

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

DATE: 8 December 2015

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

SUBJECT: Guildford Town Centre Transport Package

DIVISION: Guildford West, Guildford South West, Guildford South East

**SUMMARY OF ISSUES:**

This paper is to brief members on the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package project which was the subject of a six week consultation between 5 October and 15 November 2015, and to agree the package of measures to take forward to form the Business Case submission at the end of January 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to:**

- (i) Note the results (**Annex 1**) of the high level analysis of the public engagement event on the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package and note that further consideration of the comments received will be taken forward to detailed design to progress the scheme and develop the business case.
- (ii) Agree the schedule of schemes (Annex 4) that will be developed to establish the most appropriate package of benefits for the business case.
- (iii) Note that the Local Committee 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 Guildford Town Centre Transport Package proposals, included in Annex 1, together with supporting information of **Annex 2** the exhibition panels and **Annex 3** the questionnaire, together with the recommended schedule of schemes that will be developed to establish the most appropriate benefits for the Business Case for submission to the EM3 LEP on 31 January 2016 (Annex 4).

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 A 'short list' of potential schemes was approved for consultation by the Local Committee on 30 September 2015 (minute ref 100/15 refers).
- 1.2 The consultation was carried out for 6 weeks between 5 October and 15 November 2015. Annex 1 provides a summary of the feedback. The consultation took place in conjunction with the consultation on the draft Borough Cycling Plan, which is the subject of another paper to this Committee, and in parallel with Guildford Borough Council's consultation on the Draft Guildford Town Centre and Hinterland Masterplan.
- 1.3 None of the schemes within the package that were consulted upon were 'opposed' by a majority of respondents but some were supported more than others.
- 1.4 The final schedule of schemes will go forward in the Business Case for submission on 31 January 2016.

2. ANALYSIS:

Guildford Town Centre Transport Package – public consultation headline summary

- 2.1 The project was the subject of a 6 week public consultation between 5 October and 15 November 2015.
- 2.2 In order to ensure comments which overlap each consultation are effectively captured, officers from Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council will be holding a workshop to share responses.
- 2.3 A staffed exhibition was held on Friday 16 and 23 October and 6 November with an unstaffed exhibition between 9 and 15 November at Guildford Library, North Street Guildford.
- 2.4 Annex 1 provides a more detailed report on the public consultation but the headline findings have been set out in this report (paragraph 3.2).
- 2.5 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 directing users to the relevant webpages were posted at regular intervals throughout the consultation period, and the consultation was also advertised on the Borough Council web site.
- 2.6 Posters and leaflets were displayed at:

- Guildford Borough Council offices
- Surrey Sports Park
- Guildford town centre car parks
- Guildford Library
- The Friary Centre (concierge)
- Guildhall
- Guildford tourist information centre
- Yvonne Arnaud theatre
- G-Live
- The Electric Theatre
- Guildford College
- Guildford Leisure Centre
- Guildford railway station

2.7 Approximately 350 leaflets were distributed to commuters entering/exiting Guildford railway station during the PM peak travel period on Thursday 22 October.

2.8 The dedicated county council webpage for this project received **1,780** views during the 6 week consultation period.

2.9 In addition to this, special briefing sessions were set up with interested groups including the Disability Alliance Network.

2.10 The three days of staffed exhibitions at the Guildford Library welcomed **199** visitors and **151** questionnaire responses were received, 80% online and 20% handwritten.

2.11 These responses have been analysed and are provided in more detail in Annex 1.

2.12 A number of emails and letters were received as part of the consultation. These contained a number of detailed points, where these are related to items in the package of schemes, these will be considered under detailed design. Wider comments will be shared with appropriate partner organisations.

2.13 The number of responses to the questionnaire has been compared with recent similar Major Schemes and Sustainable Transport Package (STP) public engagement events and these are indicated in **Annex 5**.

2.14 Overall there were no elements of the proposals where respondents provided a majority disagreement.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 The Guildford Town Centre Transport Package is complementary to the Draft Guildford Town Centre and Hinterland Masterplan Report, and the emerging Guildford Local Cycling Strategy.

3.2 A paper brought to the Committee on 30 September 2015 (minute ref 100/15 refers) outlined the 'shortlist' of proposed schemes to be included in the package and to be the subject of consultation. The list is repeated below, along with the main findings from the consultation.

(i) **Walnut Tree Close closure (experimental closure** for up to 18 months), reducing traffic flow on Walnut Tree Close outside Guildford station.

- Feedback: This was the most widely commented on proposal. 53% of respondents said that they agreed with the proposal (ticked "yes"); 26% opposed it (ticked "no"); and 18% were unsure (ticked "I don't know"). Some respondents who ticked the "no" or "I don't know" columns did, however, provide a comment. Amongst those who opposed the scheme or didn't know, the most common issues raised were that:

(a) the closure seems unviable and would negatively impact businesses, residential properties and access to the station;

(b) the closure will create greater congestion; and

(c) it was right to consider improving Walnut Tree Close, but a closure was the wrong solution.

- Action: Consider further under analysis for development of business case

(ii) **Walnut Bridge replacement** (new bridge for pedestrian and cycle use, allowing improved connectivity over the River Wey)

- Feedback: This was the most supported proposal. 79% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked "yes"); 8% opposed it (ticked "no"); and 12% were unsure (ticked "I don't know"). Amongst those who either opposed or ticked "I don't know", there was little comment so we cannot be sure of the reasons, if any, for opposition. Concern was instead raised about the potential impact a new bridge would have on Walnut Tree Close, for example the effect of greater numbers of cyclists and pedestrians crossing the bridge and then crossing Walnut Tree Close. This would be considered under detailed design.

- Action: Include in development of business case

(iii) **Guildford College Link+** (pedestrian and cycle route, between new Walnut Bridge and Guildford College, connecting to existing network at Stoke Park)

- Feedback: 65% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked "yes"); 7% opposed it (ticked "no"); and 26% were unsure (ticked "I don't know"). Amongst those who either opposed or ticked "I don't know", there was little comment so we cannot be sure of the reasons, if any, for opposition.

- Action: Include in development of business case
- (iv) **Millbrook Road car park junction** (introduction of traffic lights, enabling right turn exit from car park for southbound traffic and reduce traffic entering the gyratory)
- Feedback: 66% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked “yes”); 7% opposed it (ticked “no”); and 27% were unsure (ticked “I don’t know”). Few comments were received that gave an indication of why some respondents opposed or were unsure of the proposal; some concern was raised about a possible increase in congestion at this location, resulting from the new traffic lights proposed.
 - Action: include in development of business case
- (v) **A25 Cycle Corridor** (completion of pedestrian and cycle improvements between Boxgrove Roundabout and Surrey Way)
- Feedback: 62% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked “yes”); 13% opposed it (ticked “no”); and 24% were unsure (ticked “I don’t know”). No negative comments were received for the scheme beyond general comments regarding the nature of segregation of cycle and walking paths.
 - Action: include in development of business case
- (vi) **A25 /A320 Stoke Crossroads** improvement
- Feedback: 65% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked “yes”); 11% opposed it (ticked “no”); and 23% were unsure (ticked “I don’t know”). Comments raised from those who opposed this proposal or who were unsure centred around respondents wanting further evidence / information of the proposed junction alterations.
 - Action: Include in development of business case
- (vii) Walking/cycling/bus corridor London Road (**London Road station to Boxgrove Roundabout**)
- Feedback: 54% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked “yes”); 12% opposed it (ticked “no”); and 33% were unsure (ticked “I don’t know”). Comments raised from those who opposed this proposal or who were unsure were typically because the respondent didn’t use the route or it wouldn’t impact on the way they travelled around Guildford. Comments made also raised the aforementioned issue of off-road cycle and walking paths. General support was given for (vii), (viii) and (ix). Further consideration to which of these three elements will be taken forward will be undertaken as the analysis and preparation of the business case progresses.
 - Action: include in development of business case
- (viii) Walking/cycling/bus corridor (**London Road station to Boxgrove junction on Epsom Road**)

ITEM 9

- Feedback: 51% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked “yes”); 13% opposed it (ticked “no”); and 35% were unsure (ticked “I don’t know”). See (vii) above for comments.

(ix) Walking/cycling/bus corridor London Road (**Boxgrove roundabout to Ganghill**)

- Feedback: 51% of respondents agreed with the proposal (ticked “yes”); 10% opposed it (ticked “no”); and 38% were unsure (ticked “I don’t know”). See (vii) above for comments.

(x) Consideration of bus improvements (in relation to the locations above)

- This element was not treated individually in the consultation, but was instead viewed as part of other elements.

3.3 Now that the results of the public consultation on the proposed options are known these will inform the development of the business case to provide the optimal benefits.

3.4 The proposed experimental closure of Walnut Tree Close will be the subject of a separate statutory consultation as part of the legal order process.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 The project was the subject of a 6-week public engagement between 5 October and 15 November 2015.

4.2 Officers from the county council were available to answer questions regarding the proposals.

4.3 A specific public web page was created for this project which 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.

4.5 Where traffic orders and Notices are required such as new toucan crossings and the proposed experimental closure on Walnut Tree Close these will be the subject of a separate statutory consultation as part of the legal order process.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1A detailed Business Case for the scheme will be submitted in January 2016 and will include a value for money section.

5.2 The estimated cost for this project is £8.91m.

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) will be carried out for each Major / Sustainable Transport scheme.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The headline benefits of the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package to the local area are as follows:

- Encourage more walking, cycling, bus and rail travel
- Reduce congestion and its cost to local businesses
- Help people get to work, retail and railway stations
- Reduce personal injury accidents.

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 Children	No significant implications arising 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, 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 aim of the consultation was to gather evidence of support for the need for the types of scheme included in the package to allow progression to a Business Case to be submitted to the EM3 LEP in January 2016. Analysis of the consultation feedback (Annex 1) has suggested the following:
- 9.2 Feedback to the consultation on the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package has been shown to provide high level support for the types of measures included in the transport package to help address congestion in the town centre, and to promote the use of sustainable modes.

www.surreycc.gov.uk/guildford

- 9.3 The consultation asked respondents about how they currently travel around Guildford and whether the improvements would encourage them to travel more sustainably on journeys to school, work, shopping areas and the railway stations. The results show that the improvements would encourage more journeys such as these to be made sustainably.
- 9.4 The results of the consultation provide enough confidence to move forward with the business case and refine the package as necessary, depending upon funding and further analysis.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Schemes will be developed further and included in the Business Case to seek funding from the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership. The Business Case is to be submitted by 31 January 2016.
- 10.2 The project will be developed further and where traffic orders and Notices are required, such as new toucan crossings and the proposed closure of Walnut Tree Close these will be presented to the Local Committee for approval to advertise the legal orders.

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Consulted

Surrey County Council officers including Transport Policy Team, Transport Studies, Passenger Transport Group, Place and Sustainability Group and Local Highways. Guildford Borough Council officers

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Public Consultation Analysis
 Annex 2 – Exhibition Panels
 Annex 3 – Questionnaire
 Annex 4 – Schedule of schemes
 Annex 5 – Public engagement comparison

Sources/background papers:

None

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