

MINUTES OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING 4 FEBRUARY 2026

HELD AT THE COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, WORCESTER

Attendees

Lyndon Bracewell (LB)	Cycling & walking Interest
John Cuthbertson (JC)	Social inclusion interest
Stephen Glazzard (SG)	Motorised use of minor highways and byways interest (2W)
Julian Grubb (JG)	Waterways Interest
John Jeffrey (JJ)	Parish Interest
Tony Kerbey (TK)	Secretary
Rowena Lloyd (RL)	Representing Worcestershire County Council PRow
Bobbie Matulja (BM)	Chair
Linda Robinson (LR)	Councillor Interest (Southern District Councils)
San Starkey (SS)	Youth Interest
Glynn Thomas (GT)	Walking Interest

Preliminaries – The secretary covered fire alarms, trip hazards, building facilities and recording.

ITEMS

1. Apologies

Karl Perks (KP)	Councillor and Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways
Peter Hughes (PH)	Business Interest
Georgina Britten-Long (GBL)	Landowner Interest
Robin Drew (RD)	Councillor Interest (Northern District Councils)

2. Declaration of Interests The Chair asked members to declare any personal or business interest in the agenda items. **None declared.**

3. Confirmation of Minutes. The Chair asked members to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting 9 July 2025 – **carried.**

4. Actions. No outstanding actions.

5. Matters Arising:

SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SWDP) Review Consultation. The Chair (BM) invited members to provide feedback on the consultation. BM then summarised her findings:

- MM2 – Safeguarding Greenspace (support)

- MM5 Green Belt protection (support)
- High Quality Urban Design (support, but ask for more explicit language to protect existing PRoW)
- MM6 – Ask for more clarity re language in sub para 5.4, i.e. a better definition of *‘Connected spaces and places that promote active travel’*.
- MM7 – Managing Travel Demand (Support but ask for the RoWIP to be included alongside considerations of the LTP and a more general recognition of PRoW as highways).
- Protection of National Landscapes (support).
- Inclusion of Active Travel England as a mandatory consultee on large-scale projects (support but specifically expand the Walking/Cycling references to include wheeling and equestrian use).
- Minimum % of Greenspace Inclusion in developments (support but must include access provision (include RoWIP)).
- MM9 – Support the Protection of Significant Gaps to Retain the Separate Identity of Settlements (support).
- MM11 D – Contributions to Green and Open Spaces (support but add the provision of new, multi-use RoW).
- Areas of Informal Recreation (AIRs) – No mention of wheeling or equestrian use.
- MM49 – Poor definition of open space (not clear if it includes statutory commons and access land)
- MM57/MM59 – Concern about new settlements movement strategies based on walking/cycling only, particularly active travel bridges.
- MM52 – Active Travel Routes on Waterways (support but open towpaths to horses and cyclists).
- A general point about the potential loss of RoW to equestrian users due to poor design in new urban areas. The balance of specific cycling routes against multi-use routes.

Post-meeting note - LAF consultation response submitted 12 February 2026 – receipt acknowledged

Supplementary Planning Guidance Wychavon Town. Link distributed 13 Jan 26 ([Help shape the future of Wychavon Town](#)). RL explained that this would be a general handrail for planners when assessing the associated applications for Wychavon Town. BM thought there was very little mention of equestrian users and had concerns about the consolidation of rail crossings. LB is a member of the Wychavon Town stakeholder group and said that enhancement of PRoW was raised at a recent meeting alongside the need to phase green infrastructure, and active travel route provision, early in the construction project. There was some discussion around PRoW maintenance priorities, how they may affect longer circular/linear routes and how multi-use paths should be a higher priority. LR voiced concerns re the lack of detail surrounding the general effect of the development on PRoW. RL explained that many of the details will be dealt with at the planning application level. Post-meeting note - LAF consultation response submitted 17 February 2026 – receipt acknowledged

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Update Consultation. BM looked at the NPPF revision and summarized her thoughts re TR8 – PRoW and the inclusion of path diversions where they enhance or improve the network. RL noted that the word ‘protect’ had been removed from the proposed text for paragraph 105. **Action - RL agreed to find the Commons paragraph and pass it to the LAF Chair.**

ROWIP Sub-Group Chair's feedback. ROWIP subgroup notes to be recirculated. LB asked if new sources of income were discussed to promote new or enhanced routes or address service-related issues such as the DMMO backlog.

6. Speakers – Worcestershire County Council Greenspaces Team – Rachel Datlen

Rachel gave a detailed and wide-ranging presentation covering the team's work and responsibilities. She took questions on:

- **The Greenspace Team's relationship with Arrow Valley Country Park (GT).** Rachel explained that Redditch Borough used to have its own Ranger Team and her staff still worked with local groups but expected a more coherent approach after local government reorganisation.
- **Wheelchair gate-access to the paddocks at Worcester Woods Country Park (JC).** Rachel will investigate more accessible options.
- **Countryside Centre Pond and fencing (JC).**
- **Possibility of multi-user routes at the new greenspace sites Ashmores and Doublegates Farms (BM).** Rachel said there will be a new Sustrans route at the latter site. Rachel will investigate status of the project and planned access.

Contact details: Rachel Datlen Greenspace Team Manager please pass any questions/requests direct to: rdatlen@worcestershire.gov.uk or via the LAF secretary. Website: [Countryside and leisure | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Short break

7. Public Rights of Way Team Report

Report presented by RL. Questions were taken covering:

- **Scheduling of the ROWIP-specific, supported sub-group meeting before the draft RoWIP report goes to committee (BM).** Date still to be determined but probably after summer 2026.
- **Worcestershire County Council's position relating to the MHT Parliamentary Bill (BM).** RL explained WCC have withdrawn their petition following negotiations with MHT leading to an undertaking and changes which are being put before the Scrutiny committee.

8. Feedback from the Active Travel Stakeholder Working Group. LB explained that the County's status has improved, leading to a grant of £3.75M over the next 3/4 years. Next meeting 17 February 2026. **Post-meeting note – minutes of the ATSWG 17 Feb 2026 are at Appendix 1 to these minutes.**

9. Items for Noting

- Natural England – Release of ‘Unlocking Nature’ Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-KVut1hCJA&t=6s> (3 mins). No comments
- RL updated the meeting on the provision of IPRow Waymark magazine.

10. Topics for Future Meetings

- Wychavon New Town Update
- De-Regulation Act and impact on PRow policy.
- NT 8 Hills Regional Park Project update (e.g. paid for or permissive access).
- Quarry Restoration Projects including access.

11. Any Other Business

LB provided an update on Ramblers Association re-organisation and the loss of the county-level coordination role.

12. Date of Next Meeting

In accordance with the rolling programme, the next meetings are proposed for:

- LAF Main Meeting – July 2026 date TBC.
- Extraordinary RoWIP Sub-group date TBC (dependent on RoWIP development schedule).

APPENDICES

1. ACTIVE TRAVEL STAKEHOLDER GROUP 17 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

**ACTIVE TRAVEL STAKEHOLDER GROUP
17 FEBRUARY 2026**

The main focus of the meeting was urban and cycle related active travel initiatives.

Bike Share & Bike Hire

An update was provided on Worcester's Beryl Bikes bike share scheme which isn't getting enough use to make it self-sustaining. The main issue is a lack of decent/safe cycle infrastructure.

'Brompton Docks' with electric folding bikes for daily hire are being installed by Wychavon at Pershore station and possibly at Evesham station. Worcester has aspirations for one at Foregate Street where new and safer cycle parking is being installed in one of the Railway Arches.

Bike Worcester will be offering a bike loan scheme including tandems and cargo bikes.

Rail Trail Wellbeing Walks

The University (with Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership funding) is training up volunteers to offer walks using the Rail Trail for other students.

Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs)

Plans for **Evesham** and **Redditch** have been finalised and uploaded to the County website. **Wyre Forest** will be uploaded by Easter.

Public consultation for South Worcestershire (**Droitwich, Worcester & Malvern**) has now been completed and amendments are being made before being signed off by the County Council. 541 responses were received (299 for Worcester). 70% were cycle related. 30% walking related. 8% under 34, 73% 35-64, 17% over 65. 8% had a long-term health condition that affected their ability to walk/cycle. There was a higher female response.

The main changes resulting from consultation appear to be adding links to priority routes to improve access and usage.

Bromsgrove is currently being drafted with consultation later in 2026.

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/travel-and-highways/walking-wheeling-and-cycling/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-lcwips>

Active Travel England Funding

Worcestershire remains at Grade 1 so gets less ATE funding. More of this is revenue support for training, support and guidance. It has been awarded ATE (DfT) funding totalling £3,735,036 for the next 4 years to 2029-30. (£755,855 capital per year for 4 years and £237,165 revenue per year for 3 years). All funding will be used to deliver elements within the LCWIPs.

The focus will be on priority schemes that deliver the best Value for Money. Exceptions are where other funding such as s.106 is available e.g. Powick (start expected Spring 2027) and the Active Travel Corridor to Kidderminster Hospital. Both using previously allocated ATE contributions.

ATE will be publishing its Rural Guidance later this year. *I assume this means specific funding for rural areas may then be made available?*

Discussions

There was a wide-ranging discussion on issues raised by stakeholders.

- Removing the cycle ban on Worcester high street (not politically deliverable, alternatives on parallel routes to be considered).
- School Streets with traffic bans at the start and end of school days. No progress.
- River Bridges. Hampton Bridge in Evesham starts this month. Discussions about two others at Bewdley and Stourport (but no funding available). Lack of safe onward routes from Keepax Bridge, Worcester.
- Adult 'Bikeability' courses on Saturdays to start again soon.
- Hedge cutting and siding out of footways and cycle routes. BHS rep recommended bound rock crumb had several advantages over tarmac.

Next Meeting

26 May 2026. Date, time and venue TBC.

Lyndon Bracewell

17 February 2026