

ITEM: A4 CYCLE ROUTE

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1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the proposed cycle route along the A4 between Maidenhead Bridge and the town centre.

2. Supporting Information**Background**

- 2.1 At the Maidenhead Cycling Workshop on 6th November 2013, the need for a cycle route to connect the town centre to the Riverside area of Maidenhead was identified. A draft scheme was subsequently prepared, which was presented to the Cycle Forum on 5th March 2014.
- 2.2 Members of the Cycle Forum raised concerns about the initial design, which featured an off-carriageway, two-way cycleway on the southern side. A dedicated workshop was subsequently arranged to capture all issues relating to the scheme and to agree how the design could be amended to address these concerns.
- 2.3 A revised scheme was then developed featuring 2m wide on-carriageway cycle lanes on either side of the A4, with cycle bypasses at bus stops. The scheme also included a hybrid cycle route in front of the King's Quarter development and another hybrid cycle route as part of the proposed Moorbridge Road slip-road.
- 2.4 The scheme was intended to form part of a longer-distance cycle route linking Maidenhead and Slough. The Royal Borough and Slough Borough Council submitted a joint bid to the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for their elements of the route. A business case was then developed and this was subsequently checked by the LEP's consultant before being presented to the Local Transport Body (LTB) for approval in November 2015.
- 2.5 Buckinghamshire County Council is also developing a proposal for a cycle route along their section of the A4 between Maidenhead Bridge and the boundary with Slough Borough and have secured funding through the Thames Valley Buckinghamshire LEP.
- 2.6 An internal funding bid was submitted to secure the local contribution that is necessary to deliver the Maidenhead section of the A4 Cycle Route scheme in 2016/17. Unfortunately, this bid was unsuccessful.
- 2.7 A safety audit of the Maidenhead section of the scheme identified a number of serious issues, including:
- Potential for conflict between cyclists and motor vehicles at the Oldfield Road and Ray Mead Road roundabouts.
 - Potential for conflict at the Ray Park Avenue junction, where cyclists would be obscured from left turning vehicles by buses calling at the bus stop.
- 2.8 These conflicts could not be addressed without replacing the roundabouts with signal-controlled crossroads. This would have been very costly to implement, which would

have meant that the costs would outweigh the benefits delivered by the scheme. Furthermore, there was significant risk in terms of costs associated with the relocation / protection of utility companies' apparatus.

- 2.9 Members therefore decided not to progress with the scheme and to return the funding to the LEP. Instead, they have asked for a Cycling Strategy to be developed. Once adopted, this would be used to identify priorities for cycling investment.
- 2.10 The Slough and Buckinghamshire sections of the route will still proceed as planned. Slough is currently consulting on their section of the route. Details can be found on the council's website: <http://www.slough.gov.uk/parking-travel-and-roads/east-to-west-a4-cycle-lane.aspx>. Buckinghamshire County Council are finalising their design and are likely to undertake public consultation in September.
- 2.11 It should be noted that although the Royal Borough is not constructing the A4 Cycle Route scheme, there are other initiatives that are being progressed, which will deliver positive outcomes for cycling in Maidenhead.
- 2.12 The Council is in the process of developing an Access and Movement Strategy for Maidenhead Town Centre. This will consider cycle routes to and through the area in the context of regeneration of a number of key 'opportunity sites' and other major development sites in and around the town centre. One of these sites is the Reform Road Industrial Estate, which may provide an opportunity to improve cycle access from the east as an alternative to the A4 Cycle Route.
- 2.13 Also, the Royal Borough will be submitting a bid through the LEP to access Growth Deal 3 funding to deliver 'Maidenhead's Missing Links'. The bid seeks to deliver improvements to local walking and cycling routes and public realm to ensure that the redeveloped opportunity sites are integrated with the wider town centre and surrounding areas. If successful, it would provide funding to deliver many of the walking and cycling schemes identified in the emerging Access and Movement Study. It will also complement any revenue bids to the Department for Transport's Access Fund that the council and its partners may choose to submit.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 **It is recommended that members of the Cycle Forum note progress with the scheme.**

APPENDIX 1: SCHEME DRAWING