

A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP)

Public Engagement Exercise (Scheme 3 Alternative and Scheme 9) Summary Report

Background

As part of the process of gaining local knowledge towards building the Business Case for the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP), Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has carried out several engagement activities since 2020. A brief timeline of these events is included below.

2020

- An engagement exercise was carried out on all phases seeking feedback from stakeholders and the public on the proposals in early 2020.
- The exercise was promoted across multiple communication channels and over 1500 people attended exhibitions held along the BREP route.
- The engagement highlighted support for the Council's ambition to improve congestion along the A38 through Bromsgrove as well as highlighting local concerns which may not have previously been known.
- The feedback was used to evolve the proposals and progress the funding bid and business case.
- Further information can be found here: [Initial Phase 3 Engagement 2020/21 | Initial Phase 3 Engagement 2020/21 | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Early 2021

- Following the initial engagement in 2020, further information was shared related to two schemes which evolved from comments on the initial proposals (Scheme 2 – Charford Road to Harvington Road and Scheme 4 – A448 near Blackwood Road) formed Phase 2 of the programme and sought to make further improvements to the walking and cycling network.
- Due to COVID-19, the exercise did not involve face to face community events but focused instead on a letter drop to residents and businesses close to the proposed schemes and media releases directing interested parties to the County Council webpages.
- Again, feedback was used to evolve the proposals, with these schemes being delivered in 2021.

July / August 2021

- A pre-planning engagement exercise was completed in July and August 2021 for schemes 3 and 5.
- Scheme 3 proposed a pedestrian and cycling footbridge to link the two severed ends of Old Station Road.
- Scheme 5 sought to replace the existing bridge on the National Cycle Network link, allowing cyclists to cross without dismounting and improvements for wheelchair and pushchair users with shallower gradients and wider paths, and a set of stairs.
- This exercise took place during July and August 2021 with Covid 19 restrictions meaning face to face events were not possible. Letters were sent to residents in both local areas with supporting media releases directing people to the Worcestershire County Council website to respond.
- Nearly 100 email responses were received.
- Further information can be found here: Engagement Exercise: [Scheme 3 footbridge alternative and Scheme 9 proposals | Engagement Exercise: Scheme 3 footbridge alternative and Scheme 9 proposals | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- Following consideration of the comments and further development of the design, especially considering the environmental impact of the Scheme 3 footbridge, an alternative option was developed
- Scheme 5 received less feedback, and is being progressed with minor amendments

Public Engagement Exercise: Scheme 3 Alternative and Scheme 9

In Summer 2022, Worcestershire County Council hosted a six-week engagement exercise presenting an alternative to the pedestrian and cycling footbridge linking the two severed ends of Old Station Road (Scheme 3), and a further scheme, Scheme 9.

This exercise used a variety of engagement methods to promote and encourage participation including:

- Letters distributed to households most effected, specifically those that directly fronted on to the proposals
- A press release was issued to local media to promote the engagement exercise, resulting in the following articles being published in the local press:
- <https://bromsgrovestandard.co.uk/news/residents-urged-to-have-their-say-on-proposed-alternative-to-footbridge-over-a38/>
- [Consultation launched for next phase of the Bromsgrove A38 improvement scheme | Bromsgrove Advertiser.](#)
- The project website. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/A38BREP This had 4019 page views (1573 unique page views) during the public engagement exercise period.
- Feedback was collated through emails sent into the Major Projects email address: majorprojects@worcestershire.gov.uk, receiving a total of **100 responses**.

Primary themes within the responses

WCC is grateful to everyone who responded, with many positive comments highlighting Worcestershire County Council's commitment to the promotion of Active Travel alongside the road network.

Outlined below are the main themes raised during the engagement exercise.

Why not make a direct cycle route between the town centre and the rail station along New Road?

The cycling infrastructure proposed within the A38 BREP project has been developed to comply with the principles set out in the [National Cycling guidance, LTN 1/20](#) which require specific measure to be put in place. The cycling infrastructure proposed has been designed for use by all active travel modes by all abilities, from school children and parents to commuters and more active cyclists.

LTN 1/20 recommends off carriageway provision wherever possible, especially on 30mph routes and those with higher flows. Due to constraints such as property boundaries and parking facilities, New Road does not have the necessary space for off road provision throughout.

Concerns around narrower carriageway impacting flow of traffic at the southern end of New Road

The area of carriageway to the southern end of New Road from Rigby Lane, is a vital link between the town and the station, and therefore provides an important link to achieve the objective of a continuous active travel corridor. To provide a wider shared-use path for cyclists and pedestrians, the width of the carriageway would need to be reduced. There are some concerns that this could lead to traffic congestion, therefore this issue will be considered further at the detailed design stage.

Access and Egress from Harwood Park Estate

Some positive comments were received regarding making Drummond Way one-way, however respondents also raised concerns around access and egress to the Harwood Park Estate. The project team have considered access to the estate, and it is felt that making the movement along Drummond Way one way south bound will maintain the ability of vehicles exiting Harwood Park sufficient capacity to and from the estate.

Why not run the cycle Lane east of Drummond Lane, utilising the existing cycle facility off Rigby Hall?

Upgrading the existing cycling facility at Rigby Hall across the back of Aston Fields Middle School was considered, however, to make this a high-quality facility, the area would need to have lighting installed, the existing vegetation would need to be removed or cut back and the routes resurfaced. Considering the impact on residents and biodiversity it was felt that a route along Drummond Way would be preferable.

Why not incorporate the existing bridge crossing of the A38 at Carnforth Road?

Making use of this existing bridge was considered, however, it does not provide sufficient parapet height for safe use by mounted cyclists. It would require major upgrades to make this LTN 1/20 compliant, with consequential impacts on the trees and residents in this area.

Why not build a new bridge at Stonehouse Road or Stoke Road?

The original scheme 3 proposed upgrading the existing uncontrolled crossing at Stonehouse Road into a pedestrian and cyclist bridge, as part of providing a relatively direct route between the station and town centre. However, this was not deemed desirable due to the scale of the bridge required and the environmental impacts the scheme would have. As such, it was not felt to be feasible and alternative options were considered.

As part of the A38 BREP programme, upgrades are planned at the junction of the A38 with Stoke Road, improving the pedestrian facilities at this location, however this does not include a pedestrian and cycle bridge. The space available in this location, and impacts on local businesses, vegetation and residents is felt to be too severe.

Why provide traffic calming along Harvington Road, Bant Mill Road and Fordhouse Road?

To provide a suitable facility for all users as set out in LTN 1/20, it is important that where it is not possible to have off carriageway provision a safe environment is introduced for motorised and active travel modes. By providing traffic calming measures along this route, it is possible to provide a safe environment for motorised vehicles and cyclists on the carriageway, however the placement of these measures will be carefully considered to ensure they do not impact residents' accesses.

What about the impact of school parking causing issues along Harvington Road, Bant Mill Road and Fordhouse Road?

Reducing the impact of school parking on nearby roads is outside the scope of this project; however, it is envisaged that the improvements planned would make the current position worse and it may reduce pressures by encouraging active modes along this route.

Could further measures be introduced to reduce speeding along Stratford Road, such as speed activated warning signs?

As part of the detailed design process, further measures may be considered, however this would be subject to the outcome of Road Safety Audits, suitable locations being available, and resources being identified for their maintenance. It is felt that the reduced carriageway width would help to provide a visual deterrent to speeding at this location and provide a safe environment for active travel modes.

Could the dedicated right turn from Stratford Road into School Drive be retained?

Following comments on the right turn from Stratford Road into School Drive the project team are reviewing the design in this location to consider the possibility for the dedicated right turn provision to be retained.

Why does the recently completed route at Charford Road not continue offline alongside the A38?

To extend the newly created cycle route from Charford Road parallel to the A38 would require the removal of extensive vegetation. The proposed route along Harvington Road, Bant Mill Road and Fordhouse Road, is seen as more appropriate.

Displaced traffic will be moved onto other routes

It is not considered that the plans will lead to significant displacement of traffic from existing routes into other areas. The key aim of this scheme is to ensure that the highway network in Bromsgrove is suitable for all users.

The new design will cause flooding issues or issues with exit of vehicles from properties

The plans that were used in the engagement exercise were a preliminary design and will be fully reviewed by the designer to ensure they are suitable in terms of ensuring adequate drainage and access to homes. Comments made by residents on these issues will be considered during the detailed design process.

Further comments

Further to the points outlined above, table 1 below provides an overview of the other key themes identified from the responses received. Those not related to the scheme 3 alternative and scheme 9 have been passed on to the relevant teams within the County Council for their consideration.

Table 1: General comments and Worcestershire County Council's response

Theme	Worcestershire County Council Response
The proposals will impact the car user. More investment in cycling infrastructure is not required.	<p>Investing in cycling and active travel infrastructure is part of a key strategy for WCC which is to provide travel choice and enable a shift from car travel to other modes of transport for those who wish to do so, particularly for shorter trips. See WCC's Local Transport Plan 4:</p> <p>https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20055/strategies_plans_and_bids/806/the_local_transport_plan</p> <p>The BREP programme includes both schemes to improve traffic flow for vehicles, and investment in active mode routes.</p>

Lighting causing issues for wildlife or houses	All lighting will be designed to ensure ambient light is kept to a minimum, minimising the impact on residents and any wildlife. The lighting will be kept to a minimum as to ensure that the routes are safe for all users throughout the year.
Environmental concerns: trees/bushes/flooding/noise etc.	<p>The design is aimed at minimising the environmental impacts as far as possible. Whilst it is recognised that there will still be some tree and vegetation loss within the area, WCC are committed to replacing any lost trees on a 2 for 1 basis within the overall A38 BREP project.</p> <p>The detailed design, which will include updated and modelled surface drainage proposals, will be designed to ensure that the new layout does not have adverse effects on properties.</p>
Not good value for money.	<p>These schemes are part of a package of improvements, building on the previous National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) active travel schemes within the A38 corridor. These are aimed at promoting active travel (walking and cycling) by reducing the severance created by the A38 and promoting safety within the corridor.</p> <p>The benefit of the scheme is assessed against the anticipated cost to ensure value for money as part of the business case process, which is scrutinised by the Department for Transport.</p>
The proposals will increase traffic congestion	The proposals will encourage slower speeds of traffic and make the route more appealing for active travel modes. There may be localised traffic delays and parking at peak times (most notably near local schools), however a key strategy for WCC which is to provide travel choice and encourage a wide range of modes of transport by increasing safety, particularly for shorter trips such as those into schools. This should have a positive effect on reducing traffic flows.
Child safety e.g., Children stepping out between parked vehicles .	This route provides various crossing points along the road with reduced crossing length. This will improve safety for pedestrians having to cross the road. The speed limit reduction and one way system will also contribute to the improved safety of pedestrians.
Prefer to have full width speed tables used rather than speed cushions	<p>The specific type of traffic calming measures to be put in place will be determined as part of the detailed design for the scheme, and will consider sever factors including drainage requirements, suitability for maintenance and their suitability to the route.</p> <p>The preference for speed tables outlined in these engagement responses will be considered.</p>
Issues during delivery. Night noise, disturbance of land, blocked drains	The work will be carried out in accordance with Worcestershire Regulatory Service's Code of Practice for Demolition and Construction Sites. This includes keeping any noise to an absolute minimum and working during standard daytime hours where possible.
Safety concerns with Shared Use footways.	The scheme design is subject to an independent Road Safety Audit. Any safety problems highlighted during the safety audit will be considered during the detailed design stage and prior to construction.

Reduce speed limits to 20mph.	Speed limit reductions are not always effective as they rely on driver behaviour and policing. The proposed traffic calming measures are anticipated to reduce speeds without the need to implement a mandatory speed limit.
Reason for A38 congestion is lack of public transport.	<p>Although these schemes are aimed at improving active travel facilities for all modes, the wider A38 BREP programme includes improvements to public transport most notably within Scheme 7 and 8:</p> <p>Scheme 7 - upgrade of existing bus stops/shelters to install Real Time Information (RTI) on the route along New Road between the Town Centre and Railway Station, this allows for 12 bus stop upgrades, plus RTI screens at the bus station and Bromsgrove Railway Station.</p> <p>Scheme 8 - provision of select vehicle detection at New Road and Charford Road junctions to support buses in crossing the A38 corridor, on the primary routes between the Town Centre and Railway station.</p>
No link between these proposals and the traffic on A38.	These schemes cannot be seen in isolation rather as part of a package of improvements, building on the previous NPIF active travel schemes, within the A38 corridor, aimed at promoting active travel (walking and cycling), reducing the severance created by the A38 and promoting safety within the corridor.

What Next?

Worcestershire County Council would like to thank everyone who has provided feedback on the proposals to date. This summary report provides an overview of the findings from the engagement activity undertaken in July / August 2022, the findings of which were considered alongside the engagement responses received following previous events, outlined at the beginning of this report. These have been considered and where appropriate been incorporated into the design of the scheme.

A Full Business Case (FBC) is currently being prepared for Phase 3 of the BREP project for submission to the Department for Transport (DfT), of which this summary report is a key part, outlining the public engagement process and the feedback received. The business case will be considered by the DfT and a decision on progress of the scheme is expected later in the year.

Future updates on the BREP project will be published on Worcestershire County Council's website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/A38BREP.