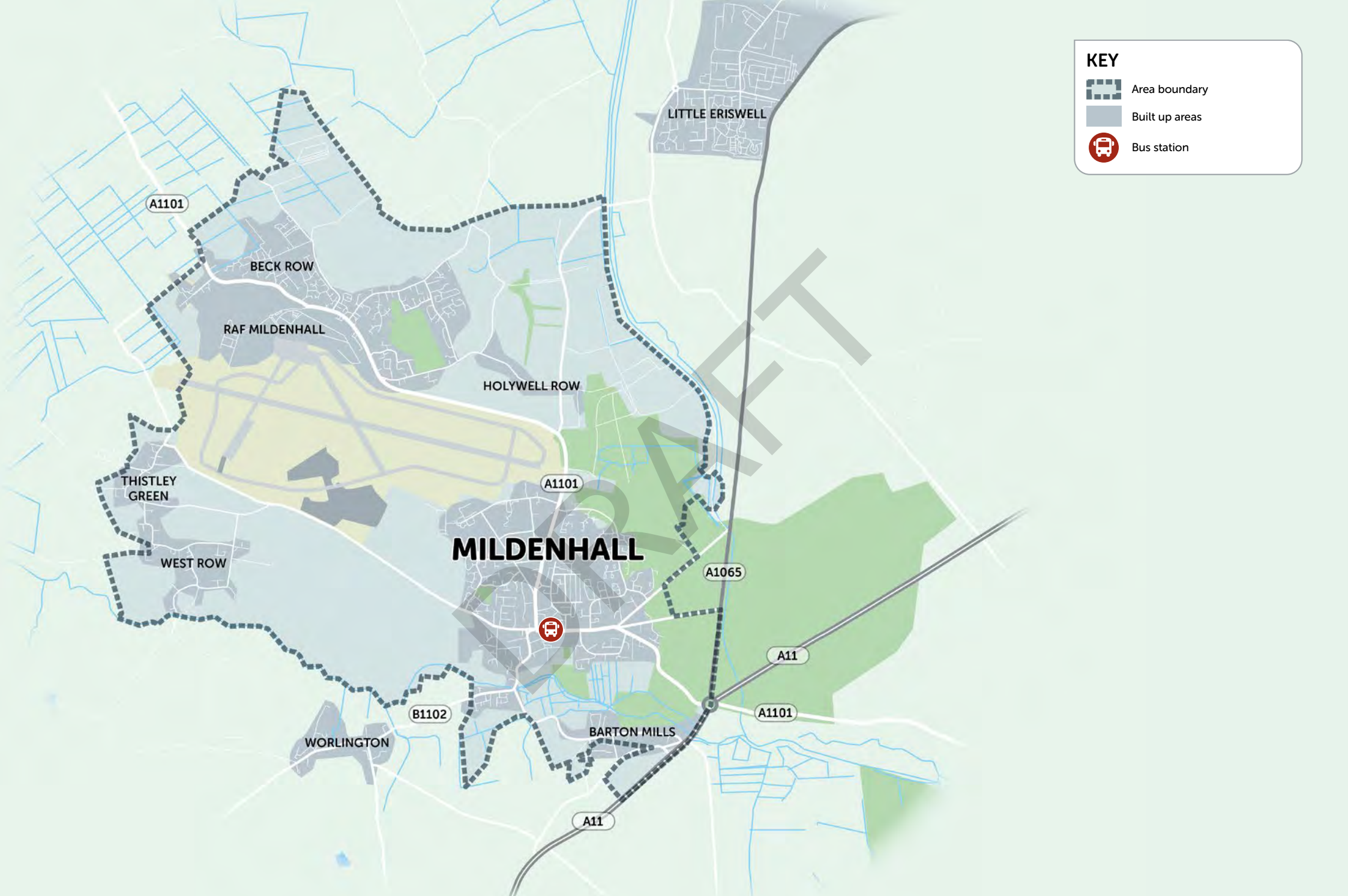





2024

Mildenhall Area Transport Plan





KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  Bus station

Introduction

Mildenhall is a market town in west Suffolk, northwest of Bury St Edmunds. Its functional area includes surrounding settlements such as Barton Mills and Beck Row. The area plan has a population of 16,274 residents¹.

The large Royal Air Force (RAF) stations, RAF Mildenhall, as well as RAF Lakenheath, are located north of Mildenhall. Both are used by the United States Air Force (USAF).

Many of the USAF personnel live in Mildenhall and its surrounding area, which would contribute to Mildenhall having a high population of young families as well as a high proportion of residents traveling to work by car.

The town is characterised by its Market Square. The recent development of the Mildenhall Hub has connected the west of Mildenhall to the town centre. The west of Mildenhall is set to see further growth in the coming years with large scale developments.

Sustainable travel options in the town centre are currently limited with often inadequate walking, wheeling and cycling routes and limited bus service provision connecting surrounding communities and other urban areas to Mildenhall. The nearest railway station is in Kennett.

There are some cycle and walking links from Mildenhall for leisure trips to the River Lark, Thetford Forest and Brandon Country Park via the Public Rights of Way network and Local Cycle Network.

Within the geographic area, at average cycling speed, most households in Mildenhall can access the town centre within 15 minutes. A large proportion of residents can reach the town centre at average walking speeds within a similar timeframe².



Mildenhall area
population

16,274
residents

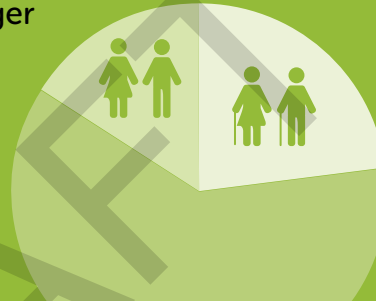


19%

of people
are 15 years old
or younger

17%

of people
are over the
age of 65



58%

of households are
classified as deprived



Travel patterns

13%

of households
don't own a
vehicle



47%

of people travel
less than 5km
to work



10%

of people walk,
wheel or cycle
to work



18%

of people work
mainly from
home



**School
travel**



5%

of school
children cycle
to school in the
Mildenhall area³

Less than

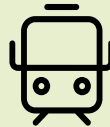
1%



take the bus

Less than

1%



take the train



66%



drive a car or van to work

Reasons for change



Decarbonisation of Transport

The proportion of commuter trips undertaken by active travel modes and by bus or train is around 12% which lags behind the levels needed to achieve carbon net zero in line with the 35% target set out in Suffolk’s Climate Emergency Plan⁴. Furthermore, the government targets half of all journeys undertaken by active travel modes in towns across the country⁵. Existing infrastructure and sustainable transport services restrict people’s sustainable travel options.



Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

Parts of the town plan area are at risk of transport-related social exclusion with regards to employment, education and health services as well as social interaction. Local transport improvements can be the key to unlocking a more inclusive transport network⁵.





A Strong, Sustainable and Fair Economy

Growth in housing and employment has been earmarked through West Suffolk Council's Local Plan at West Mildenhall. The growth is unlikely to be sustainable in Mildenhall 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 and access green space. Improved provision for walking and cycling in the town centre, most notably at the Market Place and connections to the bus station on Kings Street and west Mildenhall will help to create healthier, more attractive and more accessible streets. The public rights of way network can help to provide access to green space.



Summary of objectives

The Mildenhall 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



OBJECTIVE

Enable active travel to be the default choice for shorter trips

A network of key walking and cycling routes in Mildenhall have already been identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

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 improving the condition and appearance of pedestrian infrastructure along the Market Place, Kings Street, and the High Street to shift focus from cars to people, transforming these areas into vibrant, pedestrian-friendly spaces.

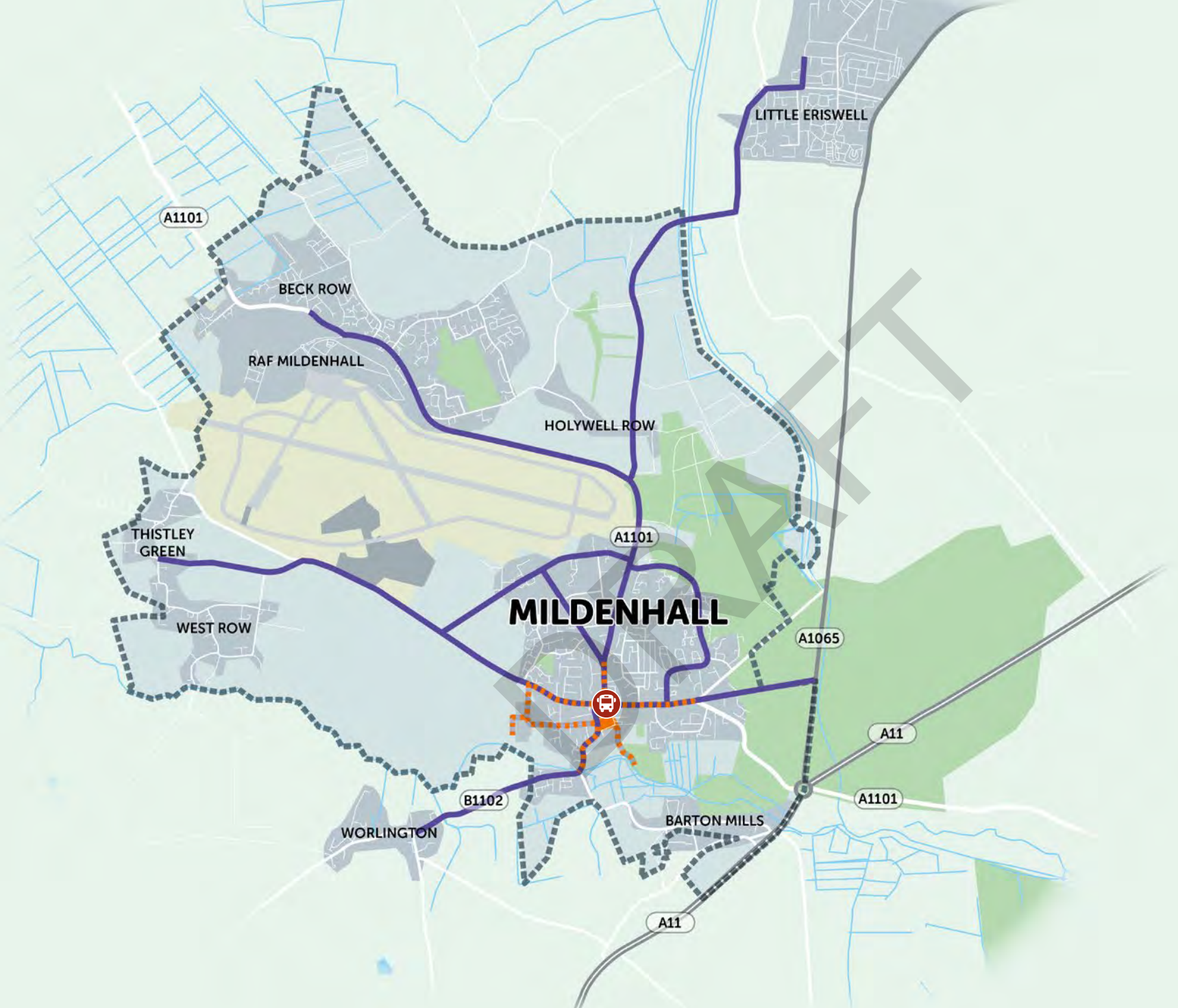
Priority walking routes

We will improve footways, crossings, and wayfinding to encourage more walking and wheeling. Kerbside activity will be managed to keep routes clear of obstacles like delivery vehicles and illegal parking. Key routes include connections between the bus station, Mildenhall Academy, and the Core Walking Zone.







Priority 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. Key connections will link the town centre with Worlington, RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, West Row, Beck Row, and the River Lark.





KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  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 Mildenhall including connections to Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Mildenhall and Thetford. A town circular connects communities with the town centre including the Mildenhall Hub. A demand responsive service links passengers to surrounding villages.

We will support greater coverage and frequency of services within the plan area with an aspiration to achieve:

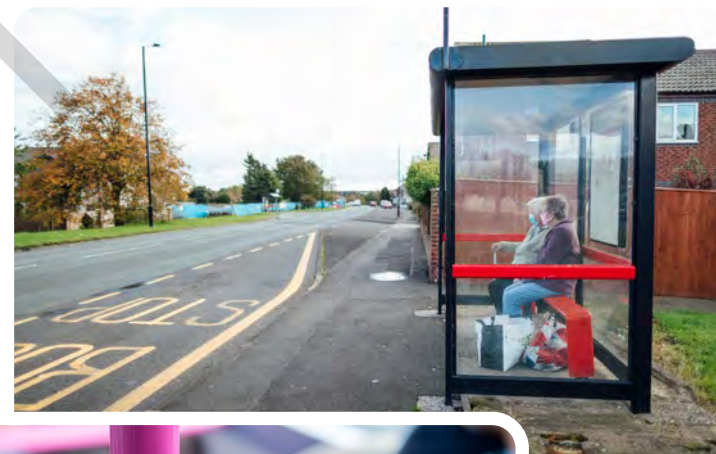
- Town service – half-hourly
- More flexible bus services that better meet local community demands, especially for those in surrounding villages
- Interurban connections – at least 2 hourly with an aspiration of hourly
- Demand responsive services – daily connections

We will support the delivery of the new bus terminus at the Mildenhall Hub which will provide further connections around Mildenhall. We will support an east west bus service link from Mildenhall to Red Lodge.

Complementary measures will also be explored to alleviate delays to buses including:

- Addressing vehicle parking either blocking access to bus stops or general progress along bus routes
- Rethinking how buses navigate the town centre, which could be supported by relocated waiting facilities

We will continue to promote bus travel as a more sustainable way of connecting into Mildenhall 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 hub in Mildenhall is the bus station on King Street which is a short distance from the town centre.

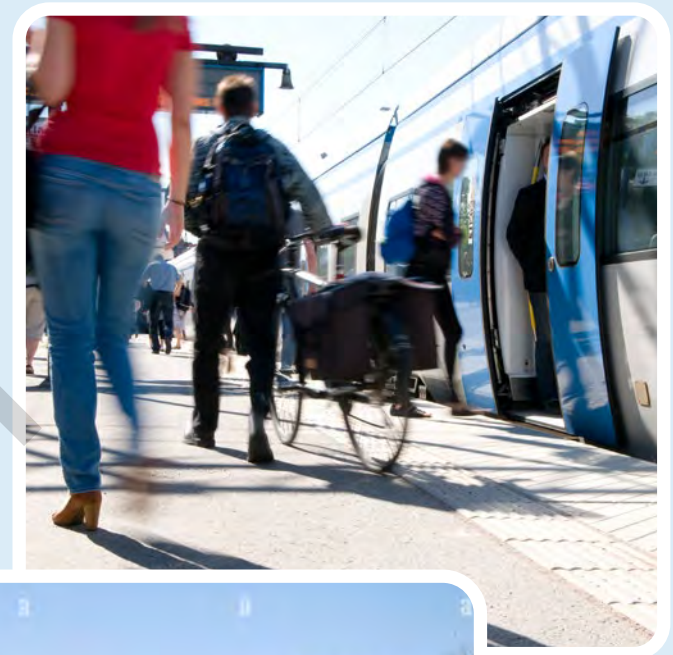
We will support the review of waiting facilities at the bus station inclusive of shelters, passenger information (preferably real-time) and sufficient high-quality cycle parking.

We will look to enhance the bus stops in Mildenhall too. This will include appropriate shelters, lighting, signage, seating and environmental enhancements and where possible cycle parking. We will make sure the bus stops are easy to get to by walking, wheeling and cycling modes.

The new bus terminus at the Mildenhall Hub will have facilities for different modes of travel, serving the west of Mildenhall.

We will continue to support West 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 also collaborate with partners to rationalise and consolidate car parking provision in Mildenhall, 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

The majority of growth in the town is planned to the west, with the east of the town being constrained by the environmentally sensitive of Breckland Forest.

A new community hub to the west of the town has already been delivered. In addition to this, 1300 dwellings are planned (west Mildenhall). Consideration will be given to permeability for walking and cycling from the site to the town centre, as well as to the River Lark Valley and the Public Rights of Way bridleway to West Row.

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. Analysis of forecast growth on the transport network indicates that the following junctions are likely to require additional capacity as a result of new developments in the west of Mildenhall:

- West Row Road
- Folly Road

National Highways has also identified the Five Ways roundabout on the A11 at Five Ways will be impacted by future growth and we will support improvements to this junction.



OBJECTIVE

Support town centre economies

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

The core walking zone includes the High Street, the Market Place and St Andrew's Street alleyways that connects the retail environment with the carparks 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 Place for certain periods of time such as on market days. We will look at the use of increased seating and social spaces, more trees and planting and co-ordinated and accessible signage and lighting.

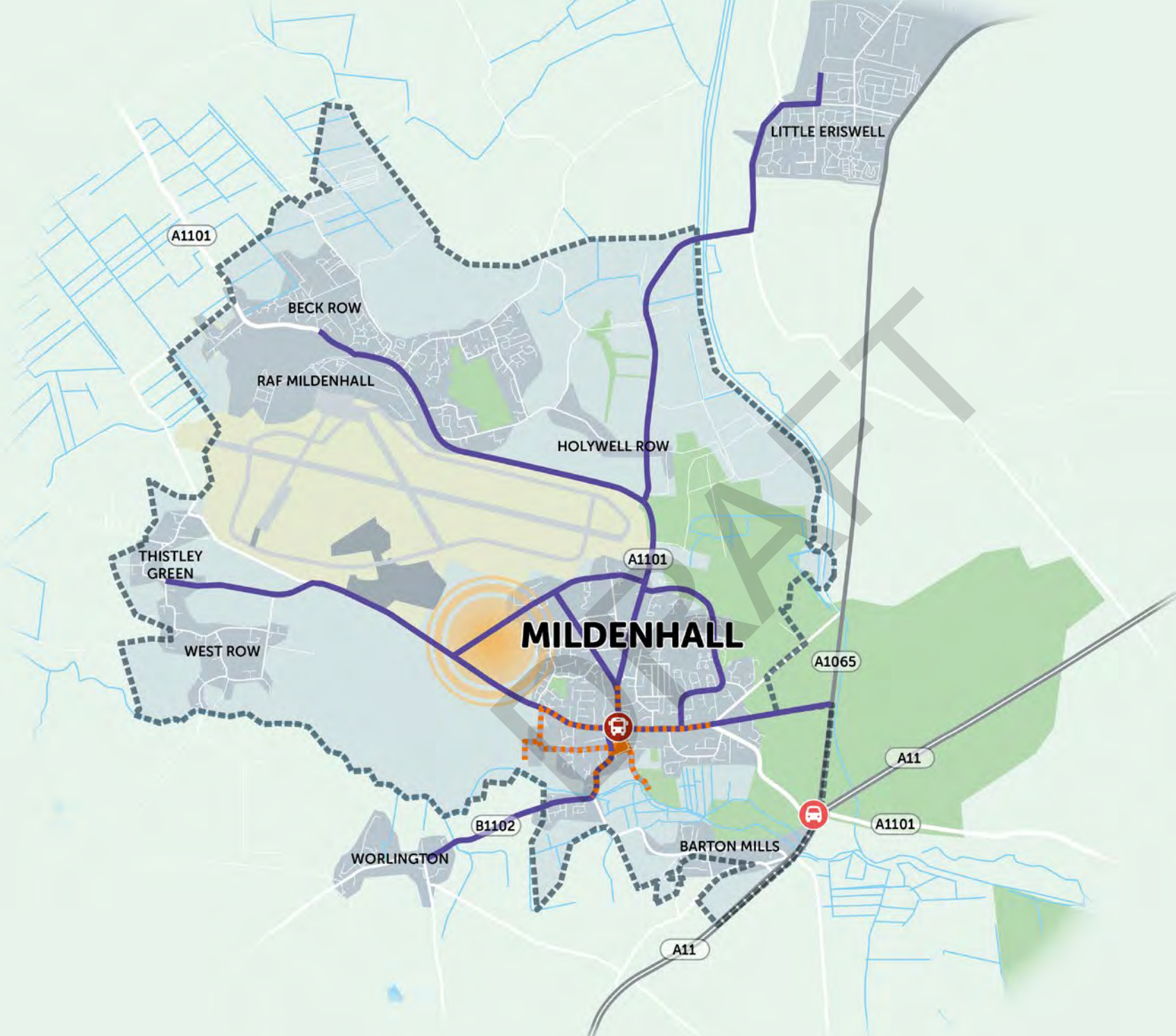
We will help to remove barriers to access the core walking zone by creating clear, safe and direct pedestrian and cycling routes. In particular from the west of Mildenhall to improve the gateway to the Market Place and the High Street.



Our plans for Mildenhall

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











KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  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

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
Mildenhall	Town centre walking and cycling improvements	£400,000

References

- Office for National Statistics, Census Data (2021)
www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/
- Travel Time
<https://app.traveltime.com>
- Office for National Statistics, Census Data (2011)
[Propensity to Cycle Tool - Suffolk \(pct.bike\)](#)
- Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan
<https://www.greensuffolk.org/>
- Gear Change. A bold vision for cycling and walking
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>
- Transport Related Social Exclusion in England
<https://www.transportforthenorth.com>