

Agenda Item A18	Committee Date 11 May 2009	Application Number 09/00251/DPA
Application Site Royal Lancaster Infirmary/Former British Waterways Site Ashton Road Lancaster Lancashire	Proposal Construction of a cycle route between Aldcliffe Road and Ashton Road, through Lancaster Infirmary	
Name of Applicant Lancaster City Council	Name of Agent Gary Bowker	
Decision Target Date 14 May 2009	Reason For Delay	
Case Officer	Mr Martin Culbert	
Departure	No	
Summary of Recommendation	Approve	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The site is a linear route between Aldcliffe Road, adjacent to Kent House/ Aldcliffe Place, in the north and Ashton Road, at its junction with the hospital's internal access road, in the south.

From the north, the route crosses the Listed canal switch-bridge to the British Waterways Depot, through which it then passes to an existing gateway in the rear wall giving access to the rear of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. It then passes over a short length of new roadway to join an existing car park and from there to the internal roadway of the hospital until it emerges onto Ashton Road at its Southern end.

The route is therefore boarded on both sides over most of its length by hospital accommodation, although it is close to the new Sixth Form Centre at Ripley School on its Southern end, and passes through industrial land and next to student accommodation on its northern end.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal is a full application for minor works to facilitate the use of this route as a cycle route for a temporary trial period. These works include the patching/resurfacing of the roadways on either side of the canal switch bridge, the construction of new security fences through the British Waterways land and along the south side of the new cycleway length within the RLI, the construction of that short length of cycleway and a security gate, together with various road surface treatments and markings on the service road, necessary lighting, signage and security cameras.

All of these works are in line with current standards and have been kept to the minimum necessary to facilitate the use of the route and satisfy both safety and security requirements.

3.0 Site History

3.1 There is no site history relevant to the consideration of this application.

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory consultees:

Statutory Consultee	Response
County Highway Authority	No objection
Police	Concerned about hospital security but no objection subject to appropriate CCTV coverage
British Waterways	No response received within statutory timescale

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 No third party representations have been received.

6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies

6.1 The Canal switch bridge and adjacent buildings within the British Waterways site are Listed Grade II buildings (which are the subject of separate applications being considered as part of this Committee Agenda). Additionally the route from Aldcliffe Road to the boundary of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary lies within the Lancaster City Centre Conservation Area. Saved Policy E35 and Paragraph 5.7.14 of the Lancaster District Local Plan seek to preserve the character and setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Policy E2 of the Lancaster District Core Strategy specifically seeks to improve walking and cycle networks, create links, remove barriers and ensure that development is integrated with pedestrian and cycle networks.

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 Lancaster City Council is currently developing the cycle route network throughout the Lancaster District as part of a 5 year Cycling Demonstration Town Project funded by Cycling England. Running in conjunction with this project the Cycling Demonstration Town Team are also working with key employers in the District to assist with, and promote, workplace travel plans and to encourage the maximum uptake of cycling as the primary mode of transport and to support other sustainable transport initiatives.

7.2 The Royal Lancaster Infirmary employs in excess of 1500 full and part time staff and has been identified by Cycling England as one of the Districts key, and therefore target, employers. Cycle access from the north of the RLI site is currently a poor and unattractive proposition as it requires part of the journey to be made on the gyratory system, which is heavily trafficked and often perceived as a barrier to cycling.

7.3 Staff at the RLI have raised issues concerning Health and Safety and security on their site. In order to address these issues the proposal is to open up the proposed cycle route on a temporary 'trial' basis to assess whether the route indeed works and provides a benefit and does not suffer from these perceived risks.

7.4 A potential route to and through the RLI has been identified by accessing the northern boundary of the site from Aldcliffe Road. Across the existing British Waterways operational yard at Aldcliffe Basin. The cycle route will then proceed through the RLI site on the existing service road and emerge back onto the public highway at Ashton Road. The route will therefore be available to cyclists (and pedestrians) who do not necessarily wish to access the RLI but to pass through it north to south and vice-versa.

- 7.5 During the trial period the improved access is intended to be for the sole use of cyclists to gain access to the RLI and/or travel east/west through the site. Due to security and safety issues the RLI management are reluctant, at least during the trial period, to open the access up to all users. Having said that the route will have open access throughout the day (closed at night) – precise times to be agreed and publicised. The current proposed timings are: open from 7am to 7pm.
- 7.6 It is however inevitable that some pedestrians and/or mobility handicapped, who become aware of the access, will use it as it will be beneficial when compared to the existing alternative routes. Access will be controlled at the northern end of the route by means of a gated entrance at the boundary with the British Waterways depot off Aldcliffe Road.
- 7.7 Signage will be erected to inform potential users of open/closed times particularly at the southern, Ashton Road, end of the site. Key holders and management of the gate will be the responsibility of RLI staff. RLI staff have also requested that the trial period should be open to review – the Intention is, however, to run the trial for a minimum of 9 to 12 month period.
- 7.8 Levels of use by cyclists in and around the Lancaster District are being monitored by fixed, inductive loop, counters. The RLI is one of the 'key employers' with whom the Cycling Demonstration Town project teams are working. The hospital have recently installed additional cycle parking facilities on their premises and are seeing increased growth in the levels of staff cycling to work. It is anticipated that these numbers will continue to increase, and therefore assist in achieving the objectives of the CDT project, which runs until March 2011.
- 7.9 The route is also of strategic importance providing a link between the recently improved canal towpath and Marsh cycle route (which form an orbital route around the city) to the RLI site and Ashton Road and other routes to the south of the city. During the trial period a cycle counter will be installed, near to the boundary of RLI/BW to monitor the level of use.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The physical works required to provide this route are relatively minor, chiefly comprising signage, lighting and road markings/safety surfaces, a short length of pathway and some security fencing, and will have little impact on the character, appearance or amenities of their surroundings. The route, on the other hand, has the potential for major benefits for the movement of cyclists and pedestrians around the Western side of the city.

Recommendation

That **PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

- 1 Standard Full permission
- 2 Development in accord with approved plans
- 3 Details of CCTV and lighting to be agreed in consultation with the Police Crime Prevention Officer.
- 4 Details of security fencing and gates to be agreed.
- 5 Detailed tree protection plan to be agreed.
- 6 Detailed landscaping scheme to be agreed.
- 7 Detailed scheme for works to retained trees to be agreed in consultation with the Police Crime Prevention Officer.
- 8 Details of the surfacing work to switch bridge and access ramps to be agreed.
- 9 Royal Lancaster Infirmary direction sign at Aldcliffe Road to be part of cycle direction sign only and a further sign to the effect of Private Road- no public access for vehicles to be provided.

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

1. None