

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE
Tel: (01709) 822700
E-mail: chris.read@rotherham.gov.uk
Email the Council for free @ your local library!

Our Ref:	Direct Line:	Extension:	Please Contact:
CR/LH	(01709) 822700	22770	Councillor Chris Read

11th March 2024

Mr Paul Thorp

Dear Mr Thorp

Question at Council – 28th February 2024

Thank you for your question at Council on 28th February, where you asked the following question:

There was an article in the Advertiser published 17th of January, stating that the council will carry out a survey to check the number of cyclists using the 2 new cycle lanes, and the pollution levels of each area. Could the council please release what the cycle use and the pollution levels were before the work was started.

I can advise that the Sheffield Road Cycle Scheme had a comprehensive business case that was approved by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, and which met the stringent requirements set out by the Department for Transport. Integral to this approval is the commitment to a thorough monitoring and evaluation process.

Prior to construction, the Sheffield Road route witnessed a flow of 33,649 cyclists annually. Projections based on business case modelling indicate a significant boost to 57,178 cyclists per year, amounting to 1.7 million cycling trips over the scheme's 30-year lifespan. Of course, this is just a forecast based on best estimates, and it will be monitored when complete.

You also asked about pollution levels. This is much harder to cover, and needs a more nuanced analysis, as there are different kinds of pollutants and levels will be different in different parts of the route. To provide clarity on this matter, I'm happy for officers to follow up with more detailed information.

Supplementary Question

As you were unable to attend the meeting, you advised that your supplementary question would have asked ***what pollution figures the council had for building these bike lanes, including its carbon footprint. If it is possible could the answer include these figures.***

I can inform you that the business case for the cycle lanes relied on a number of assessment factors, including the HM Treasury assured Active Modes Appraisal Toolkit. These were tested and supported through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Assurance Process and subsequently approved in relation to its value for money and strategic ambition. In relation to pollution and decarbonisation, forecasts of emissions have been prepared as part of business case development for the project. These are central case forecasts in opening year. Forecasts are more detailed for Broom Road as further work was undertaken to understand concerns raised during consultation in respect of that scheme – hence more detailed figures are available. Percentages reference to change as a proportion of emissions within the scope of modelling.

These are tabulated below.

	Sheffield Road	Broom Road
Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x)	Monetised savings to society of £3,900 over scheme lifetime	- 6 kg (- 0.01%) *
Particulate matter (PM_{2.5})		- 1 kg (- 0.01%) *
Particulate matter (PM₁₀)		- 2 kg (- 0.01%) *
Carbon dioxide (CO₂)	- 6.3 t	+ 2.4 t (less than +0.01%)

* Figures exclude any benefit from mode shift resulting from improved infrastructure – this benefit is expected to be very small, and is monetised over lifetime of scheme to £890.

The Council has not assessed in detail the carbon emissions associated with building the new cycleways. The following should be noted –

- The International Energy Agency indicate, globally, that the carbon impact of constructing cycleways will ultimately amount to less than 5% of carbon emissions from mode shift away from cars achieved by that (Net Zero by 2050, International Energy Agency, 2021);
- That a part of the construction activity (i.e. resurfacing of footways and cycleways) would happen anyway, and the scheme will reduce the need for maintenance in the near future; and,
- Some carbon savings can be expected in future owing to reduced areas of carriageway – these are more carbon intensive to maintain than footways and cycleways.

The headline is that the emissions benefits of cycling infrastructure are generally positive, but very small. This is why, in Rotherham, the key benefits of improved cycling infrastructure we wish to promote are improved accessibility (particularly for those without a car or struggling with the cost of living), and improved health outcomes arising from greater activity.

I hope that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of Rotherham Council