

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 April 2022

Report of the Head of Service - Design and Construction

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Ormskirk;

Corporate Priorities:
Protecting our environment;

County Road and Yew Tree Road, Ormskirk, Various Highway Measures Including Toucan Crossing and Prohibition of Driving

(Appendices 'A' - 'C' refer)

Contact for further information:

David Davies, Tel: (01772) 534495, Senior Highway Engineer,
david.davies@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

This report outlines various proposals for County Road and Yew Tree Road, Ormskirk, designed to provide an improvement to travel by sustainable transport modes including walking and cycling. Consultation and formal advertising has taken place and a summary of objections received are contained within the report.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the following proposals (i) – (iv):

- (i) Removal of footway status on Yew Tree Road and County Road, Ormskirk, pursuant to section 66(4) of the Highways Act 1980.
- (ii) Construction of cycle tracks with right of way on foot on Yew Tree Road and County Road, pursuant to section 65(1) of the Highways Act 1980 and the reduction in width of the carriageway pursuant to s.75(1) of the Highways Act 1980.
- (iii) The construction of a toucan crossing on County Road.
- (iv) Introduction of no waiting at any time, Yew Tree Road, lengths A and B.

Cabinet is asked not to approve proposals (v) and (vi):

- (v) Prohibition of driving, except pedal cycles, Yew Tree Road.
- (vi) No waiting at any time, Yew Tree Road, lengths C and D.

Detail

A number of measures detailed below and shown in Appendices 'A' and 'B' have been proposed for County Road and Yew Tree Road, Ormskirk, to assist in making local journeys using more sustainable transport modes, particularly walking and cycling:

a. Toucan crossing - County Road

Due to the nature and volume of traffic, A59 County Road acts as a barrier to pedestrian and cycle journeys within the local area. A toucan crossing at County Road, east of the junction with Yew Tree Road, is therefore proposed to provide pedestrians and cyclists with a safe location to cross County Road under traffic signal control.

b. Cycle track with a right of way on foot - County Road and Yew Tree Road

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. The proposed cycle tracks will include a right of way for pedestrians wide enough for cyclists and pedestrians 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.

Lengths of shared use cycle track are proposed in order to facilitate cyclists gaining access to the toucan crossing mentioned above. The cycle tracks would be at least 3 metres wide and are considered wide enough for pedestrians to safely share with cyclists. All necessary studies and assessments will be undertaken to ensure that equality issues are addressed and if required provision is made for vulnerable users. The carriageway width of County Road would be reduced by 1.1 metres to construct the cycle tracks under s.75(1) Highways Act 1980. The remaining width of 8.1 metres is considered adequate for a road of this nature.

c. No waiting at any time - Yew Tree Road (lengths A and B)

Lengths of no waiting at any time are proposed to ensure that cyclists' access onto, and egress from, the cycle tracks described above are not impaired by parked vehicles and to ensure adequate visibility is maintained.

d. Prohibition of driving, except pedal cycles - Yew Tree Road

As part of the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020, Yew Tree Road was closed to through traffic; south of the junction with Hillcrest Road

using powers under the Traffic Orders Procedure (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. The closure was designed to eliminate through traffic and create an environment more suitable for cycling and walking whilst public transport was disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Proposals have been considered to provide a permanent prohibition of driving on Yew Tree Road to replace the temporary COVID-19 related closure. This would involve a physical closure of the road south of Hillcrest Road, although access would be permitted for pedal cycles. Such a closure would complement the proposed cycle tracks and toucan crossing described above, creating a low traffic environment for cyclists, pedestrians and residents.

e. No waiting at any time - Yew Tree Road (lengths C and D)

No waiting at any time restrictions would be required in conjunction with the prohibition of driving described above to ensure that parked vehicles do not obstruct cyclists accessing through the closure point.

Consultations

Advertising and consultation regarding the proposed toucan crossing, cycle tracks and no waiting at any time for lengths A and B took place during April 2021.

Advertising and consultation regarding the prohibition of driving and no waiting at any time for lengths C and D took place during November 2021.

Consultation responses received have been detailed below for each proposal:

A. Toucan crossing, cycle tracks, no waiting at any time - lengths A and B

(i) The county councillor for the electoral division concerned and the local cycling group consultee both offered support for the proposals.

(ii) Lancashire Constabulary raised no objections.

(iii) Two residents offered support.

(iv) Objections were received from two residents as follows:

- The first objection stipulated the cycle track is unnecessary, a waste of money with no demand and no benefit to the residents or motorists of the area.

The cycle tracks and toucan crossing are designed to remove a significant barrier to cycle journeys within the local area and are not intended to cater solely for existing cyclists. The toucan crossing will have a significant benefit to local residents also by providing a safe and accessible location to cross County Road.

- The second objection stipulated the toucan crossing will add to congestion on County Road, exacerbating the problem of queuing vehicles blocking driveways. The number of cyclists crossing County Road at Yew Tree Road

is minimal and pedestrians should take precedence in considering safety measures.

Although the toucan crossing may cause minor additional delay to some drivers. Toucan crossings can be used equally by pedestrians and cyclists and therefore pedestrians are not being disadvantaged over cyclists by the provision of such a facility.

B. Yew Tree Road - Prohibition of driving except pedal cycles and no waiting at any time lengths C and D

(i) The county councillor for the electoral division concerned thanked residents who had taken part in the consultation. The county councillor objected to the proposals due to the impact on Scarisbrick Street and requested that officers urgently consider and seek funding for traffic calming measures on Yew Tree Road.

(ii) Lancashire Constabulary raised no objections.

(iii) The advertising and consultation resulted in 167 responses from residents, 64 in support and 103 objections. Appendix 'C' contains a summary of the comments received in support and opposition to the proposals from various locations in the area. A petition objecting to the closure was also received following the end of the advertising period.

The following issues were common themes within many of the objections received:

- Additional traffic will use Green Lane, Burscough Road and Scarisbrick Street, which are not suitable alternative routes

In response, the proposed closure would be expected to cause some diversion of traffic onto the roads described. The road characteristics of Green Lane do not suggest it would be unsuitable for a limited amount of displaced traffic. However, the traffic signal-controlled junction of Green Lane and County Road has a higher number of injury collisions recorded than the priority junction of Yew Tree Road and County Road.

Burscough Road is a classified B-road and is considered suitable for diverted traffic, although this may lead to additional congestion at the junction with County Road.

Scarisbrick Street is residential in nature and subject to high levels of on-street parking, including terraced properties with marked bays. Available carriageway width is narrow in places. Additional traffic using the street would be considered detrimental and likely to increase risks to vulnerable road users. The junctions of Scarisbrick Street with Green Lane and Burscough Street both have restricted visibility.

- Yew Tree Road is not well used by cyclists

In response, crossing A59 County Road remains a significant barrier to local journeys on foot or by cycle. The proposed County Road toucan crossing would be expected to lead to an increase in such journeys.

- Delay to emergency vehicles

In response, it is possible that emergency vehicles may suffer some delay due to increased journey distance as a result of Yew Tree Road being closed to through traffic.

- Traffic calming should be installed rather than a closure

In response, traffic calming would be expected to have some benefit in terms of reducing vehicle speeds on Yew Tree Road, thereby improving the environment for vulnerable road users. The preferred measures for cyclists are generally considered to be sinusoidal road humps, such measures may however lead to additional noise and vibration for residents. The allocated project budget is insufficient to provide additional traffic calming measures.

Risk management

Considering the objections and the implications resulting from the proposal for:

Yew Tree Road - Prohibition of driving except pedal cycles and no waiting at any time lengths C and D

Although the Prohibition of driving would reduce the risk to pedestrians and cyclists using Yew Tree Road it would result in, traffic being displaced onto unsuitable alternative routes such as Scarisbrick Street as described above, increasing the risk to vulnerable road users at this location. Due to this additional risk, Cabinet is asked not to pursue and approve this proposal along Yew Tree Road.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The estimated cost of the measures recommended in this report is £125,000. This would be part funded by a £95,000 Section 106 contribution received from West Lancashire Borough Council in relation to a nearby retail development, along with an allocation from the county council's Cycle Safety Scheme programme.

Legal

Toucan crossings, no waiting restrictions and prohibition of driving are provided under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A