

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 3 December 2020

### Report of the Head of Service - Design and Construction

#### Part I

Electoral Division affected:  
West Lancashire East;

### Ormskirk Highway Improvements, St Helens Road, Ruff Lane

(Appendices 'A' - 'D' refers)

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#### Executive Summary

Proposals have been developed to improve journeys for non-motorised road users between Ormskirk town centre and the nearby Edge Hill University. This includes an improved signal controlled junction of St Helens Road with Ruff Lane, designed to provide a safer and more convenient junction for cyclists and pedestrians.

This report summarises the results of the public consultation and formal advertising of the junction improvement proposals.

#### Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the proposals to improve the traffic signal controlled junction of St Helens Road with Ruff Lane, Ormskirk, as detailed in Appendices 'A' and 'B' and to make the Traffic Regulations Orders set out at Appendices 'C' and 'D'.

#### Background and Advice

The proposed scheme at St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction, as shown on Appendix 'A' is the first phase of an overall project for this area of Ormskirk. The wider project is commonly referred to as Ormskirk Eastern Gateway and is made up of multiple schemes that aim to make it easier to walk or cycle between Ormskirk town centre, bus and railway stations and the Edge Hill University campus.

The existing layout of St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction hinders access for cyclists and therefore acts as a barrier to encouraging cycle journeys from the Ruff Lane entrance of Edge Hill University towards the town centre.

Improvements to the existing layout will include a dedicated right-turn for cyclists leaving Ruff Lane onto St Helens Road, a manoeuvre that is not currently permitted. In addition a cycle lane will be provided for eastbound cyclists on Ruff Lane, however access from St Helens Road will no longer be permitted for eastbound motor vehicles. These measures will help to improve cycle access through the junction and encourage more people to cycle and walk between the town centre, bus and rail station and the university campus.

## **Consultations**

A formal public consultation was carried out between 6 October and 4 November 2020, which included an advertisement in the local newspaper and posting of notices on site. The traffic regulation orders advertised as part of the junction improvement are shown on Appendix 'B'.

## **Reponses**

The proposals received one supporting response and 8 responses from objectors.

Support for the proposals was offered by a cyclist who regularly commutes to Edge Hill University and uses the junction concerned.

The issues raised by the objectors, some of which reside along Ruff Lane or use the route, are summarised as follows;

1. The proposals are not extensive enough, and only address 25% of the route to the university from the bus station (raised by 4 objectors).

As described above, the proposals at St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction are the first phase of a multi-phase project. Taken in isolation, the proposals are beneficial to cyclists and pedestrians. The benefits will increase further once other associated measures that form part of the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway are implemented.

2. The current road layout of Ruff Lane and vehicle speeds are not conducive to cycling (raised by 6 objectors).

The proposals detailed in this report are focused on improvements at the St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction. An initial assessment of the remainder of Ruff Lane, towards the university entrance, has been carried out to determine what measures may be necessary to provide a safer and more enjoyable environment for cycling. Should a suitable package of measures be determined, and funding be available for implementation, further consultation with stakeholders will follow.

3. The proposals are a waste of money as few cyclists use Ruff Lane (raised by 3 objectors).

The scheme is designed to encourage more cyclists to access the university via Ruff Lane. The St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction currently acts as a barrier to cyclists who are not confident in using the junction in its current layout. The improved

signalised junction, with separate independent bicycle phases, and dedicated cycle lanes, is designed to encourage more cyclists to use this route.

4. Preventing south-east bound access from St Helens Road into Ruff Lane for motor vehicles will lead to more drivers having to use the St Helens Road junction with Knowsley Road. This may cause more congestion, collisions and inconvenience to pedestrians at this junction which is already difficult to use. The existing Electric Vehicle charging points located on Ruff Lane will require either a hazardous turning or reversing manoeuvre once the vehicle has been charged (raised by 1 objector).

There will be minor inconvenience to drivers who previously accessed the north-western end of Ruff Lane but whom would be prevented from doing so by the proposals detailed in this report. The alternative route via St Helens Road and Knowsley Road is not considered to be hazardous. Closing the end of Ruff Lane to motor vehicles allows for provision of a dedicated cycle lane through the St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction, thereby helping to encourage non-motorised journeys and hence reduce congestion. There will be no need for turning or reversing on Ruff Lane following use of the existing Electric Vehicle charging points.

5. The neighbouring towns of Skelmersdale and Burscough have received a considerable amount of traffic calming measures, cameras and the like and yet Ormskirk has been neglected in comparison (raised by 1 objector).

As described above, additional measures to improve the environment for cyclists along the length of Ruff Lane towards the University entrance are under separate consideration. Traffic calming features are one of a series of traffic management measures that will be considered.

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

Without implementation of the proposals detailed, using the St Helens Road/Ruff Lane junction will remain potentially hazardous to cyclists and will continue to act as a barrier to sustainable transport journeys between Ormskirk town centre and Edge Hill University.

### **Financial**

The estimated cost of the proposals detailed in this report is £254,000. This will be funded via a £150,000 contribution from the county council's Integrated Transport Block and £104,000 of S106 funding associated with a development at Edge Hill University. Should the S106 funding not be received, this will need to be a first call on future Integrated Transport Block grants received. It is not proposed to increase borrowing for these proposals.

## **Legal**

If approved the county council would make the Traffic Regulation Orders as set out in Appendices 'C' and 'D' pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

## **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

NA