

Meeting of: - Witham Area Committee

On: - 10th October 2006

Agenda Item No.: - 5

Topic: - Chipping Hill/ Bramble Road to Ebenezer Close Cycleway

Type of Report: - Non-Key Decision

Executive Summary: - The purpose of this report is to advise members of the following information

- The results of the safety audit/risk assessment of Option Four (the option of a new cycleway from Ebenezer Close to Bramble Road/ Spring Lodge);
 - Comparative costings of all 4 options
 - Investigation of alternative/additional crossing and traffic calming measures at Chipping Hill Bridge and Powers Hall End
 - Make a recommendation for the future progress of the proposed cycleway scheme.
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Options

1. To approve the officer's recommendations to construct a cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Bramble Road (phase 1 of Option 4) using the allocated Local Transport Plan 1 funding and to pursue additional funding to allow the construction of a link between Ebenezer Close and Chipping Hill (Option 3)
2. Not to approve the officer's recommendations to construct a cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Bramble Road (phase 1 of Option 4) using the allocated Local Transport Plan 1 funding and to pursue additional funding to allow the construction of a link between Ebenezer Close and Chipping Hill (Option 3)
3. To approve one of the other options

Risks

The main risk is losing £170,000 of Local Transport Plan 1 funding if the scheme is not underway by March 2007. There is also a risk that no additional funding will be available for a cycleway in this area in the future.

Recommendation[s]

- 1, That members approve the construction of the section of cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Bramble Road as phase 1 of a cycleway scheme**
 - 2, That Members approve applying to Sustrans for further funding to construct Option 3.**
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Background Papers: - Report to Witham Area Committee, 18th July 2006

Financial Implications: - Cost of design and constructing cycleway

Equalities Implications: - None

Legal Implications: - None

For further details please contact: - Rachel Stevens, Planner – Planning Policy

1. Background

1.1 The report follows the report to Witham Area Committee on the 18th July 2006 detailing the results of the public consultation on the four options for a new cycleway between Chipping Hill and Ebenezer Close. Due to the level of public support, Officers recommended that members approved the design and construction of 'Option 4' (the option from Ebenezer Close to Bramble Road and Spring Lodge). However, concerns were expressed by members about the safety of this route, especially where cyclists would have to dismount and pass through the car park of the Spring Lodge and how they would cross Powers Hall End to join with the existing River Route. Members also requested information on the design and construction costs for all four options.

2. Results of Risk Assessment

2.1 A risk assessment is to be carried out of the proposed cycle route, particularly focusing on the point where cyclists are expected to dismount at Spring Lodge car park. The results of this risk assessment will be reported at committee.

3. Funding and Estimated Costings

3.1 Braintree District Council hold £170,000 allocated from the Essex Local Transport Plan 1 for the provision of a cycleway on the northern part of the Witham River Route. However, the money from ECC is only available until March 2007 and if not spent by that date there is a risk it could be lost.

3.2 In 2005 a bid was made to Sustrans (the Sustainable Transport Charity) Links to Schools programme for additional funding for the cycleway and the scheme was short listed and a feasibility study was carried out by Sustrans. Unfortunately funding for the whole programme was not forthcoming from the Department for Transport, so the bid was not successful. However, it is proposed to make a further bid to another Sustrans programme to obtain additional funding for cycle links in the area, though again funding is not guaranteed.

3.3 Please note that options 1, 2 and 3 include the proposed toucan crossing by Chipping Hill bridge, however, the design and installation of the toucan would (at an estimated cost of £105,800) be solely funded by Essex County Council and not out of the Local Transport Plan 1 funding allocated for the cycleway, so this has not been included in the estimated costings for these options.

3.4 Option 1

Estimated cost of design and construction of cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Chipping Hill = £245,000

Estimated cost of new bridge, new cycleway link south of Chipping Hill and other civil works = £200,000

Total estimated cost = £445,000

3.5 Option 2

Estimated cost of design and construction of cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Chipping Hill = £245,000

Estimated cost of new bridge, new cycleway link south of Chipping Hill and other civil works = £200,000

Total estimated cost = £445,000

3.6 Option 3

Estimated cost of design and construction of cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Chipping Hill = £245,000

Estimated cost of design widening of existing footbridge and other civil works = £137,000

Total Estimated Cost = £382,000

3.7 Option 4

Estimated Cost of design and construction of cycleway between Ebenezer Close and Bramble Road = £85,000 (This excludes the cost of the section between Bramble Road and Spring Lodge, to be constructed by developer as part of proposed housing development)

Total Estimated Cost = £85,000

4. Alternative/ Additional Crossing and Traffic Calming Measures

4.1 As the Local Highways Authority, Essex County Council were asked to advise on the possibility of alternative or additional crossings, construction of additional cycle track and traffic calming measures as part of the scheme, the correspondence is attached to this report.

4.2 Essex County Council have advised that an assessment will be carried out in the vicinity of Spring Lodge Community Centre to see if the installation of a pedestrian crossing can be achieved. The results of this assessment will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

4.3 The County Council has also advised that there is not enough carriageway or footway at Powers Hall End to install a cycle link between Spring Lodge and the existing end of the cycleway at Powers Hall End. They have advised that it would not be possible to install any alternative crossing other than a toucan crossing on Chipping Hill, at the end of the public footpath from Ebenezer Close to Chipping Hill bridge, as there is not the sight line required at this location. There are also no other traffic calming measures that could be installed at the bridge apart from the traffic lights controlling the priority working.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Because of the current funding constraints, Option 4 is currently the only feasible option for a new cycleway in the area. It is therefore proposed that the section between Ebenezer Close and Bramble Road is constructed, with the construction of the remainder of the route to be completed by the developer if planning permission is forthcoming in due course for the site between Bramble Road and Spring Lodge. It is recommended that Members approve the design and construction of phase 1 of Option 4.

5.2 To provide a connection with the existing River Route in the future, it is also proposed to make a further bid to Sustrans to enable the construction of one of the other options. Option 3 was not popular in the public consultation (5 in favour out of 48 responses) but is the lowest in cost. The other advantages and disadvantages of this option are as follows:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilises existing footbridge;• Provision of safer traffic control and toucan crossing at Chipping Hill Road Bridge;• Does not require cycleway through previously undeveloped meadow;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of protected willow tree;