

## **Ashton Court Consultation Response**

Many thanks for taking the time to respond to the recent consultation regarding the proposed route across the Ashton Court Estate.

The consultation comprised of displays at Ashton Court itself for 2 months, approximately 700 copies of the leaflet were sent out to Neighbourhood Partnership contacts and nearly 1000 leaflets were distributed to local residents and locations such as Long Ashton Library. From this we received a total of 40 responses from members of the public. This was disappointingly low given the duration and scope of the consultation conducted.

However, from experience of similar consultations many people don't respond unless there is something to which they wish to object. In this case of the 40 responses, 31 were positive and 8 were negative. People also took the opportunity whilst either broadly supporting or objecting against the proposal to suggest alternative options or modifications to the described route. There were a total of 11 alternative suggestions, ranging from a tram system to improvements being made to the A370 to the installation of lighting on the new route through the Estate. Within the 8 negative comments, 3 were objections concerned with the impact the scheme would have on the historic and listed landscape.

Several themes emerged within the responses to the consultation the main ones were:

- **Shared Use**  
Respondents questioned the application of a shared use path through the Estate and highlighted the potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. However, the construction of a segregated route would require a greater width of surfaced path – and therefore a greater impact on the landscape. As a result we will progress the design as a 3m wide shared use facility.
- **Lighting**  
Some respondents highlighted the need for the provision of street lighting along the proposed route to ensure public safety. Others however, specifically commented that they would object to any lighting provision due to the detrimental impact on the heritage landscape. Our view is that the provision of street lighting has no justification within Ashton Court Estate and should not be provided to ensure as minimal an impact on the landscape as possible.
- **Surfacing**  
Many respondents specifically requested that the route be constructed with a tarmac surface to ensure a comfortable riding surface for cycling. We completely agree with this ensure not only a smooth surface, but also a surface that is cost effective in the longer term from a maintenance perspective.
- **Distance**  
A few respondents correctly noted that the length of the proposed route is longer than other potential alternatives either via the Public Right of Way (PRoW) across Ashton Park School's playing fields, or via an improved route alongside the A370. As part of the Connect2 Project very specific design criteria for the development of greenways are set. These relate specifically to the type of route proposed and its suitability in generating an increase in the number of pedestrians and cyclists using the new facility. The alignment of any greenway needs to be carefully

considered, especially its proximity to major roads such as the A370. Research has shown that routes immediately adjacent to busy roads generate much lower cycle and pedestrian traffic than those which are constructed on a new alignment away from the highway. The A370 currently carries in excess of 40,000 vehicles per day, and represents a very intimidating and unattractive environment in which to walk or cycle. Whilst representing the shortest distance overall, the alternative option across Ashton Park School's playing fields, making use of the existing PRoW is not currently being progressed for the following reasons:

1. Use of the School's playing field would require approval from the Secretary of State for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. This is set out in Section 77(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 – which dictates the manner that local authorities are able to dispose, or appropriate land secured for educational purposes.
2. The delivery of this option would require modifications to the listed walls at both ends of the PRoW to ensure a suitable width of facility was achieved.
3. The route of the PRoW falls within the same listed landscape designation as the land within the Estate, and the setting of the listed mansion. As a result this option would have similar design limitations as the route being progressed through the Estate. In particular, lighting could not be proposed along the PRoW alignment.

As a result of the positive response to the proposals set out in the consultation we will be proceeding with the detailed design of the scheme across Ashton Court Estate. We will be working closely with a landscape architect to ensure we mitigate against the visual effect of the new path within the landscape from the outset.

We are currently aiming to progress the design and intend to be in a position to submit a planning application to the two planning authorities by the end of April 2010.

Many thanks again for taking the time to respond to this consultation. If you have any further questions or comments regarding this scheme or its progress then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Jon Usher  
Project Officer, Infrastructure  
Cycling City Team  
Major Projects Team  
Tel: 0117 90 36676  
Fax: 0117 90 36830