

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 89

Subject: A23 Active Travel Scheme – Phase 1

Date of meeting: 15th March 2022

Report of: Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Culture

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Ward(s) affected: Preston Park, Withdean

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 At the Special Environment, Transport and Sustainability (ETS) Committee meeting on 21st July 2021, the Committee agreed to:

- the preliminary design for the A23 [Active Travel] Scheme
- initiating further discussion with key stakeholders to inform design development
- undertake further public consultation
- progress the development of designs
- return to a future ETS Committee with detailed design recommendations

1.2 Following the Special ETS Committee in July 2021, the Scheme was divided into three distinct phases allowing for better Council resource allocation, and more meaningful consultation to take place with stakeholders.

1.3 This report outlines the outcome of further consultation and engagement activities and includes the amended detailed design recommendations in relation to Phase 1 of the A23 Active Travel Scheme.

1.4 These proposals support the Council's visions and the objectives in the developing Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5); developed to help everyone move around the City more safely, sustainably, and easily. The initial Direction of Travel document ('Developing a new Transport Plan for Brighton & Hove') was presented to the ETS Committee on 22 June 2021 and the Committee agreed to the vision, key outcomes and principles set out in this. One of the key principles is shifting how people travel – prioritising walking and cycling for shorter journeys and public transport for both short and longer journeys.

- 1.5 The A23 is identified as a high priority strategic route for improvement in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), a strategic plan identifying routes and areas in the city for improvement over the next ten years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the A23 Phase 1 Detailed Design as presented in appendix 1 and supports officers to proceed with the associated Traffic Regulation Order.
- 2.2 That the Committee authorises officers to commence the construction phase and to procure the Works Contract under the authority of the Executive Director.

3. Context and background information

Scheme Overview

- 3.1 The A23 Active Travel Scheme is a highways infrastructure project that aims to introduce permanent alterations to the highway to improve access and encourage active and inclusive travel such as walking and cycling. The scheme will also provide benefits for other sustainable transport including bus users whilst also providing safety improvements for all road users.
- 3.2 The A23 Active Travel Scheme is being delivered as part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Active Travel Fund (ATF). This scheme forms part of the Tranche 2 works.
- 3.3 Of the £2.367m funding provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) for Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund, £909,000 has been allocated to the A23 Active Travel Scheme.

Scheme Background

- 3.4 At the Special ETS Committee meeting held on 18th December 2020 the Committee agreed to progress work on the five schemes presented in the 'Emergency Active Travel Fund – Tranche 2 Transport Schemes and Plans for Consultation' Report, of which the A23 Active Travel Scheme was one.
- 3.5 In February and March of 2021, a 6-week citywide public consultation was undertaken on the Active Travel Fund – Tranche 2 schemes. The results of this consultation were reported back to the Committee on 21st July 2021, along with preliminary designs for the A23 as part of the 'Active Travel Fund' report.
- 3.6 The Committee agreed to the preliminary design for the A23 scheme and instructed officers to initiate further discussion with key stakeholders to inform design development. The Committee also instructed officers to progress the development of designs, undertake further public consultation,

and return to a future ETS Committee with detailed design recommendations on the A23 scheme.

3.7 During the preliminary design stage, the scheme was separated into three phases to enable resources to focus on key areas of the route. The extent of these phases are as follows;

- Phase 1 – The junction of Preston Road (A23) & Argyle Road to the junction of Preston Road (A23) & Cumberland Road
- Phase 2 – The junction of London Road (A23) & Cumberland Road to the junction of London Road (A23) & The Deneway
- Phase 3 – The junction of London Road (A23) & The Deneway to just south of the junction of London Road (A23) & Mill Road.

3.8 This report focuses on Phase 1 of the route which has been designed to the detailed stage following further consultation. Phases 2 & 3 will be subject to further design and consultation at a later date.

3.9 Aspects of the detailed design recommendations will require an amendment to the existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Following approval of the detailed design recommendations, officers will undertake the relevant consultation activities in line with a change to the TRO including a 21-day public consultation.

3.10 Between October and December 2021, further consultation activities were undertaken for Phase 1 of the A23 Active Travel Scheme with a view to gather stakeholder comments and feedback on the more detailed elements of the design, details of which can be found in section 5 of this report. These comments have ultimately fed into the detailed designs provided in appendix 2.

Detailed Design Recommendations

3.11 The detailed design for the A23 Phase 1 scheme have been informed by the consultation as set out in 5.2 and include the following features;

- Widening of footway, removal of 3no. parking spaces, and formalisation of cycle lane on Argyle Road.
- Conversion of existing pedestrian crossing facility across Preston Road near Argyle Road to Toucan crossing facility, and addition of cycle related infrastructure to assist in maneuvers to/from Ditchling Rise over Preston Road.
- Widening of western footway and bi-directional cycle lane on western side of Preston Road between junctions with Argyle Road & Stanford Avenue.
- Reduction in vehicle running lanes from two to one on Preston Road between Argyle Road & Springfield Road and conversion of existing parking area to loading bay under viaduct on eastern side of Preston Road.
- Relocation of northbound Springfield Road bus stop to north of Dyke Road Drive on Preston Road.
- Side-road entry treatment at junction of Dyke Road Drive & Preston Road.

- Upgrade of existing zebra crossings to parallel crossings at junction of Preston Road & Stanford Avenue.
- Stepped cycle tracks between 1.5m-2m northbound and southbound on Preston Road between Stanford Avenue/Preston Road junction and entry to South Road junction and effective footway width widening on eastern side due to relocation of cycle lane.
- Omission of South Road/Preston Road/Preston Drive staggered junction to enable further detailed

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 During the design process several alternative options were considered, and ultimately discounted. These included:

Do Nothing

Given the strategic fit of this scheme alongside the overall visions for the Council as set out in section 1, do nothing would fail to support the overall aims of the Council. This may also jeopardise overall funding allocations for future transport schemes.

Do Less

The designs as presented in appendix 1 are in line with implementation of LTN 1/20 guidance and funding requirements. Measures identified are within available resource allocations.

Do More

Doing more would require more road-space to be reallocated to active travel users, which at a certain level could disproportionately affect the network. As such the designs reflect the need for a balance between travel modes on this corridor.

Alternative Routes

- 4.2 The National Cycle Network (NCN) 20 route makes its way along the A23 corridor and down into the heart of the city. As such, diverting the scheme from this route would not serve one of the key cycle routes into and out of the city. The LCWIP strategic network also identifies this route as a priority route. This means that this route is identified, along with others, as having the most strategic benefits to the City in terms of its potential to increase cycling levels.
- 4.3 Consideration was given to directing cycle traffic along the service road within Preston Park, however this was discounted relatively early in the project due to obstructions to the route from events being held in the park. Consideration was also given to the unsuitable lighting levels within the park, and the impact on the local wildlife that solving this issue would present.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 As agreed by the Committee in July of 2021, further engagement with stakeholders and public consultation has been undertaken on the Phase 1

designs. Below is an outline of further consultation activities, the feedback received, and the implications this had on the detailed design recommendations. Further details regarding consultation activities can be found in appendix 2.

The Consultation Project Plan was informed by the Active Travel Consultation Framework, appendix 3 which is underpinned by the Council's Community Engagement Framework and communicated to Members prior to initiating.

Consultation Summary

- 5.2 A range of consultation activities were undertaken between October and December 2021 and included virtual consultation sessions via MS Teams with Key Stakeholders including Members, internal stakeholders, various stakeholder groups and external organisations. (Full list can be seen in appendix 2)
- 5.3 The consultation approach for this scheme was to present designs to stakeholders, undertake meaningful conversations, gather comments on the designs, and implement this feedback into design revisions where possible.
- 5.4 Over 2,500 postcards were posted to addresses local to the scheme inviting residents and business owners to discuss proposals with officers at public drop-in workshops held at St. Augustine's Arts & Events Centre between 1st December 2021 and the 4th December 2021.
- 5.5 The consultation activities were also promoted by the Council's communications team using the Council website, press-releases, and social media updates.
- 5.6 In total, 400 comments were captured during the further consultation activities for Phase 1 of the A23 Active Trave Scheme. For context, the most recent Valley Gardens Phase 3 consultation received 463 responses.
- 5.7 The public drop-in sessions led to a total of 102 meaningful conversations between members of the project team and stakeholders. These conversations along with emails from stakeholders who viewed the design proposals online accounted for 220 of the total comments, with the remaining 180 comments coming from emails and meetings with a variety of stakeholders groups and organisations.
- 5.8 This approach ensured that should stakeholders have any questions, members of the project team were on hand to discuss the scheme's principles, objectives, and design specifics. In general, the conversations were constructive and presented an opportunity for both project officers and stakeholders to share opinions. On the whole, officers found the conversations to be positive and productive.

Consultation Feedback Summary

- 5.9 Table 1 of appendix 2 shows the number of comments captured based the comments' primary theme. The primary theme focuses on the mode of travel for which the comment mostly concerns. Cycling related comments were the most numerous with 141 (35%) comments, with vehicles (not including buses or motorcycles) coming in second with a total of 104 comments (26%) and walking in third with 85 (21.25%) comments.
- 5.10 Table 2 of appendix 2 shows the number of comments captured based on the comment's secondary theme, separated by the primary theme. The secondary theme identifies the more specific content of a comment and allows officers to have better insight into feedback in the context of each mode of travel.
- 5.11 Table 2 shows that for comments based around cycling, the highest secondary comment theme count relates to infrastructure with approximately 46% of all cycling focused comments on this aspect. This is partially expected as aspects of the new infrastructure being proposed on the route is designed to new LTN 1/20 standards and infrastructure may differ from what consultees are used to.
- 5.12 Table 2 also shows that comments that are primarily focused on vehicles are majority related to congestion concerns (24%) and parking restrictions (22%), and when walking is the main comment theme then pedestrian crossings make up the largest number of comments with approximately 50% of comments mentioning this.

Actioning Feedback

- 5.13 After conclusion of the further engagement activities and public consultation, the feedback received was categorised and analysed alongside the design team. This analysis then fed into revisions of the preliminary design, ultimately leading to the detailed design that is included in appendix 1.
- 5.14 Table 1 below summarises how these detailed designs respond to the main comments received in the consultation. The designs aim to respond to the main issues raised. The nature of the corridor and its competing demands for limited space means there is a need for compromise to accommodate the needs of all users. Implementing some of the requests in full is likely to have a negative impact on other users and/or mean the scheme is not able to meet the project objectives.
- 5.15 Consideration also needs to be given to the purpose of the funding with the majority for this project coming from the Active Travel Fund – Tranche 2. This is primarily for modes of travel defined as active, including walking, wheeling, and cycling. Responses to stakeholder comments therefore need to take account of this and the overall budget available.

Design Response to Feedback – Main Summary

Table 1

| Consultation Feedback | Design Response |
|---|---|
| Cycling infrastructure related comments | Cycling infrastructure related comments made up the bulk of the feedback we received in relation to cycles. The themes of these comments included widening cycle lanes, providing specific surface types, arranging junctions in CYCLOPS arrangements, and many other suggestions. These comments have been reviewed and where possible fed into the designs. It has not been possible to action all comments due to budgetary, scope, and time constraints. |
| Pedestrian Crossing comments | The project includes the upgrade of five existing formal pedestrian crossings (zebra or signalised in this case). Existing informal crossings have also been assessed and improved where possible. |
| Vehicle Congestion concerns | Vehicle congestion concerns have been analysed extensively, with the omission of the Preston Drove/South Road/Preston Road staggered junction from this phase following stakeholder feedback. Further modelling is being undertaken on the stretch of Preston Road between Argyle Road & Springfield Road to further assess the impact of the lane reduction in this area. |
| Parking Restrictions | A number of comments concerned parking restrictions throughout the phase area and whilst the designs aim to ease parking related issues throughout the scheme, these alterations will be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation process and the final implementation will be defined by the outcome of this process. |
| Bus Boarder Arrangements | During the consultation process the project team received feedback on the proposed bus boarder arrangements, many of these comments related to the potential for conflict between pedestrians, cyclists, and bus users. The project team has worked closely with design engineers to develop an alternative arrangement in the form of a hybrid bus boarder/floating bus stop, which is being adopted on other schemes, however given space constraints it has not been possible to offer alternatives at every location within this scheme. Where it has not been possible to provide a hybrid solution the designs have been amended in line with stakeholder feedback to provide visual cues highlighting potential conflict. These include a change in the colour of the surface material, and signage for both cyclists and pedestrians/bus users. |
| Request to convert the signalised pedestrian crossing near Argyle Road to a Toucan crossing to allow cycle access to Ditchling Rise | The Argyle Road signalised pedestrian crossing will be converted to a Toucan crossing allowing cyclists to use this crossing point. Additional layout changes on the northern side of this crossing provide access to Ditchling Rise for cyclists from the crossing. |
| Pedestrian Crossing between Preston Park & The Rookery | Following consultation, the design team have proposed a signalised Toucan Crossing to replace the existing pedestrian refuge island between Preston Park & The Rookery. This |

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| | facility will provide a safe crossing point between the two trip-attractors. |
| Request for a contraflow cycle lane on Springfield Road | Springfield Road is outside of the scope of this project; however, the new layout will lend itself to connecting to a contraflow on Springfield Road if these works take place in the future. The existing Toucan crossing and shared space arrangement at the western end of Springfield has been retained. |
| Speed Limit on Preston Road between the viaduct & junction with Stanford Avenue | The existing speed limit on Preston Road changes from 20mph to 30mph just south of the viaduct. Following consultation feedback, the proposals now reflect that intention to continue the 20mph section north to the junction of Preston Road & Stanford Avenue on the northbound section. |
| Concerns regarding increased congestion at the Preston Drove/Preston Road/South Road staggered junction due to capacity reduction. | The design team have taken on-board feedback in regard to the reduction in capacity that the designs taken to consultation showed. Given the space restraints within the junction itself, it is currently not possible to provide an LTN 1/20 standard design without heavily impacting other road users journey times. As such, at this time the junction has been omitted from the Phase 1 designs and will be reviewed as part of a future phase. |
| Request to increase vehicle running lane/bus lane widths | The total road width throughout the Phase 1 area is finite and as such there is a need to strike a balance between road user's needs. The design team have taken on board comments relating to lane widths and provided increased widths where possible whilst still maintaining acceptable widths for walking and cycling as per LTN 1/20. |
| Increase taper length from 2 lanes to 1 lane on Preston Road towards Argyle Road | Taper length has been increased to allow more time for vehicles to taper into one lane approaching the viaduct section of Preston Road. |

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 In summary, this report seeks for the Committee to agree that to the progression of the A23 Active Travel Scheme – Phase 1 to the construction phase, based on the understanding that further stakeholder engagement and public consultation has taken place and that these activities have led to tangible improvements in the scheme itself.
- 6.2 There are aspects of the original scope of this phase which require ongoing work, namely the Preston Drove/Preston Road/South Road staggered junction. These designs will continue to be developed alongside further phases.
- 6.3 Whilst it is the case that not every comment received during further consultation could be implemented, the further engagement undertaken did ensure that the scheme as presented is a healthy combination of national design guidance and useful local knowledge.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 grant of £2.376m is funding various schemes of which the whole A23 Active Travel Scheme has been earmarked with £0.909m funding from this grant. The anticipated costs of phase 1 of the A23 Active Travel Scheme are yet to be confirmed but are expected to be well within the allocated funding. Should costs of phase 1 be higher than expected, then less funding for the remaining phases of the A23 Active Travel Scheme could be available from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 grant. This may result in reductions in scope for the remaining phases or additional alternative funding required such as use of the Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 7.2 The design recommendations includes removal and changes to parking bays resulting in a negligible reduction. This will have a small impact on parking income, though any significant variations to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 03/03/22

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The traffic regulation order required as a result of the detailed design will need to follow the statutory process set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, which will require a period of public consultation.
- 8.2 The works contract will need to be procured in compliance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alice Rowland Date consulted: 03/03/22

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Statutory guidance from Department for Transport (DfT) updated in February 2021 reiterates that the public sector equality duty continues to apply as Local Authorities make changes to their road networks in response to Covid-19. The Council must ensure that elements of a scheme do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, and must consider their duty to make reasonable adjustments anticipating the needs of those with protected characteristics. The guidance emphasises that groups representing disabled people and others with protected characteristics should be consulted at an early stage of scheme development and accessibility requirements apply to both temporary and permanent measures.
- 9.2 DfT's Local Transport Note 1.20 (LTN1/20) which sets the standards for cycling design, and which Local Authorities receiving the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 funding must abide by, states: (4.5.11): Local authorities are bound by the Equality Act 2010 in discharging their functions, which includes managing their road networks. Designers should provide infrastructure that

is accessible to all, and the dimensions and other features set out in this guidance should help ensure that their designs comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 9.3 Following engagement with various disability stakeholder representatives (as identified in appendix 2), a number of alterations have been made to the design recommendations. Specific examples of changes include alterations to the layouts of bus boarder infrastructure designs where possible, consideration towards footway widths and street-clutter, and appropriately designed desire lines at pedestrian crossings. Whilst several disability groups were contacted for comments, not all responded within the consultation period.
- 9.4 Officers have conducted an overarching Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the Active Travel Fund schemes, and an EqIA has been undertaken for this particular scheme based on the overarching EqIA. This can be found in appendix 4.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The measures will improve the transport network for sustainable modes of transport by reallocating road space. This will give opportunities for more people to switch to low carbon modes of transport from single occupancy car use.

11. Other Implications

Public health implications:

- 11.1 Enabling greater uptake of active travel across the City will provide both short- and long-term benefits to the mental and physical health of our residents. This approach supports the implementation of the Brighton & Hove Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Appendix 1: A23 Active Travel Scheme – Phase 1 – Detailed Design Pack.pdf
2. Appendix 2: A23 Active Travel Scheme – Phase 1 – Further Consultation Report
3. Appendix 3: Active Travel Consultation Framework
4. Appendix 4: A23 Active Travel Scheme EqIA