

## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 07 July 2020

**Report Title:** Wilmslow and Crewe Walking and Cycling Schemes

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Laura Crane – Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste  
Cllr Craig Browne – Deputy Leader

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan – Executive Director Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Council has clear ambitions for delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth and environmental improvement. A key element of achieving these ambitions is delivering investment in transport infrastructure that supports cycling and walking. These schemes will support travel for everyday journeys, contributing to initiatives to promote active travel as part of the Covid-19 recovery.
- 1.2. The two schemes in this report are important elements of achieving the council's ambitions.
- 1.3. The first of these is the A530 Scheme in North West Crewe (Figure 1) which will provide improved walking and cycling links to Bentley Motors, Leighton Hospital, Leighton Academy, existing residential areas and the new homes to be constructed within the Local Plan Sites 4 and 5.
- 1.4. This paper seeks authority for the delivery of Phases 1 and 2 of the Crewe A530 Walking and Cycling Scheme that runs from the A530 / A532

Coppenhall Lane roundabout northwards to the connection with Leighton Link Road. These phases are fully funded by LGF and CEC contributions.

1.5. The council is seeking further funding for Phase 3 of the scheme that is currently unfunded. This section runs from the A530 / A532 roundabout southwards to the Rising Sun.

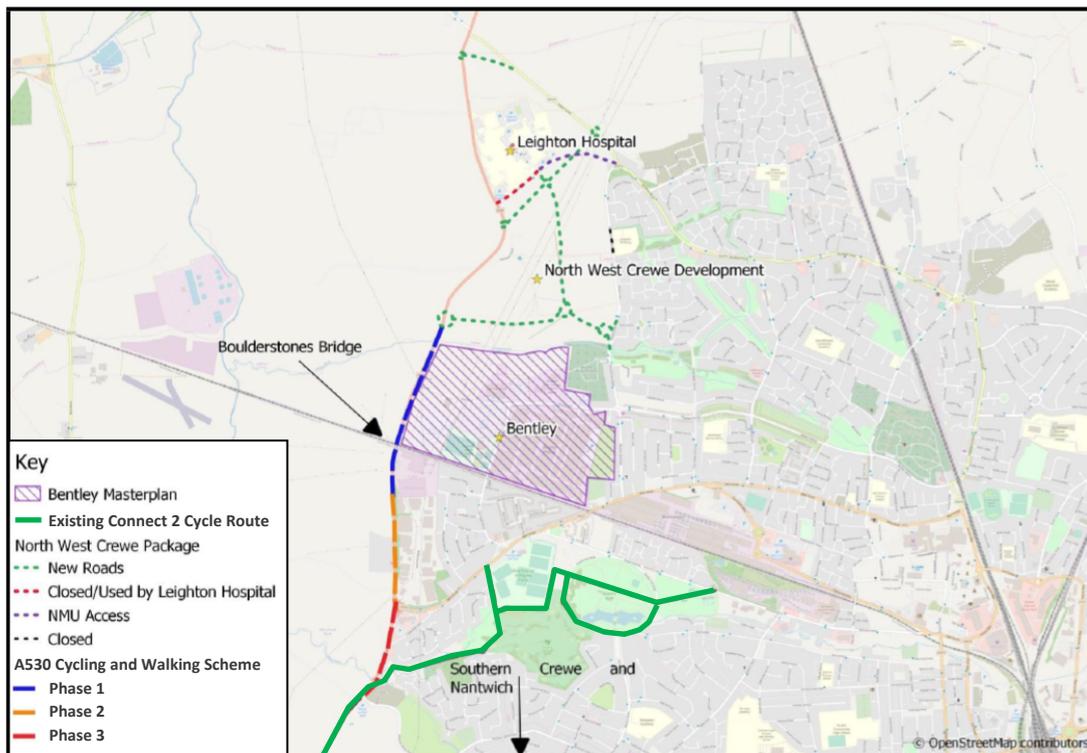


Figure 1 – Route of the A530 Scheme in Crewe

1.6. The second is the Wilmslow Strategic Walking and Cycling Scheme (Figure 2) which will fill key gaps in the network to connect Wilmslow rail station and the town centre to Wilmslow High School, The Royal London Campus and further south to Alderley Park. The programme for the Wilmslow scheme is for construction to take place during Autumn 2020.

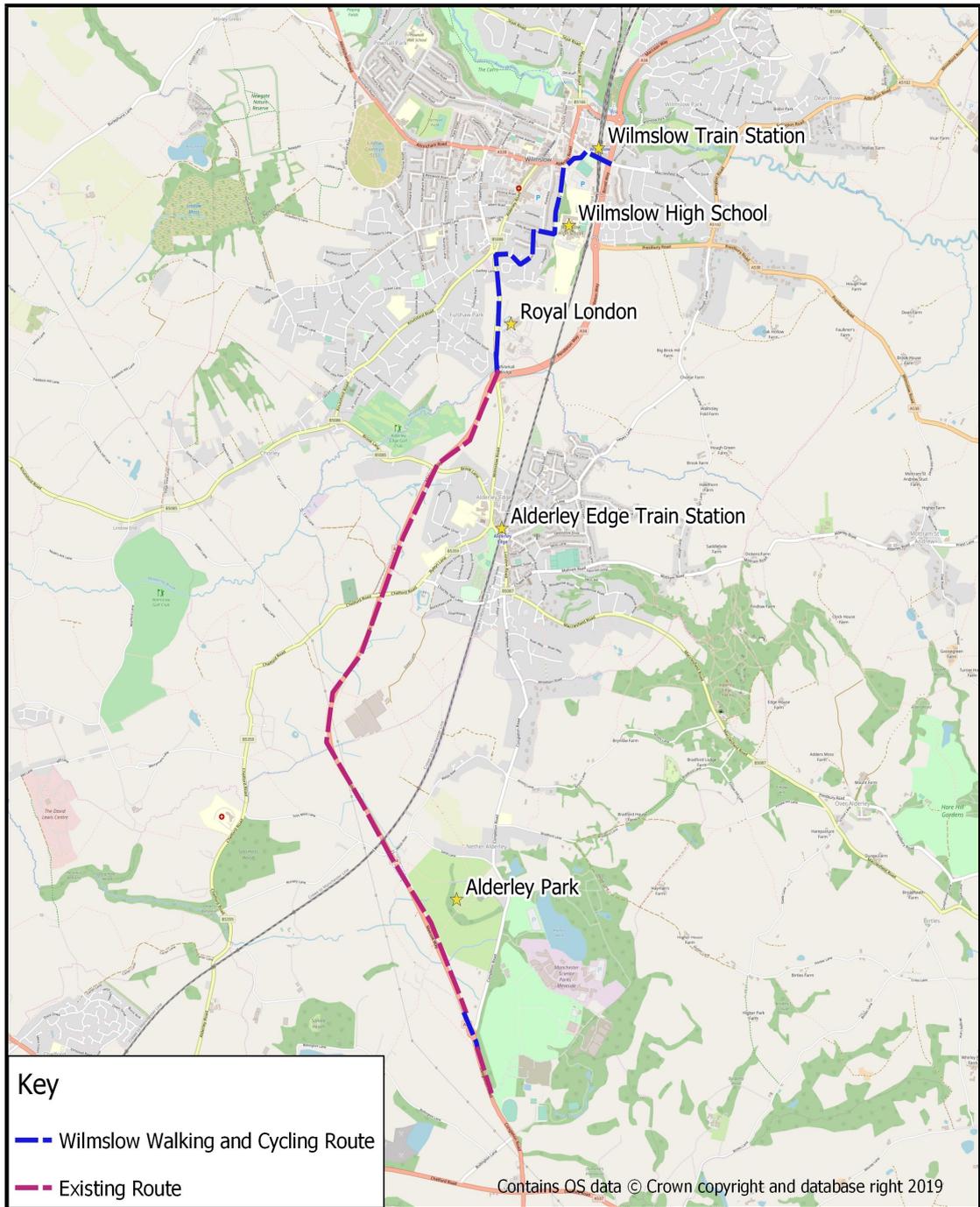


Figure 2 – Route of the Wilmslow Scheme

1.7. The purpose of this report is to recommend a procurement route through the Council’s Highway design, maintenance and construction service contract 2018 (the Highway Service Contract), and seek authority for land assembly and purchase, preferably through negotiation with land owners, however the report also seeks approval to prepare a case for Compulsory Purchase Order should this be necessary.

## **2. Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Approve the delivery of the A530 scheme in Crewe and the Wilmslow Strategic Walking and Cycling Scheme through the Highway Service Contract, subject to £1.6m of Local Growth Funding being received from Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Partnership and that Ringway Jacobs target costs for the schemes satisfy the Council's best value requirements.
- 2.2. Authorise the Director of Highways and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Transport and the Portfolio Holder for Highways & Waste, to take all necessary actions to implement the above two schemes.
- 2.3 Approve the preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in respect of land and/or rights required to deliver the A530 Scheme, where such land and/or rights cannot be acquired by agreement. Should a CPO be required, Cabinet authority to make the Order will be sought at that stage.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. The A530 and Wilmslow Schemes align with key policies of the Council and are consistent with the aims and objectives set out in the Council's current Corporate Plan, Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Cycling Strategy. The schemes will improve travel for everyday journeys as part of the recovery from Covid-19, complementing a wider programme of recovery measures in Crewe and Wilmslow.
- 3.2. The A530 Scheme in Crewe and the Wilmslow Strategic Walking and Cycling Scheme are important elements of the Council's pipeline of walking and cycling infrastructure. The Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership have allocated £1.6m of Local Growth Funding (LGF) to these schemes.
- 3.3. The works for each of these schemes are within scope of the Council's Highway Service Contract in all respects, including geographic, work types and financial limits. The Contract is "open book" and Council staff have access to costs and supporting information, enabling checks and audits to ensure that the contract provides value for money and good financial management.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. A cycle route could be delivered on the A530 utilising busy on road sections which would remove the requirement to secure land by negotiation or compulsory purchase. However, this would not achieve the scheme benefits of increasing levels of walking and cycling.
- 4.2. In the case of walking, no route would be provided, and for cycling, users would be sharing the carriageway with motorised vehicles on a 50mph road leading to safety concerns.
- 4.3. As noted, the Council has made and will continue to make every effort to contact all landowners affected by the proposed A530 Scheme in order to acquire land and rights by agreement where possible. The Council will continue to attempt to negotiate acquisition of the land required by agreement, however, if this is not possible a further report will be submitted to Cabinet recommending the use of compulsory purchase powers to secure delivery of the A530 Scheme.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1. It is the Council's ambition to improve walking and cycling facilities within the Borough. Investing in good quality cycling and walking infrastructure to give people safe and attractive routes is an important factor in encouraging the uptake of walking and cycling for commuting and leisure.
- 5.2. The Cheshire East Cycling Strategy, adopted in 2017, outlines the target to "double the number of people cycling once per week for any journey purpose in Cheshire East by 2027", which also aligns to the Government's ambition.
- 5.3. The Council has been allocated £1.6m by the Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Partnership to deliver two walking and cycling schemes by March 2021. Following a period of feasibility and options consideration, preferred options were selected and taken forward for further design. For the A530 Scheme ecology surveys were also undertaken in 2019/20 and a planning application was submitted in February 2020.
- 5.4. The programme for the A530 Scheme in Crewe (subject to planning and securing land) is for construction to be coordinated with Network Rail's delivery of the Boulderstones Bridge replacement in Autumn 2020. However, subject to the projected timescales associated with making a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) (if required) a further phase of construction may be required in 2021.

- 5.5. During the development of the A530 Scheme, the Council is making all reasonable efforts to contact all affected landowners and secure the land required for the A530 Scheme by negotiation. However, the Council has not been able to make contact with one of the landowners since the outset of the A530 Scheme. Recent progress has been made in this regard but, in order to ensure the delivery of the A530 Scheme, the Council may have to rely on its powers of compulsory purchase where land and rights cannot be acquired by agreement.
- 5.6. The delivery of all highway maintenance and improvement works on the public highway network in Cheshire East up to a limit of £5M (index linked) can be delivered through the Council's Highway Service Contract. In October 2018, the Council awarded the Highway Service Contract to Ringway Jacobs Limited after a competitive procurement process in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure and the EU procurement rules.
- 5.7. If the Highway Service Contract cannot demonstrate best value, the Council will explore alternative delivery options through a separate procurement exercise. This would require a new authority to proceed on this basis.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1. The Council has the power pursuant to Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 to acquire land by agreement in order to deliver the schemes.
- 6.1.2. The Council has a fiduciary duty at all times to the taxpayers and must fulfil this duty in a way which is accountable to local people and which demonstrates that public funds are not exposed to unnecessary or unquantified risk.
- 6.1.3. The proposed schemes are above £1m and, as such, under the Council's Constitution they are defined as Key Decisions. Key Decisions require advanced notice and the provisions concerning Key Decisions (as set out in the Constitution) must be complied with.
- 6.1.4. As set out in the body of this report, the schemes can be compliantly procured via the Highway Service Contract. If the Highway Service Contract is not used, further advice from Procurement and Legal Services will be required on the most appropriate procurement route and a new authority to proceed on the chosen route will be needed.

6.1.5. In the event that a Task Order is issued under the Highway Service Contract for the schemes, the Task Order will incorporate conditions of contract as set out in the Highway Service Contract.

## **6.2. Finance Implications**

6.2.1. The approved budget for the Schemes of £2.8m sits within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020-24 under 'Sustainable Travel Access Programme'. Confirmation of the LGF grant funding to the value of £1.6m was received in December 2019 following acceptance of a Final Business Cases for the Schemes. The remaining funds comprise of a local contribution from Cheshire East Council and third-party developer sources.

6.2.2. Costs for the preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order if required are included within the A530 Scheme's budget.

## **6.3. Policy Implications**

6.3.1. The Schemes are in line with the aims and objectives set out in the Council's current Corporate Plan, Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Cycling Strategy.

## **6.4. Equality Implications**

6.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each scheme during design. The schemes will be delivered in line with the Council's current policy and practise, taking account of the needs of all residents and users of the public highway. The Equality Impact Assessment and related consultation will report before construction of the schemes.

## **6.5. Human Resources Implications**

6.5.1. It shall be necessary to ensure that sufficient resource is allocated in Estates, Highways and Legal Services to support delivery of the two schemes. If additional temporary resources are required these will be met from the project budget.

## **6.6. Risk Management Implications**

6.6.1. All highways and infrastructure projects have inherent risks and these will vary for each scheme. The project team will deliver the schemes in full compliance with the Construction Design Management Regulations 2015. These seek to address and minimise risk from the early stage of design, through construction on site and subsequent whole life

maintenance requirements. A risk register is continuously monitored and updated as risks are identified, to mitigate their impact on safe scheme delivery. All risks have assigned owners who are responsible for managing them.

6.6.2. The Council is in advanced negotiations for the majority of the land required for the two schemes and the negotiations shall continue with the objective of securing binding legal agreements without recourse to use of compulsory purchase powers.

6.6.3. A planning application for the A530 Scheme was submitted with supporting information and is due for determination in June 2020.

6.6.4. Should the two schemes not be delivered, the £1.6m external funding from the Cheshire and Warrington LEP would be lost. Benefits related to increasing the numbers of people walking and cycling, and supporting the delivery of new development in the North West Crewe area would not be realised.

#### **6.7. Rural Communities Implications**

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

#### **6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children**

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

#### **6.9. Public Health Implications**

6.9.1. The Scheme will have public health benefits through encouraging sustainable forms of transport such as cycling and walking.

#### **6.10. Climate Change Implications**

6.10.1. The Council has committed to becoming Carbon neutral by 2025 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint. The schemes support modal shift towards methods of travel that support carbon reduction and contribute to improved air quality.

#### **6.11. Ward Members Affected**

6.11.1. Ward Members for the Crewe scheme were engaged prior to a public engagement exercise in October 2019. Ward Members for the Wilmslow

scheme will receive a detailed briefing in June 2020, before wider public engagement on scheme options.

6.11.2. For the A530 Scheme, the Wistaston ward is affected and the Councillors are Cllr Margaret Simon and Cllr Jacqueline Weatherill.

6.11.3. For the Wilmslow scheme, the Wilmslow East, Wilmslow West and Chorley, Alderley Edge, and Chelford wards are affected and the Councillors are Cllr David Jefferray, Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Cllr Craig Browne and Cllr Marc Asquith respectively.

## **7. Consultation & Engagement**

7.1. Recent consultations such as those for the Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (Summer 2018) showed strong support for active travel and walking and cycling as a mode of transport. Improving connectivity to areas of employment and housing growth is strongly supported by both the residential and business communities.

7.2. A consultation exercise for the A530 scheme was conducted in late 2019 with a range of stakeholders engaged including Parish Councils, local residents and walking / cycling community groups. Positive feedback was received that has informed the subsequent design and planning application. Engagement will continue as the scheme progresses.

7.3. Community consultation for the Wilmslow scheme is planned in June / July 2020 with the Town Council, Parish Councils, local residents / businesses, and walking / cycling community groups. This feedback will shape the scheme design and engagement will continue as the scheme progresses.

## **8. Access to Information**

8.1. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

## **9. Contact Information**

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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