

Report to Cabinet Member for Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after 15th December 2017

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

Cabinet Member Report No. T26.17

Title:	A4 (Bath Road) Sustainable Travel Scheme
Date:	7 December 2017
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Local members affected:	Cllr. Dev Dhillon - Cliveden Cllr. Lin Hazell- Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches Cllr. Ralph Bagge – Stokes Poges & Wexham

[For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444]

Summary

The A4 Sustainable Travel Scheme (STS) will bring about cycling, walking and public transport improvements along the A4 Bath between Maidenhead, Taplow Station, the Bishop Centre, and to the Slough boundary heading to Slough Station. The proposal aims to encourage sustainable travel modes to and from stations facing a likely increase in demand following a station access improvement programme underway to accommodate new Crossrail services.

The scheme will provide:

- New pedestrian and cycling facilities along the A4 comprising a widened and resurfaced 2.9km shared use footway cycleway on the northern side of the A4 Bath Road.
- Strategic connections to the National Cycle Network (NCN) 61 at one end, and cycle route (under construction) along the A4 in Slough Borough Council at the other end.
- Transport improvements to mitigate the impact of increased patronage at Taplow Railway Station, as a result of new Crossrail services, by improving connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and by upgrading bus stops.
- Improve cycling access to local visitor attractions, such as Cliveden House, to encourage tourism.
- Provide Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) to seven bus stops on both sides of Bath Road to improve passenger experience.

The purpose of this report is to set out the status of the project and recommendation for next steps to the Cabinet Member for Transport.

Recommendation:

To approve the implementation of the A4 (Bath Road) Sustainable Travel Scheme (STS) subject to confirmation of resource availability.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

- 1.1 The proposed A4 Sustainable Travel Scheme supports BCC's Local Transport Plan policies:
- Efficient and effective transport provision within Taplow and the surrounding areas (Policy 1)
 - Improving the connectivity and reliability of Buckinghamshire's transport network, stimulate economic growth and promote safer more sustainable travel (Policy 2)
 - Encouraging walking for shorter journeys (Policy 12)
 - Encouraging cycling (Policy 13)
- 1.2 The A4 STS proposal as set out in *Appendix A* will:
- Provide a 2.9km shared footway cycleway on the northern side of the A4 Bath Road, connecting with NCN 61 at one end, and cycle route (under construction) along the A4 in Slough Borough at the other end.
 - Minimise the impact of increased patronage at Taplow Rail Station (as a result of new Crossrail services) by improving multi-modal connectivity and upgrading existing bus stops infrastructure.
 - In 2016/17 Taplow Station recorded a 5.6% increase in footfall highlighting a high level of background growth before Crossrail services are operational.
 - Connect to existing cycle networks along and around the A4 Bath Road (NCN 61, Beeches Cycle Route), Taplow rail station and the Bishop Centre.
 - Improve cycling access to local visitor attractions (such as Cliveden House) to encourage tourism.
- 1.3 The proposal also aims to provide Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) to seven bus stop locations on both the north and south sides of Bath Road. The locations include outside & opposite the Dumb Bell public house, outside & opposite the Bishop Centre, opposite Hitcham Road, and outside & opposite Sainsbury's. These locations are highlighted in *Appendix B*.
- 1.4 Taplow rail station forms part of the western section of Crossrail (new service due to begin in 2019). The western section of the Crossrail route runs from London Paddington to Heathrow Airport and Maidenhead. Service improvements along the route include:
- Additional capacity and reduced overcrowding on trains
 - Electric trains providing quicker, cleaner, quieter and smoother journeys
 - Journeys into the West End, City and east London without the need to change trains.
- It is estimated that it will take 54 minutes to travel from Maidenhead to Canary Wharf.
- 1.5 Taplow station is expected to face increases in demand; Crossrail anticipates passenger numbers for peak 3 hour periods (7-10am and 4-7pm) in 2026 will treble from 2001 levels. 620 passengers in the morning peak (this number would be reversed for the evening peak). Due to this increase in demand, it is essential that sustainable travel

alternatives are provided to reduce car use to train stations and mitigate its negative effects such as local congestion and pollution.

- 1.6 With Crossrail providing easy, fast access into central London, this offers opportunities to encourage residents from the London direction to travel out to Taplow and visit local tourist attractions. A local on-road cycle route was recently implemented connecting the A4 to Burnham Beeches (which will link up to Taplow rail station once the A4 route is in place).
- 1.7 It is intended that a similar on-road, signed route will be created from Taplow rail station (or the A4) to Cliveden, which can be promoted to both tourists and locals.
- 1.8 The scheme is programmed to commence works in summer 2018. Works are expected to be on site for up to 10 months concluding by March 2019. To minimise delays and disruption, the construction programme will coordinate with the cycleway works currently being undertaken by Slough Borough Council on the northern side of the A4 Bath Road.

B. Other options available

- 2.1 A feasibility study was undertaken to establish the preferred option for the cycleway including on and off road options. It was determined that, owing to a number of factors the conversion of the footway to shared use provided the best method on grounds of safety and route attractiveness for would-be and returning cyclists. The decision to provide the route on the northern side has been taken to provide route continuity with the section under construction in Slough.
- 2.2 The A4 Bath Road corridor is considered the most direct, desirable and cost-effective route providing a sustainable shared footway cycleway corridor between Maidenhead Bridge and Huntercombe Lane South.
- 2.3 The A4 Sustainable Travel Scheme proposal deals with immediate ways and means of popularising rail travel pre Crossrail. It looks to an improvement in non-motorised access to the Taplow station with improvements to bus services (as stated in the Taplow Local Neighbourhood Plan).

Below is an extract from The Taplow Parish Plan (2006):

“Action Area PTR 1 deals with immediate ways and means of popularising rail travel pre Crossrail. PTR 2 looks to an improvement in non-motorised access to the station and PTR 3 with improvements to bus services.”

- 2.4 No other options were deemed feasible or considered as a part of the report.

C. Resource implications

- 3.1 Buckinghamshire County Council, via Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP), has secured £1,542,700 Local Growth Fund (LGF) to construct the A4 Bath Road STS project. LGF is a central government funding initiative ring-fenced for potential growth opportunities across the country.
- 3.2 The A4 (Bath Road) STS is also funded with £187,900 developer contribution secured from the Bishop Centre development under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The agreement relating to the Bishop Centre contribution stated that it is to be used “for the connection of the existing cycle routes to the east and west of the Bishop centre”. The A4 STS proposal fulfils this criterion and provides an opportunity to maximise the benefits gained to the local area.

- 3.3 There is a S106 funded scheme along the A4 corridor to install MOVA signals at the junction with Berry Hill. This S106 fund is £70,000. It has been decided that the MOVA scheme will be delivered alongside the A4 (Bath Road) STS.
- 3.4 The table below sets out the funding sources and total project budget. It is important that the project is delivered within the available resource envelope set out below, as any expenditure in excess of this will need to be funded from the existing Transportation capital programme. Further work will be undertaken to define the target cost of the project and a project board decision will be taken in due course.

	A4 STS Funding Streams			TOTAL
	LGf	S106 (Bishop Centre)	S106 (Mill Lane)	
A4 (Bath Road) Sustainable Travel	1,543	188	70	1,799

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self-Assessment

- 4.1 Effectiveness – The proposed scheme design has been subject to informal key stakeholder engagement, a statutory formal consultation process, design reviews and safety audits to ensure the scheme is safe, effective and fit for purpose.
- 4.2 Economy – The scheme proposed will enhance the immediate environment for residents and users of the shared foot/cycle path with improvements in public realm.
- 4.3 Sustainability – New Cross Rail services along the Maidenhead Slough train line will bring economic sustainability to the South Bucks area; Taplow Station¹ and environs will benefit from a stable local economy that will help provide prosperity and opportunities (jobs and housing). In anticipation, it is vital BCC creates an integrated transport network that allows all road user groups choices in their mode of travel – with a view to encourage more sustainable travelling options.
- 4.4 Value for Money – The proposed scheme has been subject to a series of cost reduction exercises through review of both the design (early contractor involvement, risk workshops, programming, value engineering etc.) and pre-construction stage (restricted working hours, traffic management plan review and construction cost reviews). Further opportunities to reduce costs will be explored as the programme develops.

E. Legal implications

- 5.1 The consultations that have been carried out meet with BCC's guidance on minimum periods for consulting with the public (4 weeks).
- 5.2 A Notice of Intent and Traffic Regulation Order for legal conversion of the existing footway to shared use cycleway will be implemented with notices placed along the A4

¹ <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/route/western-section/taplow-station>

(Bath Road) route. This will provide the opportunity for residents, stakeholders and statutory consultees to send in any feedback or comments regarding the scheme.

F. Property implications

6.1 All works are to be undertaken on the public Highway.

G. Other implications/issues

- 7.1 The project team will be seeking departure from standards approval to not undertake works to increase the width of the existing 2.8m width crossings at Bishop Centre (signalised) junctions. A minimum width of 3.0m is the current standard for signalised crossings catering for both pedestrian and cyclists, however when considering the large additional cost to widen the crossings by only 0.2m, and future expected level of usage, it is considered acceptable to seek relaxation of the standard in this location.
- 7.2 Consultation feedback highlighted the A4 Bath Road as suffering from drainage and flooding problems. Whilst it is considered that these problems are outside of the scope and budget of this project, the team are liaising with TfB's highway maintenance colleagues to ensure that survey works are undertaken as part of the future preconstruction investigation works. Any problems identified can be programmed to be undertaken as part of the construction phase to take advantage of traffic management and minimise traffic delays and disruption.
- 7.3 The public's health and safety are of primary importance; the scheme adheres to all national design standards and guidance. It has been reviewed in accordance with national standard safety audit procedures, to ensure that all potential hazards are eliminated or mitigated. Design amendments and road safety audit arising from the consultation have been finalised. All safety issues arising have been mitigated and will be kept under review as the scheme progresses through construction and operation.
- 7.4 The area around the proposed route along the A4 was monitored with diffusion tubes in order to assess the concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide. None of the sites recorded an annual mean above the air quality objective level (40 µg/m³). The STS proposals aren't expected to result in an increase in this level, and it is unlikely that there will be exceedance at the residential properties due to their distance from the kerb and the rapid fall off of pollutants.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

- 8.1 The consultation for the A4 Sustainable Travel Scheme commenced on Monday 26th September 2016 and closed on Monday 24th October 2016, involving public exhibitions, leaflet drops and promotion through local media
- 8.2 While there was a slight majority opposed to the proposed scheme (56% against, to 44% for, from 97 responses), a high level of potential use of the route was noted; 40% of the respondents said they would use the proposed cycling and walking facilities against 36% saying they wouldn't. The remaining 24% said they would maybe use the route (a total of 119 responses). Many residents highlighted a number of issues on which they asked for

further clarification and review. As a result the scheme was paused in December 2016 to take time to review the proposals and determine a suitable way forward.

- 8.3 An analysis of the responses received through the consultation has been undertaken and is presented in the consultation report in *Appendix C*. The consultation report was subsequently updated to reflect the key issues residents raised and discussed after the consultation period closed, along with the steps taken to investigate and address where appropriate, summarised below:

Berry Hill Junction:

Proposal: *Introduction of two signalised crossings and junction re-alignment involving removal of right turn lane and banning of right turn into Berry Hill.*

Concern: *Proposal to ban the right hand turn and encourage traffic to divert to the roundabout, increasing time, distance and pollution.*

Concern: *Traffic data used to inform the junction design was out of date/inaccurate.*

Response: *To ensure the proposed design was fit for purpose additional traffic data was collected in December 2016 and the junction design re-tested. This data confirmed the proposed junction would provide the additional capacity required for future traffic flows. Existing and expected pedestrian/cyclist flows were also analysed to determine the need for controlled crossings, this was found to be low. While it has been proven that the junction layout proposed provides the necessary capacity required to ensure the efficient movement of traffic, as well as the toucan crossings to help pedestrians and cyclists to cross, we acknowledge that the additional inconvenience caused to residents, particularly on Berry Hill, needed greater regard.*

Action/Amendments To The Scheme: *Having listened to the views of residents, we propose that in order to reduce the impact to drivers at this junction, the scheme will not ban right hand turning. This situation will be kept under review particularly with regard to cyclist safety.*

Safety Under Railway Bridge:

Proposal: *Widening of existing footway utilising the hatched area of existing carriageway, providing 2.2m width shared use cycleway.*

Concern: *Proposal to widen footway does not mitigate safety issue and narrows carriageway resulting in risk of HGV collisions and bridge strikes.*

Response: *To ensure that necessary carriageway width is available to accommodate passing HGVs vehicle tracking has been undertaken, which confirms this to be the case. We acknowledge that the proposed shared use cycleway is sub-optimal width, but it is the best that can be accommodated within the site constraints and is an improvement on the current situation. An alternative route to Taplow station for pedestrians and cyclists exists, using Approach Road and Station Road, should they not want to use the route under the bridge.*

Action/Amendments To The Scheme: *In order to overcome concerns about two-way passing pedestrians/cyclists it is proposed to install 'Cyclist Dismount' signs at the entrances to the bridge to encourage more considerate cycle use.*

Route On North Or South Side:

Proposal: To provide shared cycleway on the north side of A4 Bath Road.

Concern: The route would be better served on the south side as there are fewer driveways and greater pavement width.

Response: The decision to provide the route on the north side has been taken to provide route continuity with the connection from the section under construction in Slough and aspirational section to Maidenhead. The risk is that pedestrians and cyclists will not use the south side even if encouraged to do so and will continue to use the existing narrower pavement on the north side.

Action: Having reviewed the option of moving the section to the south side of the A4 it has been decided not to relocate it as switching the route from north to south and back again would increase risk to cyclists and pedestrians.

Cycling On Pavements:

Proposal: To widen and convert pavement to shared use for cyclists and pedestrians.

Concern: It is dangerous to mix pedestrians and cyclists and particularly where driveways cross the footway.

Response: A feasibility study was undertaken to establish the preferred option for the cycleway including on and off road options. It was determined that, owing to a number of factors, the conversion of the footway to shared use provided the best method on grounds of safety and route attractiveness for would-be and returning cyclists.

Conversion to shared use is an established approach to providing cycleways and has been undertaken successfully across the County over the last 30 years. While the perception is that collisions will increase, this is not revealed in collision statistics (only one report in Buckinghamshire in the past five years). The proposed widening of the pavement towards the road is intended to provide improved visibility and space for all users.

Action: After 12 months of scheme completion, a review of cyclist collisions will be undertaken to identify any safety improvements required and/or potential removal of cyclist rights to ride on the pavement.

I. Communication issues

- 9.1 As there is a high level of local interest in this scheme it will be important to keep local residents and stakeholders updated on future plans and progress. A communications plan will be developed to ensure that information and bulletins are shared in a timely fashion and the project's website will be regularly updated with relevant information and activities concerning the project.

J. Progress Monitoring

- 10.1 During the construction stage, it is anticipated that the Project Manager will be updated on day to day activities regarding the delivery plan, reporting to the Sustainable Travel Programme Board regularly against project milestones and project progress.

Background Papers

Appendix A	Overview Plan
Appendix B	Real Time Passenger Information
Appendix C	Public Consultation Report

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on 14 December 2017. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383610), Fax (to 01296 382421), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk