

Isle of Sheppey Cycle Routes



www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess



This document details a project to develop two cycle routes on the Isle of Sheppey.

The project is being delivered through a partnership between Kent County Council (Regeneration and Economy Division, Countryside Access Service and Kent Highway Services) and Swale Borough Council, with the support of Sustrans (the UK's leading sustainable transport charity).

Introduction

The Isle of Sheppey is in the Thames Gateway Growth Area, the UK's largest regeneration programme, stretching for 40 miles along the Thames Estuary from the London Docklands to Southend in Essex and Sheerness in Kent.

Providing environmental and recreational improvements is a key element of the regeneration programme and this project supports this important aim by creating two new cycle routes on the Isle of Sheppey; one in Sheerness and the other in Leysdown.

This will result in 18.5 km of promoted cycle routes, which will be available for walking and where possible for those with disabilities.

The Sheerness project provides new routes for everyday cycling. It is proposed, through funding being sought from Sustrans, to provide links into schools.

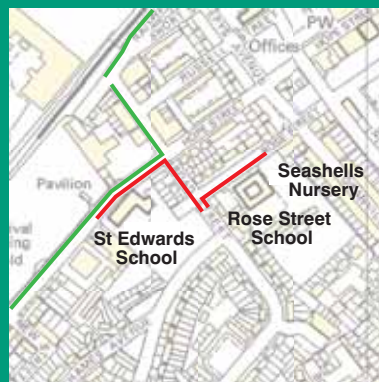
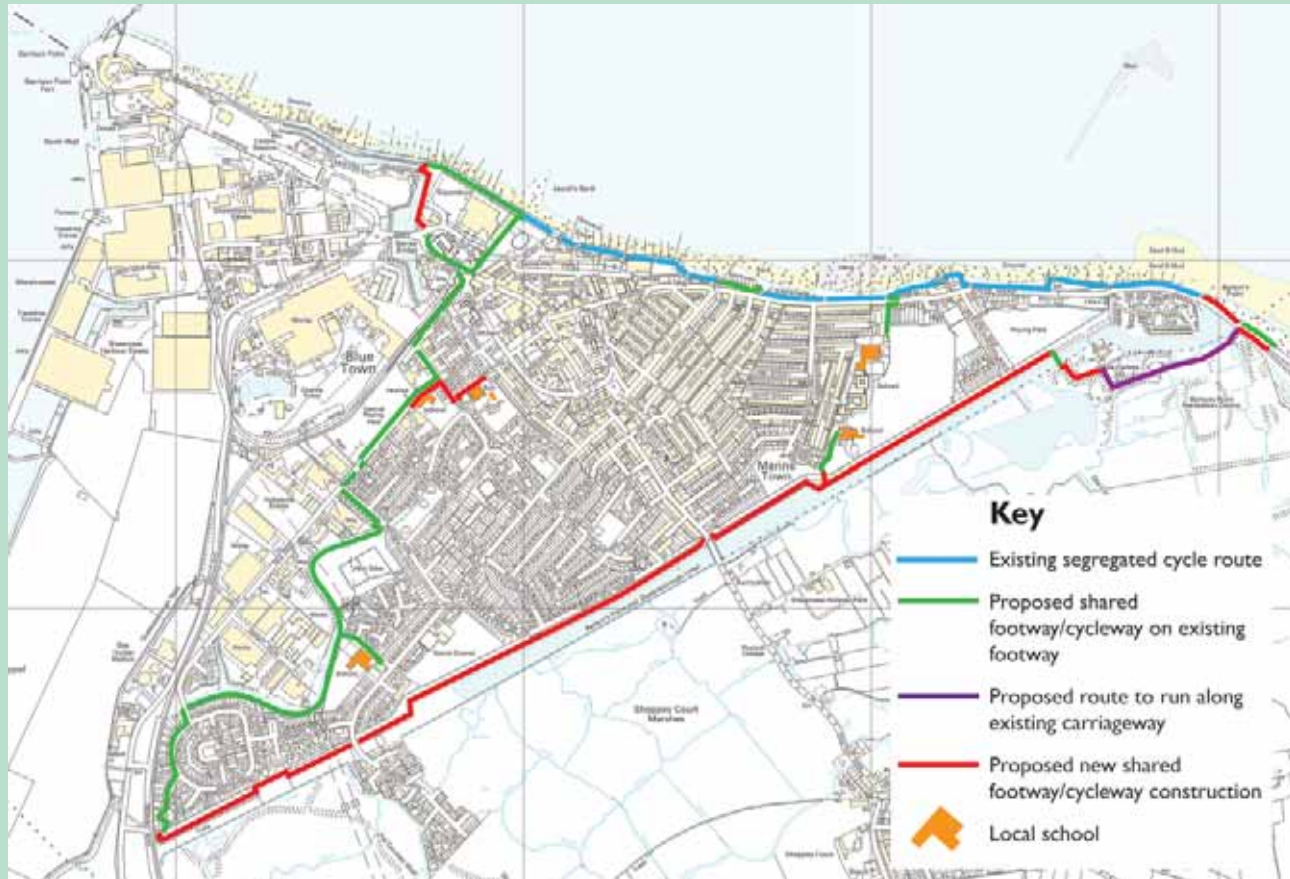
This is a significant step towards long term aspirations to increase cycling on the island, for example as part of the City to Sea initiative, which aims to provide new access routes along the Thames Estuary to link London and the communities along the Thames with the coast and countryside. The project will improve the connection of walking and cycling routes, and also help support tourism on the island and provide for healthy exercise.

This project contributes to achieving objectives in Kent County Council's Countryside Access Improvement Plan, Kent County Council's Regeneration Strategy 'Unlocking Kent's Potential' and Swale Borough Council's Sustainable Communities and Green Grid Strategies. It also fits in with the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2006 - 11.

Funding for this project has been secured from Kent County Council with further funding being sought from Interreg IVa (European funding) and Sustrans.



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Sheerness circular route



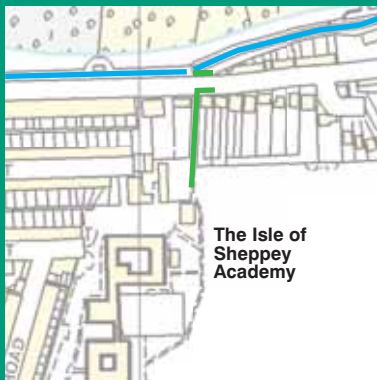
This 9km route will create a circuit around Sheerness, with many sections being suitable for recreational and family cycling. It will link the sea front, Barton's Point Coastal Park and will run along the length of the Queenborough Lines, a 3km former defensive earthwork and an important part of Sheerness' heritage. It is identified as a key project in Swale Borough Council's regeneration plan and this project will help to realise the recreation potential of the Lines for residents of Sheerness.

The Lines, sometimes locally called the 'Canal Bank', was constructed around 1863 to protect Sheerness Dockyard from attack from inland.

The defence was a 10ft (3m) high rampart

behind a wet ditch which troops would stand behind to fire out over the marshes.

This project also aims to install information boards to show the history of the Lines. The route will also be useful for everyday cycling to Sheerness Railway Station, Sheerness Leisure Centre, the town centre and other community facilities. Additional funding is being sought from Sustrans so that links from the circuit can be made into 5 schools, supporting safer cycling to school.



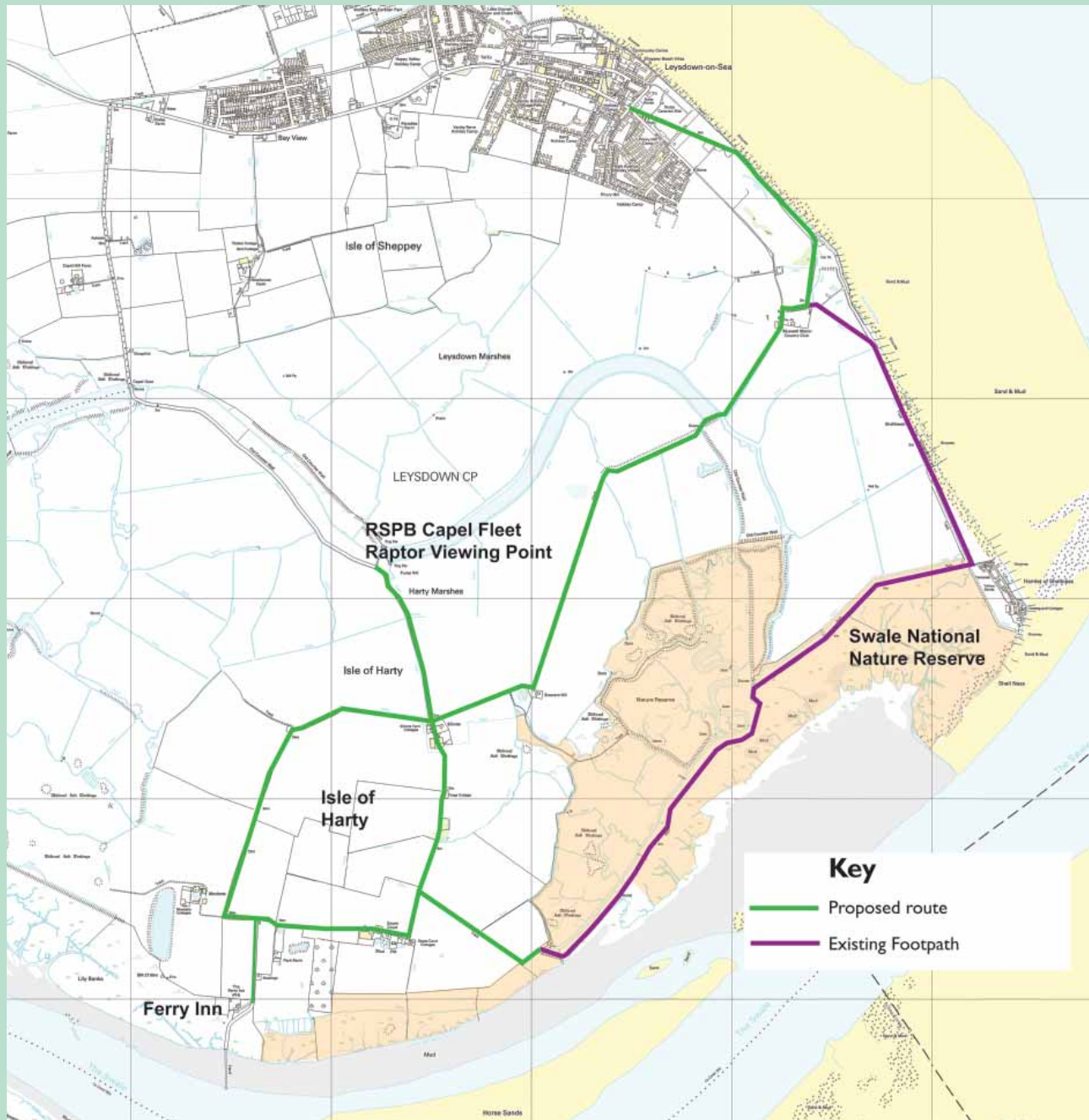
Proposed links to schools:

From far left - West Minster Primary School, St Edwards School and Rose Street School, Richmond First School and The Isle of Sheppey Academy.



Photo courtesy J Bewley - Sustrans

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Leysdown-on-Sea route

This 9.5km route will link Leysdown-on-Sea with the Isle of Harty, with an additional short circular route around Harty.

The route will follow surfaced tracks and will create an important recreational route for residents and visitors alike. By working with local landowners, businesses, Natural England and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds it is proposed to link the route to the entrance of the Swale National Nature Reserve on the Isle of Harty and to the RSPB Capel Fleet Raptor Viewing Point, making this an enjoyable, low impact and sustainable way to visit these nationally important wildlife sites.

Photos: top left - cyclist enjoying the view – middle left - stained glass window, St. Thomas Church, Harty – bottom left - St. Thomas Church – below - Harty Ferry.





The Wider Aims of the Project

This project has several important aims:

Recreation

Recreation has been identified as one of the highest priorities by residents of Swale Borough.

This project will create new routes for residents and visitors and new recreational opportunities, not only for cyclists but for walkers and, where feasible, people with disabilities.

The routes will also link existing recreational areas; for example the sea front, Barton's Point Coastal Park and the Queenborough Lines, and will make access to the open countryside and nationally important wildlife sites south of Leysdown much easier.

Tourism

The Isle of Sheppey has excellent credentials for recreational cycling and Swale Borough Council and other partners have identified the potential of cycling to help support tourism businesses through attracting new visitors.

The Leysdown route will provide a family-friendly route to explore the wildlife sites of the south-east of the island and the Sheerness route will follow the historic Queenborough Lines.



Promoting Healthy Exercise

In a national survey Swale Borough residents were in the lowest 25% of the population in taking regular exercise. These family-friendly routes can support healthy activity. The Sheerness route will also encourage children to take the active choice in getting to school.

Sustainable Travel

The project will provide useful and direct routes between green spaces, residential properties, shops, the railway station, schools and other community services with a high proportion of the routes being traffic-free.



About the Partners

Kent County Council

This project addresses aims in the Regeneration Strategy in particular the priorities ‘to build homes and communities not estates’ and ‘deliver growth without gridlock’.

This project meets the objectives of the Countryside Access Improvement Plan, to increase the usage and enjoyment of public rights of way and open green space in Kent, specifically contributing to targets under:

- Well Maintained Countryside Access
- Growth and Development
- A More Sensible Network
- Knowing What’s Out There
- Improving Safety
- Education and Respect for the Environment

It also meets the objectives of the Kent Highway Services Local Transport Plan which aims to improve provision for pedestrians and cyclists which contributes to casualty reductions, air quality and improves health and fitness levels.

Swale Borough Council

Swale Borough Council has an important role in safeguarding and enhancing our natural and built environments. We will ensure that these principles are embedded in our regeneration programme. Our vision is:

“To achieve a transformation in Swale’s economic, social and environmental profile so that it is one of the best places in Britain in which to live, work, learn and invest”

Investment will focus on improving the quality of and access to open space, enhancing the Borough’s cultural infrastructure and ensuring that new developments are truly sustainable.

More information

Copies of this booklet are available on the Swale Borough Council website www.swale.gov.uk If you would like further hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request, please contact:

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