

**Teignbridge District Council**  
**Committee name: Executive Committee**  
**Meeting date: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023**  
**Part i**

**Report Title**  
**Ogwell Strategic Link, phase 1 delivery**

### **Purpose of Report**

To enable delivery of phase 1 of the Ogwell Strategic Link using £190,000 externally awarded funding from Homes England (available for spend during the 2023/24 financial year only). Phase 1 focuses on the Baker's Park area.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**The Executive approval for the following:**

- (1) To approve implementation of phase 1 of the Ogwell Strategic Link cycle and pedestrian route using £190,000 government grant funding; and
- (2) To delegate authority to the Head of Place & Commercial Services to finalise agreements with Devon County Council as necessary to secure delivery of the project.

### **Financial Implications**

The financial implications are detailed in Section 3.1.

Martin Flitcroft  
Head of Corporate Services  
Email: [martin.flitcroft@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:martin.flitcroft@teignbridge.gov.uk)

### **Legal Implications**

See section 3.3

Paul Woodhead  
Head of Legal Service & Monitoring Officer  
Email: [paul.woodhead@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:paul.woodhead@teignbridge.gov.uk)

### **Risk Assessment**

The project delivery process includes safety assessment/risk assessment process.  
See Section 4 below

Also see Equality Impact Assessment summary (paragraph 3.4.2), and the full EqIA in Appendix 4.

Estelle Skinner  
Green Infrastructure Officer  
Email: [estelle.skinner@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:estelle.skinner@teignbridge.gov.uk)

## **Environmental/ Climate Change Implications**

See section 3.5 below.

William Elliot  
Climate Change Officer  
Email: [William.elliott@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:William.elliott@teignbridge.gov.uk)

## **Report Author**

Estelle Skinner, Green Infrastructure Officer (Spatial Planning)  
Email: [estelle.skinner@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:estelle.skinner@teignbridge.gov.uk)

## **Executive Member**

Cllr Gary Taylor, Executive Member for Planning and Building Control

## **Appendices/Background Papers**

*Appendix 1 – National Cycle Network map (in & surrounding Newton Abbot)*  
*Appendix 2 – illustrative alignment plan, Ogwell Strategic Link (phase 1 highlighted)*  
*Appendix 3 – illustrative general arrangement plan for phase 1, Ogwell Strategic Link*  
*Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment for Ogwell Strategic Link*

## **1. Introduction/Background**

- 1.1 The Ogwell Strategic Link project objective is delivery of a shared off-road bicycle and walking route between Newton Abbot and Ogwell, to enable significantly more appeal and safety for cycling. This would be done via predominantly off-road provision, as an alternative to on-road travel along the busy and constrained Totnes Road A381.
- 1.2 Devon County Council and Teignbridge District Council work closely together on delivery of strategic active and sustainable travel projects within Teignbridge. Devon County Council was granted conditional planning permission for the Ogwell Strategic Link in January 2019. Teignbridge Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) approved the overall route delivery in November 2019.
- 1.3 In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency, became a signatory of the Devon Climate Emergency, and is producing a Teignbridge Carbon Action Plan. The delivery of active and sustainable travel improvements is recognised as one of the important responses to the Climate Emergency, with transport being the largest sector of greenhouse gas emissions in Teignbridge.

- 1.4 Supporting high-quality active journeys also aligns with core Council strategic objectives:
- Moving up a Gear
  - Out and About and Active
  - Action on Climate
  - Great Places to Live & Work
- 1.5 The Ogwell Neighbourhood Plan (Policy TP01) recognises the need to better connect between Ogwell and Newton Abbot with safe paths and cycleways. Ogwell Parish Council were not in objection to the planning application. They noted the need for particular consideration in relation to Bunting Close to support safe shared-use with off-road width constraints and to ensure safety when joining on-road. This will be delivered via a following phase and the detailed design will include appropriate safety review process.
- 1.6 The Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Plan recognises the benefits of appealing and safe connectivity for on-foot and bicycle travel with local residents highlighting the need to make the town 'greener' by improving access to cycleways. Newton Abbot Town Council were not in objection to the planning application. They raised a concern about visibility and user safety at the upper (southern) end of Steppes Meadow where it joins Totnes Road A381. As part of the project delivery, the County Council (in 2021) adapted the alignment of the junction markings at Steppes Meadow and Totnes Road A381 junction, to improve safety (in particular for more vulnerable users).
- 1.7 The Heart of Teignbridge Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was produced during 2021 to 2022 and included a formal public consultation in autumn 2021. The consultation showed good overall support for the proposals. The LCWIP recognises the route needs that are already in progress, including Ogwell Strategic Link with potential future links to the development areas of Wolborough.
- 1.8 The Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Garden Community status was awarded by Homes England in 2019, to help revitalise neighbourhoods and shape significant developments and facilities for local communities. Homes England has awarded £190,000 capital funding towards Ogwell Strategic Link, for use in 2023/24. The Garden Community website includes information about the route as well as other active travel priorities and recent progress: [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\) \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

## 2. Report Detail

### 2.1 Overall route alignment & existing/future potential connectivity

- 2.1.1 Appendix 1 shows the sections of National Cycle Network (NCN) routes in and surrounding Newton Abbot (orange lines are off-road provision and blue lines are on-road provision). The Ogwell Strategic Link will help to enable the following existing and proposed future connections:

- Linking Ogwell into the Newton Abbot town centre and railway, which is accessible via the National Cycle Network Route 2 (NCN2).
- Linking Ogwell (via Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton) into the National Cycle Network Route 28, Stover Trail and Wray Valley Trail.
- Possible future connectivity from NA3 growth areas into Newton Abbot town centre, by linking into the Ogwell Strategic Link at Bradley Road / Beverley Way.
- Future delivery proposals (NCN2), Teign Estuary Trail between Newton Abbot/Kingsteignton, Teignmouth and Dawlish, connecting into the existing Exe Estuary Trail to Exeter and Exmouth.
- Future delivery proposals, to link into Torbay into the from Newton Abbot, extending the NCN2 or NCN28.

2.1.2 Appendix 2 shows the illustrative alignment of the Ogwell Strategic Link, with Steppes Meadow and Baker's Park at the eastern extent and Bunting Close at the western extent. Phase 1 focuses on the Baker's Park area including formalising ownership of Steppes Meadow (subject to due process) and delivering the stretch of route past the tennis courts (see phase 1 highlighted in Appendix 2). Subsequent phases will be required prior to fully opening the route for use, which will be to connect into Beverley Way and onward via Bunting Close into Ogwell. However, upfront benefits from phase 1 will be formalising the maintenance for Steppes Meadow (subject to due process), which is currently unregistered land.

## 2.2 Local Input, byelaw process & route design information

2.2.1 There is currently a byelaw in place against bicycle riding in Baker's Park and four other local parks in Newton Abbot (Courtenay, Forde, Osborne, Powderham). Full Council in February 2022 approved following the process to consider amending the byelaw to enable bicycle riding suitable future routes. The byelaw amendment process is subject to public consultation and approval by the relevant government department.

2.2.2 The public consultation was held during December 2022 and January 2023, and the public consultation feedback report is available on the Council website (consultations pages) and on the Newton Abbot Garden Community website. There was good overall support for amending the byelaw, with a focus on how future routes are designed (either segregating walkers and bicycle riders or ensuring sufficient width, visibility and promotion of respectful behaviour on shared routes). There were multiple comments from respondents about the need for a safe bicycle route between Ogwell and Newton Abbot, flagging the risk of using the Totnes Road A381.

2.2.3 The illustrative general arrangement plan for phase 1 can be seen in Appendix 3. The shared-route will follow the southern path through Baker's Park, which has fairly low levels of footfall, whereas the northern path is well used by dog-walkers and other walkers such as family groups. The width will be 3m minimum. There will be signage to promote respectful behaviour and to

encourage low speeds on-bicycle (signage install timing is likely to be once the route is fully opened).

- 2.2.4 The footbridge over the River Lemon (see this labelled in Appendix 2) that connects into Steppes Meadow and Baker's Park is below a suitable width for riding a bicycle and the railings are too low for formal safety of riding a bicycle over the footbridge. Dismounting and pushing bicycles over the bridge is not ideal, and so there has been an initial feasibility and broad cost estimate in the region of £150,000 for a replacement bridge of 4m usable width (this allows for investigation of ground conditions but does not allow for meeting any challenging ground conditions that may be encountered, nor does it allow for any land agreements or permits).
- 2.2.5 There is a vehicular access permitted for No.4 Totnes Road, for access to No.4 via Steppes Meadow and the southern path through Bakers Park. However, vehicular trips are likely to be, and remain, low in volume and speed. The Council could consider further measures to control misuse of this access if the need arose at a later stage.

### **3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact**

#### **3.1 Financial**

- 3.1.1 Steppes Meadow is currently unregistered and there is not any maintenance responsibility on either Teignbridge District Council or Devon County Council. However, in the interests of the Ogwell Strategic Link delivery and ongoing maintenance, Devon County Council will take steps to formally register Steppes Meadow as Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE).
- 3.1.2 Devon County Council will complete a Deed of Dedication with Teignbridge District Council, for the new stretch of route alongside the tennis courts in Bakers Park. Devon County Council will then maintain that new stretch in Bakers Park. There is anticipated to be fairly minimal changes to the lifespan and maintenance needs of the existing southern path via Bakers Park, as bicycles are lightweight vehicles. This will remain under Teignbridge District Council maintenance.
- 3.1.3 The Ogwell Strategic Link is a Teignbridge District Council capital project. Phase 1 will be delivered using external funding of £190,000, which have awarded for this purpose by Homes England. This is a Garden Communities Funding Allocation 'infrastructure funding' and the funds are held by Teignbridge District Council. The spend by date is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- 3.1.4 Further funding will be required for future completion of the overall route link. This will be sought by the County Council, with relevant officer support from Teignbridge District Council. The County Council, as Highway Authority, is the lead on the delivery of the project.

### 3.2 Economic opportunities

3.2.1 There are economic benefits that can be generated from provision of high-quality active travel provision, in particular goods and services demand from high-quality multi-user trails, which can benefit the towns and villages linked to those trails. See the link below, which evidences positive goods and services benefits related to multi-user trails in Devon. Ogwell is currently fairly isolated in terms of ease of access to safe bicycle routes, for example linking into the National Cycle Network.

[https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/sqw\\_devon\\_cycling\\_and\\_walking\\_trails\\_economic\\_impact\\_report.pdf](https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/sqw_devon_cycling_and_walking_trails_economic_impact_report.pdf)

3.2.2 In the public consultation held in 2019, on the National Cycle Network Route 2 (NCN2) Improvements in Newton Abbot central vicinity (66-respondents), just shy of 25% of respondents already use their bicycle for shopping trips in town, and a total of 60% of respondents said they would use their bicycle for shopping trips in town if the improvements to NCN2 were carried out. This does not include Ogwell but indicates some of the potential benefits that may be realised, alongside important wellbeing and environmental benefits. indicates similar benefits from wider connectivity improvements to the NCN2. For further information, please see [National Cycle Network Route proposals - feedback - Teignbridge District Council](#)

### 3.3 Legal

3.3.1 There is the need to complete the byelaw amendment process, in relation to which all necessary committee decisions have been made. A report is due to be submitted to the relevant government department in May 2023 and the response should be received by July 2023. There is a low risk of refusal based on the predominantly positive public consultation response and the safety benefits of an alternative route by bicycle away from Totnes Road A381, via the shared off-road provision. Phase 1 construction works would not commence until late in 2023.

### 3.4 Risks

3.4.1 As with any public provision, suitable design is important, and respectful behaviour by users is also particularly important. Route signage will function as a visual reminder of the expectation of respectful use by all. Ongoing feedback on route outcomes will be requested via the Teignbridge Cycle Forum, which is held biannually and is open to anyone interested in local active and sustainable travel.

Risks related to practical aspects of delivery are weather and ground conditions. This is mitigated by building relevant contingency into the delivery timeframe to allow for any unavoidable slippage. This will reduce risk of slippage beyond the spend date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. In terms of finances, inflation pressures may continue to notably affect costs of project delivery, and this is mitigated by building relevant contingency into the cost estimate to allow for continued high levels of inflation. The adoption of Steppes Meadow

involves a low risk, as the process includes advertising a public notice and any representations will be properly considered.

- 3.4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed and is in Appendix 3. A brief summary of this is below:

<p><b>Summary of significant negative impacts and how they can be mitigated or justified:</b></p>
<p>The byelaw consultation feedback noted the importance of ensuring good quality design and encouraging respectful behaviour by all users (such as clear and appropriate signage), to limit risk of impact on more vulnerable pedestrians on shared-use provision (ie – shared provision by those on-foot and on-bicycles).</p>
<p><b>Summary of positive impacts / opportunities to promote the Public Sector Equality Duty:</b></p>
<p>Provision of safe off-road routes for those on-bicycles and on-foot often encourages increased levels of uptake and uptake by a greater diversity of local communities and visitors. The byelaw consultation feedback noted the challenges of on-road travel using the busy and constrained Totnes Road A381, and the lack of safe and appealing connectivity for those on-bicycle to travel between Ogwell and Newton Abbot.</p>

### 3.5 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

- 3.5.1 The project aligns with various objectives within the Devon Carbon Plan and emerging Teignbridge Carbon Plan. A cohesive active travel network can support a significant improvement in health and wellbeing for the individuals taking part in active travel as well as for the wider local community via environmental benefits. There is a certain amount of embedded carbon at any scale of new or improved provision but as phase 1 is being delivered utilising the existing provision and a relatively short stretch of new provision with some Cell-web (not impermeable tarmac) surfacing there will be a reduced level of embedded carbon.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 An alternate option was considered via the Bradley Manor grounds, which is managed by National Trust. However, due to the volume of pedestrian usage this was not considered feasible by the Trust.
- 4.2 The funding was originally dedicated by Homes England towards the Bradley Lane Bus Link project. Following public consultation on this project in Autumn 2022, we informed Homes England that we would not be able to take this project forward. Officers worked closely with Homes England to explore the potential for other unfunded active/sustainable travel schemes to benefit from the funding instead. Homes England were amenable to this on the basis that schemes should benefit from local support, could be implemented immediately and would benefit the Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Garden Community area.

- 4.3 The Jetty Marsh link was identified as a possible option that might free up funds for other projects like the Ogwell Strategic Link. However, Homes England's preference was for the funds to be directed straight to the Ogwell Strategic Link. No other relevant schemes are ready for immediate implementation. Ogwell Strategic Link has planning permission, has formed part of multiple public consultations (planning application consultation, Heart of Teignbridge Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation, and Newton Abbot bicycle riding and parks byelaw consultation), and already has Devon County Council approval for delivery.
- 4.3 No action would result in no safe route for bicycles between Ogwell and Newton Abbot.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Ogwell Strategic Link will support safe and appealing bicycle travel between Ogwell and Newton Abbot town centre, railway and onward leisure routes that are nationally recognised.
- 5.2 The external funding from Homes England for Phase 1 of the Ogwell Strategic Link is available for spend during 2023/24 financial year only. Positive and timely delivery of external funding is important, so funders see evidence that funds awarded for improvements to benefit communities in the Heart of Teignbridge will be used accordingly.