

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Pangbourne to Tilehurst Cycle Route		
Report to be considered by:	Cllr. Keith Chopping	on:	28 November 2005
Forward Plan			
	ID1076		

Purpose of Report: To report the results of a public consultation on the provision of a cycle route between Pangbourne and Tilehurst, and for the Council to adopt a strategic cycle route between Pangbourne and Tilehurst that can be used to secure S106 contributions from developments in the area.

Recommended Action: That route 2 illustrated on the attached drawing be approved for implementation subject to Section 106 funding becoming available from developments along the route.

Reason for decision to be taken: To progress the schemes as detailed in the body of the report.

List of other options considered: Not applicable

Key background documentation: -

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the on-going programme of cycle improvements Highways Officers, in close consultation with West Berkshire's Cycle Forum have investigated possible options for cycle improvements between Pangbourne and Tilehurst.
- 1.2 The lack of cycle facilities in this area has also been highlighted by a number of requests from residents of Purley and Pangbourne wishing to cycle to local amenities, who feel they are unable to do so due to the lack of appropriate cycle facilities.
- 1.3 Highways Officers have therefore carried out a preliminary assessment of options for cycle improvements between Pangbourne and Tilehurst. The preliminary investigation has revealed two possible route options detailed on the attached drawings. Route 1 extends through residential roads and along a permissive footpath adjacent to the railway line (the footpath would be surfaced to make it cycle-friendly). Route 2 extends along the A329, and will involve the widening of existing footways to provide shared use footway/cycleways. The relative advantages and disadvantages of the routes are as follows:

1.4 Route 1:

Advantages

- Fairly direct route adjacent to the railway line
- Relatively traffic free route
- Aesthetically pleasing countryside route
- Utilises existing rights of way.

Disadvantages

- A section of the route is permissive (this is a footpath used with the permission of the Landowner pursuant to Section 31 of the Highway Act 1980). In order to cycle along this route it will be necessary to convert the permissive footpath to a bridleway requiring the permission of the landowner. Initial contact with the landowner indicates that this may be possible if agreement can be reached to the stopping-up of other sections of footway on the landowner's property. The Parish Council are not in agreement with this element.
- There is no street lighting along the route which may deter use during the hours of darkness due to concerns about personal safety. It would not be practical (financially and environmentally) to install street lighting along this route.

1.5 Route 2:

Advantages

- Existing street lighting along the route.
- No land ownership issues
- Accessible to other connecting routes.
- Can be linked to safer routes to school schemes.

Disadvantages

- Alongside a busy road with fast moving traffic which could be intimidating to less confident cyclists.
- The route will make use of existing footways which in places is interrupted by driveways and accesses which can be frustrating for cyclists.
- Some sections of footway are also less than the advisable minimum width for a shared use footway/cycleway.

- 1.6 Both schemes are currently estimated to cost approximately £125,000.
- 1.7 A consultation exercise was undertaken during October 2005 with local stakeholders, to establish which route would offer most benefits and best value. Consultees included Local Ward members, Parish Councils and local cycle organisations (see appendix 1 for a full list of consultees).
- 1.8 Consultees were sent drawings illustrating the two options and covering letter outlining the relative advantages/disadvantages, and asked to respond with their preferred route.
- 1.9 Of the 15 consultees a total of six responses were received. Two prefer option 1 and four prefer option 2. A full list of responses along with Officers comment (where appropriate) is detailed in appendix 1.

Summary

- 1.10 Although route 1 offers a relatively safe traffic free environment, it is considered that the lack of street lighting could prevent cyclists from using it due to fears over personal safety. It is also considered that legal issues surrounding the conversion of the permissive footpath to allow cycling could prove difficult to overcome. Although route 2 extends along the A329, it is considered that the route will attract more use, and can be linked into other important routes (as reflected in the consultation results).
- 1.11 It is therefore proposed that Option 2 be adopted as the Councils preferred route, and that the scheme be designed in detail and used to secure funding from development schemes taking place along the route between Tilehurst and Pangbourne. (A number of developments have been identified in the vicinity of the route that could yield funds within the next two years that could be used to upgrade the route).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Consultees

Appendix 2 – Consultation responses.

Implications

Policy: These proposals will contribute to the corporate priorities of:
(i) CP8 - Improving transportation

Financial:	The proposed scheme is currently estimated at £125,000. Funding is to be secured from future section 106 contributions from developments in the Pangbourne, Purley and Tilehurst areas.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	None arising from this report
Environmental:	These proposals will improve the environment encouraging and improving safety in respect of sustainable modes of transport.
Equalities:	None arising from this report.
Partnering:	None arising from this report.
Property:	None arising from this report.
Risk Management:	The scheme will be managed in accordance with the West Berkshire Council's Project Management methodology, and a full risk register will be maintained throughout the project.
Community Safety:	None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Councillor Graham Jones has raised no objection to this report.
Select Committee Chairman:	Councillor Quentin Webb has raised no objection to this report.
Ward Members:	The West Berkshire Local Ward Members have been consulted and have no objection to the proposal.
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Owen Jeffery has been consulted and has raised no objection to this report.
Local Stakeholders:	See appendix 1 for the list of consultees.
Officers Consulted:	Derek Crouch, Andy Garratt, Phil Frost, Frances Fernandes, Mark Edwards.
Trade Union:	Not applicable

Appendix 1 – Consultee List

Members

Susan Kemp

John Chapman

Timothy Metcalfe

Owen Jeffery

Graham Jones

Keith Chopping

Mrs M Law, Pangbourne Parish Council, Townsend House, Wallingford Road, Streatley, Berkshire, RG8 9JX.

Mr Brian Smith, Purley on Thames Parish Council, Parish Office, Goosecroft Lane, off Beech Road, Purley on Thames, Berkshire, RG8 8DR

Ed Cooper, Spokes, Newbury Enterprise Hub, Venture West, New Greenham Park, Newbury, RG19 6HN

Bob Lyle, Newbury Road Club, The Heath, Byles Green, Upper Bucklebury, RG7 6SD

Alan Stuart, CTC, 15 Sherwood Place, Purley on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 8RZ

David Wallis, Sustrans, Red Eyot, Hibbit Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1UT

Angela McMahon, Reading Cycle Campaign and Spokes, Claret House, Mill Lane, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7RS

Mr N Pike, West Berkshire Ramblers, 2 Ligueil Close, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 0BW

Mrs Weston, Claymore Group, Springs Farm, Westbury Lane, Purley, Reading, RG8 8DL

Appendix 2 – Consultation Responses

No.	Consultee	Comment	Preferred Route	Officers Comment
1	Newbury Road Club (Cycle Organisation)	The street lighting along route 2 is of major importance for safety reasons.	2	Noted
2	Pangbourne Parish Council	No comment made.	1	-
3	Cycle Touring Club	Although there are difficulties with the main road route, it will be of far greater value. Commuters would not be prepared to take the long indirect route through the country.	2	Noted
4	Purley on Thames Parish Council	Prefer route 2 on the assumption this route is achievable.	2	At present it is anticipated that this route is achievable. The scheme will be reviewed and re-consulted at the detail design stage.
5	Councillor Tim Metcalfe	Concerned that for route 1 the permissive footpath could be withdrawn by the landowner at any time (especially as the land in question is on the market). The route also becomes very boggy during the Winter months. There are also increasing problems of the permissive footpath route being used by motor & quad bikes. There are calls at the moment from locals to gate either end. The majority of people still prefer the more direct route along-side the main road as it is relatively clean, well lit and easier to use.	2	Noted
6	Reading Cycle Campaign	Prefers option 1 as it is a relatively quiet route utilising fairly traffic free residential roads. It is acknowledged that some works will be required to overcome slopes on parts of the route.	1	Noted