

Report of:	Councillor Eric Polano - Executive Member for Regeneration Richard Horniman - Director of Regeneration
-------------------	---

Submitted to:	Executive - 15 June 2021
----------------------	--------------------------

Subject:	Ridgeway Connections Scheme: Public Consultation Exercise
-----------------	---

Summary

Proposed decision(s)
<p>1. It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the responses received during the public consultation exercise are noted; b) the objections to the proposed scheme are considered and mitigations noted; and, c) the proposed scheme is agreed and progresses to implementation during the 2021/22 financial year.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? ¹
<i>Decision</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>No</i>

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
<i>The proposed scheme will improve the safety, accessibility and usability of the Borough's footpath/cycleway network, thereby ensuring that Middlesbrough residents can access employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities by sustainable forms of transport.</i>	<i>The proposed scheme will improve accessibility to key services and facilities by sustainable forms of transport, thereby improving the health and safety of Middlesbrough residents. The scheme will be designed so as to minimise its impact on nearby properties and enhance the public realm of the area through which it runs.</i>	<i>By improving accessibility to the designated district centre of Coulby Newham the scheme will improve the resilience of the local economy, thereby ensuring that the transport network does not act as a barrier to future economic growth.</i>

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

Ward(s) affected

Coulby Newham and Hemlington Wards. The relevant Ward Members have been fully involved in the public consultation process. Ward members are keen to ensure that pedestrian / travel safety is maintained for residents and that any measures are mitigated to ensure that antisocial behaviour does not result from additional access routes; for neighbouring residents.

What is the purpose of this report?

2. Middlesbrough Council is proposing to connect Hemlington Grange to the existing pedestrian and cycle network serving Coulby Newham with a new footpath/cycleway, allowing journeys between the two communities for retail, leisure and education to be made safely on foot and by cycle. The purpose of this report is to detail the results of the public consultation exercise carried out for the proposed scheme and to seek Executive Member approval for the scheme to proceed to the implementation stage.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

3. The expanded consultation exercise has highlighted a range of views from relevant stakeholders. Whilst many of the issues highlighted have been mitigated by design, there remains a overall approval for the proposals. The number of consultation responses received which are against the proposals merit Executive Member consideration. An Executive Member decision is, therefore, required to allow the scheme to be taken forward to the implementation stage.

Background

4. As set out in the Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy, Middlesbrough Council is committed to increasing the number of local journeys made on foot and by cycle. Reducing the current dependence on the private car for such journeys will reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute towards the social and economic regeneration of the Borough.
5. To achieve this objective, the Council is investing in new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure designed to provide safe and convenient routes between residential areas and local facilities such as shops and schools. One of the residential areas included in this programme is Hemlington Grange which, because of its location to the south of Stainton Way and the east of B1365 Stokesley Road, is poorly connected to the existing footpath network and not connected at all to the existing cycle route network serving the south of the Borough.
6. A proposal has been designed which uses the only available Council land in the area which can link in with the Hemlington Grange site and integrate within the existing wider network across Coulby Newham. Verges along the B1365 Stokesley Road are relatively narrow and do not accommodate a satisfactory alternative; as currently configured.
7. In order to address this situation, it is proposed to construct a new footpath/cycleway link from the existing traffic signal-controlled crossing facility at the junction of Stokesley Road and Hemlington Grange Way to the existing

footpath/cycleway between Woodlea and Ridgeway, and an additional light controlled signal crossing on Stainton Way to the west of the B1365 Stokesley Road (Gables) roundabout.

8. The proposed footpath/cycleway link will connect Hemlington Grange to the existing pedestrian and cycle network serving Coulby Newham, thereby allowing journeys between the two communities – including to the Parkway Centre, the Rainbow Centre, The King’s Academy and Rose Wood Academy – to be made safely on foot and by cycle.
9. The proposed scheme comprises approximately 170 metres of 3.6 metre wide footpath/cycleway, running between the signal-controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing facility at the B1365 Stokesley Road/Hemlington Grange Way junction to the existing footpath/cycleway to the north of The Birches. The proposed alignment of the new footpath/cycleway is shown in **Appendix 1** to this report.
10. The proposed footpath/cycleway link will run across an area of Council-owned land to the north of The Birches, and will be designed and maintained to full adoptable standard.
11. The proposed alignment has been carefully chosen in order to minimise the impact of the new link on nearby residential properties. The distance between the footpath/cycleway and the boundary of the nearest residential property will be approximately 40 metres, and the footpath/cycleway will be lit by LED luminaires that will minimise any light spill onto residential properties during the hours of darkness; as well as mitigating any risks of antisocial behaviour.
12. During the design stage of the project DMX lighting will be explored for use on the footpath/cycleway. This is a very low level lighting brightness during the hours of darkness which remains dim until a person is detected within the vicinity which it then becomes a higher level lighting brightness until the person has passed the lighting column. A similar lighting scheme is current in operation at Grove Hill Linear Park. If necessary the possibility of introducing CCTV can be explored after construction of the footpath/cycle way.

Public Consultation

13. As with all proposed highway improvement schemes, public consultation was carried out in order to seek the views of key stakeholders. The first public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period between 30th October 2020 and 27th November 2020, and sought the views of the following parties:
 - a) The occupiers of those residential properties in The Birches and Woodlea in the vicinity of the proposed route;
 - b) Local Ward Councillors; and,
 - c) The Army Reserve Centre.
14. Any stakeholders not included in the above list, but with an interest in the scheme, were also able to submit their comments via the Council website.
15. A total of 36 responses were received, with one in favour of the proposed scheme and 35 against.

16. A meeting was held on 10th December 2020 to discuss the outcome of the first consultation exercise. This meeting was attended by the Mayor and Councillors representing the Coulby Newham and Stainton & Thornton Wards, as well as by Council officers.
17. At the meeting, it was highlighted that, whilst the occupiers of nearby properties had been consulted, the main potential beneficiaries of the proposed scheme (i.e. the occupiers of properties in Hemlington Grange) had not. Consequently, the decision was taken to carry out a second public consultation exercise, with the scope of the consultation extended to cover the occupiers of properties in Hemlington Grange as well as all of the properties in The Birches and Woodlea.
18. The second public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period from 15th January to 12th February 2021.
19. A total of 83 responses were received (including the responses received during the first consultation exercise), with 43 of those responding in favour of the proposed scheme and 40 against.
20. The main grounds for objection to the scheme are set out in the table below, together with the response from Council officers in each case:

Reason for Objection	Response from Council Officers
The footpath/cycleway should be re-routed via Ridgeway instead.	The proposed route alignment is a direct and attractive one, both for pedestrians and cyclists. Re-routing the footpath/cycleway via Ridgeway would require pedestrians and cyclists to navigate a circuitous route through an industrial estate where pavement parking takes place on a regular basis. Consequently there are strong amenity, personal security and road safety arguments in favour of the proposed route alignment.
Potential for crime and antisocial behaviour.	The footpath/cycleway will be designed so as to minimise the potential for such activity. Data provided by the Strategy, Information & Governance Team shows that there were no reported incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour in the residential area in the vicinity of the proposed route alignment over the three-year period from January 2018 to December 2020.

Reason for Objection	Response from Council Officers
Loss of privacy	No existing residential property is within 40 metres of the proposed route alignment, which will run along the north side of the mound separating The Birches and Woodlea from Ridgeway (i.e. 'over the brow of the hill'). This combination of factors means that its impact in terms of loss of privacy will be minimal.
Light pollution	The footpath/cycleway will be illuminated by means of LED lanterns. This will minimise 'light spill' and, therefore, the impact on nearby properties, none of which are within 40 metres of the proposed route alignment.
Litter (including dog waste)	Dog waste and litter bins will be provided at regular intervals along the footpath/cycleway, thereby minimising the potential for such activity to take place.
Impact on local wildlife	No trees or flora will be removed as part of the proposed scheme, and access for birds and other local animal species to the area of land through which it will run will be unaffected.
Unsafe to exercise dogs	The footpath/cycleway will have no impact on the safety of dogs or dog walkers.
The footpath/cycleway will result in an increase in footfall through the existing grassed area.	The footpath/cycleway will provide a direct and attractive pedestrian and cycle link between Hemlington Grange and Coulby Newham, so an increase in footfall is inevitable. However, there will be no detrimental impact on existing users of the grassed area.
Impact on property values	Evidence published by central government shows that the value of residential properties located in the vicinity of sustainable transport links is generally higher than the value of properties where sustainable transport options are more limited.
Risk of flooding of gardens of nearby properties	The footpath/cycleway will have no adverse impact in terms of surface water runoff into the gardens of nearby properties.
The scheme is a waste of money	The footpath/cycleway will provide a direct, safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle route linking Hemlington Grange and Coulby Newham. Construction of the new route is, therefore, entirely compatible with the policies set out in the adopted Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy.

21. The results of the second consultation exercise are considered in more detail in **Appendix 1** to this report.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

22. It is recommended that:

- a) the responses received during the public consultation exercise are noted;
- b) the objections to the proposed scheme are considered and mitigations noted; and,
- c) the proposed scheme is agreed and progresses to implementation during the 2021/22 financial year.

Why is this being recommended?

23. There are currently no cycle routes connecting the rapidly growing residential area of Hemlington Grange with the adjacent district centre of Coulby Newham, and the only existing pedestrian route is circuitous and involves negotiating the busy B1365 Stokesley Road via an uncontrolled crossing facility.

24. The proposed footpath/cycleway will address both of these issues and, by doing so, allow the residents of Hemlington Grange to access local retail, leisure and educational facilities by more sustainable alternatives to the private car, in line with the policies set out in the adopted Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

25. The other potential decisions that have not been recommended include:

- a) Do nothing. This is not recommended, as it will not provide a safe and direct pedestrian and cycle route that allows residents of Hemlington Grange to access the retail, leisure and educational facilities in the Coulby Newham district centre by more sustainable alternatives to the private car.
- b) Reassessing the proposed route alignment. This is not recommended, as re-routing the footpath/cycleway via Ridgeway (as suggested by a number of the objectors) would require pedestrians and cyclists to navigate a circuitous route through an industrial estate where pavement parking takes place on a regular basis. Consequently there are strong amenity, personal security and road safety arguments in favour of the proposed route.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

26. The new footpath/cycleway link will be built on Council-owned land. The area of land required for the new link will be dedicated for highway purposes. This is a simple legal process to which there is no right of objection.

27. Any legal issues associated with the delivery of the scheme will be managed through the Council's established procedures.

Financial

28. The proposed scheme has been costed by the Council's Civil Engineering team, which has extensive experience of designing and delivering similar schemes. Based on the preliminary design work carried out to date, the cost of the scheme has been estimated at £52,000, inclusive of fees, prelims and contingencies.

29. All costs associated with the scheme will be met from the Council's 2021/22 Local Transport Capital Programme.

Policy Framework

30. The decisions recommended within this report align fully with the Council's policy framework.

Equality and Diversity

31. It is not anticipated that any protected groups will be impacted upon negatively as a result of implementing the proposed scheme. No concerns were raised during the consultation process either that the proposal could impact differently on individuals or groups because they held one or more protected characteristics.

Risk

32. This is a 'business as usual' scheme which, if approved, will be delivered in line with the Council's established risk management protocols. Appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure that all risks associated with the scheme are minimised.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

33. Council officers will commence the implementation of the proposed scheme upon approval.

Appendices

34. Appendix 1 to this report contains the following information:

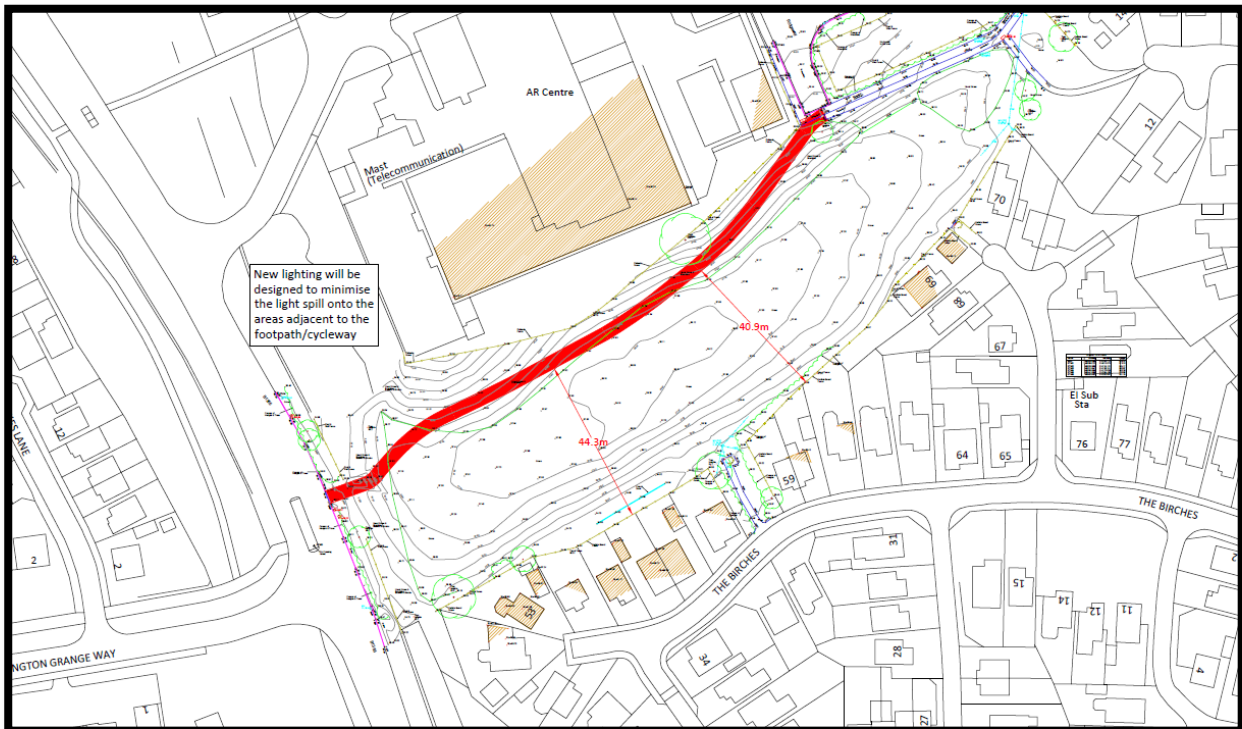
- a) Location of proposed footpath/cycleway; and
- b) Detailed consultation results.

Background papers

35. 'Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-2028', as approved by Executive on 18th December 2018 (Minute ref. 18/52).

APPENDIX 1

a) Location of Proposed Footpath/Cycleway



b) Detailed Public Consultation Results

As with all proposed highway improvement schemes, public consultation was carried out in order to seek the views of key stakeholders.

The first public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period between 30th October 2020 and 27th November 2020, and sought the views of the following parties:

- a) The occupiers of those residential properties in The Birches and Woodlea in the vicinity of the proposed route;
- b) Local Ward Councillors; and
- c) The Army Reserve Centre.

Anyone not included in the above list but with an interest in the scheme was also able to submit their comments via the Council website.

A total of 36 responses were received – one in favour of the proposed scheme and 35 against.


The second public consultation exercise was carried out over the four-week period from 15th January and 12th February 2021, and sought the views of the following parties:

- a) The occupiers of all residential properties in The Birches, Woodlea and Hemlington Grange;
- b) Local Ward Councillors; and

c) The Army Reserve Centre.

A total of 83 responses were received (including the responses received during the first consultation exercise), with 43 in favour of the proposed scheme and 40 against.

The main grounds for objection are set out below, together with the response from Council officers in each case:

Alternative Routes	Response
<p>Travelling south on B1365 and joining the footpath at Ridgeway and travelling around Ridgeway passed the Army Reserve Centre and Royal Mail sorting office and re-joining the existing foot path/cycle way at the rear of Woodlea.</p>	<p>This route is not possible as a cycle way because there is only provision for pedestrians on the Ridgeway footpath with no cycling. Cyclists would have to use Ridgeway with the additional road safety risks of cycling with other road users on a small industrial estate. This route would require the removal of established trees and flora along the B1365 to build the alternative scheme, and additionally a new footpath from the junction with Ridgeway to the entrance at the Army Reserve Centre would also have to be built. The increased costs, increased road safety concerns and the removal of established trees and flora make this option unviable. A second similar alternative route was also proposed travelling south to Stainton Way and to build a new toucan crossing. This route would channel students to Kings Academy School, but away from the Parkway shopping centre.</p> 
Anti-Social Behaviour	
<p>Residents report off-road motor cycles and quad bike users have used the area, and there are concerns that groups of teenagers will use the grassed area as a hangout.</p>	<p>Residents have reported anti-social behaviour in the consultation. From January 2018 to December 2020 in the immediate area of The Birches TS8 0UB and Woodlea TS8 0TX there is has been no reported anti-social behaviour (Data supplied by Analytics Business Partner, Strategy Information & Governance,</p>

Concerns that burglaries will be committed by using the footpath/cycle path to gain access to properties, and it will give easy access for criminals between estates.	Middlesbrough Council). A chicane barrier is to be installed near the light controlled crossing on the B1365.
Security/Crime	
Concerns that burglaries will be committed by using the footpath/cycle path to gain access to properties, and it will give easy access for criminals between estates.	Residents have reported crime in the consultation. From January 2018 to December 2020 in the immediate area of The Birches TS8 0UB and Woodlea TS8 0TX there is has been no reported anti-social behaviour (Data supplied by Analytics Business Partner, Strategy Information & Governance, Middlesbrough Council).
Loss of Privacy	
The proposed route is on a higher ground to the neighbouring properties in The Birches.	No property is within 40m of the proposed route and any impact will be minimal.
Light From Columns	
Residents are concerned about light from columns impacting on properties.	The lighting columns that are to be used are designed to channel light away from properties and will have negligible impact on properties.
Pollution/Litter	
Increased pollution by litter and dog waste.	Dog and litter waste bins will be provided along the proposed route.
Wildlife	
Damage to wildlife and birds in the area.	No trees or flora will be removed as part of the scheme.
Unsafe to exercise dogs	
Residents unable to exercise their dogs safely on the grassed area due to the footpath and perceived danger from anti-social behaviour and off-road motor cycles, quad bikes.	Residents have reported anti-social behaviour in the consultation. From January 2018 to December 2020 in the immediate area of The Birches TS8 0UB and Woodlea TS8 0TX there is has been no reported anti-social behaviour (Data supplied by Analytics Business Partner, Strategy Information & Governance, Middlesbrough Council).

Increase in footfall	
An increase in footfall in the area of The Birches and Woodlea from people who are not residents in their area.	The proposed foot path will provide a sustainable transport link between Hemlington Grange and Coulby Newham.
Property Values	
There are concerns that property values will decrease.	Central government data suggests that properties that have sustainable travel links increase property values. (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509587/value-of-cycling.pdf)
Flooding	
There is a high risk of flooding in the gardens of The Birches (52-57).	The proposed route of the foot path/cycle way will have no affect or add to run off and have no impact on adjacent properties.
Waste Of Money	
Residents feel this is a waste of money.	As set out in the Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy, Middlesbrough Council is committed to increasing the number of local journeys made on foot and by cycle. Reducing the current dependence on the private car for such journeys will reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute towards the social and economic regeneration of the Borough. (https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Integrated-transport-strategy-2018-28.pdf)