



New Forest National Park Transport Summit
November 2025

Engagement Report

Supported by Active Travel England

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Cover image: The New Forest Tour Bus near Beaulieu Road Station. Photo: NFNPA.

Introduction



Attendee trying out an e-trike in a demonstration area outside the summit. Photo: NFNPA

New Forest National Park Transport Summit Report of proceedings

Hosted by the New Forest National Park Authority in partnership with Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and Go New Forest, the event was supported by **Active Travel England's National Park Capability Fund**.

Introduction

The New Forest is a beautiful, unique place, with a strong sense of community, a thriving visitor economy, with traditional commoning, rural industries and protected natural habitats existing side by side.

Covering around 220 square miles, the New Forest National Park comprises a diverse landscape of ancient woodland, heathland and coastline, with free-roaming livestock a key aspect of its unique biodiversity. Almost 176,000 people live in the New Forest District Council catchment, a number that is set to increase with housing growth.

The National Park and surrounding towns and villages are accessed by a network of A and B roads, and served by a public bus network and eight National Rail stations, with services operated by South Western Railway, and a limited service by CrossCountry Trains. The majority of car trips made in the National Park (around 70%) are for leisure purposes, with work trips typically made over a longer distance.

The efforts of many individuals and organisations make the New Forest what it is – a jewel in England's crown and an internationally recognised landscape.

However, the National Park is under pressure. Housing growth and increasing visitor numbers are resulting in increased private motorised traffic, with a series of knock-on consequences on daily life, commoning, biodiversity, productivity, air quality and the environment.



Presentation about Forestry England's Recreation Management Strategy. Photo: NFNPA

Increased congestion is already making it harder for local people and visitors to get around. Traffic bottlenecks in key locations, including Lyndhurst, Lymington and the A31, cause severe delays and productivity impacts on local residents. visitor experience, businesses. The New Forest is also used as a cut-through for commuters, with serious collisions impacting people and livestock alike.

Since 2019, government policies to encourage active travel have seen the establishment of Active Travel England (ATE). The body has responsibility for funding and inspecting infrastructure designs delivered by local authorities who are also responsible for preparing plans for walking, wheeling and cycling in their areas.

Active Travel England funds are sought for scheme design and development on key prioritised routes across the National Park, linking villages and recreational routes to provide a combined utility and recreational network that should increase the Park's attractiveness as a destination for cycle-tourism and walking.

Key statistics

Just 7% of visitors travel to the New Forest by sustainable modes

The New Forest National Park has an estimated 16 million day visitors per year - the highest of any National Park in the UK per km²

Around 60% of greenhouse gas emissions produced within the New Forest National park come from road transport.

1. The Summit



Audience and panel. Photo: NFNPA

1. The Summit

The New Forest National Park Transport Summit was held on 20 November 2025 at Brockenhurst Village Hall, and brought together local communities and organisations with the aim of kickstarting the creation of a vision of integrated sustainable transport in the National Park.

It was hosted by the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA), together with Hampshire County Council (HCC), New Forest District Council (NFDC) and Go New Forest. The Summit was supported by Active Travel England, and anchored in the ambition of providing people with genuine choices about how they get around to help ensure the car isn't always the default - particularly for those who cannot or do not want to drive, or whose life circumstances mean they find themselves unable to drive.

Around 100 people from parishes, community groups, businesses, elected representatives and local organisations attended the event, with participation open to invited representatives and interested members of the public.

Appreciative Inquiry framing

The framing of the day's discussions used the 'Appreciative Inquiry' model, a strengths-based approach to creating change. Rather than starting by identifying a problem and looking at how to solve it, Appreciative Inquiry involves exploring what is already working and how to build on that. It is widely used to support change processes across private and public organisations.

A key part of engaging with participants using Appreciative Inquiry is to elicit views, opinions and perspectives via storytelling and recounting of lived experience. During the Summit, participants were encouraged to share anecdotes and give specific examples, with the aim of helping them feel empowered to help shape and play a positive role in their community.

2. Summit overview



Narrow pavements and a wide carriageway in Brockenhurst village centre. Photo: Richard Lewis

2. Summit overview

The Summit featured a variety of workshops, panels, group discussions and hands-on walks and talks. The day was chaired by Charlotte Baker, a transport, environment and public health communications and engagement specialist, with a decade of experience at organisations including the World Health Organisation, Greater London Authority, and the Wellcome Trust – most recently working to deliver the Mayor of London’s transport and environment priorities.



The Healthy Streets Wheel.
Image credit: Lucy Saunders, www.healthystreets.com

The event included:

- **Opening scene-setting** remarks from NPA, HCC and NFDC representatives, describing the known issues, setting out key facts, and delivering a call to action for sustainable transport in the New Forest, recognising the need to balance increasing travel demand with available infrastructure, funding constraints and protection of the special environmental qualities of the national park.
- **Smaller roundtable discussions** where participants were asked to consider what is already working well, and what could be improved for sustainable transport across the New Forest. Emphasis was given to the question of how people might get around if for any reason they found themselves unable to drive or access a vehicle.

- A series of **'visioneering panels'** asked transport users and providers to discuss what the status quo looks and feels like for them, and what the future potential could be in the New Forest. The first panel shared their experiences as users of active travel modes in the New Forest, describing how they get around and what it is like, including what they enjoy about their travel choices. A second panel was made up of representatives from the National Park's main public transport operators South Western Railway and Go-Ahead Morebus, and a sustainability facilitator and artist based in Burley, which has very limited public transport connections. Audience members had the opportunity to ask a variety of questions of the panellists.
- **Short breakout sessions**, where speakers gave 15-minute updates covering different aspects of transport and travel planning currently underway in the New Forest and elsewhere, including the recently adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), the Lymington to Lyndhurst cycle route study, public transport innovations in the Lake District, wayfinding and the gravel cycle network, transport emissions, and issues of motor traffic speed and road danger.
- **Hands-on mapping exercises**, where participants could move freely between tables with a set of maps highlighting different transport modes in different geographies across the National Park. The aim was to identify key demand hubs, desired routes and barriers to sustainable transport in different areas.
- **'Trip generator' mini-panel**, where some of the National Park's largest generators of journeys discussed the challenges and progress on encouraging sustainable transport - representatives from the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, Brockenhurst College, Wightlink and Go New Forest joined the panel.

- **Case study walks** around Brockenhurst village provided participants with the opportunity to critically analyse walking and cycling infrastructure, and streetscape more generally. Participants could choose between two different walks - one an exercise for participants to assess features such as footways, public seating, public realm and landscaping against the 10-criteria Healthy Streets scorecard, and the other focusing on accessible design, including kerbs, footways and ramps. The aim was to provide participants with the knowledge to help them assess and highlight issues in their own local areas.
- **'Have a go' cycling sessions**, where participants could engage with representatives from Cyclexperience, PEDALL Inclusive Cycling, Jorvik tricycles and a local carpenter who uses an adapted cargo bike for local jobs. Participants could try out everything from e-trikes and e-bikes, to specially adapted bikes designed to take a wheelchair and recumbent cycles.

3. Sustainable transport in the New Forest: What's working and what could be improved?



Walking and discussion tour of streets in Brockenhurst. Photo: NFNPA

3. Sustainable transport in the New Forest - what's working and what could be improved?

Over the course of the Summit, participants had the opportunity to share their own experiences of using active travel and public transport in the New Forest.



Panel with representatives from Hampshire County Council and NFNPA. Photo: NFNPA

The first session of the day featured small-group discussions of 6-8 people, moderated by volunteers using an Appreciative Inquiry lens, while the afternoon 'mapping' sessions enabled participants to input feedback directly onto maps.

The aim was to elicit views, opinions and perspectives via storytelling and recounting of lived experience, starting with what they already feel is working - the 'discover' phase - and then moving to what could be improved - the 'dream' phase.

Infrastructure, integration and information: emerging overarching themes

Infrastructure

Summit participants showed strong support for infrastructure improvements across all sustainable transport modes. There was praise for good examples of existing infrastructure, and a desire to see this expanded and 'become the norm' across the National Park.

It is well-established through evidence from elsewhere in the UK and internationally that investing in safe, inviting walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure generates demand and enables people to switch their journeys to more sustainable modes.

Equally, comfort, reasonable journey times, reliability and convenience are vital to building and sustaining demand for public transport. For example, while evening, late night and rural buses and services may not be profitable in themselves, they may bolster other more commercially viable services, as is the case with many rail services.

- **Safe walking** – how and where to build accessible footway infrastructure, safer crossings with appropriate tactile paving, lower speeds and social safety. This includes important unpaved utility links, which need to be made more accessible, to reduce barriers to usage.
- **Safe cycling** – how to fund and deliver missing links, and provide dedicated infrastructure, including cycle tracks separated from motor vehicles and pedestrians, shared-use paths limited to low-volume routes, safe crossings, quiet lanes, secure cycle parking and social safety. Utility cycle infrastructure should be designed to an accessible standard.
- **Bus services** – how and where to build better bus infrastructure to enable wheelchair access to buses, with footway connections provided where necessary. Shelters with bench or perch seating, and clear information.
- **Railway services** – how the train service can support both utility and leisure use, including stopping services adapted to provide more space for cycles and family travel, including better luggage storage and buggy spaces.
- **Town centres** – how to improve the streetscape to make areas safer and more welcoming for pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists, providing benefits to local businesses.
- **Tourism** – how to facilitate better access to key tourist centres, particularly those with no railway station e.g. Lyndhurst, Beaulieu, Ringwood. Consideration of new visitor hubs, such as Sway and Ashurst, as a base for exploring the New Forest via sustainable modes.



Breakout panel discussion about the visitor economy and trip generators. Photo: NFNPA

Integration

Modal integration was raised in discussions throughout the day, as participants expressed that while there was some good sustainable transport provision in parts of the New Forest, the lack of integration between modes meant that users weren't always able to complete journeys end-to-end.

- Attendees articulated the desire for a 'safe, cheaper, more reliable and accessible integrated transport network' across the National Park.
- The need to connect towns and villages better with each other, rather than just to surrounding urban areas, was highlighted.
- Connectivity between modes - bus and train timetables that line up, greater bike/public transport connectivity, inc. secure bike parking at stations and key bus interchanges.
- Easier ticketing, via a smart system that gives you access to all modes with one ticket or pass.
- Later running bus services for evenings out, and buses which match work shift patterns.

Information

Information provision was a common theme across the sessions, with participants highlighting good practice (e.g. Morebus's live app), but also areas for improvement. Overall, it was felt that for new public transport and active travel users, it can feel difficult to access information and change habits.

- **Information availability at transport hubs** - participants highlighted that while some transport hubs had clearly signposted information about onward travel options, at others there was almost no information about bus services, bike hire and walking distances to nearby attractions. The frequent lack of information at stations about rail delays and issues was also noted.
- **Digital travel information** - participants were positive about the availability of bus and rail information via the Morebus and National Rail apps, but expressed a desire for a joined-up system (perhaps one New Forest app) that provided all the information about different modes in one place, and suggested realistic journeys.
- **Encouraging modal shift** - across the day, participants and panellists said they felt that the positive benefits of public transport and active travel could be communicated more clearly, via marketing, incentive programmes and other targeted campaigns.

Discover: What's working?

There was strong consensus between participants on many of the transport connections and infrastructure that are currently working.

Buses were a major focus of discussions across the groups. Participants said they felt that bus connectivity around the Waterside, and between the Waterside and the New Forest has improved, as well connections in the north of the National Park between Salisbury and Fordingbridge, onto Bournemouth, and to Bransgore village. The quality of the bus service and the overall experience of bus users was frequently mentioned - parents highlighted that their children enjoy bus journeys, citing the happy, relaxed atmosphere and good school routes. Others said they appreciated the friendly drivers and the modern, clean buses.

The New Forest Tour bus, a service which runs through the summer months between major tourist attractions and town and village centres, was also frequently mentioned as a positive aspect of transport in the National Park. Participants felt that it 'goes to the right places', appreciated that bikes can be carried on the service and that locals receive discounted travel.

Conversations also centred on **walking and cycling** routes that were working well. Participants highlighted that the New Forest gravel network and inclosures provide decent all-weather walking options, along with several other routes outside the National Park boundary, such as the Marchwood footpath and network of back paths in Lymington. Initiatives such as the Lyndhurst 'walking bus' to encourage walking to school were also flagged as positive examples of active travel innovation.

The cycle route that connects Lyndhurst, Ashurst and Southampton was praised for being a useful and comfortable connection between Ashurst and Lyndhurst. The route continues east on a pleasant network of quiet streets and a well-designed, dedicated subway under the A326 that connects well into quiet greenway routes in and around Totton. Participants also highlighted the safe, off-road cycling routes provided by the gravel network, including from Brockenhurst to Lyndhurst, and Brockenhurst towards Burley, as well as the decent cycling connections to Arnewood School in New Milton.

Secure cycle parking facilities at local secondary schools and colleges were also praised by participants, who said this made it easier for young people to cycle to school. New Milton town centre was highlighted as an example of good high street cycle parking provision, where people can park their bikes outside shops with ease.

In line with national trends, participants highlighted the **increased uptake of electric bikes** in and around the New Forest, which has opened up cycling to a much wider range of people - including older people, and those with disabilities - and also helps many people to cycle further, an important factor in a large rural area such as the New Forest. Participants also mentioned the positive contribution of local cycle retail and hire shops in encouraging cycling among locals and visitors, especially in Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst.

'The New Forest Tour bus takes in the major attractions, supports locals and helps take tourist traffic off our roads.'

'There are some lovely walking opportunities in the New Forest. It's great for your physical and mental health.'

'The Lyndhurst-Ashurst cycle path is really good - as it's separate from traffic, but runs along the main road.'

There was broadly positive sentiment about the **rail network** and the connectivity it offers New Forest residents. Participants fed back that using the SWR network is a generally good experience that allows for car-free access to local cities e.g. Bournemouth & Southampton; between local towns/village e.g. Lymington and Brockenhurst, Ashurst to Sway/New Milton; and to the Isle of Wight ferry terminal at Lymington Pier (as evidenced by the fact that one third of passengers passing through Lymington Ferry Terminal are foot passengers). Participants also appreciated that bikes can be carried on the trains for free without a reservation and flagged that the space provided is better than many other rail companies in the UK.

Community transport networks were highlighted as a local strength, including the Community First New Forest bus service, the Fawley community-run minibus and local 'Dial A Ride' service, as well as voluntary groups that help take people who don't have a car or who can't drive to hospital appointments.

While discussions largely focused on public transport and active travel, two groups also flagged that **electric vehicle charging is generally good** in and around the National Park and improving all the time. Participants from three groups said that they felt **upcoming Forestry England plans to introduce parking charges** will encourage people to think about whether they really need to drive and will help maintain car parks for drivers.

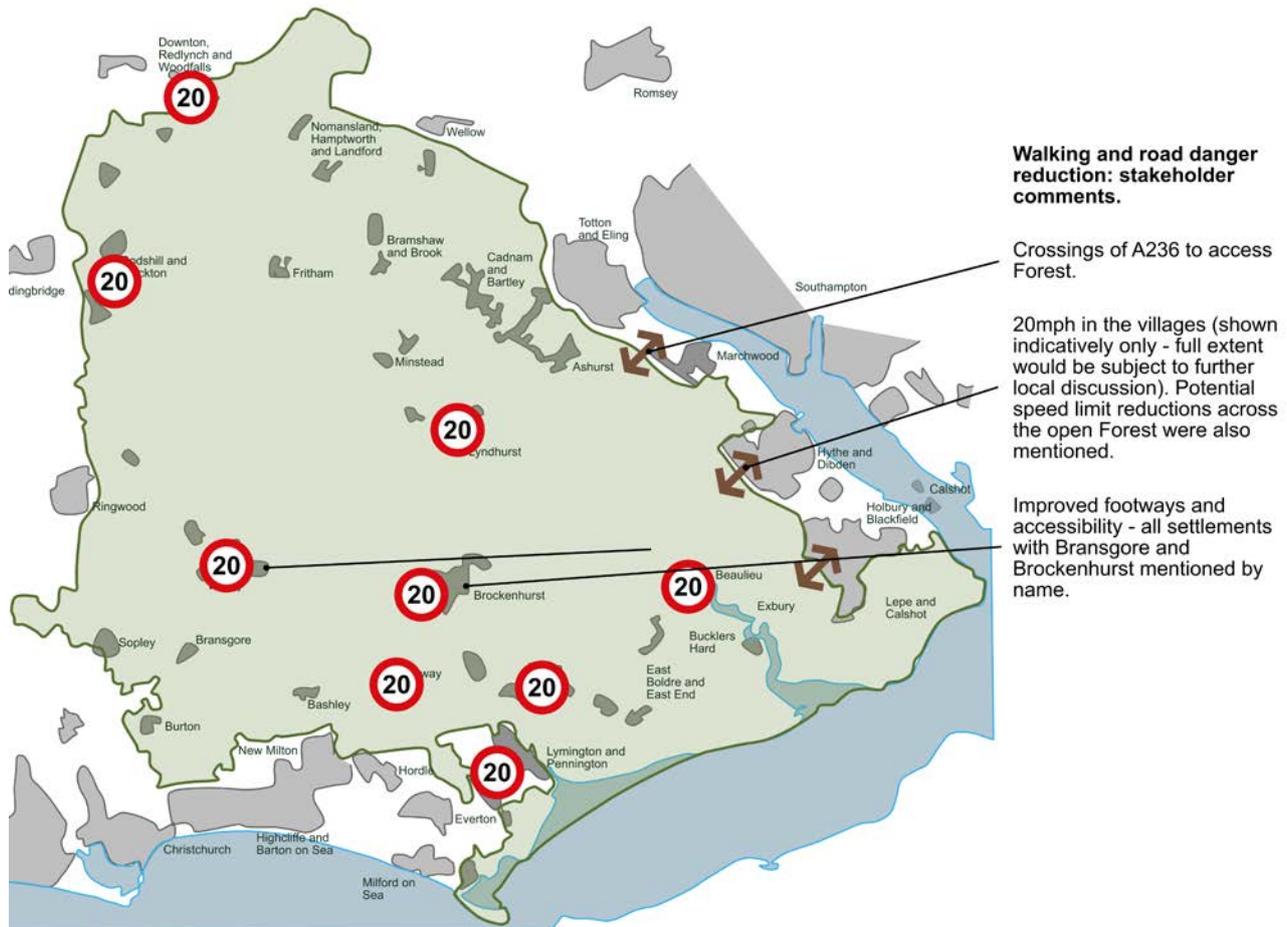
Dream: What could be improved?

In the second half of the small group discussions, participants were asked what they would improve about sustainable transport provision in the New Forest in an ideal 'dream' scenario.

'Taking the bus is cheap and fun - young children really enjoy the bus routes.'

'I live in Sway near the train station - the railway gives you lots of options and is a positive experience, especially compared to living in other rural areas like Cornwall.'

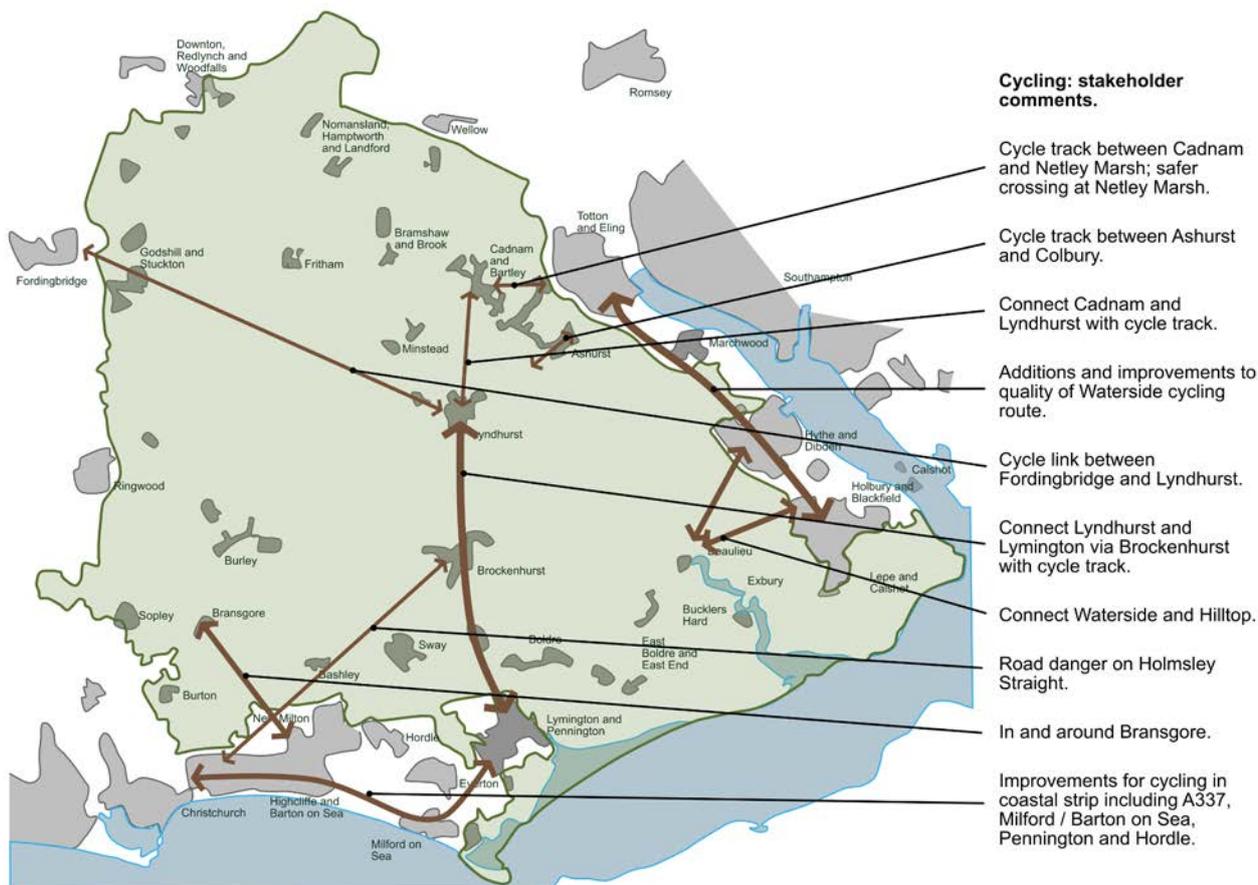
Walking and wheeling infrastructure – participants highlighted a desire for walking to feel a natural choice for short, local journeys, and the need for infrastructure improvements to facilitate this. Footway improvements were highlighted as a key issue, particularly for older and disabled people, and the need for better crossing provision, especially on major roads such as the A35, A36 and A326. It was also suggested that the installation of Dutch kerbs could help facilitate more confident journeys on foot.



This map shows what people told us they wanted to support walking. Line thickness approximately relates to number of mentions. Image: ActivePlanning.

Improved cycling infrastructure - many participants advocated for more protected cycle tracks to encourage a wider range of people to cycle around the New Forest, developed as part of an integrated network that fills current 'gaps'. Central to these suggestions was the need for better provision on main roads, or the repurposing of quieter back lanes with lower speeds and traffic filtering to provide alternative routes. Additionally, the need for better lighting, more shared use cycle/horse-riding infrastructure, and better-quality roads with fewer potholes and better gutters was highlighted.

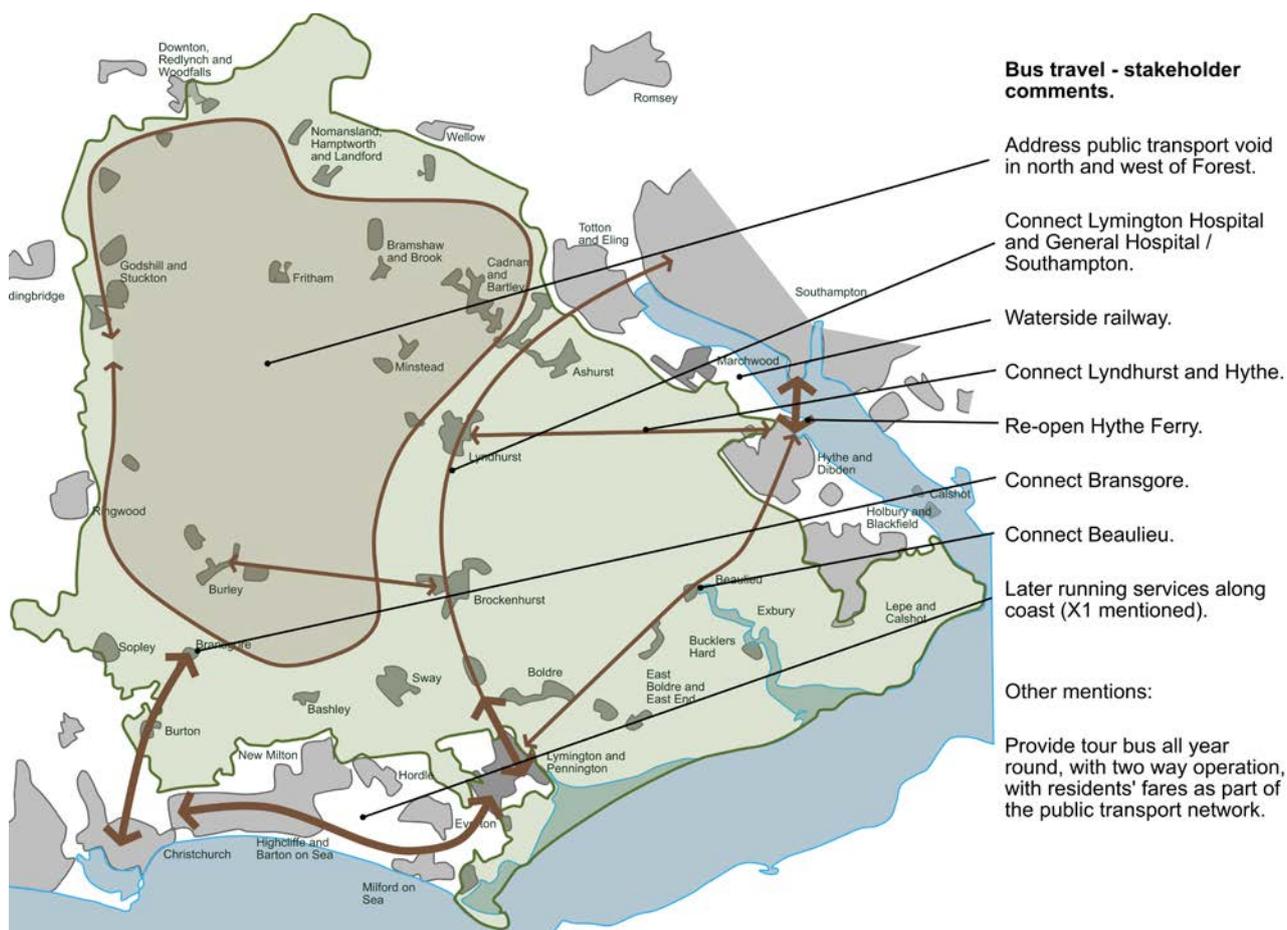
'I'd like to see a Dutch-style cycling network in the New Forest - with segregated cycleways and a culture of cycling for shorter journeys.'



This map shows where people asked for new and improved cycle routes. Line thickness approximately relates to number of mentions. Image: ActivePlanning

Cycle parking also came up, with participants expressing frustration at the lack of high street cycle parking in some key town centres (e.g. Lymington, where almost all provision is in car parks) and flagged the need for communal bike hangars on estates and blocks of flats. Participants also advocated for the expansion of shared bike hire schemes beyond the Waterside, and for a greater variety of bikes to be included, such as those with an integrated child's seat.

More regular, reliable buses – building on current service levels, participants spoke of the need for more frequent and extensive bus services, especially for commuter times. Many groups advocated for a ‘New Forest Tour style’ service that runs all year round to key village and town centres, transport hubs and visitor attractions. It was also suggested that minibuses or smaller buses could be an option for routes with lower demand, to help make these viable with lower passenger numbers. The need for more bus priority in and around town centres was also raised, and there were mentions of the need for more evening services, particularly in coastal towns and villages.



This map showed us where people wanted improved and new bus services. Line thickness approximately relates to number of mentions. Image: ActivePlanning.

More reliable trains and expansion of services - some groups highlighted the decline in reliability experienced by SWR, particularly on the Lymington to Brockenhurst branch line, where early and late services are often cancelled. Participants were generally supportive of the potential reopening of the Waterside branch line, with many feeling this would improve connectivity to the Waterside and help provide viable alternatives to driving. Support was also expressed for a railway stop at Ampress Park, as part of the Lymington to Brockenhurst branch line. Rail-cycle connectivity was also mentioned, with participants highlighting the urgent need for more secure cycle storage at stations in the New Forest.

Affordability, ticketing and convenience - participants expressed that the current ticketing system felt quite outdated and unsuited to modern transport habits. It was suggested that an Oyster-card system for use across buses and trains, with daily/weekly fare capping, could make public transport use easier and more attractive. It was also suggested that combined public transport/attraction tickets and other promotions could help incentivise sustainable transport and encourage people to change their transport habits. Affordability was also raised, with participants suggesting that bus travel should be free to under 18s and over 65s by default. The lack of comfortable places to wait for buses, and the short opening hours of train station waiting rooms was also highlighted as an issue that made public transport less comfortable and convenient for many users.

Information availability - the need to build on existing information sources (e.g. the MoreBus website and National Rail app) to create a more joined-up information hub about public and active travel options was raised. A CitiMapper-style app for the New Forest was suggested, as well as enhanced information at transport hubs to help those unfamiliar with the network to travel confidently. The need for better wayfinding on walking and cycling routes was also flagged, especially signage that shows times and distances between key locations.

Water-based transport - several groups said they felt there was potential to develop a water-based transport network, given the multiple access points to the water across the National Park and surrounds. Participants suggested building on the Hythe Ferry (if and when reinstated) and developing a network of water taxis to operate between the Waterside, Southampton and the Isle of Wight, and possibly onto Beaulieu and Lymington too, taking strain off major roads and providing an alternative for visitors and locals alike.

'We need more frequent bus services - you can often get somewhere, but then you can't get back!'

'Reducing speed limits on Forest roads would make them more friendly for pedestrians and cyclists.'

Sustainable transport planning for new developments - building on good practice e.g. recent Fordingbridge developments, participants emphasised that new developments needed to be prioritised in areas with existing public transport or active travel networks, and where this isn't possible, transport networks need to be redesigned to accommodate the new developments and residents, so that car dependency isn't locked in for future generations.

Road safety improvements - many groups discussed various safety improvements that could help facilitate safer walking, wheeling and cycling, and also reduce animal accidents. Reduced speeds on roads across the New Forest was highlighted as crucial to improving safety. Several groups suggested that 20mph should be the default for residential roads and village centres, 30mph for New Forest roads, and 40mph on main trunk roads. Participants also flagged the need for more signage, speeds and road enforcement by New Forest police.

Focusing on the **visitor economy and sustainable tourism trips**, it was suggested that a network of New Forest 'park and rides' - similar to those in Winchester and Oxford - could work well to reduce traffic levels within the National Park, when combined with a regular bus service to key attractions. The need for better cycle storage at campsites and hotels was also raised, including secure bike parking and discounts to further encourage cycle tourism and sustainable travel.

Several groups discussed concerns about **air quality**, with some participants suggesting that a charge for the most polluting vehicles to enter the National Park could help encourage sustainable transport. Parking was also discussed as a key driver of car usage, with some participants suggesting that parking provision should be reduced, and charges increased, to help encourage people to travel more sustainably.

The **school run** was also raised by several groups, with participants saying they'd like to see more done to encourage parents and children to walk, scoot and cycle to school, with school streets, 'have a go' cargo bike schemes and walking and cycling 'buses' all suggested. 'First and last mile' delivery was also discussed, with participants raising the need for more sustainable options, for instance building on the existing networks of parcel lockers, and encouraging 'last mile' cargo bike deliveries from town centre hubs.

'We need to change peoples' habits, and also the perception of public transport.'

4. Challenging preconceptions and encouraging behaviour change: Highlights from our Panels



Brockenhurst is the National Park's gateway station.
Photo: Richard Lewis.

4. Challenging preconceptions and encouraging behaviour change: highlights from our panels

During the Summit, three panels were held - one focused on active travel, another on public transport and the third on key 'trip generators' in the National Park.

Themes that emerged across all three panels included convenience, accessibility, opportunities for younger and older people to get around independently, and the social connection afforded by sustainable transport.



Active Travel panel. Photo: NFNPA

Panel 1: Active travel for all – how do we enable inclusive active travel?

The first of our panels focused on active travel, with local residents talking about their experiences walking and cycling in the New Forest, describing how they get around, and what they enjoy about their travel choices. The panel featured an e-trike user from Lymington in their 70s, a cargo bike user and parent from Totton, a man who lives without a car in Woodlands, and a local councillor from the Waterside who enjoys walking.

Areas of convergence between panellists included:

- The social, uplifting aspect of walking, wheeling and cycling - that by being out in the fresh air and away from the confines of a vehicle, you are better connected to the people and environment around you. Walking, wheeling and cycling enables you to stop and talk to people, or simply smile and wave as you're passing. Panellists also remarked that this was true of public transport journeys.

- Embracing active travel all year around - an audience member asked how panellists coped with walking and cycling in rain or colder conditions. The panellists expressed that they had surprised themselves with how they had continued walking and cycling all year round, providing helpful hints and tips about the right clothing and other useful 'gear', including special waterproof mittens that can be attached to bike handles.
- Cycling as a mobility aid - an e-trike user from Lymington in her 70s, described how her trike allows her to cycle a distance that she would never be able to walk, and explained how it helps keep her gently active and mobile.
- The importance of pedestrian infrastructure - Cllr Caroline Rackham talked about the walking experience of her parents and residents in her ward, how it helps them feel connected to their community, but also how poor-condition pavements and a lack of safe crossings can act as a barrier.

Panel 2: Sustainable public transport – connecting the Forest, one mode at a time



Public transport panel with representatives from South Western Railway and MoreBus, and a resident describing her experience of trying to use public transport. Photo: NFNPA

A second panel was made up of representatives from South Western Railway and Morebus, and a sustainability facilitator and artist based in Burley, which has very little public transport. A member of the New Forest Youth Board was also due to join the panel, but couldn't attend on the day.

Some key discussion points included:

- The relationship between demand for bus services and service planning - that it is hard for bus companies to commit to new routes or offering more frequent services without demonstration of demand - particularly for 'infrequent' journeys for individuals, e.g. to the hospital or the airport. Participants were urged to give local bus services a try and see whether it could replace a regular car journey.
- Passenger surveys show a good level of customer satisfaction with bus services in and around the New Forest - where services run, customers are generally content with the quality of the experience.
- The rail connectivity between London and the New Forest is overall a positive thing for locals, but does mean that incidents that take place some distance away (e.g. in London or Dorset) can impact service performance and reliability through local routes in the Forest.
- Changing weather patterns are having an impact on railway operations, and resulting in some levels of disruption to services.
- There is interest in providing greater linkages between public transport modes in the National Park, using railway stations as a jumping-off point for bus or other transport into the New Forest.
- In general, getting out of the New Forest by train is a positive experience - but getting from villages and towns without railway services to stations to catch a train is a real challenge - particularly for villages such as Burley.
- The need to 'sell' the advantages of public transport more, in terms of time gained to read, work or chat to friends and family, which can't be done in the same way while driving. Also, the role of local businesses and attractions in promoting sustainable travel.
- The challenges of implementing secure cycle storage at railway stations, both from a cost and logistics perspective.

Panel 3: 'Trip generators' share their perspectives on sustainable transport



Break-out discussion about visitor attractions, the economy and major trip generators. Photo: NFNPA

The Summit's third panel took place in the afternoon, and focused on businesses and organisations that generate a strong proportion of trips in and around the New Forest. Representatives from tourism, education and transport joined the discussion, which focused on evaluating the status quo and the steps the organisations were taking to improve.

The need for more transport options is particularly evident within the hotel sector. Nic Carass from Go New Forest highlighted the issues faced by hotels due to the lack of sustainable transport options for guests, sharing stories of hotel staff at times needing to provide guests with a lift to railway stations, due to limited taxis and public transport.

The National Motor Museum at Beaulieu also highlighted the challenges they faced as a visitor attraction due to limited public transport options, explaining that the New Forest Tour bus is a welcome boost during the summer, but that outside this period, it can be very difficult for visitors to arrive by public transport - involving a long walk or medium-length cycle from Beaulieu Road station, or a taxi or cycle connection from Brockenhurst. They try to encourage arrivals by public transport and bike, by offering a 20% discount for people who arrive by these modes, and it was suggested that other attractions could consider doing likewise.

Brockenhurst College is the largest educational institution in the New Forest. Assistant principal Steve Jenkins highlighted that around 60% of Brockenhurst College students arrive by train, and 25-30% by bus, contributing significantly to the college's sustainable transport mode share - 85-90% of the student population. Most of the remaining students travel by car, with a small number walking or cycling to college. He explained that as part of the college's sustainability commitments, they are looking at what they can do to further encourage sustainable transport. They already charge for parking permits, for instance, and are considering additional bus services that run at lunchtime, so pupils have options to travel home when they don't have classes in the afternoon. They are also looking into initiatives that encourage car-pooling and cycling to school.

The Wightlink ferry terminal in Lymington is also a generator of trips through the New Forest National Park. Partnerships and marketing manager Sam Woodman explained that $\frac{1}{3}$ of passengers travelling through Lymington ferry terminal are foot passengers, connecting to the ferry from the train, bus, on foot or by bike. Wightlink offer a number of initiatives to incentivise sustainable crossings to the Isle of Wight, with a combined 'rail and sail' ticket offering savings for rail passengers, a 'West Wight Wanderer' bus ticket offering sustainable onward travel on the Island, and bikes carried on ferries for no additional charge.

5. Getting specific: Area-based themes and solutions



Gate giving pedestrian access to a pub, avoiding the main road. Photo: Richard Lewis

5. Getting specific: area-based themes and solutions

As part of the Summit's afternoon sessions, participants were asked to add their suggestions and flag areas of concern on a series of maps, which showed the National Park overlaid with different transport modes.

The tables on the following pages are not comprehensive, but are indicative of the main themes and specific geographical concerns and ideas raised by attendees. For details by mode, see maps above.

WATERSIDE AND COASTAL - HYTHE, FAWLEY, CALSHOT, LEPE, BEAULIEU

- Ferry service between Hythe, Southampton and IOW – possibly Lymington + Beaulieu too.
- Pedestrian crossing needed at Eling.
- Pedestrian access between the edge of National Park and surrounding towns/ villages across A326.
- Waterside Railway line being brought back.
- Waterside railway line converted to cycleway.
- Cycle route to Hilltop, Beaulieu.
- Complete or upgrade sections of Fawley to Eling cycle route, with mentions of Dibden/Applemore, Holbury cycle lanes.
- Proper coastal bus route needed between Lymington and Hythe; also buses at Beaulieu.
- Bus needed between Lyndhurst and Hythe via Beaulieu Road; also Lepe.
- Completion of cycleway sections between Dibden Purlieu and Marchwood, Marchwood and Totton, and Marchwood and Hounslow, including to the secondary school.
- New cycle route between Totton and Cadnam.

NEW FOREST – NORTH OF A35

- Safer crossing points on the A35 and A36.
- Cycle route between Cadnam and Lyndhurst.
- Cycle route between Cadnam and Totton via Netley Marsh.
- Safer crossing for school at Netley Marsh.
- Address public transport void in the north of Forest (bounded by A35, Ringwood, Fordingbridge, Woodfalls / Downton, Landford, A36, A326 Totton bypass).
- Bus service needed between Burley and Brockenhurst.
- More buses are needed to serve Bransgore, which is growing.
- Address road danger and rat-running on quiet lanes around Hinton and Holmsley (including Holmsley Straight Mile).
- The need for new footways at specific locations in Bransgore and Sopley.
- Address the A31 severance barrier.
- Junction improvements at Cat & Fiddle, Hinton.
- Need for a utility cycle route between Fordingbridge and Lyndhurst.
- Investigating quiet lanes and pilot vehicle restrictions on the New Forest leisure network, eg the Boldrewood Ornamental Drive.

**NEW FOREST – CENTRAL / EAST
(BROCKENHURST, LYNDHURST, SWAY,
ASHURST AND SURROUNDS)**

- Bus to Lyndhurst before 9am, targeting commuter times.
- Develop Brockenhurst as a transport 'hub' with a bus station etc.
- Brockenhurst needs better pedestrian amenity, considering how visited it is. Pedestrian experience is often unsafe and uncomfortable.
- Lack of pedestrian and safe, direct cycling route between Lymington and Lyndhurst.
- Better accessibility at Beaulieu Road station.
- Need better public transport options to Beaulieu.
- Pedestrianisation of Brookley Rd to improve the pedestrian experience.
- Need a pedestrian crossing at Brockenhurst College – ongoing safety concerns.
- Inappropriate vehicle sizes going through Beaulieu village.
- Reinstate CrossCountry full timetable stops at Brockenhurst.
- Regular buses between Sway and Lymington, particularly at commuter times.
- Better pedestrian access and crossings around Undershore, Lymington to connect to the ferry terminal on foot.
- A paved cycle route from Brockenhurst to Lyndhurst (route 120 study).

**NEW FOREST – WEST COASTAL
(LYMINGTON, NEW MILTON ETC)**

- Open a railway halt at Ampress for Lymington Hospital and the business park.
- Buses needed earlier and later to suit staff working shifts at Lymington Hospital.
- Bus needed to serve the Isle of Wight Ferry.
- Buses between Lymington and Christchurch should run later in the evenings.
- Bus connections wanted between Lymington and Southampton General Hospital.
- Footpath to Buckland Rings.
- 20mph limit in Pennington village.
- Pedestrianisation of part of Lymington High Street, to improve pedestrian experience.
- Protected cycle lane needed along Southampton Road, Lymington, and between Everton and Lymington on the A337.
- A paved cycle route from Lymington to Brockenhurst (route 120 study).

6. Where to next? Next steps and outputs from the summit



Old sign on the shared
use path between Ashurst
and Lyndhurst. Photo:
Richard Lewis.

6. Where to next? Next steps and outputs from the Summit

The New Forest Transport Summit provided a sample of ideas and thoughts from invited members of the public, community organisations, businesses and transport providers. Attendees represented a good spread of geographical locations across the National Park and beyond, and a good range of organisations, however more diverse views from a range of different backgrounds are needed, which should be borne in mind when considering next steps. There were also fewer business representatives than hoped for.



Presentation about how Local Cycling and Walking Plans are written. Photo: NFNPA

Despite these limitations, the event was important and useful in that:

- It confirmed and reinforced many long-term known issues and ‘wish lists’ around transport in the New Forest, and provided a vital framework for developing a series of actions which can be tested in future engagement exercises.
- It demonstrated the considerable interest from the local community in further developing sustainable modes of transport, with default car travel taking a back seat (and being seen as a ‘problem’ to solve) in open and free discussions.
- It identified key geographical locations for interventions, particularly the coastal strip and ‘east/mid-New Forest’ settlements (Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Ashurst, Cadnam), growth nodes such as Bransgore, and the absence of alternatives to driving in the Forest north of the A35.

- It highlighted public transport ‘voids’, including between Burley and Brockenhurst, Christchurch and Bransgore, and across the north of the New Forest.
- The event also highlighted missing or downgraded links in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, incomplete or sub-standard conditions of new cycleways along the Waterside, road danger on quiet lanes used as rat-runs, missing public transport connections and a lack of frequency of evening services, accessibility challenges (poor-quality footways) and a desire for several villages to have 20mph speed limits.
- The next steps will be to pull together stakeholders’ comments and NFNPA, New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council’s own transport priorities expressed in various documents including Local Plans, Local Transport Plans and in general discussions to develop a series of prioritised, integrated transport solutions for the National Park and surrounding settlements.

Initial emerging opportunities and priorities include:

- The need for better bus/rail connectivity, including a central ‘hub spine’ between Lympington and Cadnam, with bus services branching out to under-served villages including Sway, Burley and Hythe. Much of this could be delivered by adapting and extending the Tour bus concept and funding route extensions, including sections with two-way services.
- The need to enhance public transport provision to Bransgore and use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 receipts to improve footway accessibility and cycle safety. It is important to note that some of these funds are time-limited so there is a need to be efficient with identifying and delivering projects.
- Exploring the potential introduction of New Forest-wide 20mph speed limits in village centres, and considering reviewing speed limits elsewhere, in part to help divert excess traffic to more suitable primary roads.
- Initiatives to improve pedestrian priority and accessibility to and within village centres, taking opportunities to introduce place-making features such as seating and sustainable urban drainage features, with sensitivity to specific local needs e.g. free-roaming livestock. Footway widening, pedestrianisation or part-pedestrianisation could be considered.

- Develop a Waterside transport strategy, which also answers local concerns about the quality and extent of what is delivered for active travel, including better infrastructure and links into the New Forest over the A326. Investigate community means of funding the re-opening of the Hythe Ferry, perhaps through the creation of a dedicated CIC that can attract grant funding.



A busy scene in Lyndhurst with bicycles everywhere!
Photo: Richard Lewis.

- Review the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Encourage grassroots LCWIPs prepared by parish and town councils as part of their Neighbourhood Plans, to get a finer grain of detail and community ownership.
- The potential for selecting promoted development sites in the Local Plans that will directly increase demand for new and improved bus services, whilst providing seed funding through Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106.

As part of this process, ongoing discussions will take place with key stakeholders capable of funding or delivering improvements, and local groups and communities, including:

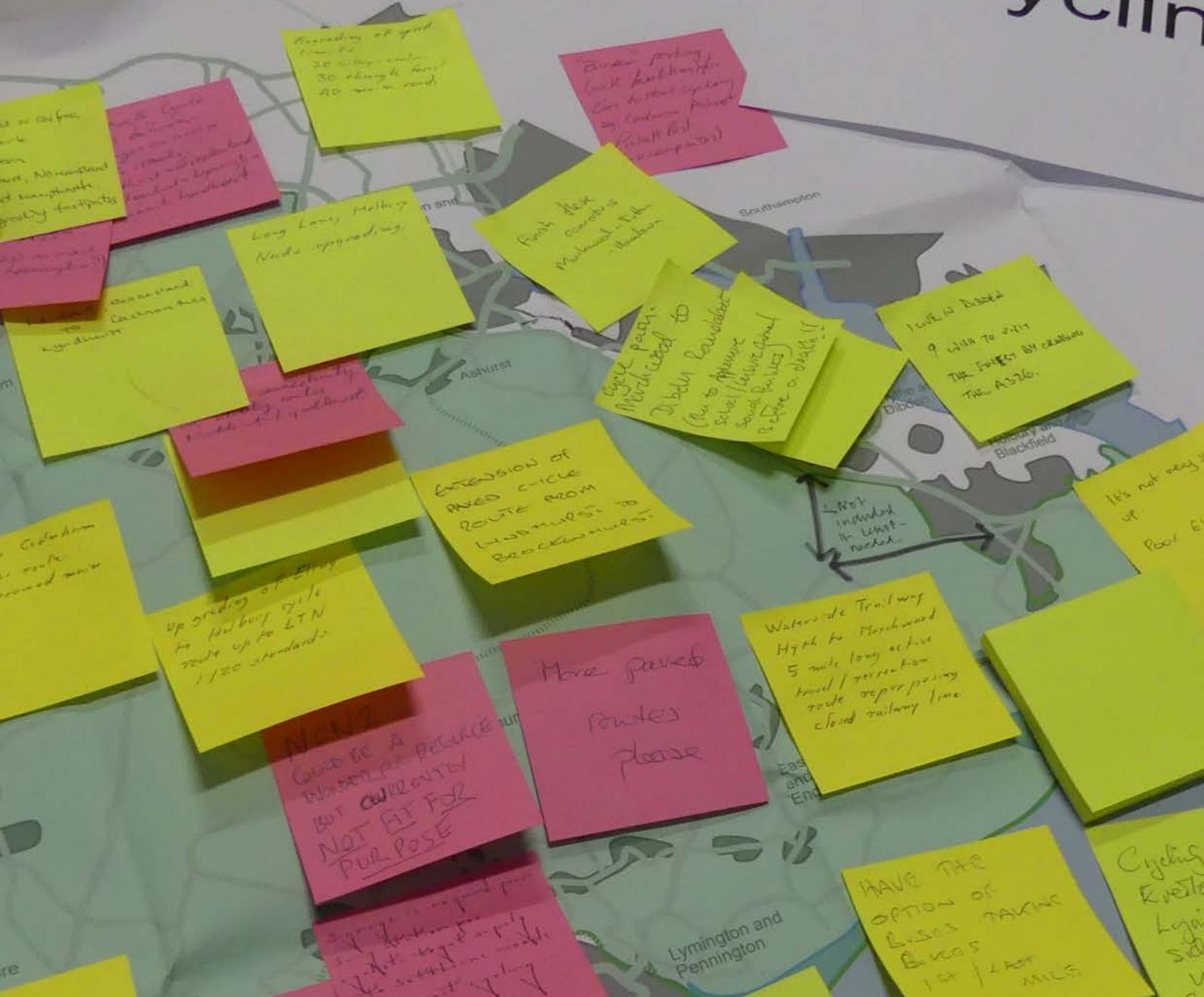
- MoreBus (several utility bus routes and the New Forest Tour).
- South Western Railway.
- Major visitor destinations and trip generators such as Beaulieu National Motor Museum, Brockenhurst College.

- Business organisations.
- Community organisations - especially those representing young people and disabled people.
- New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council and the Parish and Town Councils.
- Active Travel England.



Local business encouraging custom from cyclists Photo: Richard Lewis.

Cyclin



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November 2025



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