

Dear Richard

I refer to your email dated 27 May 2009 concerning cycling in Medway.

The Council have received many positive comments on cycling in Medway, these cover maps produced, additional cycle facilities such as an off road route in East Hoath Woods, the Countryside Park mountain bike course and facilities provided in new developments such as those in Chatham Maritime.

I feel it worth noting that the Council has to cater for all abilities of cycling and ages and this has to be integrated with the other modes of transport. This approach is detailed in Medway's Cycling Action Plan, which has specific objectives to:

- a) reduce the vulnerability of cyclists and to reduce the fear of accidents associated with cycling.
- b) increase the number of journeys made by cycle and to increase cycling as a leisure and tourism activity.
- c) encourage safe cycling as a mode of travel among potential and inexperienced cyclists for utility trips.
- d) design for convenient, safer cycle use of the highway network to key destinations, by improving the safer cycle route network and links to key destinations.
- e) contribute towards encouraging 'green' tourism and to improving the health of people who live and work in Medway by offering realistic travel alternatives by cycle and opportunities to cycle for health.

Medway Council has been actively delivering the plan which in part has resulted in the levels of cycling in Medway. I will attempt to address each of your comments in the order of the email, but I am also willing for you to meet in person an officer from Integrated Transport to further discuss your concerns and if you feel appropriate to cycle some of the routes you have concerns about. The council's current network of routes has been based on an extensive consultation exercise carried out in 2002 and this was when the Medway Cycle Forum was formed. Peoples circumstances change as you mention in your email and while officers still have some contacts they are currently not as active as they were previously. This does not mean the council has forgotten cycling it just means with limited resources efforts may be directed in an area not apparent to your situation. I will therefore attempt to comment on your concerns.

Encouraging Cycling

The Safer Journeys Team (part of our Road Safety Section) run the school cycling scheme and became accredited last year to roll out a nationally recognised scheme called Bikeit. Next month officers are involved in an event taking year 6 children on a ride to the secondary school they will be attending in September as a way to give confidence to encourage cycling to the

secondary school. We have 18 permanent cycle counter sites on main routes so are measuring cycling 24/7 and this has shown increases. The council has achieved the installation target set in the Local Transport Plan of 100km of cycle network by 2011 some three years ahead of schedule.

Medway tunnel

This is a frequently asked question and I regret but there is simply no alternative answer. Public consultation in 1987 revealed a tunnel would be more beneficial than a bridge and the scheme was submitted to Parliament in November 1988 with the Tunnel Bill becoming an Act in July 1990. Works started on building the Tunnel in July 1992 and was officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal on 12 June 1996. The Tunnel Bill does not allow non powered vehicles using the tunnel. Any changes to the current position would require a change to the Tunnel Bill and this would be an extremely lengthy legal and costly process. As stated earlier the Council has to consider all abilities and ages for cycling. A route such as the tunnel to allow vulnerable children or adults on bikes in a confined environment would simply not be acceptable.

Budget issues

In the present economic climate there are budgetary constraints, the Council's second Local Transport Plan LTP2 Delivery Report 2008 produced for government in November 2008 demonstrated the various schemes carried out in first two years of LTP2. The document also indicates the aims for the remainder of LTP2 and aims for LTP3 due to be produced for April 2011.

Future links

Officers from Integrated Transport are in discussions with Sustrans (a national cycling charity) regarding the Ranger scheme they operate and it is hoped that this will commence later this year in Medway. You may be interested in the initiative and feel able to assist. I attach a website link for your information.

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/search-results?search=rangers>

Poor on Cycling

You make the following statement 'Medway is know to be poor for cycling across the land amongst anyone keen on cycling and sustainable transport' I would be grateful if you could expand on this statement in what context as some of the records we keep have shown increases in cycling. In recent years we have also had National organisations visit and rate Medway Council in various cycling elements. What I would also suggest if you are able and along with any friends feel this is the way forward then consider reforming the Medway Cycle Forum. Officers in Integrated Transport would be only too pleased to help / assist. In fact as stated earlier the LTP3 has to be produced over the next 18 months and this would mean you have an opportunity to influence the future cycling strategy for Medway.

Medway Council is committed to encouraging cycling in Medway and this is demonstrated by the delivery of a number of interventions to promote and encourage cycling as detailed in the current cycle action plan (page 38) and a large number of actions have been achieved.

Thank you for sending me your email and I trust you will feel able to telephone / email the Integrated Transport Team. Contact details are Mark Johnson 01634 331505 email: mark.johnson@medway.gov.uk

Regards