

**7<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2009**

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**SALISBURY, LAVERSTOCK TO CITY CENTRE CYCLING FACILITIES**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To:
  - (i) Consider letters of support and objections relating to the proposed cycling facilities.
  - (ii) Recommend implementation of the proposals.

**Background**

2. Wiltshire County Council, in implementing its Local Transport Plan (LTP), is seeking to develop integrated transport measures at identified locations throughout the County. These will provide improved facilities for users of non-motorised modes of transport such as pedestrians and cyclists.
3. The development of a cycle route along Riverside Road and Church Road in Laverstock was first suggested in November 2003, when a feasibility study was proposed. An LTP budget was provisionally allocated for delivery during the financial year 2003/04. It was recognised that the existing footpath was narrow in places and therefore unsuitable for cyclists. The carriageway was not of sufficient width to allow provision of cycle lanes along its complete length. However, due to the decision by the Government Office for the South West to re-appraise the Salisbury Transport Plan, the original programme was put on hold. In February 2006, this scheme was approved to be taken forward to investigation.
4. In order to progress this, officers of the Salisbury Joint Transportation Team (SJTT) undertook a feasibility study into the provision of cycling facilities along the route. They recommended a package of measures that involved a variety of both on and off carriageway infrastructure. However, there was some concern within the Team (and among local stakeholders) about the likelihood of potential benefits to users of the measures included in the report. The physical restrictions along the route prevent the possibility of providing a continuous facility, with the resultant design considered to be convoluted and disjointed in parts. It was also suggested the measures would result in the loss of extensive greenery throughout the village and would ultimately present a more 'urbanised' feel to the area.
5. As a result, the SJTT appointed consultants, Mouchel, to undertake an independent review of the proposals, to determine what cycling infrastructure, if any, is appropriate in 2008. Their findings are detailed in the report 'Laverstock to City Centre Cycling Facilities', a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 1**. The consultants' report concluded that there is no practical way to complete a direct, continuous and coherent off carriageway route from Laverstock to the City Centre. It therefore recommended that no further investigations be undertaken into the provision of such a facility. In terms of providing suitable infrastructure, Mouchel suggest on-carriageway cycle lanes would be beneficial in achieving the desired outcomes by re-allocating road space to the cyclist at the expense of motorised vehicles. The cycle lanes would be marked using white lines and coloured surfacing offset 1.5m from the kerb line. This change is intended to provide a psychological

traffic calming effect for vehicles due to carriageway narrowing. Drawings of the proposals are attached at **Appendix 2**.

6. The implementation of cycle lanes is not uncommon in the County and have been used with varying degrees of success on many occasions. However, these proposals are fundamentally different. This is because, after cycle lanes are introduced, the resultant running widths for vehicles are sub-standard (refer to **Appendix 1**, page 28 for photographic representation). Therefore, because of the contentious nature of the design, the SJTT is proposing that the scheme be implemented as a trial during which vehicle speed, accident rates and levels of cycling patronage will be monitored, both before and after implementation of the scheme. In addition, a consultation process has been undertaken with key stakeholders. Their responses are attached at **Appendix 3**. A summary of the comments, together with the officer's response is attached at **Appendix 4**.

### **Main Considerations**

7. Following distribution of the Mouchel report to stakeholders, nine letters of comment were received. Of those nine letters, seven gave full support to the proposals. The two letters of objection were from St Andrew's School and St Edmund's School, the only responses received from schools in Laverstock.
8. The points of concern within the letters of objection centred on the speed of vehicles through the village and the effect of parking within the cycle lanes, particularly at school drop off and collection times. It was felt both these issues would detrimentally affect road safety. Furthermore, it was considered that the proposed layout may confuse motorists as the trajectory of the opposing traffic flow may result in head on collisions should they be overtaking cyclists. Therefore, it was suggested that extensive driver education be required prior to implementation. Lastly, it was felt by both schools that 'on carriageway' facilities do not offer the levels of physical protection required for vulnerable road users and that the proposals were unlikely to result in greater levels of cycling patronage amongst pupils.
9. As a scheme of this nature is yet to be introduced in Wiltshire, the points of objection may have some validity which cannot be accurately assessed until post construction monitoring has been undertaken. However, the consultant report outlines a number of similar designs currently in operation elsewhere in the country. Although other authorities have neglected to undertake before and after studies at many of the sites, the evidence that does exist generally suggests that there has been a reduction in both vehicle speed and accidents whilst overall levels of cycling has increased.
10. The scheme works on the principle that motor vehicles over-run the cycle lanes until such time as they encounter a cyclist, at which point they move over into the centre of the carriageway to overtake if there is no opposing traffic flow. The idea is that the cycle lanes act as a continual reminder to the motorist to increase their awareness and address their driving style accordingly. The removal of the centre line and narrowing of the carriageway is a psychological traffic calming technique that can, according to empirical research, result in substantial reductions in vehicle speed. As there are perceptions of speeding through the village it is hoped that similar reductions can be achieved in Laverstock. Referring to the wider objectives of the Local Plan, particular emphasis is placed on promotion and encouragement of sustainable modes of transport and achieving a reduction in community severance brought about by the use of the motor vehicle. The scheme intends to support this philosophy by encouraging cycling and enhancing road safety.

11. Of the seven letters of support received, three suggested that the proposals be extended to the A30 roundabout, thereby covering the full extent of the village. In addition, it was felt that problems with both pedestrian and cyclist safety on Laverstock Road could be addressed by providing a similar layout. However, due to the contentious nature of the proposals, it is recommended that they be implemented as per the consultant designs and extensive post construction monitoring undertaken over the trial period. This could inform decisions on whether to proceed with extensions to the scheme within Laverstock or at other locations throughout Wiltshire.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

12. The proposals seek to increase levels of cycling in Salisbury. This accords with the Local Plan requirements of increasing trips made by sustainable transport modes, considered to be environmentally beneficial.

### **Risk Assessment**

13. If schemes programmed for design or delivery within the current financial year are not progressed, given the ever increasing need for evidence based performance management, the Council risks the potential of adverse repercussions on the settlement received in subsequent years.

### **Financial Implications**

14. There is an allocation in the 2009-10 LTP Integrated Transport budget for design, construction, supervision and monitoring works.
15. If a decision is taken to halt current proposals the allocated funding will be redirected to another project and may result in a potential underspend in the LTP budget.

### **Options Considered**

16. Implement the proposals on a 12 month trial basis. The results of post construction monitoring on vehicle speed, accidents and levels of cycling patronage will determine whether the scheme can be retained permanently.
17. Abandon the proposal.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

18. Riverside Road and Church Road in Laverstock have been identified as locations that suffer from a suppressed demand for cycling due to lack of existing facilities and concerns about the safety of vulnerable road users. The scheme intends to address this by providing measures that encourage levels of cycling patronage.

## **Recommendation**

19. That:

- (i) The proposals be implemented on a 12 month trial basis.
- (ii) That stakeholders be informed accordingly.

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied upon in preparation of this report:**

None