

Sevenoaks Town East to West Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Route Consultation Report August 2023

1. 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.
- 1.3 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, and we have been successful in securing government funding of £1.2 million to deliver it. Not only will it encourage more safe car-free journeys, but it will also help to improve local air quality, positively impact the health of our residents, and help to achieve SDC's Net Zero by 2030 ambitions for the District.
- 1.4 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.

Purpose of the consultation

- 1.5 SDC and KCC want to continue to understand and incorporate the views of the local community, stakeholders, school children / parents and commuters into the design of this scheme.

- 1.6 The scheme includes widening existing footpaths, creating new links between existing footpaths and upgrading road crossings.
- 1.7 The consultation documents, including an interactive map and scheme plans/designs, were made available on SDC's website: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walkwheelcycle and KCC's website: www.letstalk.kent.gov.uk. People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation survey which was available online and in a paper version on request.

2. Consultation process

- 2.1 This chapter outlines the process followed to deliver the consultation and details the activities and documentation undertaken. The consultation was divided into five stages, detailed below.

Consultation stage	Consultation activities
Stage 1 Undertake Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify possible impacts on protected characteristic groups
Stage 2 Develop consultation process and promotional activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholders Define consultation activities Define communication activities and frequencies
Stage 3 Pre-consultation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with cycling stakeholders, schools, Access Group, local businesses, relevant SDC and KCC members and Town and Parish Councils
Stage 4 Consultation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched consultation webpage and survey Advertised consultation on social media Published press release Held 2 public drop in sessions Article in In Shape magazine Distributed posters, postcards and paper surveys Emailed all contacts on the SDC Strategic Planning stakeholder list, including statutory consultees Responded to queries via email and telephone
Stage 5 Post-consultation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and reporting of consultation responses Feedback to consultees and stakeholders Attendance at the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board

Pre-consultation activities

- 2.2 SDC and KCC officers held online meetings with SDC members and Town and Parish Councils from the wards impacted, cycling stakeholders, local schools and the SDC Access Group. The information from these meetings helped to inform and refine the design of the proposed scheme.

Promoting the consultation

- 2.3 The following promotional activities were undertaken to ensure that the consultation reach was maximised:
- All consultation material was made available on a dedicated webpage: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walkwheelcycle and www.letstalk.kent.gov.uk;
 - The consultation was frequently advertised on SDC's social media;
 - Two public drop in sessions were held on 6 June and 12 July;
 - All contacts on the SDC Strategic Planning stakeholder list, including statutory consultees, were emailed details of the consultation;
 - A press release was published at the beginning of the consultation;
 - A dedicated article was written and published in In Shape magazine, sent to all households in the District between 19-23 June;
 - Postcards were distributed to commuters and schools; and
 - Posters, postcards and paper surveys were displayed at and distributed to SDC reception, Sevenoaks library and relevant Town and Parish Council offices.

Consultation material

- 2.4 The following material was produced for the consultation and made available on the consultation webpage:
- Consultation document (route context)
 - Interactive map
 - Scheme plans/designs
 - Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
 - Consultation survey
- 2.5 In total the consultation webpage was viewed 3,414 times with 2,251 unique visitors.

Feedback mechanism

- 2.6 People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation survey, which was available online and in a PDF format. The PDF version was available in paper copy from reception at the SDC offices. Emails and letters were also accepted and analysed alongside responses to the survey.

Drop in sessions

- 2.7 Two drop in sessions were held at the SDC offices, where members of the public could view larger copies of the plans/designs and speak to both SDC and KCC officers about the proposals. They were both well attended and gave local residents and other interested parties the opportunity to review the proposed scheme and discuss any queries.

3. Equality and accessibility

- 3.1 The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) provides a process to help us to understand how the proposals may affect people based on their protected characteristics (age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion/belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities).
- 3.2 The EqIA was made available as one of the consultation documents on the webpage and in paper copy on request. We will use the feedback gathered from the consultation to review and update the EqIA before the detailed design is finalised.
- 3.3 The following steps were taken to help ensure the consultation was accessible:
- Paper copies of the consultation survey and other material were available on request throughout the duration of the consultation period;
 - All consultation material included a phone number and email address so that people could contact the Team to ask questions and to request paper copies and alternative formats of the consultation material;
 - All documents uploaded to the consultation webpage were accessible for people using assisted technology;
 - Two face to face drop in sessions were arranged for people unable or not wanting to use online material; and
 - The consultation document, EqIA and survey were made available in large print on request.

4. Summary of responses

- 4.1 This chapter summarises the number of consultation responses received and who responded to the consultation. There was a total of 490 responses to the survey.

Q1-3 – about your journeys

- 4.2 The first part of the survey 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.
- 4.3 Respondents' current travel habits were recorded as follows:

How do you usually travel to and around Sevenoaks Town?		
Transport mode	To get to/from work or school (% of respondents)	For pleasure (% of respondents)
Walking or wheeling	68%	88%
Cycling	27%	59%
Car, van or motorcycle	66%	90%
Public transport	50%	70%

- 4.4 In terms of what prevents people from walking, wheeling or cycling more often, for the majority of respondents (over 50%) the following factors were a barrier, ranked from highest to lowest:
- Poorly maintained roads, footpaths or cycle lane surfaces;
 - Lack of cycle routes or footpaths;
 - I don't feel safe cycling on the road; and
 - Using a car or public transport is easier/quicker
- 4.5 However, the following factors were not considered a barrier for the majority of respondents (over 50%), ranked from highest to lowest:
- Health reasons;
 - I don't have access to a bike;
 - I don't feel safe walking, wheeling or cycling on my own;
 - I don't feel confident enough to cycle; and
 - I don't have anywhere safe to store a bicycle at home or at my destination.
- 4.6 In terms of what would encourage more frequent walking, wheeling or cycling, only 18% of respondents agreed that nothing would encourage them to walk or cycle more and 63% stated that they could be encouraged to walk, wheel or cycle more.
- 4.7 From a personal perspective, getting more exercise / improving my health and 'knowing I am helping the environment' were factors that would encourage uptake from the majority of respondents (over 50%).
- 4.8 From an enabling perspective, better maintained existing roads, footways or cycle 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 were factors that would encourage uptake from the majority of respondents (over 50%).
- Q4 – Lake View Road options**
- 4.9 This question sought views on a preferred route to link Lake View Road with Bradbourne Park Road.

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

Q5 – Bradbourne Park Road options

- 4.10 This question sought views on a preferred approach to providing a safe walking, wheeling and cycling route along Bradbourne Park Road.

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%

- 4.11 There were 102 respondents that selected option C and some of these provided free text. These responses were grouped into themes. A breakdown of the themes are shown in the following table, including a KCC/SDC response, and generally focus on the negative comments. Some responses had more than one theme.

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	SDC/KCC response
User safety	Safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists sharing space, particularly at school drop off time and for parents with prams. Cycle route would only work if curb separation from both traffic and pedestrians.	13	Vehicle behaviour during pick up and drop off creates a non-friendly environment for both walking and cycling.
Proposal not necessary for safe cycling	Bradbourne Park Road is already safe for cyclists. Retaining 20mph is sufficient.	10	Same as above.
Alternative routes	Preference for route to have A25 option.	4	Options along A25 will require physical separation which will be more expensive.
Shared footways	Safety concerns expressed regarding the narrow pavement width.	2	Widths to be widened to 3.0m along shared paths.
Car parking	Concern for loss of resident parking.	1	Parking losses to be offset with the

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	SDC/KCC response
			reduced need to travel by car owing to the scheme alternative.
Alternative routes	Suggestion for the route to go through Knole Academy and onto Bat and Ball across the open land.	1	The scheme already provides a connection to Knole Academy avoiding busier roads.
Intervention Suggestion	Additional crossings along route section would be beneficial.	1	Crossing points already provided to make safe connections.
Route effect on nearby roads	Changes to Bradbourne Park Road will affect Bradbourne Road as well. Changes to Bradbourne Park Road should be considered in conjunction.	1	Existing 20mph on Bradbourne Road will be significantly improved with proposals. Signage improvement on Bradbourne Road is included in proposal.

Q6 – St James’s Road options

- 4.12 This question sought views on a preferred approach to manage vehicular traffic along St James’s Road.

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%

- 4.13 There were 67 respondents that selected option D and some of these provided free text. These responses were grouped into themes. A breakdown of the themes are shown in the following table, including a KCC/SDC response, and generally focus on the negative comments. Some responses had more than one theme.

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC/SDC response
User safety	Safety concerns expressed for pedestrians sharing route with cyclists. Shared surfaces with pedestrians and e-scooters	3	Scheme design at locations to be shared will be a minimum 3.0m. Sections which are pedestrian only will

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC/SDC response
	and bikes are not safe according to RNIB. Increased risk to pedestrians as some sections of route have no pavement.		work to a minimum width of 1.2m and sections used specifically by cyclists at 1,5m minimum.
Need for proposal	St James is already a quiet road - signage and road markings would be sufficient for cyclists.	3	Option 3 is a proposal which maintains the two-way movements on St James's Road.
Alternative route	Suggestion for western part of St. James's Road into part of the public highway and use that as part of the route.	3	Permission to use the St, James's Road is dependent on residents support
Speed limit	Suggestion for 20mph limit so that cars and bicycles can share lane widths.	1	20mph limits will be beneficial for all modes of traffic.
Indirect route	Route is not direct and too long and complicated to use.	1	The route identified follows existing pedestrian desire lines and used by parents for school pick-up and drop off

Q7-9 – your views

- 4.14 These questions sought views on the level of support for the proposal, and whether people would use it if it were to be delivered.

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%

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%

- 4.15 There were 354 respondents that then went on to make further comments about the proposed walking, wheeling and cycling improvements. These responses were grouped into themes. A breakdown of the themes are shown in the following table, including a KCC/SDC response, and generally focus on the negative comments. Some responses had more than one theme.

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
User safety	Concerns about the safety of the route, particularly for pedestrians where spaces are shared. Cyclists and pedestrians have different needs. Current paths/roads are too narrow to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists safely. Vehicle traffic should be fully separated.	126	Widths to be achieved for the route are accepted widths for shared path routes in which cycle and pedestrian volumes are relatively low.
Traffic management	The proposal will not stop illegal or pavement parking. There is a need to improve/add crossings on main roads. However others have said that additional crossings will cause further congestion.	101	<p>Illegal parking is something which promoting this route can tackle. Understanding the use of the pavement is for a specific need will help to highlight the need to monitor the pavements. There are design items which kerbs can be painted to indicate parking is not permitted.</p> <p>Formal crossing improvement were added at existing points of crossing, The new informal crossing added are courtesy type crossings which will encourage slower vehicle use of the routes.</p>
Additional routes	Many supported the proposals but commented that there should be further	86	No comment

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
	routes delivered across Sevenoaks including to Otford, Seal, Dunton Green, the town centre and railway station, along the A21.		
Schools	Both opposition and support from schools and parents – lots of support for a safer walking/cycling route, however also concerns that parking issues will be exacerbated and increased traffic on surrounding roads. Suggestion to extend route to Seal Primary School in the east and Dunton Green in the west. Should be a stronger focus on secondary schools.	79	<p>Parking issues is an ever-growing problem across many schools in the country.</p> <p>Cycle and walking schemes are promoted to help address these parking issues by offering a suitable alternative.</p>
Route users	Lots of support for the route and suggestions for improvements – planting along the route to enhance the environment, paths need to be widened, full segregation wherever possible, bigger issue to address is car driver mindset.	60	Options to add wooden planters and combine some green elements within new street furniture such as benches can be investigated further.
Shared footways	Some concerns for the proposed shared footway spaces – pavements not wide enough to accommodate all users, dangerous for pedestrians, full separation preferred.	60	The lack of road space and volume of pedestrian / cyclists projected to use these routes has resulted in the preference to promote shared spaces.
Infrastructure improvements	Suggestions included introducing an ebike hire scheme, more school buses, increased lighting along the route and making the A25 a cycle super highway. Some criticism that the proposals do not go far enough to move the town away from being car centric.	54	No comment.

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
Alternative routes	Concerns that the proposed route is not direct, and that cyclists will prefer to use the A25 or a less hilly route. Cyclists should be segregated from cars. Branches to the railway station and town centre should be included.	51	The scheme does include signage and totems which will inform users of distances to key points of interest. The scheme should be considered a start and future links can be developed from it.
Bradbourne Park Road section of the scheme	Both opposition and support for the options along this part of the route - concerns that a one way scheme would displace and increase traffic on surrounding roads and that it would make parking at school times even more difficult than at present. However others recognised the benefits of widening pedestrian/cycle paths including improving the safety of pupils. Concerns regarding the potential loss of trees along this road. Inconsiderate parking also needs to be addressed. Suggestions included making Bradbourne Park Road a shared space and to use a short stretch of the A25 instead.	47	KCC is aware of the impacts of one-way road proposals and the concern residents have about the impact to neighbouring roads. The benefits of reducing the conflicting traffic movements on a road which is used by many school-aged pedestrians will have lasting health benefits. There are many examples for example High Streets in which converting the route to one-way achieves a better balance of vehicles to pedestrian.
Costs	Waste of money. Proposals not required, the route won't benefit many people and the money is better spent elsewhere in the community.	46	No comment.
Traffic speed	Support for reducing the speed limit to 20mph to make cycling safer. However others suggested that traffic calming would be preferable. Roads along the route often used as rat runs.	43	20mph routes around schools is something which is supported. The proposal tackles rat-running issues

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
			by providing options for one-way routes and introducing level changes in places to slow traffic down.
Parking	Support for greater parking restrictions to disincentivise car usage. Current parking habits e.g. pavement parking and on street parking make walking, wheeling and cycling unsafe. Route will cause parents to park illegally outside schools.	38	<p>Parking concerns is an issues which only appears during school pick-up and drop-off.</p> <p>The scheme is promoting the use of methods of travel to help tackle this issue.</p> <p>As part of this scheme a measure to ensure these routes are kept clear for the intended users will be investigated and this will require the consultation with the local schools.</p>
Amherst – Riverhead Parkland – London Road section of the scheme	Concerns around using the parkland path as part of the route – steep, not lit, too narrow, too dangerous for schoolchildren/elderly people/joggers/dogs, loss of trees and damage to roots. Suggestion to use switchbacks along the steepest section or to require cyclists to dismount. Low level lighting welcomed. Concerns that the steep hill would encourage fast cycling. Support for Brittain's Lane crossing - requires signage, 20mph speed limit, and cyclists/pedestrians to have right of way.	28	<p>Proposal includes changing the ambience of the parkland path. These would include the surface quality, removal of trip hazards, new resting locations for hill climbs and improved lighting.</p> <p>The width of the route is a primary tool to tackle concerns of personal safety.</p>

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
	Suggestion that the route should be extended to the station.		
St George's Road – St James' Road section of the scheme	Both opposition and support for using St James' Road – it is a private road that will require upgrading significantly and the residents do not want to encourage traffic along this route, however there are also concerns around using the alternative St George's Road as it is likely to discourage cyclists because of the steep topography. With regards the proposal to make St James' Road one way there are concerns that this would lead to an increase in traffic on surrounding roads especially at peak times, that these roads are too narrow to accommodate cyclists and are needed for parking, and that a one way restriction will inadvertently increase traffic speeds.	26	St James's Road private road section will require a significant amount of work to raise the surface quality suitable for cycling. The landowner will also need to support the use for public cycling and walking.
Road conditions	The improvement to the condition of existing roads and pavements should be prioritised. Any walking, wheeling and cycling paths implemented should be regularly maintained and appropriately lit.	25	General maintenance of the assets installed on KCCs maintained land or by agreement will be routinely maintained.
Lakeview Road – Clockhouse Lane section of the scheme	The crossing of Lambarde Road should be at the crest of the hill rather than the dip for better visibility, and requires traffic calming measures. A mini roundabout was also suggested. Both opposition and support for using Clockhouse Lane – some feel that it should be restricted to pedestrians as cyclists would make it too	25	There a private driveways at the crest of the hill which will conflict with a proposed xing. Cyclists and pedestrian are able to cross there if required. The scheme is proposing a crossing which is better

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
	busy/dangerous where others comment that it is already used by cyclists and should be formalised.		connected and located in an easier alignment for connections.
Barriers to change	Topography of the town is a deterrent to cycling. The route will cause disruption to parents on the school run. Drivers too aggressive towards cyclists. Distance, age and weather.	25	The route proposed is a far quieter alternative to the A25. The section of really steep hill is addressed by providing resting points for users or option to have traffic reduced to one-way only.
Impact on green spaces	Some concerns about the protection of the natural environment – removal of trees and loss of wildlife habitat.	22	Proposal does not include tree removal, however treatment of the grounds near trees is proposed to remove trip hazards. The scheme in general promotes sustainable travel.
Air pollution	Some concerns that air pollution will worsen as surrounding roads become more congested.	15	The impact of the scheme to air pollution will be analysed and reported if scheme is successful and able to proceed to construction.
St Johns Hill - Wickenden Road section of the scheme	Support for 20mph speed limit. Wickenden Road is used as a rat run and requires traffic calming measures in order to boost cycling. Road is currently in poor condition and requires resurfacing. Junction with St Johns Hill is too complicated and should be more direct to prevent shortcutting e.g. move zebra crossing. There should be protection for cyclists travelling W to E joining Wickenden Road.	10	A combination of 20mph, width / load restriction and proposal to change the junction priority with Little Wood will help to address rat-running concerns

Issue raised	Issue description	No. respondents	KCC response
Climate change / net zero	Some scepticism about the effectiveness of walking, wheeling and cycle routes in reducing emissions, and suggestions that other measures e.g. an electric car and recharging strategy would have a greater impact.	8	Encouraging walking and wheeling modes of travel has a direct impact of emissions and helps to tackle obesity in children.
Hillingdon Avenue - Trinity section of the scheme	The proposed improvements should extend to the Hospital Road end of Hillingdon Avenue and north to the A25, which is used heavily by schoolchildren and could be made safer for pedestrians. Support for 20mph speed limit. Concerns that losing the grass verges will have a detrimental impact on the environment. Trinity School crossing needs to be made wider to facilitate cyclists.	7	<p>Opportunities to create spur links to the main route can be explored as future phases of the scheme.</p> <p>The loss of grass verges is required to maintain the carriageway and parking levels. A compromise will be to find locations in which planters / trees can be provided as an offset to the losses.</p>
Bike parking & extension of route	A need for improved bike parking/storage facilities in Sevenoaks town centre and extension of the route to the train station and High Street	6	Opportunities to explore these can be proposed as a future phase of the current scheme.

About you

- 4.16 This section documents the geographical location and demographics of the respondents. This data was collated using the 'About you' questions in the final part of the survey. These questions were optional, however the vast majority of respondents were happy to answer these questions.

Home town/parish	No. respondents	Percentage
Sevenoaks Town	301	61%
Riverhead	66	14%
Otford	22	5%
Chevening	14	3%
Seal	12	2%
Kemsing	11	2%
Dunton Green	9	2%

Sevenoaks Weald	4	<1%
Sundridge with Ide Hill	4	<1%
Eynsford	3	<1%
Westerham	3	<1%
Swanley	2	<1%
Brasted	2	<1%
Edenbridge	1	<1%
Badgers Mount	1	<1%
Farningham	1	<1%
Halstead	1	<1%
Knockholt	1	<1%
Leigh	1	<1%
West Kingsdown	1	<1%
Not answered	0	0%

Age group	No. respondents	Percentage
0-11	1	<1%
12-17	20	4%
18-24	7	1%
25-34	31	6%
35-44	108	22%
45-54	123	25%
55-64	66	14%
65 and over	88	18%
Prefer not to say	46	9%
Not answered	0	0%

Sex	No. respondents	Percentage
Male	224	46%
Female	222	45%
Other	2	<1%
Prefer not to say	17	3%
Not answered	25	5%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	No. respondents	Percentage
Yes	28	6%
No	411	84%
Prefer not to say	25	5%
Not answered	26	5%

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Following the feedback from this consultation, the design team will be carefully considering points raised to establish whether further minor design changes are appropriate and can be made.

- 5.2 It can be seen from the consultation that there is overall support for the proposed scheme (para 4.14) and appetite for creating safe and attractive routes to encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle more (paras 4.6-4.8).
- 5.3 KCC's recommendation is to progress the scheme working closely with Sevenoaks Town Council and private landowners (including agreeing a preferred option at Lakeview Road, Bradbourne Park Road and St James's Road) to detailed design and construction.
- 5.4 To progress the scheme to construction there will be a need for further consultation to accept changes which affect existing traffic regulations order or access. The type of changes to be consulted further will include adding or removing parking restrictions, speed limits, one-way routes and access by cyclists of existing public rights of way.
- 5.5 This consultation report will be presented to the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on 18 September 2023. Subject to the JTB's comments and endorsement, the scheme will enter the detailed design stage where it will be necessary to achieve sign off from Active Travel England (ATE). If the decision from ATE is taken to proceed with the scheme, construction is likely to start in Spring 2024.