

# CYCLING LIAISON GROUP MEETING

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at 6pm, Committee Room 2, Civic Offices

**Present:** Councillor Richard Willis; Councillor Ricky Duveen; Councillor Tim Harris; Councillor Paul Gittings, Greg Payne (CTC); Keith Elliott (RCC); Hannah Budnitz (RBC); Natalie Lucas (RBC).

**Apologies:** Councillor Tony Page; Adrian Lawson (RCC); Helen Biggerstaff (RBC/CTC); Peter Challis (Sustrans); Ros Furley (RCC).

1. **Introductions**
2. **Minutes from 14 January 2009 and Matters Arising**

Improvements - Parks have advised that it is their intention to improve the footpath by the Kennet (Footpath 2) by installing a tarmac surface. They have secured 50% of the funding from developer contributions subject to successful decision book report approval and are attempting to identify a source for the remainder of the funding but they are unable to confirm when this funding will be available at the moment.

Links to School - No routes have been suggested in discussions with West Berkshire. Work on Coley-Southcote route ongoing in response to Sustrans input.

All other matters arising to be covered in main agenda items.

3. **Update on Bikeability**

The bid for Bikeability funding has been successful. £20k has been secured for training of 500 children in years 5-7 to Bikeability Level 2 standards this financial year. The schools that have now volunteered to participate are:

- Alfred Sutton Primary School;
- Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School;
- Caversham Park Primary School;
- Highdown School and Sixth Form;
- George Palmer Primary School;
- John Madejski Academy;
- Kendrick Girls School;
- Manor Primary School;
- New Town Primary School;
- Prospect School; and
- Reading Girl's School.

The existing cycle training through volunteers will run alongside the Bikeability training and be reviewed in 2010, along with opportunities to expand the Bikeability training.

4. **Update on Mapping**

Copies of the new maps were circulated at the meeting.

Cycling England were sent the map and confirmed receipt but no comments have been received from them to date.

Positive feedback has been received regarding the new cycle map and cycle groups are pleased that it is available on the web. Copies of the map have been sent to libraries, leisure centres, the Hexagon, and schools. Businesses with a cycle to work scheme or travel plan will also be sent the new maps where contact details are available.

HB advised that there is likely to be another print run in Autumn 2009, so any feedback will be considered for revisions at that time.

One issue was raised regarding the Thames Path between the two bridges and how this was shown on the map. It was agreed that it is preferable for this section to remain blank and not shown as a path in future editions. This is to be discussed with legal prior to the next edition of the map.

**ACTION:** Confirm legal position on whether/how to show Thames towpath. Review signs and ensure they are appropriately positioned.

#### **5. Bike Week 2009**

Information on events/communications for Bike Week (13-21 June) was circulated. Last year was very successful and more media attention is expected this year as Reading has been selected by the national Bike Week management team. It was suggested that all local bike related businesses should be asked to participate. Stickers could also be put on all cycling maps sent out leading up to Bike Week. It was suggested that a teaser just mentioning the success of Bike Week and the dates for the following year should be included in the Council Tax Bulletin in future.

**ACTION:** HB to forward suggestions to Helen Biggerstaff who is coordinating the event.

#### **6. 2009-2010 Action Plan for Cycling Strategy**

It was reported that a detailed action plan for this financial year has gone through TMAP and Cabinet (Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2009). Officers are now in the position to proceed with the action plan, which concentrates on routes in South Reading and West Reading (including minor measures as identified through the Oxford Road study). It was suggested that the action to improve access to the eastbound bus gate on Oxford Road at Bedford Road could be managed by extending the bus lane.

RBC engineers will be looking at the routes but it was requested that the cycle groups ask for local volunteers from their members to lend local knowledge and identify any issues. They are welcome to ride along the routes with RBC officers if appropriate.

Cycle parking will also be considered on these routes as part of the review.

**ACTION:** RCC and CTC to provide relevant local contacts and their issues or recommendations to HB. HB and colleagues to look into the bus lane suggestion on Oxford Road.

#### **7. Cycle Auditing**

There are still concerns with the cycle audit process that was reported to TMAP. Reading Cycling Campaign will continue to view cycling auditing as a necessary process and recommend that the Council works towards best practice and formalise a cycle auditing process for any significant highways scheme, not just cycle schemes.

HB advised that safety audits do take into account safety issues for all users and meet statutory requirements, but an in-house resource for cycle auditing beyond proposals along the identified cycle routes has not currently been identified.

**ACTION:** Further report to be submitted to TMAP to identify current auditing practices, transparency and resource implications of additional work.

## **8. Maintenance of Cycle Routes**

A briefing note on road maintenance was circulated prior to the meeting. In response to queries from TH and KE, it was reported that:

- utilities (statutory undertakers) have a duty to maintain their apparatus under Section 81 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. Defective apparatus (e.g. manhole covers) is found and reported to Highway Inspectors who make the undertakers aware of the defects and their responsibility to maintain or repair the apparatus;
- other than where apparatus belonging to utilities is involved, Reading uses in-house staff to make road repairs;
- road cleaning is the responsibility of the Street Care team, not the Highways team;
- road surfaces are most likely to become damaged where there are drains or other utilities under the surface as the rigid chamber housing the drain does not move with the flexible tarmac surfacing; and
- kerbstone drainage will not generally be considered to replace traditional grates, as not only the instalment, but also the maintenance costs are much higher.

It was suggested that there is scope for the Council to prioritise main cycle routes under its maintenance regime.

A presentation from Street Care on cleaning and inspection schedules and priorities was requested for the next meeting.

**ACTION:** The Group proposes to Council that the main cycle routes shown on the new map be prioritised for maintenance. HB to request further information from Street Care and report back at the next meeting.

## **9. AOB**

RCC have received a query on whether cyclists will be able to use the bus lanes being installed as part of the M4 Junction 11 Improvements. It was reported that in the current scheme, provisions are made for separate pedestrian/cycle facilities. There no provisions for cyclists to use the bus lane due to the impact on signal technology.

**ACTION:** A written response to the query will be provided.

Cycle lane, Bridge Street - The on-street cycle lane has been removed where it crosses Fobney Street and give-way markings make the priority unclear.

**ACTION:** HB to investigate why this has happened and whether the cycle lane can be re-installed.

GP suggested that additional signs on-street matching the hazard symbols on the cycle map could warn cyclists. It was explained that these junctions already require many road signs and additional signs would not necessarily benefit cyclists. Also, Highways are trying to limit signs to reduce distractions at these junctions.

Major Transport Schemes - An update on any major transport/highway schemes in the planning/design stage should be on the agenda for the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Major Transport Schemes in the pipeline should be a standing agenda item to provide a reminder even where there is nothing to report.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009, 6pm

Late October 2009 (Dates to be circulated with the next agenda)