



Title of report: Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan Scrutiny Report

Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 2 March 2026

Report by: Transport Planning Services Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To seek the views of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the draft Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), prior to its consideration by Cabinet. The committee is invited to scrutinise the plan, provide feedback, and endorse its strategic direction. The report also outlines and details key funding streams for the council to deliver the priorities of the plan.

Recommendation(s)

That the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Review the draft LCWIP and provides feedback on its content and priorities;**
- b) The committee offers any recommendations around the LCWIP for Cabinet consideration; and**
- c) Review the progress to Level 2 authority status with Active Travel England.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options. Scrutiny of the LCWIP is a key part of the governance process to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with community needs prior to Cabinet decision.

Key considerations

2. The Local Cycling and Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a core strategic tool that enables Herefordshire Council to take a structured and prioritised approach to improving walking, cycling and wheeling routes across the county. It is required by the Department for Transport and Active Travel England (ATE) and is increasingly used as a benchmark for assessing a council's capability and ambition in active travel delivery.
3. Having an adopted LCWIP is now central to securing future investment, as funding is allocated according to a council's performance rating and the strength of its evidence base. By adopting the plan and committing to its delivery, Herefordshire will be better positioned to work towards achieving Active Travel England Level 2 status in the next assessment cycle, which would enable access to more substantial funding streams and stronger national support.
4. Without a strategic document of this nature, the council would struggle to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable transport or respond adequately to the needs raised by local communities.
5. The LCWIP directly supports national policy priorities including the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, the Gear Change vision, and wider commitments around health improvement set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.
6. ATE places significant emphasis on high-quality design, evidence-led planning and meaningful engagement with communities. The LCWIP provides the framework to meet these expectations by setting out clear priorities, identifying deliverable routes, and showing that the council can bring forward schemes that reflect both national standards and local requirements.
7. Adopting the LCWIP brings a broad range of benefits. It embeds active travel within the council's wider transport and place-shaping agenda and enables decisions to be based on robust data and clear priorities. The plan supports wider public health and environmental goals by encouraging everyday physical activity, reducing emissions, and improving air quality. It also enhances access to education, employment and essential services—especially for residents who do not have access to a car—contributing to a more inclusive and connected transport network.
8. The LCWIP is designed to evolve. It will be updated regularly to reflect feedback from residents, changing travel patterns and new funding opportunities. This approach ensures that the document remains relevant and adaptable rather than a static plan. The council will continue to review local priorities, gather input from communities and partners, and refine the programme over time. This iterative process also aligns with national expectations, particularly for rural authorities where travel patterns differ from urban areas and require flexible, long-term planning.
9. It is important to note that the LCWIP is not intended to restrict car use or disadvantage rural communities. The council recognises that private vehicles remain essential for many residents. Instead, the plan aims to support more choice in how people travel by making it easier and safer to walk, wheel or cycle for short trips, and by improving conditions for all road users. The LCWIP complements, rather than competes with, the existing road network and seeks to ensure that the transport system as a whole is safer, more efficient and more accessible for everyone.

Community impact

10. The 2025/2026 Delivery plan has a stated objective to: Adopt the Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan and provide residents with different travel choices through integrated networks. We will seek Cabinet approval to adopt and publish the plan and commence implementation
11. LCWIP makes a strong contribution to the council's wider corporate priorities, particularly around health, wellbeing and strengthening communities. It supports the Herefordshire Council Plan by promoting a healthier, more accessible and better-connected county. The plan also aligns with key national strategies such as the NHS Long Term Plan and the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2), both of which highlight active travel as central to improving population health and addressing inequalities.
12. By embedding active travel within local decision-making, the LCWIP reinforces the council's commitment to creating places that support healthier lifestyles and inclusive access for all residents.
13. There is clear and well-established evidence that walking, cycling and wheeling bring extensive physical and mental health benefits. Regular active travel reduces the risk of major health conditions including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity, while also improving mobility and respiratory health. From a mental wellbeing perspective, increased physical activity is linked with lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression, alongside improved mood and confidence. Even short, everyday journeys—such as a 30-minute walk or cycle—have been shown to deliver immediate and lasting mental health benefits. The LCWIP supports these outcomes by making it easier and safer for residents to build physical activity into their daily routines.
14. The plan also plays an important role in improving transport affordability and accessibility. Enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling routes offer low-cost, zero-emission travel options, which can significantly reduce financial pressure on households. This is especially important in rural areas and for residents who do not have access to a car. Initiatives such as the Beryl bike share scheme in Hereford further widen choice by providing flexible, pay-as-you-go transport options. By investing in active travel infrastructure, the LCWIP supports more equitable access to jobs, education and services and helps reduce transport-related exclusion.
15. The LCWIP also contributes to the council's corporate parenting responsibilities. Safe, reliable and inclusive transport networks improve access to education, training, leisure and support services for children in care, care leavers and care-experienced young people. Better walking and cycling routes can help support independence, enable social participation and improve access to green spaces, all of which contribute to improved life chances and wellbeing. The plan recognises the needs of vulnerable users, and people with disabilities, and commits to designing infrastructure that is accessible, inclusive and safe for all through adoption of the LTN1/20 design standards where possible.
16. Taken together, the health, affordability and inclusion benefits delivered by the LCWIP represent a meaningful investment in the wellbeing of Herefordshire's residents and reinforce the council's role as a responsible corporate parent. The plan supports fair access to opportunities and reflects the council's commitment to creating healthy and resilient communities.

Environmental impact

17. The LCWIP makes a significant contribution to the council's environmental policy commitments and supports the Herefordshire Council Plan's goals around carbon reduction, cleaner air, and improved access to green space. By encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling for short trips,

the plan helps reduce transport-related emissions—one of the largest contributors to carbon output in the county. The shift toward more sustainable travel will also support improved air quality, complementing wider efforts to enhance environmental resilience and create healthier local communities.

18. Sustainable travel plays an important role in reducing environmental impact, particularly in a rural county where car dependency is high. Walking and cycling are zero-emission modes that cut congestion, reduce noise, and support better public health. Herefordshire already benefits from an extensive network of public footpaths and a growing number of high-quality cycling routes, alongside initiatives like the Beryl bike share scheme in Hereford. These assets provide a strong foundation on which the LCWIP can build, enabling greater use of low-carbon modes of travel.
19. The success of the Beryl scheme demonstrates the environmental and behavioural benefits that accessible active travel options can deliver. Since 2019, users have made over half a million trips, covering around 1.2 million kilometres and generating significant physical activity. Estimates suggest that these trips have saved approximately 46 tonnes of carbon emissions, with nearly seven in ten users reporting that they replaced motorised journeys with cycling. The scheme has encouraged more frequent cycling, reduced car use for many participants, and highlighted the environmental value of well-designed, easy-to-use sustainable transport services.
20. There is strong national evidence that investment in walking and cycling infrastructure increases active travel levels, particularly in areas where use has historically been low. Programmes such as Connect2 demonstrated that improving route quality—through traffic-free paths, better crossings, and accessible design—led to notable increases in walking and cycling, especially among deprived communities and groups underrepresented in active travel. These findings reinforce the importance of the LCWIP’s focus on safe, coherent and attractive routes as a key driver of environmental and health benefits.
21. The LCWIP also reflects national policy direction. Active Travel England’s most recent business plan emphasises the importance of delivering safe, inclusive and high-quality infrastructure to reduce emissions and support healthier lifestyles. The UK Government’s investment in active travel aims to significantly increase the number of walking and cycling journeys made each year and to reduce pressure on public services through improved population health. The LCWIP positions Herefordshire to benefit from this national agenda and align local investment with national environmental priorities.
22. Throughout development of the plan, the council has considered how to minimise environmental impacts and maximise sustainability benefits. This includes encouraging low-carbon materials where appropriate, integrating opportunities for green infrastructure, and promoting active travel as a viable alternative to private car use. The LCWIP will help ensure that future schemes support healthier, greener and more resilient communities, and contribute to making Herefordshire’s towns and villages better connected and more environmentally sustainable places to live.

Equality duty

23. Due to the overall impact of this project being assessed as low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required at this stage. However, equality considerations have been incorporated into the development of the LCWIP.
24. The plan promotes accessibility for all users, including people with mobility impairments, sensory impairments, and those who rely on lower-cost modes of transport. By focusing on

safer, more inclusive walking, wheeling and cycling routes, the LCWIP aims to reduce transport inequalities and improve access to services, education and employment for groups who may be disproportionately affected by limited transport options.

Resource implications

25. The LCWIP is supported by existing budgets and external funding sources. Detailed financial implications will be set out in the Cabinet report and accompanying business case.

Legal implications

26. The relevant legal provisions for this decision can be found in the council’s constitution, www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution.

Risk management

27.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Risk - Public dissatisfaction if engagement feedback is not reflected in the final LCWIP	Clearly show how feedback has influenced the plan; update route priorities where appropriate; publish consultation summary; communicate constraints transparently
Risk - Funding constraints may slow delivery of schemes	Prioritise deliverable schemes; develop a strong funding pipeline; work toward achieving Active Travel England Level 2 status to unlock higher national investment; seek external and partnership funding
Risk - Delivery challenges due to rural geography and limited active travel alternatives	Tailor schemes to rural context; prioritise safety and accessibility; focus on key settlements, schools and employment areas; gather user data to refine priorities
Opportunity - Adoption enables access to greater funding and improves ATE performance ratings	Adopt LCWIP; demonstrate deliverability; build a strong scheme pipeline; meet ATE requirements consistently
Clear strategic plan strengthens partnership working and public support	Use LCWIP as shared framework; engage partners early; align priorities with local needs. More effective collaboration with NHS, schools, community groups and town/parish councils

Consultees

28. A comprehensive multi-channel consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the LCWIP. Engagement activities were designed to ensure input from a broad cross-section of residents, stakeholders, and representative groups.

29. The Commonplace platform attracted 1,648 visitors, with 199 contributors providing 760 comments and agreements on proposed routes, infrastructure priorities, missing links and local barriers. Respondents were able to comment directly on draft proposals and highlight locations where improvements were required.
30. Participants made location-specific suggestions via interactive maps, highlighting opportunities for new off-highway routes, Quiet Lanes, junction upgrades, and improved connections to key destinations such as Hereford County Hospital and Ledbury. This enabled highly detailed, place-based feedback.
31. Drop-in sessions were held in Hereford and Ledbury and were well attended by residents. These sessions allowed people to speak directly with officers, review draft route options and provide detailed local insights. The events supported participation from individuals less likely to engage through digital channels and helped ensure a more representative demographic.
32. Engagement sessions were held with parish councils, community groups and accessibility advocates, ensuring the needs of older residents, children and young people, disabled people, and other under-represented groups were captured. Targeted communication undertaken with colleagues in the Children's Directorate encouraged direct involvement from children and young people, who shared their specific travel needs and safety concerns.

Ward member engagement

33. Ward members were invited to comment on priorities within their areas and share issues raised by constituents. Feedback from councillors informed route refinement and the identification of local constraints.

Consultation Findings

Key themes

34. Analysis of the consultation identified consistent themes, including strong support for safer infrastructure, improved connectivity, and the removal of barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling. These themes have shaped the recommendations and revisions to the LCWIP.
35. Priority infrastructure identified by the public (in order of support)
 - a) Designate and enhance Quiet Lanes
 - b) Create and improve off-highway routes
 - c) Upgrade junctions for safety and accessibility
 - d) Introduce traffic calming
 - e) Manage and improve footways
 - f) Implement modal filters
 - g) Integrate green infrastructure
 - h) Improve routes to school
 - i) Provide additional cycle parking
 - j) Enhance signage and wayfinding
 - k) Install gateway features

- l) Improve street lighting
- m) Route support and new suggestions

36. Overall, 42% of respondents supported the proposed routes. A significant number of alternative route suggestions were submitted—several hundred in total—and these are being reviewed for inclusion in the revised LCWIP. Key scheme areas strengthened through consultation include:

- a) improved links to Hereford County Hospital
- b) enhanced connections between Lugwardine and Hereford
- c) improved access between Stretton Sugwas and Hereford
- d) upgrades to walking and cycling routes in Ledbury
- e) “quick wins” such as removing barriers, chicanes and pinch points
- f) additional pedestrian and cycle crossings at high-demand locations

How feedback has influenced the recommendations

37. The consultation has directly shaped:

- a) route alignment changes
- b) priority ranking of infrastructure type
- c) strengthened focus on accessibility and safety
- d) addition of new routes and communities not included in the original draft
- e) targeted improvements in high-demand areas highlighted by the public

38. Where suggestions could not be taken forward—for example, proposals outside the LCWIP scope or inconsistent with national design guidance—clear explanations will be provided in the published consultation summary.

Ongoing engagement

39. Further consultation will take place as individual schemes move into design and delivery. Feedback will be provided to consultees via the council website, updates to stakeholders, and communication through ward members and partner networks.

Appendices

Background papers

None identified