Proposed Highway Works in your Area

TONBRIDGE ROAD PEMBURY CYCLE ROUTE
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation on proposals to install a shared use pedestrian footway/cycleway

What are we planning to do?
Construct a new 3.0m wide, shared use pedestrian/cycle route from opposite Tunbridge Wells Hospital to the A21 junction at North Farm roundabout, on the west side of Tonbridge Road.

Please see the drawing included with this letter for the proposed layout.

Why do we want to do this work?
Included in the A21 dualling scheme between Tonbridge and Pembury, currently under construction, is provision of a non-motorised user (NMU) route to enable people to walk, cycle and ride horses from Vauxhall Lane in Tonbridge to Longfield Road at North Farm roundabout.

KCC recently consulted on proposals to provide a pedestrian/cycle link from the Tonbridge end of the NMU in Vauxhall Lane to Tonbridge Station and a decision on progressing the proposals is expected soon.

There is an existing pedestrian/cycle route from Tunbridge Wells Hospital to Tunbridge Wells town centre and this scheme would provide a completed route between the A21 NMU and Tunbridge Wells.

What is a shared use footway/cycleway?
A shared use footway/cycleway is a wide footpath that has been designated permissible for cycle use as well as pedestrians. On a shared use facility, all permitted users have equal access to all areas, it does not have separate cycle lanes and footways marked out.

Shared use footway/cycleways are identified by the following symbol:

An example of a shared use footway/cycleway is shown in the photo to the right:
Is this route included in the Tunbridge Wells Cycling Strategy 2016-2020?

Yes, the length of shared use facility being proposed forms part of route 6 detailed in appendix G of the strategy adopted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council’s Cabinet on 3 March 2016. Full details can be viewed online at: http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=15194

What are we doing to protect the environment and ecology of Tonbridge Road?

This project is planned to be built on the western verge, immediately next to the road, with a new kerbline raising the surface to 125mm above road level. The structure would be 3.0m wide, apart from a short length near the northern end where it would be wider to go behind an existing crash barrier. It will be necessary to carry out extensive vegetation clearance to make way for the facility, including the felling of a number of trees. As this location is adjacent an extensive woodland area, the removal of trees will not adversely affect the ecology of the area. We have been working with our ecology consultants to ensure wildlife is protected, particularly as this is a known habitat area for dormice. Measures will include installation of dormouse nesting boxes in advance of site clearance, to ensure mice move away from the affected area before work starts.

It is anticipated that construction would be carried out in early Autumn, subject to the outcome of this consultation, to avoid the bird nesting and animal hibernation seasons. Appropriate permissions from Natural England are being applied for as the works are in the vicinity of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), whilst not crossing any SSSI designated land. Natural England will be given working method statements and detailed drawings to ensure they are in agreement with the construction work.

How much is this project costing and where is the funding coming from?

The allocated budget for this scheme is £455,000, which includes design, construction, other fees associated with a project of this nature such as utility diversionary works and KCC costs. It is being funded by Highways England, to enable completion of the link from its A21 NMU route into Tunbridge Wells town centre.

What are the benefits of these proposals and what is less beneficial?

Cycling brings with it many health benefits, both to the cyclists and the wider environment. The individual cyclist benefits from taking regular cardiovascular exercise in an open air environment. The construction of safe cycling routes encourages those who may wish to cycle, but not confident enough to cycle on busy roads, to leave the car at home and cycle to their destination instead. The more people we can encourage to swap their car journey for one on a bicycle, the better it is for the environment with the reduction in CO2 emissions. It would also provide an important link from the new A21 NMU into Tunbridge Wells town centre, as well as encouraging hospital staff who live in the Sherwood, High Brooms and other areas of Tunbridge Wells to cycle to work instead of driving.

Finally, the new facility would also improve pedestrian provision because at present there is no footway or lighting (please see next paragraph) along the section of road between the hospital and Longfield road.

As stated above, trees and general shrubbery would have to be removed to make way for this facility, but the extensive woodland and wildlife habitat in the immediate area means the ecology of the area
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will not be adversely affected. The feasibility of introducing streetlighting to enhance the safety of the route for night-time users is under consideration and is included in the scheme design.

Your comments on both the benefits and less beneficial aspects of the proposed scheme, either those above or any of your own, would be welcome. Please see how below.

What about equalities issues?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken to assess the possible impact, both positive and negative, of this proposed scheme on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The EqIA will be updated after the consultation to take into account any relevant information received. To view the EqIA, please see ‘Where do I go to view the full proposals’ below for details of where to find it.

What are the important dates for this project?

The public consultation starts on Monday 17 July 2017 and closes at 11:59pm on Sunday 13 August 2017. The results of the consultation will be considered prior to the Cabinet Member decision in early September on whether to proceed with the scheme. Should the scheme be approved, taking into account consultation feedback, work on site would aim to commence in October 2017 and finish by the end of January 2018. We only have a small window of opportunity to clear the site between the end of the bird nesting season and the start of animal hibernation, hence the need to plan for onsite works now in advance of the consultation and decision phase. All timings are based on estimates as planning work on this scheme continues, with capacity for further review in light of the consultation feedback.

Where do I go to view the full proposals?

We would like to give you an opportunity to let us know what you think of this proposal. A full set of proposal drawings and the EqIA can be viewed on our website; www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgeroadpemburycycleroute, where there is also an online questionnaire for you to provide your comments.

Alternatively, paper copies can be viewed at Tunbridge Wells Library (Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NS), Pembury Library (Henwood Green Road, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4HS) and Tonbridge Central Library (1 Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge TN9 1TG), along with paper copies of the questionnaire.

When will I have to make my comments by?

The closing date for receipt of comments is 11:59pm on Sunday 13 August 2017.

Any questions?

If you have any questions regarding these proposals, please email traffic.schemes@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 41 81 81. In each case please use ‘Tonbridge Road Pembury Proposed Pedestrian/Cycle Route’ to identify the scheme.

When sending your comments, the preferred method is the online questionnaire. Alternatively, you can send a paper copy obtained from one of the libraries to:

Schemes Planning and Delivery, KCC Highways Transportation and Waste, Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way, Ashford TN24 8AD, or a scanned copy to the email above.
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Tonbridge Road, Pembury - Proposed cycle route: Consultation plan

July 2017

For more details please see where do I go to view the full proposal, in the attached letter.