

## **Bramhall Park to A6 Hazel Grove Cycle Route Update Report**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Update on the development of the Mayoral Challenge Fund Bramhall Park to A6 cycle route in Hazel Grove, to outline recent promotion and usage of the route, and inform on any outstanding issues with the route and provide a timescale for these to be rectified.

### **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ROUTE**

We are working with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to reduce air pollution and tackle climate change whilst also encouraging people to become more active. Part of this approach is making it easier for residents to increase the amount of walking, wheeling, or cycling they do on a daily basis. We are delivering inclusive infrastructure to make such journeys much easier and more attractive for all users and making active travel the number one choice for travelling to work, to school and to the shops.

Our Bramhall Park to A6 scheme connects residential areas in Hazel Grove and Bramhall with key local facilities and amenities, including two large high schools. It includes a segregated 2-way cycle track adjacent to a footway along Bridge Lane, Jacksons Lane, and Dean Lane, with spurs at Happy Valley to Bramhall High School and along Macclesfield Road to the shared use path along the A555. This is supplemented by raised table crossings and the tightening of side roads, as well as a series of new and upgraded crossing points of the main road along the route. A key aim of the scheme is encouraging people to cycle who would not have previously because cycling on the carriageway was too off-putting for them.

The objectives of the scheme were identified in the business case:

1. To increase the number of walking and cycling trips along the A5143 route, in particular for school-related journeys;
2. To improve safety of the route for people walking and cycling; and
3. To provide better-connected and more attractive walking and cycling routes, which provide greater travel choices for local journeys.

### **3. DELIVERY**

The scheme was delivered in phases between 2020 and 2022. We worked closely with the Contractor and our Streetworks colleagues to develop a programme which enabled its safe and efficient delivery whilst minimising all forms of disruption as much as possible. Works were undertaken to different elements of the scheme concurrently where possible, also co-ordinating certain tasks (such as landscaping) so as to maximise efficiency and minimise the overall duration of the collective works. Despite scheme being constructed during pandemic which slowed down delivery of the scheme it was still completed within the MCF programme dates.

#### **4. SCHEME PROMOTION AND ACTIVATION**

Shortly after the completion of the route, a promotional film was recorded in October 2022 by Ridge and Partners, in association with George Cox and Stockport Council, featuring employees who worked on the scheme. The promotional video showed users of the route, gave an overview of the design of the route, including the innovative use of FlexiPave on certain sections, and featured short statements from Cllr Mark Roberts, then Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration, and Sue Stevenson, Head of Highways and Transport at Stockport Council. The video was uploaded to the Council's social media streams in December 2022.

In order to take advantage of better summer weather, an activation event was held to promote the new route on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. This comprised events at two separate locations along the route, Life Leisure Hazel Grove, and Bramhall Hall. Both locations provided free bicycle servicing and active travel information. Led walks of the new route and its Happy Valley spur were offered from both locations, and a led cycle ride departed from Bramhall Hall. Almost 30 cycles were serviced across both locations, with the led ride comprising the maximum number of 8 attendees permitted under Cycling UK guidelines.

A children's scavenger hunt was also created along the route, with a small prize for completion being offered at Life Leisure Hazel Grove. This scavenger hunt remained in place throughout the 2023 school summer holidays. The activation event was advertised via a leaflet-drop to 1,500 households along the route. The leaflet also provided a map of the route and points of interest along it for context and advertisement.

Promotion of the route has also taken place with Hazel Grove High School and Bramhall High School, and further engagement is planned by the Council's Walking and Cycling Officers in the school term before Christmas 2023.

#### **5. CURRENT USAGE**

In order to fulfil the monitoring and evaluation commitments as stated in the scheme's business case, Stockport Council contracted VivaCity Ltd to install permanent monitoring cameras at five locations along the route, to remain in place for a period of five years, in order to count the number of users, both wheeled and on foot. The locations and count periods were agreed with Transport for Greater Manchester.

- Bridge Lane, east of roundabout junction with Bramhall Lane
- Bridge Lane, near junction with Headlands Road
- Jacksons Lane, east of junction with Dorchester Road
- Dean Lane/Chester Road junction
- Dean Lane, west of Five Ways junction

In order to illustrate the average of the number of cyclists utilising the route, the total number of cyclists using the route at the Dean Lane/Chester Road counter were obtained across all weekdays in July 2023. A total of 20 weekdays were surveyed in July 2023, and a weekday average was calculated from the data obtained. This is illustrated in Table 1 below:

	TOTAL CYCLEWAY	CARRIAGEWAY	Total ALL CYCLISTS
Total over 20 weekdays	4626	576	5202
Weekday Average	231	29	260

*Table 1: Snapshot Count, Dean Lane, Weekdays, July 2023*

The data from the July 2023 survey on Dean Lane was then compared with the pre-scheme count undertaken in October 2020 at an adjacent site on Jacksons Lane which surveyed cycles using the carriageway and riding on the footway, as the segregated cycle facilities were not present on the alignment at that time. The 2020 survey was undertaken across three weekdays and one weekend day, and the weekday average is shown in Table 2 below:

DATE	TOTAL FOOTWAY	CARRIAGEWAY	Total ALL CYCLISTS
Total over 3 weekdays	134	361	495
Weekday Average	45	120	165

*Table 2: Pre-Scheme Count, Jacksons Lane, Weekdays, October 2020*

	TOTAL CYCLEWAY	CARRIAGEWAY	Total ALL CYCLISTS
<b>Total Increase 2020-2023</b>	<b>+187</b>	<b>-92</b>	<b>+95</b>

*Table 3: Changes in User Numbers, 2020 vs 2023 counts*

The number of cyclists using the new active travel route on an average weekday in 2023 is 187 higher than when compared to the number observed using the footway on an average weekday in the pre-scheme count. This demonstrates that the new segregated facility has been successful in generating new users.

In addition, the total number of cyclists observed using the vehicular carriageway on an average weekday has declined by 92 since the 2020 count, which indicates that there has been a substantial shift of cyclists from vehicular carriageway to active travel route, whilst the overall number of cyclists on the route as a whole, both on- and off-carriageway, has increased by 95 since the 2020 count, demonstrating that the route has been successful in generating new users. This represents a 63% increase in the total number of cyclists across both the carriageway and cycleway on an average weekday since the scheme was completed.

It was estimated that the provision of this improvement would increase usage by 50% above the then current number. While it is acknowledged that the difference in time of year for the 2 counts will have some impact on numbers the snapshot survey in July 2023 illustrates that this ambition has already been exceeded.

We expect as the route is established over the next year that numbers will continue to increase supported by further network expansion.

## **6. CYCLE ROUTE USER EXPERIENCE**

On completion of the scheme, thorough checks were undertaken across the route with respect to gradients, surface finishes and transitions. Every effort has been made by the Design and Construction teams to provide a smooth facility along the route with reasonable comfort at suitable and expected speeds, whilst using differing surfaces and overcoming a number of engineering challenges. The interface with tree roots, driveways and associated dropped

kerbs has been carefully considered, balancing the provision of a smooth ride against other engineering considerations including drainage and the protection (and segregation) of the cycle track from the carriageway. It is recognised, in particular, along Dean Lane that protecting this green corridor has resulted in a slight compromise in the ride comfort.

Furthermore, officers are maintaining ongoing liaison with TfGM to continue to discuss any resolutions to this complex issue.

## 7. ONGOING ISSUES

Upon completion of the scheme a number of issues were identified and a sum of £175,000 was identified from the Integrated Transport Block Tranche 2 as part of the 2023-24 Transportation Capital Programme.

The issues have been categorised and are being addressed on a priority basis; a summary of progress at the time of writing is provided below.

- **Dean Lane / Macclesfield Road (Fiveways Junction):** SMBC Highways and Transportation officers have liaised with TfGM regarding the option of providing a right turn filter for traffic exiting Dean Lane. Should this amendment to the signal timing arrangement be agreed with ward members, it is anticipated that the works could be completed within 6-8 weeks.
- **Vehicles encroaching onto the cycle lane at the Bridge Lane / Hillcrest Road junction when ahead traffic is blocked by right-turners:** An order has been raised to install bollards on the footway to dissuade vehicles from accessing the footway to overtake.
- **Drainage issues identified at properties 30-36 Bridge Lane:** Drawings have been completed to address the drainage issues and an order has been raised for the works to be undertaken.
- **Obstructions to the highway:** in delivery of the Bramhall Park to A6 walking and cycling scheme, we encountered an obstruction of the Highway from two properties (Chestnut Rise and Querida) including vegetation, driveway and a small wall, which prevented the full and effective delivery of the design as intended, consulted and approved. SMBC Highways and transportation officers have offered to remove the obstructions and make good the boundary as part of the scheme. An order has been raised for these works and officers will liaise with the owners to arrange a date for the works to be undertaken.
- **Norbury Farm Exit:** a sign has been designed to advise drivers of the cycleway and an order has been raised for the sign to be produced and installed.
- **Speed humps:** officers have inspected three speed humps along Mill Lane which have become damaged and an order has been raised for the repair works to be undertaken.
- **Jacksons Lane Lay-by:** A Traffic Road Order to prevent overnight parking in the lay-by for vehicles exceeding 5 tonnes has been advertised and the order has been

sealed. An order has been placed for the required signage to be produced and installed to enable enforcement.

- **Trees along the route:** New trees were installed along the route as part of the original scheme. These trees have subsequently been subject to a survey undertaken by an SMBC Landscape Architect and Arboriculture officer to ascertain their current condition. Those that have failed / are failing should be replaceable by the contractor under maintenance. Officers are working on this to try and resolve. Officers are also working to replace the missing tree at the junction of Waterloo Road with Fir Road.
- **Norbury House:** We have contacted the resident at Norbury House regarding a section of land which has been fenced off but is publicly maintainable highway. The resident has been advised that they could apply for an order to extinguish public highway rights or seek a licence to cultivate this part of the highway. Alternatively, the resident would be asked to remove the fence and reinstate the highway in its original condition. We are currently awaiting confirmation on their intended action.
- **Variable 20mph on Jacksons Lane:** officers are reviewing options to provide a variable 20mph limit on Jacksons Lane in close proximity to Hazel Grove High School. The provision of a variable mandatory 20mph limit which applies at school times is being investigated; this would require approval from the Department of Transport for use of an unprescribed sign as currently there are no prescribed signs to accompany these restrictions.
- **Traffic Road Orders (TROs):** it has been reported that vehicles are being parked on the cycle way. Officers are undertaking a review to establish the TROs that would be required to prevent the route from being obstructed. A survey has also been undertaken from 7-10am and 3-7pm on a school weekday in November 2023 in order to assess the current level of on-street car parking along the route. The results of this survey have not been analysed at the time of writing, but it is anticipated that the proposed TRO extent will be discussed with ward members prior to a public consultation being undertaken on the proposed measures. When TRO marking is undertaken additional markings will be added to side road cycle crossings to highlight them to drivers.

The items detailed above reflect the highest priority measures which are being progressed as an initial phase of works, but officers have also identified a number of additional items to be addressed which will be prioritised and progressed in line with funding availability. This will include items such as identification and implementation of additional road markings along the route; and a review of the sign and column location on the eastern side of the Dorchester Road Tiger Crossing.