Sandwell Cycling Forum

Wednesday 19th October, 2016 at 5.15pm
Room G5, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury

Minutes

Present: Cllr Bill Gavan (BG)  - Langley Ward Member (Chair)
Andy Thorpe (AT)  - Transportation Planning, SMBC
Wayne Moore (WM)  - Transportation Planning, SMBC
Talvinder Sandhu (TS) - Transportation Planning, SMBC
Nathan Moore (NM)  - Public Health, SMBC
Mitchell Robinson (MR) - Transport for West Midlands
George Reeves (GR) - Cycling UK local campaigner for Sandwell
Colin Darling (CD) - Queen Alexandra College
Nick Bradley (NB)  - Local cyclist
PC Mark Hodson (MH) - West Midlands Police
PC Steve Hudson (SH) - West Midlands Police

Ref | Item | Action
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25/16 | Welcome, Apologies and Introductions | 
 | Apologies received from: Kira Fleck (Road Safety, SMBC, Richard Preston (Canal and River Trust) |

26/16 | Presentation from West Midlands Police | 
26/16.1 | PC Mark Hodson and PC Steve Hudson from the Roads Policing section of West Midlands Police (WMP) attended the forum, following an invitation to talk about talk about enforcement against poor driving and cycling. A discussion about cyclist training at the April 2016 meeting of the Forum prompted a discussion about the importance of different groups of road users to understand the needs of each other. It was therefore suggested that the Police should be invited to a Forum meeting to talk about driving standards and enforcement in order to improve awareness of the issues and actions surrounding this subject.

MH and SH stated that although they work on cycling issues WMP does not have a dedicated cycling team and that they have other duties. The focus on cycling safety in Birmingham resulted from observing that the significant increase in cycling in London could result in a similar situation in Birmingham and therefore the safety problems experienced in London would also probably need to be addressed in Birmingham. The main issue relates to cycling in HGV blind-spots which has resulted in serious injuries and fatalities.
The “Exchanging Places” project was developed initially to help engage inexperienced cyclists with the problem of blind-spots around HGVs using trucks. The project is delivered mainly at schools and various events. Although this approach was useful, an analysis of collision and casualty data from the last five years showed that 95% of incidents (530 in total) were due to motor vehicle driver errors, with just 5% due to cyclist errors. This evidence resulted in the WMP team shifting its focus from engaging solely with cyclists to activities centred on driver behaviour (represents 90% of the work).

The “Give Space, Be Safe” programme developed with Birmingham City Council has had both local and national media exposure and is regarded as a very positive approach to improving cyclist safety. Apart from the leaflets and posters showing the space that motor vehicle drivers should give when overtaking cyclists, WMP also carry out enforcement exercises where they explain to drivers who do not give sufficient space to cyclists the need to do so.

WMP will still fielding issues from drivers and the general public who make complaints about pavement cycling and non-use of bike lights, although complaints about specific problems are never reported to the Police which suggests major problems are largely non-existent. People are reminded that drivers are causing the most damage to people in collisions and that what is regarded as poor cyclist behaviour is usually a response to this.

The Forum wants to see more cycling and for it to be seen by society as a normal activity, but how can this happen against the above background? The Police responded by saying they can help by assisting cyclists through their enforcement work.

A discussion of the WMP’s work resulted in a question about what is being done about mobile phone use whilst driving. Six points and a £300 fine is the current penalty and the Police now use wrist cameras to point at drivers who use mobile phones in order to collect the necessary evidence.

The Police can get involved with youth groups etc for cyclist training, but it’s regarded as more positive if Bike Right or the Fire Service deliver the training.

The Forum thanked MH and SH for their attendance at the Forum meeting and for providing a very interesting insight into their approach to help bring about a safer cycling environment. SMBC will work with the Police on such matters wherever possible.

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<th>27/16</th>
<th>Actions of Last Meeting</th>
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<td>4/15.6</td>
<td>AT still to approach hauliers about offering warning stickers to prevent nearside cycle collisions, although since it was first raised a few years ago there is now widespread awareness of the issue and use of stickers by various hauliers/couriers/companies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/15.1</td>
<td>Creation of a publicity leaflet for the forum ongoing. In addition to the</td>
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distribution methods suggested at other Forum meetings the leaflets could be made available to youth club leaders and school PTAs. It was suggested that it should also be produced as a poster and used on notice boards in parks.

Facebook and Twitter messages were used to promote the October meeting of the Forum.

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<tr>
<td>3/16.6</td>
<td>Discussions between Centro and SMBC still ongoing in terms of the location of the cycle parking at Dudley Port railway station.</td>
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<td>6/16.4</td>
<td>HE still to respond with a prioritised list of cycling schemes from the list developed at the stakeholders’ meeting where severance needs to be reduced and safety improved at motorway junction in the West Midlands.</td>
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<td>19/16.4</td>
<td>Cycle schemes being developed for 2016/17 financial year and beyond using SMBC’s measures to encourage cycling budget is ongoing. More detail in section 28/16 below.</td>
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### 28/16 Cycling Infrastructure

28/16.1 A planning application for cycle parking at Smethwick Galton Bridge railway station has been received by Sandwell MBC for consideration. The application proposes a two-tier covered cycle shelter for 20 bicycles which is positioned close to the entrance of the station. Further details can be found on the Council’s website using the application number DC/16/59916.

28/16.2 WM reported that the following cycling schemes, funded by SMBC during the current financial year, have started to be constructed:

- Cycle route linking Grafton Road to Gladstone Street Toucan Crossing with West Bromwich town centre via the West Bromwich Expressway pedestrian/cycle bridge
- Cycle route linking Blackheath town centre to Rowley Regis railway station via Avenue Road
- Cycle links at Oakfield Road and Watt Street to access the new Toucan crossing at Soho Way/Soho Street
- Puffin crossings upgrade to Toucan crossings at Great Western Way/Great Bridge and Black Country New Road/Swan Lane
- Henderson Way/Short Street in Blackheath to include dropped kerbs onto Short Street (north) and a link into Short Street (south)

Updates on completion status will be provided at the next Forum meeting.

28/16.3 Schemes for completion during the 2016/17 financial year are planned for:

- Puffin crossings upgrade to Toucan crossings at Dudley Street/Claypit Lane and BlackCountry New Road/Bilhay Lane
- Other cycle schemes are being investigated for continuation of the A4123 cycle route, All Saints Way/Newton Road/Hollyhedge Road junction, Sandwell & Dudley railway station junction, A461 cycle route at Dudley Port
28/16.4 Birmingham City Council will publish a guidance document about cycle facility design in October 2016. The document has been in preparation for a few years and will be made available to council officers across the West Midlands to assist with cycle route design. It should be noted that the document is for guidance and does not establish “standards” because in some circumstances the design of cycling facilities will require engineering creativity that might not be covered by a set of standard designs. The principles of broadly what facilities should be provided is included. Other similar documents from around the UK are also consulted when designing cycle routes in Sandwell.

### 29/16 Cyclist Training

Nothing reported.

### 30/16 Cycling Promotion

30/16.1 For information on upcoming Love Your Bike Sessions and training sessions, visit the Network West Midlands website:

www.networkwestmidlands.com/offers/cycling/love-your-bike/

30/16.2 SMBC has set up a Facebook page “Walk and Cycle Sandwell” which will be used to publicise the dates of Cycling and Local Access Forum meetings and as part of the ongoing consultation exercise that will require stakeholders to understand the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in terms of infrastructure development and training.

### 31/16 Further Updates

31/16.1 Work on the West Midlands Cycling Charter is ongoing and TfWM have recruited a coordinator (Hannah Dayan) to ensure the associated action plan is moved forward.

31/16.2 Cycling UK is holding a “Space for Cycling” meeting/workshop on Saturday 29th October at Carrs Lane Church and Conference Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX between 10.30am and 4.30pm

More information available at:
http://www.cyclinguk.org/event/space-cycling-workshop-birmingham

### 32/16 Any Other Business

32/16.1 It was suggested that the Forum meetings could be held in a more accessible location and at a better time in order to engage with more people and therefore create better awareness about cycling issues and events, plus to enable people to communicate cycling issues and problems to SMBC and other stakeholders. Including the business of the Forum at Town Lead Members’ meetings at locations around Sandwell could be an option. Town Lead Members to be approached through SMBC’s Democratic Services department. A venue in Sandwell Valley after the ongoing Cycling in Sandwell monthly bike ride could also be used as an opportunity for a Forum meeting.

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<th>32/16.2</th>
<th>CD mentioned that a led-bike ride could be planned as part of the Bearwood Street Festival (June 2017).</th>
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<td>32/16.3</td>
<td>The GPS data for 1000 of the 4000 bikes given away as part of Birmingham’s Big Birmingham Bikes scheme will be made available. The data shows what routes people have used and when (and possibly therefore the routes avoided).</td>
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### Dates of next meetings

- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
- Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
- Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Minutes prepared by Transportation Planning, Strategic Policy, Directorate of Regeneration and Economy  
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Cycling information and online map: www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling