

## ITEM: COOKHAM RECREATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE

**Report Author:** Gordon Oliver      **Position:** Principal Transport Planner

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out a proposal for a new circular recreational cycle route connecting Maidenhead, Cookham Rise, Cookham and Cookham Dean and invites members of the Cycle Forum to consider what specification they would like for the path, how the scheme could be progressed and what support they could offer.

## 2. Supporting Information

### Background

- 2.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has been approached by local landowner, Richard Copas, regarding a proposal for a circular recreational cycle route connecting Maidenhead, Cookham Rise, Cookham and Cookham Dean. The proposed route is shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The route is intended to provide a safe, traffic-free, recreational cycle route that would link to the existing National Cycle Network Route 50 (NCN50) between Maidenhead and Cookham Rise that follows a permitted path across the Summerleaze estate.
- 2.3 Previously, NCN50 was inaccessible to the majority of cyclists due to the modified barriers designed to keep out trespassers on mini-motorbikes. However, this issue has since been resolved and the barriers were made accessible when the route was transferred to a new alignment.
- 2.4 Originally, NCN50 was to be extended to Winslow in Buckinghamshire via Bourne End, but plans were put on hold due to the issues at the southern end. Now these have been resolved, there may be renewed interest in extending NCN50 northwards.
- 2.5 The proposed Cookham cycle route would use a combination of established paths across private land and existing public rights of way. The sections of private land are mostly in the ownership of the Copas family, although discussions are underway with a number of third parties. These include the Chartered Institute of Marketing who own Moor Hall, and the National Trust who own Cookham Moor and Winter Hill. It is not proposed to create any new public rights of way as part of the scheme, and the cycle route would have permitted path status, but RBWM would seek to secure long-term commitment to the scheme.
- 2.6 In terms of construction, the preference would be for the route to have an all-weather bound surface that is accessible for the majority of bikes. However, it is recognised 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;
- The impact on landscape and heritage in sensitive locations.

- 2.7 There are some challenging sections, such as on Winter Hill where the slope would allow cyclists to gather significant momentum that could prejudice the safety of other path users. Also, horses could struggle with traction on this section if a conventional bound surface is used. We will seek to address these issues through discussion with various stakeholders and user groups.
- 2.8 It is intended to brand the route, with a suitable name and a coherent family of wayfinding signs and marker posts. There may also be potential for information boards to provide details about the local area and its wildlife, landscape and heritage.
- 2.9 Although the proposal is identified within the adopted Cycling Action Plan, its status as a recreational facility means that it is not a high priority for delivery, and so significant council funds are unlikely to be allocated to the scheme in the short to medium term. This means that alternative funding mechanisms will need to be explored.
- 2.10 Developer contributions may be sought for any new residential or commercial developments in the area. Also, there may be opportunities to secure funding through Landfill Tax Grants by relevant environmental bodies, but this would require partnership working with appropriate voluntary groups / charities to access funds. Additionally, opportunities to secure government funding will be kept under review and bids may be submitted as and when suitable funding is made available.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cycle Forum notes the content of this report and endorses the proposal to develop the recreational cycle route.**

## **APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED ROUTE**

