

Decision Session – Cabinet Member for 19 November 2012 Transport, Planning & Sustainability

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

RUFFORTH TO KNAPTON BRIDLEWAY – FUNDING & CONSTRUCTION

Summary

1. This report presents the current proposals for a bridleway running between the villages of Rufforth and Knapton, the sources of funding available, and who will be responsible for construction of the various sections.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet Member is asked to:
 - 1) Note the response to the recent consultation with residents and relevant user groups.

Reason: To acknowledge the wide support for the scheme

- 2) Agree to the central section of the route (running parallel with the North of England Activity Centre's access road) being funded from the council's Transport Capital Programme and that this section then be constructed by the council's Highways team.

Reason: To enable the scheme in its entirety to be constructed thus enabling as much external funding as possible to be made available.

Background

3. Council officers were approached by residents of Rufforth approximately ten years ago to look at providing an off-road cycle route between the village of Rufforth and Acomb. Such a route would enable commuters and school children to avoid cycling on

the very busy B1224 Wetherby Road and having to cross the A1237 Outer Ring Road at a busy roundabout to reach Acomb.

4. A group of interested parties, including council officers, met to look into the possibility of supplementing the existing PROW network to create a safe route. Both of the council officers involved in this group left the authority shortly afterwards and the project was moth-balled.
5. Rufforth and Knapton Parish Council subsequently submitted two petitions to the Council requesting a cycle link, the first in June 2004 with 211 signatures which was reported to Planning & Transport EMAP on the 6 May 2005 and the second in June 2007 with 166 signatures which was reported to City Strategy EMAP on the 10 September 2007.
6. The outcome of these two petitions and their associated EMAP reports was the formation of a steering group comprising initially council officers and members, parish councillors, Sustrans and a couple of other interested parties. Representatives from Yorwaste have since also been invited onto the group as part of the route would potentially cross their site and latterly as the major funding partner.
7. Council officers commissioned Sustrans to undertake a feasibility study on behalf of the steering group in 2009 which investigated several routes and put forward a preferred option. The approximate total cost of this option was £840k and would require a new bridge to be constructed across the A1237. This was deemed to be unjustifiable given the relatively small number of potential users and pressures on the council's Transport Capital Programme.
8. In subsequent meetings the steering group investigated other, cheaper options and alternative funding sources in a bid to keep the project alive. As several existing PROWs exist in the area a decision was taken to use these and upgrade them where necessary to keep costs down as low as possible. Sustrans, bearing this new preferred route in mind (see Annex 1), undertook an Options Study to look at how the various sections of the route might be constructed and for what cost.
9. A report was taken to an OIC meeting on 11 September 2012 to discuss the options available for each individual section and a decision made on which options should be taken forward.

10. Various funding sources were investigated to pay for the route to be established between Rufforth and Knapton over the past few years. These included Sustrans' Links to Schools and Connect 2 projects but unfortunately the group were not able to submit bids due to the short bidding windows and lack of match-funding available from the Council. A source of funding was, however, identified from an outstanding Section 106 agreement between the Council and Yorwaste from an application to extend their landfill site several years ago. The s106 condition stated that Yorwaste should provide a bridleway between the north-eastern and south-western corners of their site, this had the potential to provide a large proportion of the Rufforth to Knapton route. Yorwaste estimated the cost of providing their section of the route at £75k and agreed to this funding being put towards the complete route.
11. A further source of external funding was identified by Yorwaste from their Yorventure project (which funds schemes using landfill tax). Sustrans submitted a bid for £45k of funding which was successful and would enable the full route as identified in the Options Study to be constructed. The Yorventure funding is granted with several conditions, the most notable being that the full route needs to be constructed by May 2013 in its entirety.
12. Since these funding sources were identified representations have been made to the Council's PROW Officer by the owner of the North of England Activity Centre (NEAC) owner where he voiced his concerns about the safety of the section of the route which proposes to utilise his access road. An off-road option was investigated which satisfied both parties but which would add a further £39,600 to the cost of the scheme (see Annex 2). No source of funding has been identified for this section therefore funding is sought from the Transport Capital Programme to enable this section to be constructed and to ensure the Yorventure grant funding can be claimed in full.
13. At a meeting in early November Rufforth & Knapton Parish Council agreed in principle to contribute £5k towards the cost of the scheme from parish funds. How this will be funded and whether it will be split over the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years will be decided at the December meeting.

Consultation

14. The current Rural York West Ward Members have been very supportive of the overall scheme (Councillor Gillies has chaired the steering group meetings for the past 3 years) as were there predecessors. Rufforth & Knapton Parish Council have been the main instigators of the scheme so are fully in support of it.
15. An external consultation is currently underway via the council's website and the response to this consultation (which is due to end on the 16th November will be tabled at the Decision Session meeting.

Options

16. There are two options available to the Cabinet Member:
 - Option A – Agree to fund the central section of the route from the Council's Transport Capital Programme
 - Option B – Refuse to fund the central section from Council funds

Analysis

17. Option A – the main advantage of this option is that it will enable the scheme to be completed and the maximum amount of external funding to be taken advantage of. It may also help to spend the Capital Programme if there is an under-spend elsewhere in the programme. The disadvantage is that part of the Capital Programme will have to be given up which could possibly be used to deliver other schemes.
18. Option B – the advantages of this option are that Capital Programme funding will be freed up to used for other schemes. The disadvantage of this option is that the scheme may not be able to be constructed in its entirety at this time due to the fact that only the Yorwaste £75k will be available, the Yorventure Grant funding having been given up as the conditions would not be able to be met.

Council Plan

19. The outcome of this report will contribute to the following aspects of the Council Plan:

- Create jobs and grow the economy – provision of improved links to employment sites such as Northminster Business Park and York Business Park plus links to the soon to be built Park & Ride site and Poppleton Station will make it easier for staff to access employment sites farther afield workplace safely by cycle (and to a lesser extent on foot due to the distances involved). It may also influence employers' decisions as to whether they set up in York. By encouraging more people to walk or cycle to work this should reduce congestion in the city which then makes the movement of other vehicles more efficient thus saving businesses money in lost time.
- Get York moving – making cycling and walking a more attractive and efficient mode of travel should reduce residents' reliance on motorised transport thus reducing congestion and helping to get the remaining traffic moving better. Provision of a route which can also be used in the other direction for York residents as a leisure route also has the potential to introduce more people to the positive aspects of cycling which may then encourage them to undertake utility trips by cycle as well. It also has the potential to improve health by encouraging them to be more active.
- Build strong communities – provision of better walking and cycle links between Rufforth and the built-up part of York should help this rural community by reducing the severance caused by being put off walking and cycling by the busy Wetherby Road and Outer Ring Road
- Protect vulnerable people – pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders are some of the most vulnerable types of road user and provision of a safer, mostly off-road route will help improve their safety
- Protect the environment – walking and cycling are some of the most sustainable forms of transport so the more people who can be encouraged to use these modes of travel the better it will be for the local environment both in terms of air quality and noise pollution and less use of natural resources

Implications

20. The outcome of this report will have the following implications:

- **Financial** – The total scheme cost for the proposed scheme is anticipated to be £165k with the majority of the funding coming from external sources (£75k from Yorwaste, £45k from Yorventure grant and £5K from Rufforth & Knapton Parish Council). It is proposed to fund the remaining £40k from the 12/13 Transport Capital Programme.
- It is proposed to allocate £5k from the existing Cycling Minor budget and increase the Cycle Network Priority schemes budget by £35k. The increase can be accommodated by reducing the Local Transport Plan allocation to the Haxby Road to Clifton Moor Cycle route scheme where progress is slower than originally anticipated due to more extensive feasibility work being required.
- Subject to approval of the Knapton to Rufforth Cycle Route proposal the amendments to the Capital Programme will be included in the Monitor 2 report to be presented to the Cabinet Member in December. The overall Capital Programme overprogramming will be reduced to appropriate levels as the DfT have indicated, subject to full approval, that will increase their contribution (no change to overall grant) to the Access York scheme in 2012/13.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – there are no HR implications
- **Equalities** – This scheme will provide improved travel options for vulnerable groups such as children, older people and disabled groups. Initially wheelchair users won't be able to access the route as the off-road links at either end will not be in place, however, negotiations are ongoing to provide these links with the relevant landowners. The scheme also helps to reduce the severance effects experienced by Rufforth residents created by the outer ring road and the busy Wetherby Road.
- **Legal** – there are no legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder** – there are no crime and disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** – there are no IT implications

- **Property** – The land at Harewood Whin over which the bridleway will cross is held by Yorwaste on lease from City of York Council. Yorwaste is party to the proposal as part of its Section 106 Planning obligation. The Council as landlord has no objection to the proposed route which will become a public bridleway. If the matter is approved Property Services will write to Yorwaste to confirm Landlord's consent under the terms of the lease.

Risk Management

21. In compliance with the councils risk management strategy the main risk is that under Option B a potential external funding source (Yorventure) will be lost which will either result in the route being constructed to a lower specification or some sections not being constructed at all. This will have a negative impact on the council's reputation.
22. There is also the risk that if the route isn't provided in full that the contributions to the aspects of the Council Plan mentioned above in paragraph 17 won't be fully realised. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for all risks has been assessed at less than 16. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

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**Report
 Approved**



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 2012

Wards Affected: Rural West York

All

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For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

EMAP reports – Rufforth Cycle Route Petition 06/05/2005

Rufforth Cycle Route Petition 10/09/2007

OIC report – Rufforth to Knapton Bridleway Alignment 11/09/2011

Annexes

Annex 1 – Rufforth to Knapton Bridleway – Proposed Route

Annex 2 – Rufforth to Knapton Bridleway – Potential CYC Funded
Section