

Bewdley Town Council

Response to Consultation on Local Transport Plan version 4. January 2017.

Town and parish councils must be involved in all levels of transport planning, not just those relating to street furniture and public realm improvements. This is particularly important for those councils engaging with the Neighbourhood Development Plan process. Parish and town councils should have an input into new schemes and plans at an early stage and not simply as a “consultee” as part of a box ticking exercise.

Inevitably, the Town Council will have a particular interest in the following schemes:

WFST2 – Digital telematics should be sensitive to Bewdley’s historical setting and character, bearing in mind that this is a major tourist draw to the town. Digital signage would not be welcome in the Conservation Area for example. That said, the Council do see an extended role for these signs on the boundaries to alert drivers of traffic congestion and to direct non-town centre traffic to use the by-pass.

WFST3 – The Bewdley to Wyre Forest link via Dowles which provides a multi-user trail is to be welcomed, and something that the Town Council has supported as an idea in principle in the past. We would go a step further and suggest that links to Stourport and Kidderminster could be improved for cyclists/multi trail users. Riverside access to Stourport could be improved potentially reducing car journeys into Stourport and journey times for cyclists. If a link to Kidderminster could be achieved (maybe from Sandbourne Drive and following the SVR line to Kidderminster train station) this would encourage cycling into Kidderminster and then further afield by train.

BE1 – The Bewdley Transport Strategy should focus on improving car parking and reducing the volumes of traffic using the bridge and ease congestion around the church and Welch Gate. The Town Council very much support this in principle in order to deal with the AQMA at Welch Gate and have been lobbying for a solution to this problem for some time.

The Town Council look forward to working with WCC and partners on these schemes.

Turning to the Plan’s policies, the Town Council would comment as follows:

PR1 – Pedestrian safety. Some areas of Load Street need urgent review under this policy, specifically vehicular access to the Tesco Express store’s car park which crosses a footway at a key pinch point. The narrow width of the footways along the bridge put the safety of vulnerable people at risk, particularly as it is a key walking route between Bark Hill/Hales Park/Town Centre and the high school. Another key area of concern is pedestrian safety on the main river bridge. The footways are too narrow compared to the number of vehicle movements over the bridge.

PR3 – Classification. The Town Council would expect the town centre to be classified as a Grade 1 Premium Public Realm area considering its historic importance, Grade I listed

bridge and Conservation Area. The Council would not accept funding being diverted away from Bewdley simply due to another area being classed as “higher profile”.

PR12 – Street lighting. Since the main route through the Town Centre is now “B” classified, there is an argument that the large sodium/LED lamps should be replaced with in-keeping Victorian style columns, in line with this policy to provide “a higher quality column to enhance the sense of a quality space...”.

PR13 – Part of the above public realm improvement project should also involve planting street trees along Load Street. This would add to the quality of the space, enhance links to the historic natural environment and contribute to improving air quality.

AQ1, AQ2, AQ3 – AQMA's. This policy is key to addressing air quality and traffic congestion issues in Bewdley. A large, brave, strategic solution must come forward as soon as possible and the Town Council will continue to work with the County and District Councils on developing a realistic, deliverable plan.

M3 – Motorcycle parking. The Town Council recognise that an area of Severnside South in Bewdley is used as an informal parking area for motorcycles during peak times. However, the Council would not support using this area as official motorcycle parking due to its value as a civic space and market place. Motorcycle parking should be off street in town centre car parks.

Nick Farress
Town Clerk
10th January 2017