

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Decision Epping Forest Consultative Group – For Information	Dated: 23/11/2023 28/02/2023
Subject: A104 Road Safety Scheme (SEF 29/23)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1.2.3
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director, Environment	For Decision
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston, Epping Forest	

City’s Corporate Plan

Contribute to a flourishing society

1. *People are safe and feel safe.*

Shape outstanding environments

2. *We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.*
3. *Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained*

Summary

This report presents further context and updates on proposals for a road safety scheme along the A104 between Buckhurst Hill and the Wake Arms Roundabout. The road safety scheme will include road crossing points connecting car parks and defined tracks to the surrounding Forest area; a section of high friction surface on the approach to Robin Hood roundabout; alteration to the existing speed limits and installation of average speed cameras. The scheme is funded through the Department of Transport’s (Dft) Safer Roads fund and is being managed by Essex Highways.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Support the draft proposals contained in Appendix A for a road safety scheme pending Essex Highways considering comments received from recent engagement and providing detailed drawings.

Main Report

Background

1. A Forest Transport Strategy (FTS) was adopted by your committee on 11 May 2009. This followed a public consultation exercise on the strategy, jointly conducted by the Conservators and Essex County Council, which ran for three months.
2. 64% of respondents were in favour of crossing points on the A104 and design of these formed one of the first action points for the strategy.
3. The strategy acknowledged that schemes would be implemented gradually dependent on funding availability. The crossing points have not been implemented to date because funding had not yet been identified.
4. However, in April 2023, the government announced a £50m spending programme, which included £1,360,000 identified for a road safety scheme along the A104.
5. The funding was earmarked specifically for the A104 which was identified by the International Road Assessment Programme (IRAP) as one of Britain's top 75 most persistently high-risk A roads.
6. In September 2023 your committee received a report with outline proposals for this road safety scheme led by Essex Highways.

Current Position

7. A draft proposal for the road safety scheme is shown within the presentation in Appendix A.
8. The scheme proposes:
 - Average Speed Cameras to enforce the existing 30mph and 40mph speed limit
 - A northwards extension to the existing 30mph speed limit in Woodford to cover the Rangers Road junction which also includes average speed cameras
 - a series of traffic islands along the length including crossing points at the key forest crossing points, working with conservators to provide an integrated approach with the car park access improvements. Detailed drawings for these elements are currently being prepared.
9. Funding for the scheme can only be used for specific safety measures.

Options

- a. Option 1 – To support the proposed road safety scheme. This will support the implementation of road crossings and reduced speed limit as agreed in the Forest Transport Strategy, as well as speed cameras to enforce the 40mph limit introduced by the FTS. Supporting the scheme will promote partnership working that will better enable the already programmed gating of three Forest car parks as well as contributing to the preparation of an updated Forest Transport Strategy that can address wider transport issues around the Forest. **This is recommended.**
- b. Option 2 – Not to show support for the proposed road safety scheme. The scheme has been prepared by experts in road safety to deliver safety measures to address one of the highest road accident records in Britain. It delivers previously agreed proposals in the Forest Transport Strategy. Not supporting the fully externally funded scheme may jeopardise opportunities for synergistic works to the Forest car parks, and future

partnership work on the Forest Transport Strategy update. **This is not recommended**

Proposals

10. An Officer from Essex County Council Highways (ECC) presented the scheme proposals to your September committee and to the Epping Forest Consultative Group (EFCG) at their meeting in October. The presentation is attached as Appendix A.
11. The EFCG were keen to see if road cyclists could be better accommodated and there was a general feeling that the central cross hatching would not be beneficial to cyclists.
12. EFRA opposed the crossing points as they felt they could not be used by horse riders.
13. The Ramblers welcomed the crossing points which they felt helped walkers who currently struggle to cross safely.
14. The lower speed limit and cameras were generally welcomed.
15. The officer explained that additional proposals such as alternative routes for cyclists, Pegasus crossings and other measures will be considered and widely consulted on, in preparing an updated Forest Transport Strategy in partnership with the Conservators. This new document will be the way a wide range of road and transport issues can be agreed and for which further funding sources can be sought to address new proposals.
16. The officer agreed to revert to the ECC and DfT road safety teams to see if revisions can be made to the scheme within budget that might better serve the needs of cyclists. If any further revisions are available a verbal report will be presented to this committee.
17. Essex Highways are preparing detailed drawings, expected imminently, which will allow a more detailed understanding of the proposed locations of the infrastructure and how they will interact with Forest land.

Key Data

18. The total cost of the road safety scheme is projected to be £1,500,000 of which £1,360,000 is met by the grant from the DfT Safer Roads Fund.
19. Match funding up to £100,000 and £40,000 officer time to project manage the scheme is being met by Essex Highways
20. In addition to this scheme approximately £80,000 has been identified in local risk to pay for three lots of entrance gates at three of the car parks along the route which can be installed at the same time as the safety scheme.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

21. These changes support the Corporate Plan Policy aims and priorities.
 - Shape outstanding environments

Financial implications

22. The cost of the road safety scheme is fully funded from external sources. Car park entrance improvements including gates are already planned to be met from local risk at an estimated total cost of £80,000 for three sites, in this financial year. It is planned that these works will be managed to coincide with the delivery of the road safety scheme thereby reducing additional costs that would have had to be met from local risk such as road closures and planning permissions.

Legal Implications

23. Under s.95A of the Highways Act 1980 (“HA 1980”) the highway authority has the power to install speed cameras on or near a highway. Under s.65 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (“RTRA 1984”), the traffic authority can place traffic signs on or near a road. Section 66 of the HA 1980 places a duty on the highway authority (in certain circumstances) to provide footway where considered necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of pedestrians, and s.68 enables the highway authority to provide places of refuge for the protection of pedestrians crossing the carriageway.
24. Pending receipt of the detailed design for the scheme from EH, it is not yet clear whether the footways associated with the crossing points are within the area currently designated as highway. Once EH has provided more detailed plans, further advice can be given on any requirements to enable use of these areas as footway.
25. The parts of the verges proposed for installation of signage and cameras are within the areas of the Forest designated as a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). On current information, it is not considered that the scheme will impact on any of the qualifying features of either designation, [but Essex Highways will seek Natural England consent for the works as required (pursuant to the duties on public authorities under e.g. sections 28G and 28H of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)].
26. To the extent that planning permission is required for any aspect of the scheme, consent will be sought by Essex Highways.

Property Implications

27. The final scheme will require replacement and reduction in highway signage as well as the installation of cameras and associated cabling along the Forest verges. As noted above, the HA 1980 and RTRA 1984 enable Essex County Council (as the highway and traffic authority for the area) to place signage and cameras on adjacent land to the highway. Any required installations will be captured in Epping Forest wayleaves, made under the authority to grant minor wayleaves delegated to the Executive Director Environment.

Charity Implications

28. Epping Forest is a registered charity (number 232990). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to the Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.

Resource Implications

29. Involvement in the scheme will be met from existing staff resources and local risk.

Risk Implications

30. A full risk register has been prepared as part of the road safety scheme.

Equalities Implications

31. The road safety scheme will create island refuges which is likely to improve safety at road crossings for the less physically able.

Climate implications

32. The road safety scheme will reduce speeds along the A104 which cuts through the heart of the Forest. This will help to reduce emissions on this stretch of road.

Security implications

33. Security risk will be covered by the project risk register.

Conclusion

34. The road safety plans for the A104 are still being planned, however the need to deliver safety measures are of a national priority. Co-operation between the Conservators, Essex Highways and Epping Forest District Council will be key to the successful delivery of the scheme.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – ECC Presentation

Background Papers

[Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest \(corpoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)

[Env Dept - Natural Environment - Forest Transport Strategy FINAL Nov 2008.pdf - All docs \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Jacqueline Eggleston

Head of Business Development

T: 020 8532 5315

E: jacqueline.eggleston@cityoflondon.gov.uk