**Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**Report submitted by**: **Director of Programmes and Project Management**

**Date: 9 July 2015**

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| **Part I** |
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| Electoral Division affected:  Preston Central North |

**Cycle Tracks, Blackpool Road, Sir Tom Finney Way and Flintoff Way, Preston**

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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| Executive Summary Proposals have been developed to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities on certain lengths of Blackpool Road, Sir Tom Finney Way and Flintoff Way, Preston.  The proposals include the creation of shared use cycle tracks and upgrading of existing traffic signal control facilities.  This report outlines the proposals and describes the results of a public consultation. Recommendation The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to approve the removal of footways and instead the construction of cycle tracks, over which the public also have a right of way on foot, on the following lengths of Blackpool Road, Sir Tom Finney Way and Flintoff Way, Preston, as identified on Appendix 'A' and of the widths set out in Appendix 'B':   1. Cycle track length A, Blackpool Road, north side, from the junction with Sir Tom Finney Way, westwards for a distance of 422 metres, remove the footway and instead construct a cycle track over which the public also have a right of way on foot. 2. Cycle track length B, Sir Tom Finney Way, west side, from the junction with Blackpool Road, northwards for a distance of 7 metres, remove the footway and instead construct a cycle track over which the public also have a right of way on foot. |

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| 1. Cycle track length C, Sir Tom Finney Way, east side, from 11 metres north of the junction with Blackpool Road, northwards for a distance of 140 metres, remove the footway and instead construct a cycle track over which the public also have a right of way on foot. That approval be given to the dedication of extra highway width to widen Sir Tom Finney Way as shown coloured red on Appendix A from land currently in the County Council's ownership. 2. Cycle track length D, Flintoff Way, south side, from the junction with Sir Tom Finney Way, eastwards for a distance of 57 metres, subject to the dedication of extra highway width from J Sainsbury plc, remove the footway and instead construct a cycle track over which the public have a right of way on foot. 3. That approval be given to take the dedication of sections of extra highway width, as shown coloured pink on Appendix A, pursuant to Section 72 of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982on terms to be agreed by the Director of Programmes and Project Management to provide sufficient width for the proposed cycle track. |

**Background and Advice**

An October 2009 agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act associated with a retail development on Flintoff Way, Preston, required the developer to make a financial contribution for improved transport facilities within the area surrounding the development.

The County Council therefore developed a package of improvement measures as detailed below, and shown on Appendix B;

1. Shared use cycle track on the north side of Blackpool Road, between the existing National Cycle Route 6 and Sir Tom Finney Way.
2. Shared use cycle track on the east side of Sir Tom Finney Way between Blackpool Road and Flintoff Way.
3. Shared use cycle track on the south side of Flintoff Way.
4. Central refuge island on Flintoff Way.
5. Improvements to the Blackpool Road traffic signal controlled junction with Sir Tom Finney Way, including;

* Introduction of toucan crossing facilities to the north side of the junction.
* Introduction of controlled pedestrian crossing facilities to the south side of the junction.
* Upgrading of the existing controlled pedestrian facilities to the east and west sides of the junction.
* An upgraded traffic signal control system.

There is insufficient width for both the new cycle tracks proposed and the existing footways. It is therefore proposed to remove the footway lengths. This is an important decision as under S66 Highways Act 1980 the Highway Authority has a duty to provide proper and sufficient footway for use by the public on foot only, where necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of pedestrians. A footway must have been considered necessary or desirable in the past as one has been provided. Instead it is proposed to construct a cycle track but of such a width and standard that it can be used by both cyclists and pedestrians. Due consideration has been given to safety of all users.

Consultations have been carried out and the matters raised are addressed below. Nothing is raised which causes such concern that the proposal should not proceed.

**Consultations**

A public consultation was carried out during August 2014, proposing the measures shown on the attached Appendix B.

Lancashire County Council's Member for the Preston Central North has made the following objections to the proposals;

* Local residents and other pedestrians use the existing footways. The proposed shared use cycle tracks will be unsafe, with the potential for a collision between cyclists and pedestrians. There is particular concern regarding the safety of children, elderly people and pedestrians who are disabled or visually impaired.
* The area is well served by a medical centre, dental clinic and supermarket.
* Planning permission has recently been granted for a new residential care home adjacent to the proposed cycle track on Sir Tom Finney Way. This will attract additional pedestrians.
* A bus stop, well used by passengers accessing the above mentioned facilities, is located within the proposed cycle track on the east side of Sir Tom Finney Way.
* On match days, football supporters park vehicles on Watling Street Road and walk along the Sir Tom Finney Way footway to Preston North End football ground.

In response, it is established practice within Lancashire and nationally to create cycle tracks that are shared by pedestrians and cyclists. Where necessary the designated route will be widened and street furniture relocated. The proposed cycle tracks will be between 2.5 metres and 4.0 metres width. Warning signs and road markings will be provided to advise pedestrians and cyclists that the cycle tracks are shared use.

It is the case that 400m of cycletrack length A on the north side of Blackpool Road will run on a surfaced width of 2.5m as it is constrained by a line of trees which grow in the wide grassed verge area which will continue to exist alongside the cycletrack. The 400m section is therefore not adjacent to carriageway. A short 5 m length will be of a width of 2.5 m on cycle track length C where it runs behind the bus shelter. Whilst higher flows are expected for short periods on match days, the average combined pedestrian and cycle flows are considered to be low enough at these locations for paths of 2.5m width shared by pedestrians and cyclists to operate satisfactorily. The width is at least 3m along the remaining lengths.

Preston City Council members for the affected wards were consulted. One objection was received, which stated that;

**Objection 1** - Shared use cycle tracks can be hazardous to pedestrians, particularly those who are elderly or those walking with small children. Such shared facilities only work in less built up areas.

**In response**, as stated above, it is established practice within Lancashire and nationally to create cycle tracks that are shared by pedestrians and cyclists. Where necessary the designated route will be widened and street furniture relocated. The proposed cycle tracks will be between 2.5 metres and 4.0 metres width. Warning signs and road markings will be provided to advise pedestrians and cyclists that the cycle tracks are shared use.

**Objection 2** - The ancient hawthorn hedge on the north side of Blackpool Road may be damaged during construction.

**In response**, care will be taken during construction to minimise any negative impact on the hedge. The hedge is not an ancient hedge in ecology terms and there will be no significant negative impact from the proposed cycletrack.

Local cycling group representatives were consulted, the following objections to detailed elements of the proposals were received from CTC (Cyclists' Touring Club);

**Objection 1** - No Advanced Stop Lines are proposed at either the Blackpool Road junction with Sir Tom Finney Way or at the Blackpool Road junction with Flintoff Way.

**In response**, the proposals will be amended to incorporate Advanced Stop Lines for cyclists at all four arms of the Blackpool Road junction with Sir Tom Finney Way.

**Objection 2** - The proposed toucan crossing to the north side of the Blackpool Road junction with Sir Tom Finney Way includes a sharp right angled turn on the central reserve which will be difficult for cyclists, particularly those pulling a trailer.

**In response**, it is proposed to widen the central reserve to the north side of the junction by 1.5 metres in order to incorporate the toucan crossing. A minimum of 3.0 metres will be available to cyclists on the central reserve. Combined with the 3.6 metre wide crossing, this provides a reasonable amount of space for cyclists to make crossing and turning manoeuvres.

**Objection 3** - Cyclists will have to give way at entrances along the north side of Blackpool Road.

**In response**, there are three private entrances along the proposed length of shared use cycle track to the north side of Blackpool Road. The nature and layout of two of these entrances is such that cyclists will not be required to give-way to vehicles. The third entrance is laid out as a side road. In order to remove any ambiguity as to who has priority, it would be necessary to indicate to cyclists that they should give way at this location.

Preston City Council officers have been consulted due to the proposals being adjacent to Moor Park and the Blackpool Road allotments. The consultation plan attached as Appendix B includes the proposed removal of one tree from the hedge row to the north side of Blackpool Road as the tree leans into the proposed cycle track. Preston City Council officers have no objection to removal of this tree, advising that it is a Silver Maple of low quality. They have recommended that a further four relatively low quality Lime trees within the same boundary hedge should also be removed or at least crown lifted. There was a further recommendation to crown lift other trees assessed as being more beneficial in terms of amenity value.

No responses were received from other consultees, including Lancashire Constabulary, Sir Tom Finney Community School, Acorns Primary School and heath care facilities on Flintoff Way.

**Implications**:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

**Risk management**

Without implementation of the proposals detailed in this report, there will be less opportunity for safe and effective sustainable travel within the local area concerned.

**Legal**

The legal procedure to convert a footway to a cycle track is under Section 66 of the Highways Act to remove the footway and under Section 65 to construct a cycle track, although this may involve little actual physical work.

Under Section 66 the Highway Authority is under a duty to provide proper and sufficient footways by the made-up carriageways where it is considered necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of pedestrians. In this case it is considered that footways for pedestrians only are no longer desirable as the proposed cycle tracks will include a right of way for pedestrians wide enough for cyclists and pedestrians to safely share.

**Financial**

A sum of £251,821 has been secured through a S106 agreement associated with a nearby retail development for construction of the proposals detailed in this report.

##### List of Background Papers

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| Paper | Date | Contact/Directorate/Tel |
| None |  |  |
| Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate  NA | | |