

## **IMPROVING CYCLING FACILITIES IN MAIDENHEAD**

### **Plans for making improvements for cyclists are well advanced, and now boosted by extra government funding**

#### **The potential for cycling**

We know that across the country we need to be embracing “active travel” – walking and cycling – and getting out of our cars.

Earlier this year Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum conducted a survey<sup>1</sup> which showed that although only 4% of local journeys are made by bike, 57% of households own at least one bike and – importantly – nearly half of those questioned said they would “definitely” cycle more if there were improved cycle paths and cycle lanes.

The take-up of cycling has been boosted during the pandemic lockdown, with the government encouraging cycling for its mental and physical health benefits. Families in particular have taken advantage of the reduction in motor traffic. In addition, cycle shops (permitted to remain open during lockdown) saw a large increase in demand for bike sales and servicing.

In another boost, “Fix your bike” vouchers are now being made available to help people get back on the saddle<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Who are the present and future cyclists?**

Today there is a very broad range of cyclists out there, from members of cycling clubs on their road bikes who are happy to keep pace with motor traffic, through to families who prefer safer, off-road cycle routes.

But in between these extremes, there are very many more who would feel more confident about cycling if more cycle lanes were available. Indeed, a petition has recently been created (July 2020) to get the Royal Borough to ‘Create Cycle Lanes Around Maidenhead for Safety, Health and Pollution Benefits’<sup>3</sup>.

#### **What is being planned?**

The Borough has developed a Cycle Action Plan(CAP)<sup>4</sup> which sets out priorities for investment in cycling over the period 2018 to 2028. A key focus is connecting residential areas to destinations such as town centres, employment sites and education facilities. It also seeks to better integrate cycling with other forms of transport (particularly rail).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mnf.org.uk/getting-around-in-maidenhead/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53558629>

<sup>3</sup> <https://petitions.rbwm.gov.uk/CYCLELANES>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200211/cycling/828/cycling\\_action\\_plan](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200211/cycling/828/cycling_action_plan)

Some of these plans are already being implemented. Among recent developments is a new contra-flow cycle lane enabling cyclists to travel east along the High Street (past The Bear pub), as well as a new cycle route between the town centre and the new Leisure Centre at Braywick. The map below is taken from the CAP and shows existing and proposed cycle routes and parking within Maidenhead and Cox Green.

### **New budgets available**

As lockdown is eased and further parts of the economy are opened up, the Government has launched an Emergency Active Travel Fund, which includes improving facilities for walkers and cyclists. Despite tight deadlines, the Royal Borough was successful in obtaining its full indicated allocation of £140,000 (in contrast to other local authorities such as Reading, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham, which did not).

The measures under this initial allocation are set to be put in place by the end of August and are concentrated in the town centres of Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot. Within Maidenhead this includes new 20mph speed limits, increased cycle parking provision and ensuring social distancing by decluttering, pedestrian markings and the widening out of pedestrian space on footways,

Plans for the second tranche of funding must be submitted to Government by August 7th and the indicative amount available for RBWM is a hefty £560,000, so they are preparing their list of proposals, ensuring they fit in with the Department for Transport Guidelines and the local Cycling Action Plan.

The size of this tranche will allow a wider scope for proposals. For an indication of where local residents want to see action, a website Widen My Path<sup>5</sup> has been set up so that those interested can add an idea or vote for an existing idea.

### **Moving ahead**

Following the disbanding of the Borough's Cycle Forum in 2019, a Windsor & Maidenhead Cycling Action Group was formed in March this year to encourage cycling within the Royal Borough. The group have been meeting regularly online with RBWM members and officers to provide input into the council's bids for funding. The next online meeting is scheduled to be on Tuesday 15th September when among other topics expected to be discussed is school travel as the schools re-open. For details email [shearersj@btinternet.com](mailto:shearersj@btinternet.com) or see Facebook<sup>6</sup> or Twitter<sup>7</sup>.

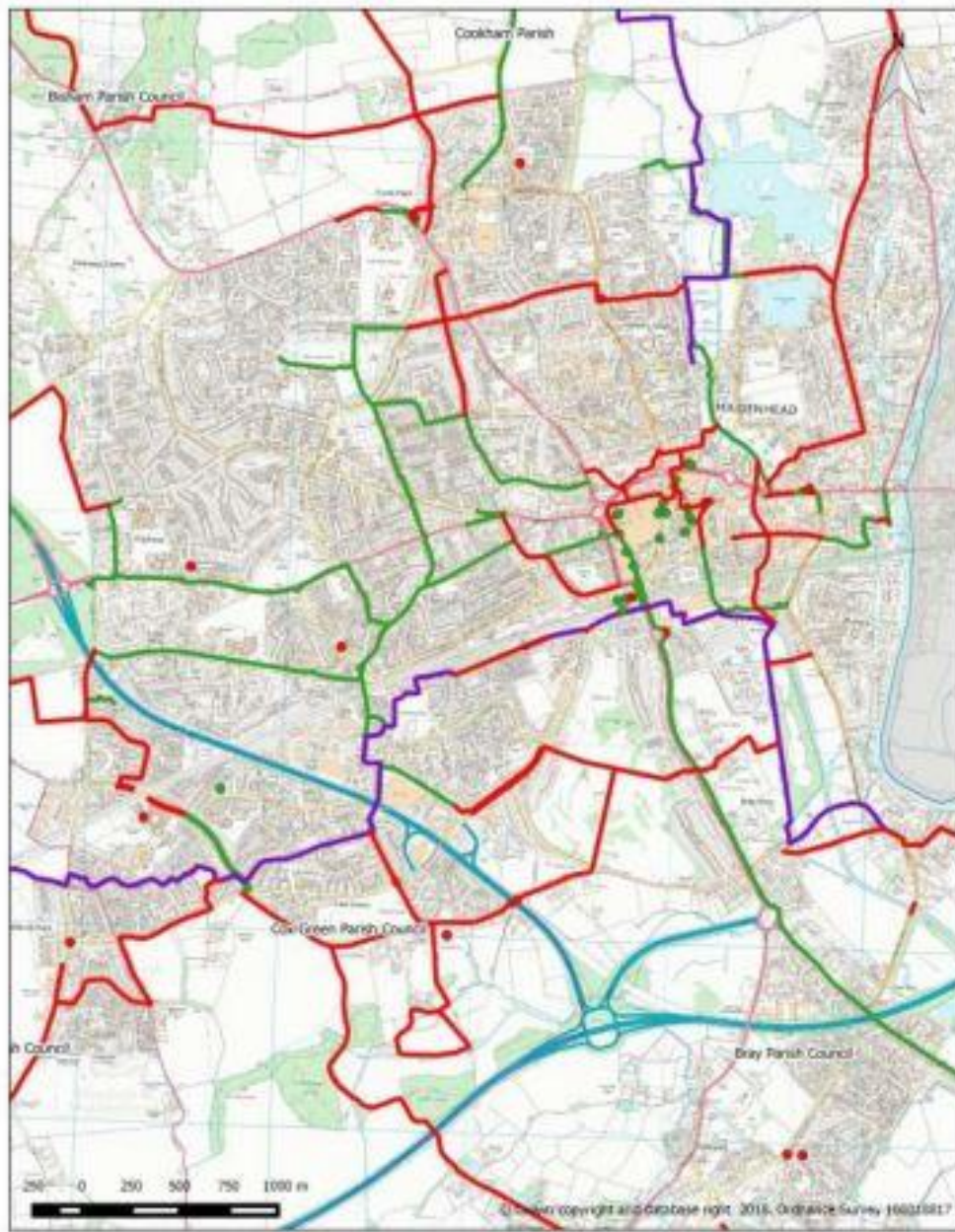
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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.widenmypath.com/suggest/#13/51.5238/-0.7190>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Windsor-Maidenhead-Cycling-Action-Group-inc-Ascot-The-Sunnings-100581748359140>

<sup>7</sup> <https://twitter.com/WAMCAG>

Figure 1: Maidenhead and Cox Green



Map of Existing and Proposed Cycle Routes and Cycle Parking Sites in Maidenhead and Cox Green

**Legend**

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Existing cycle routes: | Proposed cycle routes  |
| RBWM                   | Existing cycle parking |
| National Cycle Network | Proposed cycle parking |