

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)

DATE: 1 October 2015

LEAD OFFICER: Paul Fishwick, Programme Manager (LTS & Major schemes), Transport Policy

SUBJECT: Blackwater Valley Sustainable Transport Package Phase 1) – public engagement analysis

DIVISION: Camberley West, Frimley Green and Mytchett

**SUMMARY OF ISSUES:**

This paper is to brief members on the Blackwater Valley Sustainable Transport Package (Phase 1) project including the A331 Blackwater Valley Road Cycle corridor that was the subject of a consultation for six weeks between 15 June and 27 July 2015, and the progress made so far with the projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to agree :

- (i) To note the results of the high level analysis of the public engagement (Annex 1).
- (ii) To note the progress made on The Hatches bridleway19 (Red route).
- (iii) To note that Hampshire County Council will deliver the Blue route improvements within their area.
- (iv) To note the progress made with the Green and Orange routes to design stage ready for delivery later in the financial year.
- (v) To note that the Local Committee and the Transport Task Group will be updated on a regular basis during the life of the project.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To ensure that the Local Committee is kept informed of the scheme development, the Local Committee is asked to note the results of the analysis of the public engagement event on the Blackwater Valley Sustainable Transport Package (Phase 1), including the A331 Blackwater Valley Road Cycle corridor proposals, included in Annex 1, together with supporting information of Annex 2 the exhibition panels and Annex 3 the questionnaire.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The Blackwater Valley Sustainable Transport Package (Phase 1), including the Blackwater Valley Road Cycle corridor (Blackwater Valley STP) was presented to this committee on 12 March 2015 (minute 13/15 refers) and the Local Committee agreed that officers undertake a public engagement event for these projects.
- 1.2 In addition these projects were included within the Local Transport Strategy and Forward Programme for Surrey Heath that was approved by the Local Committee on 11 December 2014 (minute 90/14 refers).
- 1.3 A Business Case submission was made to the EM3 LEP on 16 September 2014 in partnership with Surrey Heath Borough Council and Hampshire County Council.
- 1.4 The projects have been awarded £1,062,500 of Grant Funding from the EM3 LEP (75%) with £387,500 (25%) coming from local contributions.

2. ANALYSIS:

Blackwater Valley STP (Phase 1) – public engagement headline summary

- 2.1 The Blackwater Valley STP (Phase 1) was the subject of a 6-week public engagement between 15 June and 27 July 2015.
- 2.2 An exhibition was held on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd of July at Watchmoor Business Park, Camberley.
- 2.3 Annex 1 provides a more detailed report on the public engagement event but the headline findings have been set out below.
- 2.4 The event was advertised repeatedly via social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter using the county council's Surrey Matters platforms. Advertising banners on the Surrey homepage were posted at regular intervals that directed users to the web pages, and the project was also advertised on the Surrey Heath Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership web sites.
- 2.5 Posters and leaflets were displayed at The Mall (Camberley), at The Hatches and on the Blackwater Valley Path.
- 2.6 Approximately 150 leaflets were distributed to commuters entering/exiting Blackwater and Farnborough North railway stations, and approximately 400 flyers were distributed to local businesses at Watchmoor Business Park and Frimley Business Park, as well as a number of other employers in the area such as Sainsbury's and Waitrose (Frimley).
- 2.7 The dedicated county council webpage for this project received **1,252** views during the 6 week engagement period.
- 2.8 In addition to this, the consultation was promoted at a business event on 18 June 2015.

- 2.9 The two-day exhibition at the Watchmoor Business Park welcomed **29** visitors and **102** questionnaire responses were received, 92% online and 8% handwritten.
- 2.10 These responses have been analysed and are provided in more detail in Annex 1.
- 2.11 The responses to the questionnaire have been compared with recent similar Major schemes and STP public engagement events and these are indicated in Annex 4.
- 2.12 Overall the response to the proposals was positive.
- 2.13 It should also be noted that the Local Committee received a petition on 11 December 2014 signed by 300 people asking for improvements to The Hatches to Farnborough North Station (bridleway 19). It was noted at that meeting that the county council had a longer term improvement plan for this bridleway (minute 84/14 refers), which was the subject of the business case submission to the EM3 LEP.
- 2.14 To take advantage of the summer and the school holiday period, bridleway 19 improvements (The Red Route) were commenced on 3 August with the widening and reconstruction of the route, new fences and surfacing.
- 2.15 Hampshire County Council and the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership will progress the improvements on the 'Blue Route', within the Hampshire area.
- 2.16 Surrey County Council are progressing the design of the 'Green Route' which crosses the A331 Blackwater Valley Road and the 'Orange Route' which forms the cycle/footway corridor on the eastern side of the A331 Blackwater Valley Road.
- 2.17 The speed limit on the A331 Blackwater Valley Road has been reduced to 50mph in preparation for the introduction of the Cycle corridor (Orange route).

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Options were considered by the officers from Surrey and Hampshire County Council's and the proposals set out in Annex 3 were considered the best option based on cost to fit in with available funding and deliverability within a tight timeframe.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 The exhibitions on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd July were held at Watchmoor Business Park and were open between 0930am to 0430pm on both dates.
- 4.2 Officers from the county council and Sustrans were available to answer questions regarding the proposals.

4.3 A specific public web page was created for this project that gave details of the exhibition and the questionnaire. It should be noted that what was on display at the exhibition was also available on the web site.

4.4 Notification of the public engagement event was also sent to various interested groups through the Local Transport Plan stakeholder engagement consultee schedule, as well as Hampshire County Council's promotion systems.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The detailed business case for the scheme has been submitted which included a value for money section.

5.2 The estimated cost for both projects is £1,062,500 with the local contribution providing £387,500.

5.3 The local contribution funding is now in place for these projects and the County Council is working in partnership with Hampshire County Council to deliver these improvements.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 It is the objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA's) will be carried out for each Major / Sustainable Transport scheme.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The headline benefits arising from the Blackwater Valley STP (phase 1) are boosting economic growth by;

- Tackling congestion
- Improved journey time reliability
- Reduced journey times
- Reduced vehicle operating costs
- Improved walking and cycling connectivity from/to Blackwater, Frimley and Farnborough North railway stations to local businesses.
- Support to tourism / rural economy; to the Blackwater Valley Path and Basingstoke Canal .

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
Corporate Parenting/Looked After	No significant implications arising

Children	from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below.

8.1 Sustainability and Public Health implications

Increased walking and cycling (as well as public transport use), where it replaces motorised forms of transport such as the car, will improve air quality and reduce carbon emission levels, which is a key objective of the Surrey LTP. Passenger transport and modal shift from the car to buses/rail are a further key objective of the Surrey LTP.

Transport is responsible for one third of carbon emission in Surrey. Surrey's Local Transport Plan has a target to reduce carbon emissions from (non-motorway) transport by 10% (absolute emissions) by 2020, increasing to 25% reduction by 2035 from 2007 baseline of 2,114k tonnes.

Increased walking and cycling has a positive impact on the health of a person. The NHS identifies cycling as an activity which provides significant health benefits. The emerging Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy has identified obesity as one of the priority public health challenges.

The whole project including the improved walking and cycling facilities will be marketed to residents and businesses and cycle training is available through Surrey County Council to those less confident of cycling to encourage take up and to maximise the benefits of the new infrastructure.

It could be that increased levels of walking and cycling to and around the town centre will have a positive effect on the local retail economy as some recent studies suggesting that pedestrians and cyclists actually spend more on a trip into a town than a motorist.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The Business case for this project has been approved by the EM3 LEP and the bid has been the subject of independent scrutiny by the LEP's consultants.
- 9.2 The County Council in partnership with Hampshire County Council have carried out a public engagement for 6-weeks between the 15 June and 27 July, with a positive outcome from the responses received, and the Local Committee are asked to note the consultation report (Annex 1) and approve the 'on highway' works as indicated in Annex 5 to progress to detailed design.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The county council have commenced works on the 'The Hatches' bridleway 19 Red Route and design of the Green and Orange routes, to enable construction to take place at the first opportunity and with works expected to be completed by 31 March 2016.

ITEM 13

- 10.2 The Blue Route within Hampshire will be managed by them and they have engaged with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership to deliver these improvements.
-

Contact Officer: Paul Fishwick
Job title Project Manager, Transport Policy
Contact number 03456 009 009

Consulted

Surrey County Council officers: Lyndon Mendes, David Stempfer, Caroline Tuttle, Steve Howard, Marc Woodall, Peter Orchard, Anne Woods
Hampshire County Council representative; Helen Merrills
Surrey Heath Borough Council; Jane Ireland

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Public Engagement Analysis
Annex 2 – Web site and exhibition Panels
Annex 3 – Questionnaire
Annex 4a – Rushmoor Cycle Forum response
Annex 4b – Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust response
Annex 5 – Public engagement comparison
Annex 6 – Improvement corridors

Sources/background papers:

Business case submission to EM3 LEP 16 September 2014