The Chisholm Trail

Purpose

1. It was agreed at the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board meeting of 28th January 2015 that The Chisholm Trail should form part of the City Deal prioritised programme. This report summarises for the Executive Board members the recommended route of The Chisholm Trail to be taken forward to public consultation.

Recommendations

2. The Board is asked to note the contents and:

a) Approve the proposed route option for the Chisholm Trail
b) Give approval to proceed to consultation on the route in the Autumn 2015

Reasons for Recommendation

a) Safer, direct and more convenient largely off-road route for cycling and walking;
b) Improved access to green spaces, employment areas, retail sites and residential centres;
c) Links into a network of existing cycle routes;
d) Minimal impact on motor traffic journey times;
e) Enhancement of the environment, streetscape and air quality.
f) Provide a link from the main Cambridge Railway Station to the new rail station at Chesterton;
g) Create more capacity for sustainable trips along the rail corridor;
h) Links to strategic priorities for City Deal Cross City cycle improvements

Recommendations from the City Deal Joint Assembly

The Joint Assembly recommended that the Executive Board:

(a) Approves the proposed route option for the Chisholm Trail for the purposes of public consultation.
(b) Gives approval to proceed to consultation on the route in the Autumn 2015.

Background
3. Cambridge is unique in this country in having a very significant level of cycling. The 2011 Census revealed that 29% of journeys to work were made by bicycle, an increase of some 12% (from 26%) in a decade. Within Cambridge, the challenge is to maintain and increase the already high levels of cycling by improving links and routes and addressing safety and parking issues.

4. In March 2014, Cambridgeshire County Council adopted the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC). TSCSC sits under Cambridgeshire’s Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and alongside the Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS). A refreshed LTP3 and the LTTS were both adopted in November 2014. Together, these set out the vision, high level principles, policies and strategy approach for transport in Cambridgeshire.

5. It is from these overarching documents, particularly TSCSC, that the City Deal’s transport infrastructure investment programme has been drawn. It therefore has a strong policy basis.

6. Page 4-24 of TSCSC of the cycling strategy can be summarised in the following way:

- Cycle safety measures at major junctions which could include innovative solutions such as separate signals for cyclists.
- Safe, convenient and frequent crossings for pedestrians, employing zebra crossings where possible and a pedestrian phase at signalised junctions.
- Review of on road car parking on roads forming part of the city cycle network to improve cycle provision.
- Using the opportunity that the new developments in and around the city present to create a step-change in the level and quality of walking and cycling facilities that are provided, which can in turn be plugged into the wider network.
- Provision of additional links on the existing network to join up key destinations that are already partially served by the network (for example The Chisholm Trail).
- As part of the wider corridor treatment, seek to widen existing cycle and pedestrian paths and introduce new segregated paths where appropriate.
- Increasing cycle parking capacity so this does not present a major barrier to certain cycling trips.
- Working with Cambridge City Council to investigate opportunities for new city centre cycle parks or expansion of existing cycle parks.
- Working towards 20mph speed limits on all but major routes, which will make cycling safer and more attractive.
- Improving publicity and the legibility of the pedestrian and cycle network – in particular improving signage, providing information to tourists/visitors and marketing and promotion to new residents.
- Working with partners from Public Health to publicise the health benefits associated with cycling and walking.

More details at this link: [http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20006/travel_roads_and_parking/66/transport_plans_and_policies/2](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20006/travel_roads_and_parking/66/transport_plans_and_policies/2)

7. The Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire was prepared in parallel with the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans that were submitted for examination in March 2014. The submitted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans are planning for 33,000 new homes and 44,000 new jobs by 2031. The growth proposed in these plans will only be deliverable and supported if suitable transport measures and investment are led, coordinated and
delivered. The Plans include policies requiring sustainable transport modes including cycling.

**Economic Case**

8. There have been a number of economic studies recently all concluding that cycling schemes offer very high Benefit-Cost Ratios (BCRs), thus, offering very good value for money compared to other types of transport schemes. HS2 for instance has a BCR of 2.3:1, whereas the Department for Transport found that schemes nationally across its’ Cycle City Ambition programme have BCRs on average of 5:1, with schemes in Cambridge found to be as high as 35:1.

9. The benefits to the economy around investing in new high quality cycle links to get more people cycling are: reduced traffic congestion, savings to health/NHS, reduced land use demands for car parking spaces, enabling people across the social spectrum to access employment and training by improving their mobility options, reduced employee absenteeism and improved productivity. In addition other benefits include increased independence particularly for young people, and improvements to air quality. Improved conditions for cyclists will generally mean improvements for pedestrians as well.

10. In Cambridge with an established cycling culture, network improvements in terms of safety and convenience, are likely to get more people to cycle. Consultations have revealed that there is a large group of people who would like to cycle, but currently do not, and they would cycle if conditions could be made safer by providing largely traffic free cycle routes so that cyclists are segregated away from motor traffic.

**Evolution of the Chisholm Trail**

11. The Chisholm Trail was conceived by cycling campaigner Jim Chisholm in the late 1990s. The thinking behind the Trail is to provide a strategic transport corridor that is largely traffic free that could link up key destinations, including employment sites across the city. This would mean that vulnerable road users would be able to avoid heavy traffic and junctions, whilst the route itself would serve to encourage increased sustainable transport journeys and thus relieve congestion, boost public health and make for more reliable journeys.

12. Added benefits of the project are the promotion of multi modality (allowing easy access to rail stations by foot and cycle), the opening up and linking of green spaces, and the possible creation of pocket parks giving scope for public art and other initiatives and projects. This is a robust model; the Promenade Plantée in Paris and the recently opened 606 in Chicago have enabled alternative transport and leisure routes along railway corridors. The trail will also serve to link new developments thus encouraging more residents to adopt sustainable transport modes. The Chisholm Trail is very much a strategic route that links new developments, employment sites and has direct linkages to other City Deal projects.

13. Consultants Atkins were tasked with developing a feasibility report in 2009. This identified the fact that lots of parcels of private land are needed to provide a largely traffic free route, and it confirmed that much of the land needed is in the ownership of Network Rail. It also highlighted areas for which land was not available because of other residential or commercial developments built close to rail land effectively blocking the most direct and desirable route.

14. Following the Atkins report of 2009, officers have continued to progress the proposals and there has been some discussion around specific new and potential developments
such as CB1, developments on Devonshire Road, and the City Council Depot. Cambridge Cycling Campaign, Sustrans and other groups have also fed in their ideas and thoughts at regular intervals as well.

15. The Chisholm Trail has very much been a ‘live’ project since 2009 and an established scheme, but until now tactically it has been a case of awaiting certain developments to come forward to enable the delivery of discrete sections. As a City Deal project a more proactive approach will be adopted to actively secure land needed for the whole route, along with necessary consents and permissions, to work towards delivery of the whole project.

Route selection

16. In 2012 The Chisholm Trail as a strategic transport route was added to the emerging Cambridge City Local Plan. A Basic Asset Protection Agreement was signed with Network Rail, and work began to identify potential delivery options. The trail will be a largely off road route, from the current mainline rail station to the area of the proposed Cambridge North Station in Chesterton. In 2014 a number of potential routes were assessed, and this led to the basis of the proposed option route discussed below.

17. Once approval for funding was granted in January 2015, officers considered it appropriate to bring on board further expertise to the project in order to develop in more detail the preferred, ambitious, but deliverable greenway route. John Grimshaw CBE, founder and former president of Sustrans was commissioned. He has many years’ experience in delivering new cycle routes on or adjacent to railway land, and his current portfolio of work includes developing routes to complement the HS2 project, as well as acting as a Transport Advisor to the Mayor of Bristol.

18. The subsequent work undertaken by the officer team including John Grimshaw Associates involved surveying the outline route and general area over a number of days. A preferred route document was then prepared setting out a number of plans and illustrations of the route, including reference to opportunities for enhancing the local environment and specific consideration to the parcels of land needed, and identification of landowners. The proposed route is summarised on Plan 1. The full proposed route document can be seen at this link: http://www.gccitydeal.co.uk/citydeal/info/2/transport/1/transport/6

19. Initial discussions have been held with the landowners, including Network Rail, and at this early stage, signs are encouraging that some form of agreement can be made in each individual case.

20. The views of local Councillors, Stakeholders, residents, groups, Friends Of groups and the wider public will be critical in further developing the project. Areas such as, route alignment, type of provision, path width, decision to segregate or not, surface materials and landscaping will no doubt be debated at length as the project develops.

Consultation

21. Prior to planning permission submission, a full public exhibition will take place to support further development of the preferred route and to fully understand the needs and aspirations of the local and wider communities in the delivery of this strategic route.

Consultation will include:

- Briefings for local representatives incl. Parish Councils and Residents’ Associations
• Briefings for key stakeholders, incl. interest groups and businesses
• Press release/social media/web presence using: www.greatercambridgecitydeal.co.uk
• Survey/questionnaire
• Public meetings and exhibitions in places along the consultation corridor
• Displays for public events and to be left in public places
• Direct mail/e-mail, parent-mail
• Advertising incl. Ward / Local area magazines and parish newsletters
• Information in libraries, GP surgeries and other places of interest with passing trade
• Work with local schools and colleges

Post-consultation -
• Analyse results
• Advertise results through website, press release, direct mail/e-mail, local newsletters and magazines, social media.

22. For the Chisholm Trail to be complete, a crossing over the River Cam will be needed. The Abbey-Chesterton Bridge project is currently underway as a separately funded, standalone development. The delivery of this bridge is anticipated in 2018.

23. £8.4m of City Deal funding has been allocated to this project for Years 1-5.

24. The following table provides outline dates for delivery:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Milestone or Phase</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initiation – Project Initiation Document and preparation</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Route profiling and outline phasing</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public consultation and Exhibition</td>
<td>Oct/Nov 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Planning Application Submission</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Full design of preferred option</td>
<td>By Summer 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Finalise necessary land and permissions</td>
<td>By Autumn 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Construction of separate standalone phases</td>
<td>Late 2017 to 2020</td>
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Implications

25. There are no significant implications.

26. Next Steps:
• Further development of proposed option
• Convene Project Steering Group
• Consult with the Public and Stakeholders
• Prepare planning application
• Continue land discussions

Report Author: Graham Hughes – Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment, Cambridgeshire County Council Telephone: 01223 715660

Plan 1 – Proposed route
The outline of the route can be described as follows:

1. Planned link to new rail station at Chesterton and The Busway cycle and pedestrian route to St Ives.
2. New bridge over the Cam alongside the mainline railway bridge (a separately funded project).
3. Cambridge, Past, Present and Future’s lands make the crucial link between Coldham’s Common and Ditton Meadows.
4. The Leper Chapel (Chapel of St Mary Magdalene) would become a focus of the route and enhanced by landscaping.
5. New access under Newmarket Road.
6. Existing underpass under Ipswich Line.
7. From Coldham’s Common along Brampton Road or Cromwell Road and through the planned Ridgeon site development.
8. The route to the west of the railway line crossing the existing cycling bridge, links through the Beehive Centre, along Ainsworth Rd and along the edge of the City Council’s Mill Road Depot.
9. Pass under Mill Road side arches on both sides of the railway, thereby avoiding dangerous crossings.
10. Along the railway line to the Carter Bridge from Devonshire Road to Rustat Road.
11. From Carter Bridge to The Busway via the main Rail Station.

Map showing the proposed route of the Chisholm Trail from Cambridge Central Station to the planned Cambridge North Station at Chesterton

KEY
- On quiet roads
- Traffic free sections and paths