

Notes of a remote meeting of the East Cambs Bus, Cycle, Walk Working Party held on Monday 26 February 2024 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Ian Bovingdon
Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Lorna Dupré
Cllr Mark Goldsack
Cllr Alan Sharp (Chairman)

OFFICERS

Sally Bonnett – Director Community
Angela Briggs - Community Infrastructure Manager
Hannah Walker – Trainee Democratic Services Officer

128. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Caroline Shepherd.

The Director Community introduced Angela Briggs to the meeting who previously worked in the Council's Planning department and has rejoined the Council as the Community Infrastructure Manager. Angela will be supporting the bus, cycle, walk, work going forward.

129. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

130. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Members requested to remove Cllr Lorna Dupré as having sent her apologies as she was present in the meeting held on 13 September 2023, the Trainee Democratic Services Officer confirmed the change would be made.

The Notes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record with the apologies amendment.

131. BUS, CYCLE, WALK UPDATE FEEDBACK REPORT

The Director Community advised Members that she had received feedback on the Bus, Cycle, Walk Update as attached in Appendix 1 of the report. Further feedback had been received since from East Cambs CAN who felt the recommendations were reasonable. The Ramblers and the British Horse Society asked why they had not been consulted on earlier, and the British

Horse Society highlighted that there was no mention of carriage drivers in the Burwell report and referred to their concerns regarding the Soham – Wicken route.

The Ely Cycling Campaign stressed the importance of continuity of routes across district borders and improvement in the cycling infrastructure within settlements, especially to key destinations such as schools, and to encourage developments to contribute.

They consider the biggest current cycling infrastructure issue to be access for residents of new builds to the north of Ely City centre to key destinations, they referenced the Hopkins Homes planning obligation relating to Lynn Road. A Member stated that the Soham to Wicken path had been under construction for the past 3-4 years, and they were not aware of concerns being raised by the British Horse Society. The Director Community confirmed that Soham Town Council were delivering that project route, and the plans were to leave a grass corridor for horses.

Members agreed that it was important to keep people safe using different routes and reiterated the point from Ely Cycling Campaign to urge new developments to invest money for infrastructure through Section 106.

The Director Community advised that the Planning Department were working with Hopkins Homes to ensure deliver a cycle path for North Ely.

Director Community agreed to update the table within Appendix 1 to reflect a complete set of responses and to circulate the revised document to Members.

132. DRAFT Sustrans Feasibility Studies Presentation

The Director Community presented the three feasibility studies carried out by Sustrans.

Ely to Soham

There were seven different options for the Ely to Soham route, and all options would need to acquire private land. There would need to be significant changes within Ely and Soham to make new facilities accessible and attractive.

A route map was shown to indicate the seven options.

- Option A served the A142 corridor but needed a new crossing.
- Option B was a variation of Option A but was likely to be more achievable but serve less people.
- Option C was the favoured alignment along the A142 corridor and following existing lanes, however that option was expensive.
- Option D was an improvement on the existing route to Barway.
- Option E would be an improvement on Option D if it included a link to Barway but not Stuntney.

- Option F was a variation of Option D but would be difficult to deliver and therefore was not recommended.
- Option G would link with Stuntney and Barway and would be a direct route between Ely and Soham with no major crossing needed for the A142.

Option C would cost the highest due to new crossings and measures in Ely and Soham. Option D would cost the lowest as it would be at the edge of Ely and Soham only.

A Member advised that the route to Stuntney would involve a considerable incline and whether people would be put off by this, and the fact it did not pass Ben's Yard. The Director Community advised that Sustrans can mix and match different route options.

A Member spoke to the Chair of Soham Town Council in which they believed that Ben's Yard was not a key factor when considering different routes but wanted to keep the route away from the A142. The routes would need more work and costs involved, the cycle route could link up with the train station, and Members considered whether residents would rather cycle along the river or a busy road, there needed to be further explanation for Option D.

Members discussed the reasons for and against a route via Ben's Yard but highlighted that Ben's Yard did not contribute towards active travel. Members also focussed on who the routes will be targeted to.

Members emphasised the importance of keeping cyclists safe and away from busy roads, and whether the route should follow the river. Members discussed the option to further extend Option D for a better long-term return, and that Options D or G could join existing routes and for cyclists creating a safer route with better views, and the chance to improve biodiversity.

Isleham to Fordham

The Director Community explained that there were five different options, some involved use of private land, however those over land within the Cambridgeshire County Council farms ownership might be easier to deliver.

A route map was shown to indicate the five options.

- Option A was direct with links with the two communities and was less isolated than other options. The road would be one way, or bollards would be installed close to the railway bridge to reduce traffic volume.
- Option B route went via Isleham Nature Reserve which would bring ecological challenges, but the route was part of Cambridgeshire County Council's rural estate private land.
- Option C route followed along Fordham moor via Temple Road, and the route would run along the edge of agricultural land and could be delivered entirely within land that was part of Cambridgeshire County

Council's rural estate and would have an advantage to link Option E and link into Soham.

- Option D was a variation of Options B and C. It was not as direct but could link with Option E.
- Option E included the opportunity for Options C and E to be combined to provide links between Isleham and Fordham, Isleham and Soham and Fordham and Soham.

Options C and E would cost the highest due to the measures in the villages. Option A would cost the lowest as it would involve bollards and speed reduction only.

Members emphasised that there were a lot of students who commuted to schools and sixth forms in Cambridge from the area, and whether there needed to be a bike store. Option D would run along the old railway line, but Members did not want to create an impact on the chalk meadows. Option A included creating a one way street. Members agreed that making the road one way could be a challenge.

Littleport to Ely

The Director Community explained that the existing report had been updated to include a third route option via Chettisham. Links between the communities were dominated by the A10, the railway, the River Great Ouse and Lynn Road/Ely Road. The railway crossings needed for all options provide major challenges and form significant parts of the study.

Members highlighted the importance of keeping cyclists away from the A10 to keep people safe, Network Rail were keen to avoid public interaction with crossings. A Member noted that Littleport had lots of active travel links, however they did not link up to the routes.

A Member agreed that it was vital to keep the public away from the A10, however a more rural route if not well maintained could also not be safe for the public, and asked the Director Community what the end expectations were for the feasibility studies.

The Director Community advised that the routes would be dependent on funding, the Planning Department already had access to the Sustrans reports for developers, the reports would be used as evidence ready for when funding rounds open as she stressed there are often short time frames for submitting funding bids.

Members discussed that research into Ely North should be looked at, and to emphasise active travel contributions from developers.

The Director Community stated that she would pass on the comments to Sustrans. The next steps would be to share the Sustrans reports with relevant parish councils, conduct a Member Seminar with Councillors, Parish Councils

and stakeholders, then the reports would be published on the Council's website for the public.

133. WORK PROGRAMME TO FEBRUARY 2024

Members received the Work Programme to March 2024.

134. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held middle of April for Members to look at the final reports before they go to a Member Seminar which would be held in June/July.

The meeting closed at 7:05pm.