

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 18 JUNE

FARINGDON: SOUTHAMPTON STREET & BERNERS WAY PROPOSED SHARED USE FOOTPATH / CYCLETRACKS

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed widening of a footpath at Southampton Street and the proposed conversion of a footpath at Berners Way to provide sections of shared use footpath/cycle track.

Executive summary

2. The provision for cyclists and pedestrians is reviewed when there are changes to the road layout as a result of development, when requested by local councils as a result of road safety concerns and as part of the on-going monitoring of reports on road accidents. Specific proposals are assessed applying national regulations and guidance on the provision of pedestrian crossings and the Oxfordshire County Council Walking Design Standards and Cycling Design Standards.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to widen or convert sections of existing footpath at Southampton Street and Berners Way, Faringdon to create shared use footpath/cycle tracks.

Background

4. The above proposals as shown at Annex 1 and 2 have been put forward by Faringdon Town Council as part of providing an improved and safer cycle route between the Folly View housing estate including Folly Sports Park & The White Horse Medical Practice and the town centre, including Faringdon Junior School.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation was carried out between 11 March and 10 April 2020. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series newspaper and an email sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, Vale of White Horse District Council, Faringdon Town Council and local County Councillor. Street notices were

placed on site and letters sent to approximately 35 properties in the immediate vicinity adjacent to the proposals.

6. Thirteen responses were received. Two objections, nine (70%) expressions of support and two neither objecting nor supporting. The responses are recorded at Annex 3 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

7. Thames Valley Police and the Vale of White Horse District Council have not objected.
8. Councillor Heathcoat the Local Member supports the proposals entirely.
9. Objections have been received from two local residents on the grounds of a) the southern end of Southampton Street and the footpath running up to Folly View housing estate are narrow routes where encouraging cycling will be detrimental to the safety of pedestrians and b) the scheme is not a necessary change, will not encourage any more people to use their bikes and, therefore, a waste of money and not a good use of County Council funds.
10. In response to the first point the southern end of Southampton Street is wide enough for pedestrians to share the carriageway with cyclists when necessary, the width of the footpath running up to Folly View will be maximised by siding out and cutting back the hedgerow and shared use signage provided along the routes to highlight the presence of both types of user.
11. In response to the second point, the scheme is being funded by Faringdon Town Council using Section 106 monies from the Folly View housing estate allocated to the specific purpose of providing an improved and safer cycle link between the estate and the town centre. It is hoped that the scheme will encourage more people to cycle this short distance.
12. The proposals also reflect the Department for Transport's current active-travel initiative to promote cycling during the Covid recovery phase.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

13. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

14. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by Faringdon Town Council using Section 106 monies.

JASON RUSSELL
Interim Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Plans of proposed footpath works.
Consultation responses.

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection
(2) Local County Cllr, (Division)	Support – I support this entirely, I have no objections.
(3) Vale of White Horse District Council	No objection – Having reviewed the details of the schemes the Vale of White Horse District Council raises no objection.
(4) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	<p>Object (Southampton Street) – The plans for this proposal only show the start at Southampton Street and the entrance to Berners Way which is deceiving because Southampton Street crosses a road (Bennett Road/The Lees) and continues along a narrow road until it meets Berners Way. Southampton Street is usually always full of parked cars on both sides which means the very narrow pavement cannot be currently used by pedestrians and have to walk in the single-track road as it is. This also links to 'The Hobble' which is a pedestrian only route - turning Southampton Street into a bike route will only encourage people to cycle up this also. The safety of walkers must be considered in this plan which is currently ignored.</p> <p>This scheme is a pointless waste of money and it will not encourage any more people to use their bikes. Maybe a cycle route on the main Park Road would be a far better suggestion?</p>
(5) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	<p>Object (Berners Way & Southampton Street) – This is not a necessary change and so not a good use of limited OCC funds. It is no hardship for cyclists to get off and walk a few metres.</p> <p>The paths are widely used by children, old people and dog walkers, as a route to the medical centre. Shared use pedestrian / cycle paths of the proposed width are inherently dangerous to these populations due to the aggressive riding of some cyclists and the lack of any effective policing.</p>

	Signs reminding cyclists to dismount on the sections in question would be a better solution.
(6) Local Group, (CTC, Oxford)	<p>Support (Berners Way & Southampton Street) – This will improve permeability for cycling. From google street view (2008), please ensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vegetation is kept trimmed back. 2. The posts have visibility bands on to help visually impaired people, and so cycle users can see the posts in the dark. <p>While making sections like this shared use are useful, there is often poor signage/lining to show where the shared use ends and you can no longer cycle on the footway. What do you propose to show the end if the cyclable sections of footway to prevent cycle users continuing to cycle illegally on the footway, unaware the usage has changed?</p>
(7) Local Group, (Faringdon)	<p>Support (Berners Way & Southampton Street) – Both changes of use are essential for traffic-free bike access from the Town Centre to the Sports Ground (Berners Way) and to the Health Centre (Southampton St). They are wide enough to support shared use in accordance with OCC Guidance.</p> <p>We must make it easier for the public to leave their cars at home and cycle short distances to public amenities and to appointments at the health centre - thereby reducing traffic on the roads, reducing air pollution and improving personal fitness/ weight loss.</p>
(8) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	<p>Support (Berners Way) – It is hugely important to make cycling easier and safer to encourage more people to cycle. I hope this is just the beginning.</p> <p>I hope too as and when Park Road is resurfaced that proper provision for cycling is included. Painting a line, a meter/some distance from the kerb is inadequate, unsafe and goes against cycling safety advice, where cyclist are advised to position themselves further into the road.</p>
(9) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	<p>Support (Berners Way) – I support the idea of continuing a cycle way to join Berners Way to the existing track. However, I hope that thought is given to preventing motorcycles from using the route. A few years ago, a young person died as a result of riding a motorcycle on the track and then colliding with a wall.</p>

(10) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	Support (Berners Way) – About time provision for cycling came to the fore
(11) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	<p>Support (Berners Way & Southampton Street) – Both changes of use are essential for traffic-free bike access from the Town Centre to the Sports Ground (Berners Way) and to the Health Centre (Southampton St). They are wide enough to support shared use in accordance with OCC Guidance.</p> <p>We must make it easier for the public to leave their cars at home and cycle short distances to public amenities and to appointments at the health centre - thereby reducing traffic on the roads, reducing air pollution and improving personal fitness/ weight loss.</p>
(12) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	<p>Support (Berners Way & Southampton Street) – At the moment it's possible to cycle all the way from Park Road into town, with the exception of the short section between the two parts of Southampton Street which is being changed by this plan.</p> <p>In future could consideration for the short one way section of road at the northern end of Southampton Street, by the side of the Bell pub to be made two way just for cyclists ? It's narrow but there is space and it's not a very busy road. That would be the natural next step to open the town centre to cyclists (now it's necessary to cut through the car park).</p>
(13) Local Resident, (Faringdon)	Support (Berners Way & Southampton Street) – I'm not aware that only one of these can go ahead, provided there is enough support.