

Notes of a remote meeting of the East Cambs Bus, Cycle, Walk Working Party held on Tuesday 24th May 2022 at 6.07pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Alan Sharp (Chairman)
Cllr Charlotte Cane
Cllr Lorna Dupré
Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Mark Goldsack
Cllr Simon Harries

OFFICERS

Sally Bonnett – Corporate Unit Manager
Caroline Evans – Democratic Services Officer

82. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Alan Sharp was nominated by Cllr Lis Every, seconded by Cllr Simon Harries, and duly appointed as the Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

83. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

85. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the meeting held on 20th April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

86. DRAFT SUSTRANS FEASIBILITY STUDIES

The Corporate Unit Manager updated Members on the progress of the Sustrans feasibility studies since the previous meeting. The two outstanding reports had now been completed and contained a similarly high level of detail to those discussed in the previous meeting; they would be provided for Members shortly.

Little Downham – Ely

Three different options had been identified of which Options 2 and 3 had been recommended as the preferred choices since Option 1 was considered to be

too remote. Improvements within Ely and Little Downham had also been considered. All routes involved the use of private land, therefore the precise alignments would be subject to variation. The most expensive scenario would be £5.2m for Option 3 including measures in Ely and Little Downham such as a Dutch-style roundabout at the Downham Road / Cam Drive junction in Ely to give priority to cyclists. The cheaper option would be £697k for Option 2 reaching the edges of settlements only.

Littleport – Ely

Two different options had been identified, together with improvements in both settlements. The main constraints in both cases would be the railway line and the River Lark. The higher cost option (£10.3m) included a new bridge over the River Lark. The cheaper option (£2.4m) would be to edge of settlements only and would make use of the new North Ely development, it could also add a link to Chettisham. New regulations prevented a path over a railway crossing and therefore there were no proposed routes through Queen Adelaide. Both options were expensive due to the length of the route.

The next stages of the project would be to collate information on land ownership and pass it to Sustrans, to hold a seminar with Sustrans on 22nd June, and to share the reports with other Councillors and stakeholders. Funding would continue to be sought for delivery of the schemes, including lobbying for inclusion of the routes in the LCWIP, the County Council's Active Travel Strategy, and the Combined Authority's LTCP refresh. The Planning Department would use the strategies when engaging with developers, and a Comms strategy would be put in place to inform the wider public of the Council's activities in this area.

87. PLANNING FOR SUSTRANS SEMINAR

The Corporate Unit Manager explained that the Sustrans seminar on 22nd June would be an opportunity for Sustrans to brief Councillors and other invited attendees about the feasibility studies that they had undertaken. It would not be possible to run breakout sessions for each individual route on the same date because the same engineer(s) had worked on more than one route. However, Sustrans were keen to run separate route-specific meetings at a future point.

In the course of discussion there was general agreement on the following points:

- Local meetings should be arranged for each route, to which additional stakeholders could be invited as necessary.
- A clear explanation should be provided that the seminar would be an introductory meeting focussing on the details of the overall process and a strategic overview; route-specific meetings would be arranged in due course and would be the more appropriate occasions for detailed questions or discussions about individual routes.
- Approximately 15 minutes should be allowed for each route, with careful Chairing to avoid any individual or group monopolising the time with highly specific questions.

- High-quality feedback from the Parish Councils and other local groups would be crucial for demonstrating to potential funders that there was community support for the final proposals.
- After the introductory seminar, the participants should be given copies of the reports to study prior to the route-specific meetings. Parish Councils could each then meet after those meetings in order to prepare their feedback for consideration by the Working Party.
- Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understood that there was no guarantee of delivery for any of the routes since funding would need to be secured. Parish Councils' feedback would be invaluable when preparing the funding bids for routes agreed by ECDC (following recommendations from the Working Party to the Finance & Assets Committee) but would not be the sole determining factor in whether a route was selected for progression.

It was agreed that the format of the seminar would be:

1. Introductions (Cllr Sharp)
2. Sustrans presentation
 - Overview of how the work came about, context of Gear Change / LTN1/20 / Active Travel England / Active Travel Fund.
 - High-level explanation of each route and options considered.
 - Discussion of the potential prioritisation of schemes, and address the issue about connections onto each route.
 - Next steps – feasibility and preparation for funding.
 - Q&A session (with clarity that route-specific queries should be raised at the local meetings).

The following invitee list was agreed:

1. All ECDC Councillors
2. Relevant Parish Councils
 - Burwell
 - Ely
 - Fordham
 - Haddenham
 - Little Downham
 - Littleport
 - Reach
 - Swaffham Prior
3. Potential funders
 - Cambridgeshire County Council
 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
4. Other interested parties
 - A to B1102 group
 - East Cambs Climate Action Network
 - Ely Cycling Campaign

Following a request from a Member for more information about the likelihood of securing funding, the Corporate Unit Manager highlighted that the benefit-cost

ratios in the Sustrans reports would be useful in the preparation of funding bids. Members discussed the importance of long-term infrastructure investments such as active transport proposals.

6:44pm Cllr Every left the meeting and did not return.

Members discussed the wider issue of integrated transport solutions, including the example of the lack of bus connections to Soham train station, and requested that improvements to bus travel should be included on a future agenda.

88. DRAFT ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE – DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Corporate Unit Manager introduced the Council’s draft response to the Draft Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire Consultation, as circulated the previous day. She asked Members to provide feedback by the end of 31st May; she would then make any necessary revisions and circulate the draft response to all Councillors for comment before submission.

89. WORK PROGRAMME – MAY 2022

Members received and noted the Work Programme to October 2022.

90. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were reminded that the next meeting had been arranged for 6th July 2022, and the Sustrans Seminar would be held on 22nd June 2022.

The meeting closed at 6:51pm.