

Title: Newcastle Greenway Links to Communities Bid

Submitted by: Roger Tait – Head of Operations

Portfolio: Culture and Leisure

Works Affected: Knutton & Silverdale, Silverdale & Parksite, Town, and Cross Heath

Purpose of the Report

- To report further information to the Cabinet in relation to gates and other barrier/access provision necessary to complete the scheme to improve the cycle route along the Newcastle Greenway (former Silverdale mineral line).
- To seek the approval of the Cabinet for the gates and other barrier/access provision where they are located on Borough Council owned land.

Recommendations

- That the information be received
- That the complete scheme be approved, including the gate, barrier and access provision as detailed in the report.

Reasons

- To improve infrastructure which facilitates and encourages walking and cycling in Newcastle

1. Background

- 1.1 On 22 May 2013 Cabinet approved and granted landowner consent to Staffordshire County Council (and its agents) to undertake work to improve the cycle route along the Newcastle Greenway and thereby adopt the Greenway as Highway upon completion of the works. The scheme will improve infrastructure and facilitate and encouraged walking and cycling in Newcastle.

The Cabinet requested that further information be provided at the appropriate time showing the approach to be taken in respect of the provision of gates and other barrier/access provision within the scheme.

- 1.2 Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects so that people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Sustrans has been delivering safe walking and cycling routes with funding from the Department of Transport. Through their grant programmes, the Government is seeking to reduce the proportion of journeys by private car use in order to cut congestion and pollution, and allow many more

people the choice to take regular exercise and gain a sense of independence.

1.3 Staffordshire County Council has produced the Staffordshire Local Transport Plan 2011 which demonstrates how walking and cycling will play an important role in achieving the Staffordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 long term vision which is:

1.4 A transport system that supports Staffordshire's economy and safely and conveniently connects people and services within Staffordshire and beyond; it provides opportunities for services and jobs to be accessed in a sustainable way, and makes sure that the adverse effects of transport on Staffordshire's rich environment and on residents' quality of life is minimised.

1.5 The County Council's commitment to walking and cycling is demonstrated in current draft cycling and walking strategies. The Cycling Strategy's long term vision is to create a culture where people of all ages and abilities chose to cycle, especially for a proportion of their shorter journeys because it is safe, healthy, attractive, environmentally friendly, and an enjoyable alternative to the car. The Walking Strategy's vision is to create an environment where people walk more often and for longer distances.

1.6 Staffordshire County Council has also produced the Newcastle-under-Lyme (urban) Transport and Development Strategy (NTADS) for the period 2008/09 to 2012/13 (Extended to April 2014). The overall aim of the strategy is to help:

- Reduce congestion, accessibility and safety problems currently experienced with the Newcastle urban area.
- Reduce pressures that new developments are placing on local infrastructure.
- Increase the opportunities to travel by sustainable modes of transport.
- Support the regeneration of the area.

1.7 Since 2008, around £2 million of Local Transport Plan resources have been well used to deliver NTADS projects, including cycling facilities and safer routes to schools projects. The Newcastle Greenway will link to the Lyme Valley (North) Cycle Route and also a proposal to improved North / South cycle routes in the A34 corridor.

2. Issues

2.1 Subsequent to consent being given to Staffordshire County Council to undertake work to improve the cycle route along the Newcastle Greenway, the County Council have now provided the additional information requested in relation to gates and other barriers/access provision. The locations of these are as shown on drawings CD5277/R01/ 101, 102 and 103.

It is proposed to remove the existing gates from access points on to the cycleway and replace each with both an adjustable 'A' frame to allow bicycles and pedestrians to pass, and gates that can be operated with radar keys to allow wheelchair access. Vehicular gates for maintenance access will also be provided where necessary. A drawing showing what these will look like in elevation has been provided (Ref. CDC5277/R01/112).

Gates along the route will be removed and replaced with a total of eight anti-motorcycle speed humps. These are designed to inhibit motorcycles whilst allowing bicycles to pass freely.

If, after the works have been completed, any problems arise regarding gates and access, such as motorbike disturbance, Staffordshire County Council has undertaken to review the situation and, if necessary, make local revisions to the scheme.

In addition to the anti-motorcycle humps, at the Knutton Lane and Church Lane bridges it is proposed to put a shallow 'S' bend in the cycleway to deter motorcycles, with deterrent paving to each side to discourage congregating and antisocial behaviour beneath the bridges (drawings CDC5277/R01/ 107 and 111).

It is proposed that the underpass beneath the A34 will be repaired and painted and it is hoped that the lighting within it can be reinstated. It is also hoped to arrange for a graffiti artist to decorate the internal walls as part of a project involving local schools.

2.2 Local Ward Councillors from Silverdale, Knutton and Crossheath, have had sight of the additional information and no objections have been raised.

2.3 Your officers have worked in partnerships with Staffordshire County Council for a number of years to identify opportunities to improve the cycle and footpath network in the Borough and to deliver projects, which meet the strategic objectives of both authorities.

A project will upgrade the Newcastle Greenway to improve the traffic free shared footpath and cycleway from Brampton Sidings to the rear of Newcastle Street, Silverdale to link up with the recently created section of the Newcastle Greenway adjacent to the Former Silverdale Colliery and also the Lyme Valley (North) Cycle Route. This route will provide links to 4 local schools (St. Mary's Primary School on Silverdale Road, St. Giles and St. George's Primary School on Orme Road, St. John Fisher High School on Ashfields New Road and Knutton, St Mary's Primary School) and increase opportunities for pupils to cycle to school.

2.4 Staffordshire County Council has secured a funding package of £660,000 for the scheme, comprised of Local Transport Plan funds (£110,000), Newcastle under Lyme (urban) Transport and Development Strategy (NTADS) (£100,000) and Sustrans/DfT Links to Communities fund (£450,000).

The County Council will deliver the project using its partner contractor for highway maintenance and construction (Enterprise plc). Construction work commenced in early June 2013 and completion of the scheme is hoped in March 2014.

The County Council will adopt the route as highway post – completion and maintain it from then on.

Parts of the proposed route are on land, which the Borough Council owns:

- Brampton Sidings to A34 underpass
- A34 underpass to Church Lane
- Church Lane to end of Newcastle Street, Silverdale

It has therefore been necessary for the Borough Council to grant consent as landowner to the County Council to allow the project to be implemented.

3. Options Considered

- 3.1 It is considered that the proposed barriers and accesses will provide as much protection as can be achieved against motorcycles accessing the cycleway whilst still allowing access to as many users as possible.

The most beneficial option is to permit the proposed controls and enable the project to be delivered.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 It is proposed to approve the additional information provided and grant landowner consent to Staffordshire County Council to complete the project.

5. Reasons for Preferred Solution

- 5.1 To provide maximum restriction to motorcycles accessing the route whilst allowing access to as many users as possible.
- 5.2 To improve infrastructure which facilitates and encourages walking and cycling in Newcastle.

6. Outcomes linked to Corporate Priorities

- 6.1 A Clean, Safe and Sustainable Borough
- 6.2 A Healthy and Active Community
- 6.3 Becoming a co-operative Council which delivers high quality, community-driven services.

7. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 7.1 The Council is empowered to provide recreational facilities by a number of statutes relating to open space, public health, miscellaneous praising and well-being.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 It is considered that there would be a positive differential impact resulting from the project as it would provide access to improved opportunities for walking and cycling where these are currently limited.

9. Financial and Resource Implications

- 9.1 There are no capital financial implications for the Council arising from this report as the project is to be entirely funded by Staffordshire County Council with the funding package detailed in Section 2.2 of this report.

- 9.2 Staffordshire County Council will adopt the route as highway post - completion and maintain the infrastructure from then on. Therefore there are no revenue implications for the council associated with the project.

10. Major Risks

- 10.1 There are no major risks associated with the project currently identified.
Should risks arise, they will be reported to Cabinet at the appropriate time.

11. Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 It is considered that the project will have a positive impact on sustainability and climate change by reducing traffic congestion and pollution and by providing greater opportunities for walking and cycling.

12. Key Decision Information

- 12.1 The proposal does not involve significant expenditure or saving of Council resources.
- 12.2 It impacts directly on 4 wards and has been included in the forward plan.

13. List of Appendixes

- 13.1 Appendix A: Drawings CDC277/R01/101, 102, 103, 107, 111 & 112.