

**TO:** SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**DATE:** 14 June 2010

**SUBJECT:** Sheppey Cycle Routes Project

**BY:** KCC Director of Economic Development

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** Results of the consultation process concerning the Sheppey Cycle Routes project (routes at Sheerness and Leysdown-on-Sea)

**Decision Required:** For information

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### **Introduction**

1. This report sets out the details of two new cycle routes on the Isle of Sheppey; one in Sheerness and the second in Leysdown-on-Sea. This project is being funded by KCC Regeneration and Economy with match funding from Sustrans and being implemented in a partnership between KCC Regeneration and Economy, KCC Countryside Access Service, Kent Highway Services and Swale Borough Council.
2. These routes are being developed as part of a wider plan to stimulate regeneration on the island and the project has important social and economic aims. It aims to create an excellent resource for local residents for recreation and for everyday travelling, as well as supporting tourism on the island. The routes will be designed to be as accessible to as many people as possible, and where possible will be suitable for people with disabilities. The routes will also make a substantial contribution to facilities for healthy exercise, and Sheppey has one of the highest levels of health deprivation in Kent. The Primary Care Trust and Sheppey Healthy Living Centre have been involved in the project.
3. A Stage 1 Safety Audit has been undertaken and passed for this project.
4. KCC Regeneration and Economy is providing £500k for these routes, and a third route being planned in Queenborough/Rushenden. Sustrans has provided match funding of £225k.

### **Sheerness Circular Route**

5. This circuit around Sheerness is planned to be a valuable recreational and utility route. The route will enable access along the seafront, will link to Barton's Point Coastal Park and will run along the length of Queenborough Lines in a 9km circuit around Sheerness. The route is designed for both recreational and family cycling as well as everyday utility cycling and will link to Sheerness Railway Station, through urban Sheerness and to Tesco.

6. The 'Lines' is a 3km former defensive earthwork and one of only a few greenspaces in Sheerness. This project will help to significantly improve access along the Queenborough Lines and improve this vital recreational area for Sheerness.
7. Additional funding has been secured from Sustrans, the national cycling charity, so that links from the circuit can be made into all of the schools in Sheerness; which comprises 4 primary schools and the northern site of the Isle of Sheppey Academy. This is an unprecedented step in supporting safer cycling to school.

**Leysdown-on-Sea Route**

8. This route will link Leysdown-on-Sea with the Isle of Harty, with a short circuit around the Isle.
9. The route will be suitable for families and will follow well-surfaced tracks. It will be an important recreational route for residents and visitors alike. By working with Natural England and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds it is proposed to link the route to the entrance of the Swale National Nature Reserve on the Isle of Harty and to the RSPB Raptor Viewing Point, making this an enjoyable, low impact and sustainable way to visit these nationally important wildlife sites.
10. This area has been targeted for a new route in order to create a new tourism product for the settlement, which will help to attract new visitors and boost local business.

**Consultation**

11. In total 39 consultation returns were received during the consultation period held during February and March 2010. Overall 83% supported the Sheerness route with 88% supporting the Leysdown route. A clear demand for further improvements for development of a route between Minster and Leysdown was also demonstrated.
12. The following results were received for the two routes;

**Q1 Sheerness Route**

I support the proposal	I do not support the proposal	No opinion
34	1	4

**Q3 Leysdown Route**

I support the proposal	I do not support the proposal	No opinion
36	1	2

Question 5 invited the respondents to make comments on other improvements to cycle routes that they would like to see.

The top three requested routes were, in order of requests;

1. Leysdown to Minster
2. Minster, Halfway Road to Queenborough, using the old railway line

### 3. Lowstead Corner roundabout to Leysdown

13. A total of 41 other responses were received including 2 supporting the routes and 2 objections. A large element (33) of these “other” responses came from Richmond Primary School requesting improved safety to their routes to schools. The pupil and teachers requests were as follows;

- Improved lighting on the alley between Richmond St & Jefferson Road
- Improved lighting between Richmond Primary School and Nursery Close
- Parking restrictions by the entrance to alleys in Richmond St and Jefferson Road
- Safer crossing facilities from Richmond St to Coronation Road

### **Conclusion**

14. These two routes will form important strategic routes for the Isle of Sheppey, not only providing for recreational and utility cycling, but also boosting tourism on the island and supporting healthy exercise. This is a substantial regeneration investment on the Island.

15. The consultation showed that the local residents who responded were very supportive of the project.

### **Decision Required**

16. To note the report.

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