



**friends of
the earth
Portsmouth**

Discussion Paper: Towards a Walking Strategy for Portsmouth - Creating a Connected City

1. Introduction

Portsmouth Friends of the Earth (PFOE) is a local environmental group which, for the last two years, has been campaigning to make Portsmouth a walking-friendly city where people walk rather than drive a car for everyday journeys, resulting in:

- reduced carbon emissions
- improved air quality
- improved safety
- improved health
- improved well-being
- greater sense of community and place.

To this end, our group has conducted a series of urban hikes around the city to observe what already makes the city pleasant for walking and what else would do so. We have also collected the views of local people about walking in Portsmouth via a meeting attended by over 50 people and have published these in a report on 'Walking in Portsmouth'¹. It is on this basis that our group would like propose a vision of Portsmouth as a well-connected walking city and the starting place for a strategy for achieving this.

2. Vision

Our vision for the whole of Portsmouth is of a connected city with high quality every-day walking routes linking key city destinations and supported by convenient, reliable and affordable public transport. These high quality walking routes will be continuously signed and will meet healthy streets indicators².

It should be noted that whilst we have used the term 'walking' routes, wherever possible such routes should be accessible to all, including people in wheel chairs and on mobility scooters.

3. Strategy

An important first step in achieving this vision is identifying key walking routes that connect the whole of the city of Portsmouth. It is our view that the

¹ Portsmouth Friends of the Earth (2016) [Walking in Portsmouth](http://www.foe.org.uk/portsmouth) Accessed from www.foe.org.uk/portsmouth

² Transport for London (2014) "*Improving the Health of Londoners – Transport Action Plan*", p 62 <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/improving-the-health-of-londoners-transport-action-plan.pdf> A list of healthy streets indicators may be found at the end of this report.

identification and improvement of this network of walking routes should form the basis of a Portsmouth Walking Strategy. A commitment to creating this network should be incorporated in city policy documents for planning, transport and public health and, once identified, routes should be incorporated in city planning documents. In this way all new developments can be required to link to and/or improve nearby walking routes.

Figure 1: Proposed strategy for creating a well-connected walking city

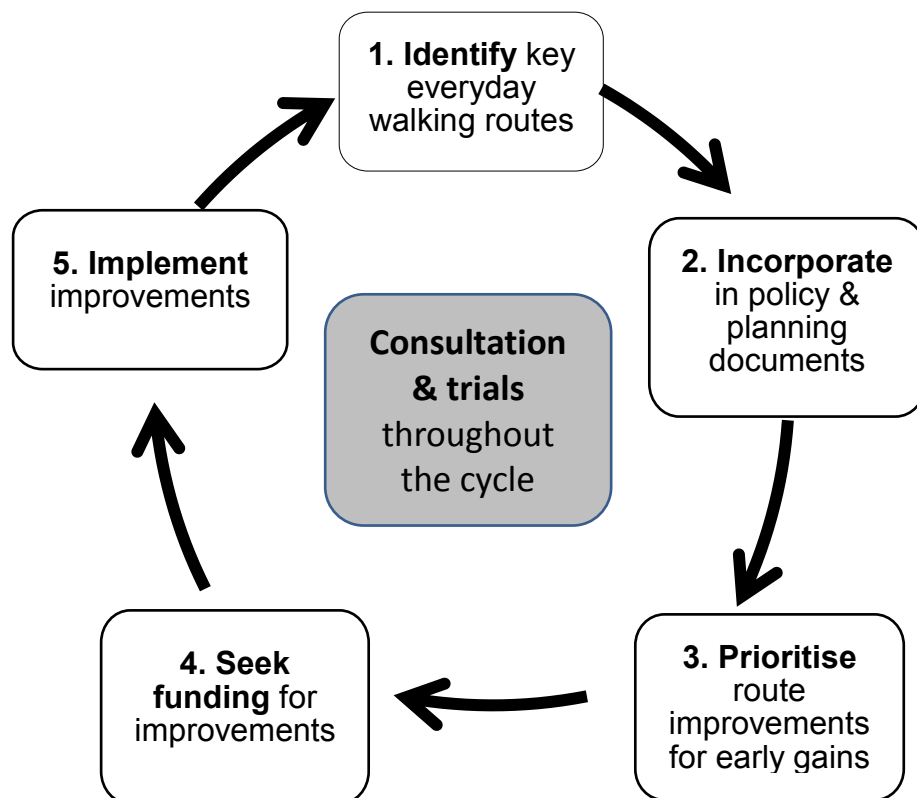


Figure 1 sums up the strategy we are advocating. As can be seen, the proposed strategy is cyclical. This is because walking routes will need to be improved and developed on a continuous basis as resources become available and as the city and the needs of people evolve. Central to the strategy is consultation with pedestrians, people with mobility disabilities and visual impairment and city planners at all stages; and trialling of route improvements such as the location & types of signs, crossings, benches and planting.

To gain early public support for investment in walking route improvements, priority can be given to routes most likely to see an increase in pedestrians. To progress the vision of a connected city, the Council will need to actively seek sources of funding to implement walking route improvements.

Our group has concluded that fairly simple changes would make walking a much more attractive transport option for residents eg directional signs throughout the route providing walking times and distance; wider pavements; well-placed crossings; more trees and other planting; and seating. However, the vision is greater and involves the creation of healthy streets which are no longer

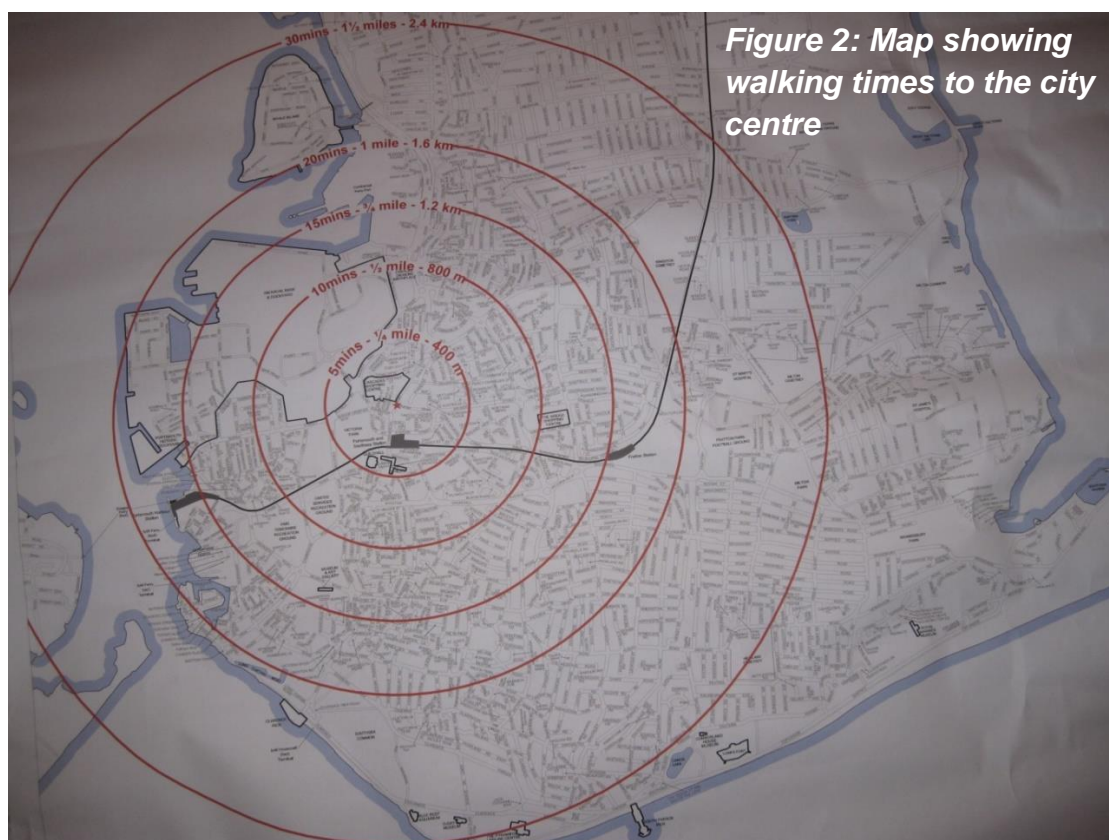
dominated by noisy, fummy traffic, and the creation of a good public transport service. Of course, if more people walk, the number of cars on the road will reduce, buses will become more reliable and a virtuous circle will be created where even more people choose to walk and so streets become less traffic dominated... We have to start somewhere, and we suggest that this is by identifying key everyday walking routes across the city.

4. Identifying key every-day walking routes

Observations from PFOE's urban hikes and local people's comments, combined with recommendations in publications by The Department of Transport³, Campaign for Better Transport/Abellio⁴ and Ramblers⁵, suggest that key city walking routes connecting the whole of Portsmouth should include:

- popular every-day walking routes between the city centre and neighbourhood high streets within 20 -30 minutes walking time
- routes from transport hubs to nearby destinations such as hospitals, sport facilities, retail outlets, business parks & major places of employment & study
- routes from all neighbourhoods to green & blue spaces
- routes between neighbourhoods separated by railway lines and major roads making use of pedestrian bridges
- long distance paths.

It is our view that places are often much nearer than people think.



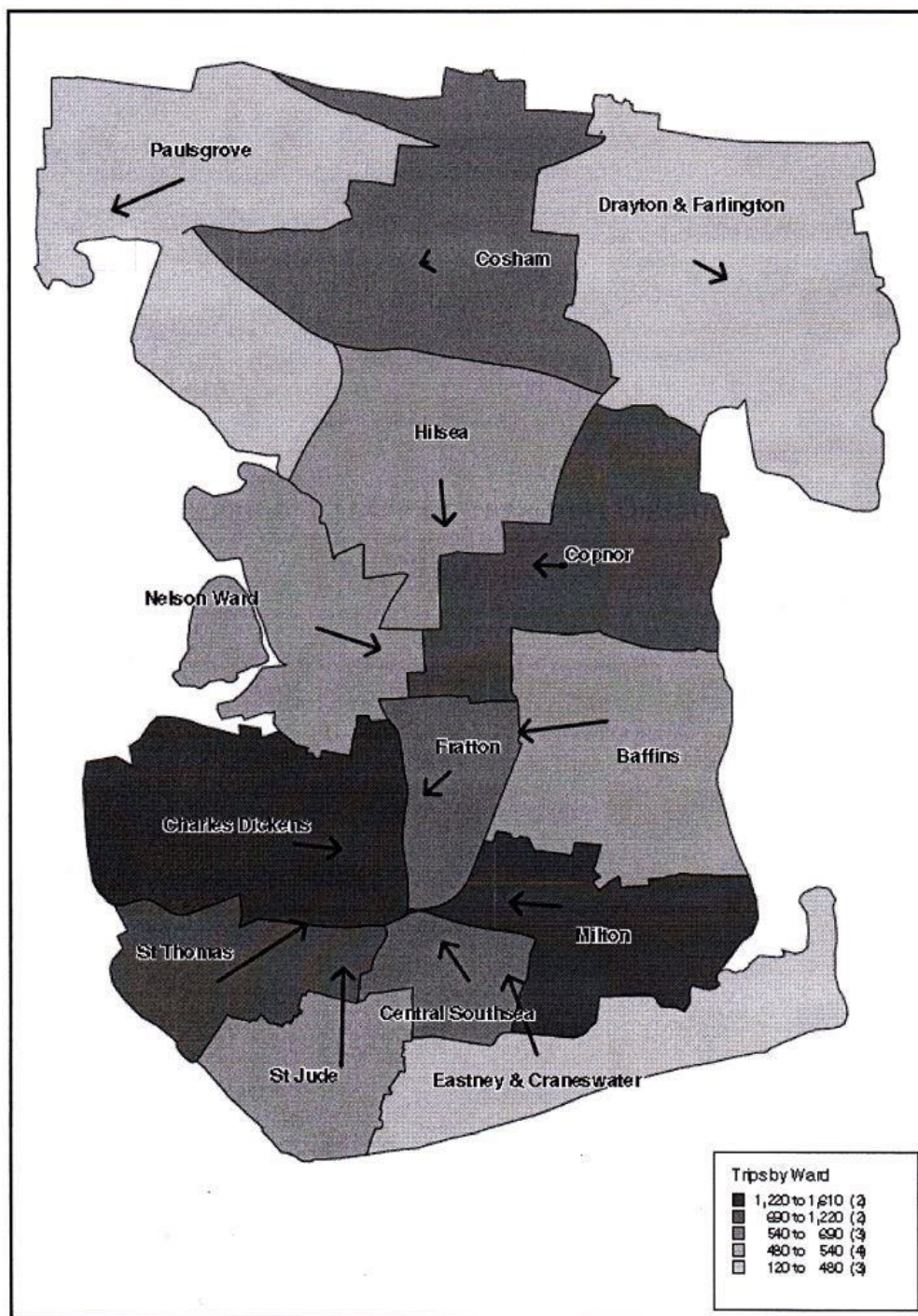
³ Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy_(Department of Transport 2016) Section 2.7

⁴ Fixing the Link: Making good the walking route from station to town centre (Campaign for Better Transport and Abellio)

⁵ Ramblers' draft document (2016): Policy Area: Urban Spaces

A recent Council bid for sustainable travel funding states: “There is a high reliance on the car for short trips. 16% of all car trips starting and finishing in Portsmouth are 'short trips' of less than 3kms in length (i.e. 9,352 out of a total of 57,691 trips.” Figure 3 below, comes from this same bid⁶ and plots the number of short car trips (less than 3 km) by Portsmouth ward and shows the prominent trip direction. This suggests that a number of short distance car trips towards the city centre could be walked.

Figure 3: Prominent direction of short (<3km) car trips – Portsmouth Wards



⁶ PCC Sustainable Travel Transition Year 16/17 application, Figure 1

Figure 4 below illustrates an indicative network of everyday walking routes that connect the whole city of Portsmouth. Portsmouth Friends of the Earth has identified these by using a mix of Google Walking Maps, WalkIt, experiences arising from our programme of urban hikes and local knowledge.



We started by identifying a 20 – 30 minutes walking radius of the city centre. We then identified everyday walking routes to the city centre from neighbourhoods

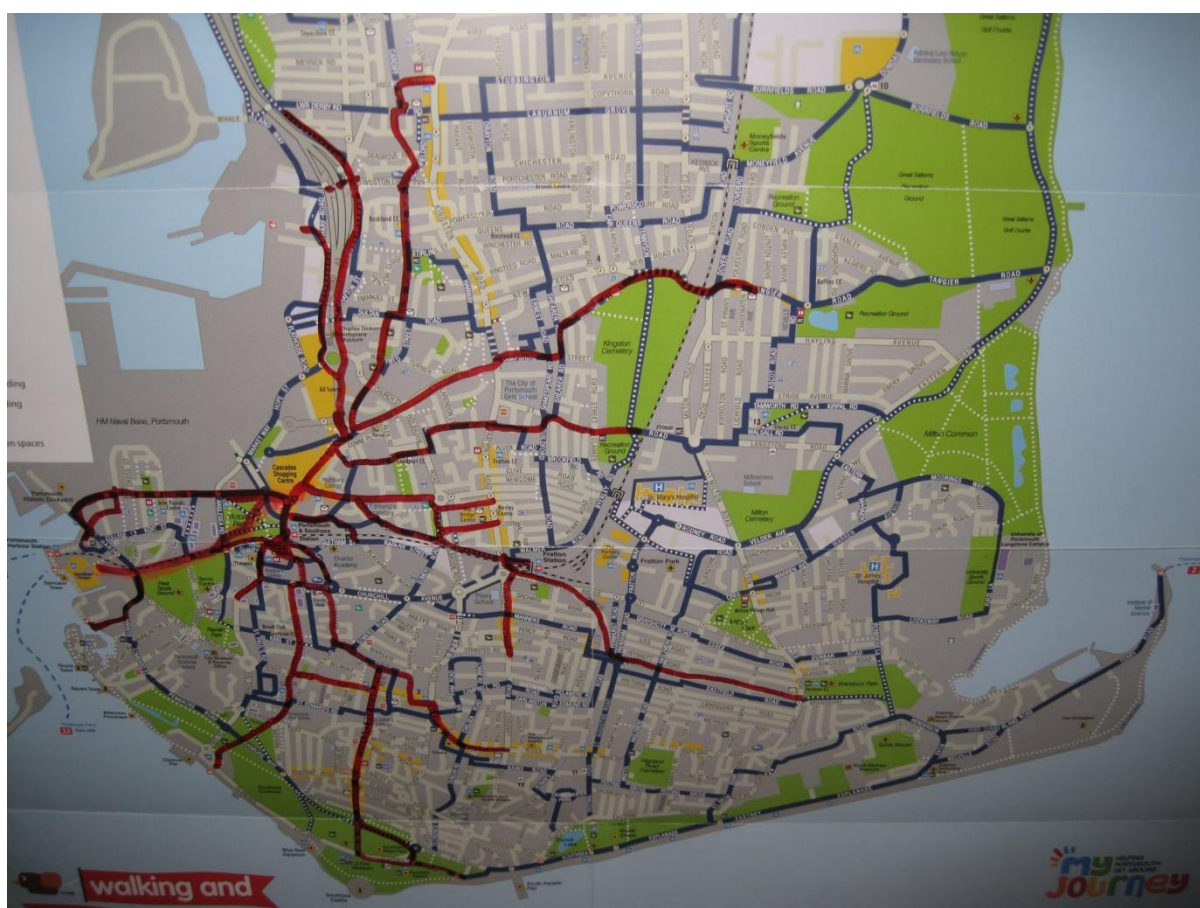
within this radius. To these we added long distance paths and major routes connecting transport hubs, high streets and other major 'everyday' city destinations such as St Mary's Treatment Centre, QA Hospital and Fratton Park.

5. Making improvements

Rather than adopting an ad hoc and piecemeal approach to improving walking routes we suggest a more systematic 'whole route' approach as outlined below. NB these steps may not be sequential. **We would like to discuss these ideas with the Council:**

- prioritising a small number of walking routes where improvements are most likely to lead to an increase in the number of pedestrians, for example a 'flagship' route between the City Centre and Gunwharf Quays and one or two other routes to the city centre (see Figure 5)

Figure 5: Everyday walking routes connecting neighbourhoods to the City Centre within a 30 minute radius (indicative)



- determining how routes might better meet healthy street indicators⁷.
- consulting about proposed improvements and trialling them (eg via 'pop-ups' and pilots) to determine the best location and type of equipment or infrastructure
- early continuous signing of the whole length of the route which:
 - should provide direction, distance & walking time information
 - may involve temporary signs in parts

⁷ See list at end of the document

- are likely to increase footfall
- are likely to engage pedestrians who will be happy to give feedback on how the route needs improving - perhaps via texting a mobile number advertised en route or linking to a website via a QR code
- actively seeking funding for walking improvements by:
 - enabling stakeholders, including pedestrians and walking campaign groups such as PFOE, to comment on draft funding applications and early project proposals that might be developed in anticipation of funding
 - as walking is a vital form of transport engaged in by pretty much all Portsmouth residents, giving walking infrastructure improvements a fairer share of the city's budget for transport infrastructure
 - making use of the Local Growth Fund and DfT highways maintenance block. The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy states that these are available for walking infrastructure improvements.
 - drawing on the Community Infrastructure Levy
 - working in partnership with a number of local business partner, see for example 'Keeping Derby Moving' sustainable transport project.
 - lobbying the LEP and Solent Transport to support walking infrastructure. NB Both Hampshire and Winchester have new Walking Strategies so combined lobbying might be effective.
 - requiring new city developments eg housing, retail, leisure to provide links to nearby walking routes, as a minimum walking signposts and convenient crossings
 - encouraging larger retailers be o improve walking routes to their stores, as many were designed with cars in mind, not people.

6. Conclusion

Portsmouth Friends of the Earth welcomes the opportunity to meet with senior Council representatives to discuss our ideas for creating a well-connected walking city as set out in this discussion paper.

Appendix

Healthy streets indicators

The list of healthy street indicators below has been slightly adapted from Transport for London (2014) "[*Improving the Health of Londoners – Transport Action Plan*](#)" Chapter 8. The indicators are endorsed by Living Streets ([see diagram](#)) and concord with PFOE's own findings from observations on our urban hikes and comments collected from members of the public.

- Accessible to all
- Used by people from all walks of life
- Clean air
- People feel safe
- Not too noisy
- Easy to cross
- Shade and shelter
- Seats at regular intervals
- Things to see and do
- People feel relaxed