

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 June 2021

Report of the Head of Service - Design and Construction

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Accrington South;

Manchester Road and Church Avenue, Baxenden, Cycle Track with Right of Way on Foot, No Waiting at Any Time and Toucan Crossing

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

As part of an upgrade to National Cycle Route 6, this report outlines proposals to provide a cycle track with right of way on foot along certain lengths of Manchester Road and Church Avenue, Baxenden. Associated proposals for No Waiting at Any Time restrictions and a new toucan crossing are also described. Consultation and formal advertising of the proposals has been undertaken. Five objections to the scheme have been received, which are summarised in the report.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the following:

- (i) Removal of footway status on Manchester Road and Church Avenue, as shown in Appendix 'A', pursuant to section 66(4) of the Highways Act 1980.
- (ii) Construction of cycle tracks with right of way on foot on Manchester Road and Church Avenue, pursuant to section 65(1) of the Highways Act 1980, including reduction in width of carriageway, as shown in Appendix 'A'.
- (iii) The introduction of No Waiting at Any Time restrictions in Manchester Road, and Church Avenue as shown in Appendix 'A'.
- (iv) The construction of a toucan crossing located on Manchester Road, as shown in Appendix 'A'.

Background and Advice

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan includes the creation of an East Lancashire Strategic Cycleway Network. National Cycle Route 6 forms part of this network, providing a cycle route between Accrington to the north and the Lancashire boundary near Stubbins to the south.

The majority of the upgraded National Cycle Route 6 route utilises off road cycle tracks and quiet roads. At Baxenden, the route is required to cross, and travel a short distance along, the A680 Manchester Road. Due to the nature and volume of traffic, Manchester Road is not considered appropriate for on carriageway cycle usage as part of National Cycle Route 6, a route designed to accommodate the needs of inexperienced cyclists. Lengths of shared use cycle track and a toucan crossing are therefore proposed in order to provide a safer route for cyclists whilst still appreciating that pedestrians are still to be provided with an area which is safe.

The following measures are proposed:

- a. On certain lengths of Manchester Road and Church Avenue, existing footway will be removed and a cycle track with right of way on foot constructed as shown in Appendix 'A'. The width of the cycle track will be wider than the footway was at least 3 metres, except for approximately 17 metres on Manchester Road which will be 2.5 metres wide as the width of the carriageway does not enable the shared use cycle track to be wider here. This is considered a short distance and wide enough to be safely shared by pedestrians and cyclists. A short length of cycle track with right of way on foot is also proposed in order to allow cyclists to re-join Church Avenue carriageway safely, away from the junction with Manchester Road.
- b. The construction of a toucan crossing on Manchester Road, to provide a safe crossing location for cyclists and pedestrians, as shown in Appendix 'A'.
- c. The introduction of No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on certain lengths of Manchester Road and Church Avenue, as shown in Appendix 'A'. These restrictions are required in order to ensure that the proposed cycle track is not obstructed by parked vehicles, and that cyclists have clear access and egress from the cycle track at Church Lane with adequate visibility.

Consultations

Formal advertising and consultation regarding the proposals was undertaken during October 2019. The following responses were received:

- (i) Lancashire County Council's elected member for the division made no comments regarding the proposals.
- (ii) The cycling consultee for Rossendale offered support for the proposals.
- (iii) Objections were received from St Johns Church, Baxenden, St Johns Church of England Primary School, British Horse Society and two residents. The objections are summarised below and responses given for consideration:

Objection 1

The proposed toucan crossing should be re-located further to the south east on Manchester Road, as this would be more convenient for children accessing the primary school.

In response - the proposed location of the toucan crossing is designed to provide cyclists with a route along the northeast side of Manchester Road. The alternative location proposed by objectors would require cyclists to use a route along the southwest side of Manchester Road. The footway along this side of Manchester Road is not considered suitable as a route to be safely shared by pedestrians and cyclists, due to the presence of a bus stop and shelter, retail and commercial premises. It is advised that the proposed site for the crossing is the most appropriate.

Objection 2

The proposed cycle track crosses the main church entrance on a bend and may be hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists.

In response - the proposed length of shared use cycle track adjacent to the church is short, linking the northern end of Church Avenue with the proposed toucan crossing on Manchester Road. The speed likely to be attained by cyclists at this location is not considered likely to be excessive. Whilst the entrance is located on a bend, with associated reduced visibility, the proposed shared use cycle track width at this location is 5 metres, thereby providing sufficient space for the area to be safely shared by pedestrians and cyclists and those exiting or entering the church.

Objection 3

The proposed No Waiting At Any Time on Church Avenue will restrict parking available for elderly church users or those with mobility impairments.

In response - there is an existing restriction which prohibits waiting Monday to Saturday 8:00am to 6:00pm. The proposals shown in Appendix 'A' will replace a 10 metre length of this existing restriction with No Waiting At Any Time. This will result in the loss of approximately two car parking spaces. Cars will not be able to park during church services on Sunday but other areas for parking are available. Exceptions to the No Waiting At Any Time restriction include vehicles stopping to allow passengers to board or alight and a disabled person's vehicle to park for a period of up to 3 hours when displaying a parking disc and blue badge. The additional restrictions are considered necessary to ensure safe cycle access and egress is maintained onto the proposed shared use cycle track, including adequate visibility.

Objection 4

The new zig-zag lines on the northeast side of the toucan crossing will cross over an existing driveway on Manchester Road, thereby impeding access to the property. It would be illegal to pull up to reverse onto the driveway or to stop on the opposite side of the road to wait for a safe gap in oncoming traffic to cross into the driveway.

In response - proposals for the toucan crossing location were revised to remove the need for zig-zags extending across the driveway and were subsequently re-advertised during October 2020. The resident concerned reiterated their objection during the re-advertising period but the point of the objection has lost its relevance.

In any event, the initial proposal did not create an offence as Regulation 22(c) of the Zebra, Pelican and Puffin Pedestrian Crossing Regulations and General Directions

1997 permits a vehicle to stop in the controlled area of a crossing for the purpose of making a left or right turn. Where a driver performs a manoeuvre as a fundamental part of making that turn (i.e. stopping and reversing in this case), they are subject to the exemption and do not commit an offence. Stopping to reverse onto a driveway situated to the left or right of the road is therefore not considered to be an offence.

Objection 5

The British Horse Society representative commented that the proposed crossing would be excellent for primary school children to use, but cyclists mixing with children on a congested stretch of road is not safe. Alternative routes were suggested for National Cycle Route 6 within the Baxenden area.

In response, the alternative routes suggested have been considered previously but are not considered viable due to land ownership or highway engineering difficulties. The majority of the proposed cycle track will be in excess of 3.0m, with a short length of 2.5m width. The cycle track is therefore considered wide enough to be safely shared by pedestrians and cyclists.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Should the cycle track, toucan crossing and waiting restrictions identified in this report not be implemented, cyclists using National Cycle Route 6 will be required to take a more hazardous route within the carriageway along A680 Manchester Road.

Financial

The estimated cost of the proposals detailed in this report is £105,000. This will be funded as part of the existing budget for the East Lancashire Strategic Cycleway Programme.

Legal

The legal procedures to convert a footway to a cycle track are under Section 66 of the Highways Act to remove the footway and under Section 65 to construct a cycle track.

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. It is considered that discrete footways for pedestrians only are no longer necessary as the proposed cycle tracks will include a right of way for pedestrians wide enough for cyclists and pedestrians to safely share. Whilst the majority of the cycle track will be in excess of 3m wide a short length on Manchester Road will be 2.5m. Given the good visibility of this section of the cycle track it is considered adequate for pedestrians and cyclists to safely share.

A decision to remove footways and replace them with shared use footway and cycle track should be made with proper consideration of the implications for the safety and accommodation of pedestrians. This report sets out these considerations.

No Waiting at Any Time restrictions and toucan crossings are provided under 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