

To: Folkestone and Hythe Joint Transportation Board
By: KCC Highways and Transportation
Date: 11 September 2023
Subject: Cheriton – Folkestone Active Travel Scheme
Classification: For recommendation

Summary: This report summarises the public consultation that has been undertaken on the proposed scheme to increase active travel along Cheriton Road, Folkestone and recommends progressing to detailed design and construction (option a).

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The proposed scheme is funded by Central Government as part of Active Travel England Tranche 2 bid to provide walking, wheeling and cycling improvements. This scheme is part of a wider strategic plan to provide cycle routes and links across Folkestone and Hythe.
- 1.2 To date there have been 3 consultations on the proposals in Cheriton.
- 1.3 The initial preliminary design consultation between 13 December 2020 to 19 January 2021 focused on:
 - New segregated cycle track (permanent).
 - Restriction / reduction of parking availability (e.g. removing or reallocating parking bays).
 - Junction improvements to give pedestrians and cyclists priority at certain locations.
 - Signage throughout the area for cyclists and pedestrians.
 - Provision of cycle parking.
 - Wider footways to provide additional space for pedestrians.
 - New landscaping and greening features along the route.
 - Improved crossing facilities to provide safer crossing points.
- 1.4 As part of the consultation, a poster, postcard, and leaflet were developed to inform the public of the project objectives and wider benefits. 191 online responses and an additional 2 written responses were received. These responses showed that there was a very high level of support for cycling and walking improvements, indicated by 84% of respondents supporting safe cycle routes, and 73% maintaining that provision of crossings for pedestrians and cyclists was very important.
- 1.5 Following a largely positive response to the first round of consultation, where 71% of respondents said they would walk more often in Folkestone, and 68% would cycle more often if the scheme was implemented, preliminary designs were developed for the scheme. These designs were consulted on in a second round of consultation, which ran from 14 September until 25 October 2021.

- 1.6 Responses to the preliminary scheme designs shown in the second round of consultation were less positive than the first round of consultation. Overall, there was a low level of support for the scheme, in which 73% of all respondents either opposed or strongly opposed the overall design outlined in the consultation.
- 1.7 In total, 919 responses to the consultation were received, 893 online and 26 paper copies.
- 1.8 A point of contention which occurred frequently in the consultation responses was the topic of parking removal along Cheriton High Street, with many respondents being opposed to this feature believing it would negatively impact residents and businesses.
- 1.9 The extents to which respondents agreed with each of the key design elements consulted on is summarised below in Table 1.

| Walking and cycling improvements | Placemaking improvements |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 70% disagreed with a new cycle route from Folkestone to Cheriton ▪ 64% disagreed with the closure of Stanley Road to motor vehicles ▪ 62% disagreed with changes in bus stop layout ▪ 61% disagreed with short sections of shared pedestrian and cycle path ▪ 60% disagreed with junction layout revisions to give more priority to people walking and cycling ▪ 55% agreed with new and improved crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists ▪ 53% disagreed with wider footways where possible to improve pedestrian safety ▪ 48% agreed with new raised tables at crossing locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 69% agreed with new and improved street furniture such as seating and rubbish bins ▪ 68% agreed with new and improved road surfacing and footway materials ▪ 66% agreed with the removal, replacement and addition of trees and vegetation ▪ 54% agreed with new areas of planting and greenery to maximise biodiversity ▪ 42% agreed with new signs for pedestrians and cyclists ▪ 41% disagreed with new cycle parking facilities <p>Changes to parking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 83% disagreed with the removal of 5 mature trees along Cheriton High Street ▪ 79% disagreed with the removal of a maximum of 38 on-street parking bays on Cheriton High Street/Cheriton Road |

Table 1 – Summary of key elements consulted upon

- 1.10 Following the second round of consultations, the local KCC Members arranged for a residents and businesses meeting to be held on 18 October 2021 which saw over 200 attendees. This was aimed at understanding the concerns being raised. Kent Officers presented the scheme, listened to concerns and answered questions. KCC also received a petition which attracted around 3700 signatures.
- 1.11 The scheme has since been revisited and the designs amended taking into consideration the key objections from the previous consultation.
- 1.12 The new proposals were developed in conjunction with local stakeholders with two workshops undertaken on 1 February 2023 and 18 May 2023 to look at the detail with the aim to maintain parking along Cheriton High Street, maintain existing trees and to remove the proposed segregated cycle lanes outside of the main business area. The new proposals also seek to aid walking within the high street, include an option to provide a 20mph speed limit, and extend the cycle provision up to Radnor Park.

- 1.13 A six-week consultation on the new proposals took place between 21 June and 1 August 2023. As part of this consultation, posters, postcards, and leaflets were created to inform the public. A total of 2,728 postcards were hand-delivered to the local area directly impacted by the proposals. In addition, part way through the consultation period social media adverts to target Folkestone and Hythe area were also used to publicise the improvements. Documentation was also placed within the local library.
- 1.14 The consultation included 2 drop-in sessions on 11 and 12 July which saw approximately 150 attendees.
- 1.15 In addition 2 KCC Officers visited local businesses for face-to-face discussions following the drop-in sessions as there were reports that some businesses were not aware of the consultation. This took place on 25 July 2023 with approximately 90% of the businesses along the High Street visited.

2.0 Consultation Summary

- 2.1 In total there were 247 responses to the questionnaire which was provided as part of the consultation. There was a total of 1,362 participants to the consultation website and the consultation material was downloaded over 1,110 times.
- 2.2 Full details of the consultation can be found within the Consultation Report which has been appended to this report. As part of the consultation questionnaire there were 4 key questions, a summary of these results is shown below:

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with the pedestrian and walking improvements on Cheriton High Street? | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree or disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 94 | 46 | 14 | 26 | 66 |

In summary 56.9% agree, 37.4% disagree and 5.7% neither agree nor disagree.

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed 20mph zone between Ashley Avenue and Coombe Road? | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree or disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 104 | 48 | 24 | 20 | 50 |

In summary 61.8% agree, 28.5% disagree and 9.7% neither agree nor disagree.

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with the cycling improvements along Cheriton Road? | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree or disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 89 | 37 | 22 | 28 | 71 |

In summary 51% agree, 40% disagree and 9% neither agree nor disagree.

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with the traffic signal alterations at the Cherry Garden Avenue and Cheriton Road junction? | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree or disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't Know |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 70 | 46 | 40 | 16 | 58 | 12 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

In summary 47.9% agree, 30.6% disagree, 16.5% neither agree nor disagree and 5.0% don't know.

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with the overall proposed active travel scheme? | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree or disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't Know |
| 90 | 42 | 20 | 23 | 69 | 2 |

In summary 53.6% agree, 37.4% disagree, 8.1% neither agree nor disagree and 0.9% don't know.

3.0 Finance

- 3.1 KCC was successful in bidding for 5 projects via the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2. The funds from the Department for Transport provided £4,878,440 of Capital Grant and £1,219,610 of Revenue Grant for all the 5 named projects. This specific project was allocated £1,000,000 of Capital Grant with the Revenue Grant used as an overall fund for the development of all 5 schemes which includes staff time, consultancy fees, consultations and data collection.
- 3.2 To date £81,000 of the £1,000,000 allocated Capital Grant has been spent.
- 3.3 The scheme will not require any additional KCC funds to complete. The detailed design stage will include an overall scheme cost estimate and in the case that the existing budget is insufficient the project will be tailored to fit the budget envelope subject to further approvals.

4.0 Programme

- 4.1 Should the Joint Transportation Board support the officer recommendation to proceed to detailed design, a further report will be prepared for KCC's next available Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.
- 4.2 The Department for Transport (their executive Agency - Active Travel England, was set up to oversee the Active Travel agenda) will need to agree to an extension to the funding programme. They have already agreed to extend to 15 January 2024.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the design stage will take three months and procurement of the contract for construction a further 3 months.
- 4.4 Once a contractor is on board, KCC Officers will work closely with the contractor to understand the construction programme and available road space. See Table 2.

| Activity | Anticipated programme |
|---|------------------------------|
| Joint transportation Board recommendation | 11 September 2023 |
| Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee | Earliest 15 September 2023 |
| Department for Transport (Active Travel England) approvals for extension of time for Grant spend. | September/October 2023 |
| Detailed Design period | Mid Sept – end of Dec 2023 |

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Construction contract procurement period | January 2024 – March 2024 |
| Construction Period | April 2024 – July 2024 |

Table 2 – Estimated programme

5.0 Options available with reasons for suitability

5.1 Members of the board can recommend to:

- a) Proceed with the detailed design of the scheme taking into consideration the feedback from the latest consultation and continue to work with key stakeholders, advertise any Traffic Regulation orders (TROs) and proceed to construction provided there are no significant alterations to the advertised scheme.
- b) Proceed to detailed design and construction of scheme but remove the Cherry Garden Avenue traffic signal design alterations. This junction will need further investigation as it is a regular crash site however this could be investigated via the Local Transport Plan funding rather than Active Travel Fund.
- c) Abandon the scheme (this may have a revenue liability for KCC).

6.0 Officer recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that option (a) should be progressed.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

1. Consultation Report
2. Scheme Plan 1 – Somerset Road to Qusted Road
3. Scheme Plan 2 – St Hilda Road to Lawrence Close
4. Scheme Plan 3 – Coombe Road to Beachborough Road
5. Scheme Plan 3a – Cherry garden Traffic Signals
6. Scheme Plan 4 – Beachborough Road to Superstore
7. Scheme Plan 5 – Superstore to Cornwallis Avenue
8. Scheme Plan 6 – Cornwallis Avenue to Radnor Park
9. Scheme Plan 7 – Radnor Park