

Sheffield Cycle Forum Notes

16th December 2021

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

The meeting was conducted online.

Chair: Cllr Peter Price, Sheffield City Council

Attendees

Peter Marsh, Yvonne Witter, Cllr Douglas Johnson, Paul Sullivan, Insp Kevin Smith (South Yorkshire Police), Cllr Richard Shaw, Charlotte Coleman, David Bamford (Cycle Sheffield), Tom Mutton, Simon Geller, Colin McCulloch, Cllr Ruth Mersereau, Andrew Rodgers, Greg Challis, Simon Ogden

Apologies for absence had been received from

Rob Wormald Andy Buck

2. NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21 OCTOBER 2021

The October Forum notes were circulated and agreed as a correct record, with the addition of

- A correction to a spelling mistake
- Yvonne Witter's name to the list of apologies

3. MATTERS ARISING

Responding to Yvonne Witter's question about the proposed "Mini Holland" for Darnall, Paul Sullivan (PS) said that there was no indication from the Government yet. It was expected to hear about the Expression of Interest, and the Active Travel 3 bid, early in the New Year.

4. EXECUTIVE MEMBER for TRANSPORT

Cllr Douglas Johnson introduced himself to the Forum. His role was much more about Governance than scheme detail. His overall perspective was that a great opportunity for transformative schemes with big capital investment had opened up. There was greater awareness of need for active travel right across the board, due in great part to consistent campaigning.

As a member of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Transport Executive Board it was noticeable how Sheffield was much more supportive of cycling schemes than other districts. In its recent submission to Government, capital funding was consolidated into one big pot and prioritised so that active travel, investment in Supertram infrastructure, bus priority and building roads were competing for funding. Sheffield, alone, did not propose building or widening roads. This made a real, positive difference to people's lives, with better outcomes in terms of air quality carbon and better neighbourhoods. It showed that things can and do change.

Although there were significant sums from Government, there was a bottleneck in delivery caused by need to get schemes designed and built quickly compounded by a shortage of labour and materials. The skills shortage included highway engineers and transport planners. These were the "green" jobs needed to address climate change but it would take time to train people up and increase capacity in the industry.

Along with Cllr RM, he was also involved with the South Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership. Whilst everyone agreed with the need for improved road safety in principle, when proposals come forward these may prove controversial. Thus there was a long way to go to improve road safety, although important initiatives such as school streets helped to illustrate the solutions and potential and tied in well with the active travel agenda by stopping people driving right to the school gates.

Similarly, the changes proposed for greater bus priority on Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road and city centre pavement parking ban. On the latter, officers had designed a scheme which was out for consultation to see if effective enforcement could be taken as proof of concept. How to roll out this approach across the city required more debate.

Finally, Cllr DJ stressed the need for vigilance around planning applications. Phone masts and advertising often seemed to be proposed for the footway or encroaching on cycle provision, although there has been some success in rejecting these.

Updating the Forum on staff resource, PS said that Transport Planning had been short staffed but with recruitment over summer the team were now up to strength; there had also been gaps in design team, but new appointments there recently filled all vacancies including for drawing up Traffic Regulation Orders. Also there has been new started in the Public Rights of Way team meaning that the service was in a healthier position to deliver although the pace and scale of investment remained a challenge.

In response to Simon Ogden's (SO) question about the Walking Forum, PS said he would investigate whether this would be facilitated by officers

ACTION: PS

Cllr Richard Shaw (Cllr RS) asked about the policy for provision of cycle parking outside new businesses, social housing and so. PS said that this was a work in progress for the Policy and Strategy team.

Andrew Rodgers (AR) said leaf fall and recent snow had showed up the lack of cycle route maintenance. As these become inaccessible, people resorted to walking in the road. On the Hanover Way cycle route, he had witnessed people falling off bikes and slipping on the pavement. Although vegetation on the Sheaf Valley route had been cut back recently, more regular maintenance was needed to make walking and cycling an attractive proposition for more people.

Responding, Cllr DJ said that maintenance fell under Amey's remit. He noted that it was safer to cycle on the highway itself rather than cycle routes in the absence of a proper regime for cleaning and gritting. It helped if people made requests and notifications to Amey. It needed to be taken to the relevant Executive Member. Cllr PP agreed that it was important to address, as everyone used the pavement whether they drove or not.

ACTION Cllr DJ

DB questioned why schemes such as Ecclesall Road and Abbeydale Road did not include active travel.

A discussion ensued about the best way to deliver high quality and attractive routes on these corridors.

In summary, there was a strong feeling that Ecclesall Road in particular was key desire line, as shown by the propensity to cycle tool and that it should thus be a priority cycle route.

The need to provide for public transport and access for motor vehicles on Ecclesall Road was said to preclude a separate cycle track by Transport Planning officers. It was recognised that a door to door cycling network had to be created to deliver the required uplift and that pressure on highway space was often apparent on valley bottom routes.

The possibility of using a parallel route, largely following the Porter Brook, was also discussed but with some concern expressed whether this would meet personal safety thresholds.

Responding to the debate, Cllr DJ said that it would be a separate piece of work to deliver cycling routes in the area but there was a clear commitment to do so. Concluding, Cllr PP said that it was important to also remember the need for active travel routes north and east of the city.

5. HALLAM UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr Charlotte Coleman, forensic psychologist from Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), introduced herself. SHU was collaborating with the University of Westminster and intending to submit a bid to appropriate UK research councils to explore the experience of “close passes” on cyclists. Although most accidents involving cycling occurred at junctions, close passes were an acknowledged concern and clear disincentive to cycling. It was important to understand more about the impact of speed, type of vehicles, proximity of pass and so. Video recording technology was being developed to get a laboratory-based view. This would be followed by taking these findings onto the road. Previously bikes had been fitted with cameras and distance measurement equipment to gauge people’s reactions. Footage was used with those who have been identified by police as committing close passes to raise awareness of impact. More work was required to understand the interaction between drivers and cyclists and how close passes deterred cycling.

The project was now at the stage of seeking stakeholders for a steering group and participants. They were in touch with Dame Sarah Storey as active travel commissioner in South Yorkshire. This would help to develop understanding of the issues that needed to be explored and to help show potential funders that there was an appetite for the work.

ACTIONS

Findings from the Sheffield Transport Vision survey -- GC.

Approaching the Forum / other cycling bodies – via PS

Proposals for further input and consideration from the Forum – CC to circulate

6. SCHEMES UPDATE (incl small schemes)

PS provided the latest position. This could be summarised by saying virtually all schemes are in the pipeline, that is either in the approval or tendering process.

Small schemes: a reiteration of the scheme to protect the Sandford Grove Road cycle lane was with Amey for detailed design, with build scheduled in the new year. Improvements to cycle lanes under the railway bridge on Prince of Wales Road on currently raised section would be finalised following a site meeting with Amey and again built this financial year

Improved signal timings for cycle crossings at Leavygreave and Western Bank, were also being worked on.

Installation of on highway cycle stands at various locations had been earmarked for January. Additional litter bins were being installed on the Little Don Link.

Changes to barriers on off road routes: Five Weirs Walk from Tinsley South to city centre and NCN 627 through the Shirebrook Valley had been identified as key interventions. Ideas for improving accessibility were being discussed with Sustrans and a potential accessible design to replace current K or A frames was shared with the Forum. This was a staggered arrangement, with possible artistic addition to be decided. Again, the intention was to identify locations and design and build this financial year.

Simon Geller, said Sustrans rangers had also been consulted about this. He added that an app for had been developed to audit all barriers. This geo-located and measured barriers with details then uploaded to provide a database and help prioritise for removal.

Responding to DB, PS said it would be ensured that there was sufficient space for people to pass the barrier on non-standard cycles at detailed design phase. SO thought the design was an excellent opportunity to identify and waymark different trails.

Insp Kevin Smith, whilst supportive of increasing access, was concerned that opening up could result in some routes becoming more attractive to off road motorbikes. He felt that any such move needed to be accompanied by detection, for example via noise monitoring to prevent abuse and its impact on legitimate users. For example, would opening up access to Wardsend create a new off-road route to the city centre.

SO said that he shared these concerns but experience from the Five Weirs Walk showed the barrier were ineffective. What had proved the bigger deterrent to motorbike use was the quality of the route. Off road riders were often looking for muddy and uneven surfaces. The more users there were the less attractive it became, so measures to generate additional trips were welcome.

SG said overall the benefits of more open access outweighed the problems that might arise. These were all manageable issues, although resources would be needed. Sustrans rangers worked closely with police and this collaboration would be

vital as new barriers were brought in. There was a new design for warning posters against off roaders. Increased police presence when the changes were made would be welcome. He added that the Trans Pennine Trail was also looking at a new scheme to remove barriers, so this was a growing trend that should be welcomed.

Cllr PP questioned whether the existing system worked properly and thought it important to adopt this new approach.

PS emphasised that as a list of proposed removals was worked up this would be shared with South Yorkshire Police and colleagues in PROW

Other schemes: tenders had been received for Kelham and Neepsend and were being assessed. City centre scheme was still to be determined.

Some preliminary designs had been received for the Shalesmoor Gateway and work was ongoing with Amey on active travel routes through the junction. These would enable connections for cycling, including between Royal Hallamshire Hospital and Northern General Hospital. Design would be shared at the next Forum along with those for the latest phase of Castlegate.

Andrew Rodgers (AR) requested an update on Netherthorpe Underpass. PS said that a site visit had gone ahead with Amey, pending final design; implementation was intended this financial year.

AR added that the cycle lane at Moore Street underpass had been made too narrow. PS said that temporary arrangements such as this sometimes fell short of the necessary standard but that officers would seek to address such shortcomings.

SO, commenting on the Shalesmoor Gateway proposals, welcomed the Rutland Road crossing. He asked how wider connectivity in the area was addressed as an additional crossing to connect to Kelham Island (Ball Street bridge) was needed.

PS said four crossing upgrades are planned as part of the scheme

1. Upgrading the existing crossing on Rutland Road so that it was controlled for pedestrians and cyclists
2. Upgrading two crossings from east to west across Penistone Road – one close to Bedford Street and the other further south, close to Roscoe Road, this would enable connections into Kelham and onto Upper don active travel routes
3. A crossing at the lower end of Hoyle Street to link Doncaster Street and Malinda Street

In addition, there are planned improvements at Neepsend/Rutland as part of the Connecting Sheffield scheme.

PS said that the February Forum should have a packed agenda as Shalesmoor Gateway, Castlegate active travel connections were finalised along with latest news on the Active Travel Fund 3 bid and the Mini Holland expression of interest.

7. CYCLING MATTERS

Responding to a request from SO on FWW repairs, PS said he would chase.

ACTION: PS

8. AOB
None

Next meeting –Thursday 17 February 2022