

A26 CYCLE ROUTE CONSULTATION

Introduction

The A26 is a main inter-urban road that is subject to heavy traffic flows, especially at peak times. Department for Transport (DfT) annual average daily flow data for 2014 confirms that 85.7% of daily traffic comprises of cars and taxis in comparison to 0.5% of journeys by bicycle.

Much of the route is also a designated Air Quality Management Area. A solution is required to encourage more cycling use along the route which would contribute towards congestion relief, improvements in air quality and health.

Consultants DHA Transport have been appointed by Kent County Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to prepare a scheme for the improvement of the existing cycle route, between Tonbridge (Brook Street junction) and Tunbridge Wells (Grosvenor Road junction).



The design approach is based upon the following criteria;

- Seek to provide a safe, coherent, comfortable and attractive route that conforms to established cycle route design principles, providing segregated space where this is achievable. Where this can't be achieved to consider reducing traffic speed as a means of improving perceived safety.
- Application of measures which seek to minimise stopping to maintain traffic flow and provide enhanced priority for cyclists.
- Use land that is within the ownership of KCC Highways, with the exception of minor revisions at Southborough Common (subject to agreement with Southborough Town Council).
- Take account of up-to-date guidance and legislation, including the DfT Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

A26 CYCLE ROUTE CONSULTATION

The proposals include the following key features;

- Where width is available existing advisory cycle lanes are widened to provide mandatory lanes (minimum 1.5m wide).
- Revised geometry at some side junctions and the inclusion of raised tables or contrasting surface treatment at all side junctions. Raised tables help to reduce the speed of vehicular turning movements and provide an enhanced crossing arrangement for pedestrians.
- Inclusion of two bus stop bypass features north of the junctions with Culverden Park and Pennington Road (Southborough).
- Provision of continuous red surfacing throughout the scheme on all cycle lanes with priority for cyclists at side junctions.
- Removal of two short sections of on street parking on the western side of the A26 between Southfield Road and Beltring Road, and between Still Lane and Holden Road.
- Introduction of 20mph limit on the A26 between the junctions of Pennington Road and Holden Park Road.
- Removal of southbound bus lane between the Hand and Sceptre and junction at Yew Tree Road to allow for cycle lanes to be introduced in both directions.
- Improvement of segregated provision at Mabledon to include the extension of shared use pedestrian and cycle paths both north and southbound.
- Provision of new shared use link on Quarry Hill.



Once complete it is hoped that the route will link with other proposed cycle routes as set out in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Cycling Strategy (2016), as well as compliment proposals to improve the town centre environments in both Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

This consultation will be open for 6 weeks from 7 November until 18 December. Please take a look at the plans and provide any comments using the feedback form. The consultation can be viewed online at; www.kent.gov.uk/a26cycleroute.

A26 CYCLE ROUTE CONSULTATION

Next steps

- Once the consultation concludes feedback will be presented to the Joint Transportation Boards (JTBs) of both Borough Councils. These are joint working groups of Kent County Council and Borough Council Members that meet in co-operation regarding highway and transportation issues. The JTBs will separately make recommendations in response to the consultation feedback received, regarding the progression and delivery of the A26 cycle route proposals within each Borough.
- It is intended that in due course new Traffic Regulation Orders will be implemented to deliver the proposals. Plans showing the likely extent of the Orders can be viewed as part of the current consultation. These will be subject to a separate public consultation exercise in due course and will include the following;
 - Conversion of existing part-time bus and cycle lanes to 24 hours 7 days a week.
 - Introduction of new 24 hour, 7 days a week cycle lanes.
 - Introduction of a new 20mph speed limit.
- Subject to funding it is hoped that the proposals will be implemented during the 2017/18 financial year.

Partners wish to express our thanks for all feedback received.

