

Walking Forum Meeting

DATE AND TIME: 12/03/2024 17:00 – 18: 30

LOCATION: Teams

CHAIR: R S

ATTENDEES:

R.S	A.B	T.H	A.C	D.H	I.H
R.M	S.L	J.W	L.S	J.C	J.M
A.S	C.J	S.O	R.H	L.F	
M.G	N.M	M.D	K.M	J.R	

APOLOGIES:

T.F.S, C.P, A.S, T.B, R.S D.P

Minutes

1. Item: Welcome to our 2nd meeting: introductions, apologies, follow-up note of 1st meeting.

- R.S offered to Chair the meeting in the absence of P.P
- Apologies
- Notes from 1st meeting
 - Action** – GDPR – emails have been sent out & replies giving authorisation for email addresses to be shared within the Walking Forum Group
 - Action** – to source & contact other groups that could be involved with the Walking Forum – this is ongoing, continually updating the mailing list
 - Action** – request for a meeting to discuss data – this will be the topic for a future meeting date tbc
- Corrections – S O did give his apologies – not recorded
 - S O is a representative of the Upper Don Trail Trust as well as being the link for the cycle forum

2. Item: Feedback from the Walking Summit

The Walking Summit was a really successful day with a good attendance. People came from all over the UK and there was a large representation from local areas, the North of England and the Midlands. Many positive messages including the Welcome speeches from Oliver Coppard and Tom Hunt – outlining the vision for Sheffield and South Yorkshire and the commitment to reach the various targets.

Discussions about encouraging walking and the importance of walking included :

- Investment in low traffic neighbourhoods
- Joined up working in active travel initiatives – e.g Doncaster work with a holistic approach linking the transport team, public health, and sport & leisure teams
- Importance of community engagement – asking for thoughts and aspirations to make sure it's right for the people who live in that area
- Linking up the works done near schools – school streets, safer routes to build up a network of safe routes.
- Will Stewart laid out a brief overview of the Transport Plan in Sheffield.

The Walk shops were very well received with great feedback and a huge thank you to all who helped to deliver these walks.

Some of the walks did highlight areas that need to be improved – particularly accessibility for wheelchair users. There was a realisation that its not just about designing the scheme it's about every single detail of implementing that scheme to make sure it's fit for purpose – looking at gradients, surfacing, widths etc. Equality and inclusion must also be included in the planning stages for any development.

The walks were a great showcase for the future and the past of Sheffield.

The afternoon sessions concentrated on planning. Sheffield will see a huge increase in the amount of city residences (without much car parking facility), so we need to be thinking how we encourage people to change their behaviour and embed different ways of commuting and travelling. There are opportunities later in the year for fieldtrips to see what other regions and authorities have done to make this shift in planning and ambition.

The Government has reallocated monies that were earmarked for HS2 – but this money should not just be for highways to fix potholes – but also to improve the cycling and walking infrastructure.

Two key topics for us to look at in Sheffield – firstly, making sure we are fully inclusive for the new strategy and new network map. Secondly, linking up the school streets and safer routes to schools. A significant piece of work is to be undertaken to look in depth at data, evaluation and monitoring.

Questions/comments

S.O – felt the event was excellent and very inspiring. He particularly felt energized by the Doncaster approach, linking transport, health and leisure. Funding for these scheme is not only from transport – other budgets including regeneration, flood defence have been used to develop areas such as Kelham which is now a low traffic neighbourhood – although some residents weren't sure if it was or not!

M. G – lots of positives from the event. Lots of positive comments about Oliver Coppard & Tom Hunt – showing their political support and strong leadership.

Shared practise and shared learning is important – every area is different and has unique issues and challenges but shared working and learning across the networks is good practise.

R.M – also enjoyed the event. Received feedback from the Kellham Island walk talking with residents about the changes – mostly positive and popular changes. Especially Bull St Bridge – now a community area that is very popular for events or just to sit out and socialise. Really important feature for the resident's wellbeing.

J.C – agrees with everything mentioned previously, really good event. One item to think about – to make sure everything is written in the specification when planning to make sure we do not waste any opportunities.

3. Item: New Road Safety Plan

The new Road Safety Action Plan is going to committee tomorrow (13 March)

The key points :

- The plan will be based on the Vision Zero approach and the Safer Systems approach both using design, engineering and education.
- Vision zero approach is Rd safety management and based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on our roads and we want to achieve our vision in the shortest possible time. This does provide significant challenges and means some adaptations to what we're already doing that will hopefully help towards us achieve a 50% reduction by 2030.
- The safe systems approach is built upon two basic facts about people. The first one is people make mistakes and will do on the roads. The second is how people are vulnerable to being killed or seriously injured if they're involved in a crash.
- The Road Safety Action Plan outlines the 5 pillars which determine what we can provide and what we can work with.
 - safe users – using enforcement & education & behavioural change techniques
 - safe roads – looking at design & engineering
 - safe speeds – 20mph zones encouraging safer speeds
 - safe vehicles – making sure people check their vehicles
 - post collision response – work with SY Police and using data collected to avoid further collisions
- We need to target our resources, so we will be data led

Our team are already working on many of the items listed above

- Education delivery in primary & secondary schools, and colleges.
- We run BIKEABILITY – cycle training for children
- Active travel education including Modeshift stars.
- Local safety schemes, 20mph zones
- School Streets – 2/3 a year

Using the data we need to make sure we are targeting the right groups with the right information – to ensure our resources and funding are being used effectively and targeted where it is needed. We are also working with partners to fill gaps in our limited programmes. We need to look at behavioural change techniques and framed consistent messaging.

We will continue to use the worst first from the data – analysing and identifying sites and then monitor progress and evaluate and assess what interventions are working and adapt as necessary – all with the aim of continuing and improving on the continued trend of reducing casualties on the roads of Sheffield.

Questions/comments

R.M – technical question relating to engineering infrastructure and flared junctions and the need for (Traffic Regulation Order) TRO's. A flared junction has a curved radius of more than 6 metres and the junction is designed to be tightened by use of bollards or extra pavement.

Answer from A.B – You don't necessarily need a traffic regulation order unless there's a need for a yellow line or wait restrictions or some sort of prohibition such as a one way or a prescribed turn.

If there's no restriction on vehicle movements or waiting, then there's no need for a traffic order.

One thing that we are looking at is continuous footways at junctions, and historically we've always used radiused accesses because that was the standard. We are now moving and pushing colleagues to move towards continuous footways crossings so that it's clear that pedestrians have priority accesses and minor side roads.

C.J- there's a lot of discussion on this topic at the moment and a lot of options around tightening radii, continuous footways, possible side road zebras.

We need to prioritize and access where we can make these changes across the city.

There must be millions of sites where we could improve the ability to cross at side road junctions and it may be that Local Area Committees have funding where they could just pick off a few sites. It may be something that will come through the Active Travel Infrastructure Plan work, to be done later in the year in terms of looking at where we prioritize investment in cycling, walking and wheeling for future years.

J. C – Important to emphasise what Nicola Marshall said about prioritizing - talking about school routes which would be a suggestion to prioritize.

If there's a big flare junction on the route to school, there's no way that children can cross it, they just haven't got the ability to deal with those kinds of junctions. They can't independently, safely cross those junctions, and so in terms of prioritization, starting with the school and then work outwards in a 15-minute walking radius, which in time most safe routes would all join up

If we design those safe routes for the school children then they're also going to be safe for everybody else. The Living Street initiatives are about inclusive design so they will also give a safe disabled access. This is how we could build up a safe continuous network across the city, because every 15 minutes or so, there may be a Primary school – so the safe streets will gradually connect.

Question from J. C – With this safe network around schools what is the priority in terms of education? Are we educating children or adult drivers?

Answer from T. H – education starts in Primary school with general road safety deliveries. Then we have Transition sessions – looking at independent travel as pupils move up to Secondary school. Y6 pupils visit Crucial Crew where they look at road safety.

We are also looking at how we can engage with parents.

We are recruiting to the Young Driver Coordinator role – education for new drivers. We may also be working with driving instructors to look at behavioural change in drivers.

We are also looking at working with partners and the Safer Roads Partnership regarding communication and messaging.

Comment from J. C – Talking about Safe Systems approach and the hierarchy – would it be prudent to put engineering controls first to make sure the roads are designed safely followed by training and education.

Comment from J. C - Some LA's are not using updated guidance for the development of roads. Can it be guaranteed that Sheffield is using the updated guidance from the Department for Transport across all areas for their strategy and planning?

Reply from A.B - In my team I've got a technical assurance team and we're providing that assurance to all internal colleagues within Sheffield City Council. We also review any external third party works so that it's incumbent on me to make sure that my team are all familiar with all the current standards and practices available. So yes, we are aware of the most modern guidance, and we are using it and we are pressing colleagues to make sure that they are using the most relevant standards.

An example of this is where we have used the Dutch style junctions. We have a Dutch style roundabout at West Bar roundabout. The other junction is a Dutch style priority square at the Townhead Street/Broad Lane junction. These two junctions use the Dutch guidance practice, making Sheffield the first city to introduce roundabouts of this type in the country.

R. M – Thinking about education, other LA's, (Bristol Road Safety Team) use interactive classrooms activities to explore alternatives to driving for students who are approaching the age when they can learn to drive, and they do a cost and benefits of car ownership compared to more active modes of travel. it's been evaluated to see about its impact on student travel choices, apparently delaying licence acquisition is likely to reduce the disproportionately high involvement of young drivers and road collisions. It should be easier to change people's behaviour if they learn from a young age and have early interventions to educate about safety and offer alternatives to driving.

Comment from S. O – comment about the innovative traffic management mentioned previously as well as other projects working alongside other agencies – but there is no information about these projects, plans, what it is going to look like. A good example of this is Fargate – where work has been going on for months, but there has been no information explaining to people why and what the plans/visions are.

4. Item: Focus of the Forum is on utility walking but what about Public Rights of Way (PRoW)?

The focus of this group is more utilitarian walking rather than the Rights of Way. We are focussing on walking to school, walking to work, less so leisure walking. It's about the

alternative to traveling in a private car and looking at means of getting around without having to need to use a car and about changing people's behaviour.

Rights of Way have a role to play within utilitarian walking, but any issues about Rights of Way should be addressed at the Local Access Forum meetings.

We now have the focus on the walking infrastructure, how does it need to be improved for everyday journeys? How can we get people walking to work, to the shops, to the park, to wherever people need to get to?

We could allocate some officer time to relaunch it with that wider focus, and it doesn't mean that we've completely dropped everything that we were doing before, but we have now got that broader focus.

We thought it may be useful for this second meeting, just to let people know a little bit about what the Council does in relation to public rights of way and about the Local Access Forum, because there may be people in this group who would like to join the Local Access Forum.

A. B – I have a small team and within that team is the Public Rights of Way team. Unfortunately, the team doesn't have the funds it needs, to do the work it wants to do, so it does the best it can with the with the funds available to it and the right of way network needs.

We need some significant investment, particularly following the storms, but from The Walking Forum perspective, much of the rights of way network is more for leisure purposes.

There are obviously rights of way in more urban areas that still require investment, but if any of the issues that people have who are attending The Walking Forum may be more applicable to more leisure orientated walking, then there is the opportunity to join the Local Access Forum and share thoughts, concerns and contribute towards accessing open land, for instance.

There is a subtle distinction between what the rights of way network can do and what we're trying to do here at the Walking Forum

Details of the public rights of way network and Local Access Forum: [Public Rights of Way | Sheffield City Council](#)

Action – put access links to Local Access Forum & Rights of Way on Walking Forum Webpage

Comment from S. O – In terms of reference for the walking forum it doesn't say anything about utility walking it just mentions encouraging walking as a natural choice for everyday local journeys – no actual distinguishing between leisure and utility walking which could prove problematic when motivating people to walk more, for them to distinguish whether they are utility or leisure walkers.

I understand that within transport funding there is a distinction between what qualifies for mainstream and Department of Transport funding, and that tends to be defined by utility journeys rather than leisure, if we're really serious about motivating large numbers of people to walk as part of their daily lives, quality and good experiences are also important because that's how people will commit to new behaviours.

Reply from A. B – We agree with these comments, however, as mentioned previously we have got to be data led. We haven't got an infinite amount of money, so we've got to target the funds where we are going to get the best return on our investment.

There are always competing demands in traffic and transportation, and that's down to the

transport team to manage those competing demands. So I do take on board what you are saying about improving leisure routes as well and it is not just about utilitarian walking routes, it's the whole experience. But we have to manage the money to get the best result that we can and it's about getting as many people, feeling comfortable and safe to walk.

Reply from J. C – This concept is not as stark as some people think.. The fact that if we can start a walking network to get every child to school, you will naturally have safe and pleasant walking routes developing, that as they develop, will also take you to the places that you want to go, further for leisure.

Comment from S. O – It should not be about leisure versus utility walking, could we look at multifunctional routes using funding from alternative resources as well as funding from the transport budget – as mentioned previously in the regeneration projects funded at Kelham.

Reply from A. B - our role is to make sure that colleagues are working to get the most, when they are looking at planning applications. We look at all angles, we look at walking routes, as well as everything from a transportation point of view e.g isolated communities travelling to shops.

Where we can, we draw in further funding to fund projects we are working on.

Comment from J. C – Having been involved with the walking forum and related projects for many years and I can see how the focus has evolved. But I think one of the things over the years that has been a bit of an issue for walking to get people places, is that it can tend to get a little bit lost and sidelined against cycling.

We need to try and get that message up there in people's thoughts and minds and try and look at how we can make walking a bigger focus like cycling has been. So rather than trying to make one mode of walking more important than the other, just try and raise the profile of walking in general and concentrate on that.

5. Item: Forum Organisation – comments received, Chair, terms of reference, next meeting.

Comments received

- Emails relating to walking maps/links – we have lots of information, maps and links in various places on partner websites and SCC website – it would be good to collate everything and put on one central platform with public access. We are looking into the best platform for this – maybe within tourism rather than transport? Will keep the forum updated.
- Hybrid meetings – we don't have the capacity or resources to cover hybrid meetings, so cannot offer them at the moment and we will be staying online for the foreseeable future. Online is working for the cycle forum and the other forums. If circumstances change, then we will offer hybrid meetings to the members.

Terms of Reference – We have not received any comments back on these – but will wait until the next meeting when we may have more participants. They will be sent out again for people to read and make any comments and then finalized.

Chair - in relation to chairing the meeting, The Walking Forum is a recognized duty for councillors. That will be up for review at the annual meeting after the elections on the 2nd of May and the annual meetings towards the middle of May. Then councillors volunteer for all the various bodies that they would like to represent for their parties. At the first forum it was mentioned that it may be useful to have a link with the relevant committee – Transport and Climate Committees. This will be discussed after the election.

Date of next meeting – As mentioned at the last meeting and in the terms of reference, we intend to hold quarterly meetings – as this is what we can facilitate at this time. **18 June** is the suggested date, after the elections and when Councillors have been assigned their duties.

5. Item: Any other business

Comment from S. O - The Waterside project at Attercliffe has planning for up to 2000 residences. You would think because of its location next to the canal it would be doing some improvements to the canal area, but actually there's nothing at all proposed for the canal to improve the tow path in terms of signage, surfacing, lighting or anything like that. It's a perfect walking route for all those people who are going to be living in that area.

It's not by any means LT120 compliant, but lots of people do cycle it, and it is an ideal walking route into the city centre.

There has been no comment, as far as I know, from transport planners or from SYMCA about it, active Travel England, have raised the issue.

Reply from C. J - I'm not sure that any of the SCC staff here at the meeting are aware of that particular application, so we will put that down as an action.

Action – look into the Waterside Project and report back about current plans.

Special mention from R. S - after 52 years of service with Sheffield City Council, Peter Price has decided to stand down at the next election. Peter has chaired both the walking and cycle forums for many years, and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Peter for his many years of service.

Date and time of next meeting:

Tuesday 18 June 2024 17:00 – 18:30