

<u>NORTH CAMBRIDGE CYCLING AND WALKING IMPROVEMENTS – TO REPORT CONSULTATION AND SEEK APPROVAL TO PROCEED</u>			
<i>To:</i>	Economy and Environment Committee		
<i>Meeting Date:</i>	13 th January 2015		
<i>From:</i>	Graham Hughes, Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment		
<i>Electoral divisions:</i>	Arbury and Kings Hedges		
<i>Forward Plan ref:</i>	Not applicable	<i>Key decision:</i>	No
<i>Purpose:</i>	To advise Committee of the consultation response, to outline the current project risks, and to seek approval to construct the scheme elements.		
<i>Recommendation:</i>	<p>Committee is requested to:</p> <p>a) note the consultation results;</p> <p>and to approve:</p> <p>b) a new controlled crossing and path at Kings Hedges Road/Arbury Road junction for construction;</p> <p>c) the widening and resurfacing of paths around Kings Hedges Recreation Ground;</p> <p>d) remodelling of the Mere Way/Arbury Road and St Albans Road/Arbury Road junctions;</p> <p>e) changes to the road layout and paths outside St Laurence's School.</p>		

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The construction of a bridleway alongside the Busway from St Ives to Cambridge has allowed many more people to walk and cycle directly and safely for education or employment journeys from outlying villages into the city. The new development at Orchard Park has also changed some travel patterns and desire lines for pedestrians and cyclists in the north of the city. These changes have brought about a local desire to improve foot and cycle links in north Cambridge, and to work towards a direct Busway to City Centre cycle route, and a network of other routes linking to this. A plan of the area in which improvements are being considered is shown in **Plan 1**.
- 1.2 A process is in place for making recommendations for allocating Section 106 funding to enable a rolling programme of schemes to be delivered over time, in line with the aims of the Cambridge Area Transport Corridor plans. Priority is given to the views of local members and the community. Suggestions for schemes which fit with the objectives of the plan are invited from the Area Committees. These suggestions are assessed and the results are then considered by the Area Committees to seek their views on priorities for consideration. Three schemes in north Cambridge emerged from this process in 2012.
- 1.3 Approval to provide £250,000 of Section 106 funding towards improving the Busway to City Centre cycle route and £50,000 to improve the crossing of Kings Hedges Road at its junction with Arbury Road was given by Cabinet on 10th July 2012. Cabinet then approved £150,000 of Section 106 funding to make improvements on Arbury Road on 18th December 2012, thus giving a total budget of £450,000 for this overall project.

2. SCHEME DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Officers commenced discussions with local County and City Councillors to see how best the budget could be used, and what sorts of issues the funding should address. Over a period of nearly two years many different options for using the funding were discussed. Concerns in the area centred around high traffic speeds, the need for improved pedestrian and cycle crossings and inadequate path widths. A number of high profile serious accidents at mini roundabouts on Arbury Road were also voiced as concerns. A number of options were considered for traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, changes to junctions and improvements to foot and cycleways. The process attempted to address local issues raised by members, and to develop the designs with member input.
- 2.2 A 'planning for real' exercise was also undertaken by pupils at St Laurence School through the Sustrans 'Bike It' project. This allowed pupils to make suggestions to improve safety and facilities for active transport in the vicinity of their school.
- 2.3 At the junction of Arbury Road/Kings Hedges Road/Circus Drive on the south east side an unsurfaced path across the grass verge has been created by regular foot and cycle traffic, showing a clear desire for a path at this location. In turn this links to an arm of the junction with no controlled crossing facility. A facility could easily be provided here with crossing movements incorporated into the current light phasing with no impact on traffic flows at the junction

3. SCHEME PROPOSALS

3.1 At Arbury Road/Kings Hedge's Road junction it is proposed to:

- Surface the informal path across the verge on the corner of Kings Hedges Road and Arbury Road.
- Provide a new pedestrian and cycle controlled crossing over Arbury Road, just north of St Catherine's Road. This would link with the shared-use foot/cycle way on the west side of the junction. The new crossing would also improve access to the Meadows Community Centre.

These proposals are shown on **Plan 2**.

3.2 Outside St Laurence School in Arbury Road it is proposed to:

- Widen the paths outside the school to improve walking and cycling access by narrowing the layby and removing hedging.
- Narrow the road, remove existing speed cushions, centre line and islands.
- Move the zebra crossing away from the St Albans Road junction and closer to the school.
- Convert the zebra crossing to a 'cycle zebra' to allow pedestrians and cyclists to have priority crossing the road.
- Replace the mini roundabouts at the two junctions (Arbury Road/St Albans Road and Arbury Road/ Mere Way) with changed priority junctions.

These proposals are shown on **Plans 3 to 5**.

3.3 In the area around Kings Hedges Recreation Ground it is proposed to widen and resurface the paths to improve access to St Laurence's school and other cycle routes in the area. The paths are both local and strategic cycle routes, but they are currently narrow and in poor condition.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 A consultation was undertaken throughout November with a number of manned exhibitions taking place, and information being available on the County Council's website. 179 responses were received.

4.2 The consultation results can be seen in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**. The consultation has shown good support for all of the elements consulted on.

4.3 Cambridge Cycling Campaign have expressed concern about shared use paths being an element of the scheme, some local members have sympathy with this view. The Cycling Campaign feel that such facilities bring conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. There is an extensive network of shared use paths in the local area already. Segregation by use of a white line can reduce conflict on paths, but path widths of at least 3.5 metres are needed and much of the flexibility in terms of width for users is lost as each users area is confined to a narrower path. For greater compliance level and surface material difference can be built in, but this adds considerably to costs. Separate parallel paths with a strip of grass between them is

another option, but again much more width is required. In some locations there is available width to provide something other than shared use paths, but at the transition points where the space reduces there would be a need for extensive tactile paving and signage to show the change of facility. This makes for a cluttered, confusing layout which has a negative visual impact within a green space setting. On balance widening the existing shared use paths fits with the existing network and gives consistent provision. The extra width offered reduces conflict.

- 4.4 The frontage of St Laurence's School is a busy area at each ends of the school day and increasing the width of the paths in that location provides valuable space for pedestrians, cyclists and pram pushers. Confident adult cyclists are likely to remain on the road in this length, so the provision of shared use paths is provided to accommodate chiefly children who are encouraged to get into the habit of cycling to school, without having to mix with motor traffic.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The provision of a new path and controlled crossing at Arbury Road/Kings Hedges Road/Circus Drive would be a useful and well used addition for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.
- 5.2 Widening and resurfacing paths around the Recreation Ground would reduce conflict for pedestrians and cyclists and would encourage more people to walk and cycle to school and for local trips in the area.
- 5.3 Traffic survey and accident data, as well as public opinion, suggests that there is a case for revising the two mini roundabout junctions near to the school on Arbury Road. Motorists have become accustomed to the layouts, and this has led to concerns about traffic speeds in the area.
- 5.4 Over time, a raised table junction with priority maintained along Arbury Road is unlikely to be as effective as a changed priority junction forcing traffic on Arbury Road to give way. Given that buses are routed via Arbury Road and Mere Way, maintaining priority for this route would have a positive impact on bus journey times as well as reducing vehicle speeds on Arbury Road at this location.
- 5.5 Arbury Road/St Albans Road junction is not part of a bus route and the predominant flow is along Arbury Road. Giving priority to the Arbury Road/St Albans Road flow would give a traffic calming effect as traffic on Arbury Road would either have to negotiate a chicane or give way. The give way approaching the school area would be particularly useful, and would also help northbound cyclists to position themselves compared with the other priority change option.
- 5.6 The proposed changes outside St Laurence's school would give more room for non motorized users at busy times and would contribute to encouraging active travel to and from the school.
- 5.7 The proposals have been developed working closely with local members and the community in North Cambridge. There is good support for all of the proposals.
- 5.8 Work could commence on some elements as early as April 2015.

- 5.9 Discussions with local members, stakeholders and the public have revealed a desire to look further at improvements for walking and cycling in this part of the city, and it is hoped that funding from City Deal could help to provide a high quality cycle route linking the Busway to the city centre and to address other gaps in the network such as Arbury Road.

6. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

More people cycling and walking contributes to a healthier population, improved productivity, reduced traffic congestion, reliability of journey times and adds capacity into an already constrained road network, all of which contributes to economic wellbeing.

6.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

Currently many people feel unsafe cycling, although cycling is potentially a form of economic, reliable transport that allows them to access employment or training, and hence to incorporate active travel into their lives.

6.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The wider shared use paths will reduce conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and improve conditions for wheelchair users and pram pushers. New crossings would allow vulnerable people to cross the road in safety.

7. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource Implications

The scheme will be capital funded from Section 106 contributions.

7.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

This is a package of localised minor improvements to the foot and cycle network, and as such there are few risks.

7.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

The improved infrastructure would be available for everyone in the community to use.

7.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

A thorough and extensive period of consultation and engagement has been undertaken. Local members have helped to shape the proposals with input from a local school, and there have been opportunities for the local community to have their say.

7.5 Public Health Implications

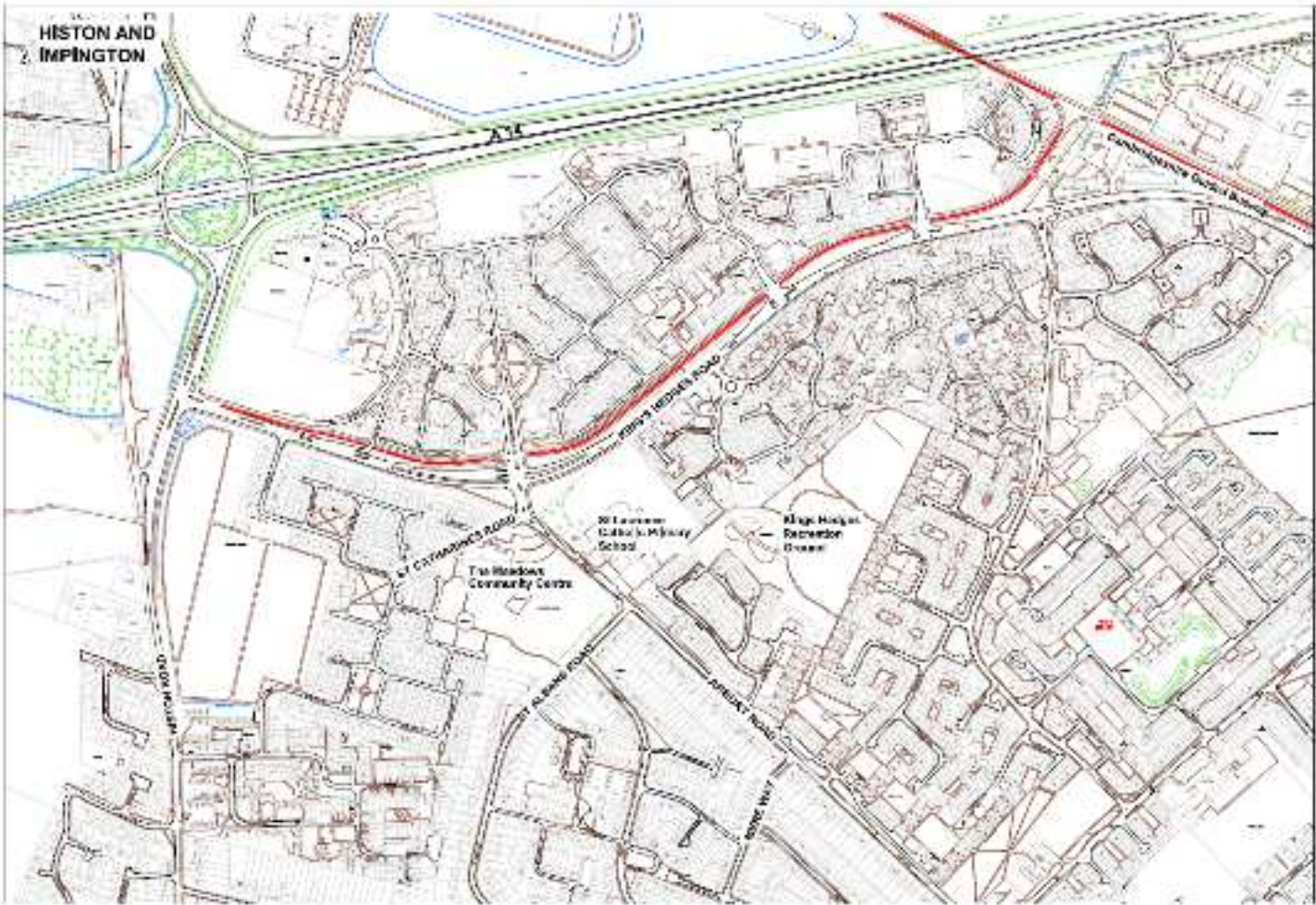
More people cycling and walking undoubtedly contributes to improved public health. The improved infrastructure would enable more people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives including commuting by foot or cycle, as well as for leisure activities such as running and dog walking.

7.6 Localism and local member engagement

There has been extensive public and stakeholder consultation. The Project Team have engaged with, and updated local members throughout.

Source Documents	Location
Consultation responses	Room 310 Shire Hall, Cambridge

PLAN 1 – LOCATION PLAN



PLAN 2 – SCHEME PROPOSALS



Map not to scale

[illegible]

PLAN 4 – PROPOSALS FOR MERE WAY/ARBURY ROAD JUNCTION



PLAN 5 – PROPOSALS FOR ST ALBANS ROAD/ARBURY ROAD



APPENDIX 1 – BREAKDOWN OF COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Category:	Number:
Proposals should tackle inconsiderate driving/parking.	41
Proposals should tackle safety issues on Arbury; junctions with St Albans Road and Mere Way	30
Need for wider paths / Segregation	25
General Positive Comments	22
General Negative Comments	22
Design needs to incorporate better lighting	5
Total	145

Do you see a need for improvements on Arbury Road?



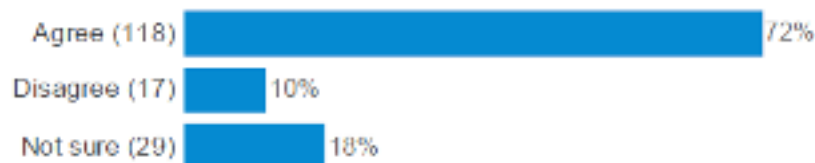
Arbury Road / King's Hedges Junction (Hard-surfacing the dirt-track across the corner)



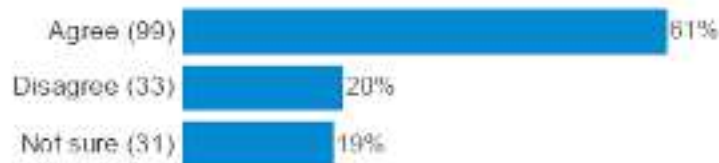
Arbury Road / King's Hedges Junction (A new pedestrian and cycle crossing over Arbury Road)



Outside St Laurence's school and the St Albans and Mere Way junctions (Widening the footpaths outside the school)



Outside St Laurence's school and the St Albans and Mere Way junctions (Narrowing the road, removing the speed cushions, islands and white centre line.)



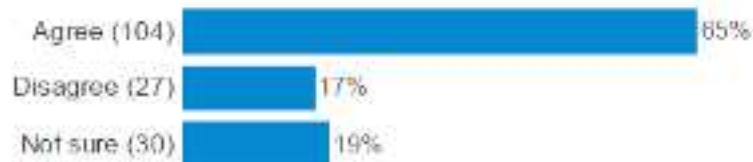
Outside St Laurence's school and the St Albans and Mere Way junctions (Moving the zebra crossing closer to the school)



Outside St Laurence's school and the St Albans and Mere Way junctions (Replacing the mini-roundabout at St Albans Road with a raised T-junction or changed priority junction)



Outside St Laurence's school and the St Albans and Mere Way junctions (Replacing the mini-roundabout at Mere Way with a raised T-junction or changed priority junction)



King's Hedges Recreation Ground and off-road cycle links (Widening the paths on the Recreation Ground)



King's Hedges Recreation Ground and off-road cycle links (Re-surfacing the paths on the Recreation Ground)

