

CYCLING LIAISON GROUP MEETING

Wednesday 14th January 2008 at 6pm, Committee Room 2, Civic Offices

Present: Councillor Tony Page (Chair); Councillor Richard Willis; Councillor Ricky Duveen; Councillor Tim Harris; Councillor Paul Gittings; Mick Simmons (CTC); Greg Payne (CTC); Keith Elliott (RCC); Ros Furley (RCC); Hannah Budnitz (RBC); Natalie Lucas (RBC).

Apologies: Adrian Lawson (RCC); Helen Biggerstaff (RBC/CTC); Peter Challis (Sustrans)

1. Introductions and Matters Arising

No comments were received on the Terms of Reference of the Group. These are now adopted.

RESOLVED: Future meetings should be synchronised to occur a couple weeks before TMAP.

Update on the A327 Corridor Study - Just under 200 consultation responses on the Shinfield Rd local centre proposals are being evaluated. After these responses have been considered, detailed designs will be drawn up and plans will be discussed at the Cycle Liaison Group and will go to TMAP. In addition, the University is considering cycle routes through campus, including converting the public right of way across the University into a cycle route.

Cycling Audits - The Group were advised that the request that these be undertaken were in the minutes reported to TMAP. However, the cycle groups felt that cycle audits are still not fully understood and should be undertaken alongside road safety audits for all schemes.

RESOLVED: An explanation of cycle audits will be highlighted separately within the report to TMAP on 24th March 2009, as well within these minutes.

2. Update on Bikeability

It was reported that meetings have been held with Greg Woodford of CTC and Liz Aldred, Road Safety Officer. RBC has agreed to enter into a contract with CTC to administer Bikeability training if grant funding is awarded. The approved decision book report is attached. An application has been submitted for grant funding to train 500 children to Bikeability standards.

The existing cycle training through volunteers will run alongside the Bikeability training and be reviewed in 2010.

3. Update on Branding work

Production of the network map is moving forward with two drop in sessions held on 8th & 12th January 2008. The sessions were well attended, but mainly by experienced cyclists. Over 40 comment / suggestion forms or emails were submitted and are currently being reviewed.

Various additions, subtractions and amendments were discussed by the Group, some of whom previously or subsequently submitted written comments. It was discussed that the map should be amended and hopefully simplified, according to the comments received, particularly where individual route maps would provide more detail for specific journeys.

RBC intends to get the first edition of the network map printed by the end of this financial year. The group were advised that the network map could be amended as necessary for future editions, particularly as individual route maps and the routes to which they refer are further developed.

RESOLVED: Cycling England to be consulted to see whether they are able to offer any free advice on the network map. Copies of the first edition to be presented at the next meeting.

4. Key Issues

a) Thames Towpath outcome

The original proposals to convert Footpath 1 between Reading Bridge and Caversham Bridge into a cycle track is not proceeding based on a significant number of objections from local residents and the Thames Path National Trails Management Group. Independent legal opinion was sought, and strongly advised that the Secretary of State would not confirm the conversion if the Council pursued the Cycle Track Order.

b) Thames Promenade temporary closure

Heavenly Planet Festival requires a 3-day closure of the Thames Promenade (South Side) between 9th - 12th July. A temporary diversion will be put in place along Richfield Avenue.

c) Norcot Road/Oxford Road junction

A preliminary design for the Norcot Road/Oxford Road signalised junction was shown to the group. The existing cycle routes will be maintained. The Group would like to see future detailed designs include advanced stop lines on Portman Road and Norcot Road as well as Oxford Road westbound. There was also a suggestion to investigate the possibility of a section of shared path on the Northeast corner from Portman Road to Oxford Road.

It was suggested that the conversion at this and other junctions from roundabouts to signalised junctions should be subject to a cycle audit, and how these junctions work together or set precedents for other junctions should be considered.

RESOLVED: Design drawings for any such proposals will be shown at future meetings for comment, particularly when they are at the 'detailed' stage.

d) Portman Road/Beresford Road junction

Options are currently being explored to change the layout of the Portman Road/Beresford Road junction to address the changes to traffic in the area when Cow Lane is upgraded. Options include the closure of Beresford Road, but cycle connections/links will be maintained within any future schemes.

RESOLVED: Drawings to be shown at future meetings for comment, when available.

e) Abbey Square development

A statement was read out to group advising why the contra flow cycle lane proposed as part of the Abbey Square development was not pursued.

It was noted that the current cycle parking facilities at the front of the library are inadequate and opportunities for additional cycle parking should be investigated, potentially using S106 money from Abbey Square development.

RESOLVED: Investigate options to improve cycle parking facilities associated with the library. (Post-meeting note: all relevant S106 funding has already been allocated.)

5. Next Steps to Implementing Cycling Strategy

In the short term, mapping and signing is the priority. The first edition of the Network Map will be published before the end of the financial year, and it is hoped that signing authorisation from DFT will be achieved by that deadline as well.

RBC officers are also working with Sustrans to identify routes that might be eligible for Links to School funding. The footpath between Coley and Southcote is one link being explored as this would benefit pupils at Prospect and Hugh Farringdon. It was suggested that there might be cross-boundary links eligible for funding as well, particularly towards West Berkshire.

In the long term, the TIF bid has the opportunity to apply for funding for strategic improvements within the Reading Urban Area to encourage the modal shift from car to sustainable modes. Projects identified that could be considered strategic cycle links include a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Thames and upgrading the Kennetside path. Suggestions have also been made by neighbouring authorities, such as a link between Theale and Calcot. The aim is to submit proposals for strategic cycle infrastructure as part of the TIF bid in Spring/Summer 2009.

In the medium term, a list of possible measures and progress report on the Cycling Strategy is to be prepared to go to TMAP in March and identify infrastructure improvements to be completed during the next financial year.

RESOLVED: That the list/progress report be discussed at the next meeting of the Group.

6. AOB

It was requested that maintenance of cycle routes be an agenda item at the next meeting.

It was also requested that more information be requested from Parks regarding the possibility of improvement of the towpath by the car showrooms on Rose Kiln Lane.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 16th April 2009

Further dates for meetings after April to be circulated with the next agenda.