

# **Riverside Routes Scheme Questions and Answers**

## **What is Riverside Routes and what does it aim to achieve?**

The 'Riverside route to city centre' scheme aims to improve pedestrian and cycle links between existing residential areas and the city centre and Oxford station. It will connect major city centre sites including Westgate, Oxpens and Osney Mead with some of the city's largest residential areas.

Problems that prevent more cycling and walking will be overcome by providing new and improved largely traffic-free connections to and through Oxford city centre.

The project proposals and budget have been split into three elements:

1. West Oxford Route improvement
2. Thames Towpath improvement
3. Oxpens Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridge

## **How is this project being funded?**

The county council has secured £3.3m from central government's Cycle City Ambition Fund, and is contributing £300k towards the scheme through maintenance improvements.

Of the £3.6m total, £3.3m is allocated to route infrastructure improvement measures, with £300k allocated to bank maintenance measures on the Thames towpath. Bank improvement works were completed in October 2016.

## **What are we asking members of the public and stakeholders to comment on and can they affect the designs/proposals at this stage?**

We are seeking general comments on the proposed designs for the following measures.

1. West Oxford Route improvement
2. Thames Towpath improvement

We would particularly welcome feedback you might be able to provide on sections and components of these routes which you would consider the most important. These routes have been split into seven sections.

1. West Oxford Route Improvements - Bulstake Footbridge to North Hinksey
2. West Oxford Route Improvements - Osney Mead to Bulstake Footbridge
3. Thames Towpath - Osney Lock to Oxpens Bridge
4. Thames Towpath - Oxpens Bridge to Pipe Bridge
5. Thames Towpath - Pipe Bridge to Folly Bridge
6. Thames Towpath - Folly Bridge to Donnington Bridge
7. Thames Towpath - Donnington Bridge to Southern Bypass

The project does not require an amendment to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). As such the county council will not be undertaking a formal consultation on the scheme

### **How will the proposals benefit cyclists and pedestrians?**

The proposals will benefit all users of the Thames towpath and Willow Walk routes through improving the quality of the surface, widening sections of the route and removing obstructions to reduce instances of pinch points and areas of conflict along the route. The improvements also propose the installation of solar studs along the route to assist with defining and highlighting the route to users.

### **Why are you not proposing segregated cycle lanes?**

Whilst the project is funded through the governments cycle city ambition scheme, improvements to the routes are intended to benefit all users. As well as providing a key off-road cycle route into and from the centre of Oxford, the routes also provide important leisure and recreational function. The county council considers that provision of segregated cycle facilities along the route would compromise the desirability of the route for a large proportion of users and could create a potential safety hazard.

### **What are the proposals for towpath widening next to trees without damaging or causing harm to them?**

Widening of the towpath to 3metres will require the narrowing of grass verges and removal of vegetation and the relocation of trees along particular sections of the route. Relocation of existing street furniture will also be required at particular points along the route. Localised narrowing of the route to widths of less than 3m is proposed at certain points, so that as many trees as possible can be retained. At widening locations, adjacent to trees, a cellweb, or equivalent, foundation will be used. Cellweb is a no-dig solution that ensures that the loads placed upon it are laterally dissipated rather than transferred to the soil and roots below whilst enabling free movement of water and oxygen, ensuring that nutrient supplies to the tree roots are maintained.

### **What are the latest proposals for the Oxpens pedestrian and cycle bridge?**

The riverside routes scheme includes a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the river Thames at Oxpens. Design proposals for the bridge are being developed and co-ordinated alongside a number of key delivery partners. In particular the bridge proposals need to be coordinated with the emerging development proposals at Osney Mead and Oxpens. Feasibility design work of the bridge element is being progressed and further details on the bridge proposal will be made available in due course once further feasibility design work has been completed.

### **What is the proposed surface construction?**

The existing towpath will be overlaid and widened with bituminous material to achieve a 3 metre wide towpath. The new towpath will then be surfaced with a buff (golden brown) 3-6mm pea gravel bonded by a bitumen binder. The buff colour will be in keeping with the rural environment it is situated within.

### **When will construction start/finish?**

Work on the Thames towpath and West Oxford route improvements is programmed to start in Autumn 2017, and is expected to last until March 2018. Once this current consultation phase has concluded further detailed design work will be carried out. Information will be made available on how the county council expects to minimise disruption to those who use these routes during the construction period.