

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee – 1 February 2024

Agenda Item 4 – Public Questions

Question One

I am a resident in Haddenham which lies by an open flood plain. To create a raised cycle track there would require expensive heavy engineering needed for supporting elements that would interfere with flood storage and flood flow. Additionally, rescue vehicles could not reach this flooded area night or day. Is a drier, less costly route being considered, which would allow rescue vehicles access day and night, well away from domestic accommodation?

Answer

The Council is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council to investigate an active travel link connecting Haddenham (Buckinghamshire) and Thame (Oxfordshire). Assessment work is being carried out to identify opportunities and constraints and consider the technical feasibility of potential options for this link. A preferred route alignment has not yet been determined.

If a decision is taken such that a scheme progresses, a full consultation exercise would be undertaken, and the public and relevant parties would be able to submit their views.

A position statement is available on the Buckinghamshire Council website at:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/walking-cycling-and-wheeling/plans-to-improve-walking-cycling-and-wheeling/the-buckinghamshire-greenway/northern-greenway-connections/>

Question Two

Having campaigned for well over 20 years for a safe active travel route between Haddenham and Thame we are delighted that Bucks Council is continuing to pursue the project and is committed to working with charitable organisations, residents, volunteer groups and Parish Councils. In light of the overwhelming usage case for the Haddenham-Thame Greenway, huge public support demonstrated in the public consultation carried out by Bucks Council and endorsement by England's Economic Heartland, can the cabinet member commit to do everything within his power to expedite the investigations currently being carried out so that we will be in a position to see concrete steps forward publicly announced before the end of the year?

Answer

The Council is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council to investigate an active travel link connecting Haddenham (Buckinghamshire) and Thame (Oxfordshire). Assessment work is being carried out to identify opportunities and constraints and consider the technical feasibility of potential options for this link.

I am aware that there is public interest in this link. The potential for modal shift to active travel for journeys between Haddenham and Thame is also recognised by the sub-national transport body, England's Economic Heartland, in their recently published Active Travel Strategy which identifies 15 high potential cross-authority active travel links across the region.

However, in taking any decision regarding this link, it is important that the Council is informed by a technical assessment of relevant factors and available evidence.

If a decision is taken such that a scheme progresses, there would need to be full consultation on the details of any proposal where the public and relevant parties could submit their views. In addition, both local authorities are seeking to secure contributory funding from local development sites towards the scheme, however it is anticipated further external funding would be required should a scheme progress.

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Question Three

What plans are there to relay the track from Claydon Junction to Quainton Road and Aylesbury following the use by HS2 for construction work?

Answer

A full response will be collated from all parties on this topic.

Question Four

Why is the council not looking at the opportunity to establish "Walking bus" schemes for local schools? These are schemes which facilitate children walking to school along pre-set routes accompanied by designated adults to reduce car travel to school and encourage young people to walk. There are multiple benefits: reduced road congestion at peak times, carbon and emission savings, children's exercise and health.

Answer

Thank you for your question relating to walking buses. The Council calls these 'Crocodiles' and there is more information on the Council's School Travel Planning webpage [Crocodiles – School Travel Planning](#). We do not provide direct support for this initiative but the guidance on our website explains how schools can organise a walking bus ensuring they have undertaken a risk assessment and have route coordinators, walking escorts, parental permissions, insurances etc for the event to take place safely. This is explained in the guidelines attached to the web page.

As an example, in May 2022, schoolchildren from Widmer End Combined School in High Wycombe took part in a walking crocodile as part of their Platinum Jubilee celebrations, which also promoted walking to school: [Buckinghamshire residents walk their way to a healthier lifestyle | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

Question Five

There has been lots of air quality monitoring along Broad Street/Berkhamsted Road in Chesham, and it is clear that the pollution levels are higher than is desirable. What actions (aside from monitoring) are Bucks planning to take to reduce air pollution along this road?

Answer

Monitoring has been undertaken in the AQMA along Broad Street/Berkhamstead Road in Chesham since the introduction of the Local Air Quality Management Review and Assessment Regime. The legal annual mean limit value for NO₂ is 40 ug/m³. The monitoring demonstrates that there has been a significant reduction in concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide in that time (see below) and now all monitoring points measure concentrations below this limit value. The Council will continue to undertake actions in its climate change and air quality strategy to reduce emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide across Buckinghamshire.

The Strategic Environmental Protection Team are working with other departments in the council to make sure that improvement in air quality is considered as part of projects across the council. In Chesham along with the Economic Regeneration Team we are encouraging visitors to arrive via Chesham Underground Station rather than using cars and to walk from the station to their chosen destination, encouraging active travel. We are improving the walk from the station to a number of popular destinations and also installing travel time wayfinding signs. We will provide an incentive for active travel via easily understandable journey and travel times but also through lifting current dull and uninviting arrival points and pathways to key destinations.

The team will continue to work with the Economic regeneration team and others such as the transport strategy to ensure that other opportunities to reduce traffic emissions and encourage more active and sustainable travel in Chesham. We have also accepted an invitation to be on the steering group for the Chesham Smart water and public realm improvement project.

Chesham AQMA 2012 - 2022

