

TECHNICAL NOTE

Job Name: Norman Place, Reading
Job No: 332610561
Note No: TN007
Date: May 2026
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Subject: **Qualitative Review of Active Travel Routes to Local Amenities**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document responds to the comments provided by Active Travel England (ATE) during their consultation on the application for Waterfront Square, Reading (Ref: PL/24/0958), and included in the Reading Borough Council's response to the application on the 27th February 2026.
- 1.2. ATE highlighted the necessity for a qualitative assessment of the surrounding pedestrian and cycle routes, particularly focusing on access to local schools and colleges through active travel modes, with this update incorporating the active travel routes to other local amenities.
- 1.3. As the original assessment in February 2025 was based on guidance at the time provided by ATE regarding active travel routes to local schools, this update keeps the original routes and their names, that being of the schools as end destinations, with the local amenities that can be used along these routes included in the route analysis.
- 1.4. By conducting this assessment, we aim to comprehensively evaluate the actual routes around the Site, thereby supporting the development of a more accessible and environmentally friendly infrastructure.
- 1.5. A review has been conducted to assess the active travel routes from the Site to nearby schools and other local amenities; these schools (routes) include:
 - **Route 1:** Thameside Primary School
 - **Route 2:** CP Colliers Primary School
 - **Route 3:** St Anne's Catholic Primary School
 - **Route 4:** Oxford Road Community School and Civitas Academy
 - **Route 5:** Kendrick School
 - **Route 6:** River Academy
 - **Route 7:** Reading College
 - **Route 8:** The Abbey School
 - **Route 9:** Caversham Primary School

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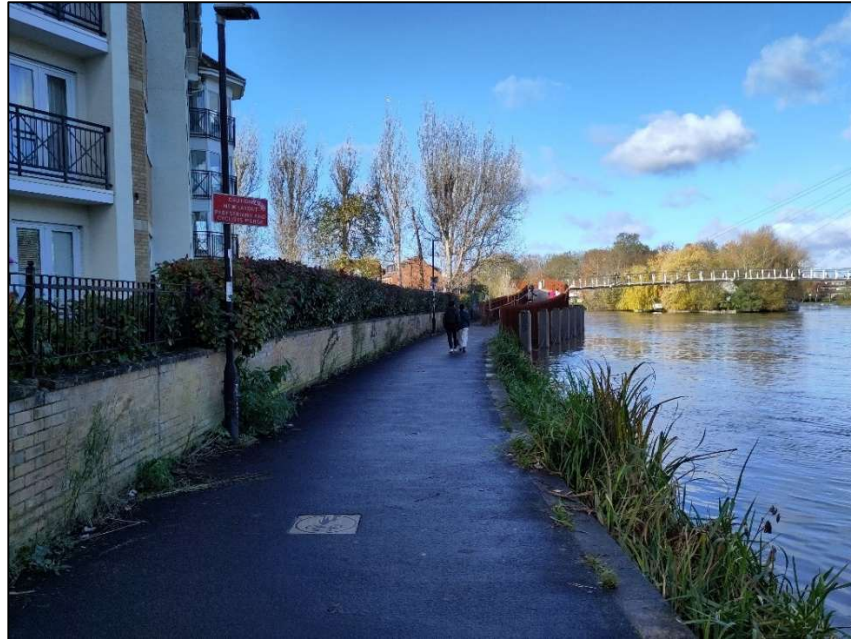
2. Active Travel Routes

- 2.1. Norman Place is well-connected by several active travel routes. The Thameside path, which routes across the north of the Site, forms part of National Cycle Network Route 5, extending from Reading to Oxford and beyond. The path along the site's western side from Vastern Road connects central Caversham with Reading station and the town centre.
- 2.2. The active travel routes around Norman Place connect seamlessly to the wider network. The Thameside path links to National Cycle Network Route 5, facilitating long-distance travel to Oxford and beyond. Additionally, the routes integrate with local paths and cycleways, providing comprehensive connectivity across Reading and supporting the Council's broader active travel initiatives.

3. Route to Thameside Primary School

- 3.1. Located north of the development, Thameside Primary School, located in Caversham, is accessible via the Thames Path. The walking and cycling route from the Site to Thameside Primary School is c. 850m long and will take 12 minutes by foot and 4 minutes by bicycle to complete.
- 3.2. Following the Thames Path and using the Christchurch Bridge provides a safe crossing of the River Thames, into Christchurch Meadows, which contains a series of footpaths connecting a playground, paddling pool, tennis courts and playing fields. Following the towpath, on the northern edge of the River Thames, and travelling north along Wolsey Road provides access to the Thameside Primary School.
- 3.3. Continuing along Wolsey Road to Gosbrook Road's southern footway provides access to Church / Prospect Street. Here, there are several amenities including cafes, restaurants, places of worship, medical practices, food stores and other shops. These are an extra 250m walking distance from Thameside Primary School. There are pedestrian island crossing points with tactile paving that allow for passage across Church/Prospect Street and a signalled crossing on Church Street 70m west of the double mini roundabout with Prospect Street / Gosbrook Road.
- 3.4. There are alternative routes to access Caversham and its local amenities via walking further west along the Thames Path and accessing via Bridge Street, Promenade Road, The Willows, onto School Lane.

Figure 3.1: Thames Path on approach to Christchurch Bridge



- 3.5. To access Christchurch Bridge, there is a ramp with handrails, and the bridge has a handrail. Harley Road, near Thameside Primary School, is part of the School Street initiative, which restricts vehicular access during school drop-off and pick-up times, creating a safer environment for children.

Figure 3.2: Pedestrian Zone on Harley Road



- 3.6. Overall, much of the route is traffic-free, enhancing the safety of the route. Streetlighting is provided along the entirety of the route, which is useful in low-light situations.

Figure 3.3: Wolsey Road



4. Route to EP Collier Primary School

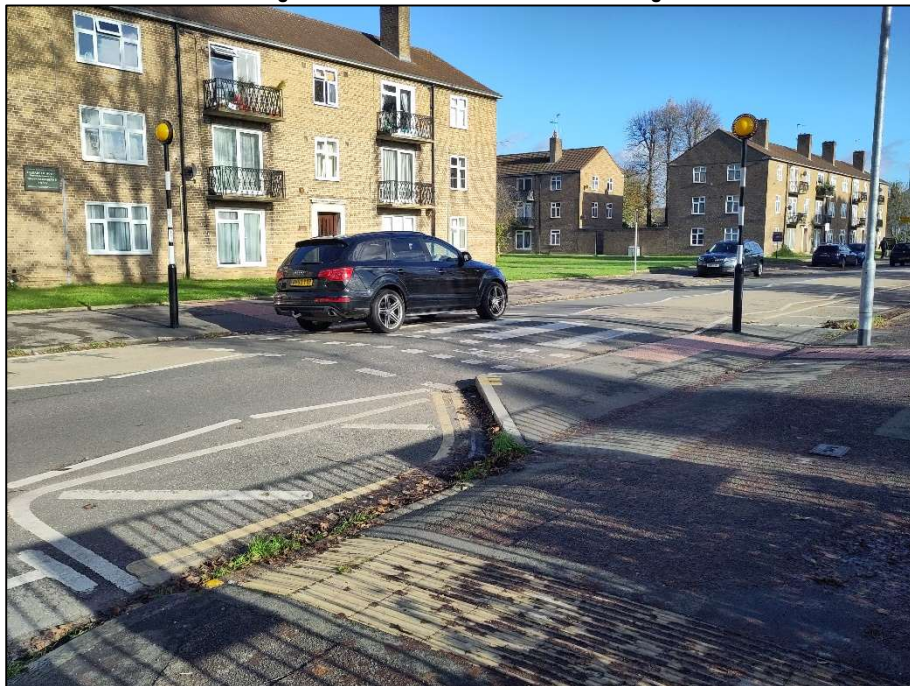
- 4.1. Located west of the development, EP Collier Primary School is accessible via the Thames Path. The walking and cycling route from the Site to EP Collier Primary School is c. 850m long and will take 9 minutes by foot and 4 minutes by bicycle to complete.
- 4.2. The route proceeds west along the Thames Path and turns into Bringham Road. From Bringham Road, the toucan crossing, located 60m northwest of Bringham Road, is available on Caversham Road to access Swansea Road. Walking 150m from Swansea Road towards Ross Road will provide access to EP Colliers Primary School.
- 4.3. The toucan crossing is served by drop kerbs and tactile paving. Swansea Road is an established 20mph zone, enforced by traffic signs and road markings. Overall, the route is well maintained and contains street lighting throughout. Swansea Road and Bringham Road are overlooked by residential developments which provide natural surveillance.
- 4.4. On Caversham Road, there are several local amenities, including local shops, restaurants/takeaways, and independent businesses, including a carpet shop, along with employment opportunities. Caversham Road provides links to Richard Avenue and Bridge Street, which both include multiple amenities that would be accessible to residents of Kings View Meadow.

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5. Route to St Anne's Catholic Primary School

- 5.1. St Anne's Catholic Primary School is North of the Site and can be reached by walking and cycling routes. The walking route is c.1.1km long and takes 15 minutes, while the cycling route is c.1.5km long and takes 4 minutes.
- 5.2. The route proceeds eastbound along the Thames Path and heading north along George Street. The bridge can be accessed by the stairs located adjacent to the bridge. Alternatively, travelling eastbound on Vastern Road will provide access to George Street. George Street provides footways on both sides of the carriageway and on-road cycleway facilities. Travelling further north using Washington Road will provide access to St Anne's Catholic Primary School.
- 5.3. Alternatively, proceeding westbound along the Thames Path and utilising the Christchurch Bridge will provide a traffic-free route through Christchurch Meadows up to Gosbrook Road. The shared footpath/cycle path facilities in Christchurch Meadows are served by street lighting with well-maintained paths with an established width of 3.0m. The section of the route from Church Christ Meadows to Gosbrook Road is a linking route identified by Reading Borough Council (RBC).
- 5.4. Other local amenities can be accessed on the route to St Anne's Catholic Primary School; these are detailed in **Paragraph 3.3**.

Figure 5.1: Gosbrook Road Zebra Crossing



- 5.5. The presence of residential buildings and office spaces along the routes provides natural surveillance. A stepped-out zebra crossing allows passage across Gosbrook Road; the footpath on the northern side of Gosbrook Road is well-maintained, and street lighting with natural surveillance from residential buildings. St. Anne's Catholic Primary School is located on Washington Road, a residential street with a 20mph speed limit and footpaths on either side of the road.

Figure 5.2: Washington Road



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6. Route to Oxford Road Community School and Civitas Academy

- 6.1. The Oxford Road Community School, situated southwest of the site, can be reached via pedestrian walking and cycle routes. The walking route is c.1.7km long and will take 24 minutes, while the cycle route is c.2.1km long and will take 9 minutes to complete.
- 6.2. The route proceeds westbound along Norman Place, crossing Vastern Road using the staggered toucan crossing. There is a retail park 100m west of the toucan crossing, requiring the use of another toucan crossing to access it, which includes The Range, Aldi and One Beyond. Heading south along Trooper Potts Way, there are several bus stops serving destinations across Reading, along with a taxi rank and the northern entrance to Reading Railway Station.
- 6.3. The route continues through the Reading Railway Station underpass, then along Station Hill, which contains a further taxi ranks and bus stops. The underpass is well lit, CCTV is in place, and markings indicate the direction of traffic flow. The underpass was refurbished in May 2024 to make it a more welcoming environment and improve access for cyclists.
- 6.4. There are additional local amenities as part of the new Station Hill development, including employment opportunities. As the Station is located on the northern edge of Reading Town Centre, it is a 240m walk to Friar Street and a further 120m to Broad Street. These contain a wide range of local amenities, retail shopping (The Oracle and Broad Street Mall), restaurants, nightlife, entertainment and local businesses serving a wide range of needs, along with further access to bus services.

Figure 6.1: Reading Railway Station Underpass



- 6.5. From Station Hill, proceeding along Tudor Road onto Caversham Road, there is a staggered toucan crossing 50m south of Tudor Road that provides access to Great Knollys Street. The crossing is served by drop kerbs and tactile paving, with a central island featuring a metal guardrail. There are two toucan crossings located 30m apart, providing two opportunities to cross towards Great Knollys Street. The junction with Great Knollys Street also provides a staggered toucan crossing, which can be used to access the southern footway/cycleway.

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- 6.6. Great Knollys Street transitions into a residential street c. 250m from the Caversham Road junction. A bollard initiates the transition, which reduces excessive vehicle use beyond this point. Great Knollys Street is served by street lighting, and drop kerbs are at crossing points.
- 6.7. Civitas Academy is located c. 350m from the Caversham Road junction. Following Great Knollys Street and George Street to Oxford Road Community School. George Street is served by drop kerbs and tactile paving at all crossing points. Street lighting is also provided along the entire route. Vehicular traffic from Oxford Road is unable to join George Street due to bollards, which increases the safety of pedestrians and cyclists whilst reducing the vehicular use of the street.
- 6.8. Oxford Road contains further local amenities with a wide range of shops, restaurants, takeaways and pubs and Reading West Station, which was upgraded in March 2024.

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7. Route to Kendrick School

- 7.1. The Kendrick School is situated south of the site and can be reached by walking and cycling routes. The walking route is c.1.5km long and will take 22 minutes. The cycling route is c.1.5km long and will take 9 minutes.
- 7.2. The route proceeds south along Vastern Road, crossing Forbury Road using the staggered toucan crossing, then heading west along Forbury Road. The route continues through Forbury Gardens onto Market Place, then southbound onto Duke Street, then London Street, heading southbound along London Street until London Road, finishing by turning left onto East Street.
- 7.3. This route provides access along the eastern side of Reading Town Centre, which contains a range of shops, restaurants and employment opportunities, with access to Broad Street and The Oracle.
- 7.4. Alternatively, the route can proceed south across Trooper Potts Way and Reading Railway Station. Proceeding south along Station Road and travelling east along Friar Street, which contains a range of local amenities (See **Paragraph 6.4**), will provide access to Market Place. This route has the added benefit of taking advantage of established footways/cycleways. The 20mph speed limit along Friar Street facilitates uncontrolled crossing facilities, served by dropped kerbs and tactile paving, which can be used to access Market Place from Friar Street.

Figure 7.1: Trooper Potts Way facing north



- 7.5. Well-maintained zebra crossings and staggered toucan crossings are provided on London Road, lined on both sides with local amenities, eateries, personal beauty establishments and employment opportunities. Crossings are clearly marked with traffic signs and road markings and are also served by drop kerbs and tactile paving.
- 7.6. Areas such as Forbury Gardens and Market Place are pedestrian-only, reducing the risk of vehicle-pedestrian collisions. Surveillance cameras in key areas, such as Forbury Gardens and along the route, provide an additional layer of security. Street lighting along the route ensures visibility during low-light conditions, enhancing safety for all users.

Figure 7.2: East Street



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8. Route to River Academy

- 8.1. The River Academy, situated west of the Site, can be reached by pedestrian walking and cycle routes. The cycle route is c.2.1km long and will take 8 minutes. The walking route is c.1.6km long and will take 23 minutes.
- 8.2. The route proceeds north along Vastern Road and Caversham Road; local amenities on these roads were detailed in **Paragraphs 4.4** and **6.2**. The toucan crossing points on Caversham Road provide access to Richfield Avenue. Heading west along Richfield Avenue will provide access to the River Academy.
- 8.3. Along Richfield Avenue, there are several local amenities that are accessible via the detailed route. These include health and fitness facilities in Rivermead Park, Rivermead Leisure Centre, Village Hotel, PlayFootball, The Bounce Park and Warehouse Fitness. Along the south side of Richfield Avenue, there are employers and other services such as a Kwikfit and the Crucible Social Club.

Figure 8.1: Toucan Crossing on Caversham Road



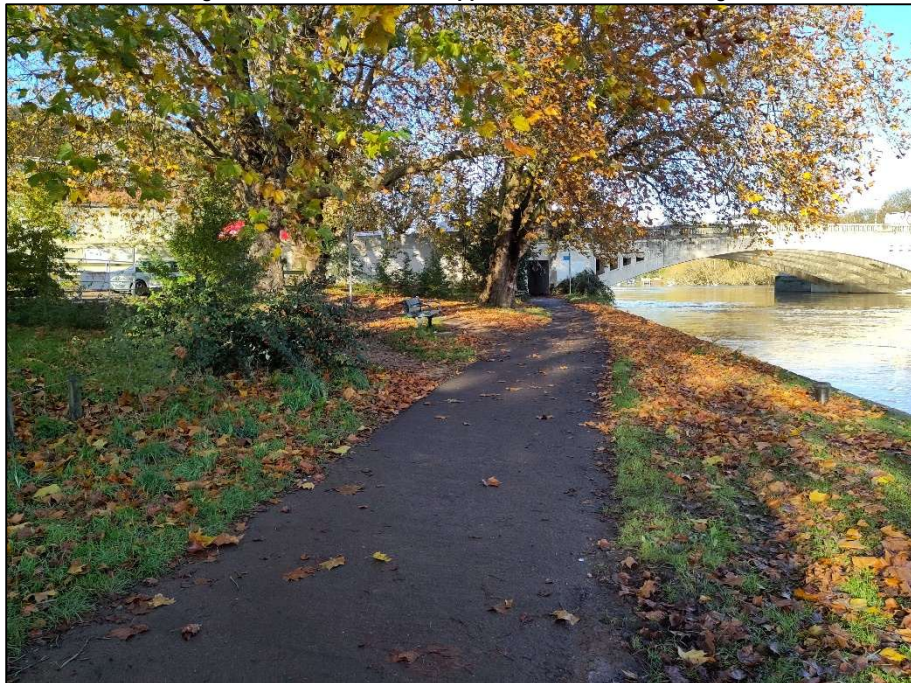
- 8.4. The toucan crossing is equipped with drop kerbs and tactile paving, ensuring accessibility for all users. Guardrailings are provided at the Caversham Bridge roundabout, enhancing the safety of the route by providing a physical barrier between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. All crossing points along the route are served by drop kerbs, facilitating smooth transitions for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, the footway along Richfield Avenue is separated from the carriageway by a verge, providing a safety buffer. Richfield Avenue itself is straight, offering good visibility and further enhancing the route's overall safety.

Figure 8.2: Richfield Avenue



- 8.5. Alternatively, the Thames Path can be used to access the Caversham Bridge Roundabout. The mentioned crossing points can be used to access Richfield Avenue. The benefit of this route is that the Thames Path is free of vehicular traffic, which can increase the safety of the users.

Figure 8.3: Thames Path on approach to Caversham Bridge

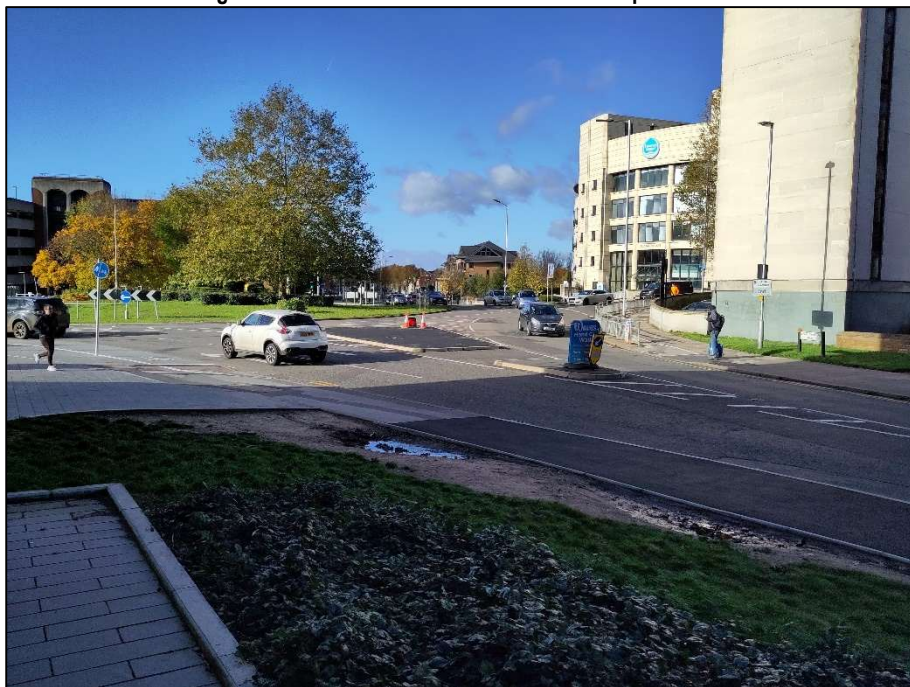


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9. Route to Reading College

- 9.1. Reading College is located southeast of the development and is accessible via the Vastern Road to Forbury Road to Kings Road. A walking route from the Site to Reading College is c. 1.7km long and will take 24 minutes to complete. The cycle route is c. 3.2km long and will take 11 minutes to complete.
- 9.2. Vastern Road provides shared footway/cycleway facilities up towards the Vastern Road roundabout. The shared footway/cycleway is well-maintained and has adequate widths to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists safely (LTN 1/20 compliant). The crossing facilities at the Vastern Road roundabout are served by drop kerbs, a pedestrian refuge island, and road markings that encourage segregation between cyclists and pedestrians. Metal guardrails are provided along the northern and eastern arms of the roundabout.

Figure 9.1: Vastern Road Roundabout from Napier Road



- 9.3. The footway is well-maintained between Forbury/Vastern Road and has on-road cycle facilities with street lighting. Crossing Forbury Road, using the staggered toucan crossing on the roundabout eastern, proceeding along the Forbury Road southern footway, along the Reading Prison, until reaching the toucan crossing across Forbury Road onto Kings Road. Both toucan crossings have tactile paving and a pedestrian refuge island.
- 9.4. Proceeding eastbound along the northern side of Kings Road, for 620m from Forbury Road, Reading College is reached, via a well-maintained footway.

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10. Route to The Abbey School

- 10.1. Located near Kendrick School, the Abbey School can be accessed by walking and cycling routes. The walking route is c.1.9km long and will take 27 minutes. The cycling route is c.1.9km long and will take 9 minutes.
- 10.2. The route towards Abbey School follows the same route as the route towards Kendrick School. The Abbey School route continues southbound past Queens Road and utilises a shared cycleway/footway adjacent to Hieatt Close, which leads you directly to the school. Alternatively, turning left at the London Road junction and utilising Kendrick Road will provide access to the Abbey School.
- 10.3. London Road provides toucan crossing facilities clearly marked with traffic signs and road markings, and is also served by drop kerbs and tactile paving. Both sides of London Road are shared footway/cycleway, part of cycle R2 and 422; the road has a 30mph speed limit and street lighting. Overall, this route is well-maintained and provides adequate visibility, ensuring user safety on the route to The Abbey School.
- 10.4. As mentioned on the route to Kendrick school, the route can proceed south across Trooper Potts Way and Reading Railway Station. Proceeding south along Station Road and travelling east along Friar Street will provide access to Market Place. Following Market Place south will provide access to Duke Street and London Road. This route provides greater access to local amenities, as detailed in **Paragraphs 6.4**.

11. Route to Caversham Primary School

- 11.1. Located to the north of the Site, Caversham Primary School is accessible by both walking and cycling routes. A walking route from the Site to Caversham Primary School is approximately 1.8km long and will take 26 minutes to complete. The cycle route is c. 1.8km long and will take 8 minutes to complete.
- 11.2. The route from Norman Place to Caversham Primary School begins west along the Thames Path, using Caversham Bridge to cross the Thames. Caversham Bridge provides bollards and a segregated footway/cycleway arrangement across the bridge.
- 11.3. Travelling north along Bridge Street, Church Street and Hemdean Road will provide access to Caversham Primary School. This route includes several safety features, such as staggered toucan crossings, zebra crossings, and well-lit paths, ensuring a safe journey for schoolchildren. Hemdean Road is overlooked by residential properties, which provide natural surveillance.

Figure 11.1: Caversham Bridge



12. Conclusion

- 12.1. Based on the qualitative review, the routes identified from the Norman Place Site to the local amenities and schools are accessible by Active Travel. The routes are well-maintained, with street lighting and natural surveillance from surrounding buildings.
- 12.2. In the vicinity of the Site, the Thames Path would be improved by the development. This would benefit from improved path width and ease of use due to the relocation of cycle parking facilities, which previously obstructed the path.
- 12.3. To conclude, based on the qualitative review conducted, the routes are deemed safe and suitable for children to access education provisions in the local area on foot and by bicycle and for future residents to reach a vast range of amenities, including food stores, shops, healthcare facilities, entertainment and many more.