

CYCLE LIAISON GROUP MEETING

Wednesday 15th October 2008 at 6pm, Committee Room 2, Civic Offices

Present: Tony Page (Councillor); Richard Willis, (Councillor); Mick Simmons (CTC); Keith Elliott (RCC); Adrian Lawson (RCC); Ros Furley (RCC); Gary Hollaway (CTC); Helen Biggerstaff (Cycle Development Officer); Hannah Budnitz (RBC); Natalie Lucas (RBC).

1. Introductions

2. Update on Cycle Strategy following Full Council

Cycle Strategy endorsed by full Council on 14th October 2008 with one amendment to produce a timetable and report on progress to Councillors in March 2009. The new strategy will lead to structured input from the cycling stakeholders and may be considered a live document.

3. Cycling Liaison Group Terms of Reference

A draft Terms of Reference for the group was circulated. It was queried whether some items discussed by the group could be published outside of the meetings such as within newsletters. It was agreed that some items could be published with the agreement of the group.

RESOLVED: Any further comments on the Terms of Reference should be sent to Hannah Budnitz.

4. Update on Monitoring

It was reported that there has been a 33% increase on the 2007 count and a 28% increase on the base count (2004) of cyclists accessing the town centre. The 2008 surveys were undertaken on an average weekday when schools were in, although it was noted that the weather recorded on the survey day was sunny. A new automatic counting site has been put in on the IDR underpass at Fobney Street. It was noted that this counter should record some cyclists coming into the town centre which haven't previously been recorded. Further improvements in monitoring are proposed in the Cycle Strategy.

5. Update on Training and Travel Plans

It was reported that 404 children had received cycle training between Autumn 2006 and Summer 2008, plus an additional 18 children at Redlands School last month. The group were concerned that the current training doesn't embrace Bikeability standards, partially because the training is delivered by volunteers who may not regularly cycle themselves. Further information is requested on this issue for the next meeting including details of how many schools are currently involved in cycling training. It was

suggested that DECS should be involved and letters could be sent out to school governors including information on what training is available and offering visits from qualified cycle instructors. A discussion took place regarding who would fund Bikeability training as existing cycle training is provided without charge to the children. The group were advised that Cycling England provide bursaries for up to 2/3rd of the costs of training instructors, and there may be further funding opportunities to cover any costs to the schools. The latter will be investigated.

RESOLVED: Further information is requested on the number of schools currently involved in cycle training (RBC) and how similar this training is to Bikeability standards (CTC). Request that Greg Woodford of CTC and Liz Aldred, RBC Road Safety Officer are invited to the next meeting if training in schools is to be a major topic.

6. Branding Work

Hannah Budnitz presented the branding work produced by the graphic designers including a proposed logo, route symbol options and initial drafts of the town centre map and potential route mapping.

The group discussed the branding work, suggesting alternative ideas on how the routes could be labelled (options including coloured, letter/number combinations or naming routes by famous cyclists or by locally important places). The group were advised that the Department for Transport may take some time to authorise the logo and route identification system for any on-road signing, so concluding the debate quickly is desirable, although there was insufficient time during the meeting. The group also discussed the options for network mapping and noted that street names and how busy/dangerous different roads are would be useful information. Various methods for circulating the artwork were discussed and it was agreed that the best way to do this would be investigated. It was separately noted that there should be a link to the Cycling page on the website from the front page and that the page should be updated.

RESOLVED: Hannah Budnitz to make the artwork available to all members of the group for further comments. (Post-meeting note: It is suggested that a 'focus group' be held to further debate the branding artwork and mapping.)

7. Community Routes

Hannah Budnitz reported that 3 'community' routes have been identified, namely town centre to Whitley Wood, a Coley-Southcote route and a Southcote to Oxford Road route via Prospect School. The group was advised that these could be delivered relatively quickly with appropriate signage, as they are mainly quiet roads linking schools, local centres and other community destinations.

A concern was raised that cycle auditing (of general highway schemes rather than schemes specifically designed to include cycle facilities) is not referred

to in the Cycle Strategy. It was recommended that cycle audits are undertaken for all new schemes to ensure that provisions are made for cyclists. There was concern amongst the group that a number of highway schemes have made provisions worse for cyclists. Keith Elliott and Adrian Lawson to provide further information on cycle auditing methodology for a report to be put on the TMAP agenda, and major schemes may in future be brought to this group.

The group were advised of the current Network Rail proposals in respect of Cow Lane Bridges. It was agreed that the proposed shared footway/ cycleway was desirable to continue the existing route on Portman Road and Richfield Avenue, but that crossings on either side of the bridge should be considered. It was also suggested that an advisory cycle lane under both bridges on the east side of the road would help cyclists travelling southwest-bound who may not want to cross the road, although it was acknowledged that the detailed design is a long way off.

Opportunities to connect Southcote Lane and Oxford Road were discussed and problems associated with the junction of Bath Road/ Tilehurst Road junction were highlighted. It was suggested that further work be undertaken to look at options for continuing cycle facilities straight across to Castle Hill and then to use Carey Street perhaps to avoid the roundabout. Such options are to be reported back to the next meeting.

Options are currently being considered for cycling along Redlands Road as part of the A327 corridor study. It was noted that any suggestions to make this route more convenient for cyclists would be welcome. In respect of the A327 corridor study, it was requested that cycle facilities on Whitley Street/Southampton Street be improved. It was confirmed that this is within the study remit and options will be investigated.

8. AOB

Natalie Lucas advised that the Thames Cycle Track proposal has been out to consultation with a high level of objections received. The objections will be looked though within the coming weeks.

RESOLVED: To update the group on the Thames Cycle Track proposal at the next meeting.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 14th January 2009 at 6pm.