

This note constitutes formal advice from the Luton Local Access Forum. Luton Borough Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its functions.

## **LAF Involvement in Developing the Local Transport Plan**

Presented to Luton Borough Council at the LAF meeting on 12 March 2025.

LAF Members: Dr Mamnun Khan (Chair), John Mardle (Deputy Chair), Louis Upton, Cherry Newbery, David Oakley-Hill, Graham Simpson, Michelle Titmus, Neville Williams, Roy McCrudden, Russell Cartwright, Raheed Salam.

### **1. Introduction**

Luton Borough Council (LBC) has initiated the process of developing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP5). At the Luton Local Access Forum (LAF) on 11 December 2024, Deni Krevesic presented the programme for developing LTP5 for delivery in March 2026.

The Local Transport Plan will have a significant impact on access so LBC is obliged to consult the LAF at an early stage. We believe that Luton Local Access Forum should be included as “Tier 2 Priority to Involve” stakeholder.

To achieve Luton’s Vision 2040, LTP5 needs to drive a significant shift from car use to active travel (in LTP4 it was estimated that we would need to double walking and increase cycling 10-fold). We believe that our involvement can help in drawing up plans for change that are realistic and likely to succeed.

The LTP5 programme should have developed a vision, objectives and targets by now and started to work on “interventions”. The next Luton Local Access Forum is on 12 March 2025. It would be good to have an update then.

The LAF is still at an early stage in thinking about the LTP. We have noted some initial thoughts on the next page:

- Section 1: We have picked out our priorities for the LTP.
- Section 2: Key enablers to support the shift to active travel
- Section 3: Why the LAF must be consulted – the legal background

## **2. LAF Priorities for LTP5**

- 2.1 The scale of changes required will cost money. It is unlikely developers will provide all the funds needed. LBC will need to prioritise infrastructure that supports active travel.
- 2.2 Strong leadership for change is vital; Nottingham is a good example of that, they used a parking levy to fund active travel.
- 2.3 Walkers and cyclists need to feel that they are the priority at junctions, road crossings and on pavements/cycleways.
- 2.4 Recreational walking and cycling needs to be promoted as well as “utility” travel. People who walk or cycle for pleasure are more likely to choose it for other journeys.

## **3. Key Enablers**

- 3.1 People need to feel safe when walking and cycling.
  - Quality of pavements: surface and lighting
  - Traffic speed is an issue
  - Parking on pavements
  - Personal safety – particularly at night
  - Electric motorbikes using the pavement
- 3.2 Adults do not easily change their habits so influencing school children to develop active travel habits is vital. Cycle training in schools and group walks should be encouraged.
- 3.3 Parts of the town are challenging for active travel, due to the steep hills, but e-bikes are one solution. The plan should embrace this as well as being open to other “Personal Mobility Devices” like scooters and low powered/speed electric motorbikes (we are still waiting for legislation on the last two).
- 3.4 Maintain the current Rights of Way network and map the “Excluded Area” to make it easier for people to see where they can walk. Luton has a rich network of cut throughs many of which are only known to locals. Using these can save time and/or facilitate a more pleasant walk.
- 3.5 LTP4 was published in April 2021. What has changed as a result of the policies in that plan? It’s only been a few years, but there should be some evidence that we can learn from.
- 3.6 LBC needs to develop a network of paths and spaces that is resilient to climate change, particularly the impact of increasing spells of heavy rain. These can lead to flash flooding as well as longer term damage to infrastructure, peoples well-being and livelihoods. LLAf would therefore like to see:
  - Developers construct sustainable access points for times of flash flooding.
  - LBC address areas that are known to flood.
  - Improve access to play areas and areas around play equipment (e.g. under swings and near jumping off points), to address the challenge posed by

wetter weather increasing wear and tear on unsurfaced paths, including access.

#### **4. Requirement to Consult**

- 4.1.1 Local Access Forums serve an essential advisory function. Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act mandates their role in advising on improving public access to land for recreation, enjoyment, and any other lawful purpose.
- 4.1.2 According to DEFRA's "Guidance On Local Access Forums in England," (section 6.1.3) LBC must not only regard the LAF's advice but should actively consult the forum on relevant matters, including those without a statutory consultation requirement. Given that the Local Transport Plan will significantly impact access, LBC is obliged to consult the LAF at an early stage. "...Appointing authorities must have regard to any relevant advice from the forum, and should aim to consult the forum on relevant matters (not just matters where there is a statutory duty to consult), preferably at an early stage in the decision-making process".
- 4.1.3 Slide 3 of the LTP presentation – "LTP5 Stakeholder Engagement" – shows organisations that will be consulted during the development of the new plan. We believe that Luton Local Access Forum should be included as "Tier 2 Priority to Involve".