

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

21 JUNE 2016

## PART I - DELEGATED

### 8. TRDC CYCLING STRATEGY – SCHEME DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report requests that the committee approves the draft programme of cycling schemes that were investigated in 2015/16, to be developed and potentially implemented by the District Council working with its partners, as well as proposals for marketing and publicising these schemes. An overview of the current Cycling Strategy is also provided.

#### 2. Details

- 2.1. The District Council promotes the development of its Cycling Strategy (2003) which is intended to:

- Maximise the use of cycles as a mode of transport, in order to reduce reliance on the use of private cars;
- Develop a cycle network which is safe, convenient, attractive and efficient, and so encouraging and enabling cycling;
- Ensure that the needs of cyclists are represented in transport, land use, health, education, leisure and environmental proposals.

The Strategy is intended to promote cycling as *a cheap, fun, healthy, reliable and adaptable form of transport, available to almost everyone.*

- 2.2. The Council has also formally endorsed the *South West Hertfordshire Cycling Study (2013)* and is working with the County Council to implement schemes proposed by the Study, many of which duplicate those proposed earlier by the District Council. The 2003 District strategy is currently being reviewed and this review will be subject to a full public consultation following consultation with all local Ward Councillors.
- 2.3. Both the District Strategy and the County Study are in line with the Local Transport Plan produced by the County Council, which promotes cycling as an effective, efficient form of Active Travel that can provide a viable alternative to car travel for many local journeys.
- 2.4. The meeting of this committee of June 2015 approved a programme of investigations into schemes to improve or enhance cycling in the District in 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A. That appendix provides an update on each investigation.
- 2.5. That committee also agreed to delegate authority to officers, in consultation with Lead Members and Local Ward Councillors to release funding towards any schemes that were found to be deliverable in the 2015/16 financial year. A capital budget of £40,000 annually was allocated towards cycling schemes in 2015/16 and of £25,000 in 2016/17.

## Progress on 2015/16 investigations

- 2.6. Initial investigations have been carried out for each of the fifteen schemes programmed in 2015/16. Following agreement by the relevant Members, the District Council agreed a capital contribution to support one of these, a scheme to improve a further section of the Grand Union Canal towpath, the Canal towpath in Kings Langley, from Water Lane northwards towards Hemel Hempstead. Progress on the other schemes is set out in Appendix A;
- 2.7. One scheme (the Ebury Way 'Gap' scheme at Tolpits Lane) has had to be substantially withdrawn as unfeasible, following legal investigations by project partners. Another, at East Lane in Bedmond, is unlikely to be progressed due to the significant challenges caused by the quality of the highway here; and an alternative connection between Abbots Langley and Bedmond is being investigated by the County Council.
- 2.8. Works on the current improvement scheme for the Grand Union Canal towpath, Phase 4, started in January 2016. The works include the introduction of a new level, well drained all-weather surface on a stretch of the towpath northwards from Water Lane, Kings Langley, shown at Appendix B.
- 2.9. This stretch is nearly 1 kilometre long with a width of up to 1.8 metres. The improved path features extra wide passing places along a narrow section to enable more people to use the path. Accesses to the towpath have been significantly improved, such as at Water Lane where a new, wider path replaces mud and invasive non-native vegetation.
- 2.10. This scheme will help to provide a traffic-free walking and cycling route to connect Kings Langley with other local towns including Abbots Langley and Leavesden, Rickmansworth, Croxley Green and Watford. The improvements will encourage safe and active travel for local people and visitors to the area to access local facilities.
- 2.11. The works were carried out by a formal partnership between the Canal & River Trust, Three Rivers District Council and Hertfordshire County Council. This phase of works cost £282,000 and was supported by contributions from Three Rivers of £100,000 in capital funding; and from Hertfordshire County Council of £142,000 in funding from Planning Obligations (paid by property developers towards improved sustainable transport for nearby developments). The Canal & River Trust provided project management and engineering expertise to enable the scheme to be delivered in less than six months, along with a contribution of £40,000.
- 2.12. This scheme extends the benefits of the schemes to which the District Council contributed under the previous Strategic Plan from 2013 to 2016. These include the *South Way Cycle Way scheme* (connecting the Grand Union canal with Abbots Langley and Leavesden on a nearly traffic-free route on footway, a quiet lane and a public right of way) and *Phases 1-3 of the Grand Union Canal towpath* improvements (creating a better surfaced traffic-free route between Rickmansworth, Croxley Green, West Watford, Hunton Bridge and Kings Langley).

### Three Rivers Cycling Strategy

- 2.13. The District Cycling Strategy aims to develop a network of cycle routes. Each individual link in these routes is considered in terms of ease and safety of cycling. Typical improvements include physical changes to path surfaces, new dropped kerbs, lighting, directional signage and the widening of paths where feasible, to reduce conflict between cyclists and other road users. In some

cases, it may be appropriate to change the legal status of cyclists to prioritise cycle access but many improvements are primarily physical design changes to make cyclists safer.

- 2.14. In order to integrate and build on the clear success of various initiatives that have been taken by the District Council to encourage sustainable travel around the District, a revised strategy is being developed in the form of a more general strategy to improve walking as well as cycling and other sustainable travel initiatives, with a particular focus on improving walking routes where these are shared with proposed cycling routes. It is intended that report on the revised Strategy will be presented to the committee this Autumn.

### **Proposed development of cycling schemes investigated in 2015/16**

- 2.15. The committee is recommended to agree that Officers continue to develop the schemes investigated in the 2015/16 financial year and set out in Appendix A, into schemes that are capable of being delivered. Officers will implement any feasible schemes, subject to agreement with relevant Members including the Lead Member for Economic Development, Sustainability and Transport, the Lead Member for Housing, Planning and Strategic Schemes, and relevant Ward Councillors.
- 2.16. The table at Appendix A sets out local proposals that are identified in the District and County strategies and identifies which Local Authority is leading on each proposal. The financial and technical requirements of most projects mean that they involve working in partnership with other organisations. The District Council works especially closely with Hertfordshire County Council which is the Highway and Traffic Authority as well as the lead authority for Public Rights of Way.
- 2.17. These proposals vary widely in scale and character depending on the type of path proposed and the context (adopted highway, private land or publicly-owned land). The development and delivery of schemes is therefore contingent on a range of factors such as land owner negotiations or legal powers (for example to improve adopted highway), in addition to the challenges involved in identifying suitable funding and working with partners and their priorities.
- 2.18. As flexibility will be required to progress these schemes in partnership with other organisations, depending on when funding and other opportunities become available, it is recommended that the committee delegates authority for cycle schemes to be progressed, following the initial investigation, to the Director, Community and Environmental Services in consultation with Lead Members.
- 2.19. In addition to cycle route improvements, a programme of new cycle parking is proposed in key destinations such as shopping centres as part of the Cycling Strategy. Proposals are being developed with London Underground Limited to increase cycle parking at local station forecourts.

### **3. Options/Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The schemes included in the programme will, if implemented, contribute towards the strategic objectives set out in the District Council's Strategic Plan, in support of all relevant Council policies and in particular the Council's Climate Change Strategy.
- 3.2 The schemes set out in the programme at Appendix A have been investigated during the last year and some can be potentially designed and delivered over the next financial year. The development and delivery of other schemes is contingent on the approval of partners who own the land where they are

proposed (primarily Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority) and are therefore reliant on the programmes and timescales of those partners.

3.3 The proposed schemes will help to develop a safer and more attractive network of cycling routes. This will contribute towards the Council's agreed policy objectives to enable and encourage cycling by developing a cycle network that is safe, convenient, attractive and efficient, to maximise cycling to reduce motorised vehicle trips.

3.4 The proposed schemes are included in either or both the adopted District Cycling Strategy 2003 and the South West Hertfordshire Cycling Study 2013 (endorsed by the District Council) and will benefit the local environment and a wide range of customers including local residents, businesses, providers of health and educational services and visitors to the local area.

#### 4. **Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets and the background to these proposals is detailed in the Three Rivers Cycling Strategy adopted in 2003. The relevant policies are entitled:

##### **Community Strategy 2012 – 2018**

##### **Three Rivers District Council Strategic Plan 2015 to 2018**

4.2 All schemes contribute towards the corporate aims to fulfil our objectives to:

- **Work with partners**, as all schemes are developed in conjunction with other public bodies such as the County Council, Transport for London or the Canal & River Trust, with land owners and local stakeholders including schools, health centres, Parish Councils and special interest groups).
- **Make the District safer and healthier as a place, providing a safe and healthy environment** by encouraging higher levels of cycling on safer and more attractive routes.
- **Reduce health inequalities** enabling and encouraging active travel by increasing cycle trips that replace physically passive motorised trips
- **Maintain a high quality local environment** by providing cycle parking and other infrastructure that improves the street scene and reduced motorised vehicle movements and need for parking.
- **Reduce the eco footprint of the district** by enabling cycle trips to replace trips that create emissions and other negative externalities affecting environment.
- **Work in partnership to promote economic prospects for all our communities** by enabling employees without vehicles (for example due to age, financial capability) to cycle to reach a wider range of employment.

4.3 This report does not propose any change to policy.

#### 5. **Financial Implications**

5.1 None specific.

5.2 The 2016/17 capital budget for development of the Cycling Strategy will be used towards these schemes and the programme will be managed within the existing budgetary provision.

## 6. **Legal Implications**

6.1 All schemes will be progressed in line with legal powers available to the District Council. This report recommends that investigations are carried out and powers delegated to officers to progress any schemes, and the Solicitor to the Council will be consulted before the implementation of any scheme.

## 7. **Equal Opportunities Implications**

### 7.1 **Relevance Test**

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	This is unnecessary as no change is proposed to service provision
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	None.

## 8. **Staffing Implications**

8.1 The programme is managed by the District Council's Senior Planning Officer in the Economic & Sustainable Development team.

## 9. **Environmental Implications**

9.1 The programme is intended to support the Council's objectives to promote sustainable travel, as set out in section 2.

9.2 The impact of schemes on the local built environment and street scene will be considered as part of individual schemes.

## 10. **Community Safety Implications**

10.1 All schemes are designed to take account of safety implications. Where appropriate the police will be consulted and where necessary road safety audits will be carried out.

## 11. **Public Health implications**

11.1 As detailed in Section 4 above, cycling as a form of active travel and recreational exercise contributes towards general public health and is enabled and encouraged by these recommendations.

## 12. **Customer Services Centre Implications**

12.1 Where required, the Customer Services Manager will be briefed as appropriate.

## 13. **Communications and Website Implications**

13.1 The scheme development process involves informal consultation of the public, local businesses and local interest groups. This is typically carried out using a

range of questionnaires and publications that are published online or on paper as appropriate. Consultations published online will be accessible from the websites both of the District Council and of the Council's sustainability programme ([www.greenourherts.org.uk](http://www.greenourherts.org.uk)). These mechanisms will also be used to promote any schemes that are developed for the strategy.

13.2 Some schemes require formal consultation of the public, usually under the traffic order-making regulations of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or under the Highways Act 1980 and associated legislation. In addition to this, it is intended that the occupiers of any property affected by any proposals will be directly informed.

13.3 Scheme marketing and promotion is important to the success of the strategy as routes will not be used until potential cyclists are made aware of them and encouraged to use them for everyday travel. Officers recommend that an element of the funding allocated to each scheme should be used in marketing and promotion. It is important, for example, that a launch event is held for each scheme. These events should be publicised as widely as possible, followed by promotional activities over the next year following the completion of each scheme, such as promoted rides, publication of leaflets and community engagement to highlight the improved routes.

#### 14. **Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy, which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

14.2 The following table gives the risks if the recommendations are agreed, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

Description of Risk		Impact	Likelihood
1	The programme may not be completed in full, due to the consultative nature of the legal process for introducing legal changes to paths and to limited resources within the council.	I	D
2	Due to the nature of proposed schemes that often rely on partnership working, lack of partners could lead to limited resources or legal powers being available to ensure that schemes would be implemented.	I	D

14.3 The following table gives the risks that would exist if the recommendations are rejected, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

Description of Risk		Impact	Likelihood
3	The ability of the Council to meet its strategic objectives detailed in section 4.1 and 4.2 would be reduced.	II	D

14.4 The risks detailed above are already managed within a service plan.

14.5 The above risks are plotted on the matrix below depending on the scored assessments of impact and likelihood, detailed definitions of which are included

in the risk management strategy. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood are plotted in the shaded area of the matrix. The remaining risks require a treatment plan.

Likelihood ↑	A						Impact V = Catastrophic IV = Critical III = Significant II = Marginal I = Negligible	Likelihood A = >98% B = 75% - 97% C = 50% - 74% D = 25% - 49% E = 3% - 24% F = <2%
	B							
	C							
	D	1, 2	3					
	E							
	F							
	I	II	III	IV	V			
	Impact →							

14.6 In the opinion of officers none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore not operational risks. The effectiveness of treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

15. **Recommendation**

15.1 That the Committee agrees that officers continue to develop the proposals set out in Appendix A in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development, Sustainability and Transport with any significant additions being subject to the agreement of that Lead Member.

15.2 That the committee delegates authority for the development, implementation and promotion of the proposals set out in Appendix A, to the Director, Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development, Sustainability and Transport, the Lead Member for Housing, Planning and Strategic Schemes, and relevant Ward Councillors.

15.3 That an element of the funding allocated to each scheme should be used in marketing and promotion.

15.4 That maps should be produced and published as part of the scheme programme to show the status of paths on the proposed network.

15.5 That public access to the report and decision be immediate.

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**Data Quality**

Data sources: None.

**Background Papers**

None.

## **APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A - TRDC Cycling Strategy Programme 2016-17

Appendix B – Location of Canal towpath improvements, Phase 4, Kings  
Langley