

ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 9 MARCH 2017

Present:

Councillors Rose Williams (Chair), Eden, Khan and Singh.

Also in attendance:

Lisa Bamsey	Readibus & Service User
Bob Bristow	Reading Association for the Blind
Liz Cheyney	Member of the Public
Alan Fleming	Enrych Berkshire
Diane Goodlock	Reading MS Society
Simone Illger	PDSN Chair
Laxmi Kachwaha	Readibus
Nigel McAlister	Member of the Public
Helen Bryant	RBC - Access Officer
Nina Crispin	RBC - Information and Engagement Officer
Steve Saunders	RBC - Principal Personal Budget Support Officer
Nicky Simpson	RBC - Committee Services

Apologies:

Councillor Grashoff	
Keith Hester	Berkshire County Blind Society
David Wiltshire	Readibus User

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Further to Minute 2 of the meeting on 15 September 2016 (and Minute 5(b) of the meeting on 30 June 2016), Liz Cheyney reported that a handrail had now been installed on the steps at the northern interchange of the station.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

3. ADULT SOCIAL CARE CHARGING AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW - CONSULTATION

Steve Saunders attended the meeting to update the Group on a public consultation from 13 December 2016 to 13 March 2017 on proposed changes to the Adult Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework. Details of the consultation could be found at:

<https://consult.reading.gov.uk/css/chargingreview/>

The proposals were to remove allowances and disregards from the Financial Assessment, add assistive technology/Telecare costs to Personal Budgets, remove the standard minimal charge from respite breaks/short stays in registered care homes and a flat rate charge for meals and

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refreshments provided at Council-run day centres. The intention was for the changes to come into effect on 1 April 2017.

Steve said that a number of responses had been received so far, with some good points made. Councillor Eden noted that, whilst respondees had not relished the proposals, most had replied in favour of the proposals, given the context of needing to maximise the contributions the Council received towards the cost of the care and support services it funded.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to see the report on the results of the consultation.

AGREED: That the position be noted and the report on the results of the consultation be brought back to the next meeting.

4. HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2017 - FIXING OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET, AND DRAFT LOCAL PLAN - ACCESSIBLE HOMES

The Department for Communities and Local Government had published a White Paper on 7 February 2017 “Fixing our broken housing market”, which set out a broad range of reforms that government planned to introduce to help reform the housing market and increase the supply of new homes. Extracts from the White Paper where it referred to disabled people, within the sections on planning for homes, had been included in the agenda and details of the White Paper could be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

Councillor R Williams reported that, in the Council’s new draft Local Plan, it was proposed that all new homes should be ‘accessible and adaptable’ and in developments of 20 or more new build dwellings, at least 5% would be wheelchair user dwellings, in line with Building Regulations.

It was suggested that there should be at least one home within each block of flats with disabled access so that disabled people could be spread out and did not have to be clustered together. It was also suggested that a watching brief needed to be kept on planning applications coming through the planning system.

AGREED:

- (1) That the positions be noted;
- (2) That Councillor R Williams write to the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport supporting the minimum 5% wheelchair user dwellings element within the draft Local Plan, flagging up the need for disabled access flats and indicating that, as Chair of the Working Group, she would be keeping a watching brief on planning applications coming through the system for access and disability issues.

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5. INQUIRY INTO HOUSING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE BY THE EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Equality & Human Rights Commission were carrying out an inquiry into housing for disabled people, to examine the extent to which the right of disabled people to independent living was supported by the provision of accessible and adaptable housing and tenancy support services. The terms of reference for the inquiry had been included in the papers and further details could be found at:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/inquiry-housing-disabled-people?utm_source=IBF+Email&utm_campaign=45d44c4be1-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_02_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3350ce020f-45d44c4be1-187667925

6. WORK, HEALTH & DISABILITY - IMPROVING LIVES GREEN PAPER

Helen Bryant noted that she had previously sent round information on a Green Paper, details of which could be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/work-health-and-disability-improving-lives>

7. PDSN - DISABILITY AWARENESS DAY

Nina Crispin and Simone Illger addressed the group on plans for holding a Disability Awareness Day in June 2017.

Simone explained that Reading's Physical Disability and Sensory Needs Network (PDSN) was a forum for local service users and representatives from statutory and voluntary organisations to come and talk, share concerns and identify gaps in service provision for those with physical disabilities and sensory needs. She said that, since the move of venue to the new Civic Offices, the number of people coming to events had dropped, and trying different formats had not succeeded in attracting more attendees. It would be good to make the PDSN a virtual hub of support, but more people needed to be involved in the network.

It was therefore proposed to hold a Disability Awareness Day to celebrate the people in Reading with physical disabilities or sensory needs, possibly on Saturday 17 June 2017, to be held from 11am to 3pm.

The Oracle Shopping Centre had already given £300 towards the budget for the event and promised help with first aid and staff on the day, and it was possible that food might be contributed. Organisations and events that might be in the programme included:

- The Stroke Association - raising awareness
- Thames Valley Police - on crime
- Tai Chi sessions
- Guide Dogs - sighted guiding training session
- Choir performances
- Remap
- MS Therapy Centre

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- Oracle Shopmobility
- something for parents of children with disabilities

The Communications Team were working on the publicity to be done on the event once a final date had been set, including preparing a draft flyer, and officers were liaising with Connect Reading to see which organisations could help.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

8. COMPASS RECOVERY COLLEGE LAUNCH EVENT

Councillors R Williams and Eden reported on a launch event for the Compass Recovery College that they had attended on 22 February 2017, which had aimed to reach out to people who might not be aware of what the College could offer for those experiencing mental health challenges.

They explained that the Compass Recovery College provided free courses and workshops at a number of venues, including Central Library, all of which had disabled access and were on public transport routes. The courses were aimed at adults of any age recovering from and living with mental health issues and provided a supportive environment for students to develop skills for life. Courses in subjects such as cookery, gardening and literacy were designed to help build resilience and for people to develop lost skills, for example if they had spent time in an institution.

Members of the Group were encouraged to spread the word about the service. People could be referred to the service by a professional or by self-referral and the College could be contacted on 0118 937 3945.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

9. ACCESS ISSUES AT THE ORACLE

Councillor R Williams reported that she and Lisa Bamsey had attended a meeting with senior staff from Hammersons about access issues at the Oracle and what could be done to help. The issues covered had included:

- The success of the Christmas Shopping Event and the possibility of holding other shopping support days during the year when the centre was quiet.
- Updating the Facilities Manager on what was needed regarding the Disabled Changing Place toilets, the provision of which had not happened in Shopmobility.
- The possibility of having designated quiet spaces in the Oracle for children and others
- Shopmobility not being well signposted
- Problems with disabled parking in the car park, including disabled users not being able to get in to use the available disabled spaces when others were queueing to enter the car park.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

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10. SIMON PROJECT UPDATE

Further to Minute 3 of the previous meeting, Helen Bryant read out the following update on the SIMON project from Marian Marsh, Transport Planner, who had not been able to attend:

“Please tell everyone I am sorry I could not make the meeting today and I will do my best to get along to the next one. The contact between your Forum and Transport Planning is very valuable and I hope to keep in touch about other projects as they come up:

- SIMON Project runs for a few more weeks with opportunities to give feedback on the app until early April.
- We got a boost to publicity thanks to BBC South Today and the Radio Berks Breakfast show. Simone and Marian did interviews and filming. A link to the South today video is here:
<https://twitter.com/BBCBerkshire/status/801448447727562752>
- Feedback so far has been very appreciative that we are trying to help people who are mobility impaired
- The main feedback we had in the first few weeks was that the sensors do not always give real time information - we are working on this and believe it is now working properly. Tell us whenever it is not please!
- The parallel parking bays are due for white lining in mid-April to help encourage people to park over the sensors rather than in between them and this should help make this clear.
- There has been some confusion about the badge part of the app. This was trialled at a day’s workshop with two kind volunteers from your forum and Simone Illger. We found the badge enforcement part of the app needs work to be done to scan in badges in the lower light we get on a rainy day in Reading than our project partners in sunnier Lisbon, Madrid and Parma! We have conveyed this information to the Project leader to help with rolling out the badge enforcement across the EU. The UK is unlikely to be using this in the foreseeable future.
- Reading’s focus is the parking part of the app. You go to navigation and you then get info on what places are free (green) and what are full (red). You can also use this part of the app to find your way to spaces and other places in town. See video or contact Marian if you need more help with this.
- So far we have not had comments on how the app feels to use in your hand. Are the buttons in the right places for you to use easily? Any other comments on clarity to see, know what to go to etc?
- There is still time to download the app using google play or the App Store. More information is at <http://simon-project.eu/>

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- If anyone is having problems downloading the app please email me and I will do my best to help and I can send some links to tutorials
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- And finally a more general comment, through the enforcement workshop and the emails you have sent me, I have learned a great deal more about the challenges you all face and would like to keep in touch so it can inform other transport planning work I do. I will contact Helen when there is anything else we could work on together.
- Thank you all for your help and interest! It is a real pleasure working with you all.”

Members of the Working Group discussed further the problems that they had experienced in using the SIMON app, noting that often by the time users reached the spaces, they had already gone. Simone Illger reported that she was due to speak at an event on the SIMON project at the Town Hall on 15 March 2017 as a disabled transport user, and she would be reporting on problems experienced, including the lack of spaces where there was room for rear entry for wheelchairs. (This event was subsequently cancelled).

AGREED: That the position be noted.

11. FUTURE OF THE WORKING GROUP & FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Helen Bryant said that this would be the last meeting of the Working Group which Committee Services would be servicing, and that she would be taking on the role in the future. Councillor R Williams said that she would be Reading's Mayor for the Municipal Year 2017/18 and so might not be Chair of the Working Group in 2017/18.

The Working Group discussed possible agenda items for future meetings and agreed that there were a number of issues around dropped kerbs and pavement furniture that they would like to raise. It was suggested that specific examples of the problems should be provided by members in advance of the next meeting and the Network & Parking Service Manager could then be asked to come and address the points raised.

Initial issues raised included:

- There were a number of places where there was only a dropped kerb on one side of the road and the nearest dropped kerb on the other side of the road could be up to 100m away.
- Some dropped kerbs would not now meet standards, as they were 25-30mm higher than they should be, some were in dangerous positions and some had up to a 40 degree incline.
- There were no markings on Friar Street and there were problems at the corner of Station Road and Friar Street.
- In Forbury Square, there was one dropped kerb, but nothing on the other side, when trying to get to the bus stop to Caversham.

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- Were developers responsible for ensuring that footpaths and dropped kerbs were restored after completion of a development?

AGREED:

- (1) That Committee Services be thanked for their servicing of the Working Group and Councillor R Williams be thanked for her work as Chair of the Working Group;
- (2) That members of the Working Group submit any further specific examples of problems with dropped kerbs and pavement furniture in advance of the next meeting and the Network & Parking Services Manager be asked to come to the next meeting to address the points raised.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Resident Parking Scheme - Charity and Carer Permit Charges

Helen Bryant informed the meeting that the Traffic Management Sub-Committee would be considering a report at its meeting that evening on residents parking permit changes and a proposal to charge £30 for Charity (first) and Carer parking permits. She had circulated a copy of the report prior to the meeting.

The Group discussed the proposal and expressed the view that there should not be a charge for either carer or charity permits.

AGREED: That the Working Group's view that there should not be a charge for either care or charity permits be reported to the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.

(b) Dying Matters Week 8-14 May 2017

Councillor Eden reported that events were being planned for the week of 8-14 May 2017 to allow people to explore issues around dying in a safe way. Lots of organisations were already signed up to be involved, but she said that if members had any ideas or knew of any organisations that might be interested, they should get in touch.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

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(c) Phoebe Cusden House - Official Opening 31 March 2017

Councillor Eden reported that the official opening of Phoebe Cusden House, which provided supported living accommodation primarily for young adults with disabilities, would be held on 31 March 2017 and members of the Working Group would be welcome to attend.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(d) Green Park Station Plans - Disabled Parking

Alan Fleming said that he had been shown plans for the Green Park Station and was concerned that the nearest access point was through the transport hub, that this was closer than the disabled parking bays and that there was an incline up to the disabled bays.

AGREED: That Alan Fleming email the details of his concerns to Councillor Eden so that she could raise the issue as Ward Councillor.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of the Access & Disabilities Working Group was provisionally scheduled for 29 June 2017, but the Council diary was still to be finalised.

(The meeting opened at 2.00pm and closed at 3.55pm)

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 th JUNE 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	THAMES PATH CONSULTATION RESULTS - PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE LEGAL STATUS TO A JOINT FOOTPATH & CYCLE TRACK		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	ABBNEY, BATTLE & KENTWOOD
LEAD OFFICERS:	EMMA BAKER	TEL:	0118 937 4881
JOB TITLES:	SENIOR TRANSPORT PLANNER	E-MAIL:	emma.baker@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The opening of Christchurch Bridge has led to increases in cycle use along the Thames Path, which is currently designated as a right of way on foot only. This resulted in the decision to consult on the proposal to change the legal status of the Thames Path to a joint footpath and cycle track.
- 1.2 This report sets out the results of the consultation, undertaken between 27th April and 25th May, and seeks approval to refer the Cycle Track Orders to the Secretary of State for determination.
- 1.3 Appendix A - Thames Path Consultation - Summary of Objections
- 1.4 Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Members of the Sub-Committee note the results of the consultation.
- 2.2 That in consultation with the chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and the Head of Legal and Democratic

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Services be authorised to submit the Cycle Track Orders to the Secretary of State for determination, in accordance with the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 and Cycle Tracks Regulations 1984.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document setting out the Council's transport strategy and policy. Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 was adopted by the Council on 29 March 2011.
- 3.2 The Cycling Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling, was adopted by the Council on 19 March 2014 as a sub-strategy to the Local Transport Plan. The strategy includes detailed policies regarding the design principles for delivering infrastructure and route improvements for cyclists on the public highway, as well as policies to encourage and promote cycling to different demographics, including the creation of off-carriageway facilities to cater for less experienced cyclists.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Thames Path is legally classified as a public right of way by foot only. This results in cyclists being required to ride on-road, navigating busy roundabout junctions on Vastern Road and Caversham Road where there are high traffic flows, or to divert their journey to the north side of the river.
- 4.2 Despite the legal status of the Thames Path, cyclists have used the route in excess of 30 years. This led to the submission of evidence in 2007 illustrating cycle use along the Thames Path which led to the decision to initiate the process of converting the Reading to Caversham Bridge section to a cycle track. The consultation resulted in over 150 objections, including one from the local National Trails branch - Thames Path Management Group, and 29 letters of support. Objections related to concerns regarding the width of the footpath, the perceived threat to wildlife and conflicts between different user groups. The Council subsequently sought independent legal advice that led to the decision not pursue the Cycle Track Order further.
- 4.3 National transport policy has, over recent years, emphasised the importance of cycling for local journeys as an alternative to private car use and resulted in increases in the number of trips undertaken by bicycle both nationally and locally. During this time, the opening of Christchurch Bridge and the redevelopment of Reading Station have contributed to significantly increased levels of cycling in the vicinity of the Thames Path and throughout the Borough. Further anticipated increases in the level of cycling, led to the decision to undertake a new consultation on the proposal to change the legal status of the Thames Path to an unsegregated, joint footpath and cycle track for approximately 6,450 metres between Roebuck Cottage and Kennet Mouth. The consultation

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commenced on 27th April until 25th May 2017 and was advertised as three separate Cycle Track Orders consist with the existing Footpath Orders. These were:

Cycle Track Order	Proposed Cycle Track Width	Total Footpath/Cycle Track Width
Roebuck Hotel to Caversham Road	1 - 2.5 metres	2 - 5 metres
Caversham Bridge to Reading Bridge	1 - 2 metres	2 - 4 metres
Reading Bridge to Kennet Mouth	1.5 - 2.5 metres	3 - 5 metres

4.4 The consultation resulted in the submission of 858 responses of which 77% of respondents (664) were in support and 23% (194) were in objection to the proposed changes. A log of detailed objections, which highlights concerns about potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists, particularly children, the elderly and disabled, and footpath widths, is included in Appendix A. The objections were made up of the following:

- 145 respondents submitted specific comments in relation to Reading to Caversham Bridge.
- 11 respondents submitted specific comments in relation to Roebuck Cottage to Thames Promenade.
- 1 respondent submitted specific comments in relation to Reading Bridge to Kennet Mouth.
- 5 respondents did not provide any specific feedback; and
- The other 32 respondents provided general feedback or comments on multiple sections of the Cycle Track Orders.
- In addition, two respondents in support of the scheme objected to Caversham Bridge to Reading Bridge due to conflicts with landowners and a pinch point along the section.

4.5 Of the eleven organisations that are deemed as statutory consultees, only two submitted responses to the consultation - Cycling UK and the Ramblers Association, both of whom cascaded the information to local representatives. Other statutory consultees included utility companies, the Pedestrian Association, Friends of the Earth, the Committee on Mobility for the Disabled, the Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People. Feedback from landowners is incorporated within the detailed objections included in Appendix A. Other local stakeholders that collectively submitted feedback, included:

- **Sustrans** - the national walking and cycling charity, that were supportive of the proposal.
- **Mid-West Berkshire Local Access Forum**, who are an advisory body that supports 'responsible shared-use' where the width 'is sufficient to accommodate the volume of cycling', but the Forum has concerns regarding the width of the footpath between Roebuck Cottage to Thames Promenade.
- The **Thames Path Management Group** highlighted their recently adopted Cycling Policy that outlines factors for consideration when proposing shared-use facilities and the requirement for shared-use facilities to be a minimum of 2 metres wide.

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- **Open Space Society** objected to the proposals based on narrow footpath widths.
- The **Ramblers Association (Berkshire)** also objected to the proposal based on narrow footpath widths between Roebuck Cottage and Thames Promenade. The Group did not object to the remaining sections, but highlighted DfT guidance on shared-use.
- The **Ramblers Association (Pang Valley)** highlighted national guidance recommending that shared-use facilities be constructed to 3 metres wide.

4.6 Of the 194 objections received, most respondents reported concerns about potentials conflicts with other users. However, officers are only aware of three actual incidents between users along the Thames Path. However, if the Cycle Track Orders are confirmed, officers would recommend the use of considerate shared-use signing to highlight the presence of other users as previously highlighted through informal consultation and used by other organisations involved in the promotion of rights of way, including the Canals and Rivers Trust.

4.7 Other concerns highlight that footpath widths along the route do not comply with the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 'Shared Route for Pedestrians and Cyclists' stating that shared-use facilities should be a minimum preferred width of 3 metres. It should be noted that this is guidance rather than a requirement and that the Note also acknowledges that Highway Authorities may need to consider whether a 'sub-standard facility is better than none'. Our Cycling Strategy acknowledges this guidance and outlines that shared-use facilities will be a minimum of 2 metres wide. The proposed widths of the Cycle Tracks are set out in paragraph 4.3.

4.8 Given that cyclists and pedestrians already share the Thames Path unofficially and the strong support shown for the proposal, it is our recommendation that the Cycle Track Orders are submitted to the Secretary of State for determination. Independent legal advice will again be sought as part of this process.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Changing the legal status of the Thames Path to a joint footpath and cycle track will contribute towards the following strategic aims:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 The consultation was carried out between 27th April and 25th May 2017.

6.2 Respondents were able to respond and request further details on the consultation in writing, by email and via the online consultation web page. Details of the consultation were also published in the local media.

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6.3 Statutory consultees were informed of the proposals in writing in accordance with the Cycle Track Regulations 1984. Other stakeholders and local interest groups were informed of the consultation through existing contacts or distribution lists, including the Mid-West Berkshire Local Access Forum, Cycle Forum and Older People's User Group.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Proposals relating to the conversion of footpaths to cycle tracks are advertised under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 and Cycle Track Regulations 1984.

7.2 As there are objections to the Cycle Tracks Orders, the Council is required to refer the Orders to the Secretary of State for determination. Given the number of objections, it is likely that the Secretary of State will call a Public Inquiry.

7.3 The Council is currently liable for accidents that occur to pedestrians using the public footpath. If the footpath is converted, the Council will also be liable for any accidents that occur to cyclists using the Thames Path whereas these are currently the responsibility of the relevant landowner.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is included in Appendix B.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Thames Path is currently designated as highway maintainable at the Council's expense (Sct. 36 Highways Act 1980) and it will continue to be maintainable by the Council if the Cycle Track Orders are confirmed by the Secretary of State.

9.2 The estimated costs associated with the Council referring the Cycle Track Orders to the Secretary of State, including a Public Inquiry and independent legal advice, is £8,000. Any such costs will be funded by existing transport budgets.

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- 9.3 The supply and installation of shared-use signing will be funded by existing Transport Budgets, subject to the Cycle Track Orders being confirmed.
- 9.4 Any other future improvements to upgrade the Thames Path, such as widening and resurfacing, will be subject to the identification of external funding.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan 2016/17 - 15 June 2016.
- 10.2 Cycling Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling.
- 10.3 Thames Path National Trail Cycling Policy 2017



Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Changing the legal status of the Thames Path to a joint footpath and cycle track.

Directorate: DENS

Service: Transport Planning

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Emma Baker

Job Title: Senior Transport Planner

Date of assessment: 05/06/2017

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

The Thames Path is currently designated as a right of way by foot only. This proposal aims to change the legal status of the Thames Path to a joint footpath and cycle track in order to reflect how the footpath is currently used and has been in excess of 30 years.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

If the legal status of the Thames Path is changed to a joint footpath and cycle track, cyclists will be able to use the right of way legally.

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

The outcome will result in the existing footpath becoming a public right of way on foot and by bicycle where pedestrians and cyclists will share an unsegregated shared-use path.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The main stakeholders consist of users and landowners whose property extends to the river bank, including the public right of way.

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Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

Yes *(delete as appropriate)*

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

Yes *(delete as appropriate)*

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

Signed (completing officer)  Date 05/06/2017

Signed (Lead Officer)  Date 05/06/2017

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- **Consultation**
- **Collection and Assessment of Data**
- **Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive**

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

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How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
Older People's Working Group	An email was sent to members of the OPWG.	May 2017
Landowners	Letters were sent to landowners in advance of the consultation	April 2017
Local interest groups, including Thames Path Management Group, Cycle Forum, Mid-West Berks Local Access Forum, Open Space Society, etc.	Emails were sent to local interest groups informing them of the consultation, including a link to the press release.	April 2017
Statutory Consultees, including Pedestrian Association, Friends of the Earth, Joint Committee on Mobility for Disabled, Joint Committee of the Mobility for Blind and Partially Sighted, utility companies, Ramblers Association, Cycling UK	Letters and/or emails were sent to statutory consultees, including national and local contacts.	April 2017
General Public	The Cycle Track Orders were advertised in the local media, on-site and through corporate media channels.	April 2017

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