

# Aylsham Network Improvement Strategy

April 2020



Norfolk County Council

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## Executive Summary

The Aylsham Network Improvement Strategy (ANIS) has been produced in collaboration with stakeholders and has identified potential measures to help address existing transport network constraints and transport improvements to facilitate the growth identified in the Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy and the Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan. The strategy aims to deliver growth in housing and employment across the Broadland, South Norfolk and Norwich City districts and to provide suitable infrastructure developments to aid this growth. The strategy states Aylsham will provide a safe and healthy quality of life for locals and visitors, retain its attractive historical centre, enjoy greater economic prosperity and accommodate new housing. NCC's Environment, Development and Transport Committee agreed to commission Market Town Network Improvement Strategies in 2017 to investigate transport problems and issues in Norfolk market towns and Aylsham is included in the second phase of this. The transport strategy for Aylsham is highly important in achieving the aims of the Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy.

Various activities were undertaken to gather evidence and information to help compile the ANIS: a committee discussion, a coalition of internal work, an external workshop, scoping of potential study work to identify priorities. This feedback generated prime objectives of the ANIS:

- To understand the current transport issues in the cycle network, road traffic, parking and access to services and facilities.
- To understand the town's future situation such as the impacts of growth proposals on the local transport network, and the implications of future changes to the economy.
- To identify what infrastructure requirements are needed to help bring forward growth and develop appropriate implementation plans.

Consultants were then commissioned to produce three technical reports on walking and cycling, parking and access, and bus stop arrangements in Aylsham. The reports highlighted the key issues arising in these three topics and provided recommendations on how these issues can be overcome and improved to achieve targets set out in the Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy. The consultants developed three cycling and walking corridors to identify areas which have potential to become popular cycling and walking routes and which can connect the town with desirable areas e.g. residential areas, the town centre and employment areas. Consultants also investigated the effectiveness of signage in the town and provided information on changes needed to provide greater clarity on the location of car parks and how to exit the car parks without using unsuitable routes. In the third technical report, consultants highlighted current issues with bus routes and stops and explored the possibility of taking buses out of the town centre and repurposing one of the car parks as a local 'transport hub'.

Key findings include:

- The identification of a cycling and walking corridor which provides connectivity between important sites in the town

- Greater clarity needed in road signage, directing cars in and out of the car parks in Aylsham in such a way to avoid the town centre and unsuitable routes. Suitable signage and locations have been identified.
- Lack of clarity over the location of some bus stops which can be improved
- The absence of suitable 'transport hub' sites in Aylsham

Based on the feedback from stakeholders and findings from the study work the Action Plan recommends areas where consideration should be given in the form of high and low priority actions.

NCC does not currently have the funding to implement all the recommendations in the Action Plan. Therefore, by identifying what is high and low priority means that when funding does become available, projects can be completed in a manner which provides the greatest benefits. Given the nature of funding using NCC led proposals would allow for schemes to be delivered within the time allocations. It is important that, especially with larger actions such as the formation of walking and cycling corridors, NCC would have to work collaboratively with other organisations.

An example of some high and low priority actions can be seen in Table 1 below. The full table can be viewed in Chapter 8.

High priority		
Scheme	Why high priority?	Action
Cycling and walking corridor 3	Cycling and walking Corridor 3 was identified by WSP as the Corridor providing the greatest benefits including improved connectivity between new housing developments and areas of employment and schools.	Norfolk County Council will wait until funding for this project becomes available. Following this, the Corridor will be developed.
Low Priority		
Scheme	Why low priority?	Action
Electronic timetables	Not high priority as does not have as big an effect on congestion and road safety as other schemes.	Wait for funding to become available and investigate the possibility of installing this.

*Table 1: Example of high and low priority actions for the Aylsham Network Improvement Strategy*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Norfolk has a population of around 891,000 people. The majority live in Norwich and the 21 market towns. These market towns act as service centres to their surrounding rural populations within the rural county. They are employment centres and home to a range of services such as healthcare, education and retail. Many retain a historic core and are generally supported by seasonal tourism.

A number of market towns still hold regular markets however some have suffered in recent years due to online shopping and the decline of agriculture or other significant industries (eg fishing and textiles). The environment the town provides for people to live, work, shop, play and move about in, the very basis of modern human activity, is fundamental to how a town functions for those who use it.

Market towns have, over the years, seen relatively significant growth particularly residential development.

Norfolk County Council is undertaking a series of transport network improvement strategies in the market towns to examine current and future issues within the town and understand the role that transport infrastructure can have in ensuring that towns continue to thrive. These network improvement strategies will identify interventions and provide evidence to inform planning and policy making in the future.

### Aylsham

Aylsham is a historic market town located in the north of the Broadland District in the county of Norfolk. The market town is 14 miles north of Norwich and 11 miles south of Cromer. Aylsham has 7,729 residents as of 2018, however this is expected to rise with the new housing developments adding around 550 households to the east and west of the town. Aylsham currently has good bus connections with Norwich city centre, and neighbouring towns and villages. Aylsham is also around seven miles west of neighbouring town North Walsham which has a rail station providing links to Norwich and the Norfolk coast. The town can be seen as being made up of three main areas: residential areas; industrial/commercial areas; and the historic town centre. The *Norfolk Market Town Report 2018* states that Aylsham has 82 town centre business premises. This can promote economic development in the area and draws people into Aylsham for services and retail. The rich history of Aylsham can be traced back to the Iron Age, and several dwellings in the Market Place were built in the late seventeenth century. The wealth of history in Aylsham makes it a popular tourist destination, along with nearby Blickling Hall attracting around 200,000 visitors in 2017. It is therefore vital that the transport networks in Aylsham are well connected and run smoothly in order to facilitate movement in and around the town in a manner which is beneficial to the local people, economy and environment (both natural and historic).

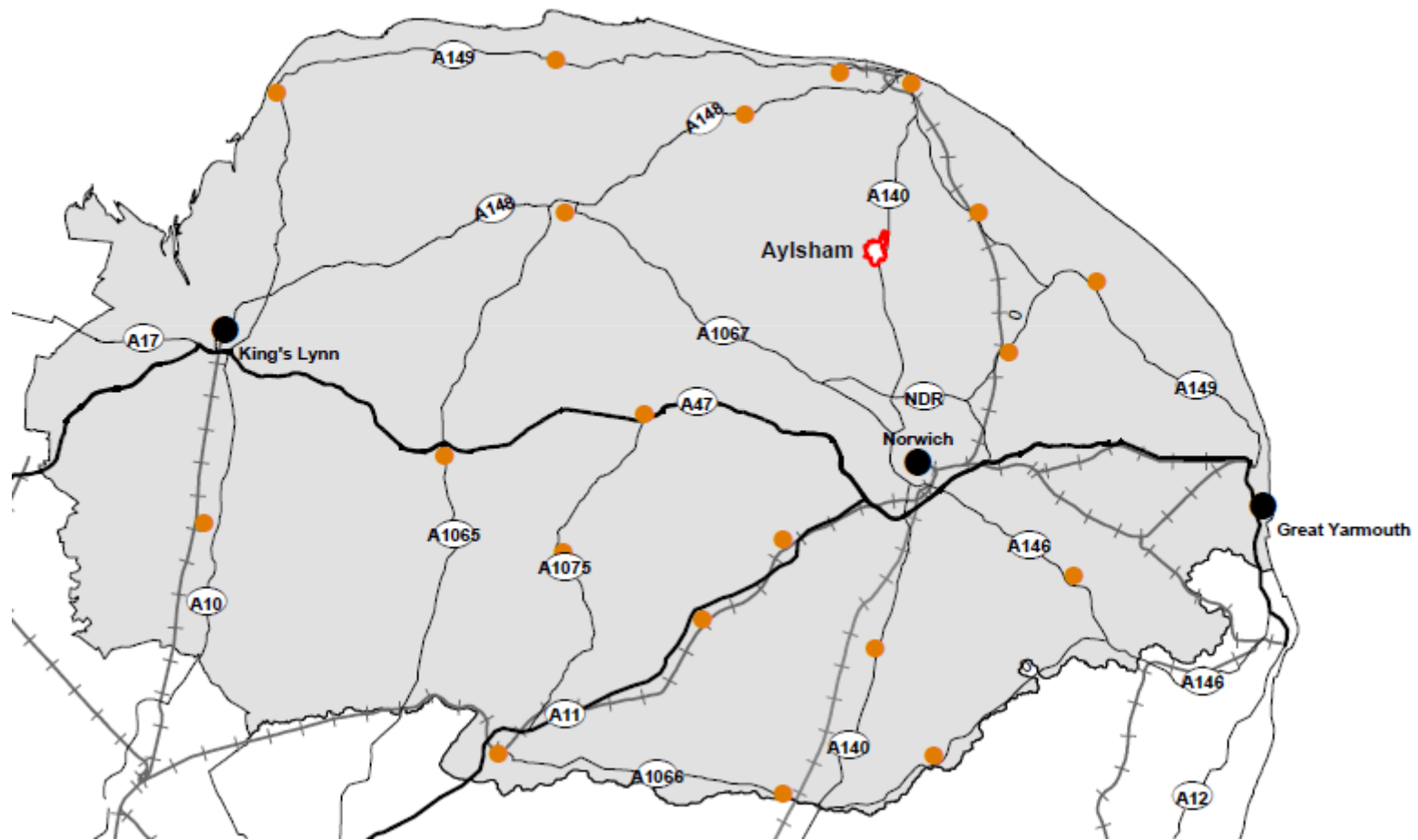


Figure 1: Location of Norfolk market towns, highlighting Aylsham's location.

## **Chapter 2: Strategy and Policy Context**

The following policies and strategies have been identified as setting the context and baseline for this Network Improvement Strategy.

The overarching aims of the Network Improvement Strategies are to:

- Understand current transport problems and issues
- Understand the future situation
- Develop an implementation plan

### **National Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2018 sets out the purpose of the planning system which is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Section 9 of the NPPF directly refers to promoting sustainable transport and Para 102 sets out the various transport issues that should be considered as a part of plan making and development proposals, so that:

- The impact of development on transport networks are being addressed
- Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised
- Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued
- The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account

There is also a chapter dedicated to ensuring town centre vitality which states that “Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation”. A range of considerations are set out in paragraph 85 with some being of particular relevance to this strategy:

- Promote their long-term vitality and viability
- Centres can grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes
- Town centres are accessible and well connected

National policy recognises the importance of towns acting as service centres particularly in rural areas serving both the local and tourist population.

### **Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy**

The Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy identifies the following sectors as being key to the Norfolk economy: energy, life sciences and biotech, ICT, tech and digital creative, advanced agriculture, food and drink, financial services and insurance, visitor economy- tourism, heritage and culture, transport, freight and logistics, construction and development and advanced manufacturing and engineering.

## **Local Transport Plan**

Norfolk's 3rd Local Transport Plan, Connecting Norfolk, sets out the strategy and policy framework for transport up to 2026. This will be used as a guide for transport investment in Norfolk as well as considered by other agencies when determining planning or delivery decisions. The strategy is accompanied by an implementation plan, setting out the measures to be delivered over the short term. Connecting Norfolk is driven by the views of local people and stakeholders and addresses the challenges we face in Norfolk. Our transport vision is:

"A transport system that allows residents and visitors a range of low carbon options to meet their transport needs and attracts and retains business investment in the county".

Six strategic aims underpin the vision, they are: maintaining and managing the highway network; delivering sustainable growth; enhancing strategic connections; reducing emissions; improving road safety; and improving accessibility.

This plan is in the process of being reviewed. A revised plan is programmed to be adopted by the county council in mid-2020.

## **The Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy**

The Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy was adopted in March 2011 and contains strategic policies for the period 2008-2026. The Strategy has been prepared by the three councils of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, working together with Norfolk County Council. The strategy is designed to deliver growth in housing and employment to key areas and provides a long-term vision and objectives in order to achieve this.

The strategy states that the 4 main towns, including Aylsham, will:

- Provide a safe and healthy quality of life
- Retain attractive historical centres
- Enjoy greater economic prosperity
- Accommodate new housing which complements each town's form, function, historic character and quality, and incorporating good sustainable transport links to town centres, local employment locations and recreation, leisure and community facilities

Policies relevant to the Aylsham Network Improvement Strategy:

- **Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets** (Policy 1). This can be done by minimising the need to travel and giving priority to low impact modes of transport
- **Promoting good design** (Policy 2) which includes the need to ensure cycling and walking friendly neighbourhoods and the need to increase the use of public transport
- **Access and transportation** (Policy 6) which includes improving access to rural areas, significant improvements to bus, cycling and walking network and encourage these as the primary means of travel.
- **Supporting communities** (Policy 7) by promoting healthier lifestyles through maximising access by walking and cycling



Figure 2 provides a map of the Aylsham Local Plan allocations, 2016. The Core Strategy is in the process of being reviewed and will be replaced by the Greater Norwich Local Plan in the next few years.

### **Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan**

The Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan was produced in 2019, covering the period up to 2038. The production of this plan was led by the Aylsham Town Council. The vision is:

*'The market town of Aylsham is renowned for its individuality and historical importance. It is vital that these are protected whilst promoting its unique character, excellent location and strong sense of community.'*

The aims of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

1. To develop sustainable employment opportunities
2. To expand the variety of leisure, cultural and sporting activities
3. To be aware there will be further pressure for additional development in the town and ensure this meets local needs
4. To ensure growth in the town is facilitated by improvements to infrastructure in order to deliver a better public transport system serving the growing community, enhance the road network to improve traffic management and road safety with priority given to the provision of pedestrian walk ways and cycle routes

The Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan has a big drive to enhance and encourage sustainable transport modes in the form of footpaths, cycleways and public transport improvements. This development will provide access, connectivity and linkages to existing networks, the town centre, schools, community and recreational spaces. In doing this, social exclusion and isolation will be reduced, whilst benefiting the health of the local population (provision of more active modes of transport) and benefiting the environment (sustainable and less polluting modes of transport).

### **Other strategies**

There are a number of other plans and strategies that have been produced in recent years in Aylsham and some which are currently underway or planned:

- Aylsham Regeneration and Delivery Strategy, 2011
- Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan, 2019 – covers the period up to 2038
- Norfolk Market Town Centre Report, 2019
- The Greater Norwich Local Plan – currently being developed
- Aylsham Conservation Area
- Recycling Norfolk's Disused Railways
- Norfolk Cycling and Walking Strategy

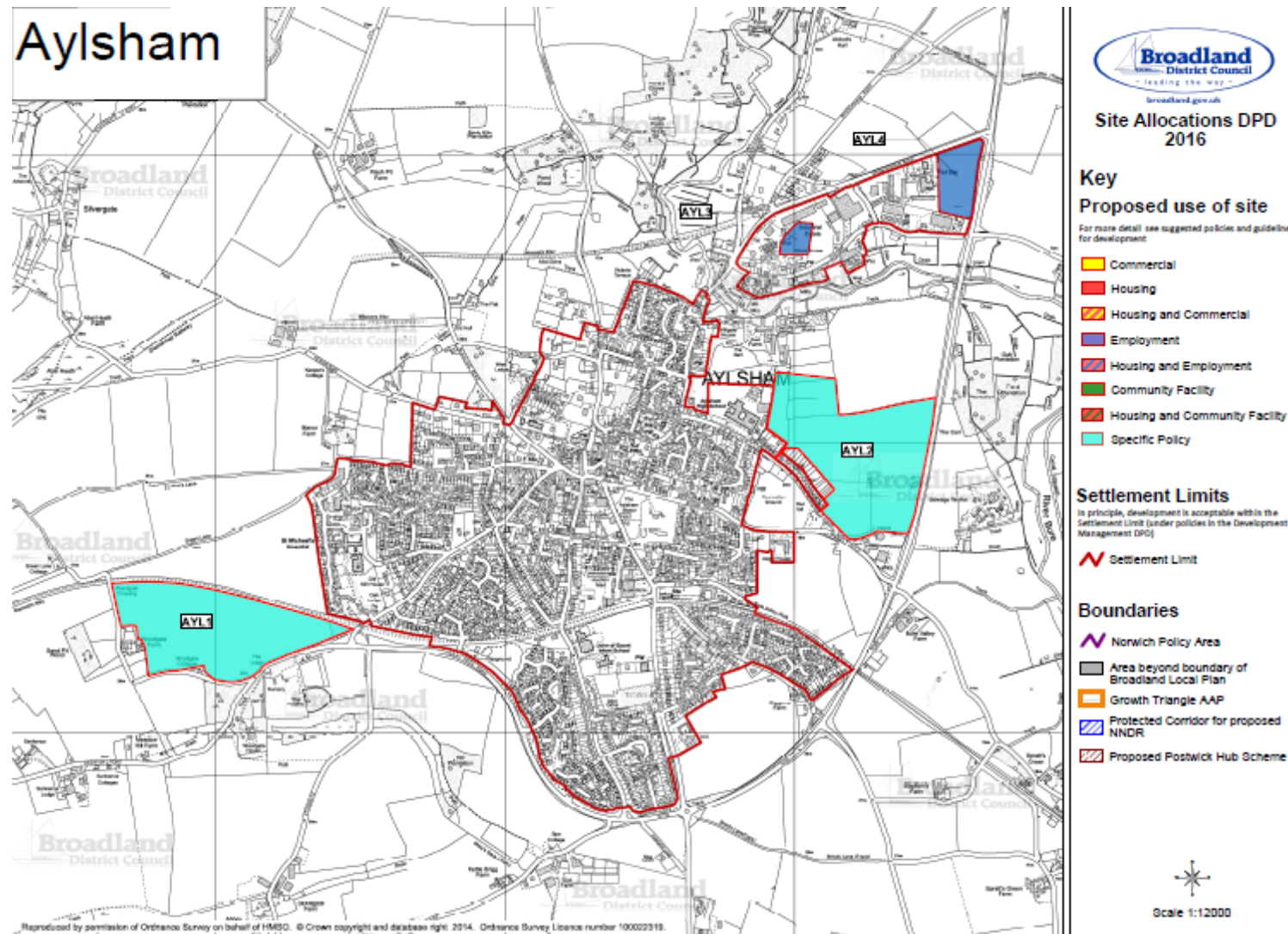


Figure 2: Aylsham Local Plan Site Allocations Map, 2016.

## Chapter 3: Aylsham Background

Aylsham is a market town situated in Norfolk, within the Planning Authority of Broadland District Council.

Aylsham is 14 miles north of Norwich and 11 miles south of Cromer and is an urban centre for neighbouring rural areas, providing facilities, services and transport links. The historic market town is bypassed by the A140, providing the town with good links to Norwich, the Norfolk coast and nearby towns and villages. The B1145 is another primary route in and out of Aylsham, connecting the town with other towns and villages to the east and west.

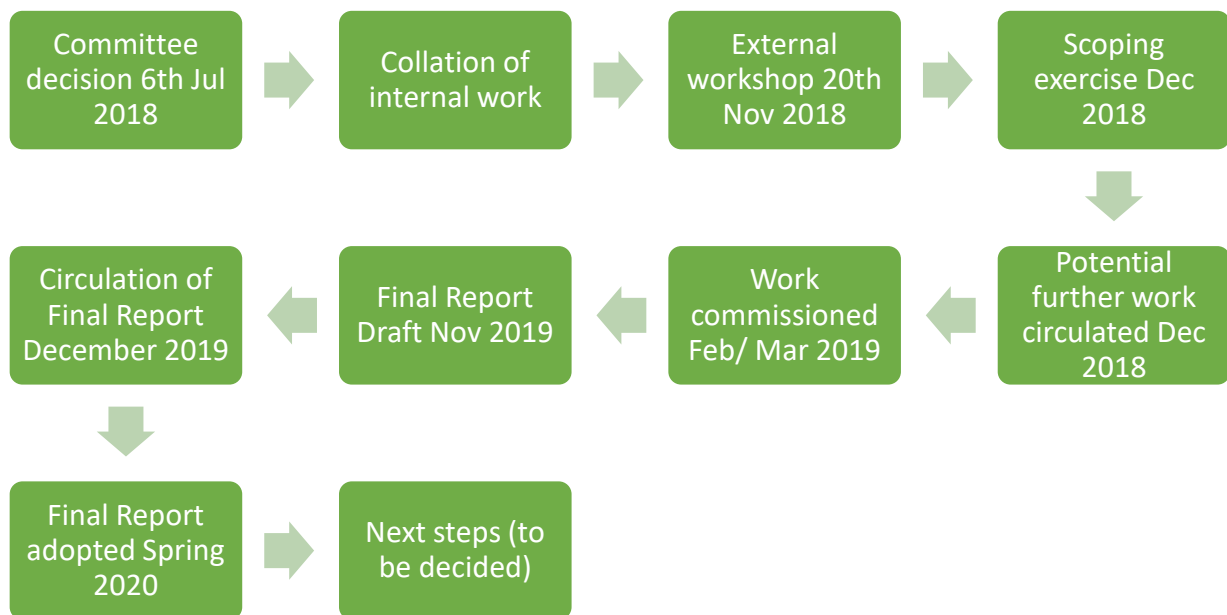
Aylsham can be divided into three different sections: the historic town centre; industrial/commercial areas; and residential areas. A high proportion of the resident population can be found in the west of Aylsham and the highest proportion of the working population can be found in the north east but is also high in the west. The Dunkirk industrial area in the north east of the town supports a range of small companies and plans to develop in the future. There are 82 town centre businesses. Aylsham holds a market in the Market Place every Monday and Friday attracting both locals and visitors.

The 2011 census showed that the population of Aylsham is 6,016 with 4,249 residents being of working age. The population has grown rapidly in the last 7 years as the population was recorded as 7,729 in 2018. 23.6% of residents are retired which is much higher than the England average which is 13.7%. Residents use a variety of transport modes to get to work however most drive to work, with 71.7% of the residents using this mode of transport. This highlights the potential for a modal shift as 27% of the local population live less than 2km from work and 31% live within 5km. These are within walking and cycling distance hence if walking and cycling is made more accessible and safer in Aylsham, there is potential for an increase in the number of people using these modes of transport to get to work.

Aylsham has been assigned a total of 550 new households shared across two new developments, Willow Park (AYL1) and Bure Meadows (AYL2), which are highlighted in Figure 2. These new housing developments will increase the population of Aylsham and hence place an increased demand on the current transport infrastructure.

## Chapter 4: Programme of activity

The purpose of the network improvement strategies is to identify issues, build a strong evidence base and help to bring forward solutions that support the delivery of future housing and jobs growth. To develop the understanding of the transport issues in Aylsham, the County Council held stakeholder workshops, carried out site visits and liaised with highways colleagues to gather a range of views on which to base the strategy. The programme of activity and timeline of events is set out below.



## Chapter 5: Transport in Aylsham today

Norfolk County Council's Environment, Development and Transport Committee agreed to commission market town network improvement strategies in 2017. Members agreed the reports would look to: understand current transport problems and issues; understand the future situation (principally growth proposals and their impacts on transport); and develop an Action Plan. The Committee agreed the scope of issues that would be looked at in the studies. This chapter provides a summary of each item set out in the scope and what the relevant issues and concerns are in Aylsham. This also includes areas where there is not a transport issue or where further work is not proposed. It sets out the scope items including casualties, parking, congestion, cycling and public transport. For each of these the Strategy lists what work is already underway and the potential further work options.

### Casualties

NCC Highways Team provided information on cyclist, motor traffic and pedestrian collisions where these resulted in an injury. (The police only compile records of injury collisions since there is a requirement that these are reported in law. No record is maintained for collisions where no injury resulted, eg minor bumps.) The number of collisions across the three modes of transport are typical for a market town and the maps below identify both slight and serious injuries.

### **Collisions involving cyclists**

In the five-year period of 2013 to 2018, there were four recorded collisions involving cyclists in Aylsham, all involving vehicles but none of which were serious. Two of these collisions were on Penfold Street located in the town centre. Despite this, it is not enough evidence to suggest there is a hotspot in the town for these collisions as this number of incidents is what is expected for a small market town over this time period. Therefore, no further work is proposed for cyclist collisions as part of this study although improvements to the safety of cycling in Aylsham have been suggested later in this report as a perception of danger can deter people from cycling.

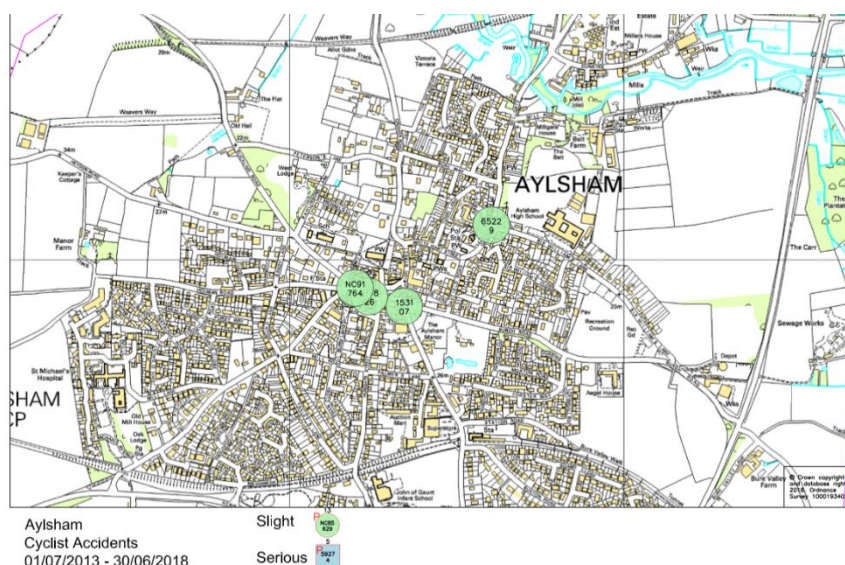


Figure 3. Aylsham cyclist accidents between 2013 and 2018.

## Collisions involving motor vehicles

Figures 4 and 5 show the collisions involving motor vehicles in the five-year period in Aylsham. Four of these collisions were serious and mostly located outside of the town centre. The less serious collisions can be found mostly within the town centre. Similarly, to above, this number of collisions is what is to be expected in a market town therefore no further work is proposed. However, proposals of traffic slowing in the town centre are apparent in order to enhance the historic town centre.

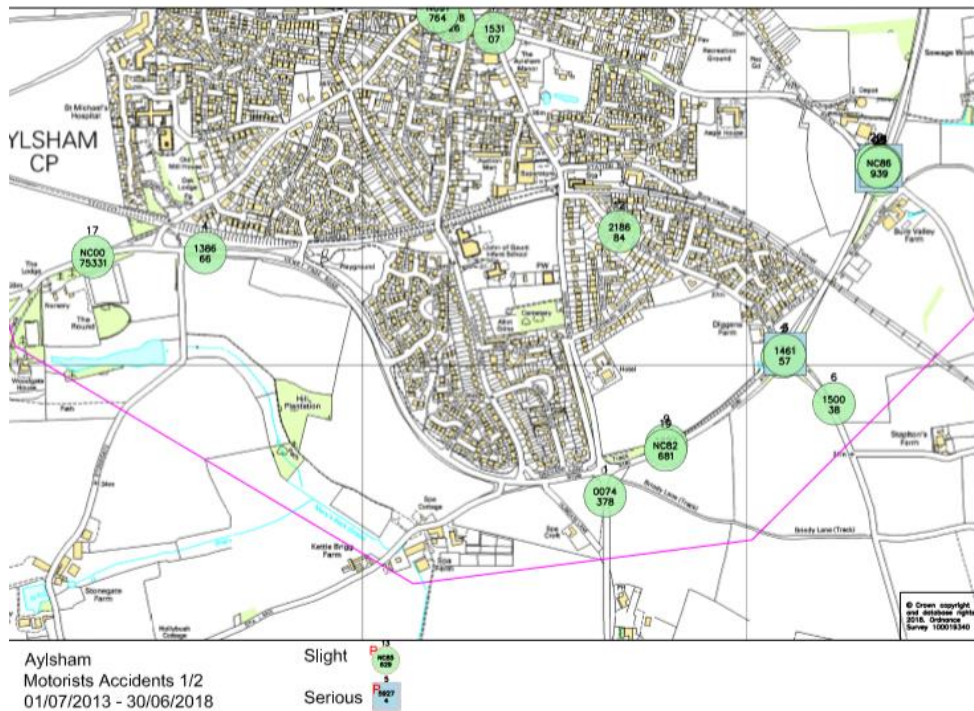


Figure 4. Aylsham motorist accidents between 2013 and 2018 map 1.

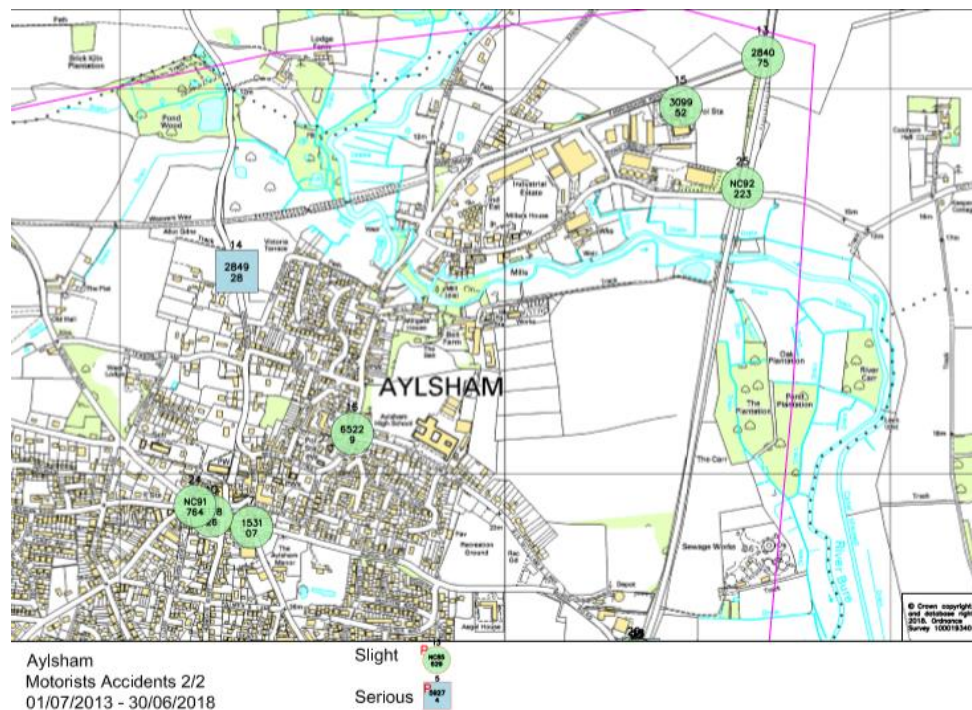


Figure 5. Aylsham motorist accidents between 2013 and 2018 map 2.

## Collisions involving pedestrians

Within the five-year period, there were six collisions involving pedestrians as can be seen in Figure 6. All of these were between pedestrians and cars, with two of the collisions being serious. There is no particular hotspot for these collisions in the town and this number of collisions is what would be expected in a market town. Therefore, no further work is required.

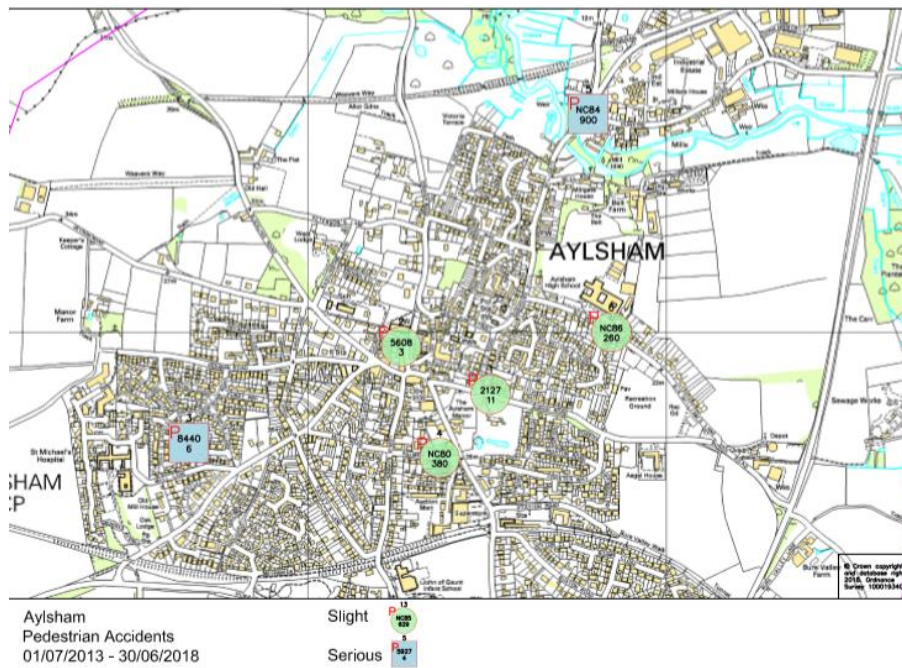


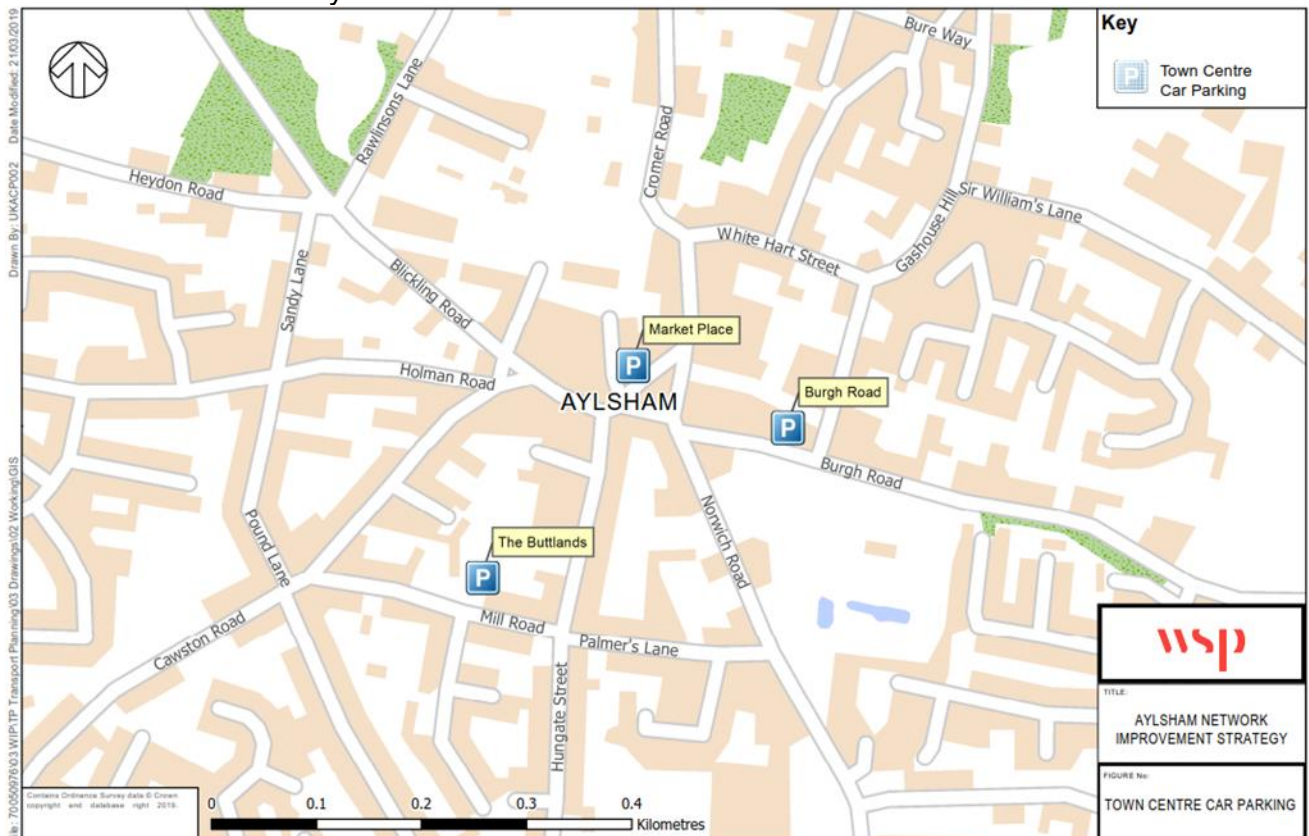
Figure 6. Aylsham pedestrian accidents between 2013 and 2018.

In summary, the casualty data for Aylsham is typical for a market town. The analysis has not identified any areas within the town where interventions should be considered to address casualty problems. It has been recommended that to ensure safety, all proposals in the town should undergo a Stage One Road Safety Audit following an initial design stage. The county council will continue to monitor the issue.

**Action: No further action required at present.**

## Parking

There are three main public car parks which form the focus of the parking assessment. These are the car parks at Burgh Road, The Buttlands, and the Market Place as can be seen in Figure 3. All of these car parks are free to use for the public. Other car parks, in and around Aylsham, are either in private ownership (for example, Budgens) or lie outside the town centre. There are small pockets of on-street parking spaces available throughout the town, however these have been excluded from the study.



*Figure 7: Main public car parks in Aylsham considered*

Burgh Road Car Park is to the east of the town centre and has a single entry and exit point onto Burgh Road. The car park has 57 spaces and 2 disabled spaces. It is free to use for a maximum for four hours between 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday. This is therefore labelled as the 'short-stay' car park in Aylsham.

The Buttlands Car Park is south of the town centre and accessed from Mill Road. There is direct connectivity to the town centre and the market square. The car park has 58 spaces free to use all day from Monday to Sunday hence making it designated as the 'long-stay' car park in Aylsham.

The Market Place Car Park is found in the town centre and is closed on market days (Monday and Friday). This car park is the smallest in the town with 29 spaces and one disabled space. Due to the market, this car park is free to use for a maximum of two hours between 08:00 and 18:00 on Tuesday to Thursday and 14:00 to 18:00 on a Saturday. There is no parking available on Mondays and Fridays before 18:00.



There are key issues regarding signage in the town including inconsistencies in signage, for example the Buttlands car park is labelled as both 'short-stay' and 'long-stay' on different signage. In addition, some signs direct cars on inappropriate routes. Therefore, further work has been done as part of this study to assess the existing parking signage in Aylsham to further understand the issues with the current signage and decide whether re-routing and new signage is necessary. The findings of this study can be found in Chapter 7.

**Action: Consultants have been commissioned to review the car parking signage in Aylsham. The findings can be found in Chapter 7.**

## **Congestion**

Aylsham Town Council (ATC) mentioned their emerging Neighbourhood Plan and aspirations to undertake a Town Traffic Plan and for the consideration of an option for a possible one-way system in the town. ATC expressed concerns about the congestion outside of schools and there has been a discussion about the need for schools to create their own Travel Plans.

Sugar beet traffic must pass through the centre of the town, this must be kept in mind.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the car boot sales off the A140 causing local tail-backs on the A140. This car boot sale is every Saturday and is open to buyers from 11:00 and sellers from 07:00.

**Action: Schools to undertake Travel Plan. Travel plans are now voluntary for schools as Norfolk County Council no longer provides this service.**

## **Access via public transport**

Norfolk County Council used software to analyse what areas can access the town via bus within 30 minutes. The software only used Norfolk's bus service data. The map below shows accessibility levels to key locations around the town (Figure 4). It should be noted that, where the map is blank (ie in areas not highlighted red, orange or green) there is no public transport access into the town within 30 minutes. The data used for this was collected twice on a Wednesday. The first collection between 07:00 and 10:00, and the second between 16:00 and 19:00.

Bus accessibility as expected is concentrated along key routes such as the A140 and the B1145 linking Aylsham to Norwich, North Norfolk and neighbouring market towns North Walsham and Reepham, along with a range of surrounding villages. The greater accessibility from the towns and the city could be explained due to these being centres of employment, shopping points and higher education facilities. For example, Norwich city has the third highest concentration of research parks in the UK and two leading universities and a host of shops hence it is a destination which provides lots of services and attracts attention. Therefore, it is well connected, with Aylsham being a 30-minute bus ride away using the A140.

Some bus stops in Aylsham could potentially be relocated in order to ease congestion. The Town Council has raised concerns about the buses in the town centre. A spot where there is currently concern is the Red Lion Street bus stop and bus route. This road is very narrow and is a very tight manoeuvre for the buses, especially when there are two buses passing one another. There is potential for further work such as looking to find a new location for the bus stops currently causing congestion and to speak to the bus operator about buses on Red Lion Street and potential alternative routes. New residents would also like to see bus use being encouraged through increased timetable information, better connections to the new housing development and discounted tickets.

**Action: Speak to bus operator about buses on Red Lion Street and potential alternative routes, look at potential new locations for bus stops which currently cause congestion. This action is included as part of the consultancy in Chapter 7.**

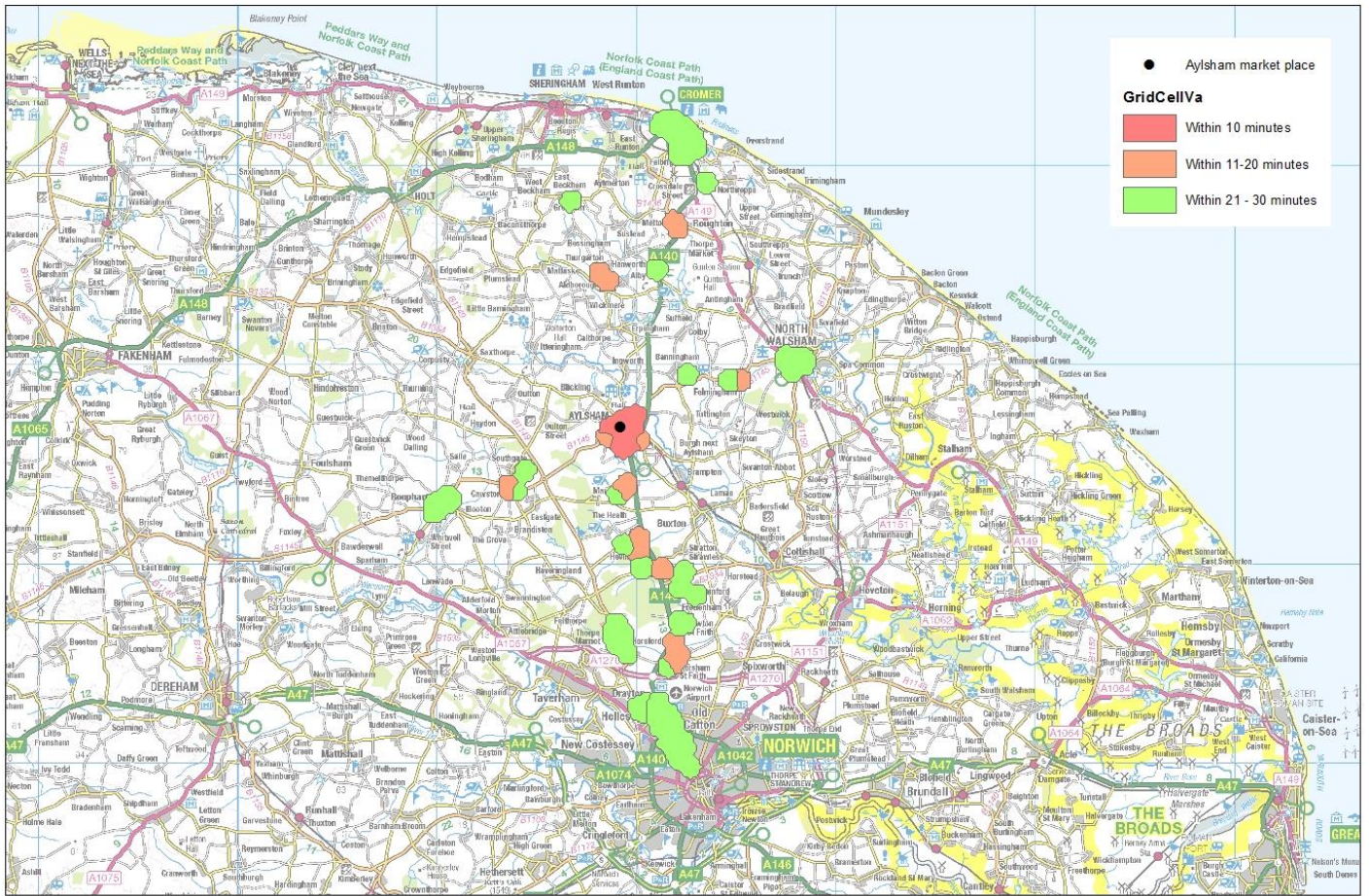


Figure 8: Public Transport accessibility to key locations in Aylsham (from locations in Norfolk only)

## **Cycling and walking**

Aylsham is host to three cycling and walking routes on disused railway lines. These are the Marriott's Way, the Bure Valley Path, and Weavers' Way. These routes function primarily as leisure routes and are managed by Norfolk Greenways Project. In addition to these, Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 33 is an on-road cycle route which connects Aylsham to North Norfolk. Outside of Aylsham, however, this cycle route is reported as being unsuitable for casual cyclists as there is no designated cycle infrastructure and the roads have the national speed limit in place, making this route appear less safe for users.

It is apparent that there is a desire for better cycle and walking links from the new housing developments at Willow Park and Bure Meadows. Willow Park is considered isolated from the town centre. Locals must currently walk on the road below the bridge or use Marriott's Way. This route is considered unsuitable by residents due to the lack of footpaths and there are concerns about the use of Marriott's Way during bad weather and in the winter as there is a poor surface and no lighting along the route.

In addition to this, other areas of the town are lacking footpaths including Penfold Street where there are no footpaths and along Cawston Road there is a lack of continuous pavement, meaning pedestrians must cross the road several times to remain on the footpath. Narrow footpaths are also a current problem in Aylsham and reported to pose a risk to pedestrian safety notably along Red Lion Street and Norwich Road. There have been discussions about pedestrianizing Red Lion Street and widening the pavement along Norwich Road to increase safety.

Aylsham Town Council have also raised concerns regarding the crossing of the A140 on the Weavers Way and Bure Valley footpaths. This issue has not been included in the scope of the study however, it is something that Norfolk County Council is aware of and the issue links with work currently being done with the Greenways project. There is not currently funding available to provide infrastructure at these crossings however there is potential for feasibility work at the crossings to be carried out if funding were to become available from the Greenways in order to form a better picture of the current situation and the work which would need to be done.

Currently 13% of residents walk to work and 5.6% cycle. This is in comparison to the majority of 71.7% of the residents who drive to work. Despite the number of residents who walk or cycle to work being higher than the Norfolk average, there is still potential for this to be increased even more. This is due to the fact that 27% of Aylsham residents live within 2km from work (a walkable and cyclable distance) and 31% live within 5km of work (a cyclable distance). If walking and cycling provisions are improved in Aylsham, there is potential for the number of residents driving to work to reduce.

There is also a huge drive to increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 walking or cycling into school. The Norfolk County Council Cycling and Walking Action Plan aims for this to be 55% by 2025. This therefore adds to the need for improved walking and cycling provision in Aylsham and to ensure the safety of

cyclists and pedestrians. Connection to schools must be considered when improvements are underway.

Aylsham is also connected to the Norwich Green Loop. This is a new 50 mile cycling and walking trail in the North of Norwich made up of the Marriott's Way, the Bure Valley Path and a new path between Wroxham and Norwich. The path connects Norwich, Aylsham and Wroxham, is a key wildlife link, health promoting asset and outdoor classroom and links the areas of growth in the north of the city with the countryside.

**Action: Consultancy projects to review specific cycling and walking routes links to the town centre, new developments, future developments and employment centres. Create walking and cycling corridors to enhance the walking and cycling experience in Aylsham which may help lead to a modal shift.**

## **Intelligent transport systems**

The Norfolk and Suffolk Integrated Transport Strategy has been adopted by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. This developed a long-term vision considering economic and technological changes including digital connectivity, autonomous vehicles and new forms of public and shared transport. Market towns are mentioned in this strategy as being an important part of the local economy and hence sustainable access to these towns, such as Aylsham, should be encouraged. The strategy sets out what transport could look like by 2030, 2040 and beyond:

### **2030:**

- Digitally connected transport networks underway and digital connectivity improved across the region allowing people to access opportunities from home including reliable home and remote working.
- Key pinch points addressed, network capacity improved and better operational regimes will boost network capacity and make journeys more reliable and resilient.
- Agile transport solutions in the Local Enterprise Partnership's priority places and better access to information will lead to 'peak' travel spread and allow people to make informed and personal travel choices with more certainty.

### **2040:**

- Connected and autonomous cars, trucks and buses will be the norm, improving safety and contributing to the smooth running of the network.
- Traditional bus service provision will have reduced but will be supplemented by on demand, responsive services that offer efficiencies.
- The move away from fossil fuels will be largely complete supported by alternative generation and storage solutions with communities benefitting from associated air quality improvements.

### **Beyond:**

- Digital access to services (including health and social care) and opportunities (including education and training) will help people be more productive on the move.
- Direct rail access between key centres with faster journey times and higher capacity, and local lines will have benefitted from more reliable rolling stock and improved customer experience.
- New service models will reduce costs and provide new services for hard to reach communities and on-account, seamless, barrier-less payment technologies will facilitate Mobility as a Service (MaaS).

Whilst some of these transport improvements may seem far into the future we are already seeing cars with built in navigation and abilities to park so we need to be aware of the technological advancements ahead and ensure any improvements suggested in this strategy will not only have an impact on the ability to move around Aylsham today but are also helping future proof the town for the changes set out above.

## **Place making**

The quality of the public realm is an important element of a town's identity and selling points, with national policy stating that competitive town centres need to provide customer choice, a diverse retail offer and reflect the individuality of town centres.

Aylsham Town Council have led the production of an Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan covering 2018 to 2038. The Plan's vision is to protect and promote the unique character and strong sense of community in Aylsham. Improvements to infrastructure, outlined in this Plan, are aimed at increasing connectivity in the town and providing better access to the town centre.

In addition to this, Aylsham is part of an international movement of Cittaslow towns. A Cittaslow town, in literal terms, is a slow town or city, and one which seeks to foster economic, social and environmental sustainability. These towns, based in 30 countries worldwide, will move forward and modernise whilst still retaining the essential identity qualifying them for Cittaslow status. This includes the 60 criteria ranging from infrastructure policies to the celebration and promotion of local produce. Despite the modern threats towns must face, including out-of-town shopping centres, online shopping and chains, Aylsham is able to maintain its individuality and retain a sense of togetherness and community. The Cittaslow status of Aylsham is something which must be considered when developing the network in the town. New developments should be considered in the context of the identity and uniqueness of the town, as this is very important and part of what makes the town so popular and successful.

Aylsham Town Council have also had discussions about the potential pedestrianisation of Red Lion Street which would further enhance the historic town centre by reducing traffic and making it a more pleasant area to be in. This aspect was considered by county council officers when conclusions were reached about what topic areas the study should cover. After consideration, pedestrianisation would be a major piece of work needing, amongst other things, extensive consultation and understanding of traffic patterns which is beyond the scope of this study. However, investigating the possibility of making Red Lion Street pedestrian friendly will be identified as one of the pieces of further feasibility work arising from the study and will be highlighted in the Action Plan chapter of this document.

This work sufficiently covers place making and as this strategy is focused on transport it is not suggested that it does further work on place making but ensures that any transport improvements such as changes to signage or cycling improvements will promote the town centre and improve access.



## Chapter 6: The future

The future challenges our current transport network, showing new travel habits, working habits and retail habits. This change in habit has been aided by technological developments and new social norms.

We are living in a time when people are better connected than ever, and everything is instant. People are now 'always on' and always contactable via the super-fast connectivity which we now have. As a result, we are increasingly expecting services to be instant and to be able to access information fast, making our lives move in a quicker and easier manner. This is changing our day to day habits which in turn is altering how we use and view different forms of transport. The future trends and new habits must be considered in the Network Improvement Strategy to ensure towns like Aylsham are not left behind and are able to cope with new ways of moving.

Aylsham is a market town hosting a large working population, areas of employment, retail facilities and a historic core. It is possible the town could be impacted in the future by the new social norms and habits which are now arising and growing. These include:

- **New working habits.** Thanks to new super-fast connectivity technologies, it is now easier than ever to work from home by using laptops and carrying out video conferences. In line with this, new working habits also include new working hours. With the growth in popularity of flexi working, the future could see a decline in the peak congestion times and 'rush hour' when people start and finish work (usually around 09:00 and 17:00) because a growing number of people will be commuting at different times or not needing to commute at all. A large proportion of Aylsham's population are of working age and therefore this future trend may have some effect on the travel habits in and around the town.
- **Changes to the economy.** The increase of the 'gig' economy and technological developments has had and are predicted to have a huge impact on the economy. Growth in technology can provoke job losses as people are increasingly being replaced by machines. This can be seen especially in agriculture where a shift in employment has been seen, with more people working in transport, wholesaling, retail and food processing. These changes, especially the rise of the 'gig' economy, could see movement away from the traditional 9-5 commuting congestion. Due to this, towns including Aylsham could see these changes.
- **New shopping habits.** Popularity in ordering goods online has dramatically increased within the last few years. The development of the internet and connectivity has made shopping online far easier, quicker and in some cases cheaper than visiting shops. Companies such as Amazon provide a wealth of products at your fingertips which can often be delivered to your doorstep within 24hrs. Due to this, fewer people are making journeys to retail areas which could in the future take more vehicles off the road. However, this habit will lead to more delivery vehicles and longer distance journeys to deliver items as fewer people are buying local. The effect of this future habit may be minimal on Aylsham however, due to its Cittaslow status.
- **Improved customer experience on public transport.** Public transport is increasingly becoming more connected and convenient. For example, the provision of Wi-Fi on board trains and buses means people can stay

connected on the move and continue to be productive. Due to this, there is potential for a modal shift and increased usage of public transport as being able to work and stay connected is becoming of high importance to many people and may lead to people choosing to take public transport as it is the more attractive form of transportation. Live transport updates on arrival times, contactless payment for tickets and applications which plan your journey for you are also making the use of public transport as convenient as ever. New technologies like these are becoming more popular, hence it can be expected that there may be an increase in the usage of public transport in the future. The possibility should therefore be considered, ensuring that there is suitable provision for public transport in Aylsham to support the potential growth in its usage in the future.

- **E-Bikes.** Electric propulsion future trend would mean we would expect to see E-Bikes becoming more common. They enable people to move around without emitting any carbon emissions and make it easier for people to cycle and travel longer trips than an ordinary bike. If these become more popular in the future, Aylsham, along with the rest of the country, would need to ensure there are, or there is potential for development of, adequate cycling facilities to strategic locations.

In addition to these new social norms, Aylsham is set to take on more housing developments in the future, as set out in the Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy. The town is already having 550 new households which are spread between Willow Park in the west and Bure Meadows in the East. Along with this, it can be expected that in the future Aylsham will have to cope with more housing developments due to the New Anglia Economic Strategy which aims to add 140,000 new homes to Norfolk and Suffolk by 2036. Population growth in the region and the ideal location and proximity the town is to large employment centres such as Norwich could also increase the possibility of more housing in Aylsham and its surrounding area. The current and future growth of the town will place pressure on the transport systems in place and will therefore require the transport network to keep up with the growth of the town. This could see Aylsham needing to provide connections to new developments, improve public transport and highway connections to desirable locations and to try and promote low carbon modes of transport to ensure that the growth of the town does not negatively impact the environment.

## Chapter 7: Our findings

In order to address the issues raised in Chapter 5 regarding the current transport in Aylsham, consultants were commissioned to investigate three main topics: Walking and cycling, parking and access, and bus stopping arrangements in Aylsham. These areas were agreed as the focus of this study with the wider stakeholder group across the town.

With regards to walking and cycling in Aylsham, consultants provided a report which:

- Appraised the existing walking and cycling network in Aylsham
- Examined the data relating to active travel and the town characteristics
- Developed key walking and cycle corridors for the town

The purpose of the parking and access report was to:

- Carry out an assessment of existing parking signage in Aylsham to understand how visitors are routed to, and from, the public car parks
- Highlight where signage needs to be improved

The bus stopping arrangements report produced by the consultants was commissioned to examine the potential options for revised bus stopping arrangements in Aylsham Town Centre.

This chapter will highlight the findings from these three studies and present the improvements which can be made to achieve the aims of the strategies and policies presented in Chapter 2.

### **Cycling and walking**

Consultants produced a report with the aim of developing key walking and cycling corridors in Aylsham.

The study used the Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) to provide an evidence base to inform walking and cycling investment in Aylsham. The tool produces four scenarios which offer useful insights into the future. The scenarios are:

- The 'Government Target' scenario which forecasts the achievement of the Department for Transport's Cycle Delivery Plan target of doubling cycling between 2013-2025
- The 'Gender Equality' scenario which sets the number of women cycling to the same as men to increase the overall amount of people cycling
- The 'Go-Dutch' scenario which predicts how many people would cycle if there was the same amount of cycle infrastructure and culture as the Netherlands
- The 'E-Bikes' scenario whereby all cyclists own an E-Bike

The tool also allows the user to see where cycling flows go, and which parts of the network may be busiest or more attractive, highlighting areas which could be a focus for cycling. In Aylsham, the tool identified the Bure Valley Path as an attractive cycle route which is both fast and quiet. The tool is a good starting point however, it does

not consider the local plan growth or strategic development plans which could change travel patterns dramatically

The PCT explored three walking and cycling corridors in Aylsham. Corridor 3 was deemed the most feasible and the corridor which should be taken forward for further assessment and detailed design costing. Information about Corridor 1 and 2 will still be covered however as these are the top three corridors and they could potentially be used to guide improvements to the cycling and walking infrastructure in the future.

**Walking and Cycling Corridor 1: Marriott's Way to the town centre via Cawston Road**

This corridor, as can be seen in Figure 9, connects new housing in the southwest of Aylsham with the Marriott's Way leisure route and the town centre, whilst being near the Parish Church and St Michaels Church of England Primary School. This corridor is approximately 1 mile long and captures both existing and future residents in Aylsham.

The benefits of this corridor include:

- The provision of a direct commuter route for new and existing residents into the centre of the town
- A connection to Marriott's Way which provides easy access to a large proportion of Aylsham to recreational routes
- The utilisation of existing infrastructure
- Providing greater pedestrian permeability in the town centre
- Improving walking provision at a number of pinch points which also works double as a traffic calming scheme along Cawston Road

The limitations of this corridor include:

- The high cost of completing this corridor. The total indicative cost for this corridor would be £490,000
- The potential detraction from Marriott's Way's natural attractiveness as a leisure route.
- The lack of connection to Aylsham High School
- The lack of direct connection to primary employment sites within the town

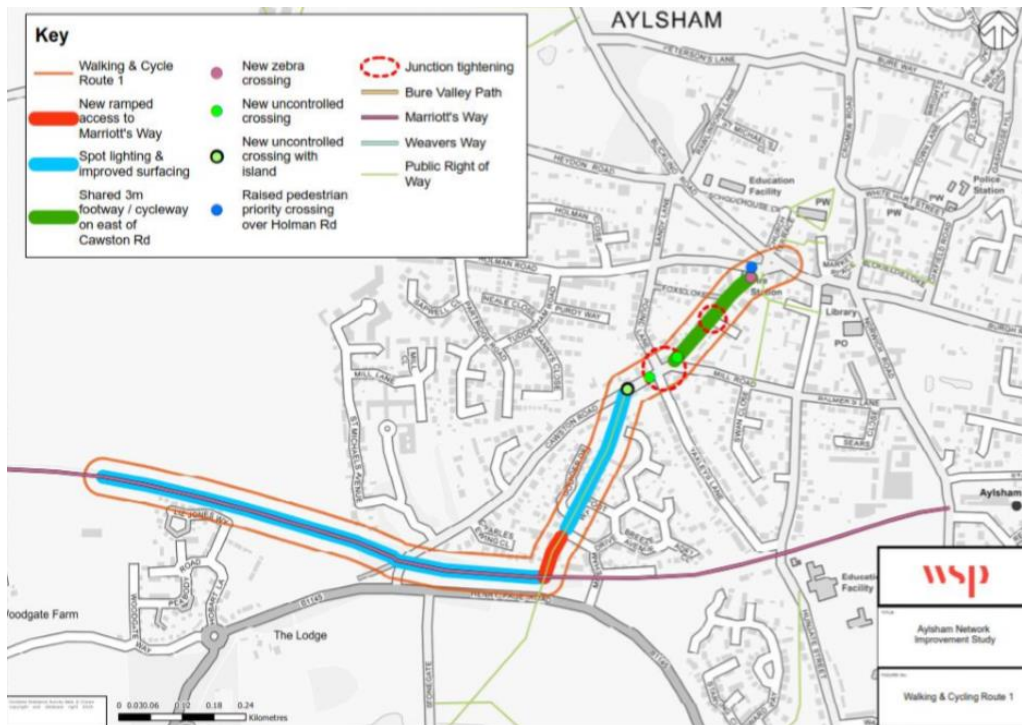


Figure 9: Walking and cycling options – Corridor 1

Works that can be implemented to improve this corridor include:

- Improvements to Marriott's Way including adding lights to the sides to make it safer for walking and cycling in the dark, providing ramped access to the town from the Marriott's Way and improvements to the bound surfacing.
- A new uncontrolled central island crossing on Cawston Road at the exit from the Public Right of Way.
- Reducing the corner radii at the junctions of Yaxley's Lane and Pound Lane and at the junction of the cul-de-sac on the east side between Mill Road and Foxes Loke and a raised and continuous footway/cycleway at location so drivers must give way which will slow vehicles and improve pedestrian safety.
- Widen the 3m shared footway/cycleway along the south-east side between Mill Road and Holman Road.
- Install a zebra crossing at Cawston Road.
- Provide a raised pedestrian crossing across Holman Road.

### Walking and Cycling Corridor 2: Aylsham Garden Centre to the town centre via Norwich Road

This corridor connects the Aylsham Garden Centre to Marriott's Way, primary town retail locations, the doctor's surgery, the community church and the town centre. The corridor is approximately 0.9 miles long and highlights Norwich Road as an area of potential notable uplift, as can be seen in Figure 10. This corridor has a total indicative cost on £413,000.

The benefits of this corridor include:

- It provides a direct commuter route between the town centre and local amenities
- It connects to the Marriott's Way and the Bure Valley Path

- It improves pedestrian permeability in town for those with visual impairments
- It is closely aligned with the potential demand shown in the PCT

The limitations with Corridor 2 include:

- The physical constraint on the Norwich Road
- There is no direct connection to primary employment sites within the town
- There is no connection with Aylsham High School

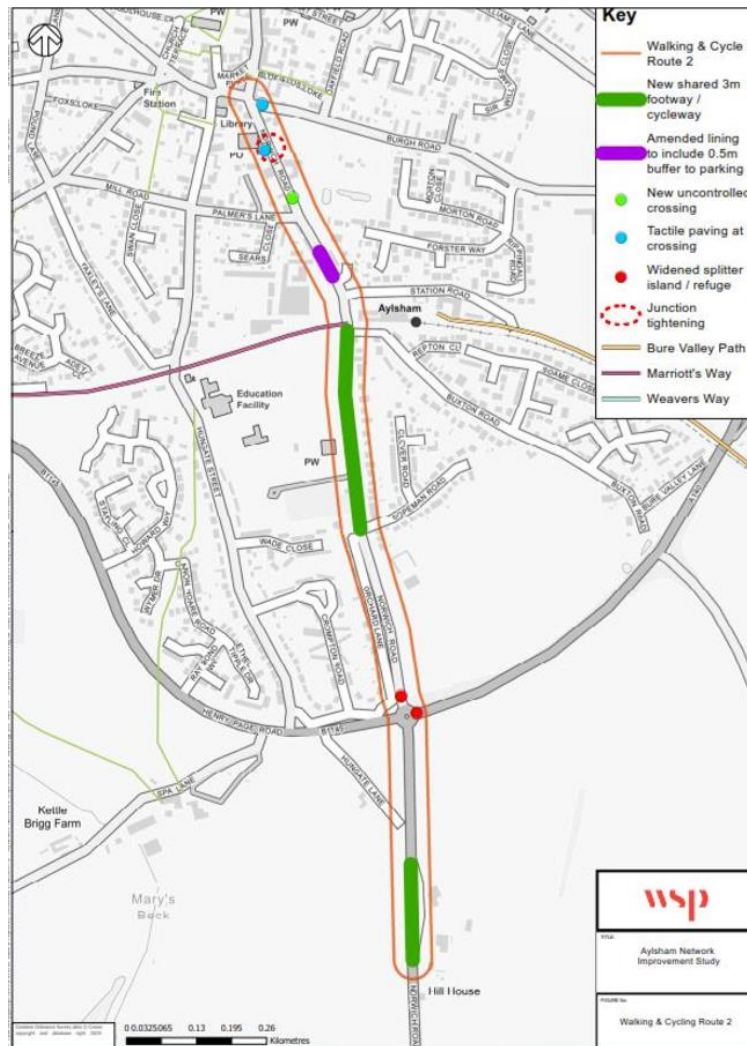


Figure 10: Walking and cycling options – Corridor 2

Works that can be implemented to improve Corridor 2 include:

- An extended shared footway/cycleway along the A140.
- Implementation of wider splitter islands on the east and north arm of the A140/Norwich Road/B1145 roundabout.
- A new 3m shared footway/cycleway on the west side of Norwich Road between Orchard Lane and Marriott's Way. This would require further investigation into whether the path can be implemented due to physical constraints.

- A new uncontrolled crossing on Norwich Road to the north of Palmer's Lane prior to where the footway on the west side of the road disappears for a short section.
- A tightened corner radius at the Budgens Car Park access which will force drivers to move more slowly
- Tactile paving for the north-south movements at Burgh Street which makes crossing the road easier for people who are visually impaired.

**Walking and Cycling Corridor 3:** Bure Meadows to the town centre via Burgh Road  
 This corridor connects Aylsham High School to the town centre and to new housing in the north east of the town. The corridor also provides potential further links to the Dunkirk employment area, as can be seen in Figure 11. This corridor is approximately 0.6 miles long and encourages walking and cycling around the town and to the Dunkirk employment area. Due to this and the new link the corridor provides which is currently not possible due to physical constraints, this route will have the largest benefit. These benefits include:

- A walking and cycling route largely segregated from vehicular traffic, making these modes of transport much safer and reducing the chances of a collision.
- There is the potential to connect this corridor to Weavers Way in the future.
- Improvements in pedestrian permeability in the town for the visually impaired.
- A connection from the town centre to Bure Meadows.
- Potential link to the Dunkirk employment area in the future.
- A connection to Aylsham High School

The only limitation of this corridor is the high costs. The indicative cost of the corridor is £363,500 however this excludes the unknown cost of buying third party land which is required to create this route, and the risks regarding the ownership of this land.

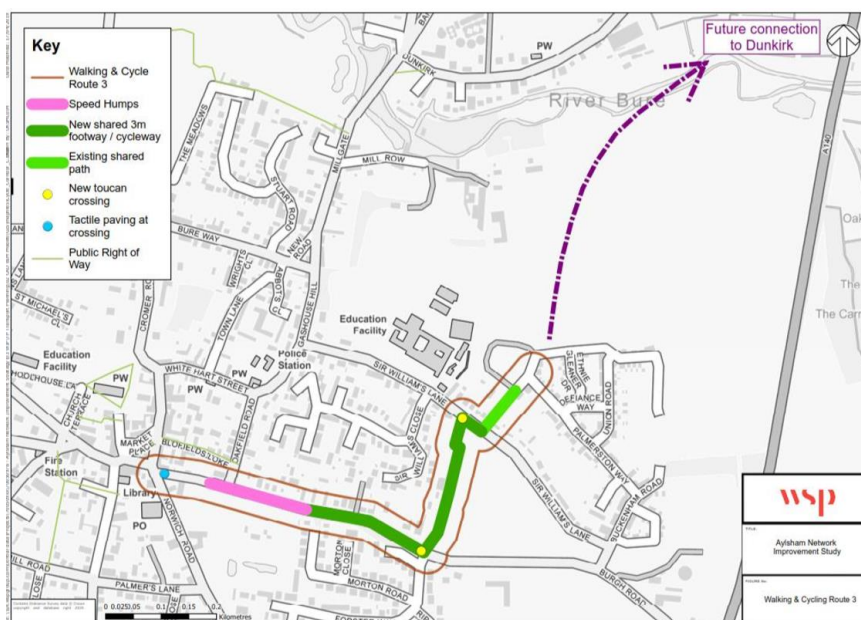


Figure 11: Walking and cycling options – Corridor 3

Works that can be implemented to improve Corridor 3 include:

- New tactile paving for north-south movements on Burgh Street.
- Speed humps to calm traffic on Burgh Road.

- A new shared footway/cycleway on the south side of Burgh Road. This would require the purchase of third-party land.
- A new toucan crossing to connect the proposed path to an existing recreation area and a new toucan crossing on Sir Williams Lane
- Widening the existing path running north-south through a town recreation area.
- A new short section of 3m shared footway/cycleway on the north of Sir Williams Lane which connects a path in the recreation area to the existing shared path along Buckenham Road. It would also connect with Bure Meadows.

### **Corridor costs**

It is to be noted that none of the corridor costs include land purchase costs, detailed design, construction and traffic management, utilities, nor other constraints which may become apparent during the next stage of design.

### **Recommendations**

A RAG assessment was carried out, ranking the three corridors against the proportion of existing town served including active development sites, the level of cycle provision and priority, leisure route potential, school connectivity, employment/retail/leisure connectivity, impact on vehicular traffic, and cost. The RAG assessment showed Corridor 3 to be the best suited for further development, refinement and design. Corridor 3 scored very highly in level of cycle provision and priority, school connectivity, employment/retail/leisure connectivity and cost hence placing it in first place. This was followed by Corridor 1 as the second most suitable route and Corridor 2 as third.



## **Parking and access**

Consultants were commissioned to carry out an assessment of existing parking signage in Aylsham to understand how visitors are routed to, and from the public car parks. The study looked at the three main car parks in Aylsham which are Burgh Road, The Buttlands and the Market Place. Aylsham does have other areas of on street parking and other car parks which are privately owned, therefore these have not been included in the study.

Burgh Road car park is Aylsham's 'short-stay' car park which has 57 spaces and is free to use for a maximum of 4 hours between 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday. The Buttlands is the largest car park with 58 parking spaces. This car park is Aylsham's "long-stay" car park as it is free to use all day Monday to Sunday. Finally, The Market Place car park is the smallest of the three with 29 spaces which are free to use for 2 hours between 08:00 and 18:00 Tuesday to Thursday and 14:00 to 18:00 on a Saturday. No parking is available here on a Monday or Friday before 18:00 due to the market days. More information about these car parks can be found in Chapter 5.

Signage is incredibly important, especially for people who are not familiar with Aylsham. It enables the control of where cars move, to make sure sensible routes are taken and so people can find important locations easily such as car parks. Signage is particularly important in Aylsham due to the town centre having a historic core and narrow streets. Signage is needed to ensure people do not use streets unsuitable for their vehicles which could potentially cause congestion or collision and to ensure that the place making of the historic town is not harmed by high volumes of traffic through the centre.

## **Inbound**

Signage approaching Aylsham is good on the A140 Northbound, however it was found that the signage can be sporadic and limited for vehicles approaching Aylsham from the north-east, the east and the north-west of the town. Signage from this direction saw the Buttlands car park being labelled as both "short-stay" and "long-stay" on different signage on the way in. In addition to this, the redirection signage from Burgh Road car park directs cars on an inappropriate route down Palmers Lane. This route is not suitable because there is not enough space for two vehicles. Therefore, consideration should be made about changing this signage and looking for a more appropriate route. Existing inbound route signage can be seen in Figure 12 and Table 2 below.

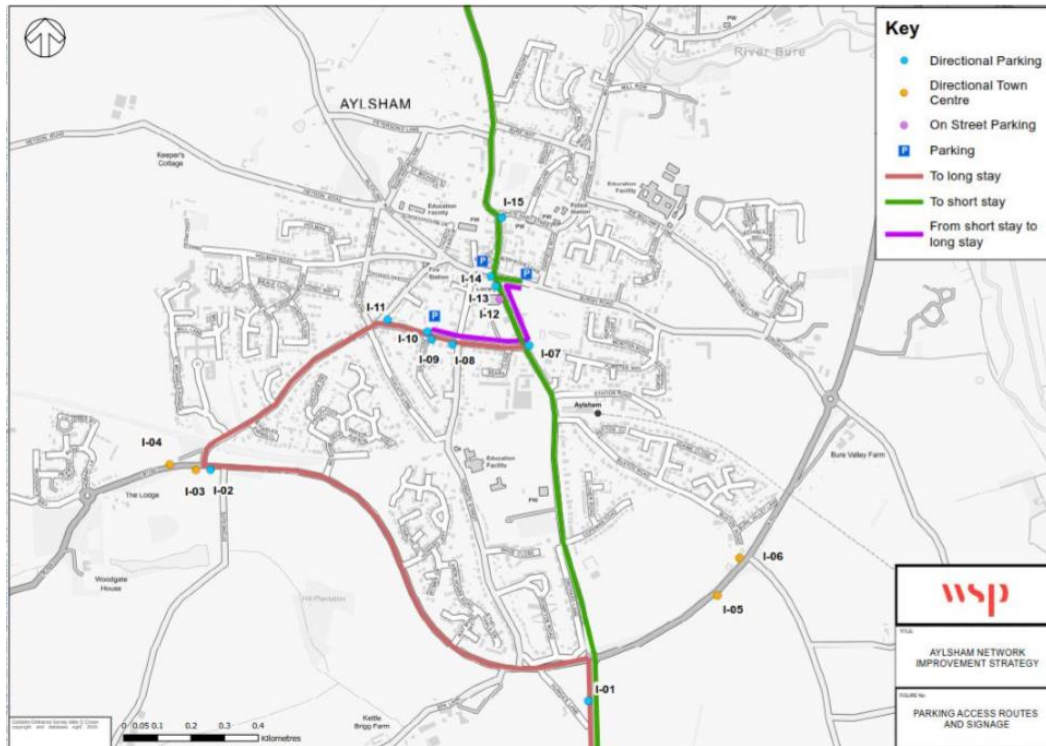


Figure 12: Existing inbound signed routes to car parks.

Sign	Sign Message	Direction
I-01	Ahead for short stay Left for long stay	From south
I-02	Right for long stay	From east
I-03	Left for Town Centre	From west
I-04	Left for Aylsham Town Centre	From west
I-05	Right for Aylsham	From east
I-06	Right for Aylsham	From east
I-07	Right for free parking Left for free parking	From north From south
I-08	Right for free parking Left for free parking	From north From south
I-09	Right for free parking Left for free parking	From east From west
I-10	Right for free parking Left for free parking	From east From west
I-11	Right for free parking	From south
I-12	Parking (on-street)	N/A
I-13	Right for short stay	From south
I-14	Left for free parking	From east
I-15	Right for free parking	From north

Table 2: Existing inbound signage list

## Outbound

It is desirable that the exit routes from the three car parks direct vehicles to the A140 or the B1145 through primary town roads and avoiding the town centre in order to maintain its aesthetic. However, there is currently no signage directing vehicles out of the Buttlands car park nor Burgh Road car park. This risks people who are unfamiliar with Aylsham taking unsuitable roads out of the town which could increase the chances of collision, congestion and threatening the place making of Aylsham town. In addition, on exiting the Market Place car park, signage directing you out of Aylsham is not immediately obvious until some distance has been travelled. However, due to this car park only having a small amount of spaces, more signage may not be appropriate nor desirable. Exiting outbound signage can be seen below in Figure 13 and Table 2.

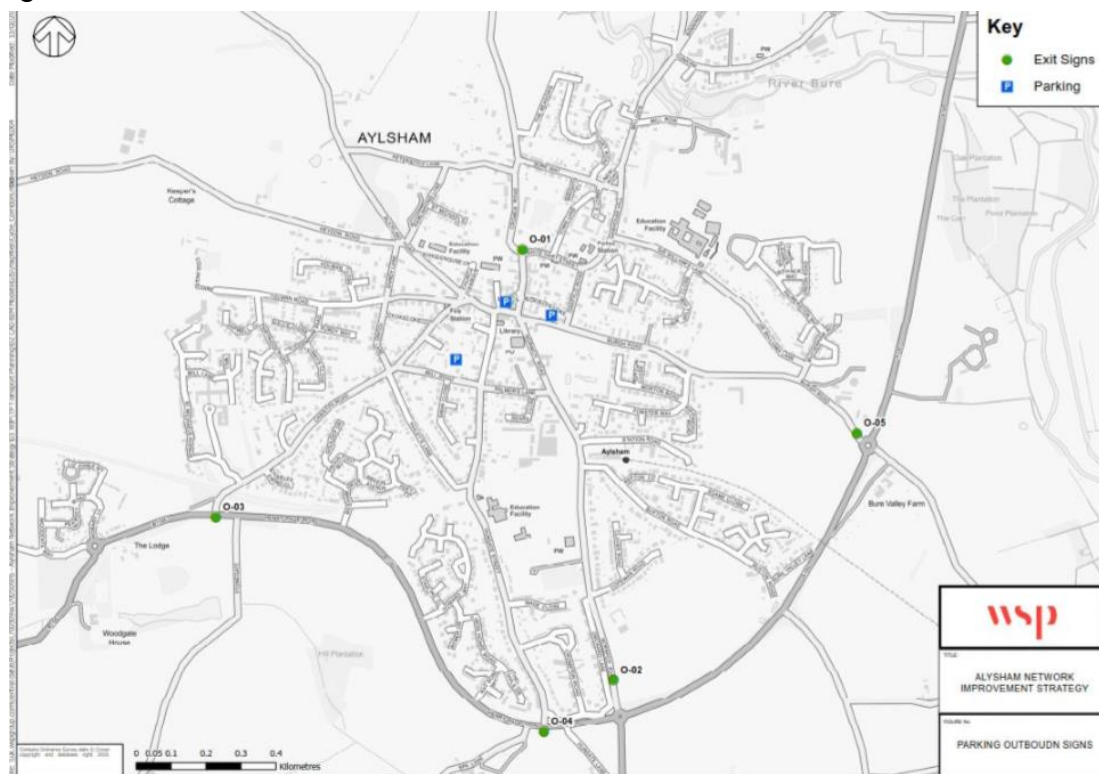


Figure 13: Existing outbound signs from car parks

Sign	Direction
O-01	From south
O-02	From north
O-03	From north
O-04	From north
O-05	From west

Table 2: Existing outbound signage list

## Proposed routes and signage

Proposed routes and signage have been generated in order to disperse vehicles to main public car parks in such a way to avoid the risk of any traffic bottlenecks and to minimise negative interaction between cars and vulnerable road users. The proposals put forward by the consultants will need further study and a detailed assessment.

### Signage into Aylsham car parks

Proposals of the routes into the Aylsham car parks can be seen in Figure 14. The consultancy report recommended that:

- Greater clarity should be provided for vehicles approaching Aylsham from the west on the B1145, and the north-east and south on the A140.
- Vehicles requiring the “long-stay” parking should be directed to the Buttlands car park via Cawston Road which is a primary access route into the town centre.
- Vehicles approaching from the south and west of Aylsham requiring “short-stay” parking should be directed to Burgh Road car park via Norwich Road. This is currently being done to a good standard so no change here is required.
- Vehicles approaching from the north-east, on the A140, could be directed to Burgh Road car park via Burgh Road
- No vehicles should specifically be directed to the Market Place for parking. This would be unsuitable on market days and would encourage movement through the centre of the town which could detract from the historic town aesthetic, place making and could aggravate congestion due to the narrow roads.



Figure 14: Proposed signed access routes to car parks

### Signage leaving Aylsham car parks

Proposals for routes out of Aylsham car parks can be seen in Figure 15 below. The consultancy report recommends that:

- Vehicles should be directed to the A140 or the B1145 in the most direct and appropriate manner as these are the most major routes out of Aylsham.

- Vehicles exiting the Buttlands car park should access the B1145 via Cawston Road, avoiding movement through the town centre.
- Vehicles exiting Burgh Road heading northbound should exit Aylsham by accessing the A140 via Burgh Road. Vehicles exiting this car park and heading southbound or westbound should be directed along the Norwich Road to access the B1145. These routes both avoid the town centre.
- Vehicles exiting the Market Place car park should also be directed along the Norwich road in order to access the A140 and the B1145.

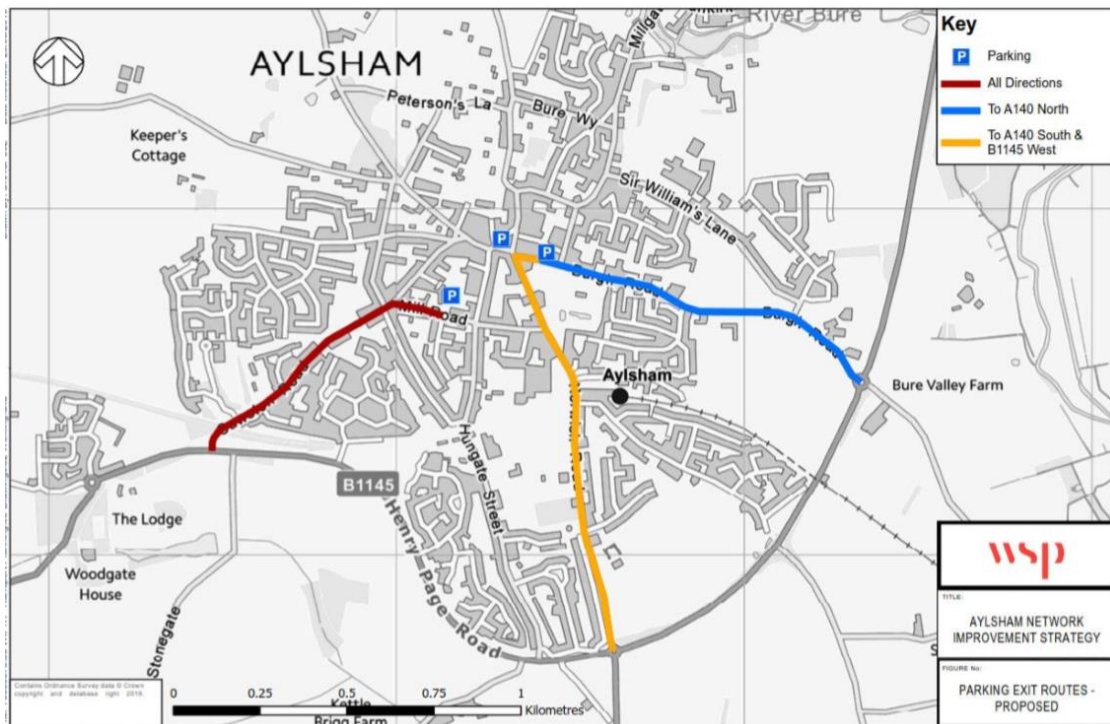


Figure 15: Proposed signed exit routes to car parks

These proposals avoid driver confusion and utilise primary routes into and away from the town centre. When implementing the new signage, it must be ensured that the signage is concise, legible and located only at key-decision making points (which are highlighted in Figure 16) to avoid street clutter. The proposed signage for at these points can be seen in Table 3. Consultants recommend that the Burgh Road car park continues to be the “short-stay” car park and the Buttlands remains to be the “long-stay” car park.

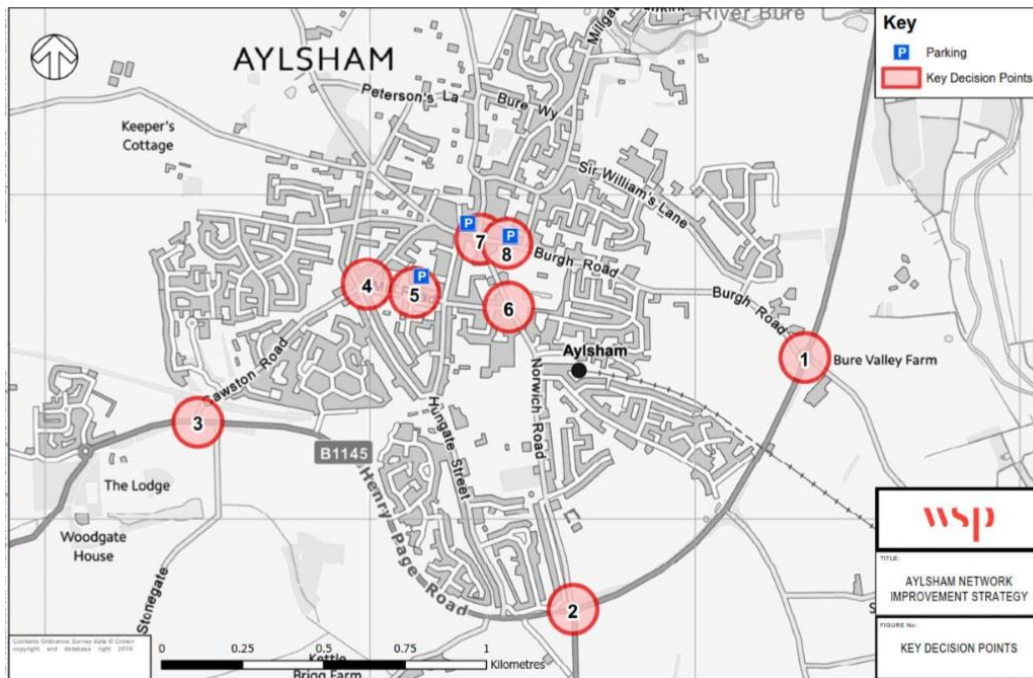


Figure 16: Key decision-making points in Aylsham

Decision Point	Location	Direction	Sign Type
1	A140	Southbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (third exit to Burgh Road) Inbound: Long Stay Parking (second exit to A140 southbound)
	Burgh Road	Eastbound	Outbound: A140 (left-turn to Cromer; right-turn to Norwich)
	A140	Northbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (first exit to Burgh Road)
2	A140	Southbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (second exit to B1145 westbound)
	A140	Northbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (second exit to Norwich Road) Inbound: Long Stay Parking (first exit to B1145 westbound)
	B1145	Eastbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (first exit to Norwich Road)
	Norwich Road	Southbound	Outbound: A140 (ahead to Norwich; left-turn to Cromer) Outbound: B1145 (right-turn to Reepham)
3	Cawston Rd	Southbound	Outbound: All Directions (left-turn to A140; right-turn to B1145)
	B1145	Westbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (right-turn to Cawston Road)
	B1145	Eastbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (left-turn to Cawston Road)
4	Cawston Rd	Northbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (right-turn to Mill Road)
	Mill Road	Westbound	Outbound: All Directions (left-turn to Cawston Road)
5	Mill Road	Eastbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (left-turn into The Buttlands Car Park)
	Mill Road	Westbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (right-turn into The Buttlands Car Park)
	The Buttlands	Southbound	Outbound: All Directions (right-turn to Mill Road)
6	Norwich Rd	Northbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (ahead to Norwich Road)
	Norwich Rd	Southbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (right-turn to Palmer's Lane) Outbound: All Directions (ahead to A140 and B1145)
7	Norwich Rd	Northbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (right-turn to Burgh Road)
	Red Lion St	Southbound	Inbound: Short Stay Parking (left-turn to Burgh Road) Outbound: A140 (ahead along Norwich Road)
	Burgh Road	Westbound	Inbound: Long Stay Parking (left-turn to Norwich Road) Outbound: A140 / B1145 (left turn to Norwich Road)
	Market Place Car Park	Southbound	Outbound: A140 / B1145 (right-turn to Norwich Road)
8	Burgh Road	Eastbound	Inbound: Short Stay (left-turn to Burgh Road Car Park)
	Burgh Road	Westbound	Inbound: Short Stay (right-turn to Burgh Road Car Park)
	Burgh Road Car Park	Southbound	Outbound: A140 north (left-turn to Burgh Road) Outbound: A140 south / B1145 (right-turn to Burgh Road)

Table 3: Proposed signage at each decision-making point

### **Indicative costs**

The total cost of the 21 new signs, taking into account the number of and the size of the signs, is estimated to be £12,540. It must be noted that this is only an indicative cost and that further development and site investigation is needed before implementation.

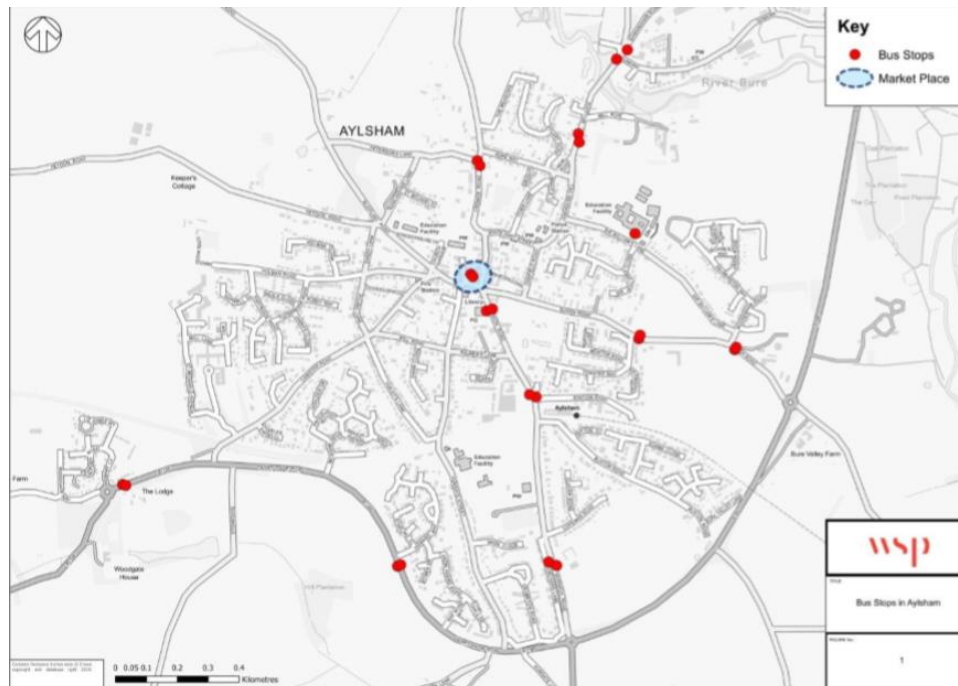
### **Recommendations**

Consultants recommended that:

- Greater clarity should be provided for vehicles approaching Aylsham from the west (B1145), and the north-east and south (A140).
- The allocation of the Buttlands car park for “long-stay” and the Burgh Road car park for “short-stay” should be maintained.
- There should be no specific signage directing cars to park in the Market Place.
- Vehicles should be directed to and from the Buttlands via Cawston Road.
- Vehicles should be directed to and from the Burgh Road car park via Norwich Road or Burgh Road depending on the direction of travel.
- Parking signage must only be placed at key decision-making points.
- Consideration could be made into providing additional signage in the Market Place, informing motorists leaving the car park that the road to the north is for local access and church access only.

## **Bus stopping arrangements**

Consultants were commissioned to examine the potential options for revised bus stopping arrangements in Aylsham town centre. Bus services in Aylsham are currently focussed on the Market Place in the heart of the town centre. The location is ideal as most of Aylsham's commercial and civic amenities are within 400m of the two market place bus stops. In addition to these Market Place bus stops, Aylsham has 14 other stops around the town which can be seen in Figure 17. Aylsham is served by two bus providers which are Sanders Coaches and Feline Travel. Neither of these bus providers have a layover in Aylsham therefore there is no requirement for buses to be parked at Market Place stops.



*Figure 17: Bus stops in Aylsham.*

When assessing how the location of bus stops can provide good pedestrian accessibility within the town centre, certain things must be taken into consideration. These include:

- The road layout and origins and destinations of the bus routes
- Concessionary pass holders taking up at least 75% of the off-peak bus usage therefore at stop infrastructure would be beneficial to make boarding and waiting easier and more pleasant for this demographic and to minimise walking distance.

### **Current issues highlighted from the study**

Consultants found that some of the assigned bus stops in Aylsham lacked clarity. The most notable were the bus stops outside of Budgens/The Aylsham Manor on the Norwich Road. On the site visit there were no physical signs of a bus stop and no buses appeared to be stopping at these assigned stops either. In addition to this confusion, a pair of bus stops at Gashouse Hill were not referenced by any resource. However, they appeared to be well established. This therefore highlights the need for more clarity and for resources to be updated.



The buses serving Aylsham are double decker or full-sized single deck and therefore take up most of the road space. This is especially apparent on the narrow roads at the junction of the Market Place and Red Lion Street. This caused concerns for congestion. Potential blockages at the Market Place are more likely to occur from buses heading in the opposite direction than multiple buses arriving at the same stop at the same time.

Narrow roads also force some vehicles, especially buses, to swing across traffic lanes when turning. This is particularly apparent when turning left from the Market Place into Penfold Street.

### **Proposed alternative arrangements**

Consultants have given consideration into whether new stops could be introduced on any other road (other than the Market Place) to optimise accessibility. The criteria for a new bus stop include 14 metres of uninterrupted pavement along a road with enough width for other traffic to pass. Consultants inspected Red Lion Street, Penfold Street, Norwich Road and Burgh Road and found none of these locations would be feasible to accommodate a stationary bus, concluding that relocating bus stops would not be a practical option for Aylsham.

It would be desirable to move the southbound Market Place stop further southwards however this would cause problems with the Market Place parking and would further inhibit the tight left-hand turning for buses from the Market Place onto Penfold Street. Any movement of the northbound Market Place stop would also cause problems for buses making this turn. The existing Market Place stop allows more than one bus to be stationary at the stop simultaneously therefore, maintaining this can be deemed the most practical option.

There is potential for the formalisation of the Budgens bus stop which is currently non-existent. By moving the stop into the space outside Budgens on the north side, there would be enough space for waiting passengers. This therefore merits further investigation for a formalised bus stop.

A more radical approach to taking buses out of the Market Place would be to create a local 'transport hub' or interchange in a suitable off-road site. After investigation, consultants suggested it would be necessary to re-purpose part or all of an existing car park as there is no vacant land suitable. Burgh Road car park would not be suitable as it would cause a deviation from existing bus routes and create a significant increase in bus movements on a relatively minor road. The Buttlands car park would also be unacceptable as it is remote from the main bus routes and the shape of the car park is unsuited to buses. Therefore, it was concluded that repurposing a site in Aylsham to create a 'transport hub' is not a feasible option.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Aylsham's road layout is constrained by width which impacts on turning movements of vehicles, particularly buses. In addition to this, the lack of available sites for off-road facilities makes the current bus stop layout the most ideal. There is however potential scope to formalise a northbound stop on Norwich Road outside Budgens. Consultants recommendations include:

- Enhanced restrictions for the section of Market Place on both sides of the road from, and including, the bus stops towards Red Lion Street where currently only single yellow lines are marked, and bus stop box road markings would emphasise the space required by stationary buses.
- To improve passenger experience of buses in Aylsham, electronic timetable information displays covering all operators is advised to provide real-time information. These can be fitted to bus shelters. Real-time data is able to be provided by Sanders Coaches who serve Aylsham.

Findings from the consultancy reports have highlighted various recommendations which would help to improve the transport network in Aylsham. In the next chapter, these recommendations are set out as short-term, medium-term and long-term actions to help put into action the Aylsham Network Improvement Strategy.

## Chapter 8: Action Plan

Based on the feedback from stakeholders and findings from the study work the Action Plan recommends areas where consideration should be given in the form of high and low priority actions. NCC does not currently have the funding to implement all of the recommendations in the Action Plan. Therefore, by identifying what is high and low priority means that when funding does become available, projects can be completed in a manner which provides the greatest benefits. Given the nature of funding using NCC led proposals would allow for schemes to be delivered within the time allocations. It is important that, especially with larger actions such as the formation of walking and cycling corridors, NCC would have to work collaboratively with other organisations.

The list of schemes proposed through this strategy can be found in Table 3. The high priority actions are the actions NCC should take when the funding becomes available. The low priority actions are the actions NCC should take once the high priority actions have been completed and there is money left to do so.

A feasibility study into making Aylsham Town Centre more pedestrian friendly is highlighted in this action plan as a more feasible alternative to pedestrianisation of Red Lion Street (more information on this in Chapter 5). This feasibility work has not been placed under a high or low priority header due to the current uncertainty over funding and carrying out the work. Norfolk County Council will investigate funding potentials however it must be understood that at this stage, feasibility work and funding cannot be confirmed.

High Priority				
Scheme type	Scheme	Why high priority?	Indicative cost	Action
Cycling and walking Corridor 3	New tactile paving for north-south movements on Burgh Street	Cycling and walking Corridor 3 was identified by WSP as the Corridor providing the greatest benefits including improved connectivity between new housing developments and areas of employment and schools.	£363,500 (does not include cost of buying third-party land)	Norfolk County Council will investigate funding opportunities for this project to be developed.
	Speedhumps to calm traffic on Burgh Road			
	New shared footway/cycleway on the south side of Burgh Road which requires purchase of third-party land			
	New toucan crossing to connect the proposed Corridor path to an existing recreation area.			
	New toucan crossing on Sir Williams Lane			
	Widening existing path running north-south through a town recreation area			
	A new short section of 3m shared footway/cycleway on the north of Sir Williams Lane, connecting path in the recreation area to existing shared path along Buckenham Road. Also, connection to Bure Meadows			
Parking and access	Greater clarity to be provided for vehicles approaching Aylsham from the west (B1145) and north-east and south (A140)	Reduces the number of vehicles going through town centre unnecessarily and taking unsuitable routes on Aylsham's narrow roads.	£12,540	Further design and development will be required to provide more robust costings for when funding comes available.
	Vehicles to be directed to and from The Buttlands car park via Cawston Road			
	Vehicles to be directed to and from Burgh Road Car Park via Norwich Road or Burgh Road depending on direction of travel			
	Parking signage placed at key decision-making points to provide clarity to drivers and minimise street clutter			

Bus stopping arrangements	Review traffic orders and road markings which apply to the Market Place. Enhanced restrictions may be more appropriate for the section of Market Place on both sides of the road from (and including) the bus stops towards Red Lion Street where only single yellow lines are marked and bus stop box road markings would emphasise the space required by stationary buses	This scheme would have a beneficial effect on the congestion in the Town Centre.	Unknown	Norfolk County Council will investigate funding opportunities for this project. If funding does become available, the council will carry out a review of the traffic orders and road markings in the Market Place to identify specific work which could be taken forward
<b>Low Priority</b>				
<b>Scheme type</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Why low priority?</b>	<b>Indicative cost</b>	<b>Action</b>
Cycling and walking Corridor 1	Improving the Marriott's Way by adding lighting to the sides, providing ramped access to the town from the Marriott's Way, improving the bound surfacing	Not the highest priority Corridor as does not provide as many benefits as Corridor 3. However, it does provide some benefits hence should be considered if funding were to become available.	£490,000	Norfolk County Council will investigate funding opportunities for this project. If funding does become available, the Corridor may be developed depending on further feasibility studies.
	New uncontrolled central island crossing on Cawston Road at the exit from the Public Right of Way			
	Reduced corner radii at the junction of Yaxley's Lane and Pound Lane			
	Reduced corner radii at the junction of the cul-de-sac on the east side between Mill Road and Foxes Loke and a raised continuous footway/cycleway at this location			
	Widen the 3m shared footway/cycleway along the south-east side between Mill Road and Holman Road			
	Install zebra crossing at Cawston Road			
	Provide a raised pedestrian crossing across Holman Road			
	Extended shared footway/cycleway along the A140	The least suitable of the three corridors formed but still feasible and potentially	£413,000	Norfolk County Council will investigate funding for this

Cycling and walking Corridor 2	Wider splitter islands on the east and north arm of the A140/Norwich Road/b1145 roundabout	beneficial. Would require further investigation into shared footway/cycleway on Norwich Road. Corridor 3 is deemed most suitable due to its connectivity hence making this walking and cycling corridor less of a priority.		project. If funding does become available, the Corridor may be developed depending on further feasibility studies and investigation into a shared footway/cycleway on the Norwich Road.
	New 3m shared footway/cycleway on the west side of Norwich Road between Orchard Lane and Marriott's Way			
	New uncontrolled crossing on Norwich Road to the north of Palmer's Lane prior to where the footpath on the west side of the road disappears for a short section			
	Tightened corner radius at the Budgens Car Park access which will force drivers to move more slowly			
	Tactile paving for the north-south movements at Burgh street			
Bus stopping arrangements	Timetable information displays covering all operators, providing real-time information.	Not high priority as does not have as big an effect on congestion and road safety as other schemes	£20,000-£25,000	Norfolk County Council will investigate funding opportunities for this project. If funding does become available it could investigate the possibility of installing this, and carrying out feasibility study into the formalisation of Budgens bus stop.
	Formalisation of northbound bus stop outside Budgens on Norwich Road		Unknown	

Table 3: Aylsham Network Improvement Strategy Action Plan



