SUBJECT: COOMBE LANE – SEGREGATED CYCLE TRACK

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Environment and Regeneration - Richard Rawes

LEAD MEMBER: Leader of the Council & Chair of Cabinet Street Management Committee: Councillor Andrew Judge

KEY DECISION REFERENCE NUMBER: N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee agrees:

1. subject to satisfactory negotiations with Network Rail, to the principle of the purchase from Network Rail of a section of land on the south side of Coombe Lane between the Station Buildings and Raynes Park Bridge to construct a segregated cycle track, replacing the existing unsatisfactory cycle route through the Cattle Arch by Raynes Park Station. As shown on Drawing No. Z71/102.

2. to the principle of introducing traffic signals at the Coombe Lane / Pepys Road junction.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Cycling is economic and efficient, environmentally friendly and healthy. Almost two thirds of all trips in London are less than 5 kilometres in length and many of these could reasonably be made by cycle if convenient and safe conditions were to be created. On Merton’s congested roads it is frequently quicker to cycle than to use a private car, consequently there is a significant potential to shift away from car to cycle use.

1.2 Cycling is also more dangerous than most other forms of transport in London, only powered two wheelers have a higher accident rate. Analysis by the London Research Centre has shown that cyclists are three times more likely to be killed or injured in road accidents than pedestrians are, and fifteen times as likely to be killed or injured as those travelling by bus. In recent years, in Merton, accidents involving cyclists represent 11% of all road accident casualties although cycling accounts for only 2% of travel.
1.3 In 1997 LPAC published a Cycling Strategy for London which had as its key target a 10% modal share for cycling by 2012. The Government in its White Paper “A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone” endorsed by the National Cycling Strategy which involves a doubling and then quadrupling of cycling by the year 2012. It also called upon local authorities to play a leading role in promoting the growth in cycle use. The National Cycling Strategy recommended that cycle reviews of existing infrastructure should be undertaken in order to produce Local Cycling Strategies and that cycle audits be applied to all planned changes to the transport network. The Council is committed to encouraging people to make trips by cycle as an alternative to the use of the private car. This is being achieved by making as many areas of the Borough as possible, safe and accessible to cyclists.

1.4 The introduction of a London Cycle Network (LCN) is now a common aim of all 33 London Authorities. Their commitment to introduce measures to provide a viable London wide network of cycle routes is fully supported by the London Mayor and Transport for London. The aim of the LCN is to make travel by cycle easier, safe and comfortable by providing a conspicuous network of routes that link local centres and provide for longer distance journeys.

1.5 The network will comprise a wide range of measures to assist cyclists including: cycle lanes on main roads, protected crossings, signed back streets, gaps in road closures, contra-flow cycle lanes and shared use paths in parks and open spaces. The network will help cyclists to circumvent busy main roads and provide extra protection where heavily trafficked streets and busy junctions are unavoidable.

1.6 The Government maintains that having an environment conducive to cycling is a pre-condition to encouraging people to undertake more “active travel” – or modal shift. Local Implementation Plans will require local authorities to place greater emphasis on cycling and getting the infrastructure right for cycling is a major part of the equation.

1.7 In partnership with Transport for London’s Centre Cycle of Excellence (CCE) the London Cycle Network+ (LCN+) project management team at LB Camden are managing the delivery of a 900km network of high quality cycle facilities across London. Schemes on the LCN+ are required to meet 5 principal criteria of being Coherent : Direct : Attractive : Safe : Comfortable.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The segregated cycle track on Coombe Lane between the A3 and Raynes Park Station was introduced in 1994. At Raynes Park Station cyclists are required to dismount and walk through the “Cattle Arch” immediately adjacent to the entrance to station. The cycle route then recommences on the south side of the railway line with advisory cycle lanes on Approach Road and Kingston Road.
2.2 The link between these cycle facilities on Coombe Lane and Kingston Road has never been satisfactory, which was highlighted when developing the Cycle Route Implementation and Stakeholder Plan (CRISP) for this section of the LCN network. The CRISP report recommended that the cycle route should continue on the southern footpath of Coombe Lane and link with the existing cycle route through the old Skew Arch, emerging at the existing Toucan Crossing on Kingston Road. In order to maintain a consistent and safe width for a segregated footpath and cycle way, from where the footpath narrows by Station Buildings to Raynes Park Bridge, it would be necessary to purchase land from Network Rail and cut into the railway embankment.

2.3 T/L, Cycle Centre of Excellence (CCE) and Merton Cycling Campaign fully support this concept, and CCE have earmarked funds over the next two years, through the Borough Spending Plans, to facilitate this.

2.4 This will also be the opportunity to consider the current traffic arrangements at the Coombe Lane / Pepys Road / Raynes Park Bridge junction within the Raynes Park one-way system. Pedestrians have raised concerns regarding narrow central islands and restricted sight lines while traffic from Pepys Road and from under the railway bridge are expected to merge and travel west along Coombe Lane, but this generally does not occur.

3. EVALUATION

3.1 T/L sector Consultants have been engaged to evaluate the scheme. Network Rail, whilst slow to respond to approaches made to them, have not ruled out the concept. Issues they have raised of concern are :-

- the design of the new retaining wall to support the railway must be approved by Network Rail
- future responsibility for the new retaining wall
- retention of their advertising hoardings (this is an important revenue stream for Network Rail)

Discussions are continuing and a further up-date will be given to Members at your meeting if appropriate.

3.2 One advantage, should the cycle scheme proceed, is that the combination of the wider area of public highway, the railway embankment retaining wall and the advertising hoarding (which would be replaced) could go a long way to address the litter problem that exists on the railway embankment, an item that is frequently raised at the Area Forum.

3.3 The Consultants have also explored the possibility of introducing traffic signals at the Pepys Road / Coombe Lane / Raynes Park Bridge junction. This would address some outstanding issues of pedestrian safety, vehicle movements and a poor accident record.
4. **PROPOSAL**

4.1 The proposal is to formulate a new segregated footpath and cycle track on Coombe Lane, between Raynes Park Station and the old Skew Arch by Wyke Road. To achieve this it will be necessary to purchase a strip of railway embankment land from Network Rail. Because there are a number of technical issues that have yet to be resolved we are not able to submit a detailed design for approval. However Officers do need approval in principle to the concept of the scheme and the purchase of the land from Network Rail in order that negotiations may continue.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Funds to implement the LCN+ are sought from TfL through the annual Borough Spending Plan submission. The allocation for this proposal in 2006/2007 is £250,000 with a further £100,000 earmarked for 2007/2008.

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT and HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 If this scheme is approved, the road safety implications and the risks to those undertaking construction and maintenance will be fully considered at each stage of the design process, from the preliminary design included with this report to the detailed design that will be used for construction. The design risk assessments that have been undertaken as part of the preliminary design process are detailed in 5.4 below.

6.2 To consider the road safety implications, Safety Audits will be undertaken by external consultants broadly in accordance with the Highways Agency design note on Road Safety Audits, published as Volume 5 Section 2 Part 2 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

6.3 The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 apply to this scheme. Therefore when undertaking its duties as Client and Designer under these regulations, the Council follows the Approved Code of Practice, ‘Managing Health and Safety in Construction’, published by the Health and Safety Commission. The Planning Supervisor appointed for this scheme is F.M.Conway Ltd.

6.4 The risks that have been identified during the preliminary design stage, and the measures that have been implemented to manage them, are detailed in the table below.
Management of Health and Safety Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Measures to Reduce Risk</th>
<th>Information on Residual Risk Passed To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible risk to cyclists and pedestrians when using the current cycle route through the Cattle Arch.</td>
<td>The scheme as listed within this report</td>
<td>Highways Project Officers undertaking detailed design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible risk to cyclists and pedestrians when using the proposed cycle route</td>
<td>Provide segregated route in accordance with current design standards</td>
<td>Design team at Mayer Brown, the consultants engaged to design the proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible risk to cyclists, pedestrians and road users during the construction and implementation stages.</td>
<td>Implementation will need to be staged to ensure minimal impact and impedance to pedestrians and other road users</td>
<td>Highways Project Officers undertaking detailed design, Planning Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND STATUTORY PROVISION

7.1 Section 65(2) of the Highways Act, 1980 empowers a Local Authority to construct, alter or remove a cycle track constructed by them.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS

8.1 The introduction of these cycling and walking improvements will affect all sections of the community, and assist in improving safety for these vulnerable road users.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None for the purpose of this report

10. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None for the purpose of this report

APPENDICES – The following appendices form part of this report:

Plans of the routes will be on display at your meeting.

BACKGROUND PAPERS – The papers used to compile this report were:

The Cycle Route Implementation and Stakeholder Plan for LCN+ Link 149

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