

**Report to the Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 11 April 2024

**Report of the Director of Highways and Transport**

**Part I**

Electoral Division affected:  
Fylde East;

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Delivering better services;

**Blackpool Road, Kirkham - Shared Use Cycletrack**  
(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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**Brief Summary**

This report recommends a shared use cycle track be constructed within existing highway extent and on land already owned or to be acquired by the county council north of Blackpool Road, Kirkham, to be constructed from the East side of the A585, to the West side of the A585, making use of some sections of the existing pathway which already runs through the St George's Park housing estate. Objections have been received from some residents.

The works are to be funded by housing developers who have a planning consent with conditions and have already entered into a Section 278 agreement but have agreed the change to the works to be done and have part paid the monies.

**Recommendation**

Following a variation to the old Section 278 agreement and land acquisition from Kirkham Town Council, Cabinet is asked to approve the construction of a shared use cycletrack within existing highway widths on Blackpool Road and the A585, Kirkham and on land already owned by the county council and further land acquired from the Kirkham Town Council along the route option 1 shown in the report, from the A583, crossing under the A585 and exiting onto Ribby Road and the A583.



## Detail

As part of a large housing development west of Blackpool Road and the Kirkham Bypass roundabout, planning conditions were in place requiring a Section 278 Agreement to improve pedestrian and cycle safety and accessibility in the vicinity.

To address these planning conditions the proposed scheme makes use of existing highway width and land already owned by the county council, land to be acquired by the county council from Kirkham Town Council through the St George's Park estate, upgrading and widening the path to cater for both pedestrians and cyclists.

This route from a highway design perspective is the safest means of diverting pedestrians and cyclists off the main A road. The route will be advantageous to school children travelling to and from the school playing fields. The proposal also has the benefits of not only providing safe passage for pedestrians, it also would not influence traffic congestion on an ever-expanding network route.

This may also have a positive environmental impact providing an alternative way for school children to travel to and from school, reducing the number of children travelling to school by car.

## Appendices

Appendices 'A' - 'B' are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

| Appendix     | Title                                  |
|--------------|--|
| Appendix 'A' | Proposed Crossing A585 Options 1 and 2 |
| Appendix 'B' | Advertising Plan                       |

## Consultations

During the design process for this proposal objections were raised by a minority of residents regarding the route proposals. Residents of Cherry Close objected to the original proposal involving using the path to the south of their properties. Therefore, an informal consultation exercise was carried out and another option was put forward to residents.

Option 1 - The route which utilises the existing pathway which runs adjacent to Cherry Close. The route is owned by the parish council and will be acquired by the county council and the route will be widened into land also to be acquired. The hedge would be reduced in width but with care. The cycletrack would then link to Ribby Road, a quiet road more suitable to the use by the many school children. Some young people may thereby avoid use of the A road completely.

Option 2 - This took the original route up to Foxwood Drive then diverted to the main road (A583) through the existing treeline. Land would need to be acquired and the land is steep and trees and shrubs would require removal and would bring cyclists onto a cycle lane in the carriageway, but would avoid any amendments to the path passing adjacent to Cherry Close.



The results of the informal public consultation showed that Option 1 was most favourable. The route was felt to be convenient and kept the children and young people off the A road.

Option 1 was formally advertised (Appendix 'B' refers) with the following groups/individuals being consulted regarding the proposed shared use path with the results as follows:

Lancashire Constabulary - No objection to the proposals.

Kirkham Town Council and Councillors - All in agreement with the scheme.

The MP for the constituent for the Fylde area - In agreement and fully supportive of the scheme.

Some residents of Cherry Close – The following objections were raised:

- (i) Residents believe the Council has shown no consideration to the non-cycling residents of Cherry Close, and the council has prioritised cyclists over existing residents.
- (ii) Residents believe that creating a shared use path will encourage an increase in general traffic, i.e. in addition to pedestrians and vehicles, and thereby potentially cause increased risks and danger.
- (iii) If option one was to proceed, there is a hedge that will be required to be trimmed and narrowed in width. Residents believe that this will result in spoiling the visual attractiveness of the Close and potentially destroy the hedge.
- (iv) Residents of Cherry Close believe that by widening the existing path and converting it into a shared use path, this will have a detrimental effect on how Cherry Close looks and cause an increase in noise and air pollution.
- (v) Residents believe that the consultation exercise which was carried out to determine the most favourable route will divide opinions and create ill-feeling amongst groups of residents.

## **Response**

A safe crossing facility over the A585 was a requirement for the new housing development by the local planning authority following county council highway advice. The original proposal was a signalised crossing. However this revised proposal will create a much safer route from the west side of the A585 to the east side with less risk to vulnerable users.

In conclusion, from on-site assessments from both engineers and safety auditors the conclusion was to support an off-road shared use path which will run underneath the existing bridge that carries the A585 as opposed to the original proposal of a Green Man signalised pedestrian crossing. The new proposed path will provide a much safer route to both pedestrians and cyclists including local school children who already currently use the path.



Having balanced the issues raised by the objectors with the requirement for a safe crossing facility, it is suggested that the proposal in Route 1 provides the required improvements to pedestrian and cycle safety and accessibility in the vicinity. The proposed route would have the following impact:

- The proposed path would provide a safer route for vulnerable road users who experience difficulty crossing the A585.
- Air pollution from motor vehicles would be less as the route would not follow the main road which is high speed.
- It may have an environmental impact resulting in an increased number of children travelling to and from school via foot or bike as opposed to in the car, additional opportunities can be considered for sustainable travel to work.
- The cycle track will mean that highway users on foot and on pedal cycle can safely share the same space and that cycle users will not have to use the main carriageway.

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Legal**

The legal procedures to construct a shared use cycle track within carriageway extent are under Section 66 of the Highways Act.

Section 36 Highways Act provides that a highway constructed by a highway authority is a highway maintainable at public expense and so the new cycletrack lengths on land owned under the A585 and acquired from the Town Council will be so constructed.

A Section 278 agreement relates to payments by others for works able to be carried out by a highway authority and the original agreement will be varied to refer to the proposed works.

The county council is able to acquire land.

### **Financial**

This scheme will be funded through a Section 278 Agreement which covers the costs to the county council for the construction and supervision phases of the project. Any additional funding requirements for the proposals will be funded by the developer and added to the capital programme.

### **Risk management**

Vulnerable road users attempting to cross the A585 Kirkham Bypass will be at less risk if the proposals are implemented. The alternative route provides a much safer route than crossing the A585 and travelling along the main road.



The shared cycle track will be able to be used safely by highway users on foot and on pedal cycle as the width will be 3 metres where possible which will provide for safe use and meets relevant regulation and guidance.

### List of Background Papers

| Paper | Date | Contact/Tel |
|-------|------|-------------|
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

