

**Notes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum**  
**held on: Tuesday 16 July 2024**  
**(Via Teams call)**

**Attendees:** Rob Hill (RH) – Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability [PAWS] and Reading Cycle Campaign [RCC]  
Kevin Hurley (KH) – President, Newbury Velo  
Cheryl Evans (CE) – Senior Road Safety Officer, WBC  
Clive Tombs (CT) – Senior Engineer, WBC (notes of meeting)

**Apologies:** Alban Luffman (AL) – Sustrans  
Rhys Williams (RW) – Canal & River Trust  
William Pitt (WP) – Chair, West Berkshire Spokes

	<u><b>Action</b></u>
<p><b>1. Welcome, Introductions &amp; Apologies</b></p> <p>CT welcomed attendees.</p> <p>Apologies were recorded on behalf of Alban Luffman of Sustrans, Rhys Williams of Canal &amp; River Trust and William Pitt of Spokes.</p> <p><b>2. Notes of previous meeting &amp; Matters Arising</b></p> <p>Notes of the last meeting held on 13/03/2024, were agreed.</p> <p><b><i>Hambridge Road business estate:</i></b> CT had mentioned Cllr Tony Vickers proposal for a future survey of businesses to Principal Engineer on 14/03/2024. Important to acknowledge that, as flagged on 20/12/2023, while there is an aspiration to create and upgrade this corridor in the future, presently no resources or funding are earmarked for this corridor. CT will mention again after opening of Kings Road Link Road.</p> <p><b><i>Mallard Court to Monkey Bridge:</i></b> the Council's Public Rights of Way section is continuing to pursue.</p> <p><b><i>Bikeability:</i></b> update under agenda item 3</p> <p><b><i>Future extensions to Eling Way:</i></b> on 14/03/2024, CT had provided Cllr Martin Colston (MC), Cycle Forum Chair, with an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats relating to Eling Way extensions, for MC's consideration. Aspirations for future Eling Way extensions, plus associated resource constraints and considerations have also been highlighted by CT to the Portfolio</p>	<b>MC</b>

Member for Environment and Highways, Cllr Gourley.

**St John's Roundabout, Newbury:** CT had provided WBC Highways Maintenance team with a detailed issues note on 04/01/2024, for their consideration and followed up on 07/03/2024 and 27/06/2024. Following staff changes, this has now been allocated to a Project Engineer in Highways Maintenance team to investigate.

### 3. Bikeability and Cycle training updates

**Bikeability:** CE advised coming to an end for summer term, resuming September 2024 but already at capacity for September-October. WBC has received an extra £15k to encourage involvement across District. This is partly being used to fund a social media campaign with school.

CE highlighted that Bikeability Trust require 80% of budget to be used for Levels [1](#) and [2](#) training, leaving only £20k funding for the later levels. WBC has raised concerns with the Trust about this.

Limited number of instructors remains a challenge; 3 potential new participants identified.

RH to ask Karen at Reading Cycle Campaign if they could help.

RH

KH to also send out another message to Velo members to invite interest in becoming instructors.

KH

CE advised there is an instructors' training course in September in Bristol. £800 Bursary is available per individual and CE would consider scope to top up by a further £100.

***Scooter Heroes initiative:*** CE advised 8 infant schools have been engaged with to deliver this initiative through to the Autumn term, using funding allocated from Active Travel England, to build confidence and encourage use of push-along scooters for travel to school.

***Hand cycle:*** CE advised Joanne Bassett is acquiring a hand cycle to assist with training

### 4. West Berkshire scheme updates

#### Construction Schemes 2024-25

**Stockcross Linkway Stage 1,** between the [A4/B4000 roundabout](#) and [Stockcross village](#): scheme complete and [officially launched](#) on 09/07/2024. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kzxr8hr-w>

**A4/Crown Mead, Thatcham:** following Ward and Portfolio Member input, stakeholder communications and letters to frontagers had been sent. Plans: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/crown-mead-thatcham>

Currently looking at late September 2024 for start of construction.

### **Schemes in development including aspirational schemes**

**Old Bath Road, Newbury/Speen:** Outline design undertaken. Mainly a footway improvements scheme, but aspiration to reallocate some carriageway space for cycling and apply cycle symbols, to connect from Linkway 7 on A4 Western Avenue and Speen Estate through to [Goldwell Park and the quiet route to Northcroft and town](#). CT has issued Project Brief, with objective of starting construction at end FY 2024-25.

**Theale-Calcot Connector:** Feasibility Study completed, using ATE funding. Centring on potential future replacement of [50+ year-old, narrow pedestrian bridge](#) west of M4 Junction 12, with a replacement structure that would be suitable for cycling as well as walking. This is on LCWIP corridor S5 (Theale-Calcot-Reading).

Feasibility Study, funded by Active Travel England, has been discussed with National Highways. CT showed the favoured design for the bridge deck and approaches on screen. Core issue is substantial funding and resources required for further scheme development and ultimately for construction (initial estimate of £5.39M for physical replacement of bridge structure alone, with costs for land acquisition, legals and construction of approaches on top of this).

National Highways do not have funding available and have no visibility on their own future funding; their position is that the existing bridge is in fair structural condition though not meeting current standards for non-motorised users.

No funding presently earmarked for further design work or construction; WBC Active Travel Infrastructure Project Board has agreed to pursuing with National Highways and Active Travel England. Wider WBC and Reading BC colleagues are aware of the scheme, in context of corridor S5.

**Stockcross Linkway Stage 2:** Feasibility Study completed, using ATE funding for a future Stage 2 of the Stockcross Linkway from the [A4/B4000 roundabout](#) across the [Bath Road Bridge](#) over the A34 to connect in to the quiet road called [Speen Lane](#) towards Northcroft Leisure Centre, Goldwell Park and Newbury. CT showed the preferred design on screen. CT has approached National Highways who own Bath Road bridge; discussions also ongoing with developer of the 'covered reservoirs' site opposite Speen Lane. No funding presently earmarked for further design work or construction; awaiting outcome of NH and other discussions.

**A4 London Road at Newbury Manor Hotel, Linkway 2:** was at Outline design and agreement was due signature, but hotel owners are now considering selling the site, impacting the proposed land transfers and previous scheme which a lot of work has gone into.

Network Manager has sanctioned Feasibility design work for an alternative scheme that could be delivered within the existing Highway boundary.

**A4 Western Avenue Stage 2, Newbury, Linkway 7:** Feasibility designs completed, using ATE funding. CT showed on screen the design for the shared route variant for proposed next section of Linkway 7, from [Waitrose Roundabout](#) eastwards to [Chestnut Crescent/Hawthorn Road estate](#) and to the west side of [Robin Hood Roundabout](#). Internal preference for a Toucan crossing where B4494 Oxford Road meets A4 on north side of the Waitrose roundabout. Intention is to submit this to ATE design review August/September 2024, to reflect WBC's work on active travel and help the case for funding.

Will require significant additional resources to develop scheme to Detailed design and then construction, to link in to the separate, proposed Robin Hood Roundabout scheme, and to link into proposed Linkway 6 to Winchcombe School and north Newbury via Shaw Estate and Donnington Estate.

KH raised issue with existing Toucan crossing (PN130) on west side of Waitrose roundabout. Appears long delay for cyclists and pedestrians waiting to cross. CT said he would ask signals engineer to investigate and review timings (***post-meeting note: request forwarded 25/07/2024***).

CT

**Pangbourne to Purley:** Project Board approval received to develop Outline design in-house and pursue investigations, following on from the Feasibility Study and focussing on the proposed off-carriageway section between east end of Pangbourne and west end of Purley.

CT showed one part of the design work on screen. Officers had met with representatives of Sulham Estate and their consultants on site on 11/07/2024. In addition, WBC's new automatic counters would shortly be deployed, and again in the Autumn term, to collect data on existing use by cyclists and pedestrians.

No funding presently earmarked for further work beyond Outline level in-house, or construction. WBC exploring with Sulham Estate on what basis they might be prepared to make a strip of land available.

**Lower Way reappraisal, Thatcham, Linkway 5:** Feasibility work underway on possible conversion of legacy scheme on south side to shared use throughout, given relative level of use and current inconsistency in provision (currently part-shared, part-segregated and interspersed with bus stops that are technically on a cycle track).

**Eling Way extensions:** relates to potential extensions of the Eling Way multi-user path which currently [connects Hermitage with Hampstead Norreys](#).

**Proposed Phase 1 extension within Hermitage:** awaiting outcome of Certificate of Lawfulness application. As highlighted at last meeting and to stakeholders, significant issue with landowner in section abutting Yattendon Road. Challenging to progress alongside 'core' LCWIP and Highway-side schemes but WBC Network Management are persevering, and hopeful to deliver in FY 2024-25. PROW are looped-in. Eling Estate

**Aspirational further extensions:** as advised at last meeting proposals papers, identifying preferred routes for future extensions northward (Hampstead Norreys to Compton and allowing for extension towards Upton/Didcot) and southward (Hermitage-Curridge-Long Lane-Shaw-Newbury) have been circulated to senior officers 02/02/2024, emphasising need for Project Team and design/development resources to be identified, and beyond that substantial funding sourced for delivery, if the overall Eling Way Newbury to Didcot vision is to be realised.

CT showed mapping from one of the proposals papers on screen and reiterated the challenges given that Eling Way is predominantly off-Highway and wider economic considerations.

This links back to the SWOT analysis for Eling Way provided to Cllrs Colston and Gourley.

#### **Developer-related schemes:**

**Watermill Bridge, A343 near Wash Water** (inside Hampshire/Basingstoke & Deane Borough): Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council lost their judicial review of the Planning Inspector's decision. If the scheme goes ahead, then under the s106 agreement the developer will undertake to design and construct a 1.8km cycle- and pedestrian route from the development up the Andover Road towards Monks Lane, the intention being this should then link into other measures including towards Newbury College/Tesco via Monks Lane. Likely that WBC officers will review relevant developer

proposals, as they materialise, in common with the approach taken on Sandleford Park/Bloor Homes.

Sandleford Park/Sandleford Park West: WBC officers have had sight of and commented on the cycle and pedestrian aspects of the proposals prepared by the developer and their consultants, including interface to the existing shared route on Monks Lane.

## 5. NCN4, canal towpath and related matters

Sustrans upgrade near Mill Road/Dewe Lane, Burghfield: completed by Sustrans April 2024. 380-metre section close to the River Kennet between [Mill Road/Dewe Lane junction](#) and [a point close to the Cunning Man pub](#) has been remediated to provide access for people walking, wheeling and cycling. WBC have ordered safety signs and markings for Mill Road.

Newbury Phase II and Reimagining the Towpath wider initiative: Newbury Phase II relates to Ham Bridge to Bull's Lock section. Canal & River Trust's [appeal on the Good Exchange](#) remains open, with £191k raised against original target of £396k.

The wider Reimagining the Towpath initiative continues to develop, led by Sustrans with partners CRT, WBC and Greenham Trust. Programme Board set up. Presentation made to Funders Forum, emphasising scope to deliver in stages over potentially 10-year timeframe. Would require significant capital funding, initial estimate £21M to remediate/create route canalside across the District.

Hambridge Road – aspiration for controlled crossing at canal bridge: following the Sustrans/DfT funded Feasibility Study, WBC funded a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit on Sustrans' Feasibility design. WBC intends to also capture data on current level of crossing movements across B3421 Hambridge Road at or close to the canal bridge by pedestrians and cyclists, in school holidays and term time, to inform further consideration by WBC Traffic Services team.

CT

## 6. Any Other Business

Festival of Cycling 2025: KH confirmed this originally stemmed from Newbury Road Club's plans to celebrate their centenary in 2025. NRC and Newbury Velo have had initial discussions; cost estimate for an inclusive event understood to be £25k. KH said Velo have made it clear they do not have budget but could assist practically.

Needs an in-person meeting involving Velo, NRC and Spokes (who have previously shared a robust plan for an event with Velo) to explore. Cllr Martin Colston, KH, WP and Newbury Road Club

MC,  
KH,  
WP,  
NRC

representative to pursue offline.

*Cycling for Climate:* RH mentioned the Cycling 4 Climate initiative – further details at: <https://cycling4climate.nl/en/international/>

***Next Cycle Forum Meeting:***

**6:00 pm on Tuesday 15 October 2024, online.**

Link to be circulated separately.