

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	9 September 2014
Title:	Project Appraisal: Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route
Reference:	6039
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to procure, spend, and enter into the necessary contractual arrangements to implement the proposed improvements to the Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route, consisting of up to five stages, as set out in this report, at an estimated total cost of up to £1,088,000 to be funded from the Cycling Ambition Department for Transport (DfT) Grant and East Hampshire District Council held developer contributions, together with alternative external funding sources.

Scheme Outline

1.2. It is proposed to implement a 2.5metre wide shared cycleway/footway linking Petersfield to the Queen Elizabeth Country Park. This covers the area from the B2070 The Causeway south of Petersfield and on to the Country Park visitor centre. This route would also serve as a link between Petersfield and the existing cycle route to Clanfield and Horndean creating a cycling link through the South Downs.

Delivery Options Considered

1.3 The completion of an off-road route from 150m north of the junction of B2070 The Causeway with Bolinge Hill to the B2070/Greenway Lane roundabout, which made up Section 1 of the whole scheme, was included as part of the design. However, detailed costings have shown the whole scheme to be in excess of existing funding so it has been agreed to make this section an on-road advisory routed and concentrate on the delivery of Sections 2 to 5 with the existing available funds. Officers are currently actively pursuing a number of alternative external funding sources to deliver this section. Should this funding be forthcoming, this section of route will be

included in the final scheme. There were no other feasible alternatives to the route progressed.

Measures of Success

- 1.4 The Country Park is already a popular destination for cyclists, and there has been strong support from the Cyclist Touring Club that indicates this link will be well used. It is also proposed to include cycle counters along the route to enable this to be monitored.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the end of January 2013, the DfT invited National Parks to bid for a share of a new £17million fund to boost cycling. In total four grants were awarded from the Cycling Ambition fund for infrastructure improvements, enabling more people to get active and to cycle in and around National Parks.
- 2.2 The South Downs National Park Authority has been working with partner authorities in the National Park to develop a package of schemes that can be delivered within a two year funding period as grants must be claimed by March 2015.
- 2.3 In August 2013, the National Park Authority was awarded £3.8 million to deliver around 55 kilometres of new cycle routes across the National Park, to encourage recreational visits around and to/from the park, and to encourage those living and/or working within the park to travel by cycle for day-to-day journeys. Three schemes (including this one) in Hampshire are included in the project and will be delivered by the County Council in partnership with the National Park.
- 2.4 The Queen Elizabeth Country Park is the biggest Country Park within Hampshire with 2,000 acres of open access woodland and downland including the Butser Hill, the highest point on the South Downs, which is also designated as a National Nature Reserve. Over 300,000 people visit the park each year. There are a range of facilities that are open all year round including a visitor centre with shop, café, theatre and activity area. In addition there are two play areas, barbecue sites, picnic areas and 22 miles of trail for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- 2.5 There are a number of drivers for this scheme including the need to provide cycleway links not only between Petersfield and the Country Park but also with Clanfield, Horndean, and the South Downs where there are considerable links to other cycle routes. It is expected that if a cycle route was provided, this would be used by cycle commuters between these areas and encourage more sustainable transport options. At present the only route between Petersfield and Queen Elizabeth Country Park is via the A3 or using off road routes with significant gradients. Neither of these routes is suitable for the majority of people, and this has been highlighted by a 4,000+ signature petition, initiated by the Cyclist Touring Club in support of a new route. The Ramblers Association in Hampshire and local equestrian organisations have also indicated their support.

3 Finance

3. 1	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u> Sections 2-5/ Sections 1-5	<u>% of total</u> Sections 2- 5/ Sections 1-5	<u>Funds Available</u> Sections 2-5 / Sections 1-5	<u>£'000</u> Sections 2-5/ Sections 1-5
	Design Fee	60 / 60	7.5 / 5.5	DfT Cycling Ambitions Grant	688 / 688
	Client Fee	5 / 5	0.5 / 0.5	East Hampshire Developer Contributions	100 / 100
	Supervision	8 / 10	1 / 1	Alternative external funding sources *	0 / 300
	Construction	715 / 1,013	91 / 93	N/A	N/A
	Total	788 / 1,088	100 / 100	Total	788 / 1,088

3.2	<u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	5.9 / 5.9	0.005 / 0.005
	Capital Charge	76.0 / 105.0	0.047 / 0.065

*This project appraisal covers the scheme as a whole, sections 1 -5, to a total value of up to £1,088,000. However, current funds available are only sufficient to deliver Sections 2 - 5 to a value of £788,000. Bids for additional external funding to allow for all 5 sections to be delivered are currently being actively pursued. However, if this additional funding isn't forthcoming the scheme will be reduced in scale, through the omission of

Section 1, to meet the funding available, until such time as monies are received to allow the completion of the entire route.

4 Programme

- 4.1 It is planned to deliver the route in two stages to meeting funding availability. It is anticipated that work on Sections 2-5 will begin in the Autumn and be complete by Spring 2015 as per DfT spending requirements, whilst work on Section 1 will commence when funding becomes available, which is likely to be April 2015.

5 Scheme Details

- 5.1 **Section 1:** The first section starts at a point 150m north of the junction of B2070 The Causeway with Bolinge Hill Lane (where it would join another existing shared footway/cycleway implemented in the 2013/2014 financial year) progressing south on the western verge up to B2070/Greenway Lane roundabout. If insufficient funding is available once final tenders are received, then this section will be signed as an on-road advisory route only.
- 5.2 **Section 2:** This section starts from the B2070/Greenway Lane roundabout, into the eastern side of the A3 slip road where it would enter the disused old A3. Here the route will then link in with an existing forest track in the Queen Elizabeth Country Park. This section of the route falls within Highways Agency control and is approximately 1,565metres in length. It is proposed to implement a 2.5metre shared use cycle route along the A3 Slip Road by widening the existing Eastern footway. There would be a 1.5metre safety margin alongside the carriageway. The old A3 is still in relatively good condition and serves a disused quarry as well as access to utilities still present along this route. This route is gated, and access to vehicles is heavily restricted. As such, it is not proposed to provide a dedicated cycle route but to direct users along the main carriageway. It is expected that some vegetation clearance and removal of cats' eyes will be required as well as modifying the gates to allow cycle access but still prevent unauthorised vehicular access. Similar works will be required to the south of the route where smaller, field gates are present. To the south of this section there is no fencing at the edge of the embankment. Therefore a suitable pedestrian/cycle restraint to ensure safety of Non Motorised Users, and also to protect the edge of the embankment, will be provided.
- 5.3 **Section 3:** This follows an existing forest track and connects the route from the old A3 with the live A3. This section is within Forestry Commission land and is approximately 505metres in length. It is proposed to provide a new 2.5metre shared use path along the existing forest track connecting to the live A3 verge at the lowest point. Works will consist of a new macadam footpath and also some cut/fill at the lowest level to connect safely to the A3 verge. The majority of the route is bordered with thick vegetation. However, once this thins and the route moves towards the A3, it is proposed to provide fencing to ensure the safety of Non Motorised Users near the traffic.

- 5.4 **Section 4:** This section transfers from the forest track down to the live A3 verge and along the A3 until the Queen Elizabeth Country Park. This section is owned by the Highways Agency and is approximately 760metres in length. It is proposed to provide a 2.5metre shared use path within the existing verge with a post and rail fence protecting Non Motorised Users from the live traffic. A Road Restraints Assessment Process assessment has been undertaken which identifies that a safety barrier is not required. The existing chalk trap will be modified in places to provide sufficient space for the footpath, and where this is in close proximity an additional fence will be provided to ensure Non Motorised Users are protected from falling into the trap. At the layby, it is proposed to undertake minor alterations to provide sufficient space for the path and chalk trap while still providing sufficient carriageway widths. New kerbing is expected to be provided to the rear of the layby. Near the Queen Elizabeth Country Park entrance and overbridge, the existing ditch will be piped to allow sufficient space for the shared use path, which then transfers into section 5.
- 5.5 **Section 5:** Here the route descends into the Country Park visitors centre area. The landowner is primarily the Highways Agency although some of the route is within the Country Park, which is within the ownership of the Forestry Commission. The approximate length of the section is 150metres. It is proposed to bring the shared use path from the A3 verge down the embankment by using a retaining wall to control the gradient. The existing embankment is chalk, and it is considered that cutting into the embankment would affect its stability. Fencing will be provided to ensure the safety of Non Motorised Users.

6 Departures from Standards

- 6.1 Section 4: The layby will be improved. However there is insufficient space for it to be brought up to full standard.

7 Community Engagement

- 7.1 The Cyclist Touring Club has been campaigning for this route for some time, initiating a 4,000+ signature petition, and is therefore very supportive of these proposals. County and District Councillors, including County Councillor Ken Moon, are also supportive of the implementation of the route, as is the South Downs National Park Authority. Proposals will be circulated to all interested parties for their information, as well as being displayed at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park visitor centre prior to construction works commencing.
- 7.2 The proposals have been displayed on the County Council's website and to date no further comments have been received as a result of this.

8 Statutory Procedures

- 8.1 There are no statutory procedures associated with this scheme.

9 Land Requirements

- 9.1 Some of the land is within Highways Agency and Forestry Commission ownership, and all works and materials have been agreed with them. County Council officers are currently making arrangements to progress the legal Agreements/licenses for undertaking works on non County Council owned land.

10 Maintenance Implications

- 10.1 Discussions are on-going with the Highways Agency as to how the cycle route will best be maintained in the future.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approve the Project Appraisal for Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route as outlined in this report.
- 11.2 That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment give approval to procure, spend, and enter into the necessary contractual arrangements to implement the proposed improvements to the Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Cycle Route (QECP), consisting of up to five stages, as set out in this report, at an estimated total cost of up to £1,088,000 to be funded from the Cycling Ambition DfT Grant and East Hampshire District Council held developer contributions, together with alternative external funding sources.
- 11.3 That authority to make the arrangements to implement the scheme, including minor variations to the design or contract, be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport, and Environment.

LTP3 Priorities and Policy Objectives

3 Priorities

- To support economic growth by ensuring the safety, soundness and efficiency of the transport network in Hampshire
- Provide a safe, well maintained and more resilient road network in Hampshire
- Manage traffic to maximise the efficiency of existing network capacity, improving journey time reliability and reducing emissions, to support the efficient and sustainable movement of people and goods

14 Policy Objectives

- Improve road safety (through delivery of casualty reduction and speed management)
- Efficient management of parking provision (on and off street, including servicing)
- Support use of new transport technologies (i.e. Smartcards; RTI; electric vehicle charging points)
- Work with operators to grow bus travel and remove barriers to access
- Support community transport provision to maintain 'safety net' of basic access to services
- Improve access to rail stations, and improve parking and station facilities
- Provide a home to school transport service that meets changing curriculum needs
- Improve co-ordination and integration between travel modes through interchange improvements
- Apply 'Manual for Streets' design principles to support a better balance between traffic and community life
- Improve air quality
- Reduce the need to travel, through technology and Smarter Choices measures

- Promote walking and cycling to provide a healthy alternative to the car for short local journeys to work, local services or school
- Develop Bus Rapid Transit and high quality public transport in South Hampshire, to reduce car dependence and improve journey time reliability
- Outline and implement a long term transport strategy to enable sustainable development in major growth areas

Other

Please list any other targets (i.e. National Indicators, non LTP) to which this scheme will contribute.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This scheme will create a leisure route from Petersfield town centre enabling cyclists to cycle safely to the Queen Elisabeth Country Park. This will have a positive impact on more vulnerable pedestrians/cyclists or less confident cyclists, as it will negate the need to cycle on the carriageway.

2 Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1 The provisions of the Act have no impact on these proposals.

3 Climate Change:

3.1 How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

3.2 How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

This scheme will further encourage cycling in preference to the car, thereby reducing vehicle use and improving local air quality.