



Our strategy for walking, wheeling and cycling in South Yorkshire

Safer neighbourhoods
and routes to opportunities

SOUTH YORKSHIRE
SYMCA



MAYORAL
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

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Mayor Oliver Coppard's foreword

In South Yorkshire, we believe that everyone should have the freedom to move in ways that work for them—whether that's walking to the bus stop, using their mobility scooter to get to the local shop, or riding their bike to school.

This strategy is about giving people real choice in how they get around. Because the truth is, most journeys don't start on a bus or end on a train—they start on our streets, in our neighbourhoods, and with our feet. That's why we're building a transport system that works for everyone. That means making it easier, safer and more welcoming to walk, wheel and cycle — and making it a seamless connection to the bus, tram or train. It's about making sure that the first and last mile of every journey is one people feel confident and comfortable making. And it's about making sure that public transport and active travel aren't just connected—they're integrated.

But this strategy is about so much more than transport. I've committed to South Yorkshire becoming the healthiest region in the country because poor health doesn't just affect individuals and families; it holds back our whole region. Helping people be a bit more active every day will play a huge role in achieving that ambition. So, we want to build a region where walking, wheeling and cycling aren't just good for you—they're the easiest, most natural choice.

That's especially true for our children. I've promised to make South Yorkshire the best place in the country for kids to walk, wheel and cycle. Because every child deserves to feel safe and confident getting to school, playing out, or heading to the park. And every parent deserves to know their child can do that safely.

We're also putting our communities front and centre. Too many people in South Yorkshire have been left out and left behind for too long. That's not good enough. So, we're changing how we work. We're designing our new projects with people, not for them. We're listening to those who are the most often left out and left behind — people with disabilities, women and girls, people from ethnically diverse communities, and those living on low incomes. And we're making decisions that reflect their needs, their voices, and their lived experiences.

This strategy is built on evidence, shaped by insight, and driven by ambition. It's about creating safer streets, stronger communities, and a healthier, happier South Yorkshire. It's about making sure that no matter who you are, or where you live, you have the opportunity to move freely, safely and with dignity.

Let's build a region where everyone has the choice to walk, wheel and cycle—and where no one is left behind.





Active Lives Commissioner Ed Clancy's foreword

I started my role in early 2023. Since then, I've met with hundreds of different community groups, businesses, employers, members of the public and elected politicians to find out what they want, and need, to help more people walk, wheel and get on their bikes. And most importantly, I've spent a lot of time with our incredible local authority partners who work tirelessly day in, day out, to make our region a better place to walk, wheel and cycle.

It quickly became apparent that we couldn't 'cut and paste' a strategy from somewhere else. We're different from other places. We're a collection of strong communities. Communities where families have, for generations, worked hard to fuel this country's industrial revolution, especially in coal and steel. And although those communities were hit hard when many of those industries closed, they're rightly proud of where they live – I've met so many people who work and volunteer to make their neighbourhoods better places to live right now.

So many people told me how, when they were kids, they walked to school, played out in their street, or went out on their bikes for the day with their mates, just like I did. They want the same for their children and their grandchildren. And that shouldn't be too much to ask. That's why a major priority for strategy is creating safer neighbourhoods – where parents are happy to let their children walk to school, practise on their scooter outside their front door, ride their bike to the park. We know this is not just what children and parents want, but it is also a great way to help people get a little bit more active every day.

Our focus will be on the neighbourhoods that have the most challenges, where people have the least choice to get active now, and the biggest financial stress. But to really create long-term change in those places, the leaders have been clear with me that we need to connect those neighbourhoods to better opportunities.

So our second big priority is working alongside bus, tram and train projects to create routes to opportunities. As a region, we will soon have control over our bus network, we already run the tram and we will have much more say in rail. Every one of those journeys will start and end with a walk, wheel or a bike ride. I want everyone to feel safe, welcome, and able to access bus and tram stops, and train stations—so they can get where they need to go, regardless of age, ability, or circumstance. And we want to support more people to feel happy and able to cycle on safe and accessible routes to get to work, college and other places, if it works for them.

I'm so pleased that each of our local authorities: Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, have been working so hard on their own investment plans and pipelines for projects. It means we're in a great position to create places where everyone has the choice to walk, wheel and cycle and no one is left behind. I can't wait to get cracking.



Vision & mission

Vision - A wealthier, healthier, happier and safer South Yorkshire – where everyone has the opportunity to stay near and go far.

"I really look forward to walking the kids to school – it's safe, they can scoot or ride there and we all get a bit of fresh air. It's easy to then hop on the bus to work."

"I used to feel a bit trapped inside the house, worried there wouldn't be a dropped kerb or safe crossings. Now I'm confident I can wheel to the park for fresh air – and I'm always bumping into people I know!"

"I used to be so worried about tripping on the uneven surface, and not being able to spot traffic turning in – now the footways are clear and level, and I feel much safer from traffic with the new crossings. It's easy getting to the shops and I can have a rest whilst waiting at the bus stop."



Mission - Working with South Yorkshire's strong communities, we'll build safer neighbourhoods that people feel proud to call home. We'll make it easier to get to work and learning opportunities, especially by walking to buses, trams and trains. Our priority is giving choice to the people too often left out - because they deserve better, and they've got the most to gain.



"Navigating the pavements with a pram and scooter to nursery used to be really difficult. More space and safe crossings mean I can let my eldest go on ahead a bit and have fun!"

"Using my e-bike means I can reliably get to the start of my shifts and get home easily after work. I'm also getting a bit of exercise without getting sweaty up the hills."

We will achieve our vision through a twin-track approach, underpinned by a much stronger focus on community engagement:

Safer neighbourhoods

Children can walk or wheel to school, play out and learn to cycle and everyone feels safe, welcome and able to get out and about, especially those who need the most support

Routes to opportunities

People will be able to get easily to jobs and opportunities by safe ways to walk or wheel to bus, tram and train, or feel confident to cycle there

Engaging our communities

Everyone in South Yorkshire feels able to choose walking, wheeling or cycling for everyday journeys; and supports investment to develop neighbourhoods and routes to support their choice

What do we mean by walking, wheeling and cycling?

Throughout the strategy we refer to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Walking

Walking means getting about on foot, at a pedestrian's pace. It can also mean walking on foot with assistance, such as a walking stick or frame, the arm of a companion or a support animal. Another important group of people to keep in mind when planning for walking needs are people pushing a buggy or pram.



Wheeling

By wheeling we mean getting about on wheels, but still at more or less the pace of a pedestrian. We mean people who do not have a choice and rely on wheels to travel, and it is essential our approach is inclusive of this. This includes people using manual or powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Wheeling is sometimes used to describe children using manual scooters, balance bikes etc, to travel on the pavement, often accompanied by adults on foot, or people pushing a buggy or pram. While children are a key priority, our top priority when we talk about wheeling is people who have to use wheels to replace walking, and who can't safely bounce down off a kerb or squeeze past a parked car or stand up and walk.



Cycling

Cycling means getting about on wheels at a faster pace. This might be on a push-bike or an electrically assisted pedal cycle (e-bikes), a cycle with 2, 3 or 4 wheels, cycles propelled by arms or those built to carry more than one person.

E-scooters are an increasingly popular way to get about. They are not currently allowed either on public roads or pavements so depending on the outcome of the current government consultation and limited government trial, we will need to ensure their needs are thought about on either the road, pavement or cycle infrastructure.

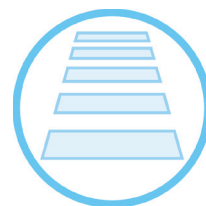


What do we mean by 'hardware' and 'software'?

Throughout the strategy we refer to **hardware** and **software**. We use this analogy as the two rely on each other to work properly and we need both to support people to walk, wheel and cycle more.

Hardware

Hardware refers to the physical things we need to build and install to give people the opportunity to walk, wheel and cycle more. This could be:



New or improved crossings, wider pavements



Places to stop and rest, especially to easily access public transport stops



Protected cycle tracks



Software

Software refers to measures we need to provide alongside the hardware for people to feel capable of walking, wheeling and cycling more, and to feel motivated to do so. This could be:



Local walking groups so people feel more confident, and enjoy walking where they live



School projects which help children and parents walk, scoot or cycle to school



E-bike loans, to give people the capability to cycle more comfortably around some of our regions more hilly areas




Inclusive cycling sessions providing a safe place for people to access non-standard cycles



Our strategy is full of case studies from across South Yorkshire which demonstrate the hardware and software measures we are already delivering.

Our priorities

1. Help grow our regional economy inclusively and sustainably by




Connecting our disadvantaged neighbourhoods to opportunities to work and learn

Helping people be more active to give them better health so they can return to work

Enabling people to have the choice to walk, wheel or cycle for short journeys, to reduce emissions and congestion


2. Make places better and safer for people by



Making our neighbourhoods more accessible, attractive and welcoming to move around in

Creating places, and the routes that connect them, that are safe, and feel safe, to walk, wheel or ride in

3. Help our residents be healthier by



Helping people be more active every day which improves both their mental and physical health

Reducing air pollution by reducing short journeys by car

Why it matters

We believe that making walking, wheeling and cycling more accessible to everyone can help solve many of the challenges posed to South Yorkshire.



"Physical activity has major proven benefits across the life course for mental and physical health conditions. It can significantly improve healthy life expectancy, and reduce the years too many live in ill health. One of the best ways to increase physical activity is to embed it into everyday life through walking, wheeling or cycling for everyday journeys, as this strategy lays out. Whilst increasing physical activity is good for all, the greatest health benefits come from those who are not active doing a bit, or those who do some doing a bit more. It is great to see that this strategy will focus on challenges for these groups."

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER PROFESSOR CHRIS WHITTY



Help grow our regional economy inclusively and sustainably

Having a secure job with a decent wage is key to helping people be healthy and happy. Our Plan for Good Growth highlights that both good transport links and better health are key to building a stronger more inclusive economy in South Yorkshire.¹

Challenges

Many people across South Yorkshire cannot easily access work and learning opportunities.²

Especially for those on low incomes – over 350,000 people in South Yorkshire have no access to a car.³

And 20% of people nationally looking for a job haven't applied for one because they can't get to it.⁴

Ill health is stopping many people from working.

Of the 230,000 people out of work in our region, for 70,000 people it is because of long-term ill health.⁵

Our economy needs to grow whilst we reduce carbon emissions.

We have committed to achieve net zero by 2040 and transport accounts for 26% of our emissions.⁶

Lots of car journeys are really short – 50% are less than 3km and 22% less than 1km.⁷

Empowering people to choose to walk, wheel or cycle

Helping more people walk or wheel to access buses, trams and trains will widen the number of places they can work and learn.

Helping people feel confident riding a bike to their job will give them more options, especially if they work shifts.

"I used Barnsley Big Bike Recycle to travel to and from work at Morrisons Cortonwood. I was spending over £500 on taxis to get to and from work so was looking for other, cheaper ways to get to and from work with not driving."

BARNSELY RESIDENT

Getting more active is one of the biggest things anyone can do to improve their health and get back to work – walking for just 20 minutes daily reduces your risk of heart disease later in life.

"I used to rely on the car for every trip. Now I walk or cycle most days – it's easier, cheaper and feels so much better for my health."

SHEFFIELD RESIDENT

Helping people walk, wheel or cycle, or use public transport for some of their short journeys could reduce congestion and emissions, making the whole transport system more efficient.



Help create safer, better places

We know that the biggest reason that people don't walk, wheel and cycle more is that they don't feel safe on our streets and near our roads. A single person killed or seriously injured on our roads is one more than we can accept. We need to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured walking, wheeling and cycling on our roads, and ensure our streets feel safe for everyone.

Better places, which feel safer and more welcoming, encourage people to get out and about, to see friends and neighbours, to go to a shop or cafe. And being able to access the amazing number of green spaces we are lucky enough to have makes people feel calmer and happier, improving both mental and physical wellbeing.

Challenges

Every year over 250 people walking, wheeling or cycling in South Yorkshire are killed or seriously injured by a vehicle.⁸

Many people don't feel safe walking, wheeling or cycling.

Of the 39 people killed on our roads in 2024, 17 of them were pedestrians. And if you live in a low-income area you are twice as likely to be injured on our roads.⁹

Research shows women frequently avoid travelling alone after dark and are more likely to use private transport for safety reasons.¹⁰

Our neighbourhoods often don't feel welcoming to spend time in.

It's harder to make social connections with your neighbours when there's lots of traffic – doubling the number of cars halves how many neighbours you know.¹¹

Many people don't have access to green space.

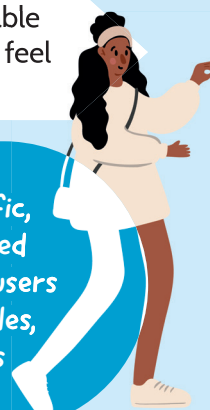
People who live in more deprived areas, and people from ethnically diverse communities, are less likely to have access to green space.¹³

Empowering people to choose to walk, wheel or cycle

Making our roads and streets safer to use will enable people to walk, wheel and cycle, and make them feel happier about their surroundings.

"Safety concerns were central to people's decisions about how they travel. Fear of traffic, poor lighting, and pavement parking discouraged walking and cycling—particularly for disabled users and parents. Participants called for clearer rules, stronger enforcement, and safer environments across the region."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR



Making neighbourhoods and high streets more welcoming will enable more walking, wheeling and cycling and we know from other places in the UK that improvements can increase spend by up to 30% in local shops, especially if it is easier to walk there.¹²

"Improvements to make the area easier for people to walk, wheel or cycle more would help a lot. More walkers and cyclists mean more casual shoppers – especially families. Improvements would include better lighting, bike parking, slower traffic, and clearer walking routes from bus stops and car parks."

PARTICIPANT, BUSINESS FOCUS GROUP

Making more green space available to more people will foster greater pride in our community spaces and encourage residents to be outside and active.

"Walking around Doncaster is great when you've got the green spaces, good lighting, and well-maintained paths, it feels safe and inviting."

DONCASTER RESIDENT

Help our residents be happier and healthier

Good health is the key to both economic growth and happiness. That's why our Mayor, Oliver Coppard, wants South Yorkshire to be the healthiest region in the UK. This is a big goal because, right now, people in South Yorkshire can expect to live in good health until they're only 61, which is well before most people retire. We know that getting people to be more active is an important way to help them stay healthier, especially for children.

Challenges

1 in 4 people in South Yorkshire do less than 30 minutes activity a week, and this number is higher for women, those from Black backgrounds and lower income groups.¹⁴

Walking for 30 minutes or cycling for 20 minutes on most days reduces mortality risk by at least 10%.¹⁵

It's even more important that children are physically active – both to help their development now and build lifelong habits.

But over 52,000 children aged 5 to 16 are not getting enough physical activity every day in South Yorkshire.¹⁷

Mental and physical health go hand-in-hand, and we want everyone in South Yorkshire to live happy, healthy lives.

Around 1 in 5 people in South Yorkshire over 16 are expected to have a common mental health disorder.¹⁸

Air pollution contributes to 5% of all deaths in South Yorkshire, that's over 700 deaths every year, with children particularly impacted by air pollution from car exhaust fumes.¹⁹

You get the most pollution just after you turn on the ignition so short car trips are especially bad.²⁰

Empowering people to choose to walk, wheel or cycle

Exercise can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer, and lower your risk of early death by up to 30%.¹⁶

"I'm fitter, happier, and spending less – all from walking more."

RESIDENT, ROTHERHAM

Safer neighbourhoods and streets will help parents and children to travel actively to school, work, the shops or to access public transport.

"It's so nice to walk to the shops now – it's quiet, green, and I get some exercise without even trying."

RESIDENT, BARNSELY

Physical activity can increase your self-esteem mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress.

"After losing my brother to suicide I've struggled. I found being outdoors and doing some exercise helps a great deal. The e-bike [loan] has made a huge difference to how I'm feeling, I now have the opportunity to attend at least two rides a week where I can forget everything for a few hours."

BARNSELY RESIDENT, BARNSELY BIKE WORKS

Creating safe routes that enable people to choose to walk, wheel or cycle for regular short journeys, especially the school run, can help to reduce air pollution and improve the health of our children.





Policy context

The South Yorkshire region is currently in an exciting period of growth and transformation. The English Devolution White Paper, published by the UK Government in December 2024, represents a great opportunity for regions like South Yorkshire to put our communities on the map. We will be in a position to start to reverse the decades of under-investment across the north of England, particularly to deliver a truly integrated transport system, and support priority areas such as crime, housing and education.

A period of change

Devolution has kick started a programme of change in our region:

- South Yorkshire will receive an Integrated Settlement from Spring 2026 – this is a massive step forward for the region. It will allow us to plan and target investment into the medium and long-term, directing it towards regional priorities.
- Our South Yorkshire Growth Plan sets our ambitious plans for more jobs and investment in our region – it is critical that people can access those opportunities.
- The historic decision by the MCA Board in March 2025 to proceed with bus franchising reverses the era of de-regulation present since the 1980s, providing the opportunity to integrate transport and improve accessibility in all its forms across the region.
- Police and crime commissioner powers were provided to Mayor Oliver Coppard in May 2024 – this has presented the opportunity to align these priorities with transport, including road safety initiatives and security on public transport to improve outcomes for local people and communities.
- The South Yorkshire Supertram came back under public control in March 2024. SYMCA and the Mayor can now run and invest in the tram network to best deliver benefits for South Yorkshire's communities.



A new policy framework

To maximise these opportunities, we are working to develop a new policy framework, which this strategy will sit within in. The framework is supported by Mayor Coppard's manifesto commitments and key priority areas, as well as the recommendations to come out of the Mayor's Citizen's Assembly on climate change. The Investment Plans being developed by our local authority partners have been agreed by local leaders and are informed by local development plans – these plans support this strategy by providing direction in terms of delivery on the ground.

South Yorkshire walking wheeling and cycling strategy alignment with key plans and policies



Outcomes

The South Yorkshire Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy will deliver benefits in a whole range of policy areas, including health, employment, safety, social cohesion, transport. We have worked closely with our local authority partners to agree a set of outcomes that will deliver benefits across health, travel choice, or support for travelling differently. We believe these outcomes will lead to long-term impacts in economic growth, creating better places and a healthier population. We want people to walk, wheel and cycle more, to feel positive about doing it, and to feel the benefits of doing so.

The emerging Local Transport Plan will develop overall outcomes for the region that include the benefits of improving public transport, car trips and other ways of travelling. Our part in this process is how more people walking, wheeling and cycling can contribute to this, and therefore the outcomes for this strategy have been developed accordingly. We will be working further on our outcomes as we develop our overall outcomes framework for our new single Integrated Settlement from 2026.



How we measure our success is vital if we are to positively impact on the lives of the people of South Yorkshire. This will be monitored by taking an outcomes-based approach. Reflecting our priorities, these are:

Get more people moving

Increase in the number of adults walking and wheeling 10 minutes per day

Increase in the number of adults cycling once per week

Increase in the number of children cycling once per week e.g. to school, green spaces, shops

People able to travel differently

Increase in the number of children walking, wheeling and cycling to school

Increase in the proportion of journeys being made by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

Increased demand for walking, wheeling & cycling

Increase in number of people wanting to do more walking, wheeling and cycling

We will only invest in interventions which achieve these changes to people's lives. These outcomes will only be realised through an all-encompassing, holistic approach to walking, wheeling and cycling combined hardware, software and road and street safety. We will ensure our approach is built on the views of the local communities in South Yorkshire so that the change is bottom-up and what people want.



So where are we at the moment?

How active are the people of South Yorkshire?

Current levels

30%

of adults walk or wheel for at least 10 minutes per day²¹

7%

of adults currently cycle at least once per week²²

20%

of young people currently cycle at least once a week²³

How are people currently travelling in South Yorkshire?

62%

of children travel to school by walking, wheeling or cycling²⁴

41%

all short journeys made in South Yorkshire are by walking, wheeling & cycling or Public Transport²⁵

Increased demand for walking, wheeling and cycling in South Yorkshire

34%

of people said that they would like to walk, wheel or cycle more²⁶

And where do we want to be by 2035?

2035 target

33%

10%

25%

65%

45%

45%

We need to be accountable for achieving this level of change and this is why every intervention we develop will have a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan with associated ring-fenced funding to ensure we are going beyond an arbitrary figure of, for example, how many kms of route; instead we will track the actual impact on people's lives.

If we achieve these outcomes, what benefits will the people of South Yorkshire see?



More walking

33,000 more people starting to walk just 10 brisk minutes per day could add over 40,000 years of healthy life expectancy across South Yorkshire; save over 4,500 GP appointments per year and save almost £100m over 10 years in lower healthcare cost and less sick days at work.²⁷



Healthier school trips

Giving people more choice so that we have over 3,500 fewer cars outside our primary school gates across South Yorkshire every morning – nearly a quarter of a million fewer car journeys each year at morning rush hour.²⁸



Shifting our journeys

If 45% of short journeys were by active or public transport, that's over 90,000 fewer car trips every day, 34m fewer every year, saving 8,000 tonnes of CO₂ and generating over £100m in financial return (on top of health benefits).²⁹

Focus on safer neighbourhoods and routes to opportunities

Our twin-track approach is a focus on creating safer neighbourhoods and building routes to opportunities to support more people walk, wheel and cycle.

Mission

Creating safer neighbourhoods

Children can walk to school, play out and learn to cycle and everyone feels safe and welcome getting out and about, especially those who face the most barriers.

Building routes to opportunities

People will be able to get easily to jobs and opportunities by safe ways to walk to bus, tram and train, or feel confident riding their bike there.

We will focus on

Safer neighbourhoods

The neighbourhoods facing the most challenges.

The people who are the least active now and need the most support getting out, and children.

Routes to opportunities

Connecting those most left behind to key opportunities, especially for work and learning; or routes where there is the most opportunity to reduce short car trips.

People who need the most support to access work, especially those without access to a car.

How people's voices will shape our approach

Our communities are at the heart of this strategy. We want to understand the barriers people face and their wants and needs, to inform the designs and the support we give. We will engage, involve and enable people to share their views, discuss ideas and participate in decisions. At an early stage this means:

Safer neighbourhoods

People who live in the neighbourhood, groups and organisations representing them.

Local services, such as schools, libraries, religious centres, sports facilities, day care centres and local businesses.

Our diverse range of internal experts from Parks and Countryside to Road Safety.

Routes to opportunities

Communities living along the route.

Key destinations including places for work and learning for example large and small employers, colleges and universities.

Our diverse range of internal experts – from Health to Public Transport colleagues.

Tailored and targeted engagement

As we work towards creating safer neighbourhoods and building routes to opportunities to support more people walk, wheel and cycle, our engagement will be tailored to the specific groups we are targeting with a specific focus on least heard voices. This could include:

Listening to communities and different groups of people to find out what really matters to them, their insight into their behaviour and habits.



Workshop sessions using a participatory approach, via representative organisations. For example, sessions in schools with children, with older people at lunch clubs, with key partners, including large employers, small businesses and places of learning.



Pop-up events within the community to talk to the people who live there and understand how they feel about their neighbourhood.



Pop-up events along the routes, to talk to the people who are making journeys and understand the barriers they face and options they'd like to have.



Events targeted at those least heard voices we want to prioritise, such as those living on very low incomes, disabled people or from ethnically diverse communities. We will carry out focus groups with these groups of people to help us properly understand what they want and need.



Seamless links with bus, tram and train

Very few journeys that any of us make involve just a single way of getting around. There is already a strong link between walking, wheeling and cycling, and bus, tram and train. Short active journeys are how most public transport trips start, and we want to ensure that this continues and people's experiences of this is improved.

South Yorkshire Combined Authority already runs the tram, and we are well on the way towards being in control of the region's buses as well – therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure walking, wheeling and cycling is at the heart of an integrated regional network. And we won't be able to encourage more people to take the bus, tram or train regularly unless we make them more accessible.

Projects and programmes need to be planned more effectively to make walking, wheeling and cycling central to all transport investment. Key principles of this approach will be centred around:

Being able to safely find, get to, and wait at bus, tram and train stops and stations, including safe and accessible ways to cross roads, welcoming places to sit, and safe and easy cycle storage before continuing your journey, including provision for non-standard bikes.



Ensuring journey planning services, such as apps, maps and wayfinding, support people to get to and from stops and stations, considering the needs of disabled people.

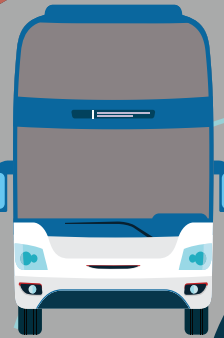


Delivering software projects, such as travel planning and “walk to the stop” initiatives, that collectively supports people to get to and use public transport.



We'll work with bus, tram and train teams to make sure it's easy for people to walk, wheel or cycle to public transport, by designing paths and spaces that are safe, accessible and well connected.





"My vision for the future of travel in the community is one where it's genuinely accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities. I'd like to see smoother, step-free paths and entrances at all transport stops, more dropped kerbs, and reliable audio-visual announcements on buses and trains. In the next 5–10 years, I hope to see more accessible vehicles, more frequent services that don't leave people waiting too long, and better training for drivers and staff so they can support passengers with different needs."

PARTICIPANT FROM DISABILITY FOCUS GROUP

BUS STOP



Stronger, Safer, More Inclusive Streets Strategy

Safer neighbourhoods

26 / Safer neighbourhoods

A safer neighbourhood is an area you can get around easily by walking, wheeling and cycling, where children can walk or scoot to school and feel safe crossing the road. Where you feel comfortable walking to the local shop, to the park or library, there are welcoming places to sit and rest and green spaces to enjoy and move around in. We need to make our neighbourhoods easier, safer and more attractive for people to move in. We also need to ensure that new housing developments have walking, wheeling and cycling at their heart, strengthening inclusivity and creating safer places in new as well as existing neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods in 2025

I live next to a park, there's a short cut through to the shops, but I can't use it because of the barrier that stops me to get through on my scooter. It's a shame as I don't have a garden, I'd like to be able to enjoy the park. We have a local recreation ground with a play area but it's not very welcoming, there is nowhere to sit, and it just feels unloved. There's no lighting in the park or the rec, so I don't really feel safe there.

Neighbourhoods in 2035

I love my journey to the local shops; I go through the park – it's a shortcut but I always take my time to take in the surroundings. It's such a great space, there is a community garden, and you see so many different people. I often stop and chat to people and have got to know my neighbours, I feel happy living here.



Ways we could make roads and streets safer

Create 20mph zones making it safer for children

Ensure pavements are clear

Safer roads and streets around schools including School Streets

Good lighting

Reduce the amount of through-traffic on residential streets to prioritise resident journeys and safety

The types of hardware we could build

Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy

Improve or build crossings where they are needed

Create parklets, play areas and public spaces with benches, greenery and public art

Remove or redesign access control barriers so everyone can access paths

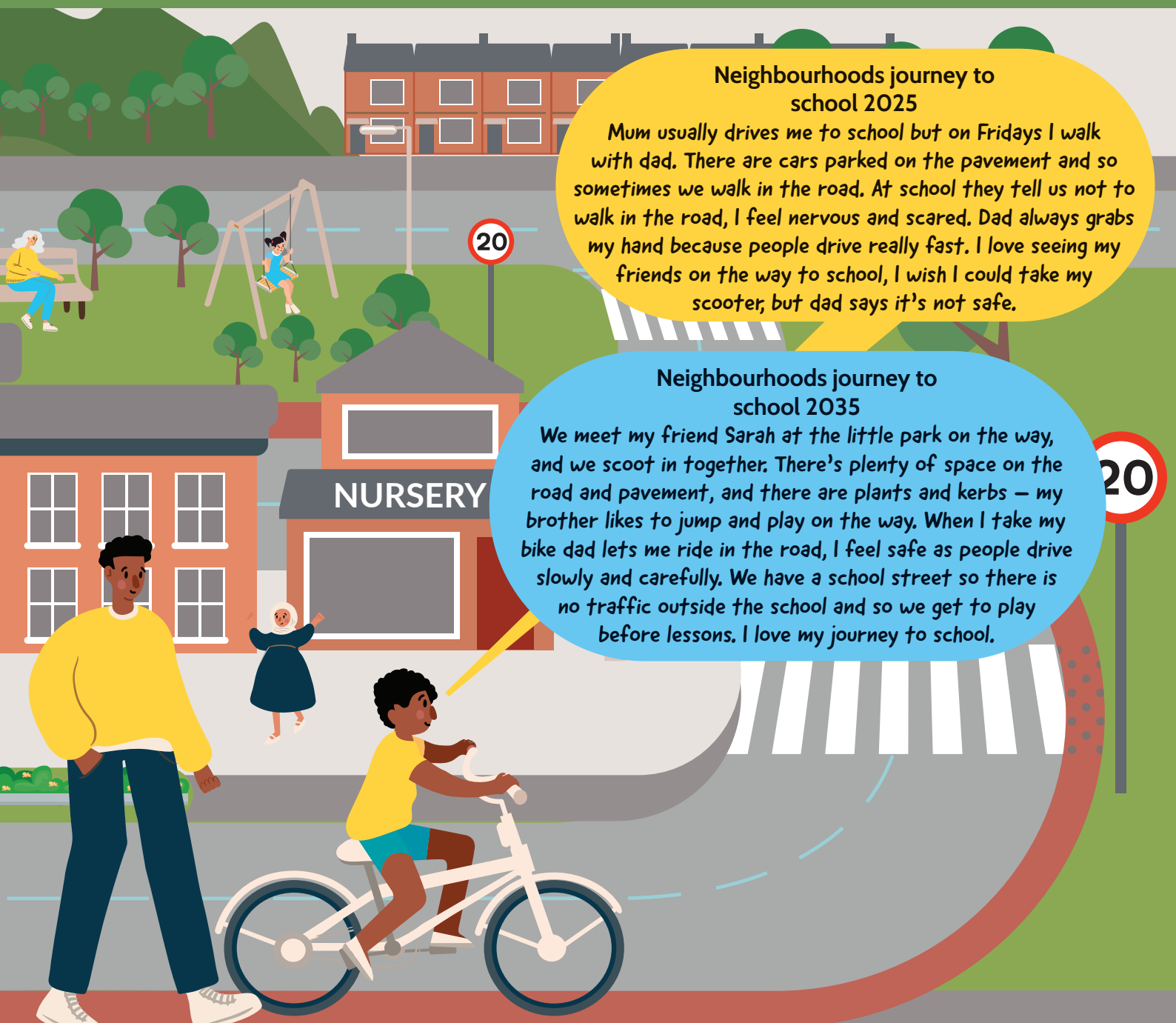
Wide, well-maintained pavements

Prioritise pedestrians at side roads through continuous footways and side road zebras

Change junctions to slow down vehicles

Improve signage and wayfinding

Provide cycle parking near homes and key local services



Neighbourhoods journey to school 2025

Mum usually drives me to school but on Fridays I walk with dad. There are cars parked on the pavement and so sometimes we walk in the road. At school they tell us not to walk in the road, I feel nervous and scared. Dad always grabs my hand because people drive really fast. I love seeing my friends on the way to school, I wish I could take my scooter, but dad says it's not safe.

Neighbourhoods journey to school 2035

We meet my friend Sarah at the little park on the way, and we scoot in together. There's plenty of space on the road and pavement, and there are plants and kerbs – my brother likes to jump and play on the way. When I take my bike dad lets me ride in the road, I feel safe as people drive slowly and carefully. We have a school street so there is no traffic outside the school and so we get to play before lessons. I love my journey to school.

Software projects we could run

Schools projects to help children and families including: council run schools programmes; partner programmes from Living Streets; Modeshift; and Sustrans

Support to help children learn to love riding bikes with Bikeability

Support new and existing community walking and cycling groups

Develop programmes with health providers such as GP surgeries to help people be more active

Routes to opportunities

Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy

28 / Routes to opportunities

A route to opportunity will do just that - connect where you live to the places you need to get to, especially for work and learning, often from a neighbourhood to town and city centres or another big site like a college, hospital or business park. These routes are typically 2 – 10km, too long for most people to walk within their daily routines. This means we need to give people options to take public transport or cycle.



Journey 2025

I have to take a taxi to my hospital appointments. I don't drive and to get to the bus stop I have to cross a busy road with no crossing, the pavements are uneven, and I worry about tripping. Once I get to the stop there is nowhere to sit and I can't stand for too long because I have health conditions.

BUS STOP

Journey 2035

I take the bus to my hospital appointments. It's much easier to get to the bus stop since they installed the crossing over the main road, and waiting at the bus stop is much more comfortable now there is a shelter with seating. I see a lot of the same people and enjoy chatting while we wait at the stop and on the bus.

Ways we could make roads and streets safer

Reduce speed limits
where needed

Install high quality
lighting

Resurface existing
routes

The types of hardware we could build

Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy

Improve or build crossings where they are needed, especially over main roads

Wide, clear pavements which prioritise pedestrians at side roads

New traffic-free routes in green space or along old railways and waterways

Places to stop and rest along routes, with green space, shelter and support for urban drainage

Comfortable public transport stops: with seating, shelter, and good lighting

Protected cycle tracks to keep people safe

Safe ways for people cycling to bypass bus stops on busy roads

Secure cycle parking at the start and end of people's journeys



Software projects we could run

Support for employers to help their staff get to work

Cycle loans, including e-bikes, cargo and non-standard bikes, especially for those on low incomes

App-based incentive programmes to motivate people to travel differently

City cycle hire programmes

Our approach matters

Supporting more people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling is just as important as the specific projects and initiatives we deliver. The Mayor has outlined key principles for how South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority should work moving forward, and we've developed these with partners across the region to shape our new approach around these values.



Putting people at the centre

Our communities in South Yorkshire are at the heart of this strategy. Our teams have met and talked with thousands of people in the last five years about walking, wheeling and cycling – both individual projects and our long-term plans. We've realised we need to work differently with people than we have up until now to really help thousands of people move differently every day.

Our commitments:

1. We will work hardest to listen to the people all too often left out and left behind in relation to walking, wheeling and cycling. We will prioritise the voices of people who currently have the least opportunity to walk, wheel and cycle because we want our plans and projects to help them the most. We will set up ways, across the region and locally, to make sure we collaborate with them effectively and if they don't engage with us, that's our fault, not theirs. This includes (but isn't limited to) the following groups:
 - People with disabilities and long-term health conditions
 - People from ethnically diverse communities
 - Women and girls
 - People living on low incomes



We will build strong relationships with these groups so they can advise and guide our strategy and plans over the long-term.

2. We will change how we work with people to design our projects. We will move from consulting with people on a project we've already designed, to engaging with them earlier so that they can design the project with us. We'll actively make sure that it's not just the loudest voices that get heard.
3. We will use behavioural insights to understand how people actually behave and want to move every day and make this the starting point for new projects, with our projects following what we have heard from people.



Walking and wheeling are crucial

The average person walks for 90 minutes per week and cycles for just 7 minutes. For some people, cycling just isn't a possibility. That's why we will put walking and wheeling first. The majority of our residents walk at least a little bit every day or, for those that can't walk easily, use mobility scooters or wheelchairs. Many people with young children rely heavily on pushchairs and scooters. It's also the way that most people travel to the bus, tram or train and we know that best way to help people have more travel choices is to help them easily access public transport.

Our commitments:



4. Walking and wheeling will be absolutely central to our plans and must form a critical part of all of our projects, with a big focus on making our villages, towns and cities better places to walk and wheel about.
5. We will place a major focus on how we can improve walking and wheeling access to bus, tram and train stops and work collectively across our organisations to provide a seamless experience.

Our roads and streets will be, and feel, safer

Last year, our Mayor took over the powers of the Police and Crime Commissioner and we took over strategic responsibility for the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership. We are currently developing a detailed strategic plan to help us reach 'Vision Zero' where no one is killed or seriously injured on our roads. We know that the hardware and software we deliver needs to help people be, and feel, safer around our roads and in our neighbourhoods. But we also need to work across the region to put in place ambitious policies and measures, as well as strong enforcement to ensure that we reduce the number of people walking, wheeling and cycling who are killed and injured.

Our commitments:



6. We will support our local authority partners to put in place ambitious measures to help people be, and feel, safer around our roads.
7. We will ensure that the needs of our most vulnerable road users are central to the development of our new Vision Zero action plan, guiding every pillar of the Safe System approach: Safe Roads and roadsides; safe speeds; safe road users; safe vehicles and post-crash response.

Build hardware that works for everyone

Because our focus is supporting people who might be the least confident to walk, wheel and cycle, we will need to ensure that our 'hardware' (things like road crossings; bike paths and streets) are designed to make it easy and safe for them. We know that the higher quality the project (e.g. wider pavements, more separation from traffic, separation between walkers and those on cycles) the more people use it and the safer it is.³⁰

Our commitments:



8. We will continue to have a Design Review Panel where we review all planned projects to ensure that the hardware we build is inclusive and supports people who face the most barriers to getting out and about.
9. We will ensure that we follow key design standards and guidance to ensure that all our projects support the people who need the most help moving around to feel safe and welcome.
10. We will build capacity to deliver high quality hardware, providing training and support to our LA partners to enable them to deliver the design and project management of projects in-house.

Build skills and motivation using software

Building more crossings, better places to walk and more cycle tracks is really important because we know that when people feel safe, they get out and about more on their own feet or wheels. But we also know that many people will need extra help, even where we build more hardware, to walk, wheel and cycle more. So we will have a big focus on developing and running high-quality "software" projects, like schools programmes, support for employers, community walking or cycling groups that give direct support to people to be more active.



11. Every project where we will plan to put in new or changed hardware, we will work hard with the local communities to:
 - design with them the software projects they will need to be more active and ensure that these have long-term secure funding as part of each project
 - introduce measures to make the roads and streets be, and feel, safer
12. We will develop a small number of region-wide software projects to actively help people to move differently.

Bring expertise together to create a whole systems integrated approach

To successfully achieve the ambition in this strategy, we will need a team effort. We need the combined expertise of our communities; professionals working across public health, transport, highways, sports and physical activity, regeneration and more; South Yorkshire Police; NHS partners; businesses; community and voluntary sector organisations; national partners and funders; and many others. We need all these partners to work together in a system which supports people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling.

Supporting people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling



Our commitments:

13. Each of our organisations (our four local authorities and SYMCA) will work in an integrated way, bringing together diverse expertise to work, including public health, physical activity and sports development, and town centre/business liaison, collaboratively.
14. Our projects will be integrated with hardware, software, road and street safety measures, underpinned by community engagement all provided as standard. We will support local authorities to develop integrated plans.
15. We will develop a strong network of regional and national partners including NHS, third sector providers, education providers and others to work together on our plans, integrating expertise and funding streams to have the biggest impact for our region.

Measuring our progress

We need to set some ambitious targets to achieve our vision, then effectively measure our progress, and hold ourselves accountable. We know that we have some significant gaps in how we currently gather and monitor data and so our approach will evolve and improve over the next two years.

Our commitments:



16. We will develop a clear set of outcomes that drive our decision making and investments over the coming years, gather clear baseline data and measure our progress annually.
17. We will create a clear framework to monitor, evaluate, and learn from our walking, wheeling, and cycling projects. Each project will include a plan for how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, and we'll build on insights from previous local evaluations to improve future plans.
18. Where possible, we will ensure data is disaggregated by demographic groups, including all protected characteristics, to ensure that accessibility is being improved.



Community engagement and partnerships

People will be at the heart of all our plans. We want to change the way we work with people so that they design our new projects with us and that they work for them. We have made some great progress across South Yorkshire in how we work with our communities in relation to our walking, wheeling and cycling projects, but we recognise we still have a long way to go.

As well as residents, we want to create our plans and projects with local organisations across the region, so many of whom want to help their employees and members or customers get to them easily and safely and many increasingly want to support their employees to be as healthy as possible.

Our people, with a focus on those most often left behind and left out



Organisations that represent our focus groups



Our stakeholder organisations



How community voices and local organisations have shaped this strategy and our local investment plans

Our local authorities have worked hard to listen to the voices of those most often left out and left behind in forming their investment plans. Significant effort has been made to change how we engage with our communities, ensuring that we speak to people face-to-face and listen, rather than just relying on social media or online platforms.

Rotherham

A dedicated Engagement Officer now oversees the work with communities for each project that is delivered. This has included working closely with schools to deliver safety enhancements and reduced speeds around the school gates, through activities such as focus groups and drop-in sessions. Outside of school activities, focus groups have also been held with key groups including local women of South Asian heritage, people with disabilities, and local business owners, to hear from the unique perspectives of people with different needs and backgrounds.

Case study - Rotherham engagement activity

As part of developing their investment plan in Rotherham, the team held focus groups with over 50 people from different backgrounds. One focus group was with eleven women of South Asian heritage to explore in detail how they felt about walking, wheeling and cycling. The participants talked passionately about wanting to especially be able to walk more around their neighbourhoods and for key journeys, and also many would like to learn to ride a bike. Not feeling safe was their biggest barrier due to a wide range of factors including: poor hardware, especially pavements, lack of consistent lighting, having to use underpasses; negative comments from other people; and cars, both moving too fast around them and parked where they need to walk, especially around schools. We want to ensure we listen to all voices in communities as we design new projects, especially those that are often heard least.

- Emerging themes from different groups on what would make them more likely to walk or wheel more
- Older respondents said fewer cars parked on the pavement
- Younger respondents and female respondents said more frequent crossings
- Respondents with disabilities said better pavement accessibility and condition; nicer places along streets to stop and rest; and more measures preventing crime and anti-social behaviour such as more CCTV cameras

"Travel should be simple and stress-free for everyone, regardless of mobility or health conditions."

ROTHERHAM FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Sheffield

The council has developed an evidence base to understand current perceptions of walking, wheeling, and cycling, and to identify gaps in knowledge. This has been strengthened through public engagement with local communities, working closely with Sheffield's Local Area Committees (LACs) and creating tailored engagement plans. Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector organisations were invited to propose paid engagement activities, using their existing networks and local insight to gather meaningful feedback.

A key focus of this engagement approach has been research to hear from least heard communities. An engagement programme undertaken in 2024 delivered over 40 face-to-face engagements across 22 different locations. In addition, across all the online survey responses received, 70% indicated they had never previously engaged with a council consultation.

Case study - Sheffield voices

Researchers joined an online social event hosted by Sheffield Voices. During the discussions, it became clear that the group saw vehicles parked on footways as a major obstacle to walking in their local area. Participants shared how difficult it is to navigate narrow pavements, especially when using mobility scooters. These challenges significantly limit their ability to travel independently.



"I have a friend who uses a mobility scooter who has to go up the centre of many roads because of obstructions on the pavement e.g. bins, parked cars."

Doncaster

Doncaster is working with local communities to help more people move more in their everyday lives. Through the Get Doncaster Moving programme—a borough-wide initiative to make it easier for people to be physically active—the council is using local knowledge and data to understand what people need and what works best in each area. They're partnering with Well Doncaster, a public health programme focused on reducing health inequalities, to make sure residents have a say in shaping activities and services that support walking, wheeling, cycling, and other ways to be active. A key part of this approach is the use of Community Connectors—local people who help others in their neighbourhoods find ways to be more active. These connectors are based in areas where fewer people are active and are supported by trusted community organisations. By listening to local voices and working together, Doncaster is building a movement that makes being active easier, more inclusive, and part of everyday life.

Case study - Doncaster community panel

The council has established a consultation panel chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Equalities, Education and Skills that meets to give people who are least heard a voice to influence the design of projects. The panel includes older people and those with visual impairment, limited mobility and long-term health conditions. The panel members are able to share their experiences and barriers to moving around the region, and the type of things that impact on their independence.

Key impacts

- The panel has influenced design choices, including materials used in infrastructure
- Members have participated in Community Street Audits and Road Safety Audits
- Stakeholders across departments are increasingly engaging with the panel
- Members feel heard and valued, contributing to a sense of ownership and inclusion

Accessibility measures

- One-on-one discussions were held before the first meeting to understand individual needs
- Meetings are held in person, with materials shared in advance for screen reading or assistive tech use
- Travel expenses are covered to support participation

Lessons learned

- Successes: Proactive engagement and cross-departmental involvement have been key
- Improvements: As the panel grows, meeting formats may need to evolve to ensure everyone can participate fully



Barnsley

Barnsley is taking a community-first approach to increasing participation in walking, wheeling, cycling, and other forms of physical activity. Through schemes led by the Sport and Physical Activity Team and supported by significant funding from Sport England, the borough has recently launched a three-year engagement programme that places people at the heart of decision-making. Dedicated engagement officers will work in key neighbourhoods to gather insights that shape both infrastructure (“hardware”) and behavioural change initiatives (“software”). This includes integrating digital programmes like the popular Beat the Street initiative to reach and motivate residents in new ways.

“[Beat the Street] encouraged me to get out with my whole family on the bikes and discover new places in Barnsley. It gave us an enjoyable challenge and encouraged my children to walk part of the way to school instead of just by car. It also allowed us to meet other school parents and teachers and foster those relationships.”

PARTICIPANT – BEAT THE STREET BARNSLEY

Case study - Barnsley GameChanger Project & What's Your Move Festivals

Barnsley's GameChanger Project 2025 exemplifies its asset-based community development model. With £274,000 secured in funding, the project has delivered 1,934 sessions since September 2021, engaging over 33,000 participants—nearly 60% of whom were previously inactive. This blueprint is now informing wider community work across the borough.

Complementing this, the What's Your Move Festivals have brought thousands together through free, inclusive physical activity events. The town centre festival attracted over 3,000 attendees, while localised community festivals—such as the Dorothy Hyman event with 1,500 participants and the Thurnscoe midweek gathering with 200 attendees—demonstrated the power of grassroots collaboration. These events were delivered by local anchor organisations and supported by over 30 community groups, showcasing Barnsley's commitment to co-designed, locally-led engagement.



What we have heard across South Yorkshire

We have met with hundreds of individuals, community groups and stakeholder organisations since 2024 to gather their input into our strategy. During 2025 we also worked with research partners to start to build a picture of how our residents feel about walking, wheeling and cycling, how we can improve it, and to start testing the ideas in this strategy, the work included:

- Collating all the research and engagement carried out by our local authority partners over recent years including reviewing over 25 separate previous research and engagement reports from across the region
- Meeting with over 100 different individuals representing community groups and stakeholder organisations in different locations across the region and online
- Asking key stakeholder organisations representing people with lived experience of disability; from ethnically diverse communities; and living with low incomes to provide feedback on the emerging strategy

We recognise this is just the start of our understanding of people's attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and needs around walking, wheeling and cycling and we want to do much more over the coming years, especially so the voices of children and young people can be at the heart of our work.

Citizen Assembly on climate

In 2023, a representative group of 100 residents across South Yorkshire came together as part of the Mayor's Citizen's Assembly. The aim was to shape how the region responds to the climate emergency by hearing from the public and allowing our residents to discuss and develop recommendations for the region to take forward. Out of 14 recommendations to come out of the Citizen's Assembly, two brought into focus the need to invest in our neighbourhoods and public spaces, and to support people to walk, wheel and cycle more:

- Retrofit and plan public spaces to prioritise pedestrian usage and accessibility for all reflects residents' requirement for accessibility and importantly the want to undertake active travel.
- Integrated travel infrastructure for e-bikes, scooters, and pedestrians with mini-hubs throughout urban areas for pick up and drop off of these transport systems further reflects residents' demand for accessible transportation and importantly transportation that moves away from the traditional use of a car.

This has helped shape our focus on safer neighbourhoods, especially with a focus on walking; and an approach to routes to opportunities which is integrated with public transport.

What we have heard across the region

Across all local authorities there is significant community appetite to walk, wheel and cycle more, but there are notable barriers that come up in conversation regularly that prevent people from doing so. And a similar set of thoughts about what is needed to support people.

The key themes that emerged from our recent South Yorkshire engagement included:

Feeling safe is critical

Safety concerns are central to people's decisions about how they travel. Fear of traffic, poor lighting, and pavement parking discouraged walking, wheeling and cycling—particularly for disabled users and parents. Participants called for clearer rules, stronger enforcement, and safer environments across the region.

“20 mph zones, they're good – not as much risk of getting hurt!”

STUDENT, ROTHERHAM OPPORTUNITIES COLLEGE

The importance of 'hardware'

Almost every participant and group talked about how poor infrastructure —such as disconnected footpaths, poor surfaces, lack of lighting or crossings, lack of protected cycle lanes, stopped them being as active as they wanted. This was especially true for people with disabilities. People were very positive about the differences that good infrastructure can make in terms of feeling safe and welcome to get out and about. And many highlighted that simply knowing recommended routes would be a huge help.

“There's good cycle infrastructure here and routes that are close to nature, which is great for my health and mental wellbeing.”

PARTICIPANT, DONCASTER WORKSHOP



How good walking, wheeling and cycling made them feel

People consistently spoke about how walking and cycling had improved their mental health, physical wellbeing, and quality of life. People shared personal stories of feeling fitter, happier, and more energised when they could walk, wheel or cycle a bit more every day. These experiences made active travel feel not only achievable, but desirable and highlight the importance of the right software projects to help people be more active.

"I used to rely on the car for every trip. Now I walk or cycle most days – it's easier, cheaper and feels so much better for my mental health."

PARTICIPANT, SHEFFIELD FOCUS GROUP

People want to get involved

People across South Yorkshire stressed the importance of being listened to—and being part of shaping change. They called for better representation of disabled people, young people, and those in underserved areas in helping shape what plans and projects we develop in the region. People want community-led approaches and more transparent engagement from authorities.

"I live in Thurnscoe, an old pit village and moved here recently. I commute to NHS Rotherham and NHS Sheffield. I do think your approach to community engagement is important and your local chats reach different people. Instead of WhatsApp and Insta, the local chats have such a good reach."

RESIDENT, BARNLEY

Changing habits

Many people acknowledged that, for those who have access to a car, habit means that their car often feels like the default choice for journeys. Cars feel linked to convenience, people's identity, and daily routines. There were discussions around how we can support people to broaden their choices so that people can plan walking and cycling into their days instead – and how to help people see the potential benefits.

"I think it (School Streets trial) was a brilliant idea and one I'd like to see in place all the time. It makes for a nice walk to school, and I would imagine less pollution at these key times –. I also thought it made obvious how many cars must use the route as a rat run and how anything to prevent this should be welcomed."

PARENT, SHEFFIELD

Our long-term plans

We've used all the insight gathered over the last two years to shape this strategy; but this is just the start. Listening to our communities and working with them to design our projects and plans needs to be part of our DNA. We've made three commitments to how we will work with communities in Our Approach Matters section on page 30-33 above and over the next 12 months we will work together to develop a new, deeper, approach to community engagement. We'll build on the great work already happening across the region to develop an approach for every stage of a project.

Achieved so far

Since the adoption of the Active Travel Implementation Plan in 2019, we have made great progress delivering hardware and software projects across the region to help more people walk, wheel and cycle more often.

Our current programme, to 2027 is approximately £210 million, which includes £40 million as part of wider multi-modal projects and £3.7 million for software (up to March 2025). So far, our local authorities have delivered £120 million worth of these projects.

We are very proud of what this funding has allowed our brilliant local authorities and external delivery partners to achieve. We have collectively built a significant amount of hardware to improve journeys for people on the ground, including over 80 kms of walking and cycling routes, and we have been able to support thousands of adults and children to feel more confident walking, wheeling or cycling, the table below summarises the key outputs delivered:



Hardware	Delivered	
New and improved routes including protected cycle routes and new or resurfaced footways	88km	
Cycle parking spaces	451	
Public realm improvements like pedestrianisation, high quality surfacing, greenspace, seating and tree planning	36,121 m ²	
New and improved crossings (including uncontrolled crossings) ³¹	257	
School Streets	19 (including 6 ongoing trials and 1 completed trial)	



Software	Delivered	
Dr Bike – mechanics who can perform simple repairs and service bikes	Checks	2,200
	Services	1,800
	Sessions	900
Cycle training	Adults trained	32,000
	Sessions	1,200
Cycle loans and hires		6,400
Walking initiatives	Adults	5,400
	Children	4,300
Cycling and walking events	Adults	23,700
	Children	40,500

Case Study - Beat the Street Barnsley

A community moving together

In summer 2023, Barnsley hosted one of the largest Beat the Street games to date—a six-week interactive challenge designed to get residents walking, cycling, and scooting. Delivered in partnership with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and funded by Sport England, the initiative aimed to tackle physical inactivity and improve wellbeing, especially among children and families.

From 5 June to 17 July, 25,363 people took part, representing 10.6% of the targeted population. Participants collectively travelled 144,810 miles, with 87% of players being children. The game used “Beat Boxes” placed around Barnsley to reward movement and exploration, with 554,767 swipes recorded—an average of 22 swipes per person.

Physical Activity Improvements

- Among adults, inactivity dropped from 19% to 11% (based on 509 matched responses)
- Among children, inactivity decreased from 28% to 21% (based on 47 matched responses)
- Adults meeting recommended activity levels (150+ minutes/week) rose from 68% to 78%

Health and Economic Value

- The programme is projected to deliver 53 Quality Adjusted Life Years

For every £1 spent, the estimated return over 5 years includes:

- £26.59 in productivity savings
- £6.10 in transport savings
- £10.35 in healthcare savings

(Source: NICE ROI Calculator, based on 9,068 adult participants)

Community Engagement

Beat the Street Barnsley was one of the largest games to date, with 78 out of 80 invited schools participating. Engagement coordinators worked with schools, community groups, sports clubs, and workplaces to build momentum. Local events such as storytelling trails, treasure hunts,

and themed activity weeks (e.g. Go Explore, Go Wild, Go Active) kept the community involved and excited.

Feedback from 1,072 survey respondents and 102 children showed that Beat the Street had a lasting impact on attitudes and behaviours:

“I purchased a bike to take my 3 children out beating the streets. Since the start of the competition, we’ve started riding to and from school every day..I’m feeling much more energetic and less stressed.”

FEMALE PARTICIPANT, AGED 30–39

“Speaking on behalf of my 5-year-old, it encouraged him to take walks where before he would complain. His interest in walking has been priceless.”

PARENT OF PARTICIPANT

Beat the Street Barnsley successfully brought people together through movement, exploration, and fun. It improved physical activity levels, strengthened community connections, and demonstrated real value for public health investment. Most importantly, it showed that small changes—like walking instead of driving—can lead to big impacts when a community moves together. Barnsley Beat the Street has returned for 2025.



Case study - Doncaster

Making it easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle

Between 2020 and 2024, Doncaster invested over £29 million into 27 miles of cycleways and footways, transforming the borough's active travel infrastructure. These improvements have made cycling safer, more accessible, and more appealing for everyday journeys.

- Bennetthorpe saw a 108% increase in cyclists using the route after upgrades
- Kirk Sandall Station improvements led to a 212% uplift in cycling
- Conisbrough to Warmsworth cycleway improvements resulted in a 110% increase in cycling one year post-completion
- Leger Way recorded 37,400 cycle journeys in the first six months after completion
- Bentley Station recorded 21,752 cycle journeys between August and December 2023
- South Parade saw 47% more journeys by cycling

The improvements have helped connect communities to key destinations like transport hubs, schools, and employment centres—making it easier for people who don't have access to a car, while also giving others the option to choose cycling over driving.

"I choose to active travel for a number of reasons...The main reason is to beat, and not be caught up in the traffic congestion. I can actually be at the College quicker on a cycle than in a car. Once at the College, the Cycle Hub gives peace of mind from a safety perspective. Without it I would not actively travel."

DONCASTER RESIDENT AND CYCLE HUB USER

Doncaster's infrastructure improvements are encouraging more people to cycle, reducing traffic congestion and supporting healthier, more sustainable travel choices.



Case study – Rotherham

The Journey Matters Hub

Established in 2018, the Journey Matters Hub brings cycling support directly to communities and workplaces, helping people overcome barriers to active travel. The cycle hub offers free pedal and e-bike loans (for 1–3 months), bike repairs and safety checks, journey planning support, and cycle training. The hub aims to make cycling more accessible, especially for those who may not otherwise have the means or confidence to get started. It focuses on reaching communities most in need and supporting individuals to build lasting cycling habits. The Journey Matters

Hub is helping people make lasting changes to how they travel. Here's what the data shows:

- 501 people took part in the 4-week bike loan scheme
- 65% of them used a car, motorbike, or scooter before joining
- 31% kept cycling after their loan ended
- 89% were still cycling 3 to 6 months later
- On average, participants cycled 76 miles per month
- In total, e-bike users cycled 3,817 miles

"I would like to thank you all for the service you provide. Whether that's loaning or servicing people's bike especially my Raleigh E-bike. Due to cost of living, I can't afford to take my bike to a bike shop for servicing or repairs that's why I use this service. Ed and the team are amazing, and it helps my mental health being able to be out on my bike. If this service wasn't available, I would struggle to get out. Thank you to office staff too."

JOURNEY MATTERS BENEFICIARY



Case study - Sheffield

School Streets

A School Street is a temporary road closure during school drop-off and pick-up times. For one hour in the morning and afternoon, school staff, parents, and local volunteers close the road to traffic, creating a safer and quieter environment for children to arrive and leave school. Since launching in Sheffield in 2021, the School Streets programme has been well received by both parents and school staff. Schools have noticed more children arriving by scooter or bike, helping them build confidence, independence, and healthy habits for life.

By March 2025:

- 18 primary schools and 1 secondary school in Sheffield had active School Streets
- 81% of parents said the scheme had a positive impact on their area
- 76% of parents felt safety around the school had improved

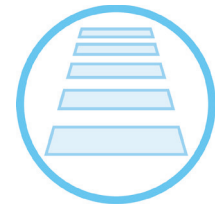
Safer streets are encouraging more children to walk, scoot, and cycle to school, giving parents greater confidence in their independence, while the wider community plays an active role in making school journeys safer.

"My child is now able to walk to school on her own. Before, the road outside was really dangerous—cars parked on zigzags, dropping kids off in the middle of the road, engines idling. Now, with fewer cars, it's much safer for children to cross."

PARENT



Making our hardware high quality and inclusive



Why does this matter?

People have told us, and the evidence shows that the number one reason people don't walk, wheel and cycle more is because they don't feel safe.³² We also know that the only way to give people the skills and ability to choose to move differently is to deliver hardware of the highest quality.

In more deprived areas people are more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the roads. Investing in walking, wheeling and cycling, where communities have been left out and left behind, not only can help improve safety, but also offers significant benefits, including improved health, reduced transport poverty, and more access to opportunity.³³

For people to be safe and feel safe and to ensure it is accessible to all, we need to make sure our hardware meets the highest standards. This is especially true for people that rely on wheelchairs, mobility scooters, non-standard bikes or other help to get out and about. For people with accessibility needs an uneven pavement or no crossing point can make a route unusable. Given our collective commitment to supporting those who need the most help, together we will be deliberately uncompromising on quality. This will require some shifts in how we work as we collectively increase our ambition – but it is the only way to achieve the level of transformative change deserved for our region.

"For me and my disabled patients in Rotherham uneven pavements stop people leaving the home. Risk of falling results in further social isolation and more dependence."

ROTHERHAM RESIDENT



Case Study: Transforming the Trans Pennine Trail

Doncaster's Accessible Green Corridor

In June 2024, City of Doncaster Council completed a major upgrade to a 1.6km section of the Trans Pennine Trail (NCN Route 62) between York Road and Melton Road. This stretch was identified as a priority following a 2021 consultation with Trans Pennine Trail users, which highlighted it as one of the most in-need areas for improvement.

The improvements aimed to make the trail more accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for a wide range of users—from walkers and cyclists to horse riders and people using mobility aids. The improvements were made possible through a grant from Sustrans, as well as funding from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). The improvements included:

- **Surfacing improvements:** A new rubber crumb surface replaced muddy and waterlogged paths, creating a smoother, more durable trail suitable for walking, running, cycling, and horse riding.
- **Access upgrades:** Six restrictive barriers were removed or redesigned to allow access for mobility scooters, non-standard bikes, prams, and wheelchairs.
- **New connections:** Two new access points were created from nearby residential streets, improving connectivity to local communities.
- **Placemaking features:** New benches were installed, with plans to plant wildflowers around seating areas to enhance the trail's natural appeal.
- **Wayfinding improvements:** Clear signage was added to help users navigate the trail more easily.



Community Support and Engagement

A public consultation held in August 2023 showed overwhelming support for the proposed upgrades. The improvements were shaped by feedback from local residents and trail users, ensuring the final design met real community needs. The removal of ineffective barriers was particularly welcomed, as these had previously blocked legitimate users.

One local resident shared:

"It's made such a difference to be able to get out and walk and enjoy the sunshine, enjoy the green, enjoy the wildlife. It's amazing when you can get out in the fresh air, it's made such a difference – instead of looking out of the bedroom window to it I can actually go down it, prior to that it was impossible."

The upgraded trail now offers a safer, smoother, and more inclusive experience for all users. It supports active travel, encourages outdoor recreation, and strengthens connections between communities and green spaces. By improving access and usability, Doncaster is helping more people choose walking, cycling, and wheeling for everyday journeys and leisure.

What are the shifts we need to make together?

We will be building on the great progress made by our local authorities over recent years in the shifts we want to make. It will take time, but we want to ensure that all new projects meet the highest standards, so we deliver the improvements in infrastructure that we need to make our places better and safer for the people of South Yorkshire. This will include the use of equality impact assessments to ensure that policies, projects, and initiatives promoting walking and cycling are fair and don't disadvantage any specific group based on protected characteristics like age, disability, or ethnicity.

We are working together with our local authority partners to achieve a collective ambition that all our projects work towards the following principles, recognising that in some cases there may be exceptions:

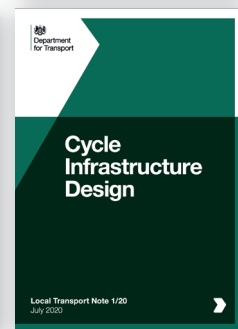
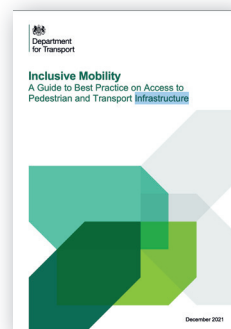
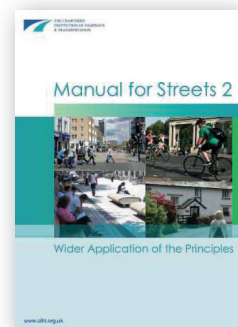


How will we ensure our new hardware is high quality and inclusive?

Shared principles

We will design and build our hardware based on the needs of the people using our streets. We collectively commit to the standards and principles within the latest walking, wheeling and cycling design guidance, currently this includes:

- **Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2**
How to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets, as well as busier streets such as high streets and town centres.
- **Inclusive Mobility**
A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure.
- **LTN 1/20**
Guidance on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure.



We recognise the need for a shared and consistent approach to standards and guidance, and so over the coming months we will be working together to develop some key tools including shared standard designs for key hardware e.g. bus-stop bypasses and exploring other ways we can improve our design of hardware.

Many of our settlements in South Yorkshire are in rural areas, and they must not be forgotten when designing our hardware and we need to recognise that the types of interventions may look different in rural locations. As a starting point we are using the fourth-coming Rural Active Travel Design Guidance as a basis for the design requirements in rural settings.

Shared expectations at outset of projects and Design Review

We will develop a framework of expectations at the outset of projects in line with these standards and guidance in line with our collectively developed integrated model for routes and neighbourhoods. The level of quality will be ensured through the SYMCA Design Review Process. Designs will be assessed based on existing Active Travel England tools.

We are keen to build on existing relationships to develop a panel of experts with a range of lived experiences from a diverse range of backgrounds and our aim is that this panel would be embedded within the design process.

Delivering high quality environments is essential if we are to create safer, better places and this is why the level of place-making will be assessed as part of the design assurance process.

Support and training

We have a strong foundation to build on across South Yorkshire, our local authority partners in the region are already leading the way nationally and we are keen to build on this and develop best practice.

A new and ambitious approach requires developing further skills to ensure the ideas in this strategy become a reality. This means learning from experts and visiting exemplar neighbourhoods and routes both within and outside of the region. We are committed to a programme of site visits over the next 18 months. This is also about everyone involved in the design process having an appreciation of the daily challenges facing individuals wanting to use the walking, wheeling and cycling network. This will be delivered by working with a range of organisations focused on inclusivity and accessibility.



We will continue to foster an environment of collaboration and shared endeavour between our local authority partners. This will be achieved by building upon the numerous workshops and conferences which have helped shape our strategy and develop Local Walking Wheeling and Cycling Investment Plans.

Over the last year and a half we have facilitated six workshops and two training sessions to help co-design our strategy with our local authority partners. We've had over 200 attendances working across our organisations in transport, public health, sport and physical activity, road safety, planning, neighbourhoods and community, as well as key national stakeholders such as Active Travel England.

What support do we need from national government?

There is a lot that we can do in South Yorkshire, but we need the support of central government too – both to ensure we don't duplicate effort and for regulatory change. We want to work with our partners in Department for Transport and Active Travel England to:

- Ensure they support us to keep increasing the quality and inclusivity of our designs by providing national guidance and standards incorporating walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Develop and adopt a national policy on side road zebras, following the outcome of the ongoing trials conducted by the DfT, and continuous footways, including their inclusion in any new national standards that are adopted.
- Develop a stronger national framework to support the restriction and enforcement of pavement parking, including making traffic regulation orders that ban pavement parking easier to implement.

Making our software impactful



Developed with our South Yorkshire communities and tailored to their wants and needs, we will provide a range of software measures within our approach to Safer Neighbourhoods, with a **focus around schools**, and Routes to Opportunities, with a **focus around e-bikes**. These are set out in the relevant sections above. As well as every new scheme integrating software measures together with hardware improvements and road and street safety measures, we anticipate some South Yorkshire wide initiatives too.

Safer neighbourhoods

Our software projects and initiatives in neighbourhoods will focus around giving people, especially children and those less able to get out and about, the capability and motivation to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle where they live, with a major focus on schools.

Safer Neighbourhoods activity is co-designed with local communities and groups, and we will use wide-ranging engagement to ensure that community voices are central to our decisions.

A focus on children and schools

In his Mayoral 2024 manifesto, Oliver Coppard pledged to make 'South Yorkshire the best place in the country to walk, wheel and cycle for our children, with an ambitious plan for active travel centred around schools.'

Over 140,000 South Yorkshire children aged up to 11 make the school run each day. Alongside our 70,000+ 12 to 16-year-olds in education, we want as many children to safely walk, wheel and cycle to and from school as we know this will support happy, healthy South Yorkshire children.

We will work closely with and provide support to our 408 primary schools, 77 secondary schools and 45 SEND schools, to help them support parents and children to walk, wheel, scoot, cycle or use buses or trams to get school.



Our schools are already doing a lot, supported by millions of pounds of funding from local and central government:

89

schools take part in Living Streets WOW – Walk to School Challenge

95

schools hold Modeshift STARS travel plan accreditation

57%

pupils receive bikeability L2 training³⁴

2,000

children taking part last year in Barnsley's innovative integrated programme "Ramp Up"

18%

increase in children receiving bikeability L2

19

School Streets (with three more planned)



What will we do?

Our local authorities and third sector partners are already working incredibly hard to support tens of thousands of children and families to walk, wheel and cycle more, especially to school. We will work with them to coordinate investments and programmes, where needed, and help to provide schools with a simple offering to maximise the impact of projects and programmes.

The Mayor has awarded new investment over the next years of over £1m for:

- Coordinating providers to ensure a joined-up approach between cycle training, promotional events and other software measures currently offered.
- Providing additional funding for high quality cycle shelters and scooter parking at schools.
- Providing children from our most deprived communities with balance and pedal bikes, trikes and scooters.
- Providing non-standard bikes for kids that need them.
- Enhanced support and close working with existing school walking, wheeling and cycling delivery partners.

Supporting communities in our neighbourhoods

Our Safer Neighbourhoods work will continue to build and deliver established capability and behaviour change interventions SYMCA support through local authorities, such as:

- Led walks and wellbeing walks - group activities welcoming people to be active and meet new people in an organised setting.
- Led ride popups - temporary events providing a safe and friendly space for people of all ages and abilities to chat, receive support and hire bikes, including non-standard cycles.
- Adult and child learn to ride - courses for all ages dedicated to improving bike handling and skills.
- Health referral programmes, including social prescribing - tailored support for people to increase their physical activity levels, with information, advice and recommendations based on their needs and what matters most to them.
- Challenge and incentive schemes; 'gamification', such as "Beat the Street" and "Better Points" - initiatives and events that encourage physical activity through fun challenges, points-based games and competitive scoring.



Routes to Opportunities

Our software projects and initiatives along Routes to Opportunities will focus around enabling people to get to work and learning opportunities they would not otherwise be able to access. This will involve supporting them to walk and wheel to link in with public transport opportunities, especially bus and tram, and also to cycle where appropriate, especially through supporting people to access e-bikes.

A focus on e-bikes

E-bikes have the potential to radically extend the reach of cycling to many more people than who currently feel they are able. Their electric motors provide assistance when pedaling to flatten out those South Yorkshire hills and are great for those who don't feel confident on a bike or who want or need that extra bit of help. For those who work shifts at times when public transport is less regular, an e-bike could be a viable option to connect home to work.

However, e-bikes are expensive and are far beyond many people's budgets. Our local authorities all have successful bike loan schemes already and, supported by Active Travel England, we are already investing an additional £500k to help people access them.

We are currently designing a new programme to support people who cannot access cycle to work schemes, particularly those in low-income groups, to access e-bikes for much longer periods of time, so they become a really viable form of transport. And we will also support any of our local authorities who want to invest in cycle hire schemes in their city centres.

Local authorities across South Yorkshire have already made great progress in helping people take up cycling, especially through e-bike loan schemes that reduce barriers and promote active travel. Here's how each area is supporting residents:

- The Active Travel Hub at Doncaster Train Station offers free e-bike loans to support commuting, leisure, and health—particularly for those who benefit from electric assistance. Between April 2022 and April 2024, the hub issued 167 e-bike loans.
- Barnsley Bike Works runs a free one-month e-bike loan scheme. Residents can borrow an e-bike along with a helmet, pannier bag, and lock. The scheme helps people overcome financial and practical barriers to cycling, offering a flexible and healthy way to travel.
- The Rotherham Journey Matters Hub provides free e-bike loans for 1–3 months. Participants receive all the essentials—helmet, bag, lock, and lights—and the team maintains the bike throughout the loan. Free cycle training is also available to boost confidence and skills.
- The Sheffield CycleBoost e-bike rental scheme gives residents the chance to try an e-bike for a month or longer without the upfront cost of buying one. It's a great way for anyone curious about switching to an e-bike to give it a go before committing.



More support getting to our regional hubs and employers

Other software projects within our Routes to Opportunities theme will support our regional hubs and employers by providing services such as:

- **Dr Bike** - a mobile service that can come to your home or work and perform simple repairs and servicing.
- **Cycle maintenance classes** - short sessions aimed to help people understand and look after their bike a bit better.
- **Personalised Travel Planning** - targeted support and information from trained advisors to help people make travel choices.
- **Cycle hire (inc. e-bikes)** - a service allowing people to pay to borrow a bike to make a journey.
- **Cycle loans (inc. e-bikes)** - free loans to help people access bikes.
- **Cycle training and cycle skills building (inc. e-bikes)** - helping adults get confident on their bikes.

Getting to a bus or tram stop often involves a walking, wheeling or cycling trip from home or elsewhere. We want to make these journeys easier and safer to support people to use public transport for their onward trips and we will be working with our public transport teams, especially as we design new bus and tram services, to provide truly integrated transport.



Our overall approach

We aim to deliver on our software projects in a way that can deliver long-term meaningful change, helping people to travel differently. This will be based around:

- **Behavioural insight**
We need to have detailed understanding of how and why people make their travel choices, and what could influence them in the future. This will be centred around understanding the three key components of behaviour change – Capability, Opportunity and Motivation.
- **Sustainable funding**
To ensure the projects and campaigns we fund are not supported indefinitely without results.
- **Robust monitoring and evaluation**
To understand what and how well we're achieving will shape our future programme and hold us to account.
- **Complementing what is being delivered by others**
Duplication is wasteful; we will work with our local authority and private sector partners to ensure our approach is designed to build on what others are already doing.

Successful behaviour change campaigns provide people with the capability and opportunity to walk, wheel and cycle more, through information and targeted support. We also want to build on recent campaigns like “This Girl Can” to improve the motivation for change, and we will be looking to develop collaboratively different campaigns that will make being more active feel more appealing, relevant and possible for everyone.



Network maps

We have worked collaboratively with our Local Authority partners across Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield councils to produce an ultimate topline desired network for walking, wheeling and cycling for South Yorkshire. Each partner has developed a network map for their own investment plans, and these have been brought together into our strategy to show the shared ambition across the region.

The network maps produced have used the approach outlined in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan guidance, alongside community evidence base findings and additional data such as Local Plan sites, connections to public transport and lines of severance. The exact approach taken has been based upon the requirements of each local authority, and as such each area looks slightly different.

Greater detail on the priorities and pipeline for investment is shown with the individual investment plans produced by each area within our region.

Over the coming year we will continue to work with our Local Authority partners to develop these maps with an aim to produce an online version.

Map 1: Walking and wheeling zones to 2045

The map is based on information provided by each local authority. Each local authority has approached their walking network slightly differently, we have overlayed the walkability tool* which shows where areas may have better access to amenities.

The **walkability tool** helps to better understand how accessible daily amenities are from people's homes, with a higher score given for a higher number of amenities within reasonable walking distance. The process identifies areas where focused investment would have the greatest impact on walking trips.

Map 2: Desired cycling network to 2045

The map is based on information provided by each local authority. Each local authority has approached their cycling network slightly differently, for example, Sheffield has used a straight-line planning tool – showing places to be connected, whereas Rotherham has opted to just show the strategic cycling network. For Barnsley and Doncaster existing routes which require upgrade have been included. The National Cycle Network has been included, for context.

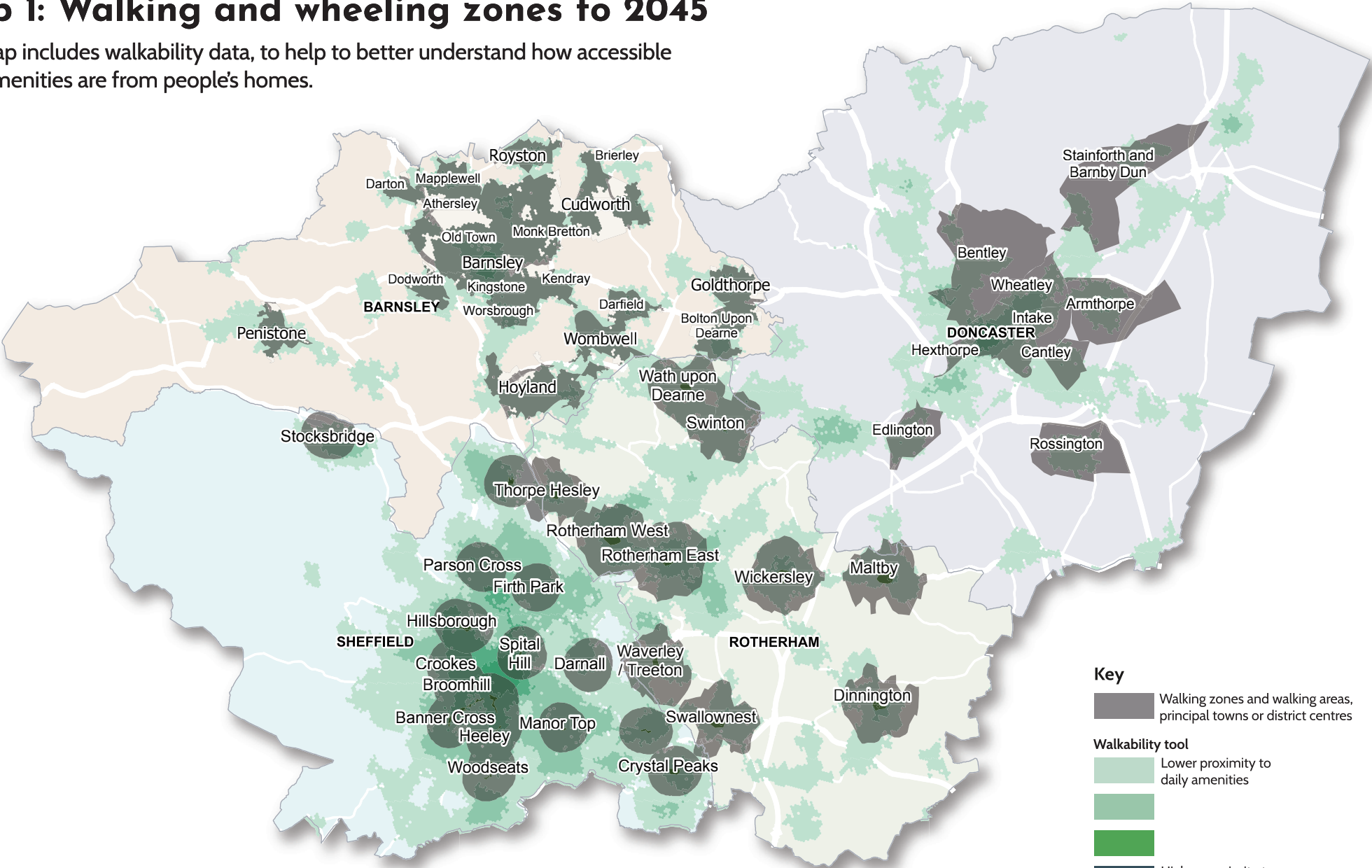
Map 3: Walking, wheeling and cycling projects delivered since 2019 - funded to 2027

The map shows projects which have been delivered since the publication of our previous Active Travel Implementation Plan or are funded for delivery to 2027. It shows both pure walking, wheeling and cycling or 'active travel' projects, plus 'multimodal' schemes which include some improvements for people walking, wheeling and cycling. The map also shows projects where funding has been awarded for 'development' only.

Schemes which are funded but not yet delivered will go through public consultation and cabinet approval – so may result in some change.

Map 1: Walking and wheeling zones to 2045

This map includes walkability data, to help to better understand how accessible daily amenities are from people's homes.



Key

Walking zones and walking areas, principal towns or district centres

Walkability tool

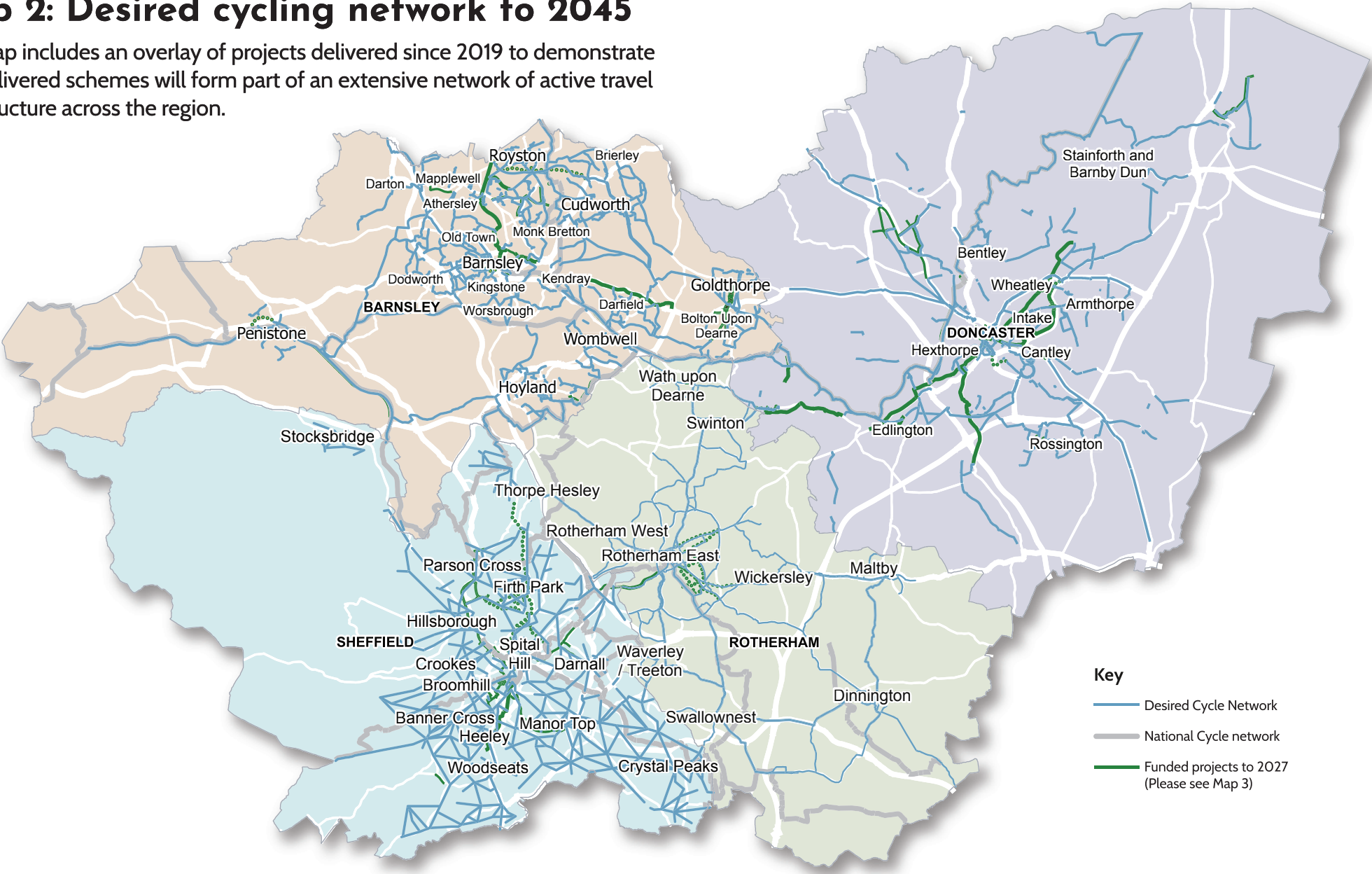
Lower proximity to daily amenities

Higher proximity to daily amenities

* The walkability tool helps to better understand how accessible daily amenities are from people's homes, with a higher score given for a higher number of amenities within reasonable walking distance. The process identifies areas where focused investment would have the greatest impact on walking trips.

Map 2: Desired cycling network to 2045

This map includes an overlay of projects delivered since 2019 to demonstrate that delivered schemes will form part of an extensive network of active travel infrastructure across the region.



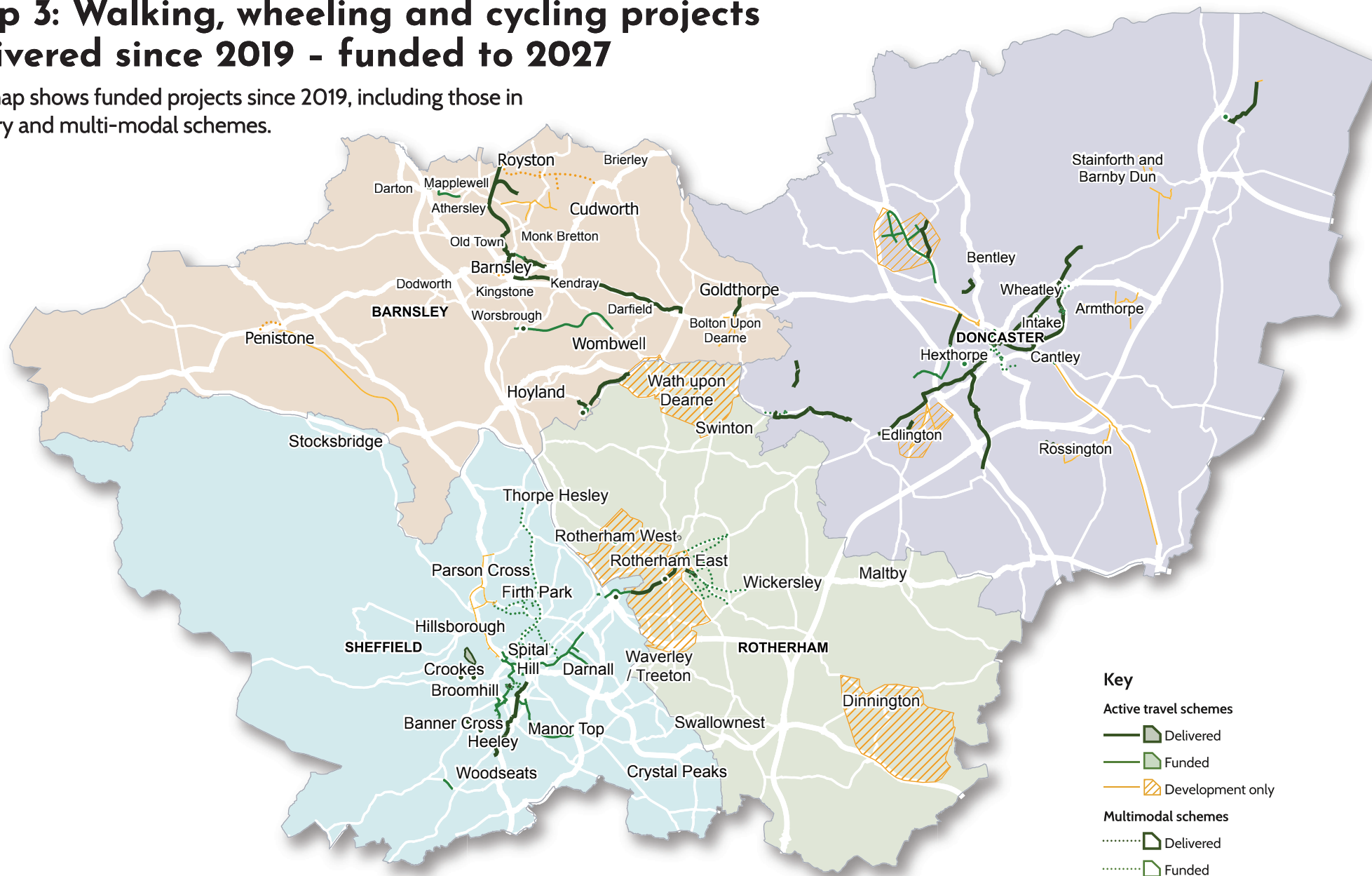
Key

- Desired Cycle Network
- National Cycle network
- Funded projects to 2027
(Please see Map 3)

Source: Barnsley Council, Source: OpenStreetMaps under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 license (CC BY-SA 2.0) and OS Premium Addressbase Data., Source: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Source: Doncaster Council

Map 3: Walking, wheeling and cycling projects delivered since 2019 - funded to 2027

This map shows funded projects since 2019, including those in delivery and multi-modal schemes.



'Multimodal' means projects which focus on other transport improvements, for example bus, but include benefits for people walking wheeling or cycling.

'Development only' means projects to design a scheme but not build it. These can form part of a pipeline for future investment.

Funding

We are currently developing the full funding plan and investment plan for the strategy in partnership with our local authorities and central government and we have developed a strong pipeline of schemes in each of our local authority areas to feed into the overall South Yorkshire pipeline.

As over the last eight years, we anticipate that the principal source of funding for this work will be from transport-related funds and we have developed a strong pipeline of schemes in each of our local authority areas to feed into the overall South Yorkshire pipeline. At the same time as we were developing the strategy in the summer of 2025, the government announced the funding allocations for the Mayoral Combined Authorities for their Transport for City Regions fund totalled £1.455bn for South Yorkshire from 2027 to 2032. During 2025 and into 2026 we will be developing a region-wide plan for this funding to support our ambitions to create an integrated transport network for the region including to support more people to walk, wheel and cycle.

Active Travel England also had their future funding announced in June 2025 to be £670m for all England regions from 2027 to 2032. During summer 2025, each Combined Authority took part in the Capability Ratings review process to determine their Capability Rating which will help determine future financial settlements. In the 2025/26 financial year, South Yorkshire received £5m in a one-year settlement.

But as well as transport funding, our plans will need to also integrate closely with other infrastructure projects and funding sources, for example urban renewal, new developments and public transport schemes, so that communities feel we are working closely together on single solutions that work for them, rather than disjointed or piecemeal funding.

We will also be developing a funding plan for our software projects, in particular, developing a clear shared narrative for funding with sport and physical activity and public health interventions as both have such a clear relationship with walking, wheeling and cycling. We want to explore private and voluntary funding sources alongside public sector funding.



What will our funding model be?

We believe that to really shift the numbers of people choosing to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys and have fun being outside, we will need to provide the opportunity, capability and motivation to support people to choose to move more and differently. This integrated approach extends to how we fund future projects.

For projects in a specific place

All new schemes and projects which focus on a specific geographical area from 2024 will include funding dedicated to each of:

Hardware

infrastructure on the ground which gives people the capability and opportunity to choose to walk, wheel and cycle

Road and street safety measures

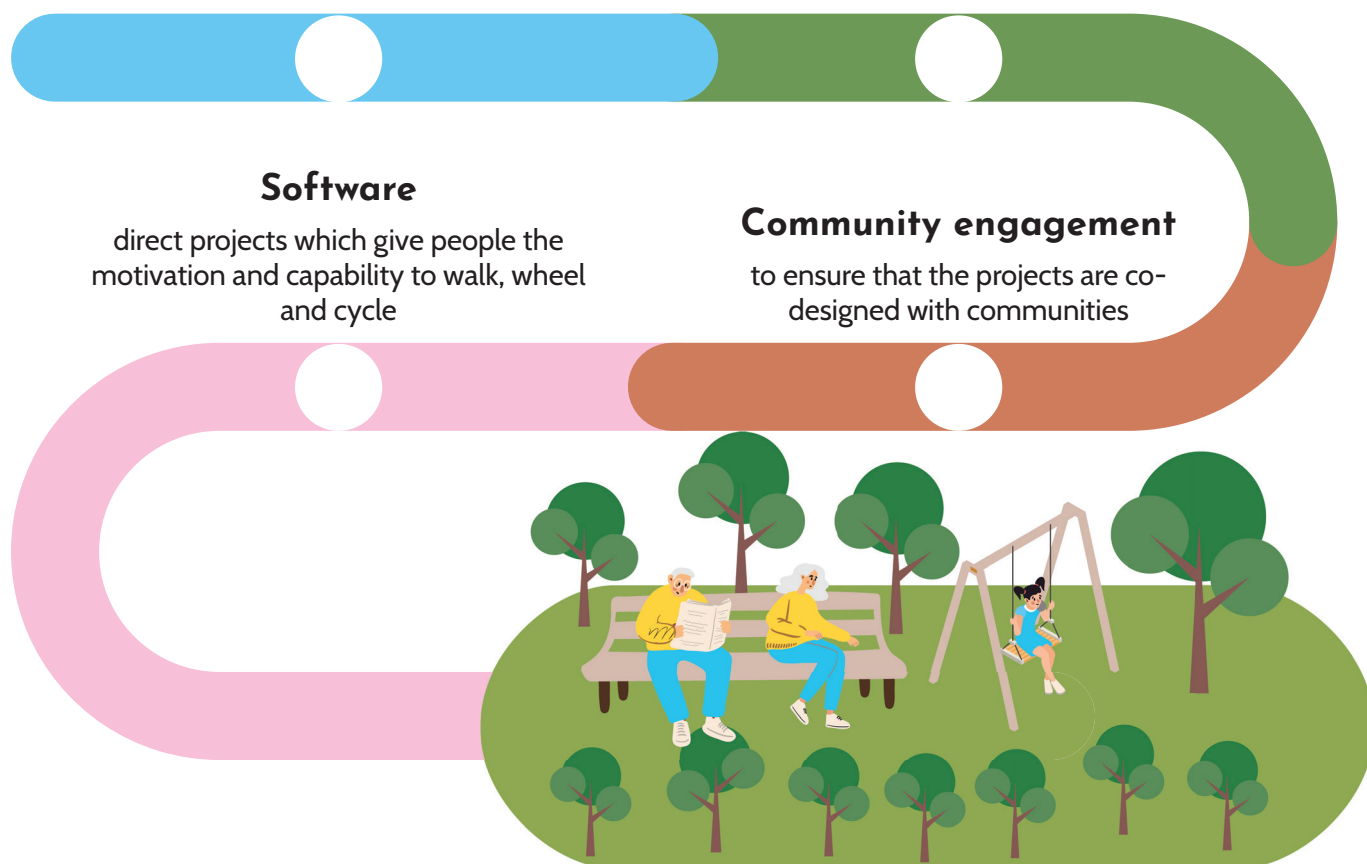
which make it safer, and feel safer, to walk, wheel and cycle more

Software

direct projects which give people the motivation and capability to walk, wheel and cycle

Community engagement

to ensure that the projects are co-designed with communities



We will work with our local authority partners to ensure that all new projects focussed on a specific area with capital funding, include the funding for the community engagement work, software, campaigns and communications needed to give people the capability and motivation to move differently, as well as the opportunity provided by new hardware. We may have more flexibility under a Single Settlement for South Yorkshire in how we allocate capital and revenue to specific projects if we think this is necessary to truly realise the benefits of each project.

Monitoring, evaluation and research

Robust and comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and research are key to understanding whether we're achieving our goals and to continuously improving future activities and interventions. They help us learn, make informed decisions, avoid unintended consequences, and ensure transparency and accountability in everything we do and every pound we spend.

Our approach will reflect best practice in the field, enabling outcome-focussed, evidence-based decision-making to flow from the process. This will include using innovative evaluation and research approaches, and we are keen to partner with our South Yorkshire universities who can provide independent and expert input and review. Our approach will be adaptable and transparent, communicating findings to partners, stakeholders and the public as comprehensively as we can. And at all times, we will aim to be proportionate to the resources available.

A comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and research plan based on our desired outcomes will be published in 2026 and annual reports will be published to update on our progress.



Regional outcomes

At the regional level this will be based on annually tracking progress on each of the six outcomes up to 2035. This will give a regional picture on walking, wheeling and cycling. As well as the amount people are walking, wheeling and cycling, perceptions and attitudes are an important gauge of progress.

The data sources for the annual tracking of outcomes are set out below:

Whilst this is in progress, we will be developing a clear way to measure our 6 key outcomes, likely initially as set out below.

Increase in adults walking and wheeling (10 mins per day)

Walking, wheeling & cycling statistics (DfT)

Increase in adults cycling (once per week)

Walking, wheeling & cycling statistics (DfT)

Increase in children cycling (once per week)

Active Lives Children & Young People School Surveys

Increase in children walking, wheeling & cycling to school

Active Lives Children & Young People School Surveys

Increase in proportion of journeys using walking, wheeling & cycling (mode shift)

We will work with DfT on the National Travel Survey (NTS) to ensure a robust input for active modes going forward and use comparable local data to cross reference

Increase in number of people wanting to do more walking and cycling

Annual Travel Survey (SYMCA)

For individual schemes

In addition to monitoring of outcomes at a regional level every piece of hardware and software will have measurable outputs, such as the following:

Outputs

- Kilometres of footway or cycleway (on highway)
- Kilometres of path (off highway)
- Crossings
- Signalised junctions
- Area of traffic management scheme, such as speed reduction treatments, traffic flow, school streets
- Public Realm improvements
- Cycle parking

Changes in behaviour and attitude

- Numbers of people walking, wheeling and cycling
- Numbers of people engaged in software projects
- Lengths and frequencies of active journeys made

Key outcomes

- Perceptions of local community or neighbourhood
- Perceptions of regular journeys

We will produce an annual report that shows what we've delivered with our local authority partners, reflecting our commitment to transparency and responsible spending. Every project will include a clear monitoring and evaluation plan for tracking progress and assessing impact, with a dedicated budget for data collection and analysis built into overall costs. We will also build on approaches and insights from previous locally specific evaluations to strengthen future planning. These expectations will be set out in our forthcoming framework.



Endnotes

- 1 South Yorkshire Plan for Good Growth.
Available at: https://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/getmedia/Oa501851-f673-4337-972a-43608d62fff9/SYMCA-PlanForGoodGrowth_Final.pdf
- 2 Sheffield Hallam University (2018) – Research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that transport barriers, particularly in low-income areas of South Yorkshire, significantly restrict access to employment. Issues include unreliable bus services, high travel costs, and poor alignment between transport and job locations.
Available at: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/centre-regional-economic-social-research/publications/tackling-transport-related-barriers-to-employment-in-low-income-neighbourhoods>
- 3 Local Government Association (2024) – National analysis highlights how inadequate local transport infrastructure contributes to economic exclusion. In areas like South Yorkshire, poor public transport connectivity limits access to jobs and education, especially for those without private vehicles.
Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/how-local-transport-infrastructure-influences-economic-inclusion>
University College London (UCL) – Academic review on transport poverty shows that limited mobility leads to social disadvantage, restricting participation in work, education, and community life. The report calls for integrated transport and social policy to address exclusion.
Available at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/transport/sites/transport/files/transport-poverty.pdf>
- 4 Local Government Association (2024). How Local Transport Infrastructure Influences Economic Inclusion. The report highlights that poor transport connectivity is a key barrier to employment. A 1% improvement in public transport journey times could reduce employment deprivation by 0.91%.
Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications>
- 5 Office for National Statistics (2023). Health and Disability and the Labour Market, UK: 2023. Over 2.5 million working-age people are economically inactive due to long-term sickness, an increase of more than 400,000 since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk>
- 6 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). Plan for Growth: Economic Analysis. The Authority has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040. The report identifies that transport contributes approximately 26% of the region's total emissions.
Available at: <https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk>
- 7 RAC Foundation (2020). The Future of Mobility: Short Car Trips in the UK. Based on Department for Transport data, around 50% of car journeys are less than 3 km, and 22% are under 1 km. These short trips present opportunities for modal shift to walking, cycling, or public transport.
Available at: <https://www.racfoundation.org>
- 8 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (2024). Police and Crime Plan 2025–2029. The plan states that over 250 people walking, wheeling, or cycling are killed or seriously injured by vehicles each year in South Yorkshire, identifying them as the region's most vulnerable road users.
Available at: <https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk>
- 9 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (2024). Police and Crime Plan 2025–2029. The plan reports that 39 people were killed on South Yorkshire's roads in 2023, including 17 pedestrians. It also highlights that individuals living in low-income areas are disproportionately affected by road traffic injuries, being twice as likely to be harmed.
Available at: <https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk>

- 10 Sustrans (2022). Are We Nearly There Yet? Exploring Gender and Travel. The report highlights that women frequently avoid travelling alone after dark due to safety concerns and are more likely to choose private transport for personal security. It cites ONS data showing that one in two women feel unsafe walking alone at night, and many adjust their travel behaviour accordingly.
Available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk>
- 11 Centre for Transport Studies, University College London (2016) Social impacts of road traffic: perceptions and priorities of local residents.
Available at: <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1527704/> et al. 2017 Social impacts of road traffic. pdf
- 12 Living Streets (2018). The Pedestrian Pound: The Business Case for Better Streets and Places. The report presents evidence from UK case studies showing that improvements to public spaces—such as making high streets more welcoming and walkable—can increase local retail spend by up to 30%.
Available at: <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk>
- 13 The Health Foundation (2024) Inequalities in access to green space
Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub/our-surroundings/green-space/inequalities-in-access-to-green-space>
- 14 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (2024). Health Equity Panel Report. The report states that 1 in 4 adults in South Yorkshire do less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week. It also highlights that inactivity rates are higher among women, people from Black ethnic backgrounds, and those from lower income groups.
Available at: <https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk>
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South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

11 Broad Street West,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 2BQ
0114 220 3400

enquiries@southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk

