

# **Title of report: Active Travel Measures**

**Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: Monday 23 September 2024**

**Report by:**

**Classification**

**Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

**Wards affected**

**Purpose**

- To consider active travel measures including road safety for all users.
- Explore the county policy on implementing active travel measures where new road build is being proposed.
- Explore where the council is on implementation of active travel measures across the county.
- Explore the benefits and challenges of active travel measures around key buildings such as schools and hospitals and residential roads in Herefordshire.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) That the committee notes the reference to active travel across council policies and strategies;
- b) That the committee further notes progress the Council has made in implementing active travel measures across the county; and
- c) That the committee determines any other actions or recommendations it may seek to make.

**Alternative options**

1. None identified. This report provides an update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

## Key considerations

2. Evidence for these exploratory activities are from Council Active Travel policies and from appropriate case studies from within the county and other authorities.
3. All active travel policy stems from either the council plan or any statutory duties that are not explicitly captured in the council plan.
4. Active travel describes everyday 'journeys for a purpose' made by walking, wheeling, or cycling<sup>1</sup>. (Wheeling is an equivalent alternative to walking – for example, using wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams or pushchairs). Active travel is a low carbon way to travel. It has a range of other benefits including public health, lowering congestion and pollution, tackling social inequalities, better place making, improved mental health, tackling obesity, improved air quality, amongst others.
5. Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for active travel policy nationally. The DfT's four objectives for active travel are to: increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled; increase people's annual walking activity; double rates of cycling; and increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school. However, this is likely to change as a new government sets out its agenda for active travel. The anticipation is that there will be more, rather than less, focus on active travel. For example, the Secretary of State has published five new priorities for transport, one of which is "delivering greener transport".
6. Most active travel schemes are implemented by local government. This includes infrastructure improvements and interventions, maintenance of infrastructure, behaviour change campaigns and innovative scheme design.
7. Activities that support, promote and deliver active travel could include: new cycle lanes, school streets schemes, city bike hire projects, amending existing road space outside schools, providing cycle training, offering walking groups, supporting GPs to offer social prescribing, advising planning teams on cycling and walking inclusion for new developments, junction and crossing redesign to make crossings safer for pedestrians, travel planning for schools and employers, end of ride facilities, anti-theft schemes.
8. The Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28 sets out how the council will make its contribution to the ongoing success of Herefordshire. With the overarching vision, 'Delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do', the plan outlines the council's priorities in four areas:
9. People - We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported
10. Place - We will protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire remains a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place and do everything we can to improve the health of our rivers. Including the objectives: Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county. Work towards reducing county and council carbon emissions, aiming for net zero by 2030/31 and work with partners and communities to make the county more resilient to the effects of climate change.
11. Growth - We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure

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<sup>1</sup> [Active travel in England - Committee of Public Accounts \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/committees/public-accounts/active-travel-in-england)

12. Transformation - We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money
13. At a strategic level, active travel policy is captured by the Local Transport Plan (LTP). This is a statutory document, by which the council prioritises its transport interventions for a period of time. Herefordshire Council is currently developing a new LTP. The LTP drives the funding proposals and future opportunities for external funding (mainly the Department for Transport). The objectives for the new Local Transport Plan were approved by Cabinet in March 2024. Active travel is specifically referenced in Objective II. All the recommended objectives are set out below:
  - I. Supporting a thriving and prosperous economy – by creating a sustainable, reliable and integrated transport network that includes investing in new infrastructure, improving access to new housing, employment land, facilities and services, education and training.
  - II. Enabling healthy behaviours and improving wellbeing – by providing the right facilities and environment for a wide range of travel modes (including walking, wheeling, cycling, bus, community transport and rail) to increase readily-available transport choices for everyday journeys.
  - III. Tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment – by creating a transport system offering viable low emission options for most journeys, by influencing the way in which we travel, the way we make decisions and deliver transport options.
  - IV. Improving accessibility and inclusivity – by ensuring that the transport system is accessible and understandable to everyone, and making the most of improved digital connectivity.
  - V. Improving transport safety and security – by reducing the negative impacts of transport on people, ensuring our communities are safe, perceived as safe, and more pleasant places to live.
14. The above objectives will be used as criteria for prioritising transport schemes in the LTP. A long list of schemes has been produced, drawn from a wide range of council documents concerning transport in some form or another, ranging from the EV strategy to Home to School policy. The prioritised list will then be open to public consultation. Following consultation, we expect to publish the LTP in 2025.
15. A key element of the Local Transport Plan is the statutory Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The LCWIP sets out a prioritised list of interventions to improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the county. The priorities are determined by a set of criteria. There is currently (September 2024) an engagement exercise underway with key stakeholders, by which responses can be gathered on an interactive online map, which allows not only responses to proposed routes, but also the sharing of other routes based on 'local knowledge' to be demonstrated. LCWIP tend to consist of a policy framework document, which sets out the links to the council plan, and Local Transport Plan, along with other relevant policy documents followed by an implementation plan, which shows the proposed prioritised list of interventions.
16. The Transportation Team spend a substantial sum of money transporting children and young people to education establishments because a suitable walking or cycling route is not available. A route may be possible, but has been assessed as 'hazardous', hence the council

is obliged to provide transport, even though the distance will be less than three miles for over 8s and two miles for under 8s. Our intention is to, where possible, align the hazardous routes with the LCWIP to see if there are areas where a suitable investment would render the route safe for walking and/or cycling, and thus remove this route from the hazardous list. This would deliver multiple benefits of providing safe routes in particular areas, reducing ongoing costs to the council of providing short-distance transport, increasing public health and lowering congestion and pollution.

17. Substantial work was done on previous iterations of the Hereford bypass planning activity. (see appendices 6 - 9). The key messaging from these studies and investigations is the ability of the bypass to facilitate the conditions by which active travel can flourish. This will be achieved by removing, or dramatically lowering the amount of, traffic from the centre of the city, (including possible actions of detrunking the A49, introducing cycle lanes, and bus lanes, and a range of other measures). The bypass can provide a complementary suite of active travel interventions to support substantial mode shift alongside place making and a reduction of severance. It is clear from the studies that were undertaken between 2014 and 2019, that active travel is a fundamental part of any bypass work. In 2019 it was stated in a Cabinet report that "A number of active travel options have been considered and consulted on in 2014 and 2016. A robust appraisal process outlined in this report has been adopted to determine the schemes which should be included in the scheme business case. If schemes are not progressed the objectives of the South Wye Transport Package will not be met". This puts the delivery of active travel schemes at the heart of the development of a bypass (South Wye Transport Package – a previous iteration of the bypass).
18. Whilst it should be accepted that this work was completed as part of a previous iteration of the bypass/growth corridor, it is to be fully expected that similar work will be undertaken - either by updating, or re-commissioning - for the latest iteration.

## **Case Studies**

19. There are multiple examples of active travel and sustainable transport interventions that have been implemented by or with the council. They are listed below.
20. Herefordshire Council continue to provide support for the city hire bike scheme, run by Beryl Bikes. They are proving to be popular, with year on year increases of usage. Ebikes have also been added to the fleet; extending range and ease of ride. The latest published update on Beryl Bikes is in this news release from June 2024, see Appendix 1
21. The Council continue to organise and operate Nordic Walking Courses. These are a fun way to encourage people to build more walking into their daily lives, in a fun way. The latest courses starting in September 2024 are already fully booked. See Appendix 2
22. The roll out of EV charge points is continuing across the county. We have been working closely with our supplier Wenea to ensure we are installing the most up to date rapid chargers, where possible. We have been mostly aiming for car park charging, but we will see on-street charging coming on line, following the introduction of the government's LEVI scheme. A press release from July 2024 contains the latest update, see Appendix 3:
23. Herefordshire Council was awarded £1.5 million from the Department for Transport Access Fund for the Destination Hereford project from 2017 to 2020. This resulted in the Choose How You Move (CHYM) initiative, which included actions to Improve access to Employment, Improve Access to Education, Getting Hereford Active, see Appendix 4:

24. The area at the front of Hereford Railway Station is being fully redeveloped into the Hereford Transport Hub. The key objectives of the Transport Hub are to support economic growth, improve accessibility and encourage active travel in line with the adopted policies of the council, and Central Government. In particular the project will:
- i) Improve the public realm around the train station and create better walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure which will allow for improved integration of the new development with the historic city core;
  - ii.) Improve access to Hereford railway station and the new interchange infrastructure;
  - iii.) Help address the decline in Hereford's traditional role as a regional economic hub, and meet the national agenda for economic growth;
  - iv.) Encourage the transport mode shift away from car use by facilitating travel by public and active travel;
  - v.) Enable attractive, seamless transfer between different modes of travel; and
  - vi.) To welcome visitors to the city and establish an attractive environment for visitors and commuters.
  - vii.) Merge with other Hereford City Centre Improvement (HCCI) projects as an integrated package of movement and connectivity linking the transport hub with Hereford City Centre. See Appendix 5
25. Appendix 10 provides examples of previous active travel engineering measures that have been delivered around the county.

## **Community impact**

26. There are no direct community impacts as a result of providing an update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
27. Increasing physical activity and minimising the time spent sitting down helps to maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and depression. The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, each week. The averages for people in England are approximately 84 minutes per week walking and 8 minutes cycling, 92 minutes of exercise in total<sup>2</sup>.
28. The effects resulting from a changing climate will potentially impact every community in the County. Risk and level of impact is increased for specific geographic areas, commercial activities and demographics.
29. Supporting modal shift to active travel helps to improve local air quality and in turn that will benefit all who reside and visit the county. Improvements in this area will positively contribute towards the delivery of The Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-2028, specifically the following success measures:
- a) Support all residents to live healthy lives within their communities (People).
  - b) Work with residents and partners to build connected and resilient communities (People).
  - c) Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county (Place).

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<sup>2</sup> [Health benefits of walking and cycling: preventable early deaths - The Health Foundation](#)

## Environmental Impact

30. Climate and environmental impact are intrinsically linked. Activities that impact the climate impact biodiversity and local air, water and soil quality. Emissions reduction by switching to active modes have positive associated environmental impacts.
31. Supporting modal shift to active modes supports the Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-2028 ambitions to:
  - d) Value nature and uphold environmental standards to minimise pollution and maximise biodiversity (Place).
  - e) Work towards reducing county and council carbon emissions, aiming for net zero by 2030/31 and work with partners and communities to make the county more resilient to the effects of climate change (Place).
  - f) Seek strong stewardship of the county's natural resources
  - g) protect and enhance the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards
  - h) build understanding and support for sustainable living
  - i) develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment

## Equality duty

32. There are no equality duty implications associated with providing this progress report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
33. Environmental inequalities tend to disproportionately impact areas of deprivation and those with lower household income<sup>3</sup>. The Beryl bike schemes helps to tackle these inequalities by being the cheapest form of public transport available in the city. The busiest bays in residential areas are in areas such as the Oval.
34. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

  - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/the-state-of-the-environment-the-urban-environment>

## **Resource implications**

35. There are no resource implications associated with providing this progress report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
36. Any recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Committee will require separate governance.

## **Legal implications**

37. The role of the scrutiny committee is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.

## **Risk management**

38. There are no risks associated with providing this progress report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
39. Any new projects arising as a result of recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee will require separate governance.

## **Consultees**

40. None.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Beryl Bikes update, available through this weblink:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1769/major-million-milestone-for-hereford-bikeshare->

Appendix 2: Nordic walking update, available through this weblink:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1802/free-nordic-walking-courses-in-hereford-this-september>

Appendix 3: EV charge point roll-out. available through this weblink:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1796/new-electric-vehicle-charge-points-for-leominster>

Appendix 4: Choose How You Move (CHYM). Herefordshire Council

Appendix 5: Hereford Transport hub [Paper to follow as supplement]

Appendix 6: South Wye Transport Package - Option Refinement Report

Appendix 7: South Wye Transport Package - Active Travel Measures

Appendix 8: Hereford Transport package

Appendix 9: Hereford Transport package - Active Travel Measures at Option Development Stage

Appendix 10: Examples of Active Travel Engineering Measures

## **Background papers**

None identified

### Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

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Approved by	Mark Averill	Date 13/09/2024
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