14 December 2011

BUSWAY EVENTS POLICY

1. Background

1.1. The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway has a maintenance track along its entire length. This is designated as a bridleway between Cambridge and St Ives and as a cycleway between Cambridge and Trumpington and through Orchard Park. It is therefore available for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. The Cambridge to St Ives section will form part of the National Cycle Network.

1.2. A number of requests have been received for events such as sponsored walks or fun runs using all or part of the maintenance track or crossing the live guideway. Agreement was given for a fun run event organised by the Friends of Histon Recreation Ground which took place in November 2011.

2. Health and Safety considerations

2.1. The maintenance track is normally 4m in width (3m on southern section). In a number of locations, physical constraints reduce the width to as little as 2.5m. The track is a minimum of 300mm from the guideway and is unfenced.

2.2. In normal circumstances with the anticipated levels of use this does not present a concern. With larger numbers of people there is an increased risk of people straying onto the guideway. This will be particularly the case in competitive situations such as fun runs or races where the competitive pressure may lead to a higher level of risk taking.

2.3. Buses travelling on the Busway are relatively quiet, particularly when approaching. There is therefore a real risk of a collision between a participant and a bus, especially with competitive events.

2.4. Where events cross the Busway, it would be necessary for the event organisers to deploy marshals. Again with competitive events there is a risk of competitors ignoring marshal's instructions.

2.5. At present, where events take place on the public highway and require a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, organisers are required to pay the Council’s costs to advertise public notices. In the case of charitable organisations, this charge is often waived. The operating and maintenance costs of the Busway will be met by the Bus Operators with no contribution from Council funds. The Busway Guidance for Developers requires anyone carrying out work or operations adjacent to the Busway to meet the Council’s costs of checking documentation and supervising works and it is unlikely that the bus companies would
countenance their access charges being used to promote events along the Busway.

3. **Impact on other users**

3.1. Bus drivers will slow down, and in extreme cases stop, if they have any concerns about the behaviour of users of the maintenance track. The presence of large numbers of people on the maintenance track may therefore affect the operating speed of the Busway as drivers adopt a cautious approach.

3.2. The bus operators’ views have been sought on the issue and they would prefer not to have events on the Busway maintenance track. However, if events are to use the maintenance track then they would wish to see them held on Sundays and public holidays when the buses run less frequently.

3.3. The presence of large numbers of people will make it difficult and potentially unpleasant for other users to use the track.

3.4. On the other hand, the Busway is a public asset and it is reasonable for people to expect to be able to use it for a variety of purposes as long as they are not causing a nuisance or danger to others.

3.5. A Bonfire Burn 10k event was held in November and was organised by the Friends of Histon Recreation Ground and the lessons learned have been incorporated into this paper. The use of the maintenance track should be reviewed after all events to ensure the appropriate lessons are captured and safety for all users is maintained.

4. **Policy**

4.1. Given the above, the following guidelines are proposed for assessing the approaches currently being made to the Council from event organisers. It is not proposed that this should be a rigid policy as flexibility of approach is required:

- All applications for events will be considered on their merits - key considerations will be the number of competitors, the nature of the event and the length and location of the Busway maintenance track to be used;
- The bus companies will be consulted on any proposed events and their views taken into account when decisions are taken;
- Competitive events that it is considered would create an undue nuisance or danger to other users of the maintenance track or buses on the Busway will not be allowed;
- Non-competitive events such as sponsored walks will normally be allowed as long as they meet the criteria above;
- Any events allowed will need to have insurance as with events on the Highway, a copy of which should be made available for officers.
Organisers must have considered any risk that could be created as a result of their event and provide a statement of how the event will be organised;

- The costs of checking insurance and the proposed organisation of an event and if necessary, checking or supervising on the day should be met by the organisers;
- For all proposed events the Council must be informed of the route in sufficient time to ensure all parties are fully informed and contingencies put in place if required.
- All events using the maintenance track are to do so in a direction opposite to the flow of the buses.
- Sufficient marshals are to be provided by the event organisers to ensure no incursion onto the Busway tracks.
- All events with multiple participants are to start sufficiently remote from the Busway such that when the participants reach the maintenance track they are spaced out to avoid bunching and thus increase the risk of incursions on to the Busway tracks.
- All participants are to be given a safety brief by the event organisers. Safety information about using the maintenance track should also be included on the event website and be sent out with any pre-event information.
- Adverse weather can affect access to particular sections of the maintenance track (e.g. due to flooding), and participants may attempt to use the live guideway as an alternative route. Unauthorised access on to the guideway constitutes trespass, punishable by a fine of £1000. Event organisers must re-evaluate the proposed route nearer to the time of the event if adverse weather is likely to affect it, and either re-route the event, or cancel it if necessary. Any revised plans for the event must be notified to the Council. The Council reserves the right to cancel any event at short notice if the safe operation of the Busway is threatened.
- The Council officers responsible for processing event applications (Busway Operations Manager and others as necessary) will use this paper as their guidance prior to seeking formal approval from the Director of Strategy and Development.
- When the Director of Strategy and Development has come to a view on whether an event should be allowed, this view will be confirmed or otherwise with the relevant Cabinet Member.
- Event organisers will be required to liaise with the Busway Operations Team at the St Ives Control Centre for the duration of the event (including any setting up and closing down activities). Any incident arising from the event which threatens the safe and efficient running of the Busway or requires the attendance of emergency services must be co-ordinated through the Control Centre.