

GILBERT ROAD, CAMBRIDGE – CYCLING SCHEME

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **15th June 2010**

From: **Acting Executive Director: Environment Services**

Electoral divisions: **Arbury and West Chesterton**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a**

Key Decision: **No**

Purpose: **To outline for approval, recommendations for the implementation of a cycle scheme for Gilbert Road, Cambridge.**

Recommendation: **It is recommended that Members approve the Option 1 scheme (Increased Width Advisory Cycle Lanes) to be taken forward and implemented.**

<i>Officer Contact:</i>		<i>Member contact:</i>	
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cycling England (CE) have been tasked by the Government with delivering a national programme to increase cycling levels, create examples of best practice and demonstrate what could be done with the sort of levels of investment in cycling that is found in much of continental Europe. By March 2008, CE had launched new national standards for cycle training (Bikeability) and had created an initial six 'Cycling Demonstration Towns' (CDTs) all of whom increased their levels of cycling.
- 1.2 The County Council, in partnership with Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) was successful in its bid to become one of these 11 new 'Cycling Towns'. The bid was not only for the City but importantly included the necklace villages within a 5 mile radius of Cambridge.
- 1.3 Initially Cycling England provided funding of £3.6m up until April 2011, which is to be match funded. In addition a further £210,000 has been secured, with further funding likely based on our record of delivery.
- 1.4 The provisional programme to spend this money was approved by Cabinet on 4th November 2008. Cabinet resolved to delegate the final decision on the programme to the then Cabinet Member for Growth and Environment in consultation with the then Deputy Chief Executive, Environment and Community Services.
- 1.5 The provisional programme was presented to and discussed by Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire's Area Joint Committees (AJCs) and In Your Patch Meetings as well as the Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire County Council Joint Transport Forum. It was submitted to Cycling England early in 2009 and subsequently received their approval.
- 1.6 The approved programme is shown in **Appendix A**.
- 1.7 A scheme in Gilbert Road was included in the programme because for some time it has been recognised as an important part of the cycle route from villages to the north of Cambridge such as Histon, Impington, Cottenham and Rampton into central Cambridge, as well as being a key route on many school bound cycling journeys. An improvement of cycle facilities has been an objective of the Council for many years and has been contained in a number of policy documents such as The Northern Corridor Transport Plan which was adopted in 2003.
- 1.8 On 23rd February 2010 Cabinet approved 3 schemes in Cambridge. They were Madingley Road, Cherry Hinton Road and The Tins. The Gilbert Road scheme which was the fourth of the schemes considered by Cabinet, was deferred to allow the PDG to discuss the matter further since the scheme proved much more controversial than the other three.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The budget for the Gilbert Road scheme is £400,000, with £100,000 from the

Cycling Town initiative and £300,000 from the Northern Corridor Area Transport Plan (NCATP).

- 2.2 The NCATP forms Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Cambridge Local Plan and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. It was compiled jointly by City, District and County Councils and is a sister document to the Southern, Eastern and Western Corridor Area Transport Plans.
- 2.3 The purpose of NCATP is to identify new transport infrastructure and service provision that is needed to facilitate the building out of Local Plan development allocations in the north of Cambridge.
- 2.4 The NCATP states that in line with current national and local transport policy, the emphasis of any new transport capacity created in the corridor should be for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. By identifying how additional capacity of this nature can be provided, the plan aims to not increase car traffic in the area, particularly during the peak hours and increase the proportion of journeys made by bus, cycle and on foot, whilst minimising delays to public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists. These are also objectives of the adopted Local Transport Plan.

3. GILBERT ROAD BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Gilbert Road is currently used by 900 cyclists per day from villages north of Cambridge and parts of north Cambridge, who may be heading to the east of the city and destinations such as the rail station. With Chesterton Community College, four local primary schools and the new development on the NIAB site to the west, there is potential to grow cycling trips markedly in the future if a safe environment can be provided for them. This is also the case because of the wider route improvements that have been made that feed into this area such as improvements between Rampton and Cottenham, through Histon and Impington and once land is obtained, Cottenham to Histon.
- 3.2 Currently there are 1.3m wide advisory cycle lanes along the whole length, and on both sides of Gilbert Road vehicles can legally park. Surveys have revealed that typically 20 vehicles are parked in these cycle lanes at any time, with a concentration at the Milton Road end, who are believed to be commuters rather than residents or their visitors. This increases the risk of accidents, particularly for children and discourages people from cycling from the wider area. The majority of houses on Gilbert Road have at least two off street parking spaces.
- 3.3 The cycling scheme is not just about the safety of road users in Gilbert Road. Gilbert Road forms part of a wider network of cycling provision as well as being an important route for motor vehicles including buses. As part of the Cycle Cambridge proposals, the Cottenham-Histon-Cambridge corridor has been identified as a key route for improvement. One of the fundamentals of encouraging modal shift, removing the perceived danger of cycling and encouraging an increase in cycling is to make routes continuous by improving the safety on the whole route. The Gilbert Road scheme is one section of the above route. Work has started on improvements through Histon and Impington, and work on the link from Cottenham to Histon will commence

once land is obtained. Gilbert Road has long been seen as part of this extended route and has been included in County policy for some time.

- 3.4 There have been 10 reported accidents in the last 5 years, of which 6 involved cyclists. Many cyclists perceive Gilbert Road as a dangerous place to cycle and many use the footways, coming into conflict with pedestrians.
- 3.5 For these reasons, the improvement of cycle facilities along Gilbert Road is considered to be particularly important and will not only make safer provision for all using Gilbert Road, including residents, but will provide significant benefit to users from a wide area who use the road to access Cambridge.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 A wide range of options for the improvement of cycle facilities along Gilbert Road have been considered. Some of these have been developed by our own assessment and others have been suggested by local people or interest groups. **Appendix B** summarises the options considered and the assessment of those options. These options include:
- Mandatory cycle lanes
 - Advisory cycle lanes with or without waiting/loading bans both at all time and only peak times
 - Hybrid cycle lane
 - Central cycle lanes
 - Using the footway as a shared use footway/Cycle Path
 - Variations of the above
 - Various traffic calming options including:
 - Safety cameras
 - Raised tables
 - Round top humps
 - Speed cushions
 - 20mph limits
 - Interactive signing
- 4.2 The development of the options for Gilbert Road commenced with initial talks between a range of officers from both the County and City Council and local County members. The full range of options set out above were considered and discussed to see which might be feasible.
- 4.3 From these talks, consultants were asked to compile a report to assess the options that were considered most appropriate from the initial discussions.
- 4.4 The consultants' report recommended that only 2 options had the potential to really provide good quality provision for cyclists that would ensure that they felt confident to use the road and hence free up the footway for pedestrians. The report also recommended that traffic calming be considered to add to the safety of vulnerable road users in Gilbert Road, a view strongly endorsed in particular by local members. The options recommended by the consultants were:

Option 1 Increased Width Advisory Cycle Lanes

The existing advisory lanes (bounded by a broken line) could be widened to 1.7m with double yellow lines to prevent cars parking in them. In this case, the enforcement restrictions would need to be undertaken by local authority parking attendants. If a solid line were used to create a mandatory lane, police enforcement would be necessary. Vehicles would not be able to park on the verge.

Option 2 Mandatory Cycle Lanes.

The existing lanes could be widened to 1.5m and converted to mandatory lanes (bounded by a solid line). Vehicles are not permitted to enter or park in these lanes, though it is the police's responsibility to enforce the restrictions and there have been enforcement problems in mandatory lanes in other parts of the city. Without double yellow lines motorists would be permitted to park on the grass verges, which has become a common practice in recent years.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 An extensive and thorough consultation was undertaken which included consulting on 3 other schemes in the city (Madingley Road, The Tins and Cherry Hinton Road) at the same time. By consulting on a number of schemes at the same time this made efficient use of officer time and provided more for people to see ensuring a better turnout. The consultation comprised 6 public events, 2 of which were held in Gilbert Road. The events were advertised in the Cambridge News and via posters and flyers. Given the perceived level of interest from Gilbert Road residents it was decided to letter drop all properties to ensure that they were all aware of the proposals.

5.2 Consultees were asked to complete questionnaires (also available on line) indicating whether they supported the proposed details shown. They were also encouraged to add comments.

5.3 **Table 1** below shows the consultation programme that was undertaken.

Date & Times	Venue
Tues 19 th January 4.30 – 7.30pm	Cherry Hinton Village Centre
Wed 20 th January 8.00 – 10.00am	Madingley Park & Ride
Wed 20 th January 4.30 – 7.30pm	Madingley Park & Ride
Thurs 21 st January 4.30 – 7.30pm	Chesterton Community College
Mon 25 th January 4.30 – 7.30pm	Chesterton Community College
Wed 27 th January 4.30 – 7.30am	Cambridge Central Library

5.4 The Cambridge Environment and Traffic Management Area Joint Committee was consulted on the scheme proposals at its meeting on 25th January.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS

- 6.1 A total of 566 responses were received of which 196 were from Gilbert Road residents. There was nearly a 100% response rate from residents of Gilbert Road which has proved very useful in understanding the full views of residents on this sensitive scheme.
- 6.2 Looking first at the general need to improve cycle facilities in Gilbert Road, including parking restrictions, 73% of respondents stated their support with 24% opposed and 3% no opinion. For just Gilbert Road, 36% of respondents supported the proposals, with 56% opposing and 8% no opinion.
- 6.3 In terms of the proposed traffic calming, overall 55% were in favour, with 32% against and 13% with no opinion. For just Gilbert Road, 53% of residents supported and 37% opposed it.
- 6.4 Turning to the specific route proposals presented at the consultation (as noted above), 50% of all respondents who stated a preference preferred Option 1 (advisory cycle lanes with double yellow lines). Support for Option 2 (mandatory cycle lanes) was 29% with 21% supporting neither. For just Gilbert Road residents 31% preferred Option 1 and 20% preferred Option 2 with 49% having no preference.
- 6.5 **Table 2** below summarises the results:

Do you support the need to widen and improve the cycle lanes (including parking & loading restrictions)?			
	YES	No Opinion	NO
All	73	3	24
Residents	36	8	56
Do you support the proposed traffic calming?			
	YES	No Opinion	NO
All	55	13	32
Residents	53	10	37
What is your preference for cycle lane options?			
	Option 1	Option 2	Neither
All	50	29	21
Residents	31	20	49

- 6.6 The results of this consultation demonstrate that overall, there is a high degree of support for the principles of the scheme. However, in Gilbert Road, although a significant minority of residents do support the proposals, the majority do not, principally due to the loss of on street parking.
- 6.7 PDG and Cabinet were particularly interested in the views of local schools so further work was carried out to ascertain their views. **Plan 1** shows the location of schools and **Appendix C** summarises the views of local schools and community groups.
- 6.8 All except one of the schools are very supportive of the proposals for improved cycle provision on Gilbert Road. The exception is Mayfield School which whilst supportive of improving cycle safety, remains concerned about

displaced parking and the effect it will have on them. If the scheme goes ahead then the issue of either school keep clear markings or parking restrictions at the front of the school could be considered.

- 6.9 Since the last Cabinet meeting there has also been some further engagement with the petitioners. Dr H Tribe representing the residents, and Dr J Woodburn representing the Cambridge Cycling Campaign attended a meeting with officers to discuss the options and a range of points were discussed. Dr Tribe who presented the residents' petition still believes that there is no need to change the status quo with possibly the addition of speed control but not raised tables or cushions, whereas Dr Woodburn from the Cycling Campaign is still of the belief that the current situation is dangerous and that the proposals should be implemented. Whilst the meeting has not changed the views of either of the petitioners, it has served to give each party and the officers more of an insight into the concerns of each side of the debate.
- 6.10 Local members fully support the scheme proposals. Written statements from Councillors Moss-Eccardt and Wilkins are contained in **Appendix D**.

7. VIEWS OF GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG)

- 7.1 PDG discussed the scheme at length at its meeting on 19th May. The following is a selection of points that were noted:
- There has been a long desire for improvement to cycling on Gilbert Road
 - The proposed scheme will make provision for an Increase in safety for cyclists
 - The residents of Gilbert Road also undertook their own survey and this gave rise to different results to the survey undertaken by the council
 - It was noted that there would be a loss of parking for residents, but that the majority had at least 2 off road spaces
 - This is a road for all users and that there is no right to park
 - There was general support from the schools with the exception of Mayfield.
- 7.2 Although not unanimous, the majority of members of PDG supported the scheme and recognised the greater benefit, whilst noting the concerns of the residents. The majority supported the Growth & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder to recommend to Cabinet to approve the scheme.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Following the previous Cabinet meeting, Officers have discussed the Gilbert Road proposals further with the two petitioners who presented at Cabinet as well as local interest groups and schools. Officers have also considered again the options that were presented at Cabinet and considered other options more recently put forward by residents.
- 8.2 This process has confirmed a number of points. Firstly, if the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on Gilbert Road is to be significantly improved, one

of the two schemes originally presented to Cabinet is the best way forward. Any of the others would not deliver the same levels of benefits and therefore, officers views are that they would not be worth implementing. The success of the scheme hinges on the removal of parking to give clear, continuous cycle lanes. Traffic calming will keep vehicle speeds under control and reassure less confident cyclists that it is safe to cycle.

- 8.3 Secondly, it is clear that there is, and on the favoured schemes, always will be a, difference in the views of the people who live in the wider area and those who live on Gilbert Road. This is to be expected as the residents of Gilbert Road will be the most directly affected. The question that officers have then considered is whether given this, it would be right to proceed with the scheme. The first point here is that the Gilbert Road project should not be looked at in isolation but as a part of the larger strategic cycle network in Cambridge and its hinterland, improvements to much of which is underway or complete. If this important link is missing, the benefit from the overall scheme will be significantly diminished. Following on from that, from the surveys undertaken, virtually all properties on Gilbert Road have at least two parking spaces and so the lack of on street parking should not be an issue. Indeed, from surveys, much of the daytime parking is believed to be commuters unrelated to residents.
- 8.4 Thirdly, there is strong support for the proposals from local Members and most of the schools in the area. Whilst these groups may be affected in some way, they have also indicated clearly the benefits that would result for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 8.5 Following this further appraisal as requested by PDG, the views of officers remain that the best scheme for Gilbert Road is to deploy wider advisory cycle lanes with parking restrictions rather than mandatory cycle lanes. This will improve safety and benefit a much wider area than just Gilbert Road.
- 8.6 Whilst not the key determining factor, members should be aware that if Cabinet are minded not to support the scheme then there may be an impact on future funding for Cambridge as a Cycling Town, and Cambridge's inclusion on Cycling England's Cycling City and Towns programme beyond 2011 given that this has previously been flagged up as a scheme we wish to pursue. It may also result in the loss of the £300,000 allocated from Cycling England this year unless other replacement schemes can be agreed.
- 8.7 Whilst noting the overall support for the scheme and the division in support from Gilbert Road residents, but recognising the greater benefits for other members of the community by improving safety for cyclists and promoting the growth of cycle usage in this part of the city, it is recommended that the Option 1 scheme should proceed.

9. NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 If Cabinet approval is granted to take forward and implement the scheme, public notices and traffic regulation orders will need to be drafted to introduce parking restrictions and to introduce the raised features. Objections to these will be considered by Cambridge Environment and Traffic Management Area

Joint Committee. The earliest meeting this can now be done at to comply with statutory processes will be the October meeting.

9.2 The programme to implement the scheme would be thus:

June	Advertise parking/loading restrictions and raised features
October	Objections to be considered by Cambridge Traffic Management and Environment Area Joint Committee
November	Commence construction
Christmas	Complete

10. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR MEMBER INFORMATION

Resources and Performance

- 10.1 Cycling Town status offers the County Council and its partners the opportunity to double its spend on cycling within the Cambridge area by harnessing an external source of funding.
- 10.2 There is a prospect of further funding from Cycling England beyond March 2011 if the Cambridge programme is deemed successful and the programme nationally is extended. If this scheme is not implemented, it will reduce the chances of securing such additional funding.

Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working

- 10.3 The Cycling Town is a partnership of local councils and other stakeholders. Officers will continue to work closely with these organisations.

Climate Change

- 10.4 The implementation of the scheme will result in positive climate change effects from less car journeys as people are encouraged to cycle because of improved facilities. This significantly outweighs any negative climate change effects due to construction and implementation.

Access and Inclusion

- 10.5 There are no significant implications for any of these headings within this category.

Engagement and Consultation

- 10.6 Six public exhibitions took place in January 2010 for 4 cycling schemes including Gilbert Road, 2 of which were at Chesterton Community College and 1 was in Cambridge Central Library.

Background Documents

As attached

APPENDIX C: VIEWS OF LOCAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

ESTABLISHMENT	COMMENTS MADE	POSITION	CONTACT
Milton Road Primary School	I support safer cycling and walking, though I do have parents who live some way away who drive, and need somewhere to park. There would be less available parking under the proposed scheme.	Steve Burton, Headteacher	Telephone
Arbury Primary School	Mr Tull supports the proposals which he believes will improve the safety for his pupils when they leave primary school and go to Chesterton Community College.	Ben Tull, Headteacher	Meeting
Mayfield Primary School	We already have major problems with congestion around Warwick Road and the Mayfield School site and are very concerned that these changes will lead to more cars parking in the roads around the school....We believe that the inevitable increase in parked cars from Gilbert Road would cause us enormous problems and increase the hazards for children walking and cycling to school. We would be grateful if you would consider this issue and note our opposition to the parking ban.	J Hill, Headteacher	Letter
Mayfield Primary School	The Governors reiterated the views of the head teacher in that there were concerned that if the scheme went ahead, displaced parking from Gilbert Road would increase the pressure on parking and congestion around the school. They emphasised that they support cycling initiatives in general and cycling was a vital part of their travel to work plan and had recently had new and additional cycle parking installed as part of the Cycle Cambridge project but could not support our Gilbert road proposals because of their concerns above.	Jane Catchpole, Governor responsible for Travel Plan	Meeting
Chesterton Community College	As Principal of the school I support the proposal to establish a cycleway as I think that Chesterton students' safety will be improved thereby. Standing on gate duty over the past number of years I have seen numerous instances where students have veered into the centre of the road to pass a parked car, narrowly missing other cars using the road at the same time. It has been a matter of good fortune only – and probably, the skill of the car drivers! - that there has not been a serious accident up to now, I think.	Mark Patterson, Principal	Meeting and E mail
Chesterton Community College	As Chair of Governors I would definitely wish to support the current proposals. I have now heard back from our Governors and the consensus is favourable, with a preference for Option 1.	Mary Sanders, Chair of Governors	E mail
Castle (Special) School	I totally support the mandatory cycle lane and the traffic calming measures. My staff feel that would increase safety and support sustainable travel, ie cyclists. The road speed is quite fast along there and with the schools location (particularly Chesterton) this would help. The other concern would be creating 'rat runs' along the other roads leading to our school in Courtney Way and then back out onto Gilbert Road when drivers maybe try to avoid the calming measures In a quick poll of my staff the mandatory cycle measures would be welcome, there was less enthusiasm for the traffic calming proposals.	Carol McCarthy, Headteacher	E mail
12 th Cambridge Scouts	Leaders for the duration of the meeting could possibly park down the drive but parents are not able to do this due to the volume of cars and the limited space on the drive. This could have an impact on the group as we have children from a wide area including Girton and from a safety aspect in terms of having young people walking up and down the unlit drive way whilst vehicles are manoeuvring.	Mark Mills, Group Scout Leader	Telephone
Islamic Academy	<i>Have been unable to make contact.</i>		

APPENDIX D: VIEWS OF LOCAL MEMBERS

MEMBER & WARD	COMMENTS MADE
KEVIN WILKINS, WEST CHESTERTON	<p>I am strongly in favour of the cycle provision and the traffic calming. I strongly agree that the two need to be done together. It's important to highlight that the benefits of this scheme are for the whole community, in particular the children at school on Gilbert Road, which extends far wider than the residents of Gilbert Road itself. I am opposed to any proposals that will not change the culture of on-street parking and might fail to provide the desired improvement in cycling in the area such as peak-hour-only loss of parking.</p>
RUPERT MOSS-ECCARDT, ARBURY	<p>I support the scheme to improve cycling provision by introducing parking restrictions and improving the lanes. I don't think I could sell anything to the residents that didn't involve some measure to reduce speed, whether it be traffic calming or a lower speed limit. As I've said before, raised junctions might well do the trick and are less contentious than some forms of traffic calming.</p> <p>You will have seen the letter from Mayfield School (which is just inside Castle Ward). They are concerned about displaced parking, and I share their concern. I believe that these concerns would be mitigated if parking restrictions were established around the school entrances to ensure safety. I spoke briefly with Cllr Brooks-Gordon (member for Castle) and she would support appropriate parking controls there.</p>