

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (SPELTHORNE)

DATE: 18 JULY 2016

LEAD OFFICER: David Sharpington

SUBJECT: Spelthorne Cycling Plan

DIVISION: ALL



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

As part of the Surrey Transport Plan, a Surrey Cycling Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2013. The Strategy set out a role for Local Committees to oversee the development of Local Cycling Plans. This report suggests a way forward for Spelthorne.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Spelthorne) is asked to:

- (i) Approve the method for developing the Spelthorne Cycling Plan;
- (ii) That the development of the Cycling Plan be included in the remit of the Transport Task Group.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

A Spelthorne Cycling Plan will support the Spelthorne Local Transport Strategy. A long-term, consistent approach to provision, that supports other programmes, will help its effectiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 The Surrey Cycling Strategy, approved by Cabinet in December 2013, set its aim as 'more people cycling, more safely' and set out its vision:

"..... a true Olympic legacy would see every child in Surrey learning to ride a bike and being able to cycle safely to school. It would mean that many more of our residents cycle for transport and leisure, reducing congestion and reliance on cars and reaping the considerable health and economic benefits this brings. And it would mean that people without access to a car can travel safely and affordably around the county."

1.2 The objectives in the Surrey Cycling Strategy included, "Surrey Local Committees will oversee development of Local Cycling Plans that reflect local priorities and issues". This would include a Spelthorne Cycling Plan.

- 1.3 Regarding infrastructure, the Surrey Cycling Strategy states: “We will improve infrastructure for cycling by securing funding to develop high quality, joined up cycle routes, taking account of international best practice, utilising off road and quiet streets, and separating cyclists from motorised traffic on busy roads where feasible. We will focus our efforts on routes that connect where people live with where they work, shop and go to school and with rail and bus stations.”

This approach arises from the view that most people do not wish to mix with heavy traffic when cycling and that the prospect of doing so prevents some people cycling altogether. This was reflected in the consultation for the Strategy, where the most common response to the questions, ‘what would encourage you to cycle more often?’ and ‘which of the following would encourage you to take up cycling?’ was in both cases, ‘more cycle routes, particularly away from busy traffic’.

So the strategy places an emphasis on provision that provides an alternative to cycling on busy roads – cycle paths adjacent to the road, greenways completely away from the road and quiet road routes.

However, it also recognised that many confident, ‘fast’ cyclists may prefer to use the road, for example it takes them away from the presence of pedestrians and people riding bikes more slowly.

Other cycle infrastructure includes cycle parking and changing facilities at the workplace.

- 1.4 The strategy also recognises infrastructure provision by itself will not achieve the full potential benefits of cycling.
- 1.5 Promotion and events are an essential part of a strategy, especially in relation to public health programmes that are trying to reduce levels of inactivity in both the child and adult population.
- 1.6 Skills and behaviour are another key area of activity. A person cycling needs to achieve a basic level of traffic awareness, skills and control even if their intention is to ride only on quiet roads or cycle paths. Initiatives such as Drive Smart address all road users including people cycling; lawful behaviour and understanding and respect of other road users.
- 1.7 Lastly, monitoring and evaluation needs to be built into the Plan.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The opportunity is to choose and target Spelthorne-specific interventions to achieve the potential set out in the Surrey Cycling Strategy. This is where working on a Borough Cycling Plan, utilising local knowledge and evidence, could be effective.
- 2.2 As described in section 1, the range of activities that can help to increase the level of cycling and make it safer are:
- a. Infrastructure
 - b. Promotion and events

- c. Skills and behaviour
- d. Monitoring and evaluation

The Cycling Plan could be structured around these four strands.

- 2.3 A number of past and present projects in Spelthorne have been aimed at making cycling safer and promoting it as a healthy lifestyle. There are around 41km of cycle facility in Spelthorne – cycle paths, cycle lanes and advisory routes. The Borough Council runs a successful “Cycling for Health” scheme aimed at adults. The County Council offers subsidised Bikeability cycle training to all year 2, year 5 and year 6 pupils in the Borough and also offers customised cycle training for all ages.
- 2.4 Creating a network of paths that are separated from busy roads will require substantial capital investment and it is a long-term prospect. The Department of Transport has occasionally made significant sums available for transport schemes and in 2013 the County successfully bid for the ‘Walton Links’ cycle path scheme, enabling the construction of the cycle path between Gaston Bridge and Walton Bridge (Local Committee 24th June 2013 item 41/13) The “Wider Staines Sustainable Transport Package (STP): Stanwell - North Ashford – Staines” (Local Committee 14 March 2016, Highways Update refers), includes cycle provision and will form the basis of a bid to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The Transport Task Group to oversee the production of a Spelthorne Cycling Plan.

The following paragraphs set out an approach to developing a Plan. It is proposed that the development of the Cycling Plan be included in the remit of the Transport Task Group.

- 3.2 Infrastructure

The following approach will allow priorities to be developed with a framework of a consistent, Borough-wide approach to infrastructure:

1. Produce a Borough-wide Plan of connected ‘desire lines’. Some initial officer work has already been undertaken on this, including plotting existing facilities and proposals in the Forward Programme of the Local Transport Strategy (Local Committee 28th September 2015, item 25/15) However, it is still draft and requires scrutiny.
2. Seek to implement significant sections of route when sufficient funding becomes available, for example through LEP funding or development opportunities. It is an advantage in bidding processes if schemes have been developed to a point that shows they are feasible, have benefits and have a reliable cost estimate.
3. Identify potential smaller improvements within the Borough-wide network that could potentially be implemented from local funds. For example, this could be minor works such as dropped kerbs, conversion of short lengths of path to shared use, monitoring

equipment, feasibility studies for larger schemes or Travel SMART activities.

3.3 Promotion and Events

An information report is also being presented to this Local Committee providing an update on “Travel SMART” activities, which can support more and safer cycling through information, promotion and marketing techniques. An ongoing programme could be included in a Cycling Plan.

3.4 Skills and behaviour

There are two County-wide initiatives that could be further adapted to develop a Spelthorne-specific programme. Firstly, Bikeability cycle training could make local offers if funding was available. Secondly, Surrey County Council's Drive SMART road safety partnership with Surrey Police aims to reduce casualties and antisocial road use by encouraging users to share roads and paths lawfully and respectfully.

3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can both help define priorities and measure the success of initiatives. For example, cyclist casualties followed a general upward trend in the County 2008-2014, with 2015 seeing a decrease. Cyclist casualties in Spelthorne comprise about 1 in 10 of the County total:

Spelthorne cyclist casualties	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Fatal	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	3	5	11	14	10	12	12	12
Slight	44	51	28	47	45	54	53	46
Total in Spelthorne	47	57	40	61	55	66	65	58
Total for Surrey	421	472	453	529	561	627	648	578
Spelthorne as percent of Surrey	11%	12%	9%	12%	10%	11%	10%	10%

Automatic cycle counters enable constant recording of the numbers of cyclists passing over the counter loop; the counters can be on paths or the road. There are 80 counters across Surrey; the first ones in Spelthorne were installed in 2015 as part of the Walton Bridge cycle links scheme.

In 2015, as part of the County Cycling Strategy monitoring, interview surveys were conducted with a representative sample of people across Surrey – 147 people were interviewed in Spelthorne out of a total of 1,671 in the County. Findings included that 44% of Spelthorne residents had cycled in the last 12 months (all of Surrey 46%).

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 If the Committee agrees include the development of the Cycling Plan in the remit of the Transport Task Group, that Group could be responsible for setting out a timetable for the production of the Plan and the scope of any related consultation.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 There are no implications as this report sets out a suggestion for producing a Cycling Plan rather than any actions that might come from it.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken for the Surrey Cycling Strategy. This could form a framework for undertaking a similar exercise for a Spelthorne Cycling Plan as it is developed.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The Cycling Plan would be a borough wide document. Specific actions would have local impacts in their specified areas, and these will be assessed as proposals are brought forward.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
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	No significant implications arising from this report

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 The proposed method for developing a Cycling Plan will help to ensure a Borough-wide, member-led set of proposals and priorities in which interested local people will be able to participate.

9.2 It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Approve the methodology for developing the Spelthorne Cycling Plan;
2. That the remit of the Transport Task Group includes the development of the Cycling Plan.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 The Transport Task Group would work on the development of the Plan.

Contact Officer:

David Sharpington
Cycling Programme Manager
020 8541 9977

Sources/background papers:

1. Surrey Cycling Strategy, Surrey County Council Cabinet report item 224/13a, 17 December 2013.
 2. Walton Bridge cycle links scheme, Local Committee report item 41/13, 24 June 2013.
 3. Forward Programme of the Local Transport Strategy, Local Committee report item 25/15, 28 September 2015.
-