

## QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND ANSWERS

Questions to Portfolio Holders

## (A) Question from Tina Walker

“Transport is responsible for about 27% of all emissions. We need to find innovative ways to reduce the reliance on motorised vehicles. With this in mind **Cycling UK Stevenage** have formed a group looking at the provision for cycling and active travel in the town and we would like to ask whether cycling permeability and accessibility is to be properly built into all developments including the Town Centre and Forster Country that links up to the existing network within Stevenage and linking up to route 12 towards Letchworth and beyond; whether in every new **planning** proposal will the existing network be protected, and in line with your declaration of a climate emergency, priority will be given to enhancing the network with Cycling UK Stevenage being consulted/involved at the planning stage?”

*Answer (Councillor John Gardner):*

*Together with Hertfordshire County Council we are working to improve and expand our fantastic cycle network. New sizable developments have and will continue to be required to connect into and where appropriate further expand our cycle network. Cycling UK and other interested stakeholders are welcome to subscribe and have their say during the relevant planning applications.*

## (B) Question from Councillor Richard Briers

“Over time the priority that the cycleways had (and should remain) over crossing minor side roads has been eroded. We need to reclaim our routes for active travel. Will cyclist priorities be reinstated as a matter of urgency at existing junctions and incorporated in future planning decisions? This should not need planning to correct priority issues at existing junctions.

Examples: Costco development and most of the other junctions on Gunnels Wood Road.”

*Answer (Councillor John Gardner):*

*Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the segregated cycleways in Stevenage. Stevenage Borough Council is committed to active travel, and secured the improvements linked to the Costco development and will continue to secure other improvements where appropriate. Stevenage Borough Council will seek external funding opportunities where available to help promote active travel options such as cycling.*

## (C) Question from Loyd Davies

“I understand that responsibility for the maintenance of the Stevenage cycle track surfaces rests with HCC but in many locations, it is the hedgerow and surface vegetation that narrows the cycle-track and causes a hazard. In some places the usable surface has been reduced by more than half. Cycling UK

Stevenage riders are using the network daily; we could assist you with identifying places that need attention.

Examples:

1. The short spur link from the A602 down the hill to join the Gresley Way cycleway south of Ridlins Stadium is dangerous because going downhill you are forced onto the wrong side of the track.
2. The cycle-track junction with Brittain Way on the north-east corner of the roundabout opposite Ken Brown Motors; here a tall hedge blocks more than half the cycleway and blocks the cyclists view of the road traffic and vice versa.
3. Broadhall Way cycle way near Broadwater Crescent junction - vegetation on the surface narrows cycleway on a sloping section which is hazardous as cyclists coming uphill move across towards the path of oncoming cyclists descending at speed.

Will the frequency of hedgerow maintenance and surface vegetation clearance along the cycleway and footpath network be increased to ensure that cyclists can safely use the cycle-tracks, particularly while Social Distancing?"

*Answer (Councillor John Gardner):*

*Our pruning schedule includes a summer sightline prune and a full winter prune.*

*The summer prune takes place between June and September, where hedges are cut in their entirety and shrubs are cut back from paths, roads, vision splays and any other health and safety infringements.*

*A full winter prune, where hedges and shrubs are all cut in their entirety is conducted between November and March. With this specification in place, each hedge is pruned twice a year, with some shrubs being pruned either once or twice a year.*

*There are approximately 40km of cycle tracks within Stevenage. Until recently a quarterly sweep was completed but this has recently been updated to categorise the cycle tracks and highways lanes into three priorities of weekly, monthly and quarterly inspections, with work completed where required.*

*In conjunction with our schedules, and our pruning and sweeping operatives reporting issues, we would very much welcome collaborative working with Cycle UK Stevenage riders to understand where cycle ways are being narrowed due to vegetation.*

*Launching a reporting network to resolve the issues identified in suitable and practicable timeframes and by those responsible will undoubtedly help to address the concerns that have been raised, and supports our Co-operative Neighbourhood approach. Please report any concerns to:*

*[Depot.Reception@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:Depot.Reception@stevenage.gov.uk)*

*Please also bear with us in the meantime as we are still operating under Covid-19 restrictions.*