

**Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Cabinet
Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services
Report submitted by: Interim Executive Director for Environment
Date: 5 March and 6 March 2015**

Part I

Electoral Division(s) affected:
Penwortham North, and South
Ribble Rural West

Adoption of the Route for the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass
(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Executive Summary

Approval is sought to adopt and protect the route for the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass as shown at Appendix 'A'.

Route adoption and protection is identified as an early activity under the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to the Preston, South Ribble, and Lancashire City Deal. Once the route is approved, the County Council will be in a position to progress a planning application and start land assembly procedures.

A six-week public consultation exercise was held on one preferred alignment rather than options for the route, for the reasons that, as described in this report, an indicative route showing a direct link between the A582 at Broad Oak roundabout and the A59 west of Penwortham at Howick Cross has already been identified in the published Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan. This route reflects the updated scheme objectives and is already shown, alongside the currently protected 'Blue route', as a potential alternative route in the development plan for the area.

1250 responses were received during the consultation. The full consultation report is presented at Appendix 'B'. Very few responses were received that argued against the completion of Penwortham Bypass (by whichever choice of route), which suggests a strong degree of consensus across the local communities affected that the completion of the Bypass should occur.

53% of the responses cited support for or raised no issue with the council's preferred choice of route.

After giving full consideration to the responses received to this public consultation, there are a number of legitimate concerns that will need to be addressed as the proposal is developed. Complementary measures may also need to be considered for introduction, as construction proceeds and the road and wider transport improvements come into use. There has been no matter raised that would stop the progress of the preferred route. On that basis, the Executive Director is satisfied that the comparative advantages of the preferred route presented as part of the consultation and in this report remain and the consultation reaffirms the benefits of the choice of preferred route.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

That:

- i. the route, as shown in appendix 'A', be approved and adopted as the route of the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass;
- ii. the route currently approved and protected for the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass ('the Blue Route') be rescinded;
- iii. the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services be requested to adopt and safeguard the route of the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass as that shown in appendix 'A' for development control purposes;
- iv. South Ribble Borough Council be notified that the route shown in appendix 'A' should be included and protected in the Development Plan as the route of the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass

Background and Advice

The Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan (CLHTM) was published by the County Council in March 2013 and provides the basis for determining future transport investment priorities across Preston, South Ribble and Chorley. Many of the transport priorities identify large-scale improvements and additions to the existing highway network.

It has been evident over many years that the existing transport network serving Preston and the wider area is becoming increasingly congested, despite a range of improvements and sustainable travel measures that have been introduced.

Recognising this issue, the Central Lancashire local authorities agreed to fund a transport model to study traffic flows on the transport network and permit a more

comprehensive and strategic analysis of how the area's transport network functions and the potential alternatives to satisfying current and future traffic demands.

This study was brought into particular focus with the preparation of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and the scale and distribution of new housing to be accommodated as part of the area's development strategy. The strategic development areas identified in these plans, in North West Preston and along the A582/B5253 in South Ribble, prompted the County Council, as Transport and Highway Authority, to conclude that simply relying on improvements to the existing network and even with a much greater investment in sustainable travel measures, Central Lancashire's transport network would not be able to cope. Instead, substantial additional transport infrastructure would be required to serve this new development and growth in the wider area. The County Council undertook to develop a solution to support the area's growth and deliver the Core Strategy.

As a result, Central Lancashire was the first area in the County to have a highways and transport master plan put in place. These master plans were identified in the Local Transport Plan as a means for highway and transport implications to properly inform and influence Lancashire's development and growth, and provide a sound basis to determine transport investment priorities.

The CLHTM was published in March 2013 following a public consultation exercise, and represents the County Council's considered position of the transport infrastructure needed to support the delivery of its development strategy. Its findings and proposals have been fully incorporated into the emerging Local Plans, and more particularly site allocations policies, in the area.

Supporting the development of the CLHTM, consideration was given to whether and what measures to improve travel on the existing road network could provide a level of relief sufficient to resolve existing problems and serve future demand from proposed development and growth of the area. Numerous measures were identified across the area and across all modes of travel, but these assessments made it clear that even with a major programme of sustainable transport improvements these would not have the necessary impact. Indeed, these measures would not compensate for even a modest traffic growth between now and 2026.

What became apparent through independent technical assessment underpinning the CLHTM is that the current transport network serving Preston and South Ribble simply does not have enough spare capacity to allow for significant changes to improve bus journey times and enhance the public realm to encourage walking and cycling. This led the master plan to conclude that significant additions to existing highway infrastructure, of a scale and location to support the area's strategic development sites, would be needed to support the development aspirations of Central Lancashire.

The Completion of the Penwortham Bypass between the A582 and A59 is one of four major road schemes identified in the CLHTM. Its completion will complement the capacity improvements along the A582 and Penwortham New Bridge linking to Ringway, will support economic development through travel reliability and convenience, and provide congestion relief to Penwortham along the A59 corridor.

More particularly, it will:

- Improve access from the A59 to the motorway network on a suitable road that does not pass through Penwortham or Preston city centre;
- Reduce traffic in Penwortham, which experiences very significant peak hour congestion, and allow public realm improvements and measures to promote walking and cycling in the town centre;
- Provide opportunities for bus priority on the A59, including the potential for park and Ride.

The County Council has promoted a new road to bypass Penwortham from the A59 to Central Preston incorporating a new bridge over the River Ribble for over 40 years. The first phase between Marsh Lane and Broad Oak roundabout was constructed and completed in 1986.

Completing the bypass with a connection to the A59 to the west of Penwortham was consulted on during 1994. The County Council published two possible routes for a connection, referred to as the 'Blue Route' and the 'Brown Route'. Both routes would be dual carriageway with access limited to the junctions with the A59 and Broad Oak roundabout.

Out of this 1994 consultation, the Blue Route was chosen as, and remains up until this time, the County Council's protected route to complete the bypass. The route followed closely the alignment of an established proposal for the bypass, passing north of New Longton between Longton Bypass and Broad Oak roundabout. A similar scheme had earlier been the subject of public consultation in 1991 by the Department for Transport as part of the Preston Southern and Western Bypass, though that scheme was subsequently deleted from the Trunk Road Programme.

The second option, the Brown Route, forms the basis for the County Council's indicative route presented in the CLHTM. This same route is also shown as a 'Potential Alternative Route' on the Policies Map to South Ribble's *Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document* (Partial Version) published in November 2013. More recently, it has been shown and described as part of the transport infrastructure included under Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal.

Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal

The Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal was signed in September 2013 and provides a financial structure to deliver the transport improvements identified in the CLHTM, subject to planning, land assembly and other statutory procedures, and in advance of the bulk of development so to minimise as far as possible the impacts on the existing transport network and on local communities and road users.

In April 2014 a programme for delivery, presented in the City Deal Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for 2014/15 was endorsed by the Cabinets of the 3 Local Authorities and approved by the City Deal Executive. The IDP timetable programmes the development and approval of routes for the completion of Penwortham Bypass and the route protected during the 2014/15 financial year.

Public Consultation

A 6-week period of public consultation was held during September and October 2014. A series of events were held in the local area; affected communities, landowners and parish councils were engaged. Web-based and media information presented the technical justification to the choice of route and invited comments thereon.

The consultation presented a preferred single route design for the road proposal, rather than a series of options for the route, for the reasons that, as described in this report, the route for the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass has already been identified in the published Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan and the South Ribble Local Plan.

The choice of route, which would join to the A59 at Howick Cross, was presented as the preferred route over the existing protected route because it will:

1. Divert away more of the traffic on the A59 through Penwortham travelling to and from Howick Cross, Hutton and Longton. Taking still greater volumes of traffic out of the residential and shopping areas along the A59 will improve conditions for residents, pedestrians and cyclists, including users of the local schools, and businesses in the area, and give greater opportunity to make public realm improvements and give over road space along the A59 through Penwortham to public transport and other users;
2. Give a greater reduction in road traffic casualties as a result of less traffic through Penwortham;
3. Result in no houses or other premises being demolished or affected along the route of the bypass, compared to 5 properties which would be demolished for the Blue Route. The preferred route also has a far smaller environmental impact, with less land, woodland and hedgerow being taken. The preferred route which is the subject of this consultation is more than half a mile shorter in length than the Blue Route;
4. Provide a much more cost effective and therefore affordable and deliverable solution;
5. Provide a more direct north-westerly alignment and continuation of the A582, and a more direct route to a prospective new River Ribble crossing. A new crossing of the River Ribble remains a longer term ambition of the three local authorities, and preliminary work is underway as part of the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal to determine a feasible route and protect a corridor for a road bridge and connections to it from the existing road network, A59 to the south and A583 to the north.

1250 responses were received during the consultation. The full consultation report is presented at Appendix 'B'. Very few responses were received that argued against the completion of Penwortham Bypass (by whichever choice of route), which suggests a strong degree of consensus across the local communities affected that the completion of the Bypass should occur.

53% of the responses cited support for or raised no issue with the council's preferred choice of route.

After giving full consideration to the responses received to this public consultation, there are a number of legitimate concerns that will need to be addressed as the proposal is developed. Complementary measures may also need to be considered for introduction, as construction proceeds and the road and wider transport improvements come into use. There has been no matter raised that would stop the progress of the preferred route. . On that basis, the Executive Director is satisfied that the comparative advantages of the preferred route presented as part of the consultation and in this report remain and the consultation reaffirms the benefits of the choice of preferred route.

Turning to the main issues to emerge through the consultation, these are described below along with a summary response for each:

- Design and alignment of the proposal

The preference for the more direct link between A582 and A59 in favour of the currently protected 'Blue Route' generated no definitive reasoning or issues which could not be addressed in the detailed design or validated by the imminent Central Lancashire Transport Model. Concerns have been expressed over the effectiveness of the new route to take traffic out of Penwortham, and the proximity and impact of the preferred route on Howick C of E Primary School, All Hallows School and residential properties including those along Howick Moor Avenue. Respondents have also made suggestions over the design of the road and the roundabout junctions and additional sections of road to link to the existing network and local facilities.

The choice and line of the preferred route has been influenced by the scheme objectives, including: the ability to divert away more of the existing traffic volumes along the A59 through Penwortham travelling to and from Howick Cross, Hutton and Longton, with the consequential benefits to safety and amenity in Penwortham; the reduction in land take and loss of residential properties and natural features; and the opportunity for a direct route to a prospective new River Ribble crossing.

Discussions have begun with both schools to consider what measures and complementary provision can be introduced to mitigate and compensate for the effects of the scheme and ensure the quality of school provision, and specifically playing field provision, is not adversely affected. The same consideration will be given to properties that could be affected by the road, its construction and operation. Measures to minimise visual or noise impacts in particular are likely to feature strongly in the landscape design that will accompany the road design as part of a planning application.

Turning to the design, the road will be delivered as a dual carriageway with a separate off-highway 3 metre wide shared use cycleway for use on pedal cycle and on foot along its length joining to existing (and potentially enhanced) cycle ways and footways on the A59 and A582. The junction arrangements will be considered in the detailed design. The intention is that controlled crossings will be provided at the new A59 roundabout to provide safe crossing points for off-road users including school

children. Broad Oak roundabout will become a signalised roundabout with crossing provision built into the infrastructure.

- Impacts on existing local network

A number of local network issues have been raised through the consultation. These concerns have focussed on, for the most part, the potential for the scheme to create safety issues or cause rat running on parts of the existing network.

The design and delivery of the new road will be supported by detailed traffic modelling to determine and confirm its ability to handle future predicted levels of traffic. This detailed work will also consider the effect of the new road on future travel patterns, to determine whether there is any need, or indeed opportunity, to make further local improvements on the existing network. Suitable and complementary measures will be put in place to deal with specific local issues where this is appropriate. This would extend to measures to discourage through traffic using the existing corridor through Penwortham in order to optimise use of the full bypass.

The delivery of the new road will be complemented by changes to the Liverpool Road (A59) corridor through the built up area of Penwortham, focussing on the local centre. What we already know is that removing a substantial amount of traffic from the A59 through Penwortham will allow opportunities for bus priority measures, public realm enhancements, and improvements to prioritise and promote walking and cycling through this residential and retail corridor.

- Impact on the rural environment

A number of respondents have raised concerns over the loss of countryside, agricultural land and natural habitats and features.

A key design principle to deciding on the route and detailed layout of the road is to avoid the loss of any recognised natural or historic features in the landscape. Where this is not possible, appropriate measures will be introduced to compensate for, replace and enhance those features. The planning application will be supported by an environmental impact assessment which will consider all aspects of the proposed scheme including the impact of its construction and operation on existing land use and features of ecological and landscape value.

- Delivery of the Ribble Crossing

Almost all of the respondents who commented on the prospect for a new bridge crossing over the River Ribble were in favour of the proposal and felt this should be made a priority, to be delivered much sooner to coincide with the bypass scheme.

Funding is not in place at this time for a new Ribble Crossing, however, work is underway to investigate the potential for accelerating the delivery of the crossing, to determine a feasible route for a bridge and its approaches, and to explore potential funding options. The business case for a new Ribble crossing will be much stronger with the construction of the bypass in conjunction with the opening of the Preston Western Distributor.

Route for Completion of the Penwortham Bypass

Closely following the alignment of the 'Brown Route', an initial design has been developed to inform the preferred route. Since the Brown Route was identified, there have been some changes along the corridor, including new house building at the Broad Oak roundabout, which have been taken into account in the route shown at Appendix 'A'.

The completion of the Penwortham Bypass would run along the south western side of Penwortham between the A59 Liverpool Road and A582, forming a junction with Broad Oak roundabout.

From a new roundabout junction on the A59, between Howick C of E Primary School and Blackhurst Cottages, a new dual carriageway would extend south eastwards between Howick Moor Lane and Mill Brook. The route would then turn eastwards to connect to Broad Oak roundabout.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

If the recommendation is not followed, there is the risk that development will take place along the route making the future construction of a new road either more difficult or impossible.

Risk to uncertainty and delay on progressing statutory planning and land assembly procedures and in turn construction of road schemes.

Financial, Legal, Property

There are financial implications in relation to the protection of the route for the Completion of the Penwortham Bypass. A small number of properties are directly affected by the route. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the authority may receive claims relating to blight. Costs associated with this scheme will be funded through the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal Infrastructure Delivery Fund.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Penwortham Bypass consultation report	2014	Phil Wilson/ Environment/34559

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A