

RIDGEWAY CONNECTIONS: PROPOSED FOOTPATH/CYCLEWAY

Results of Public Consultation Exercise: Report to Executive Member for Regeneration

1. Purpose of Report

Middlesbrough Council is proposing to connect Hemlington Grange to the existing pedestrian and cycle network serving Coulby Newham with a footpath/cycleway, allowing journeys between the two communities for retail, leisure and education to be made safely on foot and by cycle. This Report sets out the rationale behind the proposed scheme, details the results of the public consultation exercises carried out in October/November 2020 and January/February 2021 and makes recommendations as to whether the scheme should be taken forward to the implementation stage.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- a) The responses received during the public consultation exercise are noted;
- b) The objections to the proposed scheme are overruled; and
- c) The scheme proceeds to the implementation stage.

3. Background

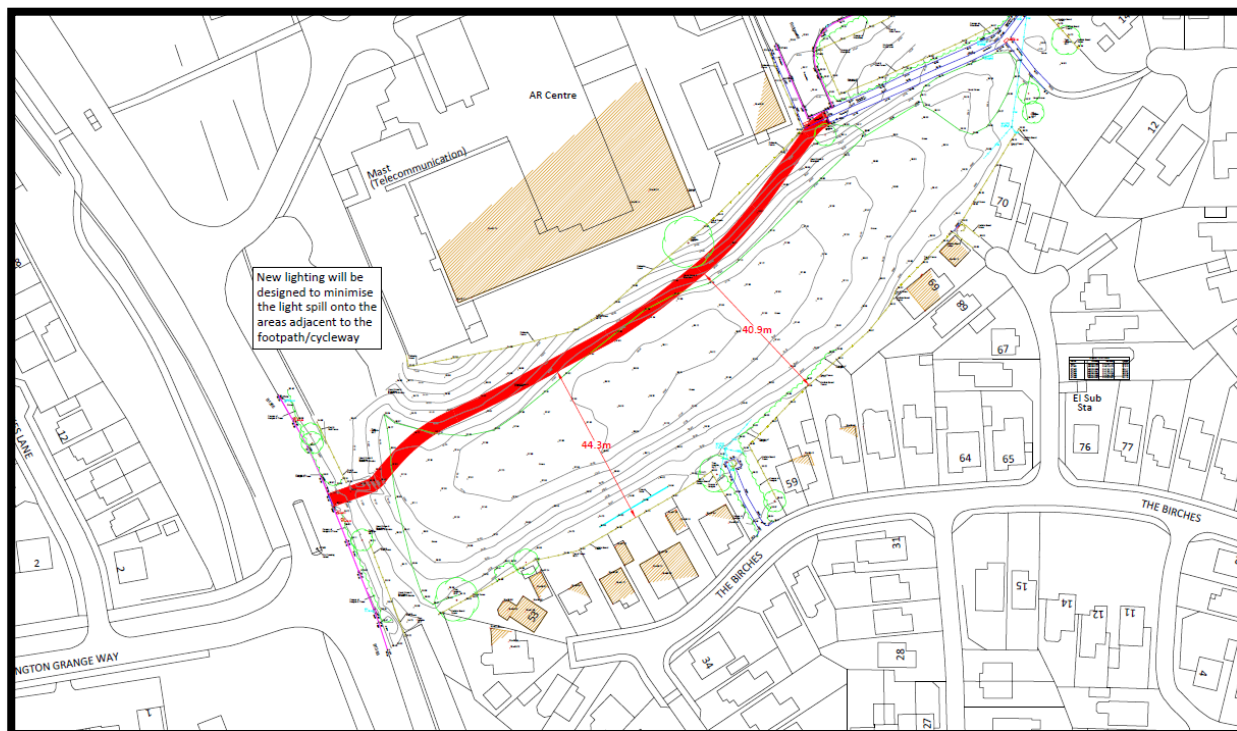
As set out in the Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy, Middlesbrough Council is committed to increasing the number of local journeys made on foot and by cycle. Reducing the current dependence on the private car for such journeys will reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute towards the social and economic regeneration of the Borough.

To achieve this objective, the Council is investing in new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure designed to provide safe and convenient routes between residential areas and local facilities such as shops and schools. One of the residential areas included in this programme is Hemlington Grange which, because of its location to the south of Stainton Way and the east of B1365 Stokesley Road, is poorly connected to the footpath and cycleway network.

In order to address this situation, it is proposed to construct a new footpath/cycleway link from the existing traffic signal-controlled crossing facility at the junction of Stokesley Road and Hemlington Grange Way to the existing footpath/cycleway between Woodlea and Ridgeway, and an additional light controlled signal crossing on Stainton Way to the west of the B1365 Stokesley Road (Gables) roundabout.

The proposed footpath/cycleway link will connect Hemlington Grange to the existing pedestrian and cycle network serving Coulby Newham, thereby allowing journeys between the two communities – including to the Parkway Centre, the Rainbow Centre, The King's Academy and Rose Wood Academy – to be made safely on foot and by cycle.

4. Proposed Scheme



The proposed scheme comprises approximately 170 metres of 3.6 metre wide footpath/cycleway, running between the signal-controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing facility at the B1365 Stokesley Road/Hemlington Grange Way junction to the existing footpath/cycleway to the north of The Birches. The proposed alignment of the new footpath/cycleway is shown on the above plan.

The proposed footpath/cycleway link will run across an area of Council-owned land to the north of The Birches, and will be designed and maintained to full adoptable standard. The proposed alignment has been carefully chosen in order to minimise the impact of the new link on nearby residential properties. The distance between the footpath/cycleway and the boundary of the nearest residential property will be approximately 40 metres, and the footpath/cycleway will be lit by LED luminaires that will minimise any light spill onto residential properties during the hours of darkness.

5. Public Consultation Exercise

As with all proposed highway improvement schemes, public consultation was carried out in order to seek the views of key stakeholders. The first public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period between 30th October 2020 and 27th November 2020, and sought the views of the following parties:

- The occupiers of those residential properties in The Birches and Woodlea in the vicinity of the proposed route;
- Local Ward Councillors; and
- The Army Reserve Centre.

Anyone not included in the above list but with an interest in the scheme was also able to submit their comments via the Council website.

A total of 36 responses were received, with one in favour of the proposed scheme and 35 against.

A meeting was held on 10th December 2020 to discuss the outcome of the first consultation exercise. This meeting was attended by the Mayor and Councillors representing the Coulby Newham and Stainton & Thornton Wards, as well as by Council officers.

At the meeting, it was highlighted that, whilst the occupiers of nearby properties had been consulted, the main potential beneficiaries of the proposed scheme (i.e. the occupiers of properties in Hemlington Grange) had not. Consequently, the decision was taken to carry out a second public consultation exercise, with the scope of the consultation extended to cover the occupiers of properties in Hemlington Grange as well as all of the properties in The Birches and Woodlea.

The second public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period from 15th January to 12th February 2021. A total of 83 responses were received (including the responses received during the first consultation exercise), with 43 of those responding in favour of the proposed scheme and 40 against. The results of the second consultation exercise are considered in more detail below.

Detailed Consultation Results

The occupiers of 492 properties were consulted by post on the scheme:

43 FOR

40 AGAINST

A total of 43 replies were received from consultees in favour of proposed the scheme. The comments received included:

<i>We walk over often however with a young baby in a pram I find it's not easy going via Ridgeway as there tends to be cars coming in-and-out and lots of parked cars partially on the pavement making it dangerous and difficult with a pram.</i>	<i>I am in favour of this as my two daughters go to Rose Wood School and it would be fantastic that we could walk to school. Also walk to the local supermarkets via this route.</i>
<i>Thinking of the future it gives us a good route to Rose Wood Academy for my youngest child and safe way once she is of an age to be able to make her own way there and back.</i>	<i>It would also allow me to walk to the shops, doctors etc. safely with a pram and a young baby.</i>
<i>I have family living on Hemlington Grange and as we regularly walk across most days I feel the proposals will enable us all to walk back and forwards safely. As the field is so muddy and difficult for a pram at the moment we are having to go via the Ridgeway which during the day is extremely busy with cars coming in and out and parking up on pavements but at night is deserted and therefore very</i>	<i>As dog owners and also with family who live on The Birches, we walk over to the Woodlea footpath almost daily, morning and night. We use the current footpath onto Ridgeway, which is not in good shape. It has no lighting at all, often floods in bad weather and is completely covered with litter and discarded food. Once onto Ridgeway, we have to compete with busy traffic (often emergency service vehicles) to cross the road and also the full length of the path has parked</i>

<i>lonely especially when on your own. It's also not pleasant having to walk through the small wooded area by the ambulance station onto Stokesley Rd where the crossing isn't as safe as the controlled crossing further up the road.</i>	<i>cars on it (during working hours). It really is not suitable for pedestrian use.</i>
<i>I am strongly in favour of and support the proposed path way. I live on the new estate and see children daily trying to cross the extremely busy road. It won't be long before there is an accident. In addition to this, the small pathway which runs towards the Post Office/TA was not built to take the amount of traffic that now goes through it. It is also in an awful state, full of rubbish etc.</i>	<i>I also find it lonely at night when the sorting office and factory are closed. I don't feel safe having to walk through the wooded area as it can be very dark at night or crossing Stokesley Road at this point. I feel the new path gives a safe crossing of Stokesley Road for not only me with a young baby but for my eldest daughter enabling her to visit family and school friends either walking or cycling on her own.</i>
<i>This will make a huge difference to people for access to local amenities and remove a lot of risk of traffic whilst crossing Stokesley Road. The current Coulby Newham residents which are opposing this have been making their voices heard in the area with remarks that Hemlington is of a poor standard to themselves. We in Hemlington Grange are all hard working professionals with a right to walk into any public area without discrimination.</i>	<i>We are both very much in favour of the proposed plans to have a connecting footpath and cycle path from the existing crossing over Stokesley Road to the existing cycle path near the Ridgeway. Lighting on this path would be excellent, as we currently run around the area on existing paths through the Ridgeway and it is quite dark, especially the small cut from the little crossing to the path through trees onto the Ridgeway.</i>

A total of 40 responses were against the proposed scheme. The main grounds for objection are set out in the table below, together with the response from Council officers in each case:

Alternative Routes	Response
Travelling south on B1365 and joining the footpath at Ridgeway and travelling around Ridgeway passed the Army Reserve Centre and Royal Mail sorting office and re-joining the existing foot path/cycle way at the rear of Woodlea.	This route is not possible as a cycle way because there is only provision for pedestrians on the Ridgeway footpath with no cycling. Cyclists would have to use Ridgeway with the additional road safety risks of cycling with other road users on a small industrial estate. This route would require the removal of established trees and flora along the B1365 to build the alternative scheme, and additionally a new footpath from the junction with Ridgeway to the entrance at the Army Reserve Centre would also have to be built. The increased costs, increased road safety concerns and the removal of established trees and flora make this option unviable. A second similar alternative route was also proposed travelling south to Stainton Way and to build a new toucan crossing. This route would channel students to Kings Academy School, but away from the

Parkway shopping centre.



Anti-Social Behaviour	
Residents report off-road motor cycles and quad bike users have used the area, and there are concerns that groups of teenagers will use the grassed area as a hangout. Concerns that burglaries will be committed by using the footpath/cycle path to gain access to properties, and it will give easy access for criminals between estates.	Residents have reported anti-social behaviour in the consultation. From January 2018 to December 2020 in the immediate area of The Birches TS8 0UB and Woodlea TS8 0TX there is has been no reported anti-social behaviour (Data supplied by Analytics Business Partner, Strategy Information & Governance, Middlesbrough Council). A chicane barrier is to be installed near the light controlled crossing on the B1365.
Security/Crime	
Concerns that burglaries will be committed by using the footpath/cycle path to gain access to properties, and it will give easy access for criminals between estates.	Residents have reported crime in the consultation. From January 2018 to December 2020 in the immediate area of The Birches TS8 0UB and Woodlea TS8 0TX there is has been no reported anti-social behaviour (Data supplied by Analytics Business Partner, Strategy Information & Governance, Middlesbrough Council).
Loss of Privacy	
The proposed route is on a higher ground to the neighbouring properties in The Birches.	No property is within 40m of the proposed route and any impact will be minimal.
Light From Columns	
Residents are concerned about light from columns impacting on properties.	The lighting columns that are to be used are designed to channel light away from properties and will have negligible impact on properties.
Pollution/Litter	
Increased pollution by litter and dog waste.	Dog and litter waste bins will be provided along the proposed route.
Wildlife	
Damage to wildlife and birds in the area.	No trees or flora will be removed as part of the scheme.
Unsafe to exercise dogs	
Residents unable to exercise their dogs safely on the grassed area due to the footpath and perceived danger from anti-social behaviour and off-road motor cycles, quad bikes.	Residents have reported anti-social behaviour in the consultation. From January 2018 to December 2020 in the immediate area of The Birches TS8 0UB and Woodlea TS8 0TX there is has been no reported anti-social behaviour (Data supplied by Analytics Business Partner, Strategy Information & Governance, Middlesbrough Council).
Increase in footfall	

An increase in footfall in the area of The Birches and Woodlea from people who are not residents in their area.	The proposed foot path will provide a sustainable transport link between Hemlington Grange and Coulby Newham.
Property Values	
There are concerns that property values will decrease.	Central government data suggests that properties that have sustainable travel links increase property values. (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509587/value-of-cycling.pdf)
Flooding	
There is a high risk of flooding in the gardens of The Birches (52-57).	The proposed route of the foot path/cycle way will have no affect or add to run off and have no impact on adjacent properties.
Waste Of Money	
Residents feel this is a waste of money.	As set out in the Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy, Middlesbrough Council is committed to increasing the number of local journeys made on foot and by cycle. Reducing the current dependence on the private car for such journeys will reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute towards the social and economic regeneration of the Borough. (https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Integrated-transport-strategy-2018-28.pdf)

6. Summary and Conclusions

The second public consultation exercise generated a total of 83 responses, with 43 of those responding in favour of the proposed scheme and 40 against.

The proposed scheme will provide an attractive, convenient and safe route between Hemlington Grange and Coulby Newham, encouraging residents to walk and cycle when visiting family members or travelling to community facilities including the Parkway Centre, the Rainbow Centre and local primary and secondary schools by providing one of the 'missing links' in the existing walking and cycling network serving the new estate.

Middlesbrough Council's Green Strategy 2020 encourages the use and uptake of cycling and walking across the Borough as part of the One Planet Living principles and the need to reduce travel and manmade air pollution supporting more sustainable travel means.

The current travel modes within Middlesbrough need to be addressed and sustainable travel must be supported not only to reduce manmade air pollution, but to encourage a more active lifestyle – living and travelling in a sustainable way which will improve our wellbeing and help reduce the burden on the National Health Service.

Although 40 objections were received to the proposed scheme, none of the grounds on which those objections were made are considered to be sufficient to justify either the rejection of the proposed scheme or any significant alterations to its design. It is, therefore, recommended that the objections received are overruled, and that the scheme proceeds to the implementation stage.

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8 March 2021