



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

Bid to the Department for Transport for Cycling Safety Schemes

25 February 2013

KEY ISSUE:

As part of its commitment to reducing cycling casualties and securing a cycling legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games, Surrey County Council is developing a programme to encourage more people to cycle, more often, safely and conveniently. This report seeks the committee's comments and approval to proposals for an off-road segregated cycling path scheme extending from Walton Bridge through Walton Town Centre and along Terrace Road. The scheme was the subject of a bid submitted to the Department for Transport's (DfT) cycle safety scheme fund.

SUMMARY:

In July 2012 the DfT announced a £15m fund for cycling infrastructure in order to tackle cycling casualties and reduce barriers to more cycling. Following analysis of cycling collisions across Surrey, the county council has submitted a bid for funding for five cycling schemes, two of which were highlighted as a priority, offering best fit with the DfT fund evaluation criteria. One of the two priority schemes includes proposals within Elmbridge for a link from the new cycle paths on Walton Bridge extending through Walton Town Centre and along Terrace Road.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) that the proposals for the Walton-on-Thames Bridge Links cycle scheme are approved and that residents and businesses will be consulted to inform upon the detailed design prior to construction, should the bid to DfT be successful.**

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In July 2012 the DfT announced a £15m fund for cycling infrastructure to be administered by Sustrans. The fund was set up due to growing concern about the number of cycling casualties across Great Britain. Following initial expressions of interest, local authorities were invited to submit bids by 30 November 2012, and the DfT will announce the outcome in February 2013. In November 2012, the DfT announced further funding of around £10m to augment the fund. Scheme implementation is required to be complete or largely complete by December 2013.
- 1.2. As part of its commitment to reducing cycling casualties and securing a cycling legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games, Surrey County Council is developing a programme to encourage more people to cycle, more often, safely and conveniently. Increased cycling will provide health benefits to participants, and will help to reduce congestion and carbon emissions on Surrey's roads. Therefore Surrey County Council has submitted a bid to the DfT fund for five schemes, two of which were highlighted as a priority because they offered the best fit with the fund evaluation criteria:

Priority Scheme Name	Borough/ District
• Walton-on-Thames Bridge Links	Elmbridge & Spelthorne
• Leatherhead Town Centre	Mole Valley

- 1.3. The bid also includes the three other schemes in order to demonstrate the scale of the county council's ambition, and in case any further funding is made available by the Department for Transport:

Additional Schemes	Borough/ District
• Leatherhead Wider Links	Mole Valley
• Kingston Road, Staines-upon-Thames	Spelthorne
• Egham, The Causeway	Runnymede

2. ANALYSIS and COMMENTARY

Cycling Casualties

- 2.1. While the overall number of road casualties has been decreasing in Surrey, the number of cycling casualties has increased sharply in recent years, over and above the increase that has also been seen across Great Britain. The number of seriously injured cyclists in Surrey has more than doubled since 2008, whereas the increase in seriously injured cyclists across Great Britain over the same period was 26 per cent.
- 2.2. The number of seriously injured cyclists in Elmbridge has also doubled (from 5 in 2008, to 10 in 2011), though the numbers are much smaller and therefore more susceptible to random fluctuation from year to year. The total number of cyclists injured in Elmbridge (all severities) has increased by 31 per cent (from 62 in 2008, to 81 in 2011).

Cycling Casualties in Surrey 2008 to 2011*

Severity	2008	2009	2010	2011
Fatal	1	2	4	1
Serious	49	78	93	106
Slight	367	390	353	422
Total	417	470	450	529

* At the time of writing the number of cycling casualties in 2012 had not yet been confirmed, however emerging results indicate a similar or greater number countywide than in 2011, despite 2012 being one of the wettest years on record.

Cycling Casualties in Elmbridge 2008 to 2011

Severity	2008	2009	2010	2011
Fatal	0	0	0	0
Serious	5	8	13	10
Slight	57	42	47	71
Total	62	50	60	81

- 2.3. It is thought likely that the increase in cycling casualties is due to an increase in the overall levels of cycling. However we cannot assume a simple direct relationship between the level of cycling and casualties, because there is wide variation across the county. For example there has been a large increase in cycling in Woking town centre following the Woking Cycle Town project, but there has not been any increase in cycling casualties there. This shows that investment in high quality cycling infrastructure, promotion and training can result in increased cycling, without increased casualties.

Scheme Design Principles and Selection

- 2.4. The five schemes submitted by Surrey County Council were developed following analysis of cycling casualties taking place across the county to identify locations and stretches of road with a concentration of cycling casualties. Guildford, Woking and Reigate/ Redhill were excluded from this

bid as these areas have already been awarded funding to improve cycling infrastructure as part of the DfT's Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

- 2.5. The proposals were then refined and prioritised in light of feedback received from Sustrans. The schemes were designed to offer a strong fit with the fund evaluation criteria set by the DfT:
- Evidence of perceived or actual risk to cyclists
 - Evidence of match funding
 - Deliverability within timescale
 - Clear demand for stakeholders for proposed solution
 - High quality design and innovation
 - Potential demand including connectivity and promotion
 - Commitment to monitor proposed scheme before and after
- 2.6. Outline design of the schemes has been undertaken following the principle of providing continuous cycle paths separated from motor vehicles along busy roads so that people who are not able or willing to mix with heavy traffic (i.e. most people) can get around by bike and so that people who already cycle find them convenient. Furthermore, segregated paths will make it easier for motorists to pass cyclists and reduced conflict between cyclists and other users of the highway, including motorists and pedestrians.
- 2.7. This approach is based on attitudinal survey research that was carried out in Walton-on-Thames and Leatherhead as part of the bid development. This research clearly indicated that Surrey residents would be far more likely to cycle if they had access to segregated cycle paths, and that sharing busy roads with vehicle traffic is a major barrier to more cycling.

3. PROPOSED SCHEME IN ELMBRIDGE

- 3.1. Drawings describing outline proposals for this scheme (which includes elements within both Spelthorne and Elmbridge), are contained within Annex 1. Following analysis it was identified that 35 cyclists have been injured, 3 of them seriously, between January 2008 and July 2012 on these roads.
- 3.2. It can be seen that within Elmbridge the scheme will provide continuous cycle paths segregated from motor vehicles and pedestrians along both sides of Terrace Road from the junction with Waterside Drive (next to Grovelands School), up to Church Street. Raised tables will be considered for the mouths of the side roads to encourage slower speeds and safer, more considerate interaction between motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians at these crossing points.
- 3.3. The cycle paths will proceed along both sides of Church Street and Hepworth Way, (the existing wide carriageway will be narrowed to create space for the segregated cycle track). Care will be taken to incorporate cycling facilities within the traffic signal junction with the High Street.

- 3.4. A number of options will be considered for the junction of New Zealand Avenue with Oatlands Drive to incorporate cycle and pedestrian crossings while maintaining efficient motor vehicle traffic flow through this important junction. The diagram with Annex 1 is only one illustrative layout and traffic modelling will be undertaken to determine the preferred layout. The proposed cycle paths will then link to the cycle paths that are being built on both sides of the road over Walton Bridge, and which will then continue into Spelthorne along the A244 up to Gaston Bridge.
- 3.5. The scheme is innovative because it includes continuous, separate cycle paths on both sides of the carriageway in a town centre location. This is the type of environment where in the past it has often been perceived as “too difficult” to provide dedicated continuous cycle facilities. The proposals will also provide improved facilities for pedestrians, and narrower carriageways that will reduce excessive speeding.
- 3.6. The scheme will improve access and reduce risk along desire lines to reach Walton-on-Thames town centre, and will link to the new cycle paths on the new Walton Bridge. This in turn links to the National Cycle Route 4 “Thames Valley Cycle Route” which runs underneath Walton Bridge alongside the river Thames.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1. Two general attitude surveys have been completed in Walton and Leatherhead in order to inform Surrey’s future cycling programme activities. This showed that sharing busy roads with vehicle traffic is a major barrier to more cycling, and that there was support for fully segregated cycling facilities.
- 4.2. The Local Committee Chair, Vice Chair and relevant Divisional Members were provided with a copy of the council’s initial expression of interest on 3 September 2012. They were also provided with a copy of the outline scheme drawings on 20 November 2012 and met with officers to discuss the proposals on 13 February 2013.
- 4.3. Should the bid be successful, detailed design will proceed and residents and businesses directly affected by the proposals will be consulted to inform upon the design prior to construction. For the Walton-on-Thames Bridge Links cycling scheme it is envisaged that consultation with residents and businesses could be incorporated into the ongoing communications regarding the construction of the new Walton Bridge.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Excluding the cycle paths that form part of the Walton Bridge project, it is estimated that the scheme will cost approximately £1,409,000. This will be met by the bid to the DfT for £984,000 along with match funding of £225,000 section 106 developer contributions and £200,000 capital investment by the county council, subject to approval by county council cabinet on 26 March 2013.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Increased 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 new routes will be marketed to residents and businesses and training will be offered to those less confident of cycling to encourage take up and to maximise the benefit of the new infrastructure.
- 6.2. Increased cycling, where it replaces motorised forms of transport, will improve air quality and reduce carbon emission levels in the county. 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 a 2007 baseline of 2,114k tonnes.

7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None identified.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. In developing the county council's Cycling Programme we have identified the following impacts and actions:

Key impacts

Younger people – more reliant on cycling as a mode of transport

Older people – less likely to cycle due to mobility and other concerns; could be adversely affected by cycle routes that impact on pedestrian routes and access.

Gender – our research suggests women are less confident cycling in busy traffic although cycle casualty rates amongst males are higher than amongst females.

Disability – people with mobility problems and visual impairment adversely affected by cycle routes where they interact with pedestrian routes

Actions

Identify key routes that link school destinations

Segregation of routes from pedestrians wherever feasible

Development of segregated cycle routes designed with least confident cyclists in mind

Achieve full segregation wherever feasible.

9. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1. As part of its commitment to reducing cycling casualties and securing a cycling legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games, Surrey County Council has submitted a bid to the Department for Transport for five off-road segregated cycling path schemes. The top priority scheme (Walton Bridge Links) is within the Borough of Elmbridge and was developed following identification of routes throughout Surrey suffering higher numbers of cycling casualties.
- 9.2. The schemes were developed following attitude surveys that showed that sharing the road with busy traffic was a major barrier to more cycling, and that there was support for off-road segregated cycling facilities.
- 9.3. It is recommended that the proposals for Elmbridge are approved as they will reduce cycling casualties and other road casualties, and will encourage more cycling, and safer cycling. Increased cycling has benefits to the health of participants, helps reduce traffic congestion and will reduce carbon emissions where it replaces other motorised transport. If successful the bid will result in additional investment to increase accessibility to Walton-on-Thames town centre, which would help maintain the town's economic activity.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

**Annex 1: Walton Bridge Links – route plan
Walton Bridge Links – illustrative junction layouts**

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