

14969 Kirkby Lonsdale to Cowan Bridge

Sustrans-Ireby-with-Leck Councillors

31/10/2024:14:00-15:30

Attendees:

Ireby-with-Leck Councillors

Councillor Jean White (JW); Councillor Andrew Makinson (AM)

Sustrans

Rachel Gibbons (RG); Jim Yeoman (JY)

Notes (see also presentation attached)

Support for the scheme

- JW and AM: Majority of people want to see the route happen, but not in the proposed form.
There is a feeling within the village that the proposals are dangerous (see below)
There is some feeling of 'not past my front door', or people who simply do not want the scheme to come through the village.
JW and AM made clear that they have to represent the views of the residents.
- JY and RG accepted this, but also noted that some residents had shown support for the scheme.

Difference between Sustrans drop-in event (June) and Cowan Bridge meeting (July)

- JY: Feedback from Sustrans drop-in event was generally more positive than July meeting
- AM: attendees at July meeting were local residents, many of whom live on the road.
- JY: 100% attendees at June meeting were from postcodes within a 3 mile radius of Cowan Bridge. 70% of attendees were from Cowan Bridge, Overtown or Leck
- Some people said they were not aware of the drop-in event. JY stated that Sustrans had sent over 130 letters in advance, to every listed address in postcodes in and surrounding Cowan Bridge. Posters and flyers were left at Cowan Bridge Tearoom and Fraser Hall. Emails were sent via the Parish Council and Fraser Hall.
- AM: Voting at July meeting was done by raising hands. Potential that attendees felt pressured to go with majority.
- JY: Feedback at Sustrans drop-in event was provided by anonymous forms.

Railway Route: Casterton to Cowan Bridge

- AM: Caton to Bull Beck is a brilliant path. When there is a railway line right next to the path, why isn't that being used? The local conservative MP put in his election materials that the path would be extended to Sedbergh.
- JY: We have looked at this option in depth and there are a lot of issues with this route:
 - o There is no public right of way and it dissects fields. For landowners north of Cowan Bridge, going alongside the road is less intrusive to farm operations than the middle of fields.
 - o Near Kirkby Lonsdale there are sections which have gradients over 10% which would exclude a lot of people.

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- JY: What we are doing is much more feasible, and will look like the path at Bull Beck (a 3m wide tarmacked path) – it just won't be on a railway line. The preferred route link up to Whoop Hall/The Meadows, and camp sites along the A65. The preferred route is more direct, and less hilly.
- AM suggested that the current proposals showed a lack of ambition.
- JY disagreed: stated that he and Sustrans would be rightfully proud of a traffic-free Greenway linking Kirkby Lonsdale to Cowan Bridge. Regards current proposals as a marked improvement on what currently exists, and would benefit people all along the route.

Amendments to Cowan Bridge Designs

- JY: we have responded to feedback we received over the summer and amended the designs:
 - o We have removed the continuous crossing due to objections from residents in Burr Tree Gardens
 - o We have moved the location of the crossing to in front of Methodist Church, away from residential properties. JW and AM noted that the Church is currently being renovated, and will be a residential property in the future.
 - o New crossing location retains more of the parking bay than originally proposed: now proposed to be 25m long (reduced from 41m currently). The current proposal would comfortably fit an articulated HGV (maximum length 17m), or several smaller vehicles such as vans, tractors and buses.
 - o The bus shelter would need to be relocated slightly to the west, but would remain next to the bus layby.
- AM noted that Sustrans need to speak with owner of land where path leaves fields to the north-west of the village. JY to confirm if any further private land needed in this area and to make contact if necessary.

Safety on the A65

- AM: 3 members of the village were killed on the road, including a 12-year-old girl and her mother. Cowan Bridge is a small community, with a voting population of 130, these incidents have had a big impact.
- JY: data we have collected would not suggest to a highways authority that it is unsafe. The highway authority is unlikely to implement measures such as speed cameras or a signalised crossing. Nevertheless, Sustrans want the same thing as the people of the village, which is to make the situation safer for anyone walking, wheeling or cycling in the village.
- Sustrans do not quite understand why our proposals are regarded as making the road less safe:
 - o A signalised crossing would be a marked improvement on existing traffic islands, which are regularly hit by traffic. The islands to the west of the village will be removed, and replaced by the signalised crossing in the centre of the village.
 - o Wider pavements, with a 0.5m buffer to the carriageway, will mean pedestrians are further away from traffic than they currently are.

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- Narrowing the carriageway: the A65 is different widths in different places through the village. The current narrowest point is 6.3m, and the proposals don't reduce the road width to less than this at any point.
- JY: we have spoken with Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Police, both have confirmed that they regard the designs as improving safety.

Next Steps

- Parish Council meeting scheduled for 04/11/2024. Sustrans would appreciate a copy of any notes regarding the proposals.
- Sustrans will continue to engage with the Parish Council as representatives of the community.