



SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN ELMBRIDGE – 24 February 2014

AGENDA ITEM 6

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: John Hirsh – for Lower Sunbury Residents' Association

Whilst aware of the current consultation on the Surrey Cycling Strategy to which this Association has submitted its response; and putting to one side considerations of costs or precise location options, would the Committee approve the principle of erecting a foot/cycle bridge *'over the River Thames' to the benefit of Elmbridge and Spelthorne residents' amenity; and formally recommend this initiative to the SCC Cabinet member for Transport, Highways & Environment; and the Cabinet Member for Communities?

*added by the officer for clarity

The Chairman will give the following response:

Surrey County Council's Local Committee for Elmbridge is unable to approve the principal of a new bridge formally. The formal approval of a new bridge, in principal and in detail, would be subject to a number of statutory processes including planning approval, land acquisition, and funding. The Local Committee may express its support for this suggestion, if it so chooses.

Notwithstanding the formalities, in principal Surrey County Council would welcome new transport infrastructure that was beneficial in meeting our transport objectives. Encouraging cycling and walking as alternative modes of transport to the private car is recognised as key to cutting congestion, improving accessibility, improving air quality, and improving individual health. Experience suggests that wholesale take up of walking and cycling is critically dependent on the provision of high quality infrastructure that is seen to be safe and advantageous when compared to the alternative car journey.

Therefore in principal a new cycle / pedestrian bridge over the Thames is an interesting suggestion. Before Surrey County Council could lend its support to such a suggestion, we would need to be satisfied that the anticipated benefit would justify the likely cost, would outweigh any negative impact, and that the priority of such a suggestion would compare favourably to other schemes elsewhere in Surrey. It would take a reasonable amount of effort in the context of a feasibility study to assess these.

The Local Committee is invited to indicate its support (or not) for the suggested new bridge. If supportive the Local Committee could raise the profile of the suggestion by commending the suggestion to the Council's Cabinet as suggested by Mr Hirsh.

If this suggestion were to be taken forwards the next step would be to commission an initial feasibility study to begin to examine the business case for a new structure, possible locations, technical considerations and likely costs. The Lower Sunbury Residents' Association is considering whether to commission a recognised consultant to undertake such a feasibility study. This same suggestion has already been put to the Local Committee for Spelthorne, which has expressed its support; the Divisional Member for Lower Sunbury and Halliford has indicated that he may contribute to the cost of the feasibility study.

As part of Surrey County Council's Cycling Strategy it is intended to develop a local cycling action plan with each Local Committee to identify potential new cycling infrastructure that could be implemented should any money become available in the future (for example in case the Cycle Safety Fund from the Department for Transport that was announced last year is repeated in future years). The aim would be to have a number of possible schemes and a priority agreed so that a bid could be prepared and submitted in the future. If the Local Committee is favourable to the suggested cycle/ pedestrian bridge over the Thames, this could form part of the local cycling action plan, and could then be considered in the future alongside other schemes in the Borough and across Surrey.