

Meeting Minutes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum
held on: Wednesday 23rd June 2021
(via Zoom conference call)

Chair: Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) – Member for Thatcham, Colthrop & Crookham

Attendees: Cllr Andy Moore (AM) – Member for Newbury Central
 Rob Coles (RC) – Canal River Trust Area Operations Manager
 Elaine Cox (EC) – WBC Rights Of Way Officer
 Cheryl Evans (CE) - WBC Traffic & Road Safety Officer
 Robert Hill (RH) - Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group
 Angela McMahon (AMc) – SPOKES / SUSTRANS Ranger
 Gordon Oliver (GO) – SPOKES Secretary / WBC Policy Officer
 Clive Tombs (CT) – WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)

Apologies: Cllr Martha Vickers (MV) – Member for Newbury Central
 Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – Member for Wash Common
 Caroline Lane (CL) – SPOKES Chair
 Neil Taylor – Newbury Road Club

	<u>Action</u>
1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies	
2. Notes of previous meeting & matters arising	
SAW reviewed minutes of the last meeting.	
Some members had not received the updated terms of reference that Josh Kerry had amended. CT to ask Deborah Vince to recirculate again.	CT & DV
CT to discuss detail of Dorking Way sign with AMc.	CT
Rights of Way Improvement Plan – EC intends to report on this at a subsequent Forum session.	
3. Kennet & Avon Canal – Towpath Improvements	
RC summarised the Canal River Trust (C&RT)'s current focus areas within West Berkshire:	

- Newbury A339-Ham Bridge – C&RT are awaiting dates for contractor to do spray chip finish to existing surfaced path; potential for disruption given high level of use;
- Ham Bridge to Bull's Lock – overtopping and related issues; revised contractors quotes awaited. Needs substantial back edge to it. First quote was £450k but C&RT seeking better value for money before any further discussion with WBC and other parties;
- Aldermaston Wharf to Hisseys Bridge – renewal of 8km of path (of which 7km owned by C&RT). C&RT working with Sustrans under Activation Project. Design to go from C&RT to Sustrans by Christmas 2021. CT has contributed commentary and photos of issues to C&RT to inform their design work;
- Newbury Town Centre: EC met with RC and WBC Structures team. Issue with block paving identified – due to water getting in behind sheet piling and washing away sand & loosening blocks at canal edge of path. EC exploring capital bid to do surveying initially then bidding for funding to do remedial works;
- West of Newbury (West Mills to Guyers Lock) – C&RT need to address embayments. C&RT aiming to fix in next couple of months. Newbury Angling Association also helping out. GO thanked RC for all the engagement and work towards effecting repairs;
- RC also considering Spokes offer to put up a few volunteers to assist C&RT staff and volunteers in one or possibly two specific areas where path affected by ruts.

4. PAWS Survey of cycle use in Pangbourne and Whitchurch

Rob Hill updated the Forum on survey carried out in March-April 2021. 140 responses from Pangbourne & Whitchurch. Only 4 respondents aged under 35. 30% of respondents travelled from Purley via A329. 25% of respondents from Whitchurch.

Key issues:

- Availability of bike racks and proximity to shop entrances;
- Scope for secure cycle lockers/hangars for residents of flats

GO shared Bike Hangar details:

<https://www.cyclehoop.com/product/shelters-canopies/bikehangar/>

CE commented that if there are specific aspirations for parking/storage improvements, these could be added to the Active Travel Heat Map:

<https://westberksactivestreeets.commonplace.is/proposals/have-your-say-on-the-west-berkshire-active-travel-heat-map>

RH keen to see more than 1 stand adjacent to Pangbourne Library; conflict though with parking.

PAWS are going to compile report and will send it to CE and CT.

RH

5. Cycle Training Updates

Due to level of demand, CE has applied to DfT for 1000 additional places in total across all levels, as spaces on Bikeability courses will exceed demand by December, underlining success of initiative.

67 families have applied to take part in Bikeability over the summer, at venues across District.

CE reported regarding Community Clubs: starting with 10-14 year-olds, 3-hour courses running over the summer again at locations across District

CE is also running major event at Linear Park, Holybrook on 10th July – AMc noted this is also being publicised via social media locally.

Cycle parking – CE now arranging additional provision for a host of school sites including Denefield and Little Heath.

St Barts Park House and John O’Gaunt declined additional storage (felt they had sufficient, hence reallocation to primary schools).

CE has passed further details to Deborah Vince to circulate.

6. Behavioural Change Initiatives

CE reported WBC has submitted funding bid; awaiting DfT to decide on allocation of funding (anticipated early August).

Focus is on studying why there is a difference between Home to School travel and on cycling for other journey purposes.

Perhaps down to unexpected issues such as a need for more confidence and competence among adults

GO mentioned Behavioural Science in Transport network <https://www.bsphn.org.uk/>.

WBC’s initiative in this field is being watched with interest by DfT and other local authorities. RH and GO said how good it was to see this major research initiative being carried forwards.

7. LCWIP and LTN1/20

CT advised that the **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** was adopted on 3rd June and is available via the Active Travel page on the Council's website. Light refresh has been done to address an issue with map and some broken web links.

The LCWIP provides a strategic and long-term approach to developing improvements to cycling and walking facilities in the District. The emphasis is on areas which have the highest existing demand for travel and the greatest future potential for growing cycling and walking trips, hence the focus on urban areas and on utility journeys on foot and by bike. There's been close co-ordination with Reading Borough and Wokingham Borough Councils, to encourage engagement in development of the LCWIP for the Eastern Area.

The LCWIP also identifies certain leisure corridors that appear to have potential for significant improvements.

For the Eastern Area and extending out to Pangbourne and Theale, Annex C in the LCWIP identifies two schemes in respect of Strategic Cycle Routes, one in respect of Orbital Routes and two in respect of Leisure Cycle routes, all of which will require considerable further work with Reading Borough Council over the coming years.

For the Newbury and Thatcham area, Annex D in the LCWIP identifies 7 Cycle Corridors and one sub-set of a corridor to deliver going forwards.

LCWIP remains a living document, to be revised over time, with delivery over short- medium and long-term.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design is guidance issued in 2020 by the Government to local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure. It's being referred to inform the design of new, major active travel infrastructure schemes in West Berkshire.

CT had contacted the Principal Engineer (Development Control) and Environment Delivery Manager to make them aware of specific Forum members' views regarding application of LTN1/20 in context of the proposed Sandleford development, following discussion at last meeting, while noting the appeal relating to this development is still subject to decision by Secretary of State.

SAW asked about programming of improvements and underlined need to not forget the secondary and connecting links in the cycle and also pedestrian network. CT responded that the programme is being refined, with the Primary route improvements currently taking precedence and agreed with the need to ensure that enhancements to

secondary routes are kept firmly in consideration for delivery, funding and resourcing permitting.

8. Active Travel Fund schemes

CT and CE updated on the schemes under the Active Travel Fund heading:

- Crown Mead, Thatcham
Proposal relating to the section of A4 from High Street Thatcham to beyond St Johns Road was consulted on up to 9 April. 81 responses, of which 60% were negative. The most frequent complaints about the scheme were that it would increase congestion, traffic, and worsen the parking situation. CT advised WBC are reviewing the scheme, focussing on the section by the Surgery and A4 where it meets High Street and currently looking to table adjusted proposals during July 2021;
- Lawrences Lane, Thatcham
A potential point closure at the southern end of this rural lane. Overwhelmingly positive feedback (79%). WBC Traffic team are looking to carry this forwards, with detailed design to be undertaken;
- Deadmans Lane, Theale
A closure to enable and encourage active travel on this lane close by Theale Green School. Again, WBC Traffic team are looking to carry this forwards, with detailed design to be undertaken;
- School Streets
CE has asked Deborah to circulate report. Positive consultation response on the proposals in and around Calcot Primary School. Aiming for holistic approach: Balance Bike, Dr Bike, Family Training courses, £10k investment on cycle storage, welly racks at Calcot Primary – not just the part closure of Royal Avenue for 1 hour in morning and 1 hour in afternoon).
Scheme will go in for start of September

Westwood Farm School being used as a 'control' which is innovative, as are the drone surveys planned at A4/Charrington Road.

Phase 2 page added to Commonplace portal in conjunction with planned ongoing monitoring.

CE noted other schools, potentially including Spurcroft and Francis Baily also interested but before any funding bids go forward, need to know what improves Active Travel first.

CT

Forum members discussed and agreed benefits of having a bottom-up, research-led approach.

- A4 Western Avenue, Speen towards Newbury
CT referenced scheme consultation February to April 2021. Looking to provide high-quality segregated facilities on north and south sides of A4 Western Avenue effectively from Brummel Road inwards, with delivery to be split into phases;

56 responses of which 51% positive, 11% Neutral, 38% negative
Main concerns related to perceived impact on traffic flow, congestion, and effect on emergency services. There were also negative comments about taking road space away from vehicular traffic, cost-to-user ratio, and cycling and cyclists behaviour in general.

WBC is intending to adjust the scheme imminently and again intending to rapidly table revised proposals during July 2021.

CT

- Parking schemes to improve Active Travel
WBC also consulted on specific parking restrictions to improve conditions for cyclists.

Currently in discussion with WBC Traffic team regarding drawing up detailed designs for schemes including:

Kiln Road / Turnpike Road, Newbury – to deter parking on the existing shared use facility and provide some alternative facilities for parking and visitors.

Lower Way, eastern end approaching The Moors, Thatcham – Traffic team looking to make restrictions permanent and apply line markings.

Andover Road west of St Johns Roundabout, Newbury – an issue with a small number of residents who do not have off-street parking – WBC will be reviewing the very initial proposal that was consulted on before tabling a revised design.

- Active Travel heat map
CT highlighted again that the consultation remains live and open for comments via the Common Place portal until Friday 2 July (see link above). Aim is to help progressively create, including more accessible streets for active travel, including better public spaces, secure cycle parking and provide high quality environments suitable for cycling and walking.

Currently seeing particular engagement from Mortimer area as well

as Newbury and Thatcham.

Action

9. AOB

None recorded.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday 21st September 2021

- Time: 17:30 – 19:00
- Venue: (Zoom link to follow)