

By: David Hall, Head of Transport & Development

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview Committee – 16 July 2009

Subject: A258 London Road, Sholden – Proposed Walking and Cycling Improvements

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report relates to the proposal for the construction of a length of 2.5 metre wide shared cycleway/footway along London Road, Sholden between Mongeham Road and Sholden New Road. The cycleway forms part of the Dover District Cycling Plan which was approved by Dover JTB in Autumn 2008 and provides an important link between two existing cycle routes, one along Church Lane and the other which continues to follow the A258 to Fowlmead Country Park. The proposal includes the provision of a controlled toucan crossing immediately outside Sholden Primary School which gives the added benefit of providing a safer route to school and to encourage pupils to use more sustainable ways of travelling to and from school. External funding from Sustrans will be lost if the scheme is not supported

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent Highway Services (KHS) has successfully bid for funding from the Local Transport Plan to introduce Phase 3 & 4 of the cycle network for Deal during the current financial year 2008-09, to facilitate the aims of the Dover District Cycling Plan (DDCP), approved by the Dover JTB on 15 December 2008. Phase 4 of the cycle network for Deal has been designed, and following approval from the Dover JTB on 8 September 2008, consultation was progressed.
- 1.2 The results of the consultation were reported to Dover JTB on 15 December 2008.
- 1.3 The Dover JTB resolved that “the item be deferred for a site visit by Board Members, following which the matter would be reconsidered by the Board at its next meeting”.

2. Site visit and additional consultation

- 2.1 The site visit took place on 21 January 2009. Subsequent to the site visit, a further meeting took place between KHS and Sholden Parish Council on 6 February 2009.
- 2.2 In the light of some of the comments received from the Parish Council, additional views have been sought from Sholden Primary School, and a KHS representative met with the Head Teacher on 9 February. As a result of this meeting, further amendments to the scheme have been proposed.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 KHS has listened to residents concerns and the scheme has been amended. The observations made by members of this Board at the Site Visit have been addressed. Further comments have been received from Sholden Parish Council, subsequent to a meeting with KHS held on 6 February 2009. These comments have been addressed. in the light of some of the Parish Council's comments. Funding for this scheme is still available but will now be from the 2010/11 budget.
- 3.2 Members should be aware that the available funding cannot be used for any alternative routes that have been suggested. These would need to be assessed separately, and compete for funds with other schemes across the whole County from a future programme of works (i.e. from 2010/11 onwards).
- 3.3 The Dover JTB at its meeting on 6 February did not endorse the Officer recommendation and so the report as been referred to the HAB for further consideration.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members approve the progression of the scheme as detailed in drawing no. B0744100/DOV/EK/001/08

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A258 London Road Sholden – proposed walking/cycling route (Phase 4).

A report by the Head of Transport and Development to the Dover Joint Transportation Board on [date].

Introduction

1. During the current Local Transport Plan period (2006-2011) a number of cycle routes have been introduced in Deal, Kent Highway Services have successfully bid for funding from the Local Transport Plan to introduce Phase 3 & 4 of the cycle network for Deal during the current financial year 2008-09.

2. Phase 4 of the cycle network for Deal has been designed, and following approval from the Dover Joint Transportation Board on 8th September 2008 consultation was carried out, in the form of a letter drop, to the following residents and organisations;

- Residents fronting the proposals who will be most affected by the proposals.
- Sholden Primary School
- St. Nicholas' Church
- Statutory consultees (emergency services)
- Aspen Lodge Residential Care Home
- Sustrans
- Sholden Parish Council
- Dover District Council
- Kent Association for the Blind

3. The results of this consultation process is the subject of this Joint Board Report.

Background

4. A report was presented to the Joint Transportation Board that was held on 26th November 2007 regarding consultation on the Draft Dover District Cycling Plan, as a result consultation was carried out on the proposed Dover District Cycling Plan in February and March 2008. The results of the consultation and the Final Version of the Dover District Cycling Plan is the subject of another report to be presented at this Joint Transportation Board meeting.

5. The Dover District Cycling Plan has been developed over a number of years through discussions held with Dover District Council Members, Town Council and Parish Council Members at the Dover Cycling Forum. The Dover District Cycling Plan sets out the existing and proposed cycle network for Dover and Deal and identifies the routes needed to create the network, including the proposed route along the A258 London Road. Appendix A shows the maps identifying the existing and proposed cycle routes in Deal and Dover, which is enclosed in the Dover District Cycling Plan.

6. At the Dover Joint Transportation Board meeting that was held on 8th September 2008 it was agreed with Members that consultation would be carried out,

in the form of a letter drop, on the proposals to install a new cycle route along the A258 London Road. As part of the continuing development of the cycle network within Deal. Consultation letters were sent out to 75 properties, as well as the emergency services, Deal Town Council and Dover District Council and other statutory consultees. As a result 16 responses were received from residents. Sholden Parish Council also sent out 120 additional leaflets notifying residents of the proposals (Kent Highway Services emailed the Parish Council enquiring into what information was provided as part of this letter drop and as of 17th November 2008 has not received a reply) this resulted in an additional 6 responses to the consultation from residents being received. One response was received from the Kent Association for the Blind as well as one from Kent Police and Sholden Parish Council.

7. Sholden Primary School also notified parents/carers at the school of the proposals through their newsletter, one response was received from a parent as a result. This respondent was concerned about the removal of vegetation along the verge between Church Lane (Path) and the junction with The Street.

Consultation Results

8. The comments received following the consultation regarding the proposed cycle route along the A258 London Road, Sholden and Kent Highway Services responses to these comments are shown in Appendix B. The main issues of concern can be broadly concluded as follows;

- The proposed removal of the pedestrian islands because it was felt that these islands provide a safe facility for pedestrians crossing the A258 London Road and that they also reduce vehicle speeds and prevent overtaking.
- Perceived danger of cyclists using the footway.
- Perceived danger of cyclists having to cross a number of private driveway accesses, and therefore there being a preference for a cycle route to be provided on the other side (north-east side) of the carriageway.
- Removal of vegetation along the verge between the junction with Church Lane (Path) and The Street (however some comments had also been received in support of removing the vegetation).
- Concern regarding the proposals to narrow the carriageway between the junctions of Sholden New Road and The Street.
- Preference to provide a cycle route away from the A258 London Road along Vicarage Road and the footpath between the Scout Hut and the cricket ground behind the properties in Paddock Close.

These concerns will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

9. The proposed removal of the pedestrian islands, particularly at the junction with Sholden New Road was a concern for 10 of the respondents with the majority (six) being concerned about the removal of the island at the Sholden New Road junction. The work needed to widen the footway as well as maintain the existing pedestrian island at the junction with Sholden New Road would increase the cost of the scheme because highway drainage would have to be relocated as well as the present interactive sign and street lighting. As a result a bid has been submitted to

SUSTRANS for extra funding to enable the traffic island at the Sholden New Road junction to remain.

10. During the consultation a number of comments were received from residents that cyclists already use the current footway. At present the footway is too narrow for both pedestrians and cyclists to use safely, which is supported by the concern received from Sholden Primary School that pedestrians were getting hit by cyclists using the footway. The proposals look to widen the footway to enable both pedestrians and cyclists to use it safely.

11. Concerns were raised that it would not be safe for cyclists to use the footway on the north-west side of the A258 London Road because there are a number of driveways, and that it would therefore be safer to locate it on the opposite side of the carriageway. However this would result in cyclists needing to cross two junctions (Sholden New Road and The Street), these roads provide access to approximately 155 houses, it can be assumed that at a minimum there would be 2 vehicular movements from these households (if there was only one car per household) which would result in approximately 310 vehicles using these junctions during the day. The Sholden New Road and The Street junctions can therefore be assumed to be much busier than the driveways on the A258 London Road, and therefore create a greater risk to cyclists than the current driveways on the A258 London Road.

12. Also if the cycle route were to be located on the north-eastern pavement the cycle route would be on the opposite side of the carriageway to the existing cycle route, a safe crossing facility would therefore need to be provided for cyclists to cross the A258 London Road between the junctions of Sholden New Road and The Street. The construction of such a crossing is not possible due to the presence of the driveway accesses, which would be blocked by the installation of traffic signal equipment. Widening the current islands is also likely to obstruct residences access to their driveways.

13. Mixed views were received from residents regarding the removal of the vegetation on the verge between the junctions of The Street and Church Lane (Path). Two residents were in favour of the vegetation being removed because it was causing a nuisance to their boundary fences, while eight respondents were concerned about the environmental impacts of removing the vegetation. One resident was also concerned about the impact that the removal of the vegetation would have on her privacy and another was concerned about security. Unfortunately in order to widen the footway the banked verge has to be re-profiled which requires all the vegetation on the verge to be removed, this will also ensure that in future vegetation will not encroach on the footway/cycleway thereby narrowing it. However some replanting can be carried out to try to reduce the environmental impact caused by the removal of the vegetation. Also no works will be carried out to remove the vegetation during the nesting season. Residents are also able to carry out planting within their gardens which will ensure that the vegetation is maintained and does not impact on the footway/cycleway. At present the current vegetation narrows the footway at points where it is overgrown, providing less space for pedestrians and cyclists, removing the vegetation will ensure that it doesn't grow over the footway/cycleway.

14. On 4th November 2008 Kent Highway Services engineers went out on site to double-check the measurements that have previously been taken. The measurements that were taken are as follows;

Current

Carriageway width - 7.3m

Footway width - 1.9m

Pedestrian islands width - 1.3m

Carriageway width either side of pedestrian island - 3m

Proposed

Carriageway width - 6.7m

Footway width - 2.5m

The above measurements show that the carriageway (between The Street and the existing pedestrian island at the junction with Sholden New Road), will be narrowed by 60cm. This will have no negative impact on traffic using the A258 London Road, Sholden, no additional congestion will be caused as a result of this reduction and any safety concerns regarding the removal of the island at the junction with The Street will be addressed as part of the safety auditing process which is carried out prior to any proposed schemes being implemented on the highway.

15. Five out of the 25 respondents suggested that the proposed cycle route should use the footpath next to St. Nicholas' Church then run along Vicarage Lane, turn right at the junction with The Street to access the current footpath that runs between the back of the properties in Paddock Close and the cricket ground. The cycleway should then continue along Sholden New Road to the junction with the A258 London Road. Unfortunately there are a number of issues with such a route which make it unfeasible.

16. The current footpaths next to St. Nicholas' Church and behind the properties in Paddock Close are currently not wide enough to accommodate a footway/cycleway. As a result land would need to be taken from the properties next to the Church (in Vicarage Lane) and the Scout Hut and cricket ground. This would significantly increase the cost of the scheme because there would be a cost to Kent Highway Services to purchase the land (a cost which is determined by the current landowner) and associated legal costs necessary to transfer the land to Kent Highway Services. Should any landowners not agree to the sale of their land to Kent Highway Services a compulsory purchase order would need to be implemented. Such compulsory purchase orders result in significant legal costs, so much so that such orders are only carried out for major schemes (such as the creation of bypasses).

17. The creation of a cycleway along The Street and Sholden New Road where footways do not currently exist is not considered as safe as providing a cycle route using footways that currently exist along the A258 London Road. The proposed route separates cyclists from traffic and provides more space for pedestrians and cyclists to share the footway. A number of residents who replied to the consultation also commented that a number of cyclists already ride on the pavements along the A258 London Road, indicating that there is a demand for a cycle route along this road. Creating a cycle route away from the one that cyclists already use would not encourage them to use such a route.

18. Creating a cycle route in Sholden New Road would also result in the need to install a formal crossing facility to enable cyclists to cross the A258 London Road, as mentioned previously it is not feasible to install a formal crossing point at this junction that would be suitable for cyclists.

19. Installing a cycleway along Vicarage Lane and The Street would also take the cycle route away from the Sholden Primary School. One of the aims of creating a cycle route along the A258 London Road is to create a safe cycle route for children and their parents/carers to use to cycle to and from the school. Widening the footway in front of the school will also provide more space on the footway for pedestrians and cyclists to reduce the number of pedestrians being hit by cyclists at this point.

20. Therefore considering the above the proposed footway/cycleway along the A258 London Road, is considered to be the safest most appropriate route for cyclists.

21. A plan showing the proposed cycle route is shown in Appendix C.

Conclusion

22. Having received a number of responses to the consultation regarding the proposed footway/cycleway along the A258 London Road, Sholden consideration has been given to each response and changes made to the proposed cycle route where possible. Responses to each concern are addressed in Appendix B.

23. Work will continue to secure additional funding to keep the current pedestrian island at the A258 London Road/Sholden New Road junction in situ.

24. Following the removal of the vegetation on the verge between the junctions of The Street and Church Lane (Path) some replanting will be carried out to help address privacy/security concerns of residents.

Recommendation

25. It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Approve the continuation of the construction of the proposed cycle route along the A258 London Road, Sholden (between the junctions of Sholden New Road and Church Lane (Path)) in order that a safe, well used cycle route is provided.

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Appendix C: Plan of proposed cycle route along the A258 London Road through Sholden.

Appendix B: Summary of representations and analysis of consultation responses – A258 London Road, Sholden – Proposed footway/cycleway.