



Minutes

Meeting held on 02 December 2025 at 18.30 at Borough Hall.

Members present:

Ann Kennedy (AK) – Chair of the meeting
Bob Wallace (BW)
James Russell (JR)
David Mitchell (DM)
Nigel Jacobs (NJ)
Mark Poxton (MP)
Cllr Martin Towler (MT)
Cllr Nicola Gribble (NG)

Speaker:

Clare Gregory (National Farmers Union)

In attendance/Observers:

April Quinn – Bedford Borough Council
Andrew Prigmore – Bedford Borough Council
Peter Simons – Bedford Borough Council

Apologies received:

Barry Ingram

Clerk:

Georgina McDade

1. Welcome by Chairman/Apologies for Absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Brief introductions were given by all attendees. Apologies received as above.

Minutes from September were agreed and signed.

There were no matters arising.

2. Item 4 – NFU Clare Gregory

AK – Advised at the last regional meeting it was suggested LAFs have an NFU representative to discuss issues specifically relating to open spaces and access.

Clare Gregory- Raised the difficulties farmers have had this year especially regarding the dry summer and the affect this has had on crops. Acknowledged the difficulties surrounding the inheritance tax issues.

Advised that since Brexit central government has taken over payment of subsidies, but these have been reduced due to budget issues.

Budget issues include the cancellation of the stewardship scheme with no replacement scheme. No capital grants for things such as bridleway gates. The loss of the stewardship scheme has also caused a loss in permissive paths as no funding available.

There is a higher level scheme available, but that is invitational only and predominantly for SSSI areas.

The mid level tier does not include support for bridleways or footpaths.

Only a 12 month extension was provided.

AK suggested it would be helpful to have periodic updates from NFU on changes to the funding environment for landowners.

3. Items 5 – 8 - Ouse Valley/East Park Energy/EWR/Universal

AK Suggested that these items be split between delegated members due to the size of the topics and the limited time available to discuss during meetings.

MT Agreed. Discussed water issues supplying large developments. Suggested having a blanket response as a strategic overview for enhancing areas.

AK Agreed and that responses should be tailored accordingly.

JR Highlighted that the primary responsibility of the LAF is to advise the council and the LAF should synchronise their response with the Authority's to enhance the input.

AQ advised that the RoW team have a strategic overview response that is sent seeking improvements to the network taking into consideration the RoWIP.

It was agreed that the RoW team will send a copy of the response that the LAF can use as a template.

It was agreed that the RoW team will forward Pre Applications of a certain size to the LAF for consideration.

4. Item 2 - Local Transport Plan

Peter Simons introduced as the new Manager of Traffic Operations taking over from AP.

AK thanked Andrew Prigmore for his help and input into the LAF for so many years.

PS updated members on the Local Transport Plan which is due to last until 2050. Advised how local authority will commit funding and that the implementation plan lasts 5-10 years, which is currently in consultation.

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) should contain policies for all transport. Guidance now focusing more on climate change but currently await central government to provide guidance as to what LTPs should include.

Advised the Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Plan (LCWIP) is a strategic plan that supports the LTP and is user generated based on evidence rather than what is desired.

Priority of new paths will be based on how likely paths will be used.

Confirmed Parish Councils are going to be re consulted due to lack of response after the last consultation.

AP raised that the LCWIP has to focus on cycling within the town rather than recreation use in the countryside and requires balance.

NJ suggested that aspirational strategy should be included in the next RoWIP as a section.

5. Item 5 – Ouse Valley Way

No update. No discussion.

6. Item 6 – East Park Energy

LAF responded to non-statutory consultation in 2024. AK confirmed that the DCOS hasn't changed in respect of PROWs since last consultation.

AQ confirmed that the planning department will respond on behalf of the authority as a whole and will send to Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

It was agreed that the LAF wouldn't object in general, but if proposal is approved would request specific improvements, especially regarding the channelled sections, which will significantly impact the overall RoW experience for users.

It was agreed that Cllr Gribble and AK would move forward collaboratively regarding the EPE. Submitted and circulated on 13 Jan.

7. Item 7 - EWR

More information will become available in the new year. An active travel forum has been set up.

LAF currently trying to get representative to attend next meeting. EWR representatives have agreed to attend but have hedged that acceptance depending on what can be made public at the time.

8. Item 8 - Universal

No update. DCO still to be announced. Special development order made later in December and in force from 12 January

9. Item 9 – Planning Applications

Covered earlier in meeting

10. Item 10 – Countryside and Public Access Team case updates

AQ provided update on PPO and DMMO cases.

11. Item 11 - Volunteering

BW confirmed volunteers are keen to assist with inspections.

AP confirmed in the new year will look to request volunteers assist with surveying

12. Item 12 – Forum Membership

AK It was confirmed that the most recent member has resigned due to time commitments. Advertisements have been placed in universities and various walking groups.

Cllr Towler Will approach volunteering group in Council. Will also have media comms advertise LAF

JR will contact BRCC re membership

13. Item 13 – NCN51/Boundary Walk/Regional Meeting

AP confirmed that the NCN51 team will start design works shortly and physical work will start end of March.

With regards to the boundary walk, volunteers are needed to walk the route to confirm how many discs will be needed. Confirmed discs have been designed.

BW confirmed RIPPLE would assist.

AP requested ideas for routes that require improvements due to active travel fund grant that is available.

AQ to attend regional LAF meeting on 21/01/26

Secretary to re circulate boundary walk map with minutes.

14. Item 14 - AOB

JR Discussion surrounding forests. Confirmed that 3 new national forests have been signed off by central government

Agenda items for next meeting; Recurring agenda items, East West Rail, Ouse Valley Way.

Next meeting date confirmed for 10 March 2026.

Meeting concluded at 21.05.

Signed:



Date: 10 March 2026