

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 October 2021

Report of the Head of Service - Design and Construction

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
St Annes North

Clifton Drive North Project - Parts of Including Segregated Cycle Track

(Appendices 'A' - 'C' refer)

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Executive Summary

This report considers the proposals to alter the footway and in addition construct a segregated two-way cycle track between Highbury Road West and Squires Gate on Clifton Drive North in St Annes, short sections of shared use cycle track, relocation of bus stop clearways, removal of a pelican crossing and a reduction in speed limit.

Consultation and formal advertising of these proposals, together with Red Route parking and waiting restrictions and Police parking bay being the Clifton Drive North project, has been undertaken with a number of objections received.

In view of the local response regarding the proposed introduction of Red Route restrictions to Clifton Drive North, the proposals for a Traffic Regulation Order for parking and waiting restrictions are being reconsidered and will be subject to further public consultation.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (i) The alteration of the footway to use part of former carriageway width, construction of a segregated cycle track for cycles only, short sections of shared use cycle tracks, removal of footway on those short sections, the relocation of bus stop clearways, removal of a pelican crossing and reduction in speed limit, being some of the proposals shown in Appendix 'A'.
- (ii) The deferral of a decision on the Traffic Regulation Order introducing parking restrictions, which will be subject to further public consultation and to approve work is done to develop any revised parking proposals.

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| (iii) The repurposing of various scheme budgets within the Road Safety and Cycle Safety programme to fund the county council's contribution towards the Clifton Drive North project. |
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Background and Advice

A review of the National Cycle Network was undertaken by Sustrans in 2015/16 which identified the section of route along Clifton Drive North between Highbury Road West and Squires Gate as having traffic speed and flow above that which would be acceptable as a National Cycle Network route. Following this process, the Clifton Drive North project was put forward for Department for Transport funding by Sustrans, based on a number of factors including: addressing road safety concerns, establishing a vehicular and pedestrian traffic-free section of route, linking areas of population and, with the addition of this cycle only cycle track section, contributing to a predominantly vehicular and pedestrian traffic-free route for cyclists along the Lancashire coast.

The proposal for the project is in line with Lancashire's transport policy (Actively Moving Forward: A Ten-Year Strategy for Cycling and Walking, 2018) which aims to double the number of people cycling by 2028. This is further supported by Local Planning Guidance released by the Department for Transport in July 2020, 'Gear Change – a bold vision for walking and cycling'.

The proposals comprise the construction of a 2-way, 3m wide cycle track for use by cycles only on the coastal side and an altered footway becoming a 2m wide footway for use on foot only on the carriageway side, segregated by a raised trapezoidal marking. Northbound bus stops and shelters are to be re-positioned with shelters between the cycle track and footway so that cycles pass behind them, avoiding conflict with passengers boarding or alighting buses. In addition, their positions along the length of the road will be amended to balance the distance between stops and better serve existing and future demand. As a result, the total northbound bus stops would be reduced from 5 to 4.

Short sections of shared use cycle track for use on foot and cycle are proposed to be located at the northern and southern extents to facilitate transition between the existing and proposed layout. Sustrans has confirmed its approval for the construction of cycle track, altered footway and bus shelters and the segregation by trapezoidal marking. These sections of shared use cycle track will be a minimum of 2.6m wide with good forward visibility and considered able to be used safely for both cyclists and pedestrians. The removal of footway for use only by those on foot is an important decision and these shared cycle track sections are 112m and 38m in length at the northern and southern ends respectively and of sufficient width. Guidance requires a 2m minimum for a shared use section when user counts are less than 200/hr. Counts have been undertaken and they averaged less than a quarter of that. These sections have also already had some cycle use without issue.

Following consultation with Lancashire Constabulary, the Constabulary has requested that, in order to support the speed reduction proposals between Kilgrimol Gardens (northern arm) and New Road, additional pedestrian crossing facilities should be

provided. Therefore, it is proposed to install five new refuge islands and remove an existing pelican crossing, located at what was the entrance to the now demolished Pontins holiday camp.

To discourage obstruction of the segregated cycle track and footway, parking restrictions are being considered supported by an enforceable Traffic Regulation Order. Officers proposed a Red Route, with police parking bay, for the length of the scheme. This was felt appropriate as it provides a level of restriction over and above existing single and double yellow lines, by prohibiting stopping in most circumstances and thereby reduces the potential for stopping on the carriageway or across the footpath. However, it is suggested that given the level of objection this is not proceeded with at the present time.

It is proposed that a Speed Limit Order be made as shown in Appendix 'A' reducing the speed limit.

The project is jointly funded by Sustrans and the county council and a contract is being finalised to realise a £615,000 contribution to the project. The original scheme budget required the county council to fund the balance of £150,000 to the scheme budget. As the design progressed, the scope and complexity of the project increased, including a more comprehensive road safety aspect which lead to an increase in project budget. The estimated cost of the current proposed project scope is £1,107,000; an increase to the original budget of £342,000 which the county council will need to fund. Officers propose to fund this increase by repurposing existing grant funds originally allocated to projects within the Cycle Safety Programme. These sums are from projects which have either been delivered below allocated budget or are no longer progressing/reduced in scope due to a change in rationale within the project life cycle resulting in a budget underspend. An additional contingency sum of £110,000 would be reallocated to the project from unspent grant monies in the Road Safety Programme budget.

Consultation

Public consultation was undertaken between July and August 2021 where letters and plans were sent to over 900 properties, together with the formal advertising process.

This consultation resulted in various concerns being raised, mainly focused on the Red Route and the impacts that this might have on parking dispersal into neighbouring residential streets and loss of coastal local amenity. A total of 73 letters and emails were received containing 112 objections and adverse comments, with 46 of these relating to the Red Route and potential consequential wider impact. The remaining responses were in respect of the other aspects of the project.

In view of the local response, and having reviewed these concerns, officers are further investigating the proposed strategy for parking restrictions on Clifton Drive North and neighbouring residential streets. A parking survey has been completed and will be reviewed to inform revised parking proposals that will be the subject of further public consultation.

Responses to objections and adverse comments received are contained at Appendix 'B' and 'C' of this report. It is suggested that the objections raised do not undermine the benefits of proceeding with the proposed changes set out in this report.

Revised Proposal

With officers no longer recommending a specific parking control strategy at this time, approval is sought only for the shared and segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities, relocation of bus stop clearways, removal of pelican crossing and reduction in speed limit. As the grant funding is time sensitive it is considered important that the proposals contained within this report are progressed, but also further work is undertaken with developing revised parking proposals.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Should the segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities identified in this report not be implemented, cyclists traveling between Highbury Road West and Squires Gate in St Annes on National Cycle Route 62 will be required to negotiate a route section assessed by Sustrans as having traffic speed and flow in excess of current best practice guidelines with an associated road safety concern for users.

A delay in approval of the revised proposal risks delaying commencement of the construction phase and extending the works period beyond the completion date given in the funding agreement. Signage and marking works associated with any Traffic Regulation Order relating to any revised parking proposals would be the subject of a subsequent decision but could be undertaken towards the end of the construction phase. This enables the second consultation on the parking elements to run at the same time as the main site works, with a significantly lower risk to the project programme compared to delaying the entire project until this second consultation process is complete.

Financial

The estimated cost of the proposals detailed in this report is £1,107,000. This would be partly funded to the sum of £615,000 as part of the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 3), £150,000 from the county council's Local and Cycle Safety funds and the balance of £342,000 from reallocation of unspent grant monies from the county council's Cycle and Road Safety Programmes, subject to approval of the recommendations of this report, with £281,000 available from the pre 2019/20 budgets and £61,000 from the 2019/20 and 2020/21 budgets. An additional contingency sum of £110,000 would be reallocated to the project from unspent grant monies in the Road Safety Programme pre 2019/20 budgets.

This grant funding of £615,000 has been secured by Sustrans from the Department for Transport, with the understanding that the county council will deliver the scheme as described in Schedule 2 of the contract and with a completion date of 30 June 2022.

If works are not delivered in accordance with the funding agreement, Sustrans reserve the right to recall the funding.

In the event that the county council does not enter into a grant funding agreement with Sustrans, a contract for the works will not be entered into and no works would be undertaken on site.

Legal

Under Section 65 Highways Act 1980 the highway authority can construct a cycle track for use by cycles only or a cycle track with shared use with those on foot. Considerations regarding width and safety are important.

Under Section 66 Highways Act 1980 the highway authority has a duty to provide proper and sufficient footways for use on foot only 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 still desirable but the footway length will be altered to a new position. This power to alter footways is provided for in S66 Highways Act 1980 and to construct the altered footway using former carriageway widths is acceptable so long as widths and safety are satisfied. S75 Highways Act 1980 provides that the highway authority may vary widths of carriageway and footway.

On the proposed short lengths of shared use cycle track it is considered that a footway for use on foot only is no longer desirable as the proposed shared use cycle track sections will include a right of way for pedestrians wide enough for cyclists and pedestrians to safely share.

These proposals would see the reallocation of highway space under S66(4) and S75(1) of the Highways Act, to create cycle tracks under S65(1) of the Highways Act without public right of way on foot (meaning pedestrians are to be segregated from the cycle track and vice versa). Footway provision will remain for pedestrian highway users.

Advice is that Cabinet could decide to defer a decision on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order proposing the red route and police parking bay yet proceed to introduce the other elements of the revised project in accordance with the recommendations contained within this report.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		