



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

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Public Consultation on Sydenham to Hollywood Walking and Cycling Routes



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This consultation will run from Friday 11th February 2022 to Friday 1st April 2022.

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Contents

Background	4
Routes	7
Route 1 – Railway Path	8
Route 2 – Hollywood Road	10
Route 3 – Sydenham Bypass	12
Consultation Questions and Options	14
How to respond	15
Consultation Questions	16

Background

For decades transport infrastructure has been developed in such a way that it has suppressed walking, wheeling and cycling across all sectors of society and not enough has been done to reverse this trend. Until recently, transport appraisal favoured motorised traffic by not considering the wider value of walking and cycling which is now known to contribute to better health and communities, less congestion, and better quality of life, all of which yield an economic return. In order to secure the substantial health and economic benefits of active travel, it is important that transport infrastructure is developed which both encourages and enables active travel – in line with the Minister’s ambition to increase levels of active travel and the proportion of all journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport.

Cities across the world are seeking to become more liveable places. One of the key aspects of liveability is better places and greener spaces with accessibility for all the people of the city and where the city streets are not dominated by vehicles. A key element of greener cities is greener transport infrastructure and central to this is an effective active travel network – from walking, wheeling and cycling routes on city roads and streets to dedicated green corridors, linear parks, riverside paths – links to connect residential areas with jobs, services and leisure opportunities. This is particularly important in inner city areas where car ownership levels are low and accessible green space is currently limited.

On 3rd June 2021, the Minister for Infrastructure published ‘*Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change*’. This document articulates the Minister’s vision that active travel becomes a pillar of change within towns and cities in an effort to cut emissions, to improve health and wellbeing, and to better connect families and communities. It commits to the adoption of the sustainable transport hierarchy where prioritisation is given to sustainable travel by providing for walking and wheeling, then cycling, then public transport ahead of private vehicle use.

The Minister followed this by publishing ‘*Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021*’ on 4th June 2021. This document set out her ambition to make Belfast a more cycle-friendly city and provides a blueprint for the development and operation of the cycling infrastructure in the city for the next ten years.

This Belfast Cycling Network proposes a number of routes between Belfast and North Down:

- a greenway type route alongside the Belfast to Bangor railway line; and
- a walking and cycling path alongside Holywood Road and the A2 north of Tillysburn.

Additionally, a resurfacing scheme on part of the Sydenham bypass in 2020 highlighted that there is demand for cycling infrastructure along that route. This is understandable given the fact that the Sydenham bypass is a very direct route into Belfast from North Down and the road provided separated cycle lanes on each carriageway when it was built in the late 1950s.

Figure 1 (on page 6) illustrates the three routes which we wish to consult on, which are broadly, in the same area.

The first two routes are in the Belfast Cycling Network but the third route is not. This public consultation is aimed at helping us to decide whether priority should be given to developing either:

- a) Route 1 – A path along the railway from Sydenham through Holywood Exchange (red); or

b) Route 2 – A path along Hollywood Road through Hollywood Exchange (green);

Or whether we should change our priorities to develop a walking and cycling route alongside:

c) Route 3 – The Sydenham Bypass (blue).

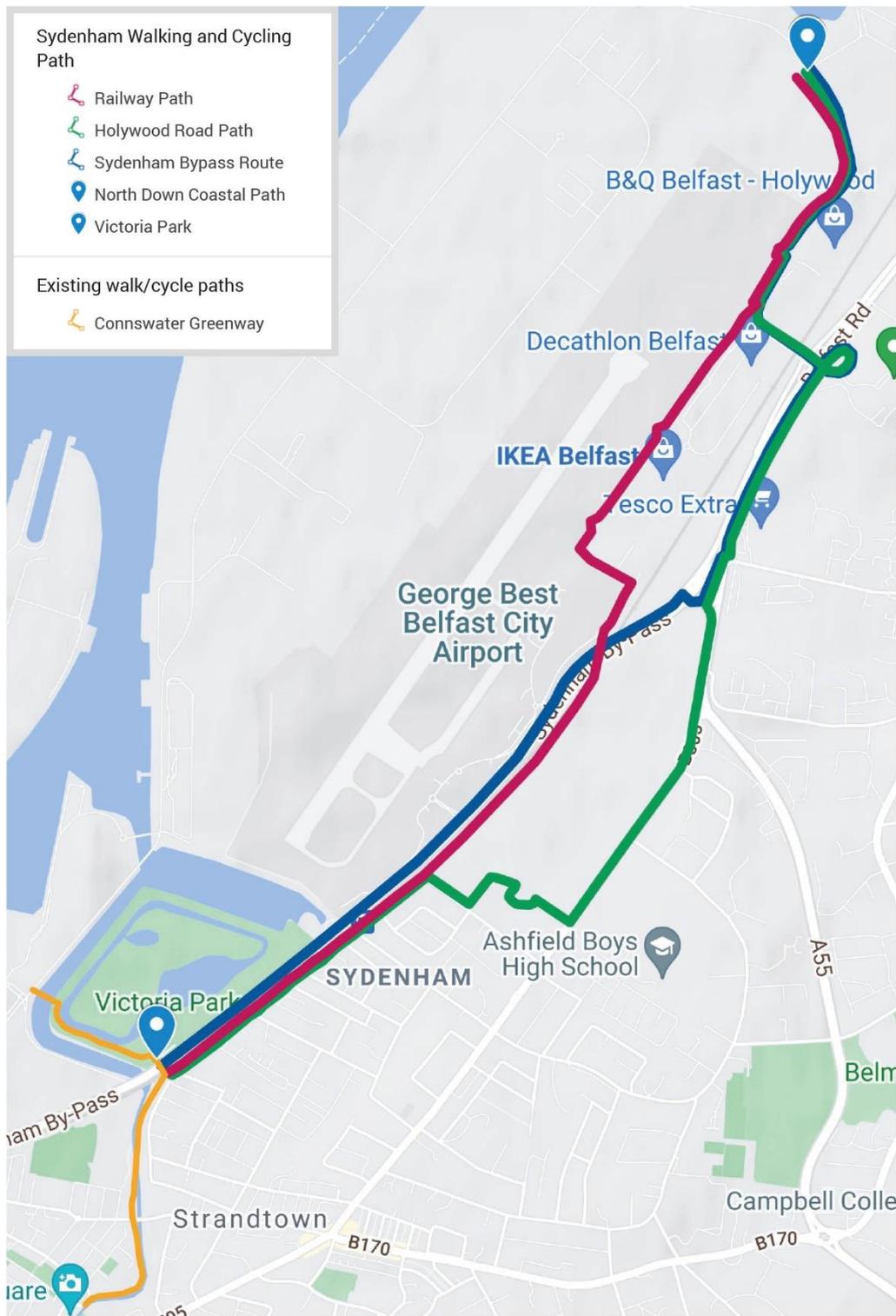


Figure 1: Potential Routes

Routes

Each of the proposed routes is between 4.0 and 4.8km long. They start at the underpass vehicular entrance to Victoria Park and terminate near Kinnegar, Hollywood. The routes would also provide a link between the existing Comber and Connswater Greenways and Hollywood Exchange and the North Down Coastal Path.

The three routes being considered are

- Route 1 – a railway path – which provides a direct link from Sydenham and Hollywood Exchange (red);
- Route 2 – a path alongside Hollywood Road – which provides links with various destinations along Hollywood Road (green);
- Route 3 – a path alongside Sydenham Bypass – which merges with Route 2 at Tillysburn (blue)

Route 1 – Railway Path

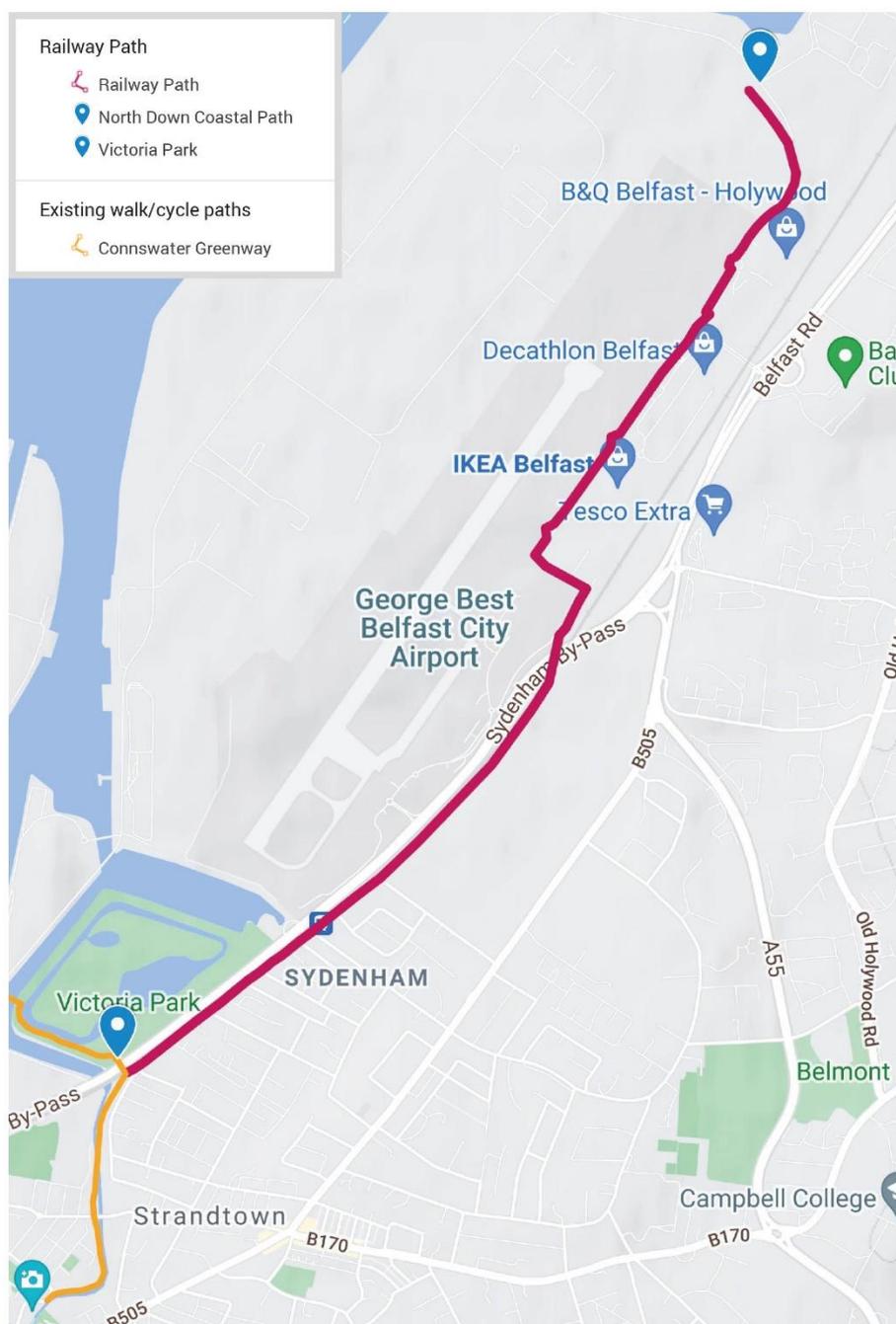


Figure 2: Route 1

Estimated Cost: £3,500,000

This is the shortest route at around 4.0 km. It commences at Victoria Park and continues along Larkfield Drive and Inverary Drive, becoming 'traffic-free' at Inverary Avenue. It would involve a new path around Alderman Thomas Patton Playing Fields, Shorts Recreational Club and Blanchflower Stadium, near the railway line. A major element is a proposed bridge over the

railway with an estimated initial cost in the region of £2,000,000. Significant embankments / ramps would be required to facilitate a bridge at this location. The route would utilise the existing airport exit underpass and continue along a 'disused' depot road which has some greenway characteristics. From Ikea the route would continue in close proximity to the airport fence line towards its termination further eastwards at Kinnegar.

Key Details

- It is the shortest route to Kinnegar and so a more direct route from Sydenham to Hollywood Exchange, Hollywood and the North Down Coastal Path
- The route would be fully segregated from motor traffic
- There would be one road crossing (at the end of the scheme where it enters the Kinnegar access road)
- It is a route that the Department has committed to building in the Belfast Cycling Network
- A good route for commuting from North Down
- There are limited opportunities for connections to schools and local destinations, being more remote from residential areas (local communities off Hollywood Road and at Knocknagoney)
- Approximately 25% would be traffic-free (greenway)
- Cost (the most expensive option)
- Delivery is currently estimated to take 48 months.

Route 2 – Hollywood Road

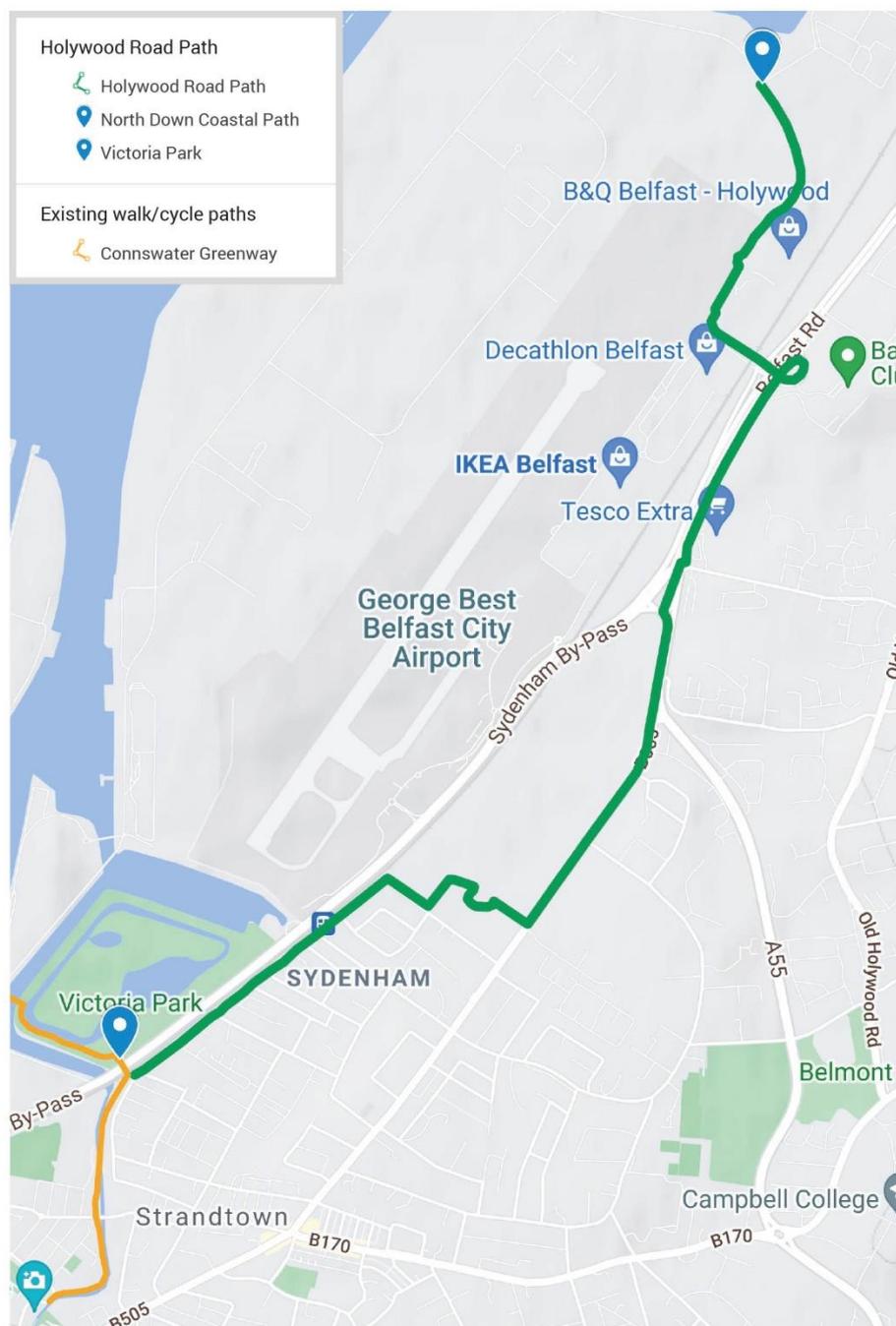


Figure 3: Route 2

Estimated Cost: £950,000

This is the longest route at around 4.8 km. It commences at Victoria Park and continues along Larkfield Drive and Inverary Drive and Alderman Thomas Patton Memorial Park. It then follows the line of the Hollywood Road. This could be on the north side (utilising grounds belonging to Shorts Recreational Club and Blanchflower Stadium) or on the south side (utilising a separated

path in front of the schools and by removing on-street parking). As well as linking the schools and communities off the Hollywood Road it would link with the proposed Tillysburn Park & Ride. After using the Tillysburn grade separated cycle paths it would follow the A2 Dual Carriageway on the east side by upgrading the existing path and providing physical separation from the motor traffic. It would utilise the existing flyover at Hollywood Exchange. Crossings would be required at the roundabout near the bridge and at Airport Road West before the route would continue in close proximity to the airport fence line towards its termination further eastwards at Kinnegar.

Key Details

- It provides good connectivity to local communities and destinations in the Hollywood Road and Knocknagoney areas
- The route would be fully segregated from motor traffic
- Makes use of an existing grade separated walking / cycling junction at Tillysburn
- Links with existing shared cycling infrastructure on Parkway (A55 Outer Ring)
- Provides opportunity for a more direct link to Hollywood town (Jackson's Road)
- It is a route that the Department has committed to building in the Belfast Cycling Network
- Cost (marginally more expensive than the cheapest option)
- A longer route to Kinnegar and the North Down Coastal Path from Sydenham
- Approximately 15% of the route is traffic-free
- Part of the scheme is adjacent to the A2 dual carriageway
- Delivery is currently estimated to take 24 months

Route 3 –Sydenham Bypass

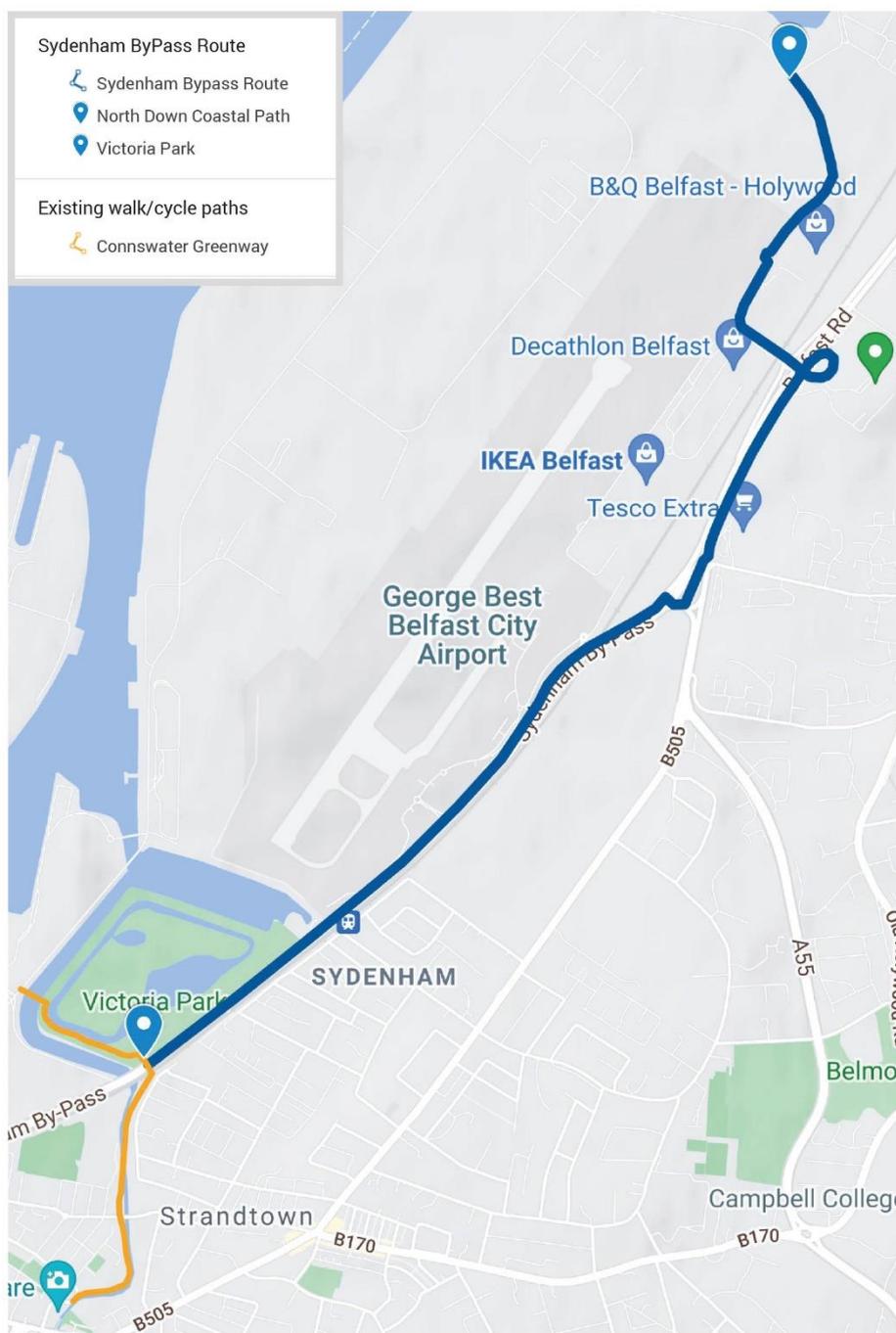


Figure 4: Route 3

Estimated Cost: £750,000

This route is around 4.4 km long. It commences in the area of Victoria Park where it would be accessed by the existing ramp to the underpass entrance to the park. It could also be extended 1.4 km further towards Belfast city centre using the existing hard shoulder as far as the Titanic Quarter station active travel underpass. It continues along the Sydenham Bypass on the existing

city-bound hard shoulder using kerbed segregation as far as the Tillysburn grade separated walking and cycling underpass, serving the proposed Park & Ride scheme at this location. It would then follow the path for route 2 alongside the A2 Dual Carriageway on an upgraded path which would provide physical separation from the motor traffic. It would utilise the existing flyover at Hollywood Exchange. Crossings would be required at the roundabout near the bridge and at Airport Road West before the route would continue in close proximity to the airport fence line towards its termination further eastwards at Kinnegar.

Key Details

- A direct route from North Down into Belfast (which would be significantly improved by extending to Titanic Quarter Station).
- The route would be fully segregated from motor traffic
- Makes use of the existing grade separated walking / cycling junction at Tillysburn
- Provides opportunity for a more direct link to Hollywood town (Jackson's Road)
- Cost (cheapest option)
- The majority of the route is alongside an arterial route into Belfast.
- Limited connection possibilities to local communities (Knocknagoney) and destinations in east Belfast
- Not included as a route in the Belfast Cycling Network
- Delivery is currently estimated to take 24 months

Consultation Questions and Options

The Department has committed to developing the cycling routes set out in *'Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021'* over the next ten years. This includes two of the routes in this consultation document (1 and 2). In light of recent suggestions that the Department should have incorporated better cycling infrastructure on the Sydenham bypass, we have included a cycle route along this road in this consultation (Route 3).

The consultation questions are designed to explore what route is preferred and will encourage more walking and cycling. The preferred route will determine which scheme will be included in the Belfast Cycling Network delivery plan for construction in the short term and which scheme(s) will be included in the longer term.

How to respond

To respond please use the SURVEY link here: <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/sydenham-to-hollywood-walking-wheeling-and-cycling/consultation/>

You can also send any views, comments or observations, via email or post to:

activetravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

or

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Whilst it may not be possible for the Department to address all of the issues raised, responses will be recorded and collated, and will form an important part of the body of evidence used to inform policy decisions

Consultation Questions

The following questions are provided as a guide to assist you in considering the issues relevant to this consultation.

Q1: How often do you travel in this locality on average? (select only one)

- (a) Every day / nearly every day
- (b) Once a week
- (c) Monthly
- (d) Very rarely
- (e) Never

Q2: If you travel in this area, what way do you usually travel?

- (a) Walk/run
- (b) Wheeling (use of wheelchair or mobility aid)
- (c) Cycle
- (d) Bus
- (e) Train
- (f) Private car or motorbike
- (g) Taxi
- (h) Goods vehicle

Q3: In which BT area do you currently live? - BTXX

Q4: In which BT area do you currently work, study or shop? – BTXX

Q5: When walking or cycling my choice is determined by (multiple answers):

- (a) the directness of the route;
- (b) whether the route is off-road (away from motor traffic);
- (c) how safe I feel using the route;
- (d) whether the route is suitable for older people, children, and those with limited mobility;
- or
- (e) Other (please comment briefly below).

Q6: If your preferred walking and cycling route were to be built are you more likely to use it for (multiple answers):

- (a) commuting;
- (b) going to school;
- (c) going to the shop/local amenities (GP, Leisure Centre, etc.);
- (d) accessing public transport;
- (e) recreationally walking, wheeling or cycling; or
- (f) I don't believe I would use it.

Q7: How often would you use your preferred route?

- (a) Every day / nearly every day
- (b) Once a week

- (c) Monthly
- (d) Very rarely or
- (e) Never

Q8: Which of the three routes are you likely to use? (please refer to page six of the consultation document - select all that apply)

- (a) Route 1 (Railway Path – red)
- (b) Route 2 (Holywood Road – green) or
- (c) Route 3 (Sydenham Bypass – blue)

Q9: Which is your preferred route? (please refer to page six of the consultation document – select only one)

- (a) Route 1 (Railway Path – red)
- (b) Route 2 (Holywood Road – green) or
- (c) Route 3 (Sydenham Bypass – blue)

Why is this your preferred route – Comment Box

Q10: What is your email address?