

Minutes of the meeting of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 9 September 2025 at 2.00 pm

Committee members present in person and voting: **Councillors: Bruce Baker, Frank Cornthwaite (Vice-Chairperson), Elizabeth Foxton, Ed O'Driscoll (Chairperson), Roger Phillips and Diana Toynbee**

Others in attendance:

G Dando	Chief Operating Officer - Resident Services	Herefordshire Council
R Evans	Regional Manager (West Midlands)	Active Travel England
F Horton	Transport Planning Services Manager	Herefordshire Council
H Merricks-Murgatroyd	Democratic Services Officer	Herefordshire Council
Councillor P Price	Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure	Herefordshire Council
D Thornton	Democratic Services Support Officer	Herefordshire Council
D Webb	Statutory Scrutiny Officer	Herefordshire Council

71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

72. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

74. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

75. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 8)

Documents containing questions received from members of the public and the responses given, plus supplementary questions and their respective responses were published as an appendix to the minutes.

76. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions had been received from councillors.

77. LOCAL WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN SCRUTINY REPORT

The committee considered a report on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The principal points of the subsequent discussion are summarised below:

1. The Transport Planning Services Manager presented that:
 - a. The plan will be used to create a priority list of projects that officers will progress for design and delivery over the coming years and will work with external partners to ensure that the work they are doing reflects what the council wants in relation to local cycling and walking infrastructure. It also helps to unlock national funding as having an LCWIP allows the council to be a higher-rated council and provides more opportunities for grants.
 - b. As part of the papers, the technical note is the basis of the LCWIP and provides the thinking behind the LCWIP.
 - c. The public have been consulted with 1,713 unique visitors to the consultation page and 761 contributions with 340 subscribed for future updates.
 - d. The main projects supported in the consultation were routes from residential areas in to the city.
 - e. The next step of the LCWIP is to go to Cabinet to gain approval and once that is achieved, part of the Cabinet recommendation is to give approval to the Chief Operating Officer – Resident Services and the Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure to prioritise the list of routes to be delivered.
2. In response to a question about what the political imperative is for driving the LCWIP forward, the Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure noted that there is no political imperative of it than if there is any need or want to move forward infrastructure projects, there has to be the basis of a plan to draw down the evidence to support any bids or applications made. It was noted that without these plans, bids will be unlikely to be successful for grant funding.
3. The Transport Planning Services Manager noted that the five most popular improvements that the public are asking for are: quiet lanes, highway route upgrades, junction safety upgrades, traffic calming, and footway improvements. Accordingly, these priorities are taken into account when determining the allocation of funding.
4. The Chief Operating Officer – Resident Services noted that active travel funding is already available. With an LCWIP in place, the council is hopeful that its grading will improve, thereby increasing the likelihood of securing additional funding.
5. In response to a question about other LCWIPs and whether it would have been good practice to have had an implementation strategy at this stage, Rhiannon Evans (Active Travel England) noted that it is helpful to have one in relation to a capability assessment which is calculated on three things: 1. Leadership; 2. Network plans; and 3. Delivery.

6. In response to a question regarding the rating system, Rhiannon Evans (Active Travel England) explained that all local authorities in England are assessed on a scale from 0 to 4, with Herefordshire currently rated at level 1.
 - a. The assessment is based on three key criteria: (1) Leadership – the strength of policies and the presence of members who actively support active travel; (2) Network Plans – commitments to LCWIPs and the funding of project pipelines; and (3) Delivery – the extent of infrastructure delivered using ATF funding.
 - b. This is important as it is linked to the amount of funding received as well.
7. The Chief Operating Officer – Resident Services added that officers are currently developing the implementation strategy and prioritisation plan. Once completed, it will be uploaded to the council's website and presented again to the scrutiny committee at a future meeting. It was noted that the aim is to have this work finalised before Christmas.
8. In response to a question about the implementation strategy and the prioritisation list and their differences, the Transport Planning Services Manager noted that the prioritisation list will provide all of the routes identified and consulted on in Herefordshire. The implementation strategy is a short-term plan of what is being designed and being built on the assumed funding over the next couple of years. Both are considered as separate documents.
9. In response to a question about greenways, the Transport Planning Services Manager acknowledged that the wording in the technical report is unclear. In the actual plan, which will be presented to Cabinet, further detail on greenways will be included. Officers are working closely with landowners to ensure their concerns are respected. While greenways will be supported, the council's main priority remains infrastructure within its own network.
10. In response to a question regarding the equality duty and its low impact rating, the Transport Planning Services Manager clarified that this report is limited to a priority list and technical overview. In contrast, the Cabinet paper provides a different equality rating and includes more detailed wording on how equality considerations will be improved.
11. In response to a question about mistakes in the technical report, the Transport Planning Services Manager noted these would be corrected.
12. The Transport Planning Services Manager confirmed that LCWIP will be subject to six-monthly updates to ensure priorities remain current and responsive to community feedback.
13. Committee members welcomed this approach and stressed the importance of clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for active travel. Officers noted that KPIs in the Local Transport Plan could be extended to cover walking and cycling, with scrutiny recommendations feeding into their development.
14. The Transport Planning Services Manager added that smaller-scale schemes (e.g. crossings, pavements, drop kerbs, 20mph routes) would be prioritised in the early years, particularly around schools, to enable short car journeys to shift to walking or cycling. Larger infrastructure projects were acknowledged as longer-term, requiring external funding, and would therefore be less frequent.

15. The Transport Planning Services Manager agreed that safety is a central priority. All new schemes will undergo safety audits, although some rural routes may not be fully compliant with national design guidance (LTN 1/20) due to physical constraints.
16. In response to a question about how market towns and rural areas would benefit alongside Hereford, it was confirmed that dedicated funding had been set aside for rural areas.
17. The Transport Planning Services Manager noted that over 700 responses had been received during the consultation. While some expressed opposition to prioritising walking and cycling over car travel, many called for more ambitious interventions than those initially proposed.
18. In response to a question about whether the priority list be included in the implementation list before Christmas, the Transport Planning Services Manager confirmed it would be.
19. In response to a question about how the success of the plan will be measured, the Transport Planning Services Manager noted that the council has a strong monitoring network which monitors walking, cycling, and car usage.
20. Committee members stressed the need to address accident hotspots, poor junction design, and potholes, noting that incidents not reported to the police should also be considered. It was advised that upgraded monitoring equipment using AI was being deployed to capture near-miss and actual collision data.

Resolved:

1. **Ensure that the performance indicators monitoring the success of the Local Transport Plan include indicators showing reduced collisions, reduced emissions, and greater take up of walking and cycling as a mode of transport.**
2. **Ensure that any targets in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are Specific, Measurable, Agreed (or Achievable), Realistic, and Time Bound.**
3. **Publish the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan implementation plan, prioritisation list and programme of work by the end of 2025.**

78. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee considered a report on Public Involvement in Housing Development Task and Finish Group – Terms of Reference.

The principal points of the subsequent discussion are summarised below:

1. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer introduced the proposal to agree a terms of reference for a task and finish group, noting that housing development is a matter of high public concern and that the group would provide an opportunity for scrutiny to contribute positively to policy development.
2. The group will comprise 5–7 councillors, excluding Cabinet Members. Membership will be open to all councillors, not limited to committee members.

3. Expressions of interest will be invited following agreement of the terms of reference, with work to take place over approximately nine months and a final report expected by May 2026.
4. Concerns were raised about the relationship between the emerging local plan and NDPs, with members emphasising the need to ensure NDPs retain a meaningful role. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer acknowledged this and agreed to make reference to NDPs within the objectives of the group.

Resolved

That:

- a) **The committee agree the terms of reference for the proposed task and finish group.**

79. WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer presented the draft work programme for the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

The principal points of the subsequent discussion are summarised below:

1. It was noted that the task and finish group would be the committee's primary piece of work over the coming months.
2. It was suggested that the committee allow time to shape the group's programme of work before finalising the wider work programme.
3. A review of the work programme in mid-October was suggested, to be followed by confirmation of priorities at the committee's scheduled November meeting.

Resolved that:

That:

- a) **The committee agree the draft work programme for Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee contained in the work programme report attached as appendix 1, which will be subject to ongoing review, as the basis of their primary focus for the remainder of the municipal year.**
- b) **The committee note the forward plan attached as appendix 2 and identify any opportunities for collaboration or alignment of work.**

80. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 4 November 2025, 14:00 pm

The meeting ended at 3.32 pm

Chairperson

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Jeremy Milln, Hereford	<p><i>While the LCWWIP is not expected to provide technical specifications, costings or timetables for specific interventions, it is required to clearly define and prioritise LTN 1/20 compliant actions into an implementation plan for infrastructure improvement, necessary to be effective as a means of increasing active travel and reducing congestion.</i></p> <p><i>How will the chairman guide Connected Communities Committee members (and thus the Cabinet member) to ensure this happens, based upon the lists of potential future projects suggested by the consultants on pages 294-308 and the general public in tables 14-27 in Appendix 3 of the Report?</i></p>	Chairperson of Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
<p>Response:</p> <p>The LCWWIP before contains a number of objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To set out an indicative development plan for a comprehensive network of active travel routes linking up all relevant origin and destination locations throughout the county. - To provide a framework for prioritising routes according to their potential to increase and sustain commuting, leisure and other trips by means of active travel - To outline indicative infrastructure improvements to inform potential future schemes. - To support the development of bids for active travel schemes. - To establish alignment between different strategic and infrastructure plans throughout the county, ensuring consistency and coherence in the design of active travel infrastructure. <p>I will look to establish through questioning the appropriate point to develop the implementation plans that you raise in your question.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p> <p><i>Thank you for the response. However I didn't ask about LCWIP's objectives, but about its implementation. The DfT's guidance on plan preparation for local authorities (April, 2017) sets out the pathway to the development of integrated networks by prioritising and programming infrastructure</i></p>			

improvements using the tools for route selection and propensity to walk and cycle which have since been augmented by the LTN 1/20 design standard.

What therefore are the questions you will put to lead Herefordshire to get a LCWIP where the interventions needed to meet the objectives are clearly defined, ordered and credible so that they can be funded and implemented swiftly and efficiently?

Supplementary response:

“Thank you for your supplementary question, Mr Milln. Having considered this and in light of the discussions we recently had at our lines of enquiry meeting, I am confident that the area you wish to explore will come under scrutiny this afternoon. Hopefully over the course of the meeting you’ll feel that it has been sufficiently answered.” – Chairperson of Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee