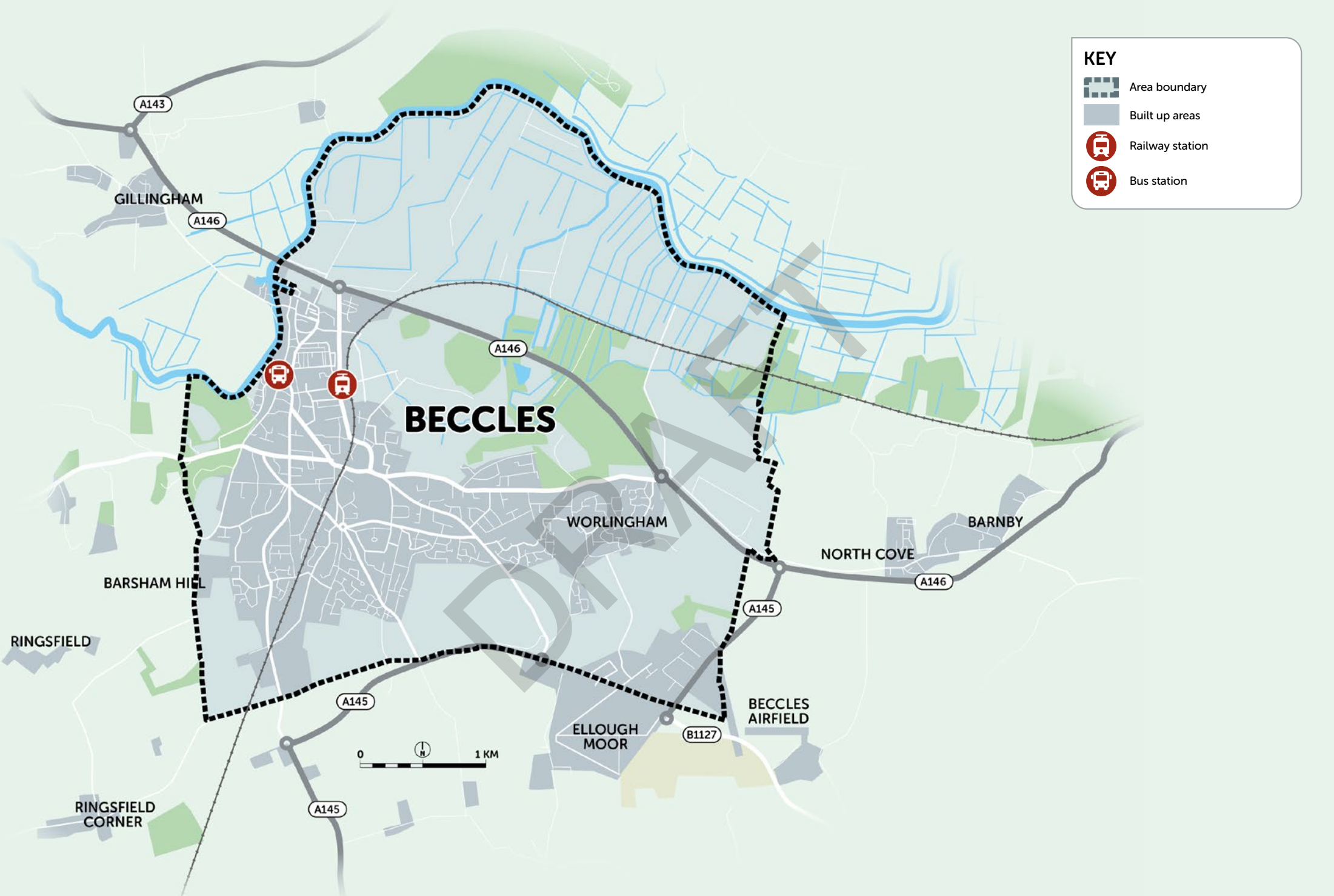






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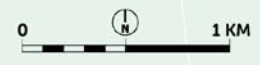
Beccles Area Transport Plan





KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  Railway station
-  Bus station



Introduction

Beccles is a market town on the bank of the river Waveney. Its functional area includes Worlingham and is based in the north of Suffolk in the district of East Suffolk. Beccles is close to the Norfolk border and is situated near key towns and cities, such as Lowestoft, Ipswich, Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

It is a historic market town, home to a mix of boutiques and antiques shops, a Lido and the river Waveney, making it a key tourist destination.

The current population of Beccles is 13,705¹ individuals. This is set to increase over the next decade through the creation of the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood.

The plan area includes a variable network of walking, wheeling and cycling route. National Cycle Routes 1 and 51 pass through the town. However, active travel facilities such as narrow footpaths and varying use of streetlights creating poorly lit areas in the centre of the town are examples of a low-quality environment. There are also limited pedestrian and cycling facilities from the town centre to the railway station and the Ellough Road Industrial Estate.



Beccles
population

13,705
residents



15%

of people
are 15 years old
or younger

29%

of people
are over the
age of 65



55%

of households are
deprived in one or
more dimensions



Travel patterns

17%

of households
don't own a
vehicle



46%

of people travel
less than 5km
to work



15%

of people
walk, wheel or
cycle to work



20%

of people
work mainly
from home



**School
travel**



Pockets of

8%

of school
children cycle to
school.

Less than

5%

of school children
cycle to school
in other areas of
Beccles²

Less than

2%



take the bus

Less than

1%



take the train



57%



drive a car or van to work

Reasons for change



Decarbonisation of Transport

In the Beccles area, 18% of commuters travel to work by walking, wheeling and cycling or take the bus. In order to meet Suffolk’s pathway to net zero, the proportion of commuter trips across Suffolk undertaken by these modes should rise to 35%³. Furthermore, the government targets half of all journeys to be undertaken by active travel modes in towns across the country⁴. Existing infrastructure and sustainable transport services restrict people’s sustainable travel options.



Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

Nearly a third of the population of Beccles are over 65 which means many are in a position where they can enjoy more active trips, while connecting with nature and the local community all via improvements to the active travel infrastructure⁵. Increasing physical activity is linked to improved mental and physical health outcomes at all stages of life and prevention of chronic and acute health conditions.





A Strong, Sustainable and Fair Economy

Growth in housing and employment has been earmarked through East Suffolk's Local Plan between Beccles and Worlingham and to the south. The growth is unlikely to be sustainable in Beccles unless issues on the transport network can be mitigated. The emphasis will be on a reduction in demand through a shift to sustainable and high-occupancy modes, though capacity improvements may be acceptable if no alternatives provide sufficient mitigation.



Creating Better Places

There are opportunities to enhance how people interact with the town centre. Improved provision for walking, wheeling and cycling in the town centre, most notably at Market Street and connections to the bus station, railway station, River Waveney northeast and to the town and the Ellough Road Industrial Estate southeast of Beccles, will help to create healthier, more attractive and more accessible streets.



Summary of objectives

The Beccles Area Transport Plan will support the development of sustainable travel options for the town's residents and visitors, so they become more attractive and realistic choices for everyone.

Enable active travel to be the default choice for shorter trips

Improve bus punctuality and reliability

Improve the integration of modes

Maximise growth opportunities

Support town centre economies

Engage with industry to limit the impact of lorries and other large vehicles on communities



OBJECTIVE

Enable active travel to be the default choice for shorter trips

A network of key walking and cycling routes in Beccles has already been identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which is closely aligned with the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy.

We will implement the following initiatives to make active travel the default choice for shorter trips:

Invest in a core walking zone

We will increase the number of residents walking by maximising the space available for pedestrians and improving the condition and appearance of pedestrian infrastructure. Focus will be given to Market Street, Smallgate, Ballygate, The Walk and Sheepgate area. The schemes will be developed in conjunction with relevant plans for the town centre. There will also be improvements to accessibility and safety.

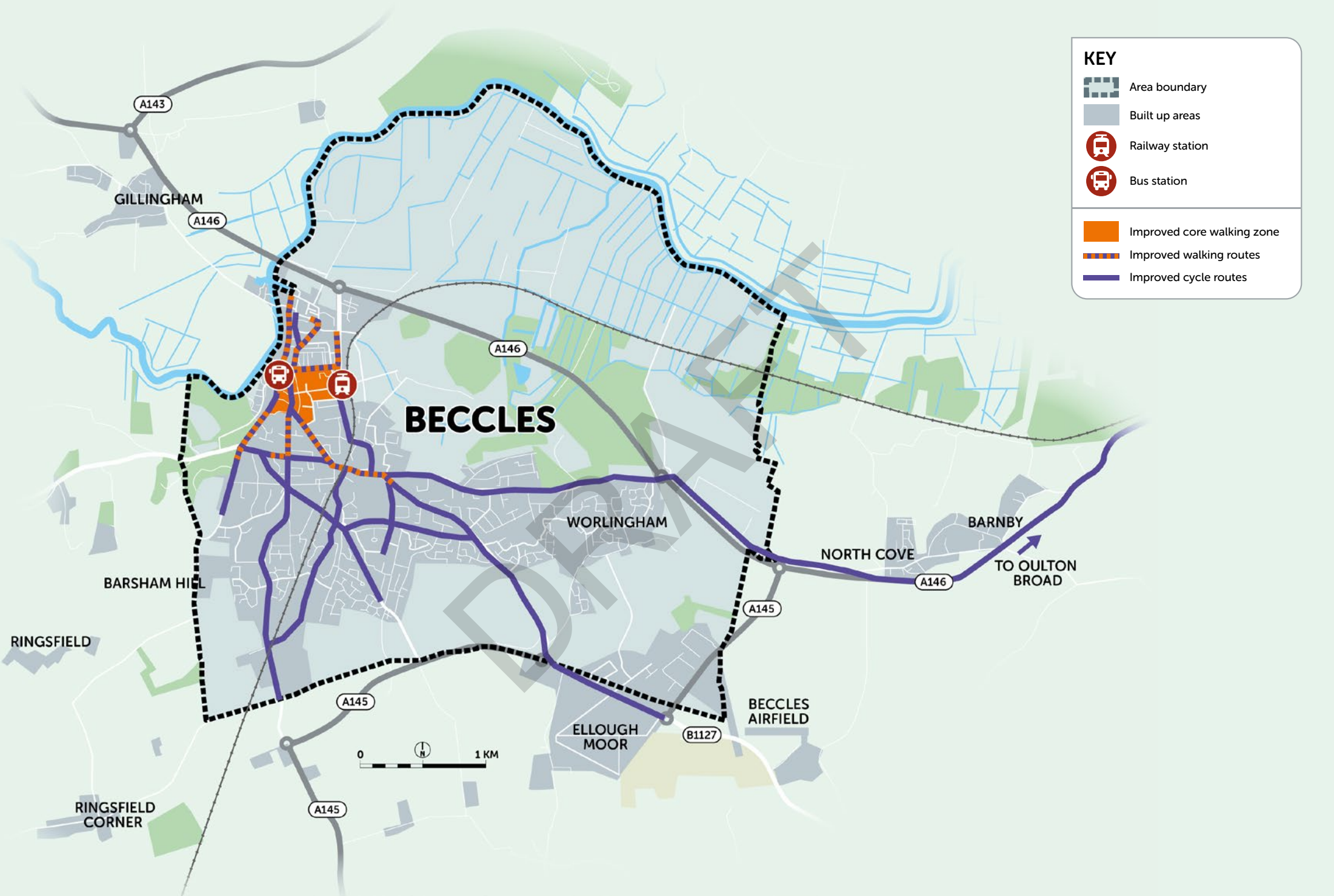
Prioritise walking routes

We will improve footways, crossing points and wayfinding signage along key walking routes in the town. We will focus on key links between the town centre, bus station, railway station, education and employment clusters and Ecch Beccles Hospital.

Prioritise cycle routes

To encourage more residents to cycle for short and medium trips (under 5 kms) we will introduce a number of installations including high-quality segregated cycle paths, priority crossing points for cyclists, modal filters and other traffic-calming measures to reduce speed and make cycling safer. We will also increase the number of secure cycle parking options. The key cycling routes will include encouraging pedestrians and cyclists to move between the main town square, bus station, and railway station with a focus on The Walk, Smallgate and Market Street. Creating a more attractive active travel environment along The Walk and Northgate, Blyburgate and Hungate to improve the gateway to the town centre and the River Waveney.





KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  Railway station
-  Bus station
-  Improved core walking zone
-  Improved walking routes
-  Improved cycle routes

OBJECTIVE

Improve bus punctuality and reliability

A range of bus services operate in Beccles including connections to Norwich, Ipswich, Lowestoft, Carlton Corville and Gt Yarmouth. A demand responsive service links passengers to villages around Beccles and to the railway station and key services.

We will support greater coverage and frequency of services with an aspiration to achieve:

- Town service – half-hourly
- More flexible bus services that better meet local community demands, especially for those in surrounding villages
- Town bus service which includes the bus station, railway station and essential services
- Interurban connections to Norwich, Ipswich and Lowestoft (hourly / 2 hourly)
- Demand responsive services – daily connections

Complementary measures will also be explored to alleviate delays to buses including addressing inconsiderate vehicle parking either blocking access to bus stops or general progress along bus routes.

We will continue to promote bus travel as a more sustainable way of connecting into Beccles as we transition away from diesel buses to our Zero Emissions Bus Plan. This move will help alleviate local air quality issues, particularly around schools at drop off and pick up times.



OBJECTIVE

Improve the integration of modes

The main transport hubs in Beccles are the bus station located on Old Market and the railway station on Station Road. Consideration will also be given to sites earmarked for growth in via East Suffolk's Local Plan, notably, the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood.

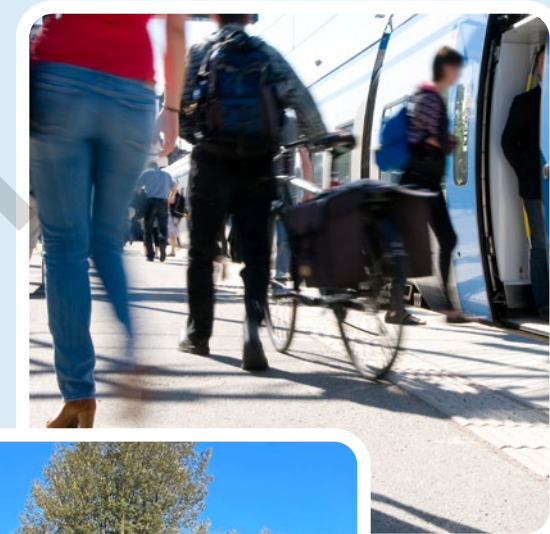
We will support measures to improve the layout of the railway station car park to enhance modal integration and provide inclusive infrastructure that enables a choice of travel options for station users. This includes improvements to cycle racks on the down platform, improvements to the current bridge and ramp to ensure the station and its platforms are accessible to all and an update to the facilities at the Station Road Bus Stop.

We will support a review of waiting facilities at the bus station inclusive of shelters, passenger information (preferably real-time) and sufficient high-quality cycle parking.

The wider active travel network which connects to / from the railway station and bus station will be explored to ensure coherent connections to walking, wheeling and cycling routes are made to key services and facilities. This includes modern wayfinding signage.

We will continue to support our colleagues at East Suffolk Council with the installation of electric vehicle charging points with more charging at places people visit regularly. This will include maximising opportunities at district run / owned carparks.

We will collaborate with partners to rationalise and consolidate car parking provision in Beccles, so it is managed appropriately with consideration to highway efficiency and all its users including those walking, wheeling, cycling, and traveling by public transport.



OBJECTIVE

Maximise growth opportunities

Plans for growth in the area plan are mainly focused on the following strategic sites:

- The Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood. The site is between the southern edge of Beccles and the recently constructed Beccles Southern Relief Road. The site is allocated for approximately 1250 dwellings and other uses. A key consideration is that the site should have sustainable transport links to the existing communities in southern Beccles, with all vehicular access being directed to the relief road.
- Land South of Benacre at Ellough Airfield is allocated for employment development
- South of Beccles, West of London Road, the site is allocated for approximately 280 dwelling and other uses.

Through the Local Transport Plan, the priority will be to mitigate the impact of new developments through careful consideration with the Local Planning Authority over spatial planning and a shift to active and sustainable modes. However, where severe impacts cannot be mitigated through sustainable travel measures alone, capacity improvements may be required to fully mitigate new developments.



OBJECTIVE

Support town centre economies

We will support improvements to Beccles by improving the attractiveness of streets and spaces within the town centre.

The core walking zone includes Market Street, Smallgate, The Walk and Sheepgate area and the alleyways that connects the retail environment with the carparks, railway station and bus station.

We will support giving greater priority to pedestrians in this area by reducing/ removing traffic and parking. In particular in the Market Square area for certain periods of time. We will look at the use of increased seating and social spaces, more trees and planting and co-ordinated and accessible signage and lighting.

We will help to remove barriers to access the core walking zone by creating a clear, safe and direct pedestrian and cycling routes. This will help to encourage residents to consider sustainable travel modes to live, work and shop, therefore reducing the need to travel by private motor vehicle.

We will also consider reducing the national speed limit in the town centre of Beccles as well as reducing the speed of vehicles via physical means, such as chicanes and pavement widening.



OBJECTIVE

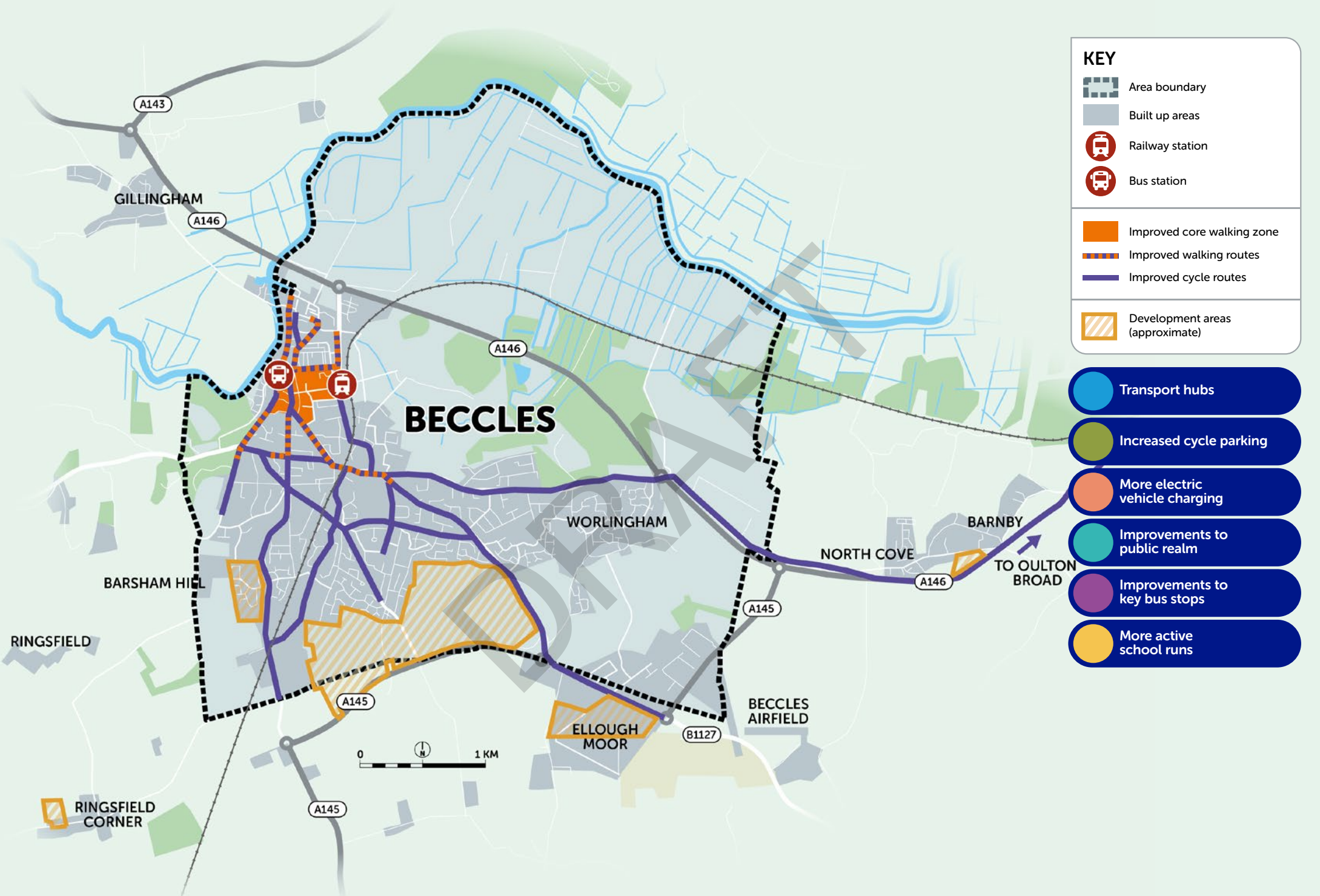
Engage with industry to limit the impact of lorries and other large vehicles on communities

We will continue to monitor the movement of lorries throughout the town via our lorry route plan and support heavy good vehicles only coming into the town centre for deliveries. This could be in conjunction with the use of physical measures to deter such vehicles from passing through the town centre zone entry points. This would be an area-wide scheme encompassing adjacent villages on the A145 and extending as far as Bungay.

We will support better wayfinding signposting to encourage through traffic to use more appropriate routes. In particular, traffic going north towards Norwich and west towards Diss will need to be signposted to encourage them to use the main road network around the town. Traffic needing to access the town itself should be encouraged to use the most appropriate access points.

We will also support businesses to make and receive their deliveries more efficiently which may include options such as e-cargo bikes and electric vehicles, contributing to making our transport network more sustainable.





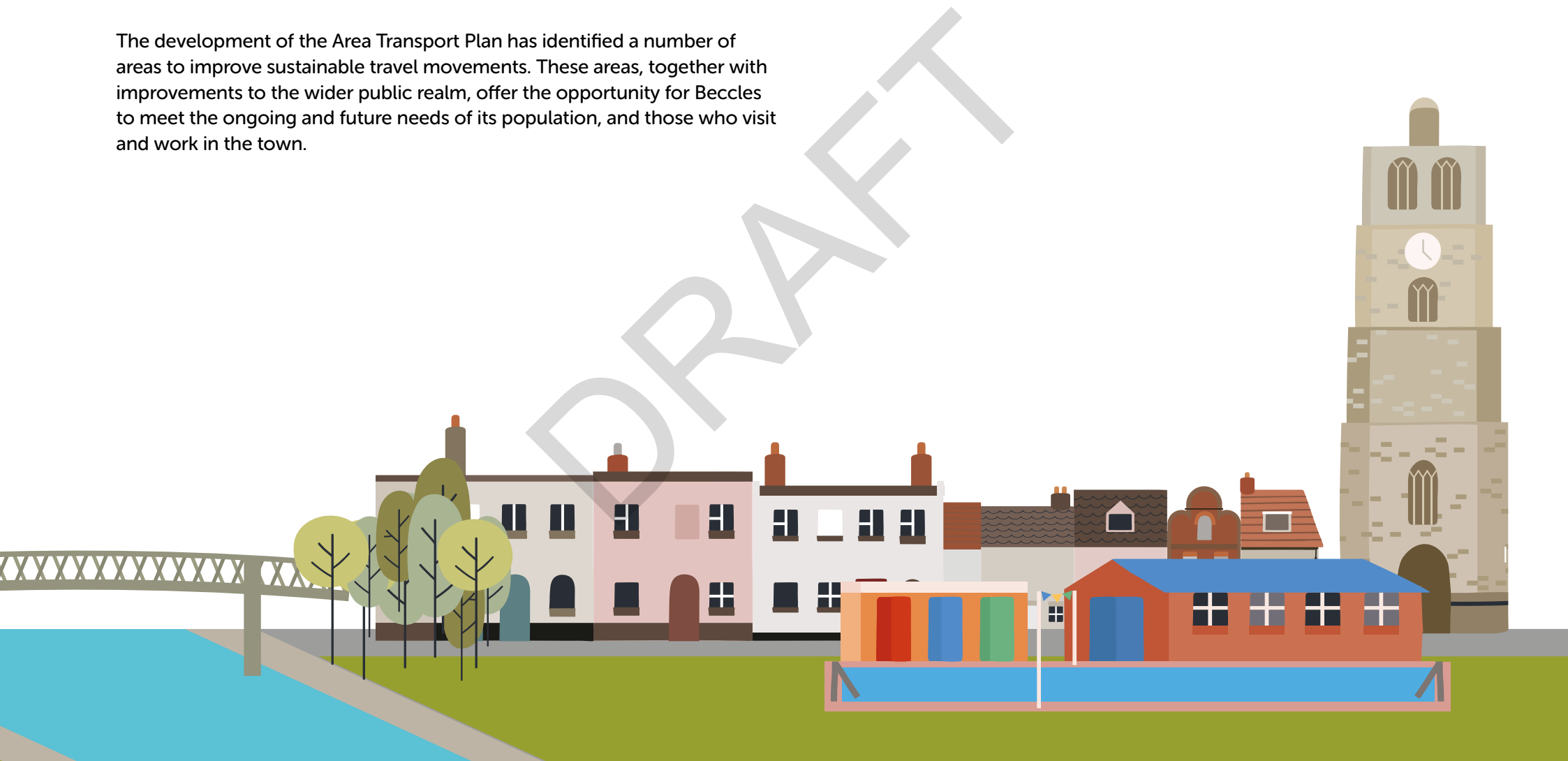
KEY

- Area boundary
- Built up areas
- Railway station
- Bus station
- Improved core walking zone
- Improved walking routes
- Improved cycle routes
- Development areas (approximate)

- Transport hubs
- Increased cycle parking
- More electric vehicle charging
- Improvements to public realm
- Improvements to key bus stops
- More active school runs

Our plans for Beccles

The development of the Area Transport Plan has identified a number of areas to improve sustainable travel movements. These areas, together with improvements to the wider public realm, offer the opportunity for Beccles to meet the ongoing and future needs of its population, and those who visit and work in the town.



Implementation plan

The table below indicates the county council’s priorities for investment over the next five years including schemes funded through the county council’s budgets, government funding and developer funding. The table does not include schemes delivered by 3rd parties.

Location	Description	Indicative Capital Investment
Beccles	Town centre walking and cycling improvements	£100,000
Beccles	Beccles to Lowestoft cycle route improvements	£100,000
Beccles	Improved cycle links to Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood	£100,000
Beccles	Modal integration at transport hubs	£30,000

References

- Office for National Statistics, Census Data (2021) www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/
- Office for National Statistics, Census Data (2011) **Propensity to Cycle Tool - Suffolk (pct.bike)**
- Suffolk Climate Emergency **Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan-Summer-23.pdf (greensuffolk.org)**
- Gear Change. A bold vision for cycling and walking <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/>
- How to travel better: a beginner’s guide to sustainable travel in 2023 and beyond <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/how-to-travel-better-a-beginners-guide-to-sustainable-travel-in-2023-and-beyond>