

Joint Transportation Board

18 September 2023

Subject: Sevenoaks Town East to West Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Route – consultation report

Director and Head of Service:

KCC: Tim Read Head of Transportation

Cabinet Member:

KCC: Neil Baker Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Key or Non Key decision: Non Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Sevenoaks ward(s):

Sevenoaks Town & St John's

Sevenoaks Eastern

Sevenoaks Northern

Sevenoaks Kippington

Dunton Green and Riverhead

Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge

Seal & Weald

Summary and purpose of the report:

This is a report summarising the public consultation that has been undertaken on a proposed walking, wheeling and cycling route connecting the East and West of Sevenoaks town, and recommended next steps.

To Recommend:

Members of the Board to consider and make a recommendation to:

Proceed to detailed design & construction working closely with Sevenoaks Town Council and landowners specifically to mitigate concerns and get agreement on a preferred option at locations highlighted in the report.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 From 1 June to 14 July 2023, Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council (KCC) jointly consulted on proposals to create a safe and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling route connecting the east and west of Sevenoaks town, encouraging residents to walk, wheel and cycle safely as an alternative to using their

cars for short journeys.

- 1.2 The route connects many of the town's schools with the communities they serve, from Riverhead and Amherst schools in the west of the town with Trinity, Weald of Kent and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys annexes in the east, also picking up Sevenoaks Primary, Walthamstow Hall Junior School and Russell House along Bradbourne Park Road. The route will also provide easy access to Sevenoaks railway station. By improving these connections, it is hoped that the route will be popular with children, commuters and the wider community. Encouraging, supporting and making it easier and safer for residents to use sustainable forms of travel is a top priority.

2.0 Detail

- 2.1 The scheme proposal focuses on creating safe walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities on existing residential roads and on public footpaths. The consultation sought views on the scheme overall, but also on the preferred approach for:
 - Connecting Lake View Road and Bradbourne Park Road;
 - Managing the travel priorities along Bradbourne Park Road; and
 - Managing vehicular traffic along St James's Road.
- 2.2 The consultation also sought views on people's current travel habits, their barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling, and the things that would encourage them to walk, wheel or cycle more often.

3.0 Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

- 3.1 The Sevenoaks Town East to West Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Route has been identified in the Sevenoaks Urban Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which was completed and launched in January 2023. SDC and KCC have been successful in securing Active Travel England funding of £1.2 million to deliver the scheme.
- 3.2 It is envisaged that the route will be the first of many to be delivered in the District, having secured funding to work up additional proposals evidenced in the Sevenoaks Urban Area LCWIP. The long term goal is to provide a radial network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes across Sevenoaks town and beyond.
- 3.3 SDC's emerging Local Plan prioritises improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling facilities and networks across the District and particularly within the District's three main towns. The Local Plan will undergo a second round of public consultation later this year.
- 3.4 The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (2023) Policy M1 promotes walking and cycling and supports the removal of barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement across the town. Policy M2 supports the Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and provision of additional cycle facilities to support new development.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 The public consultation on the Sevenoaks Town East to West Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Route took place between 1 June and 14 July 2023. The full details of the consultation including the process that was followed, the consultation activities undertaken and promotional materials distributed, as well as the full set of results, are set out in the Consultation Report, attached at Appendix A.

4.2 The key consultation results are set out in the following tables.

Table 1: Overall support / objection to the scheme

To what extent do you agree with the proposed improvements for walking, wheeling and cycling in Sevenoaks Town?		
Option	No. respondents	Percentage
Agree or strongly agree	297	61%
Neither agree or disagree	45	9%
Disagree or strongly disagree	125	25%
Not answered	23	5%

Table 2: Overall support / objection to using the route

Would you use the proposed route for walking, wheeling or cycling?		
Option	No. respondents	Percentage
Yes	248	51%
No	146	30%
I don't know	71	14%
Not answered	25	5%

4.3 There were 354 respondents that went on to make further comments about the proposed walking, wheeling and cycling improvements. For the purposes of reporting these have been grouped into the following common themes (listed from most to least common). The KCC response to each of these themes is included in the Consultation Report at Appendix A:

- Concerns for shared space user safety (for pedestrians and cyclists) specific concerns raised within the Riverhead Parish Council owner woodland between Riverhead Primary School and Brittain's Lane;
- Concerns that the proposals will not stop illegal and inconsiderate parking;
- Additional routes should be delivered;
- Support for a safe route from schools and parents, but also concerns around less parking and more traffic;
- Support from route users and suggestions including planting and need to address car driver mindset;
- Suggestions for wider infrastructure improvements including increased lighting and making the A25 a cycle super highway;
- Branches to the train stations and town centre should be included;
- Benefits of Bradbourne Park Road options recognised, but concerns around less parking, more traffic and loss of trees;
- Concerns about the cost – money better spent elsewhere in the community;
- Support for 20mph;
- Support for greater parking restrictions;
- Support for crossing across Brittain's Lane but concerns around using the Riverhead parkland path – too steep, too dark, too narrow;
- Concerns around upgrading St James's Road which would encourage traffic, however others recognised the alternative of St George's Road would deter cyclists because of the topography;
- Concerns that making St James's Road one way will increase traffic on surrounding roads;
- Existing road conditions should be improved before walking/cycling prioritised;

- Lambarde Road crossing should be at the crest of the hill for better visibility;
- Barriers to change – topography, drivers aggressive, distance, age, weather;
- Concerns that air pollution will increase owing to congestion on surrounding roads;
- Support for traffic calming along Wickenden Road however junction with St Johns Hill is too complicated and will lead to shortcutting;
- Some scepticism about the effectiveness of walking, wheeling and cycle routes in reducing carbon emissions;
- Concerns that losing the grass verges along Hillingdon Avenue will have a negative impact on the environment; and
- Improved bike storage/parking required in the town centre.

Table 3: Support / objection to the Lake View Road options

Option	No. respondents	Percentage
A – along Clockhouse Lane	260	53%
B – along Lambarde Road and Bosville Road	52	11%
Not answered	178	36%

Table 4: Support / objection to the Bradbourne Park Road options

Option	No. respondents	Percentage
A – one way northbound from the junction of Linden Chase. The footway will be widened by relocating the existing school fence.	148	30%
B – maintain two way traffic from the junction of Linden Chase. The footway will be widened by land take from the school.	200	41%
C – none of the above	102	21%
Not answered	40	8%

4.3 Of the 102 respondents that selected option C ‘none of the above’, some went on to provide their own comments which, for the purpose of reporting, have been grouped into the following common themes (listed from most to least common). The KCC response to each of these themes is included in the Consultation Report at Appendix A:

- Concerns for shared space user safety (for pedestrians and cyclists);
- Proposal not necessary for safe cycling, 20mph is enough;
- Using the A25 is preferred;
- Concerns for the loss of on street car parking; and
- More crossings required.

Table 5: Support / objection to the St James's Road options

Option	No. respondents	Percentage
A – one way (eastbound)	91	18%
B – one way (westbound)	67	14%
C – maintain two way traffic	224	46%
D – none of the above	67	14%
Not answered	41	8%

4.4 Of the 67 respondents that selected option D 'none of the above', some went on to provide their own comments which, for the purpose of reporting, have been grouped into the following common themes (listed from most to least common). The KCC response to each of these themes is included in the Consultation Report at Appendix 1:

- Concerns for shared space user safety (for pedestrians and cyclists);
- Proposal is over-engineered – signage and road markings sufficient for cyclists;
- 20mph should be introduced; and
- Route is not direct.

4.5 With regards people's current travel habits, 66% and 68% of respondents currently commute by car, van or motorcycle and/or walk/wheel respectively. For pleasure these figures increase to 90% and 88% respectively.

4.6 Respondents stated that poorly maintained roads/paths, a lack of cycle routes, road safety and using a car/public transport is quicker as their main barriers to change.

4.7 63% of respondents stated that they could be encouraged to walk, wheel or cycle more and stated the following factors would encourage them:

- Better maintained existing roads/paths;
- Separating facilities to cycle or walk on away from traffic;
- Providing new footways or cycle facilities;
- Routes that are more direct to my desired destination; and
- Creating a more attractive environment to travel around.

5.0 Implications

Financial

5.1 The scheme proposals are fully funded by Active Travel England, up to £1.2 million. To date, £55,000 has been spent (designs and consultation). Should these proposals be supported as a whole or amended, a detailed design will be required to acquire final costs for construction. It is anticipated that the remaining £1.145m will be sufficient to fund the remaining elements of the scheme (detailed design and construction).

5.2 The scheme will not require any additional KCC funds to complete. The detailed design stage will include an overall scheme cost estimate and in the case that the existing budget is insufficient the project will be tailored to fit the budget envelope subject to further approvals.

Legal

- 5.3 Traffic Regulation Orders will be required if agreement on a preferred option require a change of travel direction, parking restrictions, speed limit changes and making of a byway. These will be advertised in a local paper and notices placed in suitable locations.
- 5.4 The route requires land in private ownership – see Appendix C. The detailed design process will require 3rd party land needed for the route to have land negotiations completed between KCC and the landowner prior to any construction.

Equalities

- 5.5 The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is included at Appendix B and shows that there will be positive impacts for all users as the proposed improvements will reduce traffic speeds, reduce the volume of vehicular traffic, and separate users from vehicular traffic wherever possible, therefore creating a safer environment for all users, encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling and bringing overall health benefits.
- 5.6 Perception of personal safety has been identified as a negative impact on all protected characteristics and mitigating actions have been set out for each.

6.0 Programme

- 6.1 An indicative programme is shown below in table 6.

Table 6: Indicative programme.

Activity/scheme	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024
<i>Sevenoaks East/West cycle scheme - Tranche 3</i>								
Consultation								
JTB		Sept						
Detailed Design								
JTB update			Dec					
Construction								

7.0 Governance – Monitoring & Evaluation

- 7.1 The funding has been paid via a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 7.2 For any grant, Government is required to monitor the effectiveness of any public investment. A robust monitoring and evaluation plan is being worked on with data being collected via the consultation feedback along with camera sensors placed in locations that will pick up existing walking and cycling trips so we are able to have pre and post data for comparison.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposed scheme should help encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling. KCC's recommendation is to progress the scheme (including preferred options to be further discussed with Sevenoaks Town Council and Landowners at Lakeview Road, Bradbourne Park Road and St James's Road) to detailed design and construction.

Contact Officer:

Alan Osooha

Alan Osooha KCC Active Travel Schemes Project Manager and Designer

Background documents and appendices

Appendix A: Consultation Report

Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Appendix C: Private Land Ownership