

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023

## Report of the Director of Highways and Transport

### Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:  
Rossendale South;  
Mid Rossendale;

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Protecting our environment;

### Proposed Toucan Crossing, Bocholt Way, Rawtenstall

(Appendices 'A', 'B' and 'C' refer)

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#### Brief Summary

This report outlines proposals to provide a Toucan crossing on Bocholt Way, Rawtenstall. The proposed crossing would provide a vital, safe link between two sections of the 'Valley of Stone' cycleway and benefit the wider community.

Consultation and formal advertising of the proposals have been undertaken. One objection to the scheme has been received.

#### Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed creation of a Toucan Crossing, as set out at Appendix 'A'.

#### Detail

The East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan includes creation of an East Lancashire Strategic Cycleway Network. The 'Valley of Stone' route forms part of this network, providing a cycle route between Rawtenstall to the north and the Lancashire boundary near Whitworth, to the south.

Close to the centre of Rawtenstall, the route crosses a busy bypass called 'Bocholt Way'. At this location there is currently an uncontrolled crossing in place which is



used regularly by pedestrians and cyclists. As well as serving the route it also provides a well-used link for nearby neighbourhoods to the town centre.

As part of the overall 'Valley of Stone' scheme a Toucan crossing has been proposed at this location to:

- Allow cyclists and pedestrians to cross at the same point.
- Reduce risk and increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians attempting to cross.
- Allow cyclists and pedestrians to stop busy traffic on demand, reducing wait times, making the route more attractive and overall promoting active travel.

## **Consultations**

Two formal consultations have been carried out on this Toucan crossing.

### Consultation 1

In January 2021 the county council received a number of objections – all from horse riders who advised they regularly crossed at this point and objected that the crossing facility did not cater for horses. There was also correspondence from the Chair of the British Horse Society, who objected to the scheme and lobbied for better horse facilities in general.

Two letters of support were also received.

In response to the objections, the county council's Highways Design Team engaged with the British Horse Society, which provided a suggested non-standard design. Any design outside standards would eventually require Department for Transport approval, but initially several weeks were spent exploring a solution.

Finally, after a concept design was produced a full technical review was carried out by the Traffic Signals Design Team. Unfortunately, the design could not be supported on various safety and practical grounds. (The proposed non-standard design is set out at Appendix 'B').

The location has several limiting constraints, namely:

- The presence of a 35 metre long bridge deck adjacent to the crossing.
- A side road T-junction 40 metres from the crossing.
- The proximity of a neighbouring NHS car park.

There were numerous reasons why the Traffic Signals Design Team was unable to support the design, the main ones are listed below:

- The crossing would require horses to travel along sections of footway. This is not lawful or safe.



- The crossing itself is unconventional, outside design standards and would require Department for Transport approval, which would be extremely unlikely.
- The layout itself is likely to cause confusion for drivers and other crossing users.
- Equestrians would require a separate crossing lane, requiring acquisition of neighbouring health centre land.
- Equestrians would be unseen by drivers and 20 metres away from the crossing point when activating the crossing. The time lag and perceived lack of activity would likely lead to drivers assuming the signals were faulty and setting off whilst equestrians attempted to cross.
- The timings and journey length associated with the equestrian crossing could potentially lead to the 'red time' expiring during the crossing phase.
- The proposed signal positions would mean that cables would need to be run through the bridge deck, a task which is extremely difficult and expensive to carry out.

In March 2021 a site meeting was held between county council officers, a British Horse Society representative, and the local divisional county councillor to explain the process that had been undertaken at their request, that all options had been exhausted and that horse riders could not be accommodated in any crossing installation. The British Horse Society's objection remained, on the grounds that any newly constructed crossing which did not include equine facilities would make conditions more dangerous for horse users.

### Consultation 2

In September 2021 a video surveillance survey was carried out over a two week period on the proposed crossing location to determine the number and frequency of various users. Appendix 'C' sets out details of the full survey results.

The results were as follows: Pedestrians – 2,650, cyclists – 141, equestrian – 5.

In January 2023, following a delay due to resolving a land issue, and on the basis of the count information, it was decided to re-consult on a Toucan crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. All previous objectors were contacted, but only one objection was subsequently received which was from the Chair of the British Horse Society.

The objections are summarised as follows:

- The issue of equestrian safety has been ignored.
- The officers have ignored previous objections.
- The officers refuse to work with us to find a solution.



In response:

Following the initial consultation exercise, extensive design resources were deployed and engaged in working with the British Horse Society to find a safe, feasible crossing solution for equestrians. Over a number of weeks specialist Highway and Traffic Signals design engineers collaborated and assessed solutions until every possible option had been exhausted.

At this point the county council's Project Manager and the lead Highways Design Engineer met with two representatives of the British Horse Society on site, to personally explain the process, site restraints and conclusion.

From the video surveillance obtained, it is clearly evident that large numbers of pedestrians and cyclists currently cross at this location, whilst equine activity equated to just 0.2%. On balance, providing a needed crossing for the vast majority of users will be of huge benefit, both to the route and surrounding areas. The presence of the toucan crossing will also serve as a traffic calming feature.

Several alternatives were explored and rejected due to them requiring significant and costly changes to infrastructure that made them unworkable. The government's recently published Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) heralds an unprecedented £2billion in funding for active travel and sets ambitious aims of 50% of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030. This target will not be achieved without vital, safe links for cyclists and pedestrians.

## Appendices

Appendices 'A' - 'C' are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Proposed Toucan crossing
Appendix 'B'	Non-standard Pegasus proposal
Appendix 'C'	Video surveillance count results

## Implications:

Implications are as set out in the report.

## Risk management

Failure to implement these proposals would cause a break in the scheme, leaving cyclists and pedestrians to cross a very busy section of Bocholt Way at increased risk.

## Financial

The cost of the scheme is estimated at £120,000 in terms of construction and is supported strategically by the East Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan (2014), which sits under the Local Transport Plan for Lancashire. The funding used



to pay for these works is proposed to be from a grant secured as part of the county council's successful Active Travel Fund 4 bid. This is Department for Transport funding which is administered by Active Travel England. The additional works referred to in this report can be met within the overall funding in the programme and do not represent additional costs to the county council.

## Legal

The legal procedure to implement a pedestrian crossing is under Sections 1, 2 and 4 of 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		

