

East Herts Council Report

District Planning Executive Panel

Date of meeting: Tuesday 19 May 2026

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary

- Members have agreed to undertake a review of the District Plan, including an update of the evidence documents needed to support the new Local Plan. The East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a new strand of evidence required in this respect. This report summarises the process undertaken and key issues and seeks agreement to use the document as part of the new Local Plan evidence base, to inform Development Management decisions and to seek funding opportunities, where appropriate. It also seeks to delegate responsibility for any future updates to the LCWIP to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL that the Executive be advised that:

- A) The East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), attached as Appendices E and F (1 to 7) be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts Local Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications; and**
- B) Any minor amendments to the content of the East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree that the East Herts Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) can be used as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, and to seek funding opportunities, where appropriate. It also seeks approval for any future updates to the LCWIP to be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.
- 1.2 The LCWIP will be used to inform future planning policy and planning application decisions involving the provision and enhancement of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and measures as part of development and other proposals in East Herts, including S106 funding. It may also open up funding application opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable.
- 1.3 The LCWIP is a joint partnership initiative between Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and East Herts Council (EHC) and is underpinned by community involvement through interaction with key stakeholder and strands of public engagement and public consultation. The LCWIP has been project managed by HCC, supported by consultants, WSP. EHC officers have been heavily involved throughout the process and contributed significantly to the LCWIP's development.
- 1.4 The project has been majority funded by HCC, with contributions from this Council and benefiting from a share of this Council's allocation of the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The role of the LCWIP is to provide a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, which the Government suggests should ideally be over a 10-year period.
- 2.2 LCWIPs provide a strategic approach to transport planning across a local authority area and serve to identify key walking/cycling networks and the infrastructure changes needed to improve or deliver them with the aim of engendering modal shift towards

walking, wheeling and cycling.

- 2.3 The development of LCWIPs is strongly supported by the Government to encourage sustainable travel and lead to healthier lifestyles and outcomes. They are not a new innovation, having originally been introduced by the Department for Transport in 2017, so are a tried and tested way to improve active travel outcomes.
- 2.4 LCWIPs are developed using an evidence-based approach and a standardised methodology to deliver a strategic network plan setting out desired walking and cycling networks, as well as a prioritised list of improvements (at a conceptual level) for future investment.
- 2.5 HCC has been working with local authorities across the county to bring forward a network of LCWIPs to achieve these aims.
- 2.6 As a separate, but related, strand local planning authorities are required to complete a review of their local plans at least once every 5 years from the adoption date to ensure that plans remain relevant. In October 2023, the Council agreed that East Herts District Plan 2018 needed updating and that work should commence in 2023/24 on updating the technical studies and other preparatory work required to provide a robust evidence base to support this Review.

New Local Plan Evidence Base

- 2.7 A clear, relevant and proportionate evidence base is essential for efficient and sound plan-making to ensure that all future planning policy and decisions are based on up-to-date information. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) sets out the requirement for the preparation and review of all policies to be 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence' (paragraph 32).
- 2.8 The evidence base consists of supporting documents that will help inform the future policies and site allocations in the new Local Plan. It will cover a range of social, economic, and environmental topics and help identify local needs, constraints and opportunities. Some of the evidence will update previous studies prepared to support the current adopted District Plan. Many of these are now around 10 years old and need updating to reflect contextual and policy changes. Equally, additional evidence will be needed to address

new issues and topics that have become more prevalent in recent years. The LCWIP forms one of these latter strands.

2.9 The evidence base will be developed throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan. As revised and updated studies are finalised, the planning policy team will seek agreement from the District Planning Executive Panel and Executive to include them as part of the evidence base. The LCWIP is a fundamental document which is intended to be included as part of the evidence base to underpin the new Local Plan.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 The LCWIP is a joint partnership initiative between EHC and HCC, with the latter project managing the LCWIP alongside consultants, WSP.

3.2 The project has been majority funded by HCC, with contributions from this Council and the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund.

3.3 The main outputs to be achieved through an LCWIP are:

- A report that sets out the underlying analysis, including the barriers and enablers for walking and cycling, and provides a narrative to support the improvements identified;
- A mapped network plan for walking and cycling that identifies preferred routes, current and future travel patterns, and core zones for further development; and,
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment in the short, medium, and long term that contributes towards meeting broader local goals.

3.4 For East Herts, while the LCWIP covers the whole district, it was recognised that resources would not allow the development of a walking and cycling network that would cover every location. Therefore, at this stage, the LCWIP has mainly been restricted to cover the main five towns and the eight settlements listed as Group 1 Villages in the Policy VILL1 of the District Plan and key linkages between them. These areas have been divided into Phases A-D which include:

Phase A: Hertford and Ware Cycling and Walking Network

Phase B: Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Cycling and Walking Network

Phase C: Buntingford Cycling and Walking Network

Phase D: Group 1 Villages Cycling and Walking Network:

- Braughing
- Hertford Heath
- Hunsdon
- Much Hadham
- Standon and Puckeridge
- Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets
- Watton-at-Stone
- Walkern.

3.5 It should be noted that 'wheeling' has also been taken into account in the development of the LCWIP so that people who use wheelchairs and mobility scooters, etc, and who may not identify with walking will have their needs provided for through the walking network. Therefore, where the LCWIP refers to 'walking', it should be taken as read that the needs of those who would more correctly identify under the term 'wheeling' have also been taken into consideration in the development of the network and related scheme proposals.

3.6 The development of the LCWIP has been underpinned by a technical guidance document¹ produced in 2017 by the Department for Transport (DfT) to assist local authorities in the development of LCWIPs and the development of the East Herts LCWIP closely aligns with this process.

3.7 Following the initial formative development of the draft walking and cycling networks, it was important to both councils that the views of members, key stakeholders and local people should be gained to ensure that the most robust and fit for purpose routes, based primarily on improving access to utility destinations, would be brought forward in the final LCWIP.

¹ [Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans technical guidance](#)

3.8 Therefore, a series of interactions with members of the three tier authorities (County, District and Town Parish Councils) and key stakeholders was instigated to improve knowledge and understanding, which was subsequently followed by engagement and consultation with the general public.

3.9 The key consultation processes followed through the relevant stages of the LCWIP project are as detailed below:

Stages	Primary outcomes	Events/engagement
1 – Project set up	Scoping report MOU Project Board	N/A
2 – Information gathering	Background Evidence report Stakeholder engagement plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, HCC and EHC documents reviewed. • Information gained from local bodies and groups on studies they had undertaken but may not have been previously shared.
3 and 4 – Network Planning	Draft cycle and walking networks Stakeholder engagement Cycling and walking network plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary / Secondary routes Auditing routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early engagement of members of all three tier councils and stakeholders through workshops – online platform. • Followed by 10 week public early engagement (originally scheduled for 6 weeks 8 July to 19 August 2024, then extended to 20 September due to level of interest) –1,300 responses cumulatively received via the platform and 150 e-mails. • One public event held in each town – Sawbridgeworth, Bishop’s Stortford, Ware, Hertford and Buntingford. • A number of local stakeholder meetings hosted by HCC/EHC. • Attended relevant council sustainable group in Bishop’s Stortford.

Stages	Primary outcomes	Events/engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Hertford and Ware cycle group. • Schools engagement.
5 – Prioritisation	Infrastructure plans Stakeholder engagement Prioritisation programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 week online platform (25 February to 13 March 2025) member and stakeholder engagement – 300+ comments received and reviewed.
6 – Integration and Application	Draft LCWIP document and updated network mapping Public consultation of document and network mapping Revisions to document and mapping following consideration of responses to public consultation Adoption by both councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member and stakeholder briefings. • Followed by 6 week public consultation (25 September to 5 November 2025) – online platform. • Total of 444 comments received (269 online, 149 via email and 26 matters raised at events). • One public event held in each town – Sawbridgeworth, Ware, Hertford and Buntingford, with two held in Bishop’s Stortford, due to gales on first date. • Schools participation sessions.

3.10 The preparation of the LCWIP has been a process that has taken longer than anticipated or initially envisaged. However, this has in no small part been due to the level of public interest and interaction in the project. The East Herts LCWIP is innovative in that it was the first in the county to introduce an additional layer of informal public engagement on proposed network routes ahead of the formal public consultation. While this engagement meant that the LCWIP did not progress as initially scheduled, this was an invaluable stage that allowed for far greater interaction between the councils and

relevant stakeholders and the public and yielded much greater insight into local circumstances that the project team would otherwise have been unaware of. This engagement stage has now been emulated by other LCWIPs under development across Hertfordshire.

- 3.11 The engagement process added through the project has therefore been most influential in shaping the network infrastructure proposed for the district prior to the full public consultation.
- 3.12 While the engagement stage helped shape the proposals, this report is primarily concerned with the full public consultation held between September and November 2025 and its outcomes, which have helped determine the final mapping plans and the LCWIP document.
- 3.13 Due to the level of detailed responses, the Consultation Report at **Appendix A** provides an overview of the key online response data and overall levels of support for the LCWIP and its proposals.
- 3.14 **Appendix B** details the process and outcomes of the Schools' strand of consultation engagement.
- 3.15 Following the close of consultation, HCC and EHC officers jointly reviewed each of the 444 individual comments and cross-referenced suggestions for amendments against the proposed infrastructure and text, as well as noting support for many schemes already proposed. In some areas, several comments made concerned similar themes or locations, although proposed solutions sometimes differed.
- 3.16 For transparency, every issue submitted through the three formats (online, email or event) has been separately documented alongside a joint HCC/EHC proposed officer response and action to be taken where agreed. The comments, which have been anonymised (except in some instances where formal bodies are represented) are grouped into tables covering Changes to Network Mapping, Changes to LCWIP Report, No Changes to Network Mapping, No Changes to LCWIP Report and No Changes General Comments, so that it is easy to identify where amendments have been made and where related to location, if stated. These five tables are available at **Appendix C (1 to 5)** respectively.

- 3.17 As detailed within the Changes to Network Mapping and Changes to LCWIP Report tables, a number of amendments have been made to the LCWIP report and route network mapping for both walking and cycling since the previous version was made available for public consultation. Officers have also made some other updating changes to the LCWIP report and route mapping. A track changes version of the LCWIP report is available at **Appendix D** so that changes can be easily identified.
- 3.18 A proposed final 'clean' version of the LCWIP report, with a prioritised cost list of infrastructure improvements, mapping and other appendices attached to the LCWIP are provided at Appendices E and F (1 to 7), respectively. An Executive Summary is available at **Appendix G**.
- 3.19 It should be noted that, whilst most of the matters raised in the consultation responses concerned the contents of the LCWIP, either connected with routes on the mapping or the draft written report, there were a number of cases where the issues lay outside of the scope of the project, but would be the responsibility of their local authority departments, most notably relating to the maintenance of existing infrastructure. In such cases, comments were flagged for these matters to be forwarded by HCC to the relevant teams for their attention.

Next Steps

- 3.20 Following this Council's consideration of the report and if agreement is reached to adopt the LCWIP as per recommendations at Executive on 02 June, HCC's Environment, Transport and Growth Cabinet Panel will meet with a view to also adopt the LCWIP on 11 June 2026.
- 3.21 Once adopted by both authorities, the projects identified in the LCWIP will feed into HCC's programming and validation processes, as detailed in Figure 2 below, to be taken forward as funding becomes available and inform both plan making and decision making.

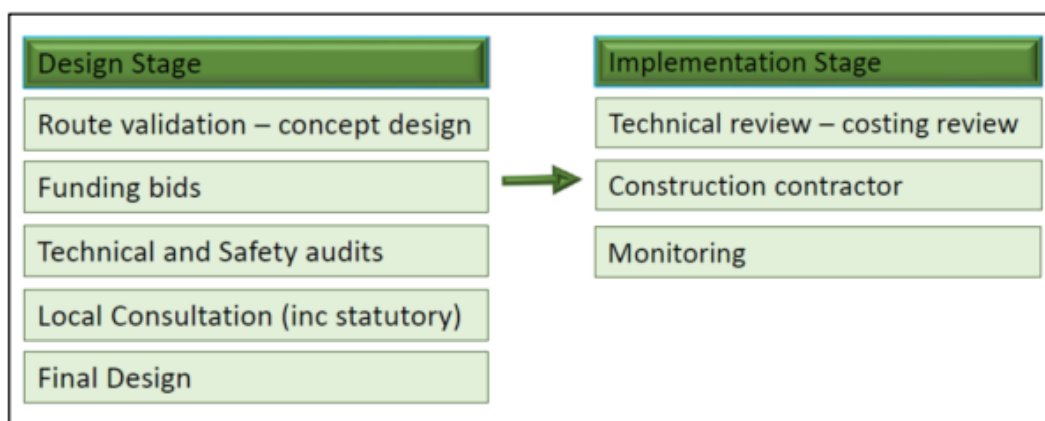


Figure 2: Post HCC Adoption LCWIP Process

- 3.22 It is important to recognise that the proposals within the LCWIP will each require further feasibility and design work before they can be implemented. The likely costings within the report for the delivery of the prioritised schemes are also indicative and will require further refinement as detailed designs evolve. If any deliverability issues are identified, there will be opportunity to reassess schemes prior to any local engagement and to seek views on them. Due to the way that the consultation responses were set out in the underpinning spreadsheets, it will be possible for engineers working on any given scheme to access the comments made by respondents to the 2025 public consultation to take them into account in scheme development. At the point where non-minor schemes are developed to the detailed stage, they would be the subject of further localised public engagement and consultation, as appropriate.
- 3.23 In terms of funding, while it should be noted that the adoption of LCWIPs is not compulsory, once in place they play an increasingly vital role in securing funding from external sources, particularly in respect of accessing resources through the Department for Transport (DfT) via Active Travel England (ATE). In funding applications, the existence of an adopted LCWIP supports a higher score in the ATE Local Authority Self-Assessment scoring process and improves the likelihood of successful outcomes.
- 3.24 The LCWIP will also be a key tool to be considered in the determination of planning applications where, provided they meet the necessary tests, contributions may be sought towards schemes within the document through S106 agreements.

- 3.25 In order to allow for any minor amendments to the LCWIP that may be needed beyond its current contents in due course, it is recommended that approval for future minor updates be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. This report therefore seeks approval for that arrangement.
- 3.26 Following the Executive's agreement to adopt the LCWIP, HCC also intends to take the LCWIP to its Environment, Transport and Growth Cabinet Panel on 11 June, with a recommendation to adopt at Cabinet on 17 June 2026.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The endorsement of the LCWIP will ensure that there is an up-to-date evidence base for the promotion of a robust strategy to enhance walking, wheeling and cycling in East Herts, which will play a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the district's residents and employees. Furthermore, it will form part of the evidence base to the emerging Local Plan and will also open up opportunities for accessing funding mechanisms that are not available without an LCWIP in place.
- 4.2 The Council could choose not to agree to the LCWIP, but this would be contrary to Government and Active Travel England's advice for LCWIPs to be developed and would mean that the Council would have no strategy for the identification of routes and interventions to improve conditions for walking, wheeling and cycling in the district. This would also be contrary to Government policy to have an up-to-date evidence base for local plan development and could undermine the Council's position in terms of successfully bringing the new Plan for East Herts forward.
- 4.3 It would also mean that some funding opportunities would not be open to help deliver schemes that have been identified in the LCWIP.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 If the LCWIP is not agreed it will lessen the opportunities for accessing external funding streams and lead to less certainty for developers bringing forward schemes that involve S106

agreements.

- 5.2 A lack of a strategic plan for cycling and walking infrastructure may make schemes ineligible for central Government funding.
- 5.3 With less potential opportunities to access funding streams there would be a greater dependency on developer funding to bring schemes forward. This could mean that areas with little or no development coming forward could be disadvantaged.
- 5.2 Furthermore, as part of the intended evidence base to the emerging Local Plan, if it is not agreed then the LCWIP would be considered as having reduced the weight in informing the Plan's strategy and the policies going forward. This would mean that significant information about walking, wheeling and cycling could be undervalued. This would be contrary to Government policy to have robust evidence in place and could undermine the Council's position in terms of successfully bringing forward the new Plan.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 An extensive public engagement and consultation strategy has underpinned the development and finalisation of the LCWIP, as set out in the main body of the report.
- 6.2 Any strategy and policies related to the emerging new Local Plan will also be subject to a number of statutory public consultations as part of that process.

Community Safety

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising from this report as responses to the consultation from individuals have been anonymised.

Equalities

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

A purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. By encouraging greater modal choice, LCWIPs will aid the some of the district's residents and to choose active travel for

their journeys over private motorised vehicles, which will have many environmental benefits, such as climate change mitigation and positive health outcomes. This will further aid the Council in reaching its net zero aspirations.

Financial

By agreeing the LCWIP strategy, the Council will be in a better position to achieve external grant funding, if required, and secure S106 developer contributions to assist in delivery of its schemes.

Health and Safety

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Human Rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 **Appendix A:** East Herts LCWIP – Consultation Report
- 7.2 **Appendix B:** East Herts LCWIP School Engagement Report
- 7.3 **Appendix C:** Grouped consultation comments on the LCWIP, addressing (1) Changes to Network Mapping, (2) Changes to LCWIP Report, (3) No Changes to Network Mapping, (4) No Changes to LCWIP Report and (5) No Changes General Comments
- 7.4 **Appendix D:** East Herts LCWIP, Post Consultation Track Changes version
- 7.5 **Appendix E:** East Herts LCWIP, proposed final ‘clean’ document.
- 7.6 **Appendix F:** East Herts LCWIP appendices including:
F1 – LCWIP App A Acronyms

F2 – LCWIP App B Hertford and Ware Cycling Study 1994
F3 – LCWIP App C Settlement Final Concept Designs
F4 – LCWIP App D Prioritised Costed List of Infrastructure Improvements
F5 – LCWIP App E Stakeholder List
F6a – LCWIP App F Final Network Plans - Walking Overview
F6b – LCWIP App F Final Network Plans - Cycling Overview
F7 – LCWIP App G LCWIP Policy Context

7.7 **Appendix G:** LCWIP Executive Summary.

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