

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

43% of responses were in favour of the scheme. This included a person who had recently given up driving due to failing eyesight and now travels by mobility scooter. Comments in support suggested that the scheme would encourage local cycling and tourism.

53% of respondents were slightly or strongly opposed to the scheme.

45 residents of Countess Road were opposed to the scheme, while 18 were in favour. It is not clear how many households this represents.

The key consultation response themes are set out below alongside the Council's response to them:

- (i) Some comments were both supportive of cycle measures in principle but opposed to the detail, asking for other cycle routes to be prioritised or this route to be extended.

**Council response:** This particular project is being prioritised over other possibilities as a funding opportunity has arisen. The possibility of extending the route from Woodhenge to Durrington along the Countess Road corridor would require land negotiation and could have an impact on archaeology (Durrington Walls). Investigating whether it is feasible would need to be a longer-term aspiration.

- (ii) Some respondents stated that there is a lack of need for the route. Some stated they believed there is already a cycle route along the existing footway.

**Council response:** The need for the route has been identified using the Department for Transport's (DfT) recognised Propensity to Cycle tool and stakeholder feedback. Additional information is set out in the draft Wiltshire LCWIP: [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans \(LCWIPs\) - Wiltshire Council](#). In order to meet the Council's Climate Change objectives and public health objectives, it is important to facilitate a shift from motor vehicles to active travel modes where possible. With the current cost of living issues, enabling much cheaper forms of transport such as cycling will provide people other options to car use.

The current on-road route for cyclists does not meet the standards set out in DfT's LTN 1/20 cycle design guidance. The existing route along the east side of Countess Road is only a footway (though some cyclists do use it to avoid riding in the road). It is far too narrow to easily convert to a shared use facility. In order to create a high-quality link, considerable land purchase and associated solicitor's fees would be required. A route situated entirely on the eastern side of the road would require the Council to purchase land from a minimum of six landowners and undertake accommodation works to alter those landowners' property boundaries to achieve a shared use path of the requisite width.

The proposed route on the western side of the road would have fewer pinch points along its length, making it safer to use and more attractive overall. It would also only result in a need to purchase land from two landowners as most of it would run within the existing highway boundary. Having to purchase land from fewer landowners is likely to help reduce the overall cost of delivering the route.

- (iii) Respondents were concerned about council taxpayers paying for the scheme. Concerns about the loss of grass verges were also raised, some people had been maintaining the verges themselves.

**Council response:** The Council is currently contributing some staff time to develop the scheme in accordance with Wiltshire Council Business Plan priorities. Funding for the design of the

scheme and the construction of the toucan crossing has been granted from Active Travel England. Funding for the delivery of the rest of the route from National Highways is in the process of being secured.

Some respondents said the money should be used to repair the road. Funding contributions for the scheme from Active Travel England and National Highways cannot be spent on highway maintenance.

In terms of the loss of the grass verge, they are part of the public highway – the purpose of which in law is to allow people to pass and repass. The cycle route would provide a public amenity so it would be a good use of the extent of available highway.

- (iv) Some residents were concerned about loss of the laybys - specifically citing delivery vehicles or tradespeople. There were also concerns about accessing the residential care home.

**Council response:** The Council undertook two video parking surveys on Sunday 18 September 2022 (09:05) and Monday 03 October 2022 (14:05). Observations have also been undertaken on site visits during the outline design. All surveys have shown limited use of the laybys. The scheme would not remove all the laybys and there would still be substantial parking available. It is likely that the parking that does take place could be accommodated off-street given that most properties have large off-street parking areas available to them. Subject to detailed scheme design, it is likely that tradespeople and delivery vehicles may be able to park on the crossovers in front of people's houses, if necessary, in addition to the retained laybys. In some cases, delivery vehicles may have to park briefly in the road – as is the case on much of the highway network.

The care home currently has a car park with occasional parking of up to two cars occurring on the grass verge and short layby along its frontage. It should be noted that no-one, including staff/visitors to the care home, has a legal right to park on the grass verge. However, the layby opposite the care home will be retained if the detailed design allows. The detailed design will also look at whether any parking could be retained/created along the frontage of the care home.

- (v) One household has a disabled child and there were concerns about whether the school shuttle bus would be able to pick the child up.

**Council response:** The detailed design will ensure that the shuttle bus will be able to stop and pick up the child.

- (vi) Some residents were concerned about the loss of grass verge, trees and the impact on visual amenity. This included concerns about visibility of cyclists on the route when vehicles were pulling out.

**Council response:** The preliminary design work shows the potential for one tree to be lost, although this will be avoided if possible. The Council will consider further planting if this can be accommodated within the scheme.

Most of the properties have large parking areas within their boundaries so vehicles could potentially be turned round. Highway Code rule 201 states "Do not reverse from a side road into a main road. When using a driveway, reverse in and drive out if you can." All users have a responsibility to the safety of other highway users so residents should be pulling out of their drives slowly and forwards already, they should be aware of not only other motorised vehicles before pulling out but also give way to cyclists and pedestrians.

- (vii) Some respondents both supporting and opposing the scheme wanted a 30-mph limit along Countess Road.

**Council response:** The Council considers the current speed limit to be the most appropriate for the road based on the Department for Transport's current guidance for setting speed limits. As part of the development of its proposals, the Council will consider the provision of light touch measures to improve awareness of the speed limit in place on Countess Road, for example painted roundels on the carriageway and additional speed limit repeater signs. The proposed traffic signal-controlled toucan crossing facility would introduce a safe crossing point on Countess Road and help to control the speed of vehicles using the road.

- (viii) A number of respondents were concerned that the pedestrian crossing would cause traffic congestion.

**Council response:** The provision of a formal pedestrian crossing would have minimal impact on traffic queuing at Countess Roundabout. The proposed traffic signal-controlled crossing would be on a continual green light until a pedestrian/cyclist pushed the button. The lights would then turn red to allow users to cross the road. The use of detection equipment would help to maximise the efficiency of the traffic signals. For example, it could detect if a user pressed the button to cross the road but then crossed before the traffic has been stopped – in this case the detectors would cancel the request to cross.

- (ix) Some respondents proposed alternative routes.

**Council response:** An alternative route (namely via the dismantled rail line bridleway) would be within the World Heritage Site (WHS). Bound surfaces (i.e., tarmac) would not be acceptable in the WHS due to the impact on archaeology and visual amenity. As a bridleway this route would also need to maintain an unsurfaced route for equestrians adjacent to a bound surface route and this could not be accommodated here. The National Trust is strongly opposed to improvements to the Rights of Way within the WHS.

The dismantled rail line does not connect to Countess Roundabout so a complete route could not be delivered using it.

Any route to the east of Countess Road via Ratfyn has already been discounted as unfeasible (Sustrans looked into this when considering links from Bulford to The Centre) and it would be a large detour for residents of Larkhill.

- (x) Issues were raised about the existing underpass, for example flooding, broken lighting and there were suggestions that people did not want to use it at night.

**Council response:** Work to address the current flooding and lighting issues at the underpass is being progressed by National Highways. In the longer term, the underpass would be replaced by at grade crossings as part of the Countess Roundabout works.