



HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL

17th JANUARY 2017

SUBJECT:	DUKE STREET, BIRKENHEAD – PROPOSED CYCLE SCHEME
WARD/S AFFECTED:	BIDSTON & ST. JAMES WARDS
REPORT OF:	ROB CLIFFORD SENIOR MANAGER (COMMISSIONING) BUSINESS SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR STUART WHITTINGHAM
KEY DECISION?	NO

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers objections to proposals to provide off-road / on-road cycleway facilities and signalised crossing improvements along Duke Street, Birkenhead between Park Road North and Duke Street Bridge as shown on plan DC/0247/100 and DC/0248/100. These proposals form part of Wirral Council's 2016/17 Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package (STEP) Capital Programme of works agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 20th July 2015 and the Transport for Growth Programme 2016/17 agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 18th July 2016.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel note the objections and that the proposed scheme to provide off-road / on-road cycleway facilities and signalised crossing improvements along Duke Street, Birkenhead between Park Road North and Duke Street Bridge as shown on plan DC/0247/100 and DC/0248/100 (Appendix 1) be approved for implementation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure that the Wirral element of the Liverpool City Region's STEP programme delivers against the aims and objectives identified in the STEP Major Scheme Business Case, in recognition of transport as an enabler of economic growth in the City Region.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The funding for this scheme was allocated following a competitive process at the City Region Level. The funds must either be spent specifically on this scheme, achieving the outcomes it was allocated for, or returned to the City Region STEP Fund for reallocation to another scheme within the City Region. Therefore other options cannot be explored for this funding.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 1st December 2016 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority approved the Major Scheme Business Case 'A STEP Change for Growth' for the Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package (STEP) to enable scheme promoters to draw down allocated Growth Deal funding to commence the delivery of STEP schemes. Cabinet subsequently gave approval to accept £1,700,000 Of STEP capital funding for Wirral with £900,000 allocated for 2015/16 and £800,000 in 2016/17 for schemes aimed primarily at improving sustainable travel links, increased accessibility to employment through the provision of cycle facilities and a reduction in congestion and carbon emissions.
- 3.2 This particular scheme proposal includes improvements for both cyclists and pedestrians, including innovative split-level cycle-ways (passing behind parking bays - commonly referred to as 'floating' parking bays), advanced stop lines at signalised junctions and improved signalised crossing improvements; all of which will form important links to local public transport in the area. Road safety improvements will also be undertaken at the Corporation Road roundabout to make it more 'cycle-friendly' in terms of geometry and to increase safety for all road users.
- 3.3 These proposals will link in with similar improvements (currently at the advanced planning stage) along the remaining length of Duke Street, across the Duke Street bridge and on into Liscard planned for 2018/19 (following completion of the Tower Road bridge replacement scheme, due to commence early 2017), completing a new continuous link from Wallasey to Birkenhead Park; incorporating more than 3km of new segregated and unsegregated cycle facilities.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Letters were hand-delivered to 105 properties directly adjacent to or potentially affected by the proposals, providing details of the scheme and inviting comment or objection by 2nd November 2016. Party Spokespersons and Ward Councillors have also been informed of the scheme proposals.
- 4.2 At the request of a local Ward member, officers subsequently met with a number of local residents on site to discuss their concerns with the proposals. At the conclusion of that meeting, residents were advised to submit any remaining concerns in writing should they still wish to object to the proposals.
- 4.3 At the conclusion of the public consultation, an 18 signature petition and 1 individual letter of objection (who also signed the petition) were received. Copies of the objections received are provided in Appendix 2 and are summarised as follows:-
- 4.4 The petitioners are concerned that the parking bay would be moved further away from their homes into a busier, narrower traffic lane. They feel their safety would be at risk and their cars would be damaged by passing traffic.

In response:

Current lane widths along Duke Street could be considered as being overly generous in places for a one lane carriageway (varying between 4.75m and 6.15m wide). The proposed scheme will result in lane widths (excluding any on-road cycle-lanes) along the full length of Duke Street varying between 3.25m and 4.65m (in excess of the 3m minimum recommended lane width for a 30mph classified distributor road carrying buses and heavy goods vehicles). Reducing excessive lane widths is also proven to have a calming effect on traffic speeds with drivers taking more care.

On-street parking bays along Duke Street are currently defined by road markings alone. The proposed scheme will provide a kerbed build-out on the approach to each new (floating) parking bay, protecting resident's vehicles and reducing the likelihood of conflict from passing traffic.

The junction of Duke Street / Price Street and Duke Street / Cleveland Street will be reduced to one lane on the Duke Street approach to the traffic signals. This will eliminate the possibility of two lanes of traffic trying to merge into one over a very short distance and (together with the presence of the proposed kerb build-outs as shown on plan DC/0247/100 and DC/0248/100) further reduce any risk of residents parked vehicles being hit. Detailed turning counts and computerised signal capacity calculations confirm that there is ample spare capacity to accommodate these minor physical alterations

- 4.5 The petitioners suggest that traders along Duke Street would not be able to load and unload goods, for example the newly relocated post office would struggle due to the proposed mandatory cycleway location.

In response:

As a result of objectors concerns, alterations have been made to the length of mandatory cycleway from the bus stop up to the signalised junction at Park Road North outside these businesses. It is proposed that this section of on-road cycleway will now take the form of an advisory lane and thus will not legally affect the ability to load and unload but casual parking would remain as being not permissible

- 4.6 The petitioners are concerned the level of emissions will increase due to the proposals as they believe traffic will become more congested due to the proposals.

In response:

Detailed turning counts and computerised signal capacity calculations have been undertaken at each of the signalised junctions along Duke Street. The results of this analysis confirm that there is spare capacity to deal with the minor signal timing and physical alterations required at each signalised junction and the minor changes in lane widths along the length of Duke Street.

The provision of facilities for cyclists is also likely to increase the number of people choosing to travel by bicycle, which in turn, would be expected to reduce the number of people travelling by other, less sustainable modes of transport and ultimately will help to reduce congestion and emissions.

- 4.7 The petitioners are also concerned that Duke Street is a busy and heavily trafficked road carrying articulated vehicles to and from the roll on roll off ferry, the docks, the Kingsway Tunnel, Liscard / Seacombe and the M53 with four crossroads / junctions between Park Road North and Corporation Road and has suggested that roads parallel to Duke Street (Livingstone Street and Cavendish Street).should be considered as being more appropriate to routes for cyclists as they are quiet residential roads with considerably less traffic than Duke Street.

In response:

For any road user travelling between Wallasey and Birkenhead, there are just 3 options for crossing the Birkenhead Docks / Float complex; Wallasey Bridge Road, Duke Street and 4 Bridges Road. For the cyclist, each of these presents a major hazard to safe passage as cyclists are forced to share with motorised traffic under less than ideal conditions. Despite this, cycle counters located on Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road are showing significantly increasing numbers of cyclists. The

Duke Street Counters alone showed an average daily flow of 312 cyclists in August 2016.

The proposed scheme will however greatly improve safety for cyclists using the Duke Street link between Wallasey and Birkenhead, providing innovative ('floating') split-level cycle-ways physically segregated from traffic (passing behind parking bays), advanced stop lines at signalised junctions, on-road mandatory cycle-lanes and alterations at the Corporation Road roundabout to make it more 'cycle-friendly' in terms of geometry. It would be completely unreasonable and unrealistic to expect cyclists to undertake a major diversion away from the most obvious route along Duke Street to follow an alternative that would not only be considerably longer and inconvenient, but would also require a number of un-catered for and less safe turning movements to eventually re-join the route further ahead.

- 4.8 The individual objector is also concerned that the proposed removal of 5 on-street parking spaces adjacent to the Council owned former (now closed) adult training centre will create further problems for residents who sometimes have difficulty finding on-street parking close to their homes. The Panel should be aware that a petition was received in October from residents of Asquith Avenue requesting residents parking to alleviate the problems faced by residents as a result of all day commuter parking. The same objector is also concerned that the cycleway positioned behind the 'floating' parking bay will increase the risk of damage to their cars from cyclists using the lane.

In response:

Officers have met with the local Ward Member and residents of Asquith Avenue and informed them that the road does not meet the current criteria for the provision of residents parking, however, a Task and Finish Group has been set up by the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the policy and consider whether any amendments are appropriate. The Panel may also be aware that work has recently been completed on the construction of a (free) 630 space park & ride car park at Birkenhead North Train Station to help commuters. This car park is well lit with CCTV and with on-street signing in place on the residential roads surrounding Birkenhead Park station to increase awareness, it is expected to encourage more commuters to use its facilities and to help ease the parking situation at Duke Street

The positioning of the cyclist to the nearside of the ('floating') parking bays removes the cyclist from the risks associated with sharing a live traffic lane. In line with current design standards, each (one-way) cycleway will be 1.5m wide with a 0.6m 'safety' hard-standing buffer-zone between the cycle lane and the (floating) parking bay provided to minimise risk to cyclists from passenger side doors opening.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated cost of this scheme is £470,000; £400,000 of which would be met from the approved (grant funded) 2016/17 STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package) Capital Programme and £70,000 from the approved 2016/17 ITB (Integrated Transport Block) Transport for Growth Capital Programme.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council follows statutory processes to consult upon and implement this type of proposal.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

Existing staff resources would be utilised in the delivery of this scheme.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 8.1 Failure to undertake the proposed scheme would result in a failure to support the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth and the Councils existing Corporate Goals and Objectives.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

As part of the consultation exercise for this scheme, letters were delivered to local residents directly adjacent to or likely to be affected by the scheme, informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, affected Ward Councillors, Active Travel Forum, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Equality Impact Assessment demonstrating that there are no negative implications associated with the implementation of these proposals, may be accessed via the following link;

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014>

REPORT AUTHOR: *Mark Redman*
Team Leader (Projects)
telephone: (0151) 606 2110
email: markredman@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Drawing No. **DC/0247/100** and **DC/0248/100**

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Liverpool City Region, Combined Authority - A STEP Change for Growth

<http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/STEP/STEP%20MSBC%20FINAL.pdf>

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - 'A Transport Plan for Growth':

<http://councillors.knowsley.gov.uk/documents/g6257/Public%20reports%20pack%2006th-Mar-2015%2011.30%20Liverpool%20City%20Region%20Combined%20Authority.pdf?T=10&StyleType=standard&StyleSize=none>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET Transport for Growth Programme 2016/17	18th July 2016
CABINET 2016/17 Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package (STEP)	20th July 2015