

ITEM: A308 CYCLE ROUTE

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1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report highlights issues associated with the shared footway / cycleway along the A308 between Maidenhead and Windsor and identifies options for addressing them.

2. Supporting Information**Background**

- 2.1 The shared use footway / cycleway between Maidenhead and Windsor runs along the northern footway of the A308. This is a popular route with local cyclists, providing an alternative to using the A308. The A308 is relatively narrow for an A-road (around 6m in places) and carries around 20,000 vehicles per day on a typical workday, with some sections subject to national speed limit (60mph).
- 2.2 The route was implemented by Berkshire County Council prior to the Royal Borough becoming a unitary authority and taking responsibility for highways and transport functions. The footway was converted to shared use with little in the way of improvement, despite the footway being less than 1.5m wide in places, which is significantly below the minimum width recommended in design guidance.
- 2.3 Works were carried out in 2009 and 2010 to address some key deficiencies with the route, but most of the problems associated with sub-standard widths remain unaddressed.
- 2.4 The route has been the subject of complaints from residents and cyclists, particularly in relation to:
- Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists due to the narrow width of the path
 - Conflict between cyclists and motorists at private driveways and side-roads
 - A lack of priority for cyclists across side roads
 - Poor visibility at side roads
 - Poor alignment of the cycle route at some junctions
 - Obstructions caused by street furniture and overhanging vegetation
- 2.5 The section between the Braywick roundabout and Monkey Island Lane is a particular cause for concern, since this section has numerous side roads and properties with vehicular accesses that open directly onto the footway / cycleway.
- 2.6 Recently, there have been two incidents reported to the council where cyclists have been involved in collisions at the junction of the A308 cycle route and Canon Hill Drive. This junction has particularly poor visibility between motorists emerging from the side

road and users of the footway / cycleway. Markings have been put on the footway / cycleway to indicate that cyclists should give way to vehicles turning in and out of the side road, but these do not appear to be effective in tackling the problem.

- 2.7 While there are no counts of the number of users on this section of route, anecdotal evidence suggests that numbers of cyclists are increasing. Local residents and users of the path have asked the Council to find a solution to the above problem.

Options

- 2.8 **Option 1: Widening** - According to LTN 2/08: Cycle Infrastructure Design, the desired width for an unsegregated shared footway / cycleway adjacent to the carriageway on one side and a fence at the other is 4m. This allows for a 3m wide path with a 0.5m buffer on either side.
- 2.9 The current footway / cycleway between Braywick Roundabout and Upper Bray Road is typically 1.6m wide. There is highway land to the rear of the footway, which would allow the path to be widened. A facility of 3m would be achievable through most of this section, although at some locations the path would be narrower, reflecting the varied line of the highway boundary. Even at 3m, this is significantly below the recommended standard, but would at least be an improvement on current conditions.
- 2.10 It should be noted that the highway land to the rear of the footway / cycleway contains a number of mature trees, hedges and other vegetation, which screen properties from the road. Widespread removal of the trees would be likely to meet with opposition from residents due to the loss of screening and the adverse impact on the character of the road.
- 2.11 It should also be noted that the land rises steeply with boundaries of some adjacent properties being 700mm or more above the level of the footway / cycleway. Utilising this land would therefore require retaining walls, which are very costly to construct. These works could potentially damage trees that are close to residential property boundaries. Some of these are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, particularly those near Braywick Roundabout and Upper Bray Road.
- 2.12 **Option 2: Alternative Route** - Alternative routes between Maidenhead and Windsor are already available, including National Cycle Network Routes 4 and 61. These are largely off-road routes that are less direct, located away from centres of population and are largely unlit. As such, they are considered to be predominantly recreational cycle routes rather than utility routes.
- 2.13 However, a route could be achieved that would make use of the existing A308 footway/ cycleway between Windsor and Fifield before diverting down Monkey Island Lane. This is a public bridleway between Tithe Barn Drive and the Monkey Island Hotel access road. Although this section is currently unsurfaced, it is about to undergo improvement works and could be made up to a standard appropriate for cycling with little difficulty. Beyond the hotel access, the road is adopted with an asphalt surface. Monkey Island Lane is very lightly trafficked and does not require any dedicated cycle provision.

- 2.14 The route could then pass through Bray village and along Hibbert Road, giving cyclist the choice of using the route through Braywick Park or continuing to the A308 to rejoin the existing footway / cycleway.
- 2.15 Bray Village does not currently have any dedicated cycle facilities except for a cycle exemption at the no-entry restriction between Ferry Road and Old Mill Lane. Although Bray Road is a B-road, a 20 mph speed limit is in force throughout the village.
- 2.16 Hibbert Road is subject to a 30 mph speed limit and does not have any dedicated cycling infrastructure. It is not currently wide enough for on-carriageway cycle lanes alongside the existing traffic lanes. Although there is highway land available for widening, this would involve extensive clearance of trees and vegetation, which would significantly change the character of the road and would require extensive drainage works. Also, a continuous facility could not be achieved, since the extent of the highway land is constrained by property boundaries around Winbury School.
- 2.17 Given the relatively low traffic speeds and flows, advisory cycle lanes with a single lane for vehicles could be appropriate for this location. This approach is used extensively in the Netherlands and is covered in more detail in the report on Cycle Routes to Charters School.

Conclusions

- 2.18 Option 1 (widening the existing route) would tackle the safety issues on the section of the A308 footway / cycleway between Braywick Roundabout and Upper Bray Road. However, there would be issues relating to the affordability and acceptability of the scheme in terms of its impacts on residents and protected trees. Also, it would not address safety issues further along the route within Holyport and Fifield.
- 2.19 Option 2 (alternative route) would allow closure of the section of the A308 footway / cycleway through Holyport and Fifield where the majority of the problems are located. This is also a more affordable option. However, it is less direct, offers less in the way of segregation from vehicular traffic, and is not street lit. As such the utility value of the route is significantly reduced. Also, under this option, residents of Holyport would not have direct access to the cycle network due to the closure of the A308 footway / cycleway between Monkey Island Lane and the Braywick Roundabout.
- 2.20 It should be noted that no budget is currently available to undertake the works within the current financial year. However, funding is available for scheme development in 2013/14. A scheme could be designed and costed this year in order to inform a bid for capital funds to be submitted next year.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members of the Cycle Forum are advised to note the contents of the report and consider the proposed options, before making a recommendation on the preferred option to the Lead Member for Highways and Transport.**



Figure 1: Junction of A308 / Canon Hill Way



Figure 2: Highway Verge to Rear of Footway / Cycleway



Figure 3: Monkey Island Lane (Public Bridleway)



Figure 4: Monkey Island Lane (Adopted Highway)



Figure 5: B3028 Bray Road



Figure 6: Hibbert Road