

## **COVID 19 – CYCLING AND WALKING MEASURES**

Report of the Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration

### **CONTEXT**

As a result of covid-19, the way we move in and around Stockport has changed with fewer people using public transport and fewer cars on the road. Alongside this, there has been an increase in numbers of people cycling and walking. This paper seeks to set out the Council's proposed approach to support safe cycling and walking under the social distancing guidelines in the short term.

In order to support the continuation of increased cycling and walking levels in the short term, the Council is already undertaking a number of activities:

- Re-starting on-site delivery of capital schemes such as Roscoes Roundabout and TCAP to deliver planned improvements to cycling and walking facilities such as crossing points and the new bridge across the river in Woodbank Park.
- Engaging with TfGM to facilitate the fast track delivery of existing schemes granted funding through the Mayoral Challenge Fund.
- Encourage residents to travel by bike and on foot as part of the One Stockport campaign

Whilst it is not clear how these trends will be further impacted as lockdown restrictions begin to lift, there is the potential that the increases in cycling and walking will persist as people choose to continue travelling in this way for leisure and commuting, and as public transport becomes a less attractive option due to social distancing and capacity concerns.

Such an increase in cycling and walking fully aligns with a number of Council strategies and objectives including the Stockport Cycling and Walking Plan, SEMMMS Refresh, and the Active Communities Strategy. Maintaining an increase in cycling and walking also contributes to the Council's wider efforts to address the climate emergency and air quality challenge.

Data collection and scenario testing is underway to inform a future discussion about how any short term increases in cycling and walking can be further encouraged in the longer term.

### **MAYORAL CHALLENGE FUNDING AND TCAP**

As noted above, efforts are underway to fast track the delivery of existing TCAP and MCF schemes to deliver permanent improvements to the cycling and walking networks as soon as possible to support safe social distancing in the short term. The following timescales are envisaged:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Delivery Timescales</b>
MCF Gillbent Road	Business case submission due imminently with work to start over the summer
MCF Bramhall Park to A6	Business case submitted May 2020. A timely approval from TfGM could see activities begin on site late Summer/early Autumn
MCF Heaton Cycle Link	Business case due for submission early June with works planned to start this summer
MCF A6MARR links	Business case due for submission early June with works planned to start this summer
MCF Offerton to Stockport, Crossings Package and Hazel Grove Package	Business cases due for completion Summer 2020 with works planned to start from November
Interchange (MCF elements)	A6 crossings and Mersey Square proposals to be submitted with wider Interchange business case by October this year
TCAP 6060	New shared facilities linking Woodbank park with Lower Bredbury via new River Goyt crossing – under construction.
TCAP 706 Heaton Lane	Modification of the existing junction with the A6 to incorporate toucan crossings linking in with existing cycle facilities along the A6 and with Mersey Sq and Leyland St – due to commence construction.
TCAP 203 Moscow Road	Widening and improvement of path between Moscow Rd and Booth St – due to commence construction.
TCAP 705B Kingsgate House	Acquisition of land to widen footway for shared use along A6 Wellington Rd North to provide consistency with existing facilities either side of this pinch point – due to commence construction.
Railway Road/ A6 Junction	Junction modifications to enhance capacity while improving C&W facilities which link in with town centre MCF proposals – feasibility work underway.

## **SAFER STREETS SAVE LIVES**

In addition, the Council is fully supporting TfGM's campaign Safer Streets Save Lives, through which the Council has been awarded up to £500,000 to deliver schemes which make it easier for people to walk and cycle safely during the crisis whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines.

Through the campaign, the Council is undertaking the following activities:

- Undertaking street audits to identify pavement pinch points focussing on district and local centres, shopping streets and park entrances, and, where applicable, removing street clutter, suspending parking and reducing carriageway widths to facilitate social distancing.
- Reviewing existing 'quiet lanes' to make the one way, and identifying new 'quiet lanes'
- Exploring bus lane time extensions to create 24 hour lanes which support public transport and cycling
- Engaging with local WalkRide groups to identify areas where social distancing for cyclists and walkers is challenging. This includes collation of suggestions submitted via Commonplace (<https://safestreetsstockport.commonplace.is/>) and via [walkcycle@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:walkcycle@stockport.gov.uk) .

The street audits in centres will identify where there are pinch points for pedestrians and potential improvements for cyclists including reviewing the provision of cycle parking. The following types of interventions to facilitate social distancing are currently under consideration. The implementation of the measures will be supported by communications to ensure that Stockport residents and visitors are aware of and understand the rationale behind the measures being implemented.

The types of measures we expect to implement include:

- Creation of temporary shared space schemes with gateway features and signage at the entry to the area and a recommended temporary speed limit of 10mph. This would be supported by temporary bolted down traffic calming features at close intervals on the carriageway. This limit would not be enforceable so the traffic calming features will need to be fairly severe (although will still need to comply with Highway standards) and frequently spaced. Speed cushions are recommended in place of humps so as not to discomfort bus passengers or patients in ambulances.
- Creation of temporary diversions and one-way systems in and around centres.
- Prohibition of footway parking and reduction in forecourt parking in Town, District and Local Centres
- Suspension of parking bays to increase effective footway in Town, District and Local Centres
- Review of street clutter in Town, District and Local Centres
- Reduction of lane widths to increase effective footway in Town, District and Local Centres
- Prohibition of the placing of advertising (A boards), goods, etc on the footway.
- Prohibition of the placing of scaffolds, hoardings, skips and containers on the footway in the Town, District or Local Centres where minimum 3m clear width cannot be maintained.
- Restriction on granting of permits to utility companies to work in the Town, District and Local Centres
- Conditions on granting of permits to utility companies to work elsewhere requiring greater pedestrian path width.

- Temporarily remove planters from Town / District / Local Centres where they create pinch points.
- Enhanced cycle parking where space permits

The Council is also exploring opportunities to further facilitate cycling and walking to schools and is considering the anticipated reduced availability of public transport in discussion with Transport for Greater Manchester and the consequent potential traffic management implications when they reopen. The type of opportunities which will be explored could include increasing secure cycle/ scooter parking, providing additional pedestrian and cycle routes into schools from adjacent streets/green space, experimental school streets where schools close adjacent streets at the start and end of their day, drop off and collect areas and associated traffic management.

As part of wider Economic Recovery Planning work, the Council is also working closely with businesses in district centres and Stockport Town Centre to develop safe operations which support social distancing as more businesses return to trading. This includes work to remove constraints and obstructions on pavements; licensing; and maintaining clean streets.

## **DFT EMERGENCY ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING**

The Council is also engaged with TfGM and the other GM boroughs to access GM's indicative allocation of Emergency Active Travel funding from the Department for Transport. This new funding is designed to help combined authorities use pop-up and temporary interventions to create an environment that is safe for both walking and cycling. GM has been given an indicative allocation of £3.17m. Work is currently underway to identify potential opportunities across the city region which could utilise the funding in line with the guidance and funding parameters. It should be noted that timescales for implementation of any schemes utilising this funding are very tight, with the Government reserving the right to clawback funding if work has not started within 4 weeks of receiving a funding allocation, or has not been completed within 8 weeks of starting.

At the time of writing exact schemes have not yet been confirmed but an update will be provided as soon as possible.

## **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement with the various WalkRide groups across the Borough has been very positive and the Council has welcomed a large number of suggestions via the Commonplace platform which are currently being reviewed. It should be noted that the timescale pressures relating to implementing the Safer Streets Save Lives and DfT Emergency Active Travel funding, in addition to the current lockdown restrictions, means that full consultation on potential schemes is very challenging. Proposals will be shared with local members at the earliest practicable time.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Scrutiny are recommended to note and comment on the proposals.

### Background Papers

None

Anyone requiring further information please contact Caroline Simpson on 0161 218 1940 or email: [caroline.simpson@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.simpson@stockport.gov.uk)