

REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CYCLE PATH ON FRESTON HILL

At a meeting held on Thursday 4th April, progress on the proposed cycle path for Freston Hill was discussed:

There were two options presented: the 1st and preferred option was for a cycle path to be 3 metres wide on the west side of the road (opposite the river). They need to get the landowners' consent and ecological studies need to be carried out. It was anticipated that cyclists would probably use the highway to go down the hill, but the cycle path to come up the hill, although the 3 metre wide path could accommodate cyclists in both directions. The 3 metre wide path would be designed to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians.

It was considered at this stage that Option 2, a 2 metre path would be more achievable, but this would only accommodate cyclists and not pedestrians.

It was stated that there were objections from Freston Parish Council in the past to losing the footpath. The Clerk was asked to consult with FPC.

If the cycle path goes ahead on the Western side, there would be two places which necessitated crossing the very busy road.

The plans would need a road safety audit. There are some funds for design and survey work available – other funds might be available from CIL - see below.

Next steps:

1. Calum Poole will share the plans seen today for the potential cycle routes on the western side of the hill so the various organisations can give feedback about these.
2. Calum will work up similar plans for the eastern (river) side of Freston Hill as we discussed before and to many seems the more safe and useful option to avoid cyclists and pedestrians going up the hill towards Shotley having to cross over a fast road (twice) with limited visibility.
3. To then have a further meeting to confirm a preferred route.
4. Following this the Highways team apparently do almost certainly have the resources for the necessary detailed survey work and engineering specifications to take the project forward.
5. Funding from CIL is available according to Katherine for such projects but with limitations around £100k and obviously this could be applied for when the preferred route is confirmed and sufficient surveys and planning done. Other sources of funding may be available as well.

The speed limit on the Strand was discussed, but this is a completely separate matter. It was suggested that the 30 mph limit be extended to the Food Hall, followed by a 40 mph limit through to Woolverstone.