

COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE

Item under consideration: Call-in of Cabinet decision, 29 October 2024, London Road Guildford Active Travel Scheme.

Date considered: 19 November 2024

On 19 November the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee convened a special meeting to review the decision of Cabinet (On 29 October 2024), not to proceed with the construction of Section 1, London Road Active Travel Scheme following a call-in request by the Vice Chairman of the Committee. At the call-in meeting, Committee members questioned Cabinet members on the decision taken. Following discussion, by a vote of 7 to 4 in favour with one abstention, the Select Committee resolved to refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration. This report summarises the reasons for referral.

Key points:

Committee members noted that the officer report and technical assessment made clear that the scheme represented an enhancement of safety compared to existing arrangements. Members noted that the scheme included compromises around road width and cycle width but that it was the best scheme available within those parameters and considered by experts to be safer than existing arrangements. Questions were raised regarding alternatives to the scheme to address safety concerns if it was not implemented. Cabinet Members suggested that a review could be undertaken to see what other safety measures or improvements could be made. The Committee noted that the decision not to proceed ran contrary to Council highways and climate change policies, including LTP4, and had a significant impact on local planning policies at Guildford Borough level and Local Cycling & Walking infrastructure Plans (LCWIP).

The Committee heard from Cabinet Members that the majority of the Cabinet had been persuaded by concerns over the proposed shared use nature of the scheme and the difficulties that some user may experience, plus concerns around the width of the road and proximity of HGVS which presented a risk to road users and pedestrians. The opposition of the Surrey Coalition of Disabled people was material.

Resolved:

That the Select Committee refers the decision of Cabinet made on 29 October 2024 not to proceed with the London Road Guildford Active Travel Scheme, back to the Cabinet for reconsideration on the grounds that:

- **The conclusions of the previous report to the cabinet and its technical assessment support the scheme as constituting a significant safety improvement for all road users.**
- **Technical evidence, equivalent in professional competence to the ARUP report, has yet to be assessed regarding Cabinet's main reasons for not approving the scheme.**

- **Alternative options to alleviate and address safety concerns have yet to be assessed or presented to the cabinet, including options such as a cyclist dismount sign for the section of the proposed scheme which concerns were expressed about.**
- **Active travel contributes to improved health and well-being, cleaner air, and the Council's ambition to hit net zero by 2050 as well as adopted transport policies, such as the Local Transport Plan (LTP4).**

Cllr Keith Witham

Chairman

Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee