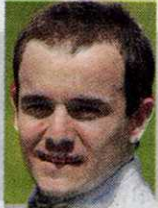




Will boardwalk

Peter Law reports



CYCLISTS from Southampton and the New Forest are hoping they win the nation's support in the first ever national vote to decide how to spend lottery money.

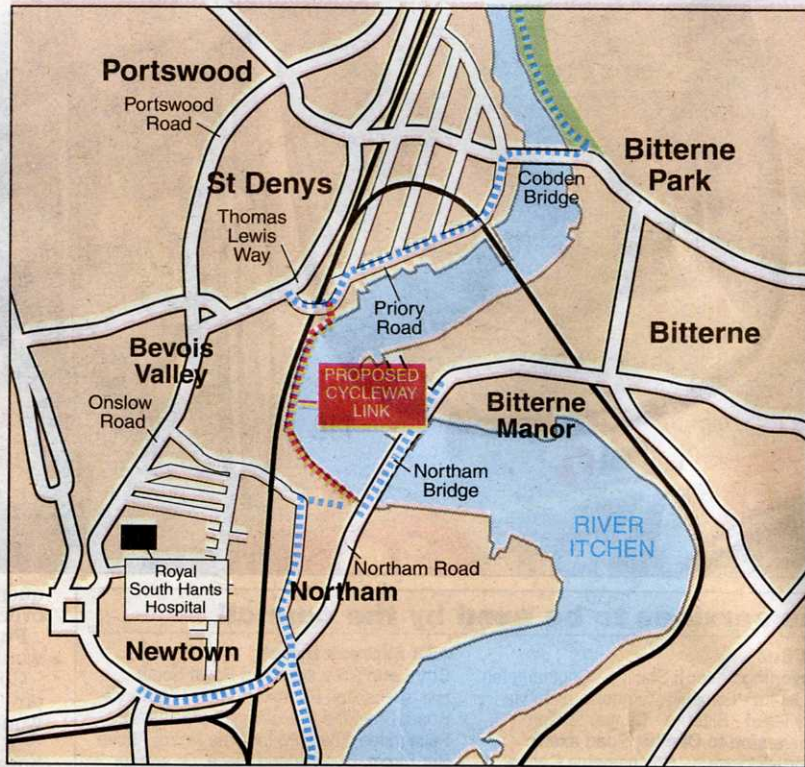
Two long-hoped for schemes in Hampshire are part of a bid by sustainable transport charity Sustrans for £50m in lottery funding to improve bicycle routes and facilities in 79 communities.

In a public televised vote in December, people will have to choose between funding for Sustrans Connect2, the Black Country Urban Park, Sherwood Forest and the Eden Project.

The lynchpin of the £3m scheme to reclaim Southampton's waterfront for walkers and cyclists is to build a unique boardwalk along the River Itchen between Northam Bridge and Horseshoe Bridge, Priory Road.

It would then link with a cycle route across Cobden Bridge and on as far as Riverside Park. Football fans would be able to walk directly from St Denys rail station, along this new path to St Mary's football stadium.

The new link, which would include steps down to the shore, would also help to create a stunning circular



NEW ROUTES? A map of the proposed scheme in Southampton.

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping © All rights reserved. AM119/06

river walk across the bridges and back to Riverside Park.

Cabinet member for Environment and Transport councillor Gavin Dick said: "This boardwalk would be fantastic for the city."

"It will allow the people to reclaim that part of the waterfront and would significantly improve walking and

cycling routes.

"And it fits in nicely with Southampton's ever growing green credentials, giving more people the opportunity to ditch the car and don their walking boots. I am fully behind this bid and I urge as many people as possible to vote for the Connect2 Lottery bid."

'This boardwalk would be fantastic for the city'

- Councillor Gavin Dick

If Connect2 wins the public vote, Sustrans will spend £1.5m on the scheme and this would be match-funded by Southampton City Council.

The New Forest project will create a new safe cycle link between communities on either side of the A35.

The scheme would involve building a new ramp up to the crossing point, a former railway bridge, and creating a verge-sided gravel track alongside the A35, past the Station House restaurant, with riders rejoining the cycle network as it goes into Clayhill Bottom.

Ranger Gemma Ward said: "People currently have to negotiate their way through fast-moving traffic on a very busy road. It puts people off riding their bikes in the area altogether."

Mayor Ken

TV presenter Lorraine Kelly and former minister Charles Clarke are leading the Sustrans bid. Historian Adam Hart Davies, designer Wayne Hemingway and London mayor Ken Livingstone are among other high-profile supporters.

The People's Millions will be shown on ITV1 in the week commencing December 3.

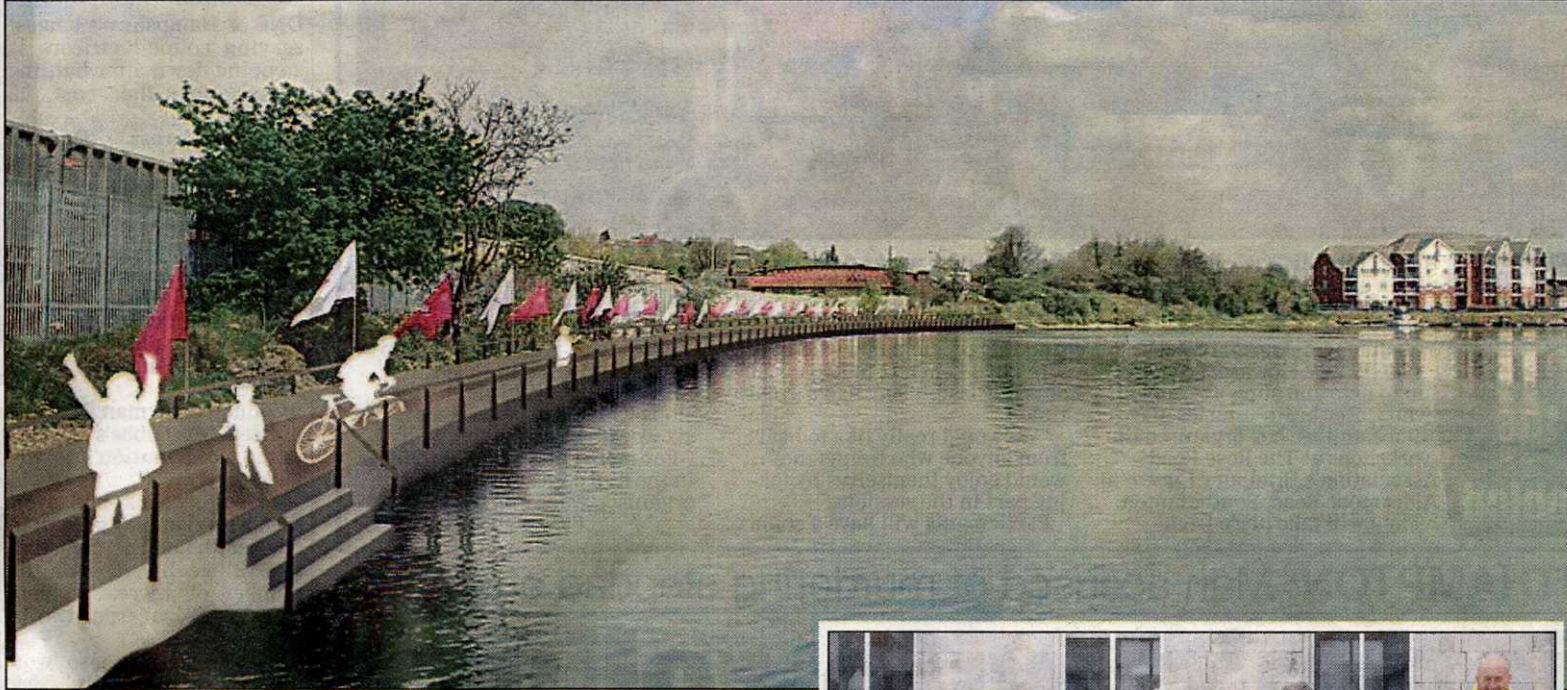
The four chosen proposals will be screened on ITV1 in 15-minute shows



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READY TO RIDE? Southampton City Council artist's impression of a boardwalk along the River Itchen between Northam Bridge and Horseshoe Bridge, Priory Road. Right, members of Southampton Cycle Forum set off on a tour of some of the areas of the city which it is hoped will attract funding.

Daily Echo picture by Richard Simpson. Order no: 5783206

during the week and the Connect2 project will be featured on December 4. Telephone voting will take place during the weekend of December 7 to 10, while voting will take place online from November 26 at

www.thepeoples50million.org.uk.
● For more about Connect2 or to register your support visit www.sustransconnect2.org.uk or text CONNECT2 to 80010 to get a vote reminder.

