

TITLE	Cycle Lanes Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 th September 2017
WARD	All
DIRECTOR	Josie Wragg Interim Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Chris Bowring, Executive Member for Highways and Transport

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

- The development of a comprehensive cycle network to encourage sustainable transport and to address congestion on the highways network;
- To support the My Journey Wokingham travel plan project, by providing new infrastructure, encouraging more residents to cycle for short journeys.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

- Note the cycling improvements and initiatives underway;
- Note the proposals to continue the development of the cycle network across the borough;
- Note the incorporation of the DfT's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Planning guidance to assist the prioritisation of new cycling and walking schemes;
- Comment on the updates and proposals in the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report considers the impacts of new cycle lanes across the Borough and cycling safety issues including the update on the extension of new cycle lanes after the completion of Phase 4 of the A329 cycleway project. (Phase 4, Ferndale Crescent to Holt Lane).

Background

In January 2017 the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee were given a presentation considering the impact of new cycle lanes across the Borough and cycling safety issues including an update on the extension of new cycle lanes. The presentation included:

- A recap of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme including the funding mechanisms and ambitions of the project;
- An overview of cycle lanes and how these have generally been funded in recent years, including Government funding (DfT) LSTF funding, Cycle Safety Funding,

Thames Valley LEP funding through the local Growth Fund and developer contributions collected as part of their commitment to sustainable travel and cycling;

- Wider commitments to the delivery of sustainable transport through planning, this included a roundup of the My Journey Wokingham project;
- A review of Safety Programmes offered by the Council, including the Bikeability work that is on-going;
- A review of the progress of the A329 Corridor cycleway project, this is also referred to as NCN 422, the number Sustrans have provisionally given to a new National Cycle route crossing the Borough.

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has asked that an update report on the impacts of new cycle lanes across the Borough and cycling safety issues, including the update on the extension of new cycle lanes after the completion of Phase 4 of the A329 cycleway project, be provided.

Funding for cycleways since 2013

As previously explained in the first presentation to the Committee, in September 2016, new cycleways are delivered where there is the greatest opportunity to encourage transport behaviour change and where the highways network and funding allow development. Since 2013 the Council has used a combination of grant funding and developer funding to provide new cycleways.

The Lower Earley Cycleway was delivered by a combination of a grant from DfT and Section 106 contributions collected from the development of Marsh Farm, now Barn Croft Drive. The Council applied to the DfT's Cycle Safety Fund, which was a competitive bid process and secured over £750,000 from a £20m nationally allocated funding pot.

The Council also secured £2.75m from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which was supplemented by Integrated Transport Block and S106 funding to give a project funding total of £4.6m to be spent over 3 years. LSTF funding was a mixture of revenue and capital funding, split 60/40. We used the capital funding element to take a packaged approach to delivering a new cycleway on the A329 corridor. A packaged approach means replacing traffic signals, improving bus stops and shelters, addressing the footway condition and kerbing, removing pedestrian islands that were a barrier to cycling and most importantly resurfacing the carriageway.

The LSTF funding only delivered enough funding to get the project as far as Winnersh, the junction with Woodward Close and the A329 Reading Road. The Council was successful in securing a portion of £4.2m of Local Growth Fund capital from the Thames Valley LEP to continue with the A329 project and convert the scheme into something that has regional and economic significance.

New cycle lane impacts

The Lower Earley Way cycleway opened in September 2015 and the first phase of the A329 cycleway opened in late 2013. The A329 cycleway is being delivered in phases.

Phase 4 is on the ground now with the last major phase being planned for delivery in 2018.

The impacts of the two cycleways have been mixed. Data collected for a full year from cycle counters on the Lower Earley Way cycleway indicated that there were 29,646 cycle trips in a year. This equates to removing 18,528 car trips from the network over the course of that year. On a daily basis that is an average of 81 cycle trips in place of 51 car journeys.

As yet we do not have cycle counters embedded in the A329 cycleway, these are programmed to be delivered late in 2017, funding dependent. We have conducted a weekly survey at 8 points along the A329 route for the last 5 years to ensure we have comparable data.

The data for 2017 shows that there are about 18,300 cycle trips along the A329 each week (both directions, 7 day total). This shows that there has been an increase in cycling along the length of the route of about 14% on the base year of 2013 (2,280 cycle trips). In terms of removing car trips from the network at our most successful point, Loddon Bridge, this equates to removing 19,400 car trips a year from the network on the 2013 base year. From the base year of 2013, on a weekly basis this is an extra 597 extra cycle trips or a reduction of 374 car journeys.

To analyse the decongestion values that cycling gives we have used the overall increase in cycling numbers and divided that by All Purpose Car/Van occupancy figures provided by the DfT's National Travel Surveys statistics figures. All Purpose Car/Van occupancy figures are 1.6 people per car/van.

Cycle safety

On the whole Wokingham Borough is a relatively safe place to cycle. The latest records from Accs-Map show that in last 5 years there have been 236 accidents in Wokingham Borough where cyclists have been involved.

This includes two fatalities the first of which was on the A4 Bath Road in 2012, where a cyclist was hit by a car from behind and the second one was in March 2017 on Church Lane where a cyclist crashed and wasn't wearing a helmet. The fatality was a result of head injuries.

The main issue in regards of safety is that of the 236 slight and serious accidents 55 were recorded on the A329 corridor. This is almost a quarter (23%) of all slight and serious accidents. The delivery of a new cycle infrastructure, a shared facility and an on-carriageway cycleway along the Borough's busiest cycling corridor will go a long way to improving cycle safety and raising awareness of cyclists.

Wokingham Borough runs an effective Road Safety programme which is proving to be effective especially for our young people. Generally Wokingham doesn't have issues with young people being in cycle accidents. The data from Accs-Map shows that of the 236 cycle accidents in the last 5 year only 31 have involved children, (13%). This is because the Council delivers a comprehensive package of Bikeability training every year to 10–11 year olds. Bikeability replaced cycle proficiency some years ago and now

we train upwards of 1,500 children a year, before they go to secondary schools. We aim to educate local cyclists to do the right thing from a young age. So far in the last 9 years we have educated over 11,300 children. In 2016 we trained over 90% of all 10-11 year olds in the Borough.

The main issue for the Borough, and elsewhere, is adult cyclists being involved with accidents with cars and lorries. As a Council we undertake a number of Driver Education programmes as part of our long standing partnership with 'Safer Roads'. The education programmes, not only make cyclists aware of all the dangers around them, but also seek to educate drivers.

This programme has been supplemented in recent years with other locally run initiatives. In 2016 the Wokingham Road Safety team held a driver training event with Stewarts Coaches, located in Headley Road industrial park. Coach and bus drivers were taken out on educational led rides so that they could experience what it's like to be a cyclist when confronted with a large vehicle. The Council will continue to take an innovative and creative approach to road safety and addressing the issue of adult cycle accidents.

Update on new planned cycleways

Phase 4 of the A329 cycleway is programmed for completion in mid-September 2017. This will complete the project on the western arm of the A329. The next cycling scheme programmed to be delivered is the final phase of the A329 cycle project. A cycleway along the London Road to Coppid Beech roundabout. Plans are still being considered for this link and how to integrate works with the town centre regeneration and junction of the northern distributor road.

The feedback from the delivery of the first four sections of the A329 cycleway has been mixed. Feedback from cyclists has been positive, including the Reading Cycle Campaign. Cyclists particularly like the smooth road surface that has been installed as it makes cycling much more comfortable. This is reflected in the extra numbers of people using the cycle lanes on the A329.

Feedback from non-cyclists has been mixed. Some pedestrians and joggers using the Lower Earley Way scheme have reported that they feel intimidated by cyclists. Motorists and motorcycle riders along Lower Earley have complained about the fence and its proximity to the carriageway. This is contrasted by the numbers of parents that use the cycleway to train their children how to ride their bikes, because the route is straight, flat and secure. The fence provides a sense of security for all users.

Feedback from non-cyclists regarding the Reading Road scheme has been confined to the initial changes in the highways layout. Over a period of time these have settled down. More recently the Council has received comments about the construction and the time it has taken to complete some tasks.

We are also developing plans to implement a new cycleway along the Bader Way, this will involve an off-carriageway route through Dinton Pastures. The route will be delivered in phases, with the aim of linking up residential areas around Mohawk Way

and will be funded by development at Sandford Farm and the Lin-Pac site development on Miles Way.

In the future we intend to develop a new prioritised plan for walking and cycling based on DfT guidance. DfT have very recently produced guidance for local authorities to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The plan will be developed by making best use of the GIS tools provided on the DfT website, including the Propensity to Cycle Tool as well as undertaking some public consultation events to understand where are the biggest barriers to walking and cycling, real and perceived. The plan will be developed alongside a new Local Transport Plan and will support the ambitions of the emerging Local Plan Update and be aligned with our Greenways initiative.

Summary

Where possible we have taken a packaged approach to delivering cycleways so that they offer the Council maximum value for money. A packaged approach means that we have replaced kerbs, repaired drains and drainage, replaced life expired traffic signals, surfaced shared use footways, installed road safety schemes and resurfaced the carriageway. This full route treatment is a cost efficient way of improving the highway, and provides a high quality finish which should need little or no maintenance for several years.

To date the A329 cycleway project has delivered 5.5km of new on-carriageway cycleway. This has meant that we have provided a new road surface on 5.5km of the A329 corridor, and upgraded signal junctions at Three Tuns, Loddon Bridge Road, Winnersh Crossroads, Woodward Close and improved the signalised crossing at Emmbrook. Footways have been resurfaced in Winnersh and on the approaches to Woosehill. Drainage systems have been repaired and maintained for the full length of the road resurfacing programme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	0	0
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	0	0
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	0	0

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cycle infrastructure is allocated as part of the annual capital programme plus s106 developer and government and grant funding and therefore, there are no financial impacts associated with this update report.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

New transport infrastructure has to be maintained. All new roads, cycleways and footways need to be swept and greenery cut back.

List of Background Papers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance-and-tools>

<http://www.myjourneywokingham.com/>

<http://www.myjourneywokingham.com/discover-wokingham/cycling/cycling-on-the-a329-corridor/>

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