
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 6 July 2010
Subject: Proposed Cycle Track Order, Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard

Report of: Basil Jackson Assistant Director for Highways and Transportation

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles to make an Order under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 on the footpath that extends from Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard following public consultation and receipt of representations.

Contact Officer: Amanda Tarbox,
amanda.tarbox@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Grovebury

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will promote sustainable modes of travel.

Financial:

There is currently £10,200 in the 2010/11 programme (Capital) for the implementation of Cycle Track Procedures in Leighton - Linslade.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

The scheme will improve safety for pedestrians through the introduction of signs warning pedestrians of the possible presence of cyclists along the footpath; a practice that we have been advised currently takes place unofficially.

Sustainability:

Implementation of this scheme may encourage people to cycle instead of using less sustainable forms of transport, is in support of the Leighton Cycle Demonstration Town initiative, CBC and Government sustainability objectives and also the Leighton Linslade Modal Shift Exemplar Town objective.

RECOMMENDATION:

That authority to seal a Cycle Track Order under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 is given to create a shared use route for pedestrians and cyclists on the footpath that extends from Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard.

Background

1. In 2008 Leighton - Linslade was awarded Cycle Demonstration Town status as part of a Government initiative to support those towns considered to be making the greatest effort to promote modal shift toward cycling. This award provided funding for staff (Go-Cycle Leighton Linslade) to promote cycling within the community and to work with others, including local authorities and land owners to assist with this. Building on this the Highway Authority was able to secure further Growth Area Funding for 2009/10 specifically targeted at cycling schemes thus building on the £1.0M of GAF funding from the previous year already used to underpin this work. In the 2010/2011 Highways programme there is some capital funds aimed at finishing off and adding to the cycle network in Leighton-Linslade.

Bedfordshire Highways have been working closely with Go Cycle Leighton-Linslade to implement a number of infrastructure based cycling schemes within the Leighton-Linslade area as part of the Leighton-Linslade Cycling Town project, with the aim of pioneering innovative ways to increase cycling in the area.

2. The cycling town of Leighton - Linslade has set themselves the target of doubling the amount of people cycling to and from key destinations within the town by the end of 2011. More specifically to:
 - Increase the number of children regularly cycling to school from 1.2% to 3.5%, measured by school travel plan surveys
 - Increase the number of commuters regularly cycling to the station from 50 to 150, measured surveying the use of cycle parking
 - Double the number of people who cycle to the town centre
 - Double the number of cyclists using key routes, measured across eight locations

3. GoCycle are running Bikeability - Nationally Accredited Cycle Training to ensure a level of competency of cyclists using the roads. The course focuses on learning the logic of the road and ensuring that the priorities of controlling the bike, seeing, being seen and a variety of ways of communicating can be put into action effectively at all times.

GoCycle is working towards the aim of providing every child in Leighton-Linslade and Heath and Reach with the opportunity to reach Bikeability level 2 by the time they leave Year 7 at school. Bikeability Level 3 is also being taught by the GoCycle Team to those above year 7 at local schools and adults in the Leighton-Linslade area.

Information

4. At the Traffic Management Meeting held on 19th January 2010 a report was considered and approved to remove the prohibition of Cycling Order on this footpath.
5. The footpath 'Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road' extends from the playing field at the end of Danes Way then runs in between Danes Way and Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road for a distance of approximately 226 metres. The footpath is between 2.5 and 2.8 metres wide with verges either side of the footpath that is between 0.5 and 2.5 metres wide.
6. The main footpath has a total of 10 interconnecting footpaths which extend through to various culs-de-sac within Saxons Close and Danes Way. All of the interconnecting footpaths are less than 2.5 metres wide; it is therefore not intended to allow cyclists to use these footpaths.
7. If the scheme is approved signs and tactile paving will be installed at each of the interconnecting footpaths where they abut the main footpath to warn pedestrians of the presence of cyclists and vice versa.
8. The footpath in question would form the most direct link for cyclists travelling from Meadow Way / Marley Fields / Stanbridge Road area (including Billington Park) towards Hockliffe Road.
9. If approved this footpath will form part of a signed cycle route to Brooklands Middle School, Vandyke Upper School and the town centre.
10. In 2009 the existing path that runs along the perimeter of the playing field (owned by Leighton-Linslade Town Council) at the end of Danes Way was widened to create a shared use path to Meadow Way and extended to form a link to Marley Fields.
11. In accordance with Regulation 3 of the Cycle Tracks Regulations 1984 a formal consultation has been carried out prior to making an Order. A consultation letter and a copy of the plan showing the extent of the footpath in question were sent to interested parties including statutory consultees and every property (30 in total) that shares a boundary with the footpath.

Support

12. Four e-mails of support have been received:
13. Bedfordshire Police support the scheme. (see number 1)
14. Right to Ride, (Leighton-Linslade area) support the scheme. (see number 2)
15. Buzzcycles (formerly Leighton – Linslade Cycling Forum) support the scheme. (see number 3)
16. A resident whose property backs onto the path has no problem the scheme. (see number 4)

Objections

17. Four e-mails (representing three residents that live within the vicinity of the footpath, and one statutory consul tee) containing objections to the scheme have been received.
18. **Objection 1 (see number 5)**

Following your letter dated 25th March I can only resend you my original objection of the initial alteration of use.

The fact that it now seems from the minutes of the meeting and your latest letter the only concrete reason that the council can think of for this move is that people already use this pathway as a cycle way so you might as well legalise it.

As I am sure you can see in retrospect this is an interesting strategy. One I am sure the local police force totally approve of. If someone breaks the law, change the law and there is no law breaking. Your letter and emails I can promise you will be brought to the publics attention every time the council take anyone to court for whatever misdemeanour they have committed.

The planned cycle way still has basic faults and who ever designed never cycled the routes. The quickest way to Vandyke and Gilbert Englefield from Meadow Way is out the front of Meadow Way and along the path by the railway to Meadway. The quickest route to Brooklands and Leedon Lower are via the path at the top of the footpath in question so perhaps changing that into a cycle path should be considered.

Tactile paving and notices are a good idea unless of course you are of an age where you cannot read or have any traffic awareness. At school times the majority of traffic on this pathway are young mothers with younger children an accident is inevitable and to keep closing your eyes to it is disastrous.

Response

We feel that the best action is to legalise what already occurs and improve safety by erecting appropriate warning signs rather than ignoring the existing situation.

Last year Leighton-Linslade Town Council widened and upgraded the path around the perimeter of Danes field to allow cyclists to use the route across the field from Marley Fields and Meadow Way. Although the path does lead to Danes Way this is not the most direct route for cyclists to take so inevitably the path from Danes Field to Hockliffe Road Service Road has become a natural link for cyclists.

The aim is to provide an off-road link from Marley Fields and Meadow Way to local schools including Brooklands Middle School, Vandyke Upper School and the town centre.

This route is not intended to be the quickest route but is aimed at children so the route has therefore been assessed in line with the level of Bikeability training the children that are likely to use the route are competent with.

The route suggested in the objection would require cycling along Hockliffe Road, one of the busier arterial roads within Leighton Buzzard which has HGV traffic; the path alongside the railway is not a cycle path.

The main objective of the Cycle Town status is to encourage people that don't cycle to give cycling a go – in order to achieve this route's need to be attractive and appropriate for the intended user.

The interconnecting paths through this estate are too narrow to convert to shared-use paths and cannot be widened with residential properties on both sides. However cyclists can dismount and push their bikes through these narrow sections to avoid a longer route depending on their destination.

Bikeability training is actively being taught to children and adults in the Leighton - Linslade area. This training includes understanding the advice in the Highway Code for cyclists and understanding what various cycle signs mean, with the aim of promoting safe cycling and encouraging cyclists to be considerate to the needs of others who may be using the same facility.

19. Objection 2 (see number 6)

1. *You are correct in saying that cycling takes place along this path and it is not un common for you people (mainly kids) to cycle at speed straight out onto the road or turn down the pavement without a care for anyone walking along. I presume by making this path a legal cycle route the Central Bedfordshire Council will take on responsibility for any accidents that take place. If not I would strongly suggest installing something to slow these people down before they are hurt or hurt some one else.*
2. *There have been occasions where mini motor bikes have used the path I would not like the fact that it would be a legal cycle path to encourage the mini motor bike users to plague our area. I presume if this is the case the Central Bedfordshire Council will arrange for extra Policing to eradicate the problem.*

3. *Many dog owners use this path and constantly allow their dogs to foul the grass area that runs along parallel to my Fence and Hedge. I raised this with the council and was visited by a council employee. The outcome of this was signs would be erected informing dog owners to clear up and the area would be monitored by the council. This was nearly a year ago to date and I have never seen anyone inspect the area or any signs. I presume this will be addresses before the path becomes a cycle route? I would hate to see young people cycle down the path and become covered in dog fouling.*

Response

There previously were bollards at the end of this path on the approach to Hockliffe Road Service Road; it is intended for these to be replaced when a decision on this scheme is reached so that bollards with integrated sign faces can be used.

This will help to slow cyclists down on the approach to Hockliffe Road Service Road and will be accompanied by a give way line and triangle painted on the ground at the end of the path to make it clear that cyclists should be giving way to other traffic including pedestrians at the end of this path.

As the bollards at the Hockliffe Road Service Road end of the path will be put back there is no physical reason as to why mini-moto users would be attracted to this path any more so than they are already.

A Cycle Track Order will legalise the use of the path for pedal cycles but not for any motorised vehicles such as mini-motos.

Bedfordshire Police have been consulted on the proposed scheme and have approved the making of a Cycle Track Order with the intention of making this path a shared use path for cyclists and pedestrians to use.

The issue of dog fouling has been raised again with Central Bedfordshire Council's Environmental Health Team and will be dealt with as a separate issue.

20. **Objection 3 (see number 7)**

As you say, this proposed Order merely regularises the shared use by cycles and walkers since we moved here in 1968. However, the plan doesn't cover the link roads between the cycle track and the various cul-de-sacs in Saxons Close and Danes Way, and I doubt that many cyclists will get off their bikes when they use the link roads. Having said that, we're quite happy for them to continue cycling through the one in front of our house, but it seems that this fact has been overlooked. And what is the point of the bobbly bits in the link roads? I don't know what they're for. Does anyone else?

For a long time many people have complained about the many signs on roads - now far too many are being set up on all the footpaths. It gives the impression that ways are being looked at as to how to spend the vast amount of money available for cycle routes. I know this money comes out of the Cycle fund. But where did that money come from? I assume from every rate and taxpayer via the EU and our own government, but you may correct me if that is not the case.

While writing we would like to mention that the the hedges that line the sides of the cycle track are the shared boundary lines of all the adjoining properties. South Beds Council were aware of this, and had confirmed that our hedge would not be cut down without our permission. Please can you confirm that your Council is also aware of this.

Response

The interconnecting paths through Danes Way and Saxons Close are too narrow to convert to shared use; the majority of which abut property boundaries each side with no opportunity to widen them. However cyclists can dismount and push their bikes through these narrow sections to avoid a longer route depending on their destination.

The signed route for cyclists will be along the main path and not through the interconnecting paths.

Corduroy hazard warning tactile paving has been installed at each of the interconnecting footpaths where they abut the main footpath to warn pedestrians of the presence of cyclists and vice versa. The corduroy hazard warning paving is installed where visually impaired people need to be warned of a hazard and advised to proceed with caution, in this case entering an area that is shared by cyclists and pedestrians.

If the scheme is approved signs will be installed at each of the interconnecting footpaths where they abut the main footpath to warn pedestrians of the presence of cyclists and vice versa.

The Highway Authority was able to secure Growth Area Funding in 2009/10 specifically targeted at cycling schemes which is where the funding for this scheme has come from.

There is no intention to remove any of the hedges along this path in conjunction with these works.

21. Objection 4 (see number 8)

The Joint Committee is very concerned about the increasing use of shared facilities for pedestrians and cyclists which do not take into account the mobility needs of blind, deafblind and partially sighted people.

Response

This objection was received from The Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People. They maintain a standing objection to all shared use proposals.

It would not be possible to widen the footpath to provide segregated facilities for cyclists and pedestrians in this case without removing the hedgerow and trees adjacent to the existing path which provide a degree of privacy and security for the residents whose properties border onto the path. Apart from the expense this would have been likely to have generated multiple objections from residents.

The design of the footpath which has a total of 10 interconnecting footpaths that extend through to various cul-de-sacs within Saxons Close and Danes Way does not lend itself to segregated use as pedestrians would need to cross the section of path reserved for cyclists to reach some of the interconnecting paths.

If the scheme is approved signs and corduroy hazard warning tactile paving will be installed at each of the interconnecting footpaths where they abut the main footpath to warn pedestrians of the presence of cyclists and vice versa. The corduroy hazard warning paving is installed where visually impaired people need to be warned of a hazard and advised to proceed with caution.

Conclusion and Next Steps

22. If authority to seal a Cycle Track Order is given as recommended, the next step in the process will be to submit the Order and objections to the Government Office - East at Cambridge, who may decide that the objections should be considered at a Public Inquiry, before deciding whether the Secretary of State for Transport should confirm the Cycle Track Order.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Plan

Appendix B – Copy of consultation letter

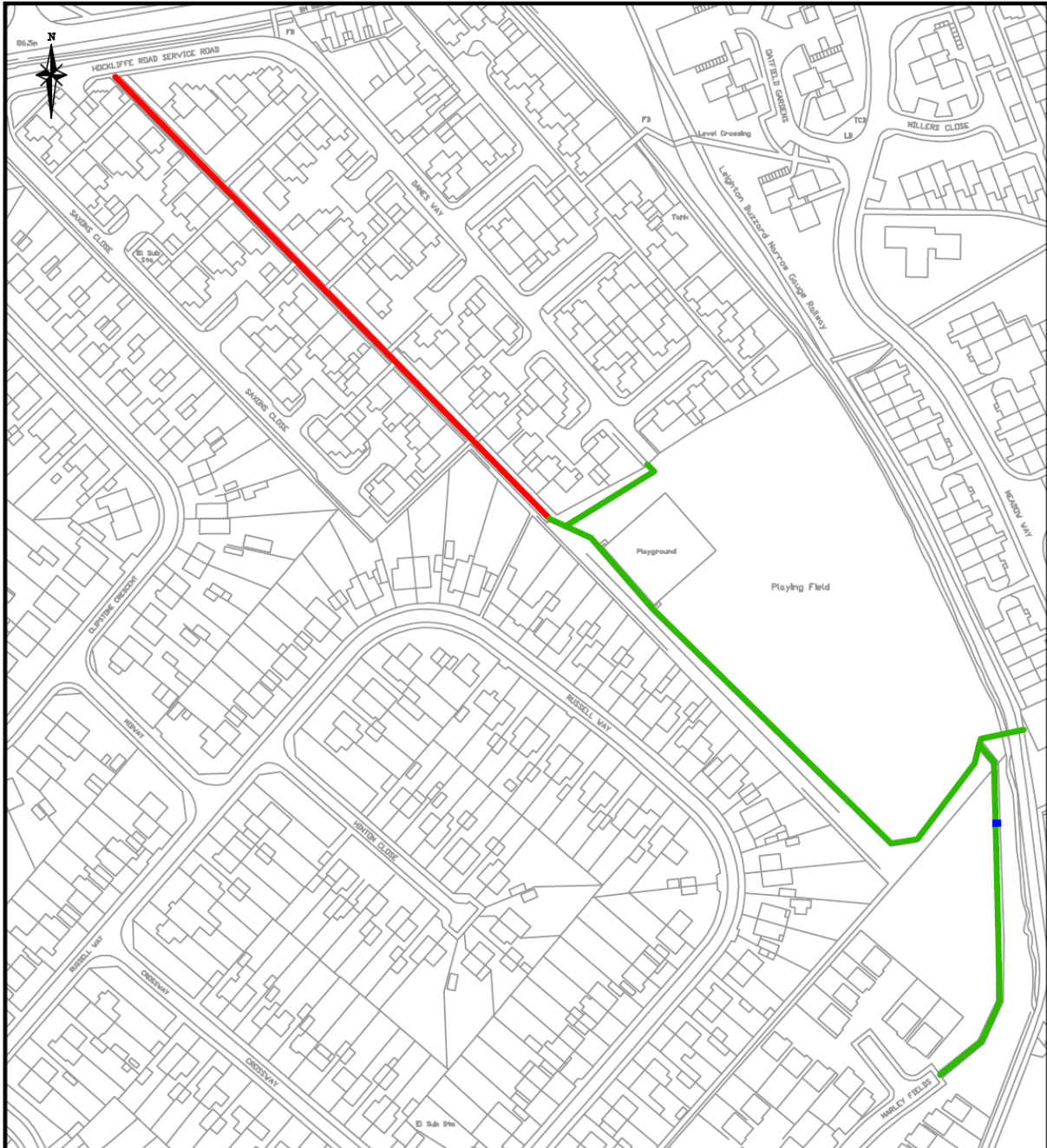
Appendix C – Responses to consultation including objections

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

None

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

Appendix A



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- Existing shared use route
- Proposed shared use route
- Cycle counter location

Client:



Managing Agent Contractor:



Project Title: LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CYCLING		Drawing Number: BH/300143/DR/025/005				Revision:	
Drawing Title: DANES WAY TO MARLEY FIELDS		Drawn By: AMT	Date: 04/01/10	Checked: NC	Approved: NC	Drawing Scale: 1:2000@A4	Drawing Status: FOR INFO.

Appendix B

Your ref:

Our ref: CH/ Cycle Tracks

Date: 25 March 2010

Dear

Cycle Tracks Act 1984
Proposed Shared Pedestrian Route and Cycle Track Between Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard

Following the recent removal of the Prohibition of Cycling Order on the footpath between Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard, Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to make an Order, the effect of which would be to convert this length of footpath to a cycle track.

Length of Footpath Concerned

That length of footpath that extends from Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard, a total distance of approximately 227 metres. The width of the path is approximately 2.5 metres. A copy of plan No. BH/ 300143-25/DR/016/004 showing this proposal is enclosed for your information.

Supporting Data

The Council is proposing to provide a cycle link from the recently constructed shared use footpath across Danes Field to Marley Fields and Meadow Way as show on plan. This route will form an off road alternative to Danes Way, and will be beneficial for cyclists, particularly children.

It is recognised that cycling does already take place along the footpath between Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road and it is therefore legalising this practice. Under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984, a Highways Authority can convert a footpath to a cycle track. A conversion allows for the public to have a right of way on pedal cycle and on foot.

In accordance with Regulation 3 of the Cycle Tracks Regulations 1984, I am carrying out the formal consultations before making an Order under the 1984 Act. Therefore, would you please let me know if you have any comments to make about this proposal by 23rd April 2010.

Yours sincerely



Chris Heard
Orders & Commons Registration Officer
Direct telephone 0300 300 6249
Email chris.heard@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Please reply to:
Countryside Access Service
Central Bedfordshire Council
PO Box 1395, Bedford MK42 5AN

Appendix C

Number 1



PROPOSAL: Shared Pedestrian Route and Cycle Track (Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road, Leighton Buzzard),

Your Reference:

<p>This Authority has considered the proposed Traffic Regulation Order as outlined in your letter and offer the following comments for further consideration.</p> <p>Comments</p>	
<p>This Authority has considered the proposed Traffic Regulation Order as outlined in your letter, together with the reason(s) given, is accepted by this authority, therefore no objection with be offered.</p>	X

Name: - ...Steve Welham

Address ...Traffic management Unit.....

.....Bedfordshire Police, Bedford Heights,

.....Manton Lane, Bedford. MK41 7PH.....

Signed:-S. P. Welham.....

Number 2

From:

Sent: 30 March 2010 21:56

To: Chris Heard

Subject: Cycle Track Order in Leighton Buzzard

Dear Chris

I have heard from my Right to Ride Colleague Ben Garner that you are going through the process of making an Order under Regulation 3 of the Cycle Tracks Regulations 1984 for the change of use from footpath to shared use for the cycle track between Saxons Close and Hockliffe Road Service Road.

As RTR representative for the Leighton and Linslade area I would like to add my support for this proposal.

Many thanks

Number 3

From:

Sent: 12 May 2010 16:41

To: Chris Heard

Cc: Steve Lakin

Subject: Saxons Close to Hockliffe service road cycle track

Dear Mr Heard,

Firstly, please accept my apologies for the late response. The letter was "filed" by a member of the family - on top of the fridge from where nothing returns.

Buzzcycles supports the conversion of this path to shared use. The width of 2.5 meters and the fact that the path is straight should result in conflict free use. It is also a useful addition to the cyclepath network.

Number 4

From:

Sent: 09 April 2010 17:44

To: Chris Heard

Subject: Cycle tracks

Thank you for your letter dated 25/03 2010 reference the cycle track between Saxon Close and Hockliffe Street.

I have no problem with the track as stated. However my garden backs onto the track just before Danes field.

Some years ago I contacted the council and asked them to cut back the trees on the current footpath ad they were over growing my garden and when we first moved here the council cut them regularly. At that time your representative said they did not know the path went up to Danes fields as they had not maps. I assume that is no longer the case.

Will you then be taking reponsibility of the trees and foliage on council land??

Many thanks

Number 5

From:

Sent: 28 March 2010 09:31

To: Chris Heard

Subject: Re: Proposed alteration of No Cycling Order - Leighton Buzzard

Dear Sir

following your letter dated 25th March I can only resend you my original objection of the initial alteration of use.

The fact that it now seems from the minutes of the meeting and your latest letter the only concrete reason that the council can think of for this move is that people already use this pathway as a cycle way so you might as well legalise it.

As I am sure you can see in retrospect this is an interesting strategy. One I am sure the local police force totally approve of. If someone breaks the law , change the law and there is no law breaking. Your letter and emails I can promise you will be brought to the publics attention every time the council take anyone to court for whatever misdemeanour they have committed.

The planned cycle way still has basic faults and who ever designed never cycled the routes. The quickest way to Vandyke and Gilbert Englefield from Meadow Way is out the front of Meadow Way and along the path by the railway to Meadway. The quickest route to Brooklands and Leedon Lower are via the path at the top of the footpath in question so perhaps changing that into a cycle path should be considered.

Tactile paving and notices are a good idea unless of course you are of an age where you cannot read or have any traffic awareness. At school times the majority of traffic on this pathway are young mothers with younger children an accident is inevitable and to keep closing your eyes to it is disastrous.

In finality you have already done the work spent the money and erected the signs , you are going through the motions of a democracy whilst having no intention of doing other than has already been decided.

Yours sincerely

Number 6

From:

Sent: 14 April 2010 21:55

To: Chris Heard

Subject: Proposed Shared Pedestrian Route and Cycle Track between Saxons Close to Hockliffe Road Service Road Leighton Buzzard

14 April 2010

Your Ref

Dear Sir

I would like to take the opportunity to bring the following points to your attention:

1. You are correct in saying that cycling takes place along this path and it is not un common for you people (mainly kids) to cycle at speed straight out onto the road or turn down the pavement without a care for anyone walking along. I presume by making this path a legal cycle route the Central Bedfordshire Council will take on responsibility for any accidents that take place. If not I would strongly suggest installing something to slow these people down before they are hurt or hurt some one else.

2. There have been occasions where mini motor bikes have used the path I would not like the fact that it would be a legal cycle path to encourage the mini motor bike users to plague our area. I presume if this is the case the Central Bedfordshire Council will arrange for extra Policing to eradicate the problem.

3. Many dog owners use this path and constantly allow their dogs to foul the grass area that runs along parallel to my Fence and Hedge. I raised this with the council and was visited by a council employee. The outcome of this was signs would be erected informing dog owners to clear up and the area would be monitored by the council. This was nearly a year ago to date and I have never seen anyone inspect the area or any signs. I presume this will be addresses before the path becomes a cycle route? I would hate to see young people cycle down the path and become covered in dog fouling.

I await you reply to the points raised.

Regards



Chris Heard
Orders & Commons Registration Officer
Countryside Access Service
Central Bedfordshire Council

By Email

31st March 2010

Dear Mr Heard

**CYCLE TRACKS ACT 1984
PROPOSED SHARED PEDESTRIAN ROUTE AND CYCLE TRACK BETWEEN SAXONS
CLOSE TO HICKLIFFE ROAD SERVICE ROAD, LEIGHTON BUZZARD**

The Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People (JCMBPS) welcomes the opportunity to comment on your proposal.

The Joint Committee is an independent body consisting of representatives of the principal organisations of and for blind, deafblind and partially sighted people with a specific interest in mobility. It seeks to ensure safe, independent and unhindered access for visually impaired and deafblind people.

The Joint Committee is very concerned about the increasing use of shared facilities for pedestrians and cyclists which do not take into account the mobility needs of blind, deafblind and partially sighted people. The Joint Committee has produced a policy statement to assist Local Authorities in understanding these concerns and to suggest how adjacent facilities for pedestrians and cyclists can be provided where alternatives, such as on road provision for cyclists, have been discounted. A copy of this policy statement is enclosed.

We would also draw your attention to the Department for Transport (DfT) publication 'Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure.' This is available from the DfT and is on their website www.dft.gov.uk.

JCMBPS works at a national level to influence the standards and policies relating to access and inclusive environments. Due to limited resources we are unable to consider in detail individual proposals.

We would strongly recommend that you consult with local visual impairment organisations, local access and disability groups and the local Guide Dogs centre. Your local authority access officer and rehabilitation worker for visually impaired people may also be able to help.

Local organisations and individuals will be able to comment in more detail and with local knowledge. This, combined with a study of the policy statement, will help you to ensure that your proposal takes full account of the requirements of blind and partially sighted people.

Yours sincerely

Number 8

From:

Sent: 05 April 2010 14:35

To: Chris Heard

Subject: Cycle Track between Saxons Close/Danes Way to Hockliffe Road

Dear Mr Heard

We live at _____ and have received your letter of the 25th March regarding the above. We must admit it made us smile, given that the work has already been carried out. Surely the letter should have been sent before the work started.

As you say, this proposed Order merely regularises the shared use by cycles and walkers since we moved here in 1968. However, the plan doesn't cover the link roads between the cycle track and the various cul-de-sacs in Saxons Close and Danes Way, and I doubt that many cyclists will get off their bikes when they use the link roads. Having said that, we're quite happy for them to continue cycling through the one in front of our house, but it seems that this fact has been overlooked. And what is the point of the bobbly bits in the link roads? I don't know what they're for. Does anyone else?

For a long time many people have complained about the many signs on roads - now far too many are being set up on all the footpaths. It gives the impression that ways are being looked at as to how to spend the vast amount of money available for cycle routes. I know this money comes out of the Cycle fund. But where did that money come from? I assume from every rate and taxpayer via the EU and our own government, but you may correct me if that is not the case.

While writing we would like to mention that the the hedges that line the sides of the cycle track are the shared boundary lines of all the adjoining properties. South Beds Council were aware of this, and had confirmed that our hedge would not be cut down without our permission. Please can you confirm that your Council is also aware of this.

Yours sincerely