

CYCLE RANKING PROCESS

Overview

The Council receives many requests for improvements to cycling infrastructure. As the number and scope of these requests greatly exceeds the funds available, it is necessary to apply a ranking process to prioritise the schemes. Detailed assessment of all schemes ensures that all relevant factors are considered and that investment is effectively prioritised and provides value for money. The process needs to be as transparent and objective as possible and to ensure that all requests are considered on an equal basis to reduce criticism on the selection of schemes and minimise contention about those schemes that do not succeed.

A Cycle Scheme Assessment & Ranking scheme has been developed that evaluates LTP targets and objectives, the council's strategic network and stakeholder proposals. The assessment also ensures best practice and partnership working are taken into consideration. The whole process is documented and the ranking reviewed annually.

In developing the process, help was requested from the 'cycle-planning' email forum, sponsored by the English Regions Cycling Development Team. Various methods currently used around the country were reviewed to see how they might meet needs in Herefordshire.

Examples were received from York, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Worcester, Hampshire and from consultants.

The resultant process involves six stages. Firstly, the proposed scheme is reviewed to assess its fit with LTP targets and wider strategic objectives. Available data is collated and reviewed, or relevant studies commissioned, prior to producing an outline design and cost summary. A detailed review then follows, scoring the scheme for how it addresses a range of more social factors including reallocation of road space, personal safety and local community involvement as well as calculating the cost of the scheme per user and the first year rate of return. The final ranking brings all the elements together and, by design, seeks to produce a balance between those schemes that concern accident sites and those with broader network objectives. To ensure a balance across the county and to maximise funding opportunities, once the final ranking is agreed, two scheme lists are progressed, one for the City of Hereford and one for the rest of the county.

Below: The Ledbury Town Trail is well used by cyclists and pedestrians alike



Above: Cycling on a quiet route south of Hereford

Highlights

- **Inclusive:** scheme requests are welcomed from a range of inputs; public requests, maintenance schedules, forum consultation and opportunities arising from new developments.
- **Transparent:** the process is clear and open and has been welcomed by interested groups. A certain degree of professional judgement is required but the judging criteria and the ranking hierarchies are both wholly transparent. This has improved confidence in the ranking of schemes relative to each other.
- **Adaptive:** by re-ranking annually, the process is able to adapt to changes in conditions and environment, as well as reflecting the impact of developments in cycling infrastructure as they are implemented.
- **Strategic development:** through this process, schemes that best fulfil the ambitions and objectives of the Local Transport Plan are given priority, aiding in the development of a strategic cycle network throughout the county.



The Way Forward

Periodically, completed schemes are removed and new schemes added to the list before re-ranking. Schemes still underway at the re-ranking stage are continued, while the list identifies the next schemes to be progressed.

This process has enabled us to address a backlog of schemes and get them moving up the ranking. We are now seeing some important schemes appearing on the ground.

Key Features

The Strategic Assessment Scoring considers how each scheme addresses a wide range of issues. A maximum of 280 points is available, spread across 11 scoring criteria, with the number of points available reflecting their strategic importance.

- **Reallocation of road space (20):** favours schemes that reallocate road space in favour of cyclists
- **Personal safety modal shift (20):** considers light levels and openness of proposed schemes
- **Modal shift (30):** prioritises schemes that attract both utility and recreational use
- **Real or perceived danger (30):** considers issues of speed, road width and the potential for segregation from traffic
- **Integration with other routes (40):** prioritises network development and supports schemes that link trip generators
- **Social inclusion (30):** support schemes that make cycling viable, where previously there was no practical or safe route
- **Local community involvement (20):** recognises the support of local groups, individuals, schools etc.
- **Promotion and publicity (20):** considers the potential for generating awareness of the scheme and encouraging usage
- **Partnership working (20):** recognises the support of strategic organisations
- **Deliverability (20):** considers issues of land ownership and potential usage constraints
- **Cost per km (30):** scores schemes from under £2k per km to over £50k per km

The final score is then expressed as a percentage of the maximum for ranking purposes.

Final Ranking

Three hierarchies are used to create ranked results:

- 1) Accident data/cost per user/(Strategic Assessment) score
- 2) Accident data/score/cost per user
- 3) Score/accident data/cost per user

The final ranking is derived through averaging **3)** with the average of **1)** and **2)**. This promotes the balance of schemes between accident prevention and network development.

Below: Sir Edward Elgar, a keen cyclist, composing his thoughts on the grounds of Hereford Cathedral



Above: Two cyclists enjoying the Wye Riverside route in Hereford

