

Report to Mousehold Heath conservators
17 January 2014
Report of Head of city development services
Subject Push the Pedalways

Item

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Purpose

To update the Conservators on the appraisal of route options for the new cycle and walking route from the Jarrolds bridge to Heartsease that is planned as part of the Push the Pedalways project and seek endorsement for a public consultation.

Recommendation

To endorse the decision of the Push the Pedalways executive board to:

- (1) Support the principle of creating a high quality cycling and pedestrian route from Jarrolds bridge to Heartsease as part of the cross city pink pedalway.
- (2) Select two route options for the west section (Option 1 (Dragoon Street) and Option 3a (Heathgate)) and two route options for the east section (Beech Drive and Gurney Road) for further design development and to consult the public on these options in February 2014.
- (3) Seek approval from the Conservators for a preferred route design in July 2014.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority to create a prosperous city, a safe and clean city and a city of character and culture and the service plan priority to improve cycling and walking infrastructure in the city.

Financial implications

It will be funded from the approved budget of £5.5m for the Push the Pedalways programme.

Ward/s: Catton Grove, Crome, Sewell, Thorpe Hamlet

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard – Environment and transport

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. The city council made a successful application to the Department for Transport for a Cycle City Ambition Grant. It was announced in August 2013 that Norwich's application had been successful and we were awarded £3.7m of government money to add to £1.8 of local money.
2. Our programme is called "Push the Pedalways" and its objectives are to:
 - boost economic growth by enabling residents to reach job opportunities, city centre facilities and linking major development sites to the cycle network
 - tackle health problems in parts of the city with high levels of obesity by providing cycling infrastructure and targeted cycling promotion
 - double the level of cycling within ten years
 - broaden the demographic appeal of cycling
 - reduce the rate of accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians
 - cut carbon emissions from journeys within the city.
3. The programme will create a safe, convenient and attractive eight mile route from the Norwich Research Park through the city centre to Heartsease and beyond. Mousehold Heath lies between Heartsease and the city centre and therefore one of the projects that make up the programme involves creating a better link to Heartsease from the Jarrolds bridge over the Wensum that uses the recently improved Valley Drive cycle and walking path. As well as creating an excellent new route this project offers an opportunity to celebrate lost cavalry rides up to Mousehold and to potentially recreate some heathland habitat, which are aims of the Heath management plan.
4. At their meeting on 18 October 2013 the Conservators agreed to have a site visit to look at potential routes. This took place on 18 November 2013. Since then the project team has been working on a route option appraisal.

Route options

5. The route of the pink pedalway between Jarrolds bridge and Heartsease currently goes via St James Close, Mousehold Street, Silver Road, Mousehold Avenue, Gurney Road and Valley Drive. The western part is long and winding and exposes cyclists to high levels of traffic on Silver Road where they also have to climb a steep hill making them less steady. This route is therefore not well used.
6. Push the Pedalways creates the opportunity to create a route that is up to 650m shorter, depending on the option that is selected. It will also be separate from traffic. These conditions will attract far more people to cycle to and from the city rather than driving their cars or relying on bus services that can be inconvenient.
7. The route option appraisal is attached to this report. It divides the route into a west section and an east section. The west is from the Jarrolds bridge to the Rangers

House and the east is from the Rangers House to Heartsease. There are six options for the west section and two for the east. Originally the project team was only intending to look at Beech Drive for the east section but following the consultation event about the whole programme in Blackfriars Hall on 26 November 2013 in the Mousehold Defenders advocated the use of Gurney Road between the Rangers House and Valley Drive. The project team realised that this option had considerable merits and has included this in the option evaluation.

8. The design team will also undertake a review of the completed Valley Drive scheme and consider whether adjustments need to be made to the design.
9. The evaluation concluded that the four lowest scoring options for the west section should not be developed any further, given that the exploring more than two options in detail would be prohibitively expensive and time consuming. The two route options for the east section both merit further development. We do not currently have sufficient information to select a single preferred option for either section. Furthermore, it would be wrong to make a decision before we find out what the public think about the two pairs of options that appear to be potentially viable.

Public consultation

10. We plan to undertake consultation in two phases. There would be a consultation on the route options in February 2014. There would then be a further consultation on the proposed detailed design of the project for the route that is selected. This is likely to take place in June 2014. The advice of the Conservators on how this consultation can be designed to reach all those people who have an interest in Mousehold Heath would be valuable.

Jarrold Bridge – Heartsease Route Evaluation

9 January 2014

Written by: Ben Webster, Delivery manager, Norwich City Council

Checked by: John Nuttall, Principal Landscape Architect, Norwich City Council

Checked by: Duncan Cole, Programme manager, Norfolk County Council

Contents

- 1 Description of route options
 - 1.1 Existing route
 - 1.2 West section route options
 - 1.2.1 Option 1
 - 1.2.2 Option 2 (a. b.)
 - 1.2.3 Option 3 (a. b.)
 - 1.2.4 Option 4
 - 1.3 East section route options
 - 1.3.1 Beech Drive
 - 1.3.2 Gurney Road
- 2 Evaluation criteria
- 3 Route evaluation
 - 3.1 Cohesion
 - 3.2 Directness
 - 3.3 Safety
 - 3.4 Comfort

3.5 Attractiveness

3.6 Cost

4 Conclusions and recommendations

Appendix 1 Route Options (west section)

Appendix 2 Route Options (east section)

Appendix 3 Historic Routes

1 Description of route options

1.1 Existing route

The pink pedalway currently connects Gilders Way to Valley Drive via St James Close, Mousehold Street, Silver Road, Mousehold Avenue and Gurney Road. The route is long and circuitous and involves climbing in busy traffic on Silver Road.

1.2 West section route options

Appendix 1 illustrates the route options.

1.2.1 Option 1

This route would cross Barrack Street using an enlarged central refuge. It would be prudent not to install a signalised toucan crossing west of the junction of Barrack Street and St James Close initially but instead to wait for the planned direct cycle and pedestrian link through the St James Place development from the Jarrolds bridge to Barrack Street to be completed and then install a crossing west of St James Close. The route would then head up St James Close and turn right into Mousehold Street. At the junction with Hassett Close it would ascent a new ramp to the field above Heathgate. A new path would cross the field and the scrub land directly to the Rangers House. This route follows the historic alignment of Dragoon Street (see appendix 3) and is partly on highway and partly on City Council owned land.

1.2.2 Option 2

Like option 1 this would cross Barrack Street. It would also head up St James Close, turn right into Mousehold Street and travel all the way the junction with Heathgate. It would turn left into Heathgate and go to the concrete bridge. Option 2a would ascend a remodelled ramp between the blocks of flats and join route option 1, to link with the Rangers House. Option 2b would not go under the concrete bridge and would instead ascend a new path through the woods to connect with Gurney Road south of the junction with Britannia Road and Beech Drive. This route is mostly on highway but part is City Council owned land.

1.2.3 Option 3

This route would turn right onto a new cycle path on the south side of Barrack Street, cross Barrack Street using the existing signalised toucan crossing and cut through to Cannell Green. It would then go along Cannell Green and left at the junction with Heathgate until it approaches the concrete bridge connecting the Heathgate flats. Option 3a and 3b would mirror 2a and 2b but from this point to the Rangers House. This route is mostly on highway but part is City Council owned land.

1.2.4 Option 4

Like option 3 this route would turn right onto a new cycle path on the south side of Barrack Street, cross Barrack Street using the existing toucan crossing and cut through to Cannell Green. At the junction with Heathgate and Gurney Road it would use a widened path along Gurney Road as far as the Rangers House. This route is entirely on highway.

1.3 East section route options

Appendix 2 illustrates the route options.

1.3.1 Beech Drive

The route would cross Gurney Road on a new crossing leading to Beech Drive. It is likely that the crossing would be in the form of a raised table supported by a 20mph limit but other crossing types will be explored as part of the detailed design. A 3 metre wide sealed surface path would be made on the alignment of the existing track that travels in a straight line to the junction with Valley Drive.

1.3.2 Gurney Road

The route would follow a widened path along the west side of Gurney Road from the Rangers House to the junction with Mousehold Avenue. Once it had crossed Mousehold Avenue it would use the recently widened and surfaced path on the north side of Gurney Road and though Valley Drive.

2 Evaluation criteria

The route options have been evaluated against twelve criteria that are grouped into six categories. It is loosely based on the Dutch system for evaluating cycle route options. A maximum of 100 points are available.

2.1 Cohesion (10 points)

This covers the quality of the connections to other pedalways in the cycle network (5 points) and the connection to residential populations and public facilities (5 points).

2.2 Directness (20 points)

This covers the length of the route with shorter being better (15 points) and the ease of finding ones' way around (5 points).

2.3 Safety (20 points)

This covers personal security, meaning a sense of threat from crime (10 points) and threat from traffic (10 points).

2.4 Comfort (10 points)

This covers the width of the clear path to cycle on (5 points) and the gradient, with more climbing and sudden slopes scoring badly (5 points).

2.5 Attractiveness (15 points)

This covers high quality surroundings and beautiful views (5 points), opportunities for ecological enhancement (5 points) and the potential to celebrate history (5 points).

2.6 Cost (25 points)

The anticipated order of costs is translated into points with the most expensive option being awarded 1 point and the cheapest 25 points, with the increments related to the relative costs between the options.

3 Route evaluation

3.1 Cohesion

West section

Option 2a scores the highest as it passes the most residential properties and the Heathgate shop. Option 4 is the least cohesive because it passes very few residential properties and avoids the shop.

East section

Gurney Road scores considerably more than Beech Drive because it combines with the orange pedalway between Mousehold Avenue and Britannia Road and passes Zaks and the Fountain Ground.

3.2 Directness

West section

Option 1 is the most direct by a large margin at 639m, it is over 150m shorter than the next shortest option and the path will be clear without any confusing deviations. Option 2a is the longest and most convoluted route.

East section

Beech Drive is considerably more direct than Gurney Road being 130m shorter, straight with no junctions.

3.3 Safety

West section

Option 1 feels safest because it is largely away from traffic and does not go through the middle of the estate. If it cannot be lit it will score less well. Option 3a suffers because there is an awkward section through parked cars on a bend and the route goes through the middle of the estate. Greater control of on street parking may be needed.

East section

The options score similarly. There would be less concern about traffic on Beech Drive (because only one road would be crossed and the whole route is away from traffic) but there would be more insecurity about personal safety, especially if it could not be lit.

3.4 Comfort

West section

There is little difference overall between the options. There will be a steep gradient on a short section of option 1 but there is scope to have the widest path. Option 4 is a shallower but longer climb and the path width is constrained.

East section

Beech Drive will be more comfortable because the path will be wider and flatter than what can be achieved alongside Gurney Road.

3.5 Attractiveness

West section

Option 1 will be dramatically better than the others because the panoramic views over Norwich offer something which none of the other options (indeed no other place in on the cycle network) can offer. There is also scope to enhance the biodiversity of the area west of the Rangers House and to interpret the historical connection with Dragoon Street and the cavalry ride can be celebrated.

East section

Beech Drive is considerably more attractive than Gurney Road because the route through the tree lined avenue away from the road is beautiful and the history of the rifle butts can be highlighted. The clearance of brambles and planting beech trees could help to restore the avenue.

3.6 Cost

West section

Option 1 will be the most expensive because of the need to remodel the Hassett Close steps and improve the crossing over Barrack Street. Option 3a is the cheapest because least construction is involved and it uses the existing toucan crossing on Barrack Street.

East section

Gurney Road will be a bit less expensive because the path has already been widened near Zaks and on Valley Drive.

Route evaluation													
Options	Cohesion (10)		Directness (20)		Safety (20)		Comfort (10)		Attractiveness (15)			Cost (25)	Total (100)
	Links to pedalways (5)	Links to residents and facilities (5)	Length (15)	Ease of wayfinding (5)	Personal security (10)	Traffic (10)	Width of path (5)	Gradient (5)	Views (5)	Ecological enhancement (5)	Celebration of history (5)	Cost (25)	
West section													
Option 1	2	3	15	5	7	8	4	2	5	4	5	1	61 (2nd)
Option 2a	2	5	1	1	5	4	3	3	1	3	2	20	50 (4th)
Option 2b	2	4	4	2	5	5	3	3	1	1	2	15	47 (5th)
Option 3a	2	3	9	3	3	5	3	3	2	3	2	25	63 (1st)
Option 3b	2	2	10	4	3	6	3	3	2	1	2	20	58 (3rd)
Option 4	2	1	6	5	6	3	2	4	2	1	1	10	43 (6th)
East section													
Gurney Road	5	3	10	2	7	5	2	4	3	1	1	25	68 (2 nd)
Beech Drive	2	1	15	5	4	9	5	5	4	3	3	20	76(1 st)

4 Conclusions and recommendations

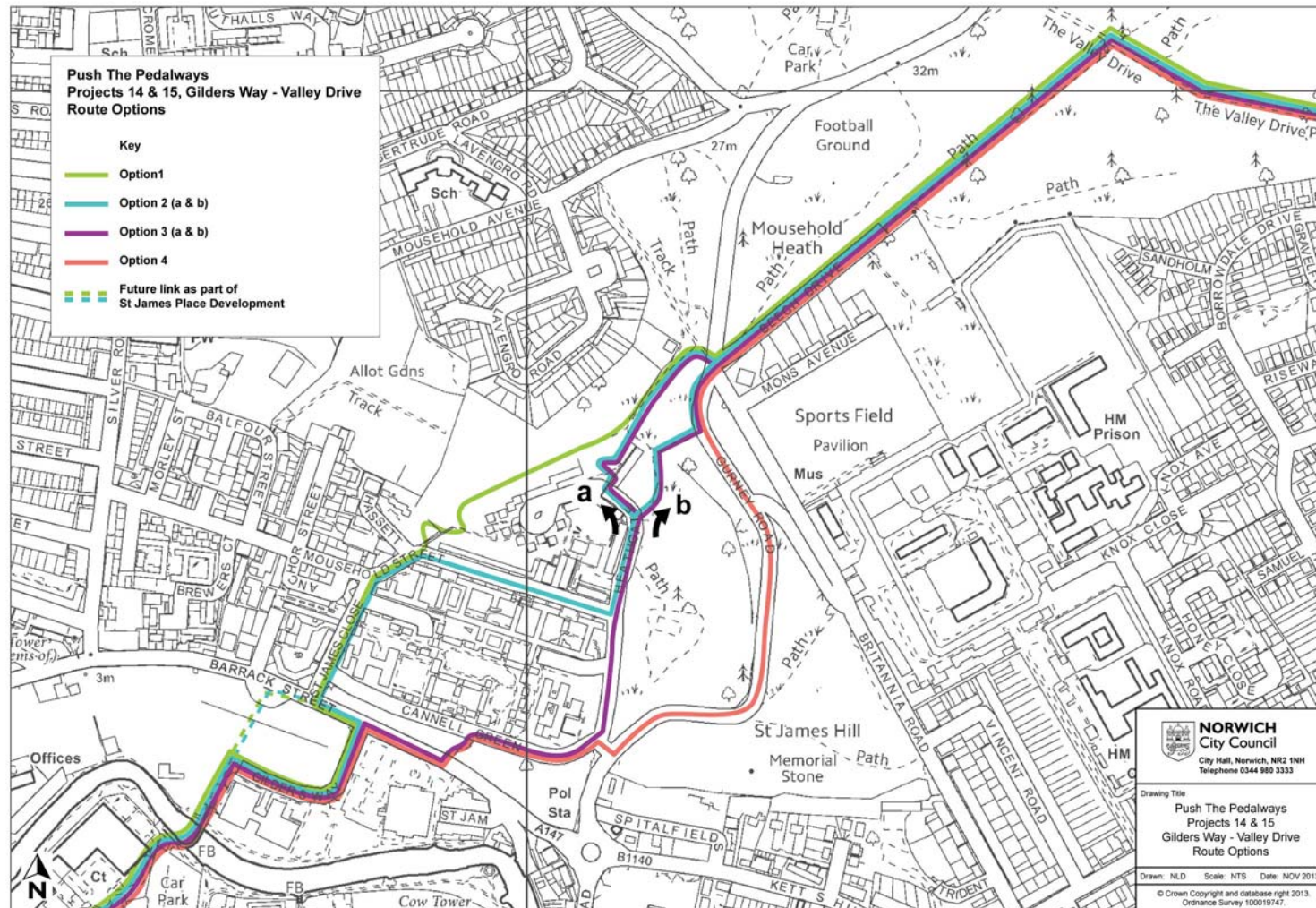
East section

It is recommended to take the top two options and develop them further to firm up detailed costs and investigate their risks for implementation. It is recommended that option 3a and option 1, with scores that were closely matched, are selected. Options 2a, 2b, 3b and 4 should be rejected and not developed any further.

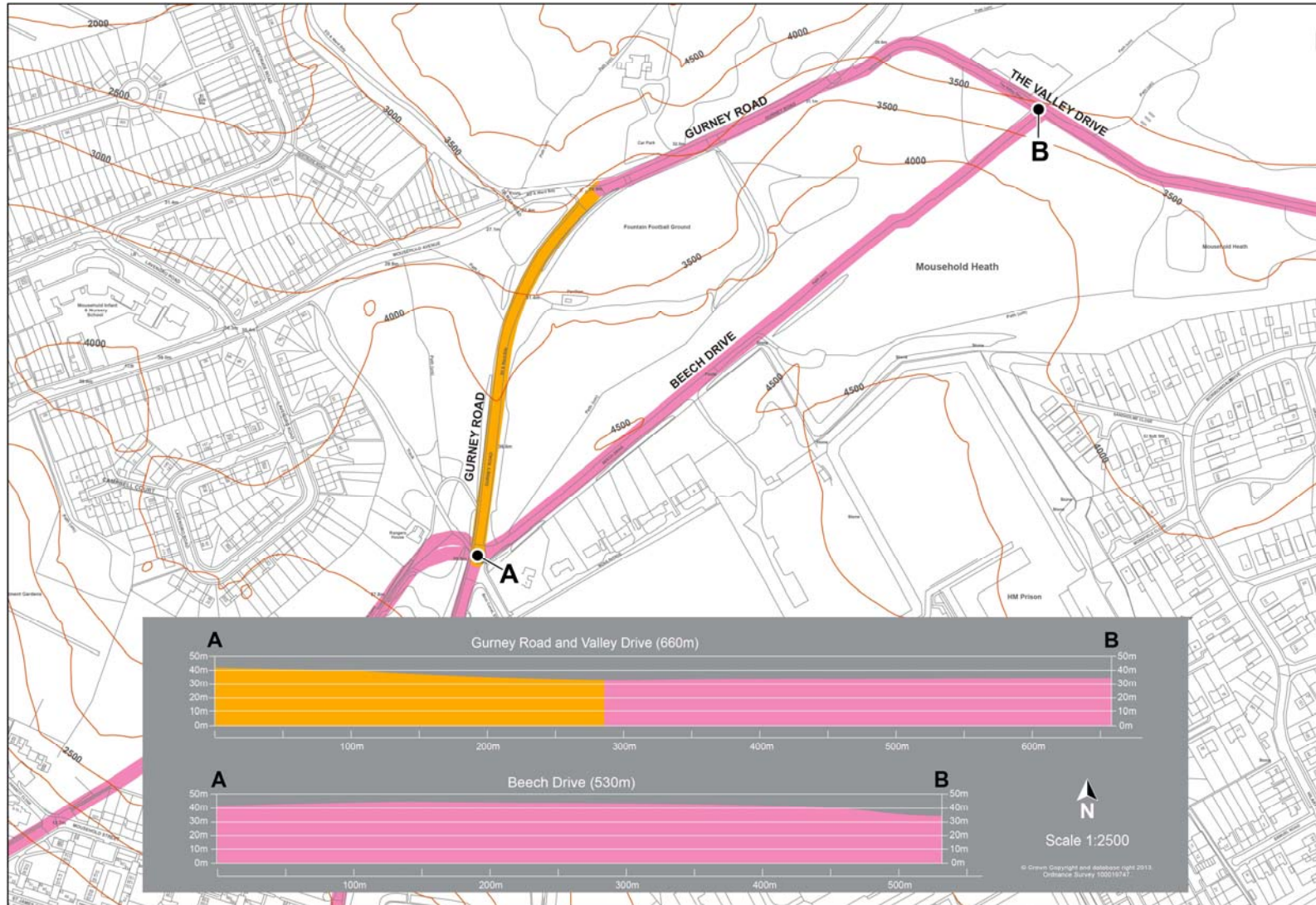
West section

It is recommended that Beech Drive and Gurney Road should remain under consideration. Both schemes should be developed further in terms of costs and risk assessed for implementation.

Appendix1 Map Showing the options for the western section (ignore Beech Drive)



Appendix 2. Options for the Eastern Route



Historic Map from 1928

