

CYCLE FORUM

MONDAY, 15 APRIL 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Malcolm Beer, Derek Wilson (Chairman) and Lynda Yong (Vice-Chairman)

Also in attendance: Mark Powell, David Dyer, Kieran Bell, Susy Shearer, Owen McQuaide, Paul Parker, David Lambourne, Steven Shepherd & Craig McDermott.

Officers: Gordon Oliver & Nabihah Hassan-Farooq

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Gammage, Harold Bodenhofer, Luke McCarthy, Councillor Yong and Councillor Lion.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON THE 14TH JANUARY 2019

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th January were agreed as an accurate and true record.

MAIDENHEAD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION/ MAJOR SCHEMES

Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Planner gave a presentation on the above titled item. Members of the Forum were told that £3.75 million had been committed to the Maidenhead Station scheme, which was needed to cope with increased rail passengers due to electrification, introduction of the Elizabeth Line and the Western Rail Link to Heathrow. Key elements included, improved access to the forecourt, interchange facilities and environmental enhancements. It was outlined that there would be improved pedestrian and cycle links between the station and town centre along with traffic management changes at A308/Broadway and A308/Queen Street. Members were told that long-stay parking displaced from the station forecourt would be reprovided in Stafferton Way. Benefits to cyclists included 300 cycle parking spaces with CCTV, improved crossing and link to King Street, and a safer cycling route across the station accesses. The Forum was informed that construction would be complete by April 2020. Members were shown illustrations of the proposed forecourt and a map which outlined where the changes would take place.

Members were told that £2.8 million had been committed to the Maidenhead Missing Links scheme to improve cycle links from North Maidenhead to the town centre and to future regeneration sites. Key elements of the scheme included; improved routes across Town Moor; a replacement bridge across Strand Water; a new route through the St Cloud Way development; toucan crossing over Cookham Road; improved route through Kidwells Park; new subway under A4 Bad Godesberg Way; and enhancements on King Street, where the scheme will link to Maidenhead Station and NCN4. Benefits to cyclists included improved connections to the town centre; a safe, largely traffic-free route that avoids busy roundabout junctions; and reduced severance from the A4. Members were told that construction would be completed by April 2021.

As part of the Maidenhead Town Centre Regeneration, £5.3 million had been given to the Maidenhead Housing Sites Enabling Works which would be focussed on junction improvements to tackle congestion hot spots and support planned development/regeneration in Maidenhead. Key elements included: Braywick Roundabout (A308(M)/A308/A330); Stafferton Way roundabout (A308/Stafferton Way); Castle Hill roundabout (A4/A308); Cookham Road roundabout (A4/B4447); Oldfield Road roundabout (A4/B3028); Ray Mead Round roundabout (A4/A4094).

Members were told that there had been drop-in sessions held on the 1st and 2nd of March and that further sessions had been planned for the 13th and 14th of September 2019. There would also be meetings with affected residents and that there would be a regular newsletter along with social media updates. Members were told that all future delivery reports would be heard at the Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

Members of the Forum discussed a range of issues which included:

- Whether there would be any additional spaces for cyclists at Maidenhead Station if the demand exceeded 300 spaces; it was confirmed that the increased forecourt would have enough space should more spaces be needed.
- That a safer cycle route into the town centre from the station was welcomed and that the removal of the cycle lane along Broadway was disappointing. It was discussed whether alternatives to the missing links subway had been explored, e.g. Dutch style roundabouts with segregated peripheral cycle routes where cyclists had priority over traffic. However, it was noted that these would not work for roundabouts with multi-lane entries / exits and would prove to be more dangerous if adopted.
- Forum Members discussed that the increase of capacity would also naturally increase speed of motorists and that more should be done to negate this in areas such as Cookham, where new developments would be constructed.
- Members also discussed the need for visibility on roundabouts and that though foliage and shrubbery looks nice, it proved to be a hazard for those cyclists as their view was obscured. It was recommended that the height of installations and greenery on roundabouts be limited.
- A member of the Forum noted that currently motor vehicles were allowed access to Maidenhead High street at particular times but that cyclists were not allowed to cycle through. There are few alternative routes through the town centre and it was suggested that a contra-flow cycle route should be provided on Queen Street.

COOKHAM RECREATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE

Gordon Oliver outlined the above titled report. The Forum were told that the report set out a proposal for a new circular recreational cycle route that connected Maidenhead, Cookham Rise, Cookham and Cookham Dean. It was highlighted that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead had been approached by local landowner, Richard Copas, regarding the proposed route and that it was intended to provide a safe, traffic free, facility that would link to the existing National Cycle Network Route 50 (NCN50) between Maidenhead and Cookham Rise which would follow a permitted path across Summerleaze estate. Members were informed that previously NCN50 was inaccessible to the majority of cyclists due to the modified barriers which had been designed to keep out trespassers on mini-motorbikes. The Forum were told that this issue had since been resolved and that the barriers had been made accessible when the route was transferred to a new alignment.

The proposed cycle route would use a combination of established paths across private land and existing public rights of way. Members were told that although sections of private land were mostly in the ownership of the Copas family, discussions were underway with a number of third parties, such as the Chartered Institute of Marking and the National Trust regarding the other sections. It was outlined that there was no proposal to create a new public right of way

as part of the scheme and that the cycle route would have permitted path status, but that RBWM would seek to secure long-term commitment to the scheme. Members were told that it would be preferential for the route to have an all-weather, bound surface that is accessible for the majority of bikes. It was highlighted that the final specification may need to vary along the route to reflect the need for access by farm vehicles; the need for access by equestrians and the impact on landscape and heritage in sensitive locations. There were some challenging sections which were highlighted, such as Winter Hill where the slope would allow cyclists to gather significant momentum and could prejudice the safety of other path users and it was confirmed that discussion with various stakeholders and user groups would address these issues. The Forum were told that the proposal had been identified within the adopted Cycling Action Plan but its status as a recreational facility meant that it was not high priority for delivery and that it was unlikely that council funds would be allocated to the scheme in the short to medium term.

At the conclusion of the report, Members discussed the following:

- That this opportunity highlighted ways in which landowners could positively contribute to the borough and its cycle networks. Members expressed thanks to Mr Copas for the proposal. Members were concerned that if this proposal was not looked at with priority that it could dissuade land owners in the future to come forward and add to the cycling networks.
- Members felt that interim work could begin and that some low-cost surfacing materials could be used initially.
- It was discussed that some areas were overgrown by grass and that certain routes were utilised by both horse riders and cyclists which would need to be sign posted effectively.
- Forum Members noted that some signage could be provided and work alongside the work of the Wayfinding Scheme which had been discussed at previous Forum meetings.
- It was highlighted that the National Lottery Heritage Fund was keen to support projects that promote public access to heritage sites.

At the conclusion of the discussion members noted the content of the report and endorsed the proposal to develop the recreational cycle route.

HURLEY TO BISHAM LINK

Gordon Oliver outlined the above titled report. The Forum was told that RBWM had managed to secure funding as well as design and implementation support from Highways England for a new shared path along the western boundary of the A404 linking Hurley Lane and Bradenham Lane. The Scheme has been funded through the Cycling, Safety and Integration Fund which sought to address severance issues created by the strategic road network. This scheme would look to complete a missing link in the public rights of way network between Maidenhead, Bisham and Marlow. The new shared path would be set back from the A404 part-way down the embankment that would cross Bradenham Lane to link to a new permitted path behind the hedge on the eastern side of the lane, emerging opposite the access to Temple Farm at the end of the of the one-way section of Bradenham Lane. The permitted path and bridleway will provide a two-way link for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. Members were informed that construction of the bridleway link should be completed by May 2019.

Members noted the contents of the report and welcomed the delivery of the new shared use path.

CLOSE PASS INITIATIVE

Gordon Oliver gave a verbal report on the above titled item. Members were informed that there had been previous unsuccessful attempts to engage Thames Valley Police to request a close pass initiative within the area. It was highlighted that a close pass initiative would take place in RBWM in May, but that the location would not be disclosed to members of the public. The initiative will be targeting drivers who have been identified as passing too closely to cyclists. They will be pulled over at a safe location and offered on the spot education on how to safely overtake cyclists. It was highlighted that the publicity around the enforcement activity would be key to encouraging safe overtaking behaviour.

FUTURE OF THE CYCLE FORUM

The Chairman outlined that this item had been spoken about in full and that considerations had been taken into account with regards to Cycle Forum Members' views and concerns about the future of the Forum. Members were keen to keep the agenda for cycling active and that discussions had been had outside of the Forum to resource a forum externally.

The Chairman confirmed that cycling matters would be considered by the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel and that the administration would confirm the new arrangements and how the panel would operate after the May elections.

The Chairman thanked all Members for their ongoing commitment to cycling and their input over the years and that without their dedication, the Cycling Action Plan would not have been adopted.

A vote of thanks was noted and placed on record to all members of the Cycling Forum for their ongoing contributions and efforts. A vote of thanks was placed on record for Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Planner for his work involving the preparation of the Cycling Action Plan and ongoing contributions to keeping the profile of cycling high in the agenda. A vote of thanks was also placed on record for Nabihah Hassan-Farooq and to Democratic Services who had helped in the administration and governance of the Cycle Forum. Councillor Beer raised a vote of thanks for the current Chairman, Councillor D Wilson for his ability to allow free discussion and encouragement of ideas at Forum meetings.

DEDWORTH ROAD/HATCH LANE TRIAL MINI ROUNDABOUTS

Susy Shearer gave a verbal report on the above titled item. Until recently the junctions were controlled by traffic signals with advance stop lines (ASLs) for cyclists on all approaches. The Council decided to conduct a trial of a new junction layout incorporating mini-roundabouts with temporary signal-controlled crossings on all approaches in order to improve traffic flow through the junctions. The Forum were informed that the Dedworth Road/ Hatch Lane mini-roundabouts trial had been in place since the end of January 2019 and that it was due to finish on the 31st March, but it had been extended for a further two months.

It was explained that the Tesco Metro located immediately south of the junctions on Hatch Lane was busy from early to late, adding to the volume of traffic using the junctions. Traffic entering and leaving the site contributed to congestion and often blocked the ASL when the junctions were signal-controlled.

Susy Shearer had invited another Cycle Forum Member from Maidenhead to help with a critical review of the junction layout. The findings of it. It was found that the two roundabouts were very close together and it was difficult to navigate between both roundabouts safely. Members were told that the traffic from Dedworth Road/Clarence Road was incoming at 30mph and traffic from Hatch Lane/Parsonage Lane were incoming from 20mph. This had resulted in frequent near misses where drivers had failed to slow down at the roundabouts. There were also concerns with the temporary crossings with drivers often failing to stop / stopping late. Pedestrians incurred long detours to use the new crossings and it was felt that the removal of the ASLs had made it more difficult for cyclists to get across the junctions. It was felt that traffic signals incorporating pedestrian crossings and ASLs would improve safety

for pedestrians and cyclists. These could be fitted with a MOVA system that would detect and respond to varying traffic demands on all approaches, improving traffic flow through the junction compared to the previous signals..

A member of the forum queried whether the roundabout had helped with the right turn into the Tesco's car park and whether this had eased congestion caused by patrons using the car park. It was confirmed that it had not reduced the traffic nor helped with safe right turns into the car park.

It was outlined that the roundabouts would remain in place until the 31st May whilst other options were looked at and it was confirmed that the existing traffic signals would need to be replaced as they were at the end of their life span.

Members were told that the MOVA system would default to red and a green signal would only be triggered by an approaching vehicle, thus helping to reduce instances of speeding along Clarence Road / Dedworth Road. It was confirmed that the MOVA system would detect a cyclist approaching the junction by the amount of metal in their bike.

Members discussed that this could be an item that could be looked at the future Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Panel. It was felt that if Members were in support of the change to a MOVA traffic light management system that they should access the consultation page on the RBWM website and leave their comments. Councillor Beer commented that it was important to look at the MOVA traffic light management system as they had worked well in other parts of Windsor and that a motion detecting system would be of particular benefit for this junction.

Members of the forum noted the contents of the verbal presentation.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.38 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....