

CABINET MEETING – 15 JUNE 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Proposed A183 Whitburn Road Two-Way Cycle Lane

Author(s):

Executive Director City Development

Purpose of Report:

To seek Cabinet approval for the construction of a segregated on-road two-way cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn, opposite Seaburn Recreational Ground, to the Bungalow Café, Roker.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the construction of a segregated on-road two-way cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn, opposite Seaburn Recreational Ground, to the Bungalow Café, Roker. The scheme estimated to cost £1.250m to be funded from Sunderland City Councils allocation of £1.125m from the Government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) Phase 2. (Formerly the Emergency Active Travel Fund) and a £0.125m match from the Council's 2021/2022 LTP grant allocation.
- Approve the funding arrangements for delivery of the proposed works and approve the resultant variation to the Capital Programme.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The construction of a two-way segregated on-road cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn to the Bungalow Café, Roker, will help reduce the likelihood of pedestrian vehicle conflict and improve accessibility for all highway users (particularly members of vulnerable groups).

This is in line with the Government's vision to get the country more active and encourage people onto bikes and other sustainable modes of transport to get around the cities. In May they announced £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking.

The Department for Transport (DfT) vision through "Gear Change" is set to get the country more active and encourage people onto bikes and other sustainable modes of transport to get around the cities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way people are moving around the city. More daily journeys within Sunderland are being made by active and sustainable travel modes. Data from our Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) has shown a 128% increase in cycling along the A183 Whitburn Road from the previous years.

Sunderland City Council has been presented with the opportunity and has been successful in securing funding from the DfT via the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to improve the cycling facilities along the A183 Whitburn Road from the former tram shelter at Seaburn to the Bungalow Café at Roker.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Not to proceed with the scheme, which would not be in line with current government guidance, nor would not help address the need to continue improving road safety and make the highway a more accessible, attractive and safer place for all users. In addition, £1.125m of external funding secured from DfT would otherwise be lost.

Impacts analysed;

Equality **Privacy** **Sustainability** **Crime and Disorder**

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28-day Notice of Decisions? Yes

CABINET – 15 JUNE 2021

PROPOSED A183 WHITBURN ROAD TWO-WAY CYCLE LANE

Report of Executive Director of City Development

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the construction of a segregated on-road two-way cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn, opposite Seaburn Recreational Ground, to the Bungalow Café, Roker.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the construction of a segregated on-road two-way cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn, opposite Seaburn Recreational Ground, to the Bungalow Café, Roker. The scheme, estimated to cost £1.250m to be funded from Sunderland City Councils allocation of £1.125m from the Government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) Phase 2. (Formerly the Emergency Active Travel Fund) and a £0.125m match from the Council's 2021/2022 LTP allocation.
- Approve the funding arrangements for delivery of the proposed works and approve the resultant variation to the Capital Programme.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 The construction of a two-way segregated on-road cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn to the Bungalow Café, Roker, will help reduce the likelihood of pedestrian vehicle conflict and improve accessibility for all highway users (particularly members of vulnerable groups).
- 3.2 This is in line with the Government's vision to get the country more active and encourage people onto bikes and other sustainable modes of transport to get around the cities. In May they announced £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking.
- 3.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) vision through "Gear Change" is set to get the country more active and encourage people onto bikes and other sustainable modes of transport to get around the cities.

- 3.4 The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way people are moving around the city. More daily journeys within Sunderland are being made by active and sustainable travel modes. Data from our Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) has shown a 128% increase in cycling along the A183 Whitburn Road from the previous years.
- 3.5 Sunderland City Council has been presented with the opportunity and has been successful in securing funding from the DfT via the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to improve the cycling facilities along the A183 Whitburn Road from the former tram shelter at Seaburn to the Bungalow Café at Roker.

4. Background

- 4.1 The main aim for the project is to reallocate existing road space to allow for full segregation between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to improve and create sustainable transport links in and around the city. While at the same time having no significant impact on motorists by keeping a two-way vehicle flow along this route.
- 4.2 The A183 Whitburn Road is an A Class road which runs along the sea front into South Tyneside Council area. Careful consideration was taken when developing the schemes outline design to present to the public.
- 4.3 Keeping a two-way vehicular traffic flow was of high importance. The rationale proposed was to keep traffic flow disturbance down to a minimum, and not to replicate issues which had arisen from EATF Tranche 1 in other Authorities around the Country. An example of this was the temporary scheme put forward by North Tyneside Council along their sea front. They gave up the southbound lane to cycling traffic and introduced a one-way system on the northbound lane. This was considered very controversial in balancing available road space. This is something we do not propose to do.
- 4.4 To maintain two-way traffic flow along the route it is required to remove the central hatch road markings including any right-turn pockets. Any cars which require to turn right into any of the seven junctions would now need to wait on the main thoroughfare (the southbound lane only). Although traffic flows would be impeded while vehicles make this manoeuvre, it will provide a traffic calming feature helping to reduce vehicle speeds. This arrangement is common practise and can be seen across the city.
- 4.5 Pedestrian refuge islands will also be required to be removed to allow the required road space to keep the two-way traffic flow. The design team proposed to introduce new parallel crossing facilities (Zebra Crossings) and a new traffic signal-controlled crossing point replacing an existing Zebra crossing. The introduction of these crossing facilities will improve safety for all users.

- 4.6 Introduction of new cycle parking facilities at key locations along the route e.g. Bungalow Café (all locations are still to be determined).
- 4.7 Improved existing bus stop facilities through the introduction of raised bus kerbs allowing better access for all
- 4.8 One main constraint along the route is the Roker bridge. At this location it is not possible to introduce a dedicated two-way cycle lane. This section will revert to a shared surface facility for approximately 130m. To help reduce the risk of pedestrian/cycle conflict, the shared surface facility will be widened by 600mm into the carriageway.
- 4.9 Full details of the scheme can be found in the attached drawings.
- 4.10 The scheme was designed in accordance with the Department for Transport's new guidance, LTN1/20. This guidance has higher standards than previously which will ultimately help improve road safety. This design guide set out new best design practices with a main aim to increase the quality of the cycling infrastructure around the county by creating fully segregated cycle lanes, and states that: -
- “Cycling must no longer be treated as marginal, or an afterthought. It must not be seen as mainly part of the leisure industry, but as a means of everyday transport. It must be placed at the heart of the transport network”*
(LTN1/20 Foreword Page 3)
- 4.11 To minimise disruption to the to all users of the seafront such as residents, businesses, and visitors/holidaymakers works will be undertaken outside of the School Holidays. Therefore, it is planned to commence on site in September 2021 and should take no longer than 26 weeks to complete. The works will be undertaken by Highways Operations our In-house contractor.

5. Current Position

- 5.1 The Council was presented with the opportunity to bid for funding via the Active Travel Fund (ATF), formerly the Emergency Active Travel Fund, in August 2020. A total of four schemes were put forward via NECA for consideration, to improve the cycling facilities within the City.
- 5.2 In November 2020 the Council was informed that it had been successful in securing £1.125m, of an estimated scheme cost of £1.250m, to implement a dedicated two-way cycle lane along the A183 Whitburn Road from the former tram shelter at Seaburn to the Bungalow Café at Roker. The Council is required to provide £0.125m of match funding (10%), which can be met from Local Transport Plan (LTP) grant allocation for 2021/22.
- 5.3 None of the other projects submitted by Sunderland Council to the Active Travel Fund (Phase 2) were successful in securing funding.

- 5.4 The main aim for the project is to reallocate existing road space to allow for full segregation between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to improve and create sustainable transport links in and around the city. While at the same time having no significant impact on motorists travelling along this route by keeping a two-way vehicle traffic route.
- 5.5 The proposals are in-keeping with the Councils commitment to create a healthy and prosperous city, helping promote the use of alternative modes of transport and healthy living. Supporting the work undertaken in recent years towards the implementation of city wide off-carriageway shared use (pedestrian and cycle) network.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 Not to proceed with the scheme, which would not be in line with current government guidance, nor would not help address the need to continue improving road safety and make the highway a more accessible, attractive and safer place for all users. In addition, £1.125m of external funding secured from DfT would otherwise be lost.

7. Impact Analysis

Introduction

- (a) **Equalities** – Equalities have been considered, particularly in relation to the visibly impaired and the partially sighted. Appropriate disability groups were consulted on the proposals and no objections to the scheme were received.
- (b) **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** – None foreseen.
- (c) **Sustainability** - The proposals are in-keeping with the Councils commitment to create a healthy and prosperous city, helping promote the use of alternative modes of transport and healthy living. Supporting the work undertaken in recent years towards the implementation of city wide off-carriageway shared use (pedestrian and cycle) network.
- (d) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion** – Not applicable

8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

(i) Financial Implications

- a) The full estimated Capital cost of the project is £1.250m to be met from the £1.125m Active Travel Fund (ATF) Phase 2 grant secured by the Council, as well as a required 10% matched contribution of £0.125m from the Council's 2021/2022 LTP grant allocation.

- b) In accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Cabinet may authorise variations to the Capital Programme provided such variations are within available resources and consistent with Council policy. It is proposed that Cabinet authorise the proposed variation.
- (ii) **Legal Implications** – The Head of law and Governance has indicated that there are no implications.
- (iii) **The Public / External Bodies –**
- c) In October 2020 the council undertook an initial engagement exercise to 150 frontage properties along A183 Whitburn Road who are directly impacted. This engagement exercise was to seek the residents and business owners' views on the potential cycle infrastructure improvements.
- d) Comments the Council received were taken into consideration to help inform the design.
- e) Once the design was at a stage where the design team were confident that all comments had been taken into consideration, further engagement was carried out with Local Councillors, Key Stakeholders, Residents and Businesses. It was also at this stage that the local MP Julie Elliot was engaged with seeking her support for the scheme, this was a requirement set out by the DfT. All information was made public and published on the Council's website. This process ran from Friday 11th December 2020 until Friday 15th January 2021.
- f) To date a total of 15 responses have been received with regards to the draft proposals as indicated below: -

Consultee Name	Response received	In favour	Against	Comment only
Statutory Consultees	2	2		
Local Councillors	2	2		
Local Resident/Business	10	1	2	7
Unknown	1			1
Other (Not directly affected)	3	1		2
Totals	18	6	2	10

- g) Julie Elliott MP expressed her concerns following her engagement. A meeting was held between City Development officers of the Council and the MP on Friday 22nd January 2021 to explain the scheme in detail. Her concerns related to:

- Removal of the pedestrian refuge islands, this concern was answered with the provision of alternative improved crossing facilities as part of the scheme.
 - Location of one of the Zebra crossings (outside of Roker Hotel), agreed to relocate zebra to the position of an old pedestrian refuge island.
 - Removal of the right turn pockets along the entire route with main concerns around the junctions at Ravine Terrace and St George's Terrace.
- h)** It now proposed to introduce yellow box road markings on each of the seven junctions. The introduction of these will help with the turning movements in and out of the junctions. Right lane pockets were originally provided on this route, when road marking was introduced to effectively reduce the width of road available as there had been many complaints from communities regarding speeding vehicles. The removal of the right turn pockets will further reduce the road width and help lower vehicle speeds further and is considered important in road safety terms.

8. List of Appendices

General Arrangement Drawings

- ATF-SCC-HGN-Z1-DR-CH-01_001-S4 P04 Whitburn GA SHEET 1
- ATF-SCC-HGN-Z1-DR-CH-01_002-S4 P04 Whitburn GA SHEET 2
- ATF-SCC-HGN-Z1-DR-CH-01_003-S4 P04 Whitburn GA SHEET 3