

Friday, March 11 2011

KENTISH GAZETTE

Crab and Winkle cycle line bridges approved

by Adam Williams

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The Crab and Winkle cycle path extension has moved a step closer.

City councillors approved plans on Tuesday night to install two pedestrian bridges across Teynham Road, the railway line and Old Bridge Road. They will link newly extended sections of the line between All Saints Close and Northwood Road, which were granted planning permission in September 2009.



Councillors adjourned debate on the application last month to allow for a site visit. Members of the development control committee met with concerned residents in neighbouring streets to hear how the bridges could overlook their houses and gardens.

Other objectors cited a lack of consideration for alternative, less imposing structures and obtaining permission to build on Network Rail owned land.

Julie Street, from the Whitstable Green Lung Association, described the bridges as more akin to motorway structures.

She said: "There's also a lack of local support for these bridges. Less than a third of the letters of support received by the council actually come from people living in Whitstable.

"You could easily deliver a cycle route using road crossings and traffic lights, which is more cost-effective and would improve safety for both pedestrians and motorists."

Five councillors opposed granting the planning application. Whitstable and Chestfield councillors Jenny Samper (Con), Julia Seath (Lab) and Ian Thomas (Con) were joined by Ida Linfield (Lib Dem) and Evelyn Bisset (Con) in voting against the bridges. Hazel McCabe (Con) abstained from voting.

Julia Seath said: "This has been the most difficult planning application for me to consider in all my time as a councillor.

"From the outset, I have supported the principle of extending the route. But, my concerns rest entirely on the impact these bridges will have on people's quality of life for those living nearby."

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