

Public Engagement Exercise for Redditch Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Introduction

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) undertook a second public engagement survey for the Redditch LCWIP between Monday 16 September and Friday 25 October 2024. The purpose of the engagement exercise was to obtain feedback on the draft Redditch LCWIP report and the proposed network of active travel routes developed by Sustrans, our consultancy partner. This draft Redditch LCWIP report builds on the 'emerging networks' public engagement exercise undertaken in late 2023. The public engagement exercise focussed on the proposed active travel network of 5 'priority' routes along with the Town centre walking and wheeling network. We would like to thank all those who responded to the engagement exercise.

Methodology

For the public engagement exercise, we conducted an online survey from our website which had 536 web page views and 358 total users (65.7% engagement rate). The public engagement exercise was publicised through a press release, social media, posters in and around the town and an email campaign to stakeholders that included local community groups. The press release was published in the Redditch Advertiser and Redditch Standard newspapers. The engagement exercise was also included in a newsletter sent to local schools.

Survey findings

Demographics

1. 101 respondents completed the survey.
2. 88% of respondents identified themselves as White English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British or any other White background; 3% as Asian/Asian British or other ethnic group; 9% of respondents preferred not to say or did not answer the question.
3. 9% were aged below 35 years old, 48% were aged between 36 and 55, 34% were aged between 56 and 75 and 9% preferred either not to say or where over the age of 75.
4. 18% of respondents said that a long-term condition affected their ability to walk or cycle.

Aims and objectives of the Redditch LCWIP

1. 86% of respondents agreed with the aims and objectives of the Redditch LCWIP. 6% were unsure and the remaining 8% disagreed.

Walking habits

1. 87% of respondents said they walk for at least 20 minutes a week with 4% saying they only walked for this amount of time a couple of times a month.
2. From a number of multiple options, respondents said they went walking for at least 20 minutes each week for the following activities:
 - a. 44% to go shopping.
 - b. 42% to meet family/friends, play sport or for entertainment.
 - c. 23% to go to work.
 - d. 15% to go to school, college, or education.

- e. 70% to go walking for pleasure.
 - f. 35% for other purposes that included walking the dog, exercise, going to the allotment or delivering leaflets.
- 3. 5% of respondents use or sometimes use a mobility aid to get around, including with walking sticking, walking frame, wheelchair and mobility scooter.
 - 4. 27% of respondents said they accompanied or sometimes children (under the age of 10 years) whilst walking. Of those, 29% used a pushchair or pram.

Cycling habits

- 1. 35% of respondents said they cycle for at least 20 minutes a week with 10% saying they only cycled for this amount of time a couple of times a month.
- 2. From a number of multiple options, respondents said they went cycling for at least 20 minutes each week for the following activities:
 - a. 10% to go shopping.
 - b. 10% to meet family/friends, play sport or for entertainment.
 - c. 11% to go to work.
 - d. 1% to go to school, college, or education.
 - e. 29% to go cycling for pleasure.
 - f. 6% for other purposes that included travelling further than 10k.
- 3. 17% of respondents said they accompanied or sometimes accompanied children (under the age of 10 years) whilst cycling. Of these, 42% used a child's bike seat, 8% use a bike trailer and 17% used a tag-along bike. The remainder said their child or children were able to cycle independently.

Agreement of proposed routes

71% of respondents agreed with all of the proposed cycling and walking routes. 23% said they disagreed and 6% were unsure.

Cycle Route 1 (Birchfield Road – Abbey Stadium)

- 1. 63% agreed that this route is a high priority to encourage further cycling and walking in Redditch. 14% were unsure and the remaining 23% disagreed.
- 2. If the route was delivered, 34% said they would use the route more than they do now and 23% saying they would use it for the same amount of time.
- 3. 83% said they would use this route more for cycling and 53% said they would use it more for walking.

Cycle Route 3 (Evesham Road – Unicorn Hill)

- 1. 68% agreed that this route is a high priority to encourage further cycling and walking in Redditch. 17% were unsure and the remaining 15% disagreed.
- 2. If the route was delivered, 33% said they would use the route more than they do now and 20% saying they would use it for the same amount of time.
- 3. 84% said they would use this route more for cycling and 42% said they would use it more for walking.

Cycle Route 6 (Easemore Road – Studley Road roundabout)

1. 77% agreed that this route is a high priority to encourage further cycling and walking in Redditch. 14% were unsure and the remaining 9% disagreed.
2. If the route was delivered, 36% said they would use the route more than they do now and 21% saying they would use it for the same amount of time.
3. 85% said they would use this route more for cycling and 62% said they would use it more for walking.

Cycle Route 7 (Arrow Valley – Washford Drive)

1. 78% agreed that this route is a high priority to encourage further cycling and walking in Redditch. 14% were unsure and the remaining 8% disagreed.
2. If the route was delivered, 41% said they would use the route more than they do now and 23% saying they would use it for the same amount of time.
3. 82% said they would use this route more for cycling and 65% said they would use it more for walking.

Cycle Route 9 (Alexandra Hospital – Church Green East)

1. 79% agreed that this route is a high priority to encourage further cycling and walking in Redditch. 12% were unsure and the remaining 9% disagreed.
2. If the route was delivered, 41% said they would use the route more than they do now and 19% saying they would use it for the same amount of time.
3. 85% said they would use this route more for cycling and 61% said they would use it more for walking.

Walking and wheeling zone

1. 69% agreed that this zone is a high priority to further encourage walking and wheeling in Redditch. 10% disagreed and 21% were unsure.
2. If this zone was delivered, 41% respondents said they would use it more than now. 37% were unsure and 22% said for the same amount.
3. For the multiple options of walking, wheeling and cycling, 77% of respondents said they would use this zone for walking, 71% said they would use it for cycling and 3% for wheeling.

Comments and responses summary

From the survey there were many issues and themes raised:

- Road safety and the need for safe, segregated infrastructure for cyclists was a key concern, as was providing safe infrastructure for walking and wheeling.
- Concerns over the safety of shared use provision was a key theme, especially for vulnerable users, including those with a disability or a visual impairment.
- Also spanning the theme of safety, there was significant feedback regarding parking on existing cycle lanes, pavement parking, traffic speeds, crossing points and traffic junctions.
- Enforcement arrangements for illegal parking and driving infringements was also a key area of concern.
- Similarly, concerns of poor behaviour of cyclists and e-scooters on footways.
- Active travel provision and car parking near schools was also a significant concern.
- There were suggestions for additional active travel connections and links to be considered within the scope of the draft Redditch LCWIP.
- Similarly, a large number of requests for wider connections beyond the scope of the draft Redditch LCWIP.
- Secure cycle parking, storage and security concerns was a key theme along with feedback requesting more storage for cycle gear at schools.
- Wayfinding, signage, lighting, and active travel maps was a key theme.
- The condition of roads, footways and existing cycle lanes was cited as a major area of concern.
- Having robust maintenance arrangements for existing and new infrastructure was a key theme, including road sweeping, hedge trimming and maintenance of verges.

Additional feedback included:

- Considering the role of the LCWIP for more recreation and leisure trips.
- That the wider benefits of active travel on health and wellbeing be strengthened.
- The needs of equestrian users be considered when schemes are being designed.
- Request to consider cycle hire schemes and bus service improvements.
- Improved active travel access to key trip attractors such as shopping centres and consideration of new developments were also raised.
- Concern for the impact on the existing highway network was raised, as was protecting green spaces.

There was some feedback questioning the need for the LCWIP, including suggesting that the funds be used for other highway areas. For clarity, the aim of the LCWIP is to provide travel choice for those who wish to use all forms of active travel and provide the infrastructure to do so. When cycling schemes come forward, opportunities for improving walking and wheeling infrastructure will also be considered and vice versa. The LCWIPs do not come with dedicated funding, however, having an adopted LCWIP will put the County Council and its partners in a better position should active travel funding become available in the future.

There was feedback regarding the deliverability and ambition of the Redditch LCWIP, and it is acknowledged that the aspirations of the Redditch LCWIP will have to be delivered

incrementally in the short, medium, and long term and subject to available funding. When active travel schemes come forward, they will be subject to detail design, feasibility and consultation with local residents and stakeholders. The current guidance for authorities and highway engineers when implementing new cycle infrastructure is Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20)¹ and where possible the design principles of this or its successor document will be applied.

All of the route suggestions and comments have been carefully considered and where appropriate incorporated into the updated Redditch LCWIP network. Feedback regarding Public Rights of Way (PROW) and the Definite Map are noted and for any LCWIP schemes that come forward we will work with the PROW team where any PROW may be impacted. It is acknowledged that the delivery of the LCWIP will require joint working with key partners including Redditch Borough Council, stakeholders, and the community of Redditch. Neighbouring local authorities, including Warwickshire County Council will also be key partners for cross boundary links.

The key themes from the public engagement have been summarised in the table below, together with responses provided by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Sustrans.

Theme	Response
Segregated cycle infrastructure	<p>The provision of safe and segregated infrastructure was a key theme and where schemes come forward in Redditch, we will design for segregated cycling facilities as set out in the latest cycling design guidance (LTN 1/20)</p> <p>LTN 1/20 sets out the minimum standards for local authorities and highway engineers when implementing new cycle infrastructure including cycle lanes, crossings, and junctions. The guidance sets out principles which represent the five key requirements to encourage more cycling, walking, and wheeling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coherent – Cyclists must be able to reach their destination with ease, utilising well connected routes, which are easy to navigate and free from obstruction.• Direct – Routes should navigate a cyclist with the quickest direction to travel from location to location.• Safe – The route must be safe, and emphasis given for cyclists to feel safe.• Comfortable – Routes should have appropriate widths for cycles, well maintained surfaces and have minimal stopping and starting and avoid steep gradients.• Attractive – Cycle infrastructure should contribute to the urban environment, be aesthetic, stimulating and clutter free.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

	<p>It is acknowledged that there are sections of narrow highway widths in Redditch which pose a challenge in providing safe and segregated infrastructure. Dedicated cycle lanes are not always feasible due to road width constraints and so shared use will be considered in order to improve cycling infrastructure. Any shared space will be designed to promote safe use for all road users incorporating the latest cycling design.</p> <p>When active travel schemes come forward, they will be subject to detail design, feasibility and consultation with local residents and stakeholders.</p>
Shared Use	<p>There was feedback both for and against shared use provision. Safety concerns raised regarding shared use included potential conflict with other users including cyclists and e-scooters. Ideally, we will design for segregated cycling provision as set out in the latest cycling design guidance. Where this is not possible, shared use on suitable footways will be considered. Any shared space will be designed to promote safe use for all road users. When active travel schemes come forward, they will be subject to detail design, feasibility and consultation with local residents and stakeholders.</p>
Network Safety	<p>Safety was a key theme of the feedback covering most areas including segregated provision, shared use, on road parking, pavement parking, traffic speeds, streetlighting and highway maintenance. The safety of all users will be the key consideration when schemes are proposed and designed. Safety was frequently raised in relation to schools and children, and it is acknowledged that traffic speeds are a particular concern for residents. Schemes will be designed incorporating best practice and the cycling design guidance which has safe provision as one of the five key principles. When active travel schemes come forward, they will be subject to detail design, feasibility and consultation with local residents and stakeholders.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council offers road safety education to all primary schools in Redditch. Bikeability Cycle Training is also available to all primary and secondary schools. Bikeability is promoted and supported by the Department of Transport and is designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads.</p>
Active Travel for Schools	<p>The development of the draft LCWIP has considered key trip attractors which includes schools and education establishments. The 5 priority routes, wider LCWIP network and Town centre walking and wheeling zone connect to and have many local schools nearby. It is acknowledged that active travel has a crucial role for school trips and reducing car trips for those shorter local journeys.</p>
On road parking	<p>On road car parking provision is acknowledged as a key challenge in providing safe and segregated cycling facilities that meets with the latest cycling design guidance. Feedback was received regarding parking on existing cycle lanes and footways, and especially near to schools. Parking on parking restrictions/double yellows was also</p>

	<p>raised an area of concern. Redditch Borough Council are a key stakeholder for the Redditch LCWIP and enforce parking restrictions within the Borough and do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to reduce the amount of illegal, dangerous, and inconsiderate parking • to encourage sensible and safe parking • to cut congestion and improve road safety. <p>When active travel schemes come forward, they will be subject to detail design, feasibility and consultation with local residents and stakeholders.</p>
Signage, wayfinding, lighting	<p>Signing and wayfinding has been a key theme for the Redditch LCWIP, and it is acknowledged that this is a very important area for residents, especially vulnerable road users. Walking or cycling improvement schemes that come forward through the LCWIP process will review existing wayfinding infrastructure and include improvements where necessary. It is acknowledged that wayfinding should be accessible to all. A review of lighting is also an element to be considered at the feasibility and detailed design stages.</p> <p>The provision of 'coherent' routes is one of the five key requirements of LTN 1/20 which includes ensuring the routes are easy to navigate. Additional feedback asked for new active travel maps to be produced. Subject to funding, 'softer' measures such as promotion and behavioural change initiatives will form part of the LCWIP process.</p>
Additional active travel connections (within the geographical scope of draft Redditch)	<p>The draft Redditch LCWIP has identified an active travel network of routes which are considered to have the greatest impact and encourage more people to walk and cycle. This has been done using a robust evidence base focussed on the demand for active travel, socio-economic and network data, as well as a review of national, regional, and local policies. While the draft LCWIP has set out 5 priority routes and the Town centre walking and wheeling zone, the wider LCWIP network will also inform future funding bids. It is acknowledged, however, that the aspirations of the Redditch LCWIP will have to be delivered incrementally in the short, medium, and long term and subject to available funding.</p>
Additional active travel connections (outside the geographical scope of draft Redditch LCWIP)	<p>The current LCWIP is focused on Redditch town in line with the Government guidance which sets out that the focus should be on utility trips within urban areas, to meet the target of 50% of short journeys being by active travel means by 2030. While the draft LCWIP has set out 5 priority routes, the wider LCWIP network, which includes links beyond Redditch, will also inform future funding bids. Active Travel England (ATE) are currently developing design guidance more aligned with less urban and rural areas. Subject to this guidance and available funding future LCWIPs for Redditch could consider wider active travel connections.</p>
LCWIP Objectives	<p>Feedback was received regarding the LCWIP objectives, and it is acknowledged that the current LCWIP guidance is focussed on everyday trips for purposes such as shopping, commuting and education. It is clear, however, that trips for leisure and recreation</p>

	<p>play an important role in promoting active travel as they are quite often the introduction to cycling. Active Travel England (ATE) who are a key funder of active travel currently prioritise funding for everyday trips. Additional feedback suggested more focus on the health and wellbeing benefits of the LCWIPs.</p>
LCWIP scheme delivery and funding	<p>In some of the feedback there was misunderstanding on the funding of the LCWIP. The LCWIP does not come with funding but having the LCWIP will put the County Council and its partners in a better position should active travel funding become available in the future. Where funding is available, and schemes come forward these will subject to detail design and local consultation. Active Travel England (ATE) are the key funders for active travel and the County Council actively seek funding from ATE to deliver schemes across Worcestershire. It is acknowledged that the aspirations of the Redditch LCWIP will have to be delivered incrementally in the short, medium, and long term and subject to available funding</p>
Impact on existing highway capacity	<p>The aim of the LCWIP is to provide travel choice for those who wish to use all forms of active travel and provide the infrastructure to do so. Traffic congestion is acknowledged as key issue of concern for residents. Where funding is available, and schemes come forward, they will be subject to detail design, feasibility and consultation with local residents and stakeholders. Similarly, any impact on existing green space and local ecology will be carefully considered.</p>
Maintenance arrangements	<p>There was considerable feedback on the quality of existing and any new highway infrastructure including roads, footways, cycle lanes and public rights of way. Feedback also included requirement for regular hedge trimming and verge maintenance. It is recognised that for improvement schemes to bring benefits in the long term that robust maintenance arrangements must be put in place. The provision 'comfortable' routes is one of the five key requirements of LTN 1/20 which specifies that routes should be well maintained. LTN 1/20 also suggests that the priority for maintenance should be those most heavily used parts of the cycle or walking route.</p> <p>The County Council has maintenance arrangements in place for our highway assets and any new assets such as cycle lane infrastructure will be added when completed. Residents are encouraged to report any highway or footway issue to the Worcestershire County Council website².</p> <p>Additional feedback included the quality and maintenance of signs and lining, which will also be considered when active travel schemes come forward.</p>

² <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/travel-and-highways/report-road-or-path-issue>

Cycle parking and security	Where appropriate and funding is available, the improvements to routes and links will also include new or improved cycle parking/storage, which is accessible for everyone. It is recognised that the provision of secure cycle parking can help remove some of the barriers to cycling and give a positive message that cycling is a legitimate and valid form of transport. When cycling schemes come forward, we will work with key stakeholders and landowners to enhance cycle parking and storage provision. Feedback also included requests to consider cycle hire schemes which are beyond the scope of this initial Redditch LCWIP. It is acknowledged, however, that hire schemes play a role in improving the uptake of cycling.
Equestrian Users	<p>Worcestershire County Council and Sustrans appreciate the specific needs for equestrian users, having worked closely with the British Horse Society. The draft Redditch LCWIP includes reference to the requirements for all users including equestrians. Where appropriate schemes will be delivered to meet the standards set through the relevant cycling design guidance. It is, acknowledged, however that specific requirements for equestrians will form part of the detailed design process when schemes come forward e.g. Arrow Valley Park, which will be subject to funding. All new funded active travel schemes that will be subject to consultation with local residents and stakeholders.</p> <p>Active Travel England (ATE) are currently developing design guidance more aligned with less urban and rural areas. Subject to this guidance and available funding future LCWIPs for Redditch could consider wider active travel connections which may have specific requirements for equestrians.</p>
Electric Bikes (E-bikes)	Concern was expressed regarding promoting the use of e-bikes as part of the Redditch LCWIP. The safety of all users is a prime objective and especially in shared use situations where there may be vulnerable users. It is recognised that e-bikes make active travel a more attractive options for many residents and particularly for disabled riders, those with long term health conditions, and many riders entering older age. It is acknowledged, however, that there is public concern regarding illegally modified electric bikes and it is an area that the West Merica Police have been taking action on, including seizing illegal bikes. Feedback also included requests to consider e-bike charging facilities which are beyond the scope of this initial Redditch LCWIP. It is acknowledged, however, that charging infrastructure plays a role in improving the uptake of cycling.

Next Steps

Along with the Sustrans Redditch LCWIP report, the invaluable feedback received will help steer our future active travel plans for Redditch and inform future bids for active travel funding. The Sustrans Redditch LCWIP report will be reviewed as the LCWIP process develops, subject to funding.