivery and highways as well as representatives from Balfour Beatty – SCC's Strategic Highway Partner. Recent examples of assessments taken through this process include the completion of an AMAT for Bitterne Road East walking and cycling scheme completed in Spring 2025 and a Healthy Streets Assessment for schools making up the Safer Routes to Schools pipeline, including St Monica's School, which will be delivered in 2025/26.

SCC is currently consulting on the draft Southampton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-25, which supports delivery of active travel, particularly to school, and including Active Travel Zones and the Southampton Cycle Network. The Health and Wellbeing team are also developing a supporting strategy to tackle childhood obesity. The emerging strategy identifies focus areas, including active travel and the need to increase levels of active travel to school, support accessibility to healthy food, improve road safety and promote the benefits of active travel. Active travel is also recognised in a wider range of Council plans and strategies, including the new Corporate Plan and City Plan published in July 2025.

An NO2 Plan setting out how the Council will tackle emissions from transport will be taken to our Cabinet Member for approval in September 2025. This plan includes development and delivery of active travel projects, including the Southampton Cycle Network, to encourage a shift away from private car travel.

The Transport Policy team support officers in Planning by assessing the impact of proposed developments on the highway by using a range of guidance and toolkits, including local Transport Assessment guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents, including cycle parking and highway adoption standards, Manual for Streets and ATE planning assessment toolkits. As part of the planning process, developer contributions towards active travel schemes are routinely collected.

Officers in the Integrated Transport Service area are encouraged to participate in a wide range of training events provided by organisations such as ATE, Transport for the South East, Modeshift and Sustrans, and are recorded in a staff training log. Where appropriate details of events are also shared with other colleagues in teams including Planning and Health and Wellbeing.

4) Please provide a maximum of 6 links to any published evidence referred to in Q3.

Southampton City Plan and Corporate Plan: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/council-plans/2035-city-plan/>

Connected Southampton Transport Strategy 2040: <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/connected-southampton-2040/>

Southampton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2035: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/have-your-say/consultation-on-a-draft-southampton-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2026-2035/>

Southampton Supplementary Planning Documents: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning/>

Southampton Climate Change Strategy: https://www.southampton.gov.uk/media/iuakjxmy/351-1-green-city-plan_climate-change-strategy.pdf

5) Please upload any unpublished evidence here referred to in Q3, up to a maximum of 6 files.

- File: ATE Training Log.xlsx
- File: ITPB Gateway document - Bitterne Road East G4a.docx
- File: BRE AMAT.xlsx
- File: Southampton School Streets Guidance.pdf

Section 3 - Network Planning

1a) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in development and publication of LCWIPs:

Level 3 - Has finalised LCWIP(s) for all population centres above 20,000 and most (greater than 67%) are published

1b) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in stakeholder engagement on LCWIPs and individual schemes:

For reference: Equality Act 2010

Level 2 - Has completed engagement with stakeholder groups representing people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act

1c) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in pipeline development and funding:

Level 2 - Has a mature draft or agreed long term (greater than 5 year) pipeline of active travel schemes ready for funding

1d) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in requiring developers to fund, deliver schemes and contribute to LCWIP development in compliance with legal and policy tests:

Level 3 - Has developed a pipeline of active travel schemes linked to the 10-year plan which supports requests for developer contributions. Ensures that alignments for planned active travel routes are protected. Uses in the majority of cases (50%-80% of relevant planning applications) the 10-year pipeline to request developer contributions. Has delivered these schemes funded in whole or part by developer contributions.

2) Based on your responses to Q1a to Q1d, please select an overall level for network planning that best represents your authority.

Level 2

3) Please describe the evidence you have to support your assessment in Q2. Maximum 500 words.

The 10-year Cycling Strategy (our LCWIP) covers the whole city area and the aspiration to deliver the Southampton Cycling Network is aligned to LCWIP areas in neighbouring Hampshire. SCC has also inputted into TfSE's Active Travel Strategy and Solent Transport's Transport Prospectus to ensure that Southampton's aspirations for active travel are reflected at a sub-national and sub-regional level.

The LTP Implementation Plan 2025-28 is currently in draft form and will be approved in October 2025. The Plan sets out the short-term delivery plan for transport based on known budgets, and priorities if further funding was to become available. This includes delivery of active travel schemes and schemes that integrate active travel improvements, including delivery of the city centre walking and public realm improvements, active travel improvements to access Southampton Outdoor Sports Centre, further improvements to the Southampton Cycle Network, Safer Routes to Schools, Bikeability, etc.

The Council's long-term active travel delivery plan is based on the short-term Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2025-28, and the longer term improvements set out in the Cycling Strategy 2017-2027 and the supporting delivery plan and the Local Walking Infrastructure Plan evidence base, which will be reported to Cabinet in October 2025 as part of the LTP Implementation Plan 2025-28. These plans take into account the proposed location of key development areas in and outside the city and have been through a formal Council process. Measures included in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will also be integrated into this delivery plan.

SCC regularly secures developer contributions as part of the planning process which are used to implement measures set out in the active travel delivery plan.

Transport officers routinely engage with people impacted by transport proposals, through a wide range of channels, including social media, community networks (including residents' groups and Citizen's Climate Assembly), schools, business and workplaces, etc to develop and deliver proposals. A recent example is extensive engagement undertaken on the Portswood Broadway bus gate trial, which involved specific engagement with a resident's association, local businesses, the emergency services, and a local religious group as well as engagement with other people living and working in the area.

As part of the safer routes to school's programme and School Streets, officer also engage with school communities and other organisations impacted by School Street closures, including Royal Mail. This is set out in School Streets Guidance on Permits and Access Arrangements and Southampton is a case study in DfT's School Streets guidance for making a temporary scheme permanent.

As part of scheme development, officers complete an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment on schemes, which builds on the statutory duty set out in the Equality Act by undertaking a more in-depth assessment, including the impact that transport schemes have on care leavers, people living in poverty, and community safety.

4) Please provide a maximum of 5 links to any published evidence referred to in Q3.

Cycling Strategy 2017-27: <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/connected-southampton-2040/southampton-cycle-network/>
LTP and Implementation Plan - [https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/connected-southampton-2040/Portswood project page: https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/eastleigh-to-southampton-corridor/portswood-project/](https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/connected-southampton-2040/Portswood%20project%20page%3Ahttps%3A%2F%2Ftransport.southampton.gov.uk%2Ftcf%2Feastleigh-to-southampton-corridor%2Fportswood-project/)
School Streets <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/atf/school-streets-managing-the-school-run/> and guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-streets-how-to-set-up-and-manage-a-scheme/moving-from-trials-to-a-permanent-school-street-southampton-city-council>

5) Please upload any unpublished evidence here referred to in Q3, up to a maximum of 5 files.

- File: Appendix 1 - Connected Southampton Imp Plan 2025-28 - draft for EMB.docx
- File: Appendix 2 - Southampton Walking Plan.pdf
- File: Southampton LWIP Prioritisation - 7 (1).xlsx
- File: Southampton School Streets Guidance.pdf
- File: TCF Portswood Broadway ESIA (1).docx

Section 4 - Delivery

1a) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in capital scheme delivery (complexity):

See here for descriptions of levels of complexity.

Level 3 - Has delivered a mix of low, medium and high LTN1/20-compliant schemes

1b) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in network integration:

Level 3 - Is delivering an integrated network, and all new schemes delivered are part of that network

1c) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in capital schemes delivery:

Level 3 - Has delivered most capital schemes (greater than 66%, up to 90%) on time

1d) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in revenue activity delivery:

Level 3 - Has delivered almost all revenue activities (greater than 90%) on time

1e) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in Bikeability delivery:

Level 3 – Has a well established Bikeability programme, with 75-80% of Year 6 pupils level 2 trained and decreasing, or 65-75% of Year 6 pupils level 2 trained and increasing.

2) Based on your responses to Q1a to Q1e, please select an overall level for delivery that best represents your authority.

Level 3

3) Please describe the evidence you have to support your assessment in Q2. Maximum 750 words.

We have scored ourselves a Level 3.

Southampton has delivered majority of our active travel schemes funded by ATF, LTP, S106 and TCF within agreed funding envelopes in recent years.

Schemes have been delivered on-time within the parameters set and reported but spend can be affected by a 'lag' in the invoicing from our HSP delivery partner BBLP which impacts actual spend.

This score is based on continued delivery of the Southampton Cycle Network (SCN) with a mixture of low, medium and high complexity LTN1/20 compliant schemes, examples include:

- Bitterne Road East walking and cycling scheme with a segregated route and new crossings that continues a radial route from local retail centre in Bitterne to connect with schools, colleges and residential areas;
- Working in partnership with Hampshire County Council to continue the SCN out of Southampton through TCF programme, including SCN5 Hut Hill towards Chandlers Ford, SCN6 through Eastleigh, and SCN3 Providence Hill towards Bursledon;
- Improving the public realm in the City Centre that benefit everyone
 - o Removing through traffic on East Park Terrace to create a bus link and safer walking and cycling environment for people travelling to Solent University and Central Parks. This is also being enforced by our new Moving Traffic Enforcement powers,
 - o Changing two car parks in the heart of City Centre into a major bus hub and new public park, the first new urban garden in 60+ yrs, with safer walking routes and enhancing the historic City Walls,
 - o Making the Inner Ring Road safer and easier to cross for walking and cycling including closing a junction and creating a new pocket park
- A series of schemes to improve the journey to school with Safer Routes to School at 8 schools and 19 permanent School Streets – including using MTE powers at 2 schools to enforce the School Street, and developing a future pipeline of schemes;
- School Travel Plan Programme delivering revenue activities in school travel planning and training. Southampton is the best 'small authority' for schools with accredited travel plans, developed a pipeline of SRTS schemes, delivered community training, Bike Doctors, and the My Journey campaign, including publishing an updated cycle map;
- Working with largest employers in Solent on workplace travel planning including coordinating a Travel Plan network and introducing Modeshift accreditation for Business Travel Plans;
- Collaboration with air quality officer to co-delivery of activities in schools to raise awareness of clean air and developing a clean air route mapping tool enabling people to plan their walking and cycling journeys via the least polluted routes;
- Increasing Bikeability participation since SCC took on the delivery of Bikeability in 2023. Over 4,000 pupils have received Bikeability L2 training across the city. In 2024/25, 68% of pupils in Year 6 received L2 training. We are aiming to increase the proportion on Y6 pupils participating in Bikeability in 2025/26 by working more closely with the Health and Wellbeing team to reduce childhood obesity, and through the Physical Activity Alliance - a partnership led by the Health and Wellbeing team with the aim of delivering on the We Can Be Active Strategy; and
- Monitoring of travel trends across the city, and the impact of schemes delivered, through our extensive network of permanent cycle counters, pedestrian footfall sensors and Vivacity sensors.

4) Please provide a maximum of 6 links to any published evidence referred to in Q3.

We Can Be Active Strategy: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/media/bjoekssso/we-can-be-active-strategy-190422.pdf>

Albion Place Project Page: <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/city-centre-transformation/albion-place-bus-hub-1/>

Inner Ring Road Project Page: <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/city-centre-transformation/ring-road-improvements/>

East Park Terrace Project Page: <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/city-centre-transformation/east-park-terrace-sustainable-corridor/>

Project Pages for Bitterne Road East and Safer Routes to Schools :

<https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/city-centre-transformation/east-park-terrace-sustainable-corridor/>

Air Quality mapping tool: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/our-green-city/council-commitments/clean-air/clean-air-routing-tool/>

5) Please upload any unpublished evidence here referred to in Q3, up to a maximum of 6 files.

- File: ITPB Gateway document - Bitterne Road East G4a.docx

Section 5 - Overall Capability Rating

1) As part of Sections 2 to 4 you have provided the following ratings:

Leadership and organisational capability - Level 3

Network Planning - Level 2

Delivery - Level 3

Please find your current Capability Rating as published September 2024 here.

Based on your responses to Sections 2 to 4 and the criteria below, please provide your own assessment of your current capability. We will validate this as part of the process to derive updated Capability Ratings.

Level 3 - Very strong local leadership and organisational capability, comprehensive plans, and a significant network in place with a growing number of people choosing to walk, wheel and cycle

2) If your selected level is different from your current Capability Rating as published in September 2024, please summarise the key evidence supporting the change in level. Maximum of 500 words.

Since the September 2024 Capability Ratings, Southampton has made progress in developing our capability and capacity for Active Travel.

There has always been a strong desire and leadership to continue to deliver our defined Southampton Cycle Network (SCN) and walking routes so the city is accessible for all and more people are choosing to walk, cycle and wheel.

- Strong leadership – have support from senior Cabinet Members who have been supportive of the implementation of schemes and activities for active travel in Southampton
- Capability – officers are keen and keep up to date with the latest guidance and approaches for delivering active travel schemes and activities that seek to put Southampton towards the fore and are taking part in training;
- Increasing in active travel – the level of cycling on our key corridors continues to be sustained with numbers on SCN1 from City Centre to New Forest National Park 25% higher in 2024 compared to 2018 before the investment in high quality facilities;
- Our Cycle Strategy and LTP set out a comprehensive ambition for walking, cycling and wheeling and is monitored to making sure that the network is delivering through the bi-annual Walking & Cycling Index with Sustrans;

Over recent years, using funding from ATF, LTP, TCF and S106 Developer Contributions, we have delivered a mix of low, medium and high complexity LTN1/20 compliant schemes that have delivered transformative improvements. Examples have been provided by our highest profiles schemes are:

- Creating a Liveable City Centre by changing how streets and spaces look and feel by providing more space for people walking, wheeling and cycling and those travelling by bus – schemes at East Park Terrace, Albion Place and on the Ring Road provide evidence of this;
- Continued delivery of the Southampton Cycle Network with Bitterne Road East, Portswood Road, The Avenue and area wide works in Woolston and Itchen delivered;
- Working with Hampshire County Council through the TCF programme on cross-boundary SCN routes to ensure connectivity to surrounding towns and villages;
- Multi-modal schemes and projects where active travel forms part of a bigger scheme such as Southampton Central Station and bus improvement projects – this includes cycle routes, cycle parking, seating, wayfinding etc;
- Ensuring that ATE assessments, post-scheme evaluation, and other tools, such as Healthy Streets audits, are integrated in the decision making process through the Gateways;
- Continued involvement in Sustrans Walking & Cycling Index programme;
- Developing a pipeline of Safer Routes to Schools projects of crossings, cycle and walking connections, and cycle & scooter parking which are being implemented;
- Comprehensive wayfinding strategy rolled out to provide the connections between the SCN;
- Southampton remains the best performing 'small' authority for ModeShift STARS accreditation, a growing number of schools with increasing active travel mode share;
- Expanding the School Streets programme and becoming an exemplar for turning temporary;
- Cross-working with other teams such as air quality and planning to ensure that active travel is incorporated;
- Delivery of Bikeability in schools with high numbers of Level 2 courses in schools.

Section 6 - Feedback

Thank you for completing this survey. We would appreciate your time to provide feedback below.

1 - very easy 2 3 - medium 4 5 - very difficult

How easy was it to complete this survey? X

Are there any improvements you would recommend for future self-assessment surveys?

The ability to navigate between sections rather than clicking individual pages would be beneficial.

Finalise your response

Please confirm that your response has been agreed by the Senior Responsible Officer for walking and cycling.

Yes