

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Engagement Response to National Highways A259 Chichester to Emsworth Cycling and Walking Route

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **Having considered the recommendation from Environment Panel (para 8.4), Cabinet is recommended to indicate the Council's support for National Highways' proposed walking and cycling improvements to the A259 Chichester to Emsworth.**

3. Background

- 3.1. An upgraded cycling and walking route along the A259 between Chichester and Emsworth is proposed as part of National Highways (NH) Designated Funds programme. The route is colloquially known as the 'Chemroute'.
- 3.2. Currently, despite being a signed and designated cycle route (the NCN Route 2), it is formed of narrow shared use paths, poor cycle design and has gaps within the cycle infrastructure.
- 3.3. The proposals for the new A259 route seek to improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians, whilst also maintaining the A259's function as a strategic diversion route for the A27. The specific objectives of the improvements are to:
 - Improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and other road users.
 - Encourage healthy and active modes of travel – in line with the Government's 'Gear Change' vision for cycling and walking.
 - Support the West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy and Chichester City Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
 - Maintain the core function of the corridor as a local A road.
- 3.4. NH is working in partnership with West Sussex County Council to develop this project via NH Designated Funds Programme. Subject to successful

outcomes in these early feasibility stages, WSCC will also make a financial contribution towards the improvements.

- 3.5. In 2020, the Department for Transport released updated guidance and good practice for the design of cycle infrastructure in support of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and the Government's vision for cycling and walking. The guidance, known as Local Transport Note 1/20, sets out five principles which represent the essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot. These principles state that networks and routes should be, coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive.
- 3.6. WSCC and NH public engagement state that, 'The design process has complied with the principles of LTN 1/20 throughout the route, with the aim of creating high-quality and inclusive walking and cycling infrastructure between Chichester and Emsworth. Shared use facilities have been proposed as a last resort only, on sections where physical and operational constraints have determined this.'
- 3.7. The proposals are to improve cycling and walking facilities along the A259 corridor between Chichester and Emsworth through a mixture of infrastructure improvements that include segregated cycling and walking facilities, shared cycling and walking facilities, enhanced crossing points, junction amendments, highways widths alterations, tactile pavements and sections of reduced speed limits. Further descriptive detail is at Appendix 1 and annotated route section plans are at Appendix 2.
- 3.8. Highways constraints on some sections of the route mean that an idealised LTN1/20 design is not possible but, as outlined at para 3.6 above, WSCC and NH state that the design is LTN1/20 compliant.
- 3.9. NH and WSCC have indicated support for the overall scheme is 59%, however, officers are aware of concern in some parts of the community, largely the Chichester and District Cycle Forum (Cycle Forum) and the Bournes Forum Working Group for Chemroute consultation (Fishbourne, Bosham, Chidham and Hambrook and Southbourne Parish Councils). These groups published a joint response which includes alternative designs for parts of the route. Being an engineering project, CDC officers are not qualified to comment on the technical aspects of the proposal, however, officers have sought the view of both WSCC and NH with regards to the alternative proposals and both have confirmed that the highway has inadequate capacity to allow for the alternative design. An NH informed appraisal of the parish councils proposed alternative design is at Appendix 3.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1. Overall, the scheme should provide improved walking and cycling infrastructure on the A259 corridor, noting that the design is compromised in places by the available highways' space.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. To consider the NH design proposals and the overall benefit of the scheme against the Environment Panel's resolution (para 8.4) and the concerns as expressed by the communities' representatives in the form of the Chichester and District Cycle Forum (Cycle Forum) and the Bournes Forum Working Group for Chemroute consultation, with the intention of the Council indicating its support for the scheme.

6. Alternatives considered

- 6.1. The first alternative would be not to indicate any Council position for the proposed scheme as the Council has no retained in-house highways engineering expertise and so to leave the design to NH and WSCC as both organisations employ highways engineers. Nevertheless, the route is an important one for Chichester District and, in particular, in the context of the emerging Local Plan where there is likely to be development along the A259 corridor between Chichester and Emsworth. To remain silent would present an ambiguous position on such an important piece of infrastructure and NH have encouraged the Council to state its view and so this 'alternative' is rejected.
- 6.2. A further alternative is to consider that the scheme is so compromised by the shared use sections and is not ambitious enough as the design is constrained to highways land only such that the Council indicates it's non-support for the scheme. Nevertheless, this position would in effect 'throw the baby out with the bath water' and not place adequate value on the many improvements to the corridor that the scheme would bring. Such a position would also risk loss of the £5M investment that the scheme represents. As such this position is also rejected.
- 6.3. The alternative as proposed by the Environment Panel's resolution is to 'broadly support' the scheme with the exception of the shared-use sections of the scheme through the villages. However NH indicate that there is no alternative to shared-use through these sections of the route. Discussions with NH about the Environment Panel's resolution indicate that, if the Council formalises the Panel's resolution as it's response to the scheme, this would pose a significant risk that the scheme does not progress in any form and the £5M funding would be spent outside of Chichester District. NH like to work in partnership with local authorities (LA) and if a LA does not support a scheme then NH do not impose it on the LA. As such this position risks the scheme not progressing in any form.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1. There are no resource or legal implications for the Council.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. NH has engaged with a range of stakeholder groups to inform the development of the design. Earlier this year, two interactive online workshops with key stakeholders were held and an online community engagement exercise via a questionnaire was undertaken. More than 200 responses were recorded, and the feedback and suggestions gathered have been used to inform and refine the preliminary design.
- 8.2. More recently WSCC and NH have carried out a public engagement exercise 22 July 2021 to 23 September 2021 (note NH has confirmed that they will receive the Council's response after the close of the public engagement). The engagement process featured an online portal and two webinars for any interested parties to participate in.
- 8.3. NH has shared with CDC high-level outcomes from the public engagement exercise which are summarised as follows: The total online responses received were 436. For the overall scheme support was 59% and non-support was 34%. The consultation support for the sections of the path are summarised in the Table below:

Chemroute section description:	Supportive consultation responses (%)	Non-supportive consultation responses (%)
Emsworth to Southbourne	53	38
Southbourne to Nutbourne	60	32
Nutbourne to Bosham	60	32
Into Bosham	61	29
Bosham to Fishbourne	61	29
Into Fishbourne	58	32
Fishbourne to Chichester	59	30

- 8.4. The NH A259 proposals were considered by Environment Panel at its meeting on 15 October 2021. The Panel resolved:
- To indicate the Council's broad support for National Highways' proposed walking and cycling improvements to the A259 Chichester to Emsworth scheme with the exception of shared-use proposals through village centres which need further consideration.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1. If the proposed scheme, potentially amended to reflect public engagement comments, is delivered then the community will benefit from overall improved walking and cycling facilities along the A259 corridor.
- 9.2. There are corporate reputational risks in supporting the scheme and also in not supporting the proposed scheme. Supporting the scheme might be seen as being in opposition to the view expressed by the parishes and Cycle Forum whereas rejecting the scheme risks avoiding the inward investment and overall improvements in infrastructure that the scheme will bring. Encouraging cycling and walking are key aims of both the Council's

draft for adoption Air Quality Action Plan and the Climate Change Action Plan.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		✓
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation Enabling a greater number of journeys to be taken by walking and cycling and the related reduction use of liquid fuelled vehicles both reduce carbon emissions.	✓	
Human Rights and Equality Impact Improvements to highway space should improve walking and road crossing for persons with mobility and or sight issues		✓
Safeguarding and Early Help		✓
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		✓
Health and Wellbeing Active travel and reduced air pollution from less vehicle traffic have mental and physical health co-benefits.	✓	

11. Appendices

- 11.1. Appendix 1: Textual summary of NH proposals as presented on the public engagement webpage.
- 11.2. Appendix 2: Section plans of sections of the A259 Chichester to Emsworth proposed NH improvements to Walking and Cycling Infrastructure.
- 11.3. Appendix 3: NH informed appraisal of the alternative Chemroute design published by Chichester and District Cycle Forum (Cycle Forum), The Bournes Forum Working Group for Chemroute consultation (Fishbourne Parish, Bosham Parish Council, Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council and Southbourne Parish Council).