
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 6th July 2010
Subject: Petition: Safer Routes to School, Sandy – Swansholme Gardens/Kings Road Cycle Bypass.
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 implement changes to a cycle by-pass facility implemented as part of the Sandy Safer Routes to School Initiative, following a number of resident complaints and petition

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Sandy
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will seek reduce car journeys for school use by promoting walking and cycling. The proposal also has benefits for the wider community to promote cycling for short journeys by improving cycle permeability between residential estate and points of interest (shops/industry etc).

Financial:

The cost of constructing this facility was approximately £4,500. The cost to implement the further changes as requested by the adjacent residents would be approximately £11,500. This can be funded from within the overall Sandy scheme and the scope of that scheme will be reduced by that amount.

Legal:

None as a result of this report.

Risk Management:

None as a result of this report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as a result of this report.

Community Development/Safety:

The facility constructed promotes cycling for local school children and provides a safer route along quiet roads and bypasses a barrier where cyclists would normally mount the footways in conflict with pedestrians

Sustainability:

The facility constructed promotes and facilitates sustainable travel.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles approve the following works are delivered:
 - (a) Removal of the existing kerbed build-out and replace with 2no. bolt down islands on the by-pass approach ramps
 - (b) Removal of existing removable cycle bollards with fixed below ground mounted bollards
 - (c) Reduce the facility to a single 1.2m wide bypass from the existing double 1.5m wide bypass (1.5m recognised as best practice)

Background and Information

1. As part of the Sandy Safer Routes to School scheme, a number of measures were prepared by Bedfordshire Highways on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.
2. The elements of the scheme were developed and identified through discussions at a working group including members of Central Bedfordshire Council (Sustainable Transport), Bedfordshire Highways, representatives from associated schools in Sandy and representatives of Sandy Town Council.
3. The aims of the scheme were to provide improved walking and cycling routes to school and to improve the general safety outside the school gates as appropriate.
4. The scheme included provision of a cycle by-pass facility at the transition between Kings Road and Swansholme Gardens, Sandy in order to improve permeability for cyclists within the estate and provide a cycle route to the school along quiet routes as identified by the Central Bedfordshire Cycle Route Strategy.

5. Prior to the scheme, Kings Road and Swansholme Gardens were separated by a kerbed barrier (with nominal level difference between carriageway surfaces) and concrete bollards.
6. The routes had been highlighted as a 'quiet road' under the proposed Sandy cycle network as developed by Central Bedfordshire and Sustrans.
7. The aim therefore was to remove this barrier to provide a channel to allow cycles to use this route – facilitating and promoting sustainable transport for short journeys in Sandy.
8. The proposal had been developed by the Safer Routes to School working group and was seen as a feature which would provide a benefit for pupils cycling to Sandye Place Middle School, using quite roads as well as the wider community.
9. The scheme was also subject to an independent review carried out by Cycling England, (a section of the Department for Transport to advise on cycle issues and promote best practice amongst local authorities). No issues were raised with the cycle bypass (as constructed), other than potentially need for waiting restrictions on the Swansholme Gardens side of the facility.
10. Following the implementation of the cycle facility, the residents of 2no. adjacent households raised concerns with motor cyclists now using the facility, risking the safety of pedestrians on the adjacent footways.
11. In summary, the main arguments raised amongst the residents included the following issues:
 1. The facility to allow cyclists to bypass the barrier was pointless, as no-one currently cycles along this route
 2. Increased danger to the public as motorcycles can now use the bypass
 3. Cycle bollards provided were removable making the road potentially open of vehicles
 4. The cycle route along Kings Road cuts across the access to the Doctors surgery with claims of near misses and a cyclist dismounted by collision.
 5. Motor cycles were not seen as a major issue by the design team/scheme client, but have always been an issue at this location.
 6. The existing turning facility has been reduced in Swansholme Gardens
12. After several communications between the residents, Central Bedfordshire Council and Sandy Town Council, a site meeting was held on Friday 16th April 2010 to discuss the issues raised and a way forward.

13. A petition dated 20th April was then received. The reasons as stated:
 1. No Prior consultation with residents
 2. Change of status of road from a 'dead-end' road
 3. Increased danger to both pedestrians and cyclists
 4. likelihood of damage to residents vehicles parked outside their own homes
 5. Opening of the road for unrestricted access by motorcyclists who are now using it as a rat run
 6. Vehicles have a severely restricted area to turn round since the bollards have been moved forward by 10 feet for no obvious reason
 7. Decrease of value of residents property because the change in status of road
14. Following this, a further meeting was held on Thursday 13th May 2010 to discuss details of a redesign, it was agreed that Bedfordshire Highways would draft 3 alternative options in order to incorporate the resident requests.
15. The preferred re-design option is shown in Appendix A. The main changes to the design as requested by residents included the following:
 1. Removal of the existing kerbed build-out at replace with rubber bolt down islands on the approach ramp to the by-pass
 2. Removal of the existing removable bollards for fixed below ground mounted bollards
 3. Reduce the 2no. 1.5m wide cycle bypass channels with a single 1.2m wide channel

Conclusion and the way Forward

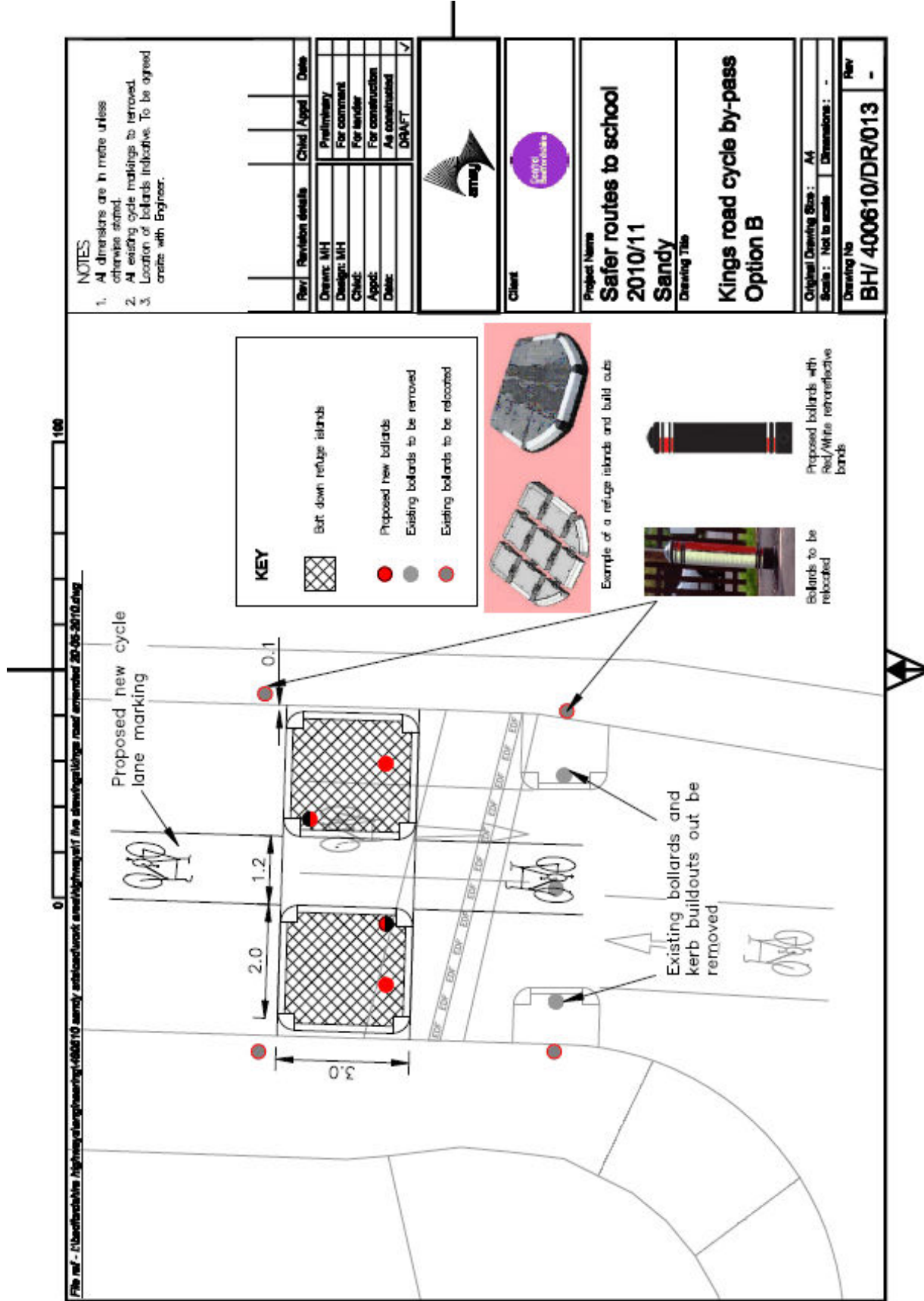
16. In reflection to the reasons the petition was formed, the following statements should be considered:
 1. Unfortunately, no consultation was undertaken with the local residents. However, the proposals were developed in order to deliver Central Bedfordshire's objectives to remove barriers to prevent sustainable travel.
 2. The status of the road has not changed.
 3. The facility provides for cyclists to continue to use the carriageway where previously the barrier would result in cyclists using the narrow footways in conflict with pedestrians. Whilst motorcycles may now use the cycle bypass, they are also now separated from pedestrians on the footways.
 4. The cycle bypass is located on a turning head. Parking should not be taking place at this location. It is not clear how the likelihood of damage to vehicles will occur.
 5. With any cycle facility, it is inevitable that few motor cyclists will also take advantage of the facility. This is very difficult to prevent without causing extreme difficulty of cyclists as a result.
 6. Unfortunately, the bollards were relocated due to shallow electricity cables. This was discussed with the residents at the time of the site meeting on the 16th April

7. Depreciation of properties for the reason stated is not applicable as the status of the road has not changed.
17. However, it was agreed that design options were to be prepared. As stated above in Para 14. a preferred option was chosen by the residents and Sandy Town Council. These changes will provide the following benefits:
1. The 'turning head' will be increased. Parking will be facilitated in order not to obstruct a resident vehicle access, resulting in parked cars either side of the cycle by-pass channel.
 2. Although cycle volumes are expected to be light, only a single bypass will be available for cyclist travelling in either direction. The single channel and reduced width is intended to reduce the speed in which motorcycles could use the facility. It will not be prevented.
 3. All bollards will be replaced with fixed bollards displaying 'route for cycles only'

Appendices:

Appendix A – Plan of revised facility

Appendix A



NOTES

- All dimensions are in metre unless otherwise stated.
- All existing cycle markings to be removed.
- Location of bollards indicative. To be agreed onsite with Engineer.

Rev	Revision details	Chkd	Appd	Date

Drawn: MH	Preliminary
Design: MH	For comment
Chkd:	For tender
Appd:	For construction
Date:	As constructed
	DRAFT

Client

Project Name
Safer routes to school
2010/11
Sandy
Drawing Title

**Kings road cycle by-pass
Option B**

Original Drawing Size: A4
Scale: Not to scale
Dimensions: -
Drawing No: BH/ 400610/DR/013
Rev: -