



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(WOKING)**

SHARED SPACE WITHIN WOKING TOWN CENTRE

28 MARCH 2011

KEY ISSUE

To consider the results from the consultation into the town centre shared space areas.

SUMMARY

The Town Centre within Woking has been the subject of an Experimental / Permanent Traffic Order allowing cycling within the shared space in certain street since 3 April 2009. The sustainable transport 'Cycling Town' has carried out improvements across the borough of Woking over the past 2 years with the 'hub' being the towns railway station and town centre. These new walking and cycling transport corridors assist people from where they live to where they wish to get to, and require continuous and direct routes into and through the 'hub' to enable the journey to be joined up. The shared space within the town centre enables this to happen. However, to ensure that the partnership project of the County and Borough Council's are implementing what people want to see and use within their town centre the shared space has been the subject of a review with a consultation being carried out for a period of 18 weeks.

This paper summarising the responses received and suggests three options, which have been evaluated with a recommended option as a compromised solution.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to agree:

- i. That the existing permanent order allowing cycling (dual use with pedestrians) within the town centre on designated streets as attached in **Annex D** (Areas A coloured yellow and B coloured blue) is amended to allow cycling all of the time in Area A except Town Square where it would be restricted to before 10:30am and after 4pm (Monday to Saturday) i.e. no cycling between 10.30am and 4pm. Cycling would also be allowed all of the time in Area B.
- ii. That the Local Committee delegate authority to the Cycle Woking Programme Manager in consultation with the Local Member and Chairman to proceed with the necessary traffic order, advertisements and notices of intent in order to deliver this project.
- iii. That funding for this scheme is allocated from the 'Cycle Woking S106 match funding' for the Cycling Towns Project.
- iv. That a report is submitted to this Committee in approximately 12 months time, indicating any incidents within the town centre.

ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

1. Sustainable Transport Bid – Cycle Woking

1.1 In March 2008, Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council submitted a joint bid to Cycling England for Government funding for a cycle demonstration town in Woking. One of the main objectives of the was to improve walking and cycling routes to and through the town centre in Woking.

1.2 These improvements included:

- the upgrading of the Basingstoke Canal towpath
- the lifting of the ban on cycling within the town centre in certain streets
- the upgrading of three crossing facilities located on the A320 Victoria Way/Road and across Cawsey Way.
- substantial increases in cycle parking within the town centre.

1.3 The bid emphasised the need to have direct, continuous, convenient, safe and attractive routes for walking and cycling connecting people to places, where people live to where they wish to travel to by sustainable means.

Progress to date – Woking Town Centre

1.4 An Experimental Order allowing cycling within the town centre was introduced on 3 April 2009 in the areas coloured YELLOW (Area A) and BLUE (Area B) in Annex A. Cycling continued to be prohibited within the areas coloured RED, due to these areas either being within the ‘closed’ shopping area’ or the streets being too narrow to allow shared-space use. It should be noted that roads that allow access with a motorised vehicle also allow cycling, such as Chertsey Road, Church Road East, Christchurch Way etc.

1.5 The Experimental Order was made into a Permanent Order on the 2 October 2010 following a decision by this Local Committee on 2 September 2010 (minute 39/10 refers).

1.6 In response to concerns raised by some residents, particularly groups representing people with disabilities, the Local Committee requested that a consultation be undertaken on the existing shared space and the possible segregated space. The consultation period started on 25 October 2010 and continued until 27 February 2011.

National Policy Guidance on shared space

1.7 Government guidance on shared spaces has evolved in recent years. The advice used to be that cyclists and pedestrians should be segregated, but this has subsequently been changed to encourage a sharing of space. For example, Transport Policy note 2/04 states that:

'Studies (by Transport Research Laboratory) have shown that there are no real factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrianised areas – accidents between pedestrians and cyclists in these circumstances are very rare. At low flows they mingle readily. When pedestrian density increases cyclists behave accordingly by slowing down, dismounting, or taking avoiding action as required.

'Pedestrianised areas are typically located in the core area of a town or city, and as such, can form a barrier to direct through-routes for cyclists. Cyclists often need access to pedestrianised areas to reach their workplace, shops or other destinations.'

For any new pedestrianisation scheme, there should be a presumption that cycling will be allowed unless an assessment of the overall risks dictates otherwise. In conducting this assessment, the risk to cyclists using alternative on-road routes should be taken into account.

1.8 This view is also corroborated by the Government's **Manual for Streets** which says that:

'Cycle access should always be considered on links between street networks which are not available to motor traffic. If an existing street is closed off, it should generally remain open to pedestrians and cyclists'.

1.9 **Manual for Streets** also states:

"Where there are proposals to introduce vehicle restricted or pedestrianised areas, the starting position should be that cyclists are allowed to continue to use the streets concerned. If there are concerns about conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, the preferred approach is to allow cycling from the outset on the basis of an experimental traffic regulation order and only restrict access when and if the need has been demonstrated. If restrictions on cycling are shown to be necessary, they may only be required at certain times of the day. The restriction periods can always be extended later if the need arises".

1.10 However, **Manual for Streets** notes that care is needed in the design of shared spaces to address the concerns of disabled people:

“The fear of being struck by cyclists is a significant concern for many disabled people. Access officers and consultation groups should be involved in the decision-making process.”

2. Consultation

2.0 The consultation was initially set for a period of 6 weeks. This was subsequently extended to 18 weeks, ending on 27 February 2011.

2.1 Extensive marketing was carried out on the consultation with press releases published before and during the consultation period. In addition to this there were five events held in Woking town centre before Christmas on Fridays and three at the end of January to remind people to complete a consultation form. Over 200 people attended these events.

2.2 Forms could be completed in online, by post or by telephone. Copies of the forms were also available in Braille.

Summary of Consultation Responses:

2.3 The consultation period began on 25 October and ended on 27 February 2011, a period of 18 weeks. During that time 730 responses were received, 560 were made by the electronic on-line system 170 by hard copies and 0 copies were made in Braille.

Summary of results.

2.4 The Corporate Strategy team within Woking Borough Council has collated the results independently. This team highlighted three weeks before the end of the consultation period that the number of people who had responded within the younger age group (under 25) was low and Surrey County Council's Transportation Studies group employed independent outside staff to carry out a specific survey within the town centre on 16 and 18 February targeting only that age group.

The full results can be found in Annex B

Gender

	N = 730	%
Male	404	55
Female	260	36
Prefer not to say	66	9

Age group

	N = 730	%
15 or under	3	1
16-24	71	10
25-44	212	29

45-64	251	34
65-74	82	11
75-84	35	5
85+	12	2
Prefer not to say	64	8

Of the above 60 (8%) stated that they had a disability.

2.5 Area A – Shared Space

For Area A (Yellow area on shaded map – see Annex A)

483 respondents (66%) **supported** the shared space including 33% of disabled people.

Summary of comments on supporting shared space (181 comments)

- 2.6 Two thirds of respondents support shared space in the yellow area on the map, area A. It is supported mainly;
- respondents support shared space because they feel that pedestrians and cyclists can co-exist and share the same space
 - for easy access to bike parking, the station, the town square, canal path, the market and Commercial way.
 - it is a safe option as long as cyclists are considerate, respect on both parties, also safer if you cycle into town with the children, the road around the town is very busy and dangerous.

Summary of comments on not supporting shared space (155 comments)

- 2.7 A third of respondents do not support shared use in area A. Of those respondents who do not support this option, 37% are over the age of 65. Of those who said they have a disability, two thirds do not support shared space. The main reasons for not supporting shared space are;
- safety issues
 - pedestrians and cyclists do not mix
 - have observed near misses

Area A Segregated

- 2.8 The responses to this option were more even, with 344 (47%) **not supporting** this option including 58% of disabled people.

Summary of comments for support of segregated areas (98 comments)

- 2.9 Only 42% of respondents support area A to be a segregated area. This option is supported, but with a condition of having clearly marked areas(i.e. separate lanes/ paths with kerbs, different colour surfaces), however this will be costly, will need to be maintained and will be hard to police. Some respondents felt that this would be a safer option.

Summary of comments on not supporting segregated areas (143 comments)

2.10 Almost half of the respondents (47%) do not support area A to be a segregated area. Respondents felt that demarcated areas will over complicate it even more and that people should use their common sense. They also felt that cyclists and pedestrians will not change their behaviour and not adhere to rules and that it is difficult to police segregated areas. Some do not support this option because of safety issues.

Area B – Shared Space

2.11 For Area B (Blue area on shaded map – see Annex A)

480 respondents (66%) **supported** the shared space including 32% of disabled people.

Summary of comments on supporting Shared Space (160 comments)

2.12 Two thirds of respondents support the blue shaded area on the map (B) to be a shared space. It is supported mainly;

- it is a safe option as long as cyclists are considerate, respect shown by both parties, also safer if you cycle into town with the children, the road around the town is very busy and dangerous.
- for easy access to bike parking, the station, the town square, canal path, the market and Commercial way.
- respondents support shared space because they feel that pedestrians, cyclists, push chairs, wheel chairs and the town buggy can co-exist and share the same space and that there is enough space for everyone.

Summary of comments on not supporting shared space (84 comments)

2.13 A third of respondents do not support shared space in area B. Of those who do not support this option, 31% are over the age of 65. The main reasons for not supporting this option are;

- safety issues
- Near misses
- hard to police segregated areas

Area B Segregated

2.14 The responses to this option were almost equal with 328 (45%) **not supporting** this option including 58% of disabled people.

Summary of comments for support of segregated areas (84 comments)

2.15 Just over 40% of the sample support area B to be segregated. Main reasons for support are;

- a segregated area will be safer
- easy access to bike parking, station, town square etc
- that physical changes such as different colour lanes etc will have to be made to make it work, but this will be hard to police.

Summary of comments on not supporting segregated areas (84 comments)

- 2.16 Forty five percent of respondents do not support a segregated area for blue area B. Main reasons for not supporting this option are;
- safety issues
 - not enough space
 - cyclists and pedestrians will not change there behaviour and not adhere to rules.

Conclusions on responses

- 2.17 The majority of respondents (66%) support shared space in area A and area B. There is not a majority of support for segregated spaces.

Disabled People

- 2.18 The Surrey Disabled People's Partnership have submitted a statement, which is attached as Annex C.

Woking Cycle Users Group

- 2.19 Woking Cycle Users Group have submitted a statement which is attached as Annex C.

Cycle Touring Club (CTC)

- 2.20 The CTC have submitted a statement which is attached as Annex C.

Surrey Police

- 2.21 Surrey Police (Road Safety) have submitted a statement, which is attached as Annex C.

3. Reported Incidents

- 3.1 During the Experimental Order period no known incidents were reported to either Surrey County Council or Woking Borough Council within the town centre Areas A or B.
- 3.2 The Local Committee at their meeting on the 2 September 2010 requested that a reporting form be developed to allow people to report any incidents. Following that request Cycle Woking developed an 'Incident Reporting Form' for use from the 25 October 2010 during the consultation period and the response within the town centre is as follows:

- There were 19 incident report forms submitted.

- 10 of these report forms relate to the town centre (none of the 9 'non-town centre' incidents resulted in an injury).

The town centre reports were as follows

- 4 report forms related to an area where there already was No Cycling (1 of these included a slight injury in Church Path (Commercial Way to High Street).
- 3 report forms related to cycling on a footway adjacent to a road.
- 1 report related to a wheelchair user and a pedestrian.
- 1 report related to a cyclist hitting a pedestrian on the hand at a toucan crossing (slight injury).
- 1 report related to a cyclist just missing a pedestrian.

3.3 There are around 1,500 cycle journeys into the town centre every working day, therefore approximately, 3,000 cycle trips are made. The incidents (1 near miss) are very low and in this case the person did state that they may have veered towards the cyclist.

3.4 The toucan-crossing incident is unfortunate but this type of crossing is shared space for cyclists and pedestrians and is a national standard crossing for this purpose.

3.5 The overall conclusion we would reach is that the Experimental shared space Order has not led to significant actual problems.

Casualty Statistics

3.6 In the three-year period between 2008 and 2010, there were two casualties involving pedestrians and cars on the A320 Victoria Way between Victoria Arch (north side) and Chobham Road toucan crossing. In the same period, there were six casualties involving cars and cyclists on this stretch of road.

4. Options Appraisal

4.1 This is clearly a very emotive issue for some people. Whilst the majority of respondents supported the shared space, some of those who oppose it have strongly-held views and concerns.

4.2 From a technical perspective there is no substantial reason why the shared space should not continue. The Government guidance is clear. It is entirely reasonable for cyclists and pedestrians to share the same space, provided there is extensive consultation about the design of the space.

4.3 During the consultation, some respondents have quoted previous Government guidance, which recommends segregation of cyclists and

pedestrians. This guidance is out of date and has been superseded by the guidance quoted in this report.

- 4.4 The consultation exercise shows that a majority of respondents favour a shared space. This conclusion needs to be considered with some caution. We are aware that there have been concerted campaigns on both sides of the argument. These may have skewed the overall responses one way or another. However, we have no evidence to suggest that the result would have been different had the campaigns not taken place. If anything, the groups campaigning against the shared space appear to have been the most active, which we would have expected to have reduced the overall level of support.
- 4.5 Experience has also shown that people are more likely to respond to something that they dislike than something that they like or are neutral about. For example, only 3 of the 730 respondents were under the age of 15, despite the fact that this group usually favour shared spaces.
- 4.6 The consultation period was lengthy and well publicised. We therefore conclude that the consultation analysis is safe and reliable. The majority view from the 730 respondents is that the shared space should continue.
- 4.7 We should then consider the strength of feeling and level of concern expressed by the minority of respondents who oppose the shared space. In this respect, the Government's advice to us is to implement an Experimental Order to see how far those concerns are justified.
- 4.8 In our case, the Experimental Order has shown that the risks to pedestrians are more perceived than real. The incident reporting mechanism showed no significant problems in the shared space. By contrast, there have been casualties involving both pedestrians and cyclists being hit by vehicles on roads outside the shared space. This underlines the importance of securing off-road routes for both pedestrians and cyclists wherever possible.
- 4.9 We now have three basic choices:
 1. Keep the shared space Order as it currently stands
 2. Remove the Order and prohibit cycling within the town centre
 3. Amend and improve the Order in the light of consultation responses.
- 4.10 On balance, we recommend the third option. The value of the shared space is that it allows cyclists to get to the town centre by safe continuous routes. It also links the cycle paths through the town and is much safer than the surrounding roads.
- 4.11 However, the consultation has shown that the Order can be improved, for example by restricting cycling in Town Square to before 10.30 am and after 4 pm i.e. no cycling between 10.30am and 4pm.

Anti Social Behaviour

4.12 One of the main concerns is the inconsiderate behaviour of a minority of cyclists, in particular cycling too fast or cycling in inappropriate places such as Church Path (Commercial Way to High Street). Evidence from other towns, and, is that this type of behaviour will continue whatever the rules and regulations are for cycling in the town centre. Limiting cycling will only disadvantage those considerate cyclists who behave in an appropriate way, slowing, changing direction or even dismounting when pedestrian flows are considerable (as indicated in the TRL case studies). Instead education and information is required for both cyclists and pedestrians so there is a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour, and enforcement is required for dangerous cycling. In that respect it is suggested that an educational programme will be developed with Surrey Police and other partners, including the Surrey People’s Disabled Partnership and Woking Cycle Users Group.

Option	Safety for Pedestrians	Safety for Cyclists	Ease of Enforcement (Police)	Cost (Police)	Consultation
1	+	++	+	+	66%
2	O	--	-	-	33%
3	+	+	+	+	

Key
++Very Positive, + Positive,
O Neither positive nor negative,
- Negative, -- Very Negative

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Whichever option is decided by the Local Committee, there will be costs associated with certain works. These range from £2,000 to £7,000 depending on the options chosen. This funding will be allocated from the ‘Cycle Woking S106 match funding’ for the Cycling Towns Project.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Surrey has embraced the concept of sustainable development, which is the foundation of Surrey’s Local Transport Plan and is committed to the vision of making Surrey a better place. Funding for Sustainable Travel will be in line with this vision whilst fulfilling its key commitments.

7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report, but improved cycle security will be a key target for the partnership.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has been mindful of its equality duties in carrying out its work in relation to this scheme. Specifically the Committee, in making a decision about the scheme's future will need to take account of the public equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 as these come into effect on 6 April 2011. These state that the Council should have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics are potentially: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These duties replace the current similar duties that exist although these only relate to disability, race and sex equality.
- 8.2 In giving due regard to these issues, the Committee are referred to the revised Equalities Impact Assessment relating to this scheme which is attached as Annex E This specifically identifies age and disability as the protected characteristics likely to be impacted by this scheme potentially both positively and negatively. The Committee will need to take account of these effects in coming to its decision- and specifically the impact on the elderly, young children and the range of disabled people who would be using the areas of the town centre under consideration. Reference is made in this Impact Assessment to specific consultation with the local disabled group and the older people's forum, and the Committee will also need to give due regard to the response to the consultation from a number of disabled and elderly groups which is attached at Annex C.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The awarding of Cycling Town status for Woking has been a great opportunity for the Cycle Woking partnership to make a real step change towards Local Sustainable Transport including cycling (as well as assisting walking and disabled people) with significant funding focused into the area in a short period of time.
- 9.2 The 18-month experimental order provided a 'rehearsal' of a permanent order and the recent 18-week consultation has provided a review of the shared space with the development of options based on the views of the consultation feedback and national policy.
- 9.3 **We recommend that the shared space should continue with amendments to allow cycling all of the time in Area A except Town Square where it would be restricted to 4pm to 10:30am -**

This would require an amendment to the existing Traffic Order. This should address some of the concerns reflected by the consultation responses, still allow commuter travel at peak periods, but restrict cycling during peak pedestrian flow periods in the 'focal point' of the town square.

- 9.4 We also recommend that anti social cycling should be tackled through an educational programme developed with Surrey Police (Neighbourhood Team) and other partners, including the Surrey People's Disabled Partnership and Woking Cycle Users Group.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.5 There is no technical reason to suspend the shared space order, it has proved to be safe, it is fully consistent with Government policy and it is supported by a majority of respondents.
- 9.6 The Local Committee will still be able to review the success or otherwise of allowing cycling within the town centre and take appropriate action on any section that has any repeated incidents.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 If members agree with the recommendations as set out at the front of this report, the shared space order will be amended.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Approved Cycle Woking Plan and Programme Local Committee minutes 08/10, 39/10 Sustrans Route User Survey Report 2010 – Canal Towpath Woking – Cycling Towns & Cities Published July 2010. Town Centre Cordon Counts (May 2009 to May 2010).

Version No. 6 Date: 23 March 2011 Time: 1600 Initials: IR No of annexes: 5