

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**17
October
2018**

Maidstone Cycle Way

Decision Making Authority	<i>Kent County Council</i>
Lead Director	Simon Jones
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Michael Hardy KCC
Wards and County Divisions affected	High Street, Shepway North, Maidstone Central, Maidstone North East
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Paul Cooper (Chair) and Mike Whiting

This report makes the following recommendations:

1. That the Maidstone Cycle Way Consultation responses be noted.
2. That the recommendation to proceed with Mote Road cycle and footway enhancements be supported.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	17 th October 2018

Maidstone Cycle Way

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 Following a meeting with the Chair and liaison with Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste Mike Whiting, it was agreed that it was essential to present to this Joint Transportation Board, in order to express the collaborative working between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council and give Committee Members a chance to make recommendations on the proposed scheme.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to inform the Board of the consultation feedback received regarding the proposed cycling improvement scheme at Mote Park. It also explains the consultation process and the wider benefits of the scheme proposal.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 The scheme proposal is based on the 'Walking and Cycling Assessment, Maidstone' by Sustrans in March 2018. This piece of work was jointly commissioned by MBC and KCC with the intention of building on Maidstone's Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011-2031. The proposed cycleway is based on suggestions made regarding improving facilities and improving safety for all users.

3.2 This scheme is being funded by the Local Transport Plan 4 block allocation for 2018-19. This funding is dedicated to the implementation of this Cycleway Scheme, to be completed this financial year. The scheme provides substantial benefits to both pedestrians and cyclists and we hope will encourage more people to choose sustainable modes of travel such as cycling. Increasing the number of cycle journeys has been shown elsewhere in England to reduce congestion, improve air quality, improve residents' health and bring investment to an area.

3.3 Following initial concerns raised regarding the protected trees and verges, arboricultural representatives from MBC and KCC accompanied by the relevant officers, held an onsite meeting to discuss the situation and see first hand the implication on the trees. Trial holes were undertaken at two random locations to see the exact implications of the extended footway and on the rooting system.

It was decided that extent of the works would not have a negative impact on the trees. The arboricultural representatives from both MBC and KCC were happy for the works to proceed based on the assumption works would be overseen to ensure construction would not impact the tree or rooting systems. The method statements for working practices would address concerns and standard safe working zones would be established around the trees with supervision onsite ensuring minimal impact throughout the duration of the construction phase.

3.4 As well as the obvious improvements to the site with an extended and resurfaced footway, it has been agreed through the KCC Road and Footway Asset Team, that the Northern side of Mote Avenue would undergo a resurfacing programme during the same construction phase. On both side all the vehicle crossovers will be resurfaced to usual construction standards.

This will enable the whole of Mote Avenue to be upgraded and regenerated within the same construction timeframe.

- 3.5 The scheme also includes upgrading of the existing Pelican crossing to a Toucan crossing. This provides an enhanced crossing for all users, with no impact on motor vehicles.
- 3.6 The consultation concluded at midnight on Sunday 7th October 2018. There were 13 responses in favour of the proposal and 15 responses against the proposal, with 1 respondent unable to support the scheme in its current form and has requested safety concerns are addressed. Please see general comments below. No comments have been duplicated and no comments have been presented which are not relevant to the proposal.

Supportive Comments
I realise that options to address Willow Way will be limited but feel it important that you understand the challenges of crossing that road and the safety implications when considering your plans.
I do not feel safe to cycle from home to Mote Park and phase 1 of the proposed improvements will go some way to alleviating this. The particular stretch of road from the A249 to the park is not cycle friendly as the road is narrow and very busy.
The proposed improvements to cycling infrastructure, crossing points and signage are most welcome and to be encouraged.
This is an impressive turnaround from recommendations made in March 2018 and a testament to excellent working relationships at Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council.
I have recently started to cycle, and I very quickly realised how difficult it is to do so through Maidstone town centre due to the sheer volume of cars using the main routes through our town. This proposed scheme is a fantastic idea, and improves cyclist's ability to safely travel from east to west and connects to the cycle path that goes north to south along the river
Obviously, there is a great deal more that needs to be done in Maidstone to put cycling and walking on a level footing with car use; and individual pieces of the "jigsaw" will only be fully utilised when there is a joined-up network of cycle paths across the borough.
I believe we would all benefit from what seems to be an improved and environmentally friendly initiative in the area.
An opportunity exists to enhance the entrance and access to Mote Park to take advantage of the substantial investment made and being made to improve its facilities. The 'crossing point upgrade' proposed needs to address these wider needs providing safer access to it for all.
It is my view that the wider verge, more level surface and avoidance of crossing Square Hill make it the safer option.
I favour segregation of walking and cycling through clear markings, similar to the Ashford Road (Huntsman Lane to New Cut Road) Cycle Way, to avoid unnecessary confusion of users of the route

Objectors Comments	KCC Responses
Reduction of vehicle crossovers area will impact on residents who use the crossover for parking.	Vehicle crossovers are not for the parking of resident as it is owned by a 3 rd party. However, as part of the proposal all vehicle crossovers facing the proposed route will be subject to resurfacing.
The position of the cycleway is on the wrong side.	The Northern side of Mote Road was deemed more problematic than the South. Closer proximity to the trees and carriageway, streetlighting in place which may require diversions.
Crossing at Willow Way is dangerous	The vegetation on Willow Way is to be cut back to improve visibility with advanced warning drivers of the presence or cyclists.
The proposal compromises the safety of those residents on Mote Avenue who have young families, are elderly or disabled	An Equality Impact Assessment has been collated and can be discussed with any concerns to be highlighted, discussed and mitigated where possible. The design has been amended to ensure cyclists will be segregated from pedestrians to make the cycle route safer. There will also be signs to ensure pedestrians are aware cyclist could be in the vicinity.
Cyclists using a shared cycleway on the southern side of Mote Avenue would have to cross the access driveways for all the properties along the route.	As per the Highway Code, Motorists should drive carefully when needing to cross the footway and pay due care and attention. Vulnerable highway users take priority.
There are more pressing departments such as health and policing where the money spent is needed much more	This scheme is being funded from our Local Transport Plan (LTP) allocation for 2018/19. We have a duty to produce a LTP to demonstrate to Kent's residents and local businesses our strategies and priorities. Health and policing are both funded from different streams.
Due to shrubbery in some of the resident's front gardens anyone travelling in close proximity to the exits of houses at a pace faster than walking speed would be put in danger from vehicles emerging from their driveways	The design has been amended to ensure cyclists will be segregated from pedestrians to make the cycle route safer. Pedestrians will be routed closer to the residents' houses and cyclists nearer to the carriageway.
Widening the pathway could negatively impact upon the roots of the trees	Trial holes have been undertaken to ascertain effects on the tree route. Please see 3.3
The disruption during the construction would outweigh the benefit of the proposal	The majority of the footway construction will have minimal effect to the motorist as there is adequate space to work off carriageway. Minor

	disruptions may be incurred during the installation of the Toucan crossing.
An obvious alternative to safeguard cyclists and pedestrian's safety would be to maintain the present footpath for pedestrians use and to create a new cycling lane parallel to the road, with a safety curb or to use one side of the avenue for cyclists and the other one for pedestrians	Separating all highway users would require more verge to be altered. There are many other safety concerns regarding this type of segregation, such as establishing a priority at junctions and roundabout.

3.7 Conclusion

There have been responses both in support and objecting to the proposed Cycleway, with a variety of perceived safety concerns. KCC feels that they can address these concerns and would look to progress the scheme segregating pedestrians and cyclists, with cyclists closer to the road and pedestrians nearer to the house frontages. KCC will also revisit the planned improvements at the crossing point of Willow Way, to ascertain if more can be implemented to improve the current and planned experience of both pedestrians and cyclists. Any changes to the scheme will be subject to a Road Safety Audit as appropriate and any safety issues will be addressed before construction.

KCC makes the following recommendation:

That the committee supports the scheme and we proceed with the Mote Road Cycle and Footway enhancements.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 'Walking and Cycling Assessment, Maidstone' by Sustrans in March 2018
https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/198370/Maidstone-Walking-and-Cycling-Assessment.pdf