

STOCKPORT COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE REPORT – SUMMARY SHEET

Subject: Marple Area Cycling and Walking Strategy (MACAWS)

Report to: (a) Marple Area Committee
2024
Cabinet Member (Parks, Highways and Transport Services)

Date: Wednesday, 31 July

Report of: (b) Director of Place Management

Key Decision: (c) **NO / YES** (Please circle)

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency (Tick box)

Summary: This report has been prepared to report the findings of a consultation exercise for the Marple Area Cycling and Walking Strategy (MACAWS).

Recommendation(s): The Area Committee is asked to comment on this report and provide a recommendation to the Cabinet Member (Parks, Highways and Transport Services) on whether to approve a number of highway measures for future funding bids.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee (if decision called in): **(d)**
Communities & Transport Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers (if report for publication): **(e)**

Capability Fund Progress Report – Marple District Centre Walking and Cycling Improvements submitted to the Marple Area Committee on 26th January 2022

Contact person for accessing background papers and discussing the report **Officer:** Caroline Aylmer-Shanks
Email: c.aylmer-shanks@stockport.gov.uk

‘Urgent Business’: **(f)** **YES / NO** (please circle)

Certification (if applicable)

This report should be considered as ‘urgent business’ and the decision exempted from ‘call-in’ for the following reason(s):

The written consent of Councillor _____ and the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer/Borough Treasurer for the decision to be treated as ‘urgent business’ was obtained on _____ /will be obtained before the decision is implemented.

Marple Area Cycling and Walking Strategy (MACAWS)

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings from a public consultation which took place from 4th September to 9th October 2023, on a package of potential highway measures in Marple Town Centre under the name of Marple Area Cycling and Walking Strategy, or MACAWS for short.
- 1.2 The MACAWS public consultation was undertaken alongside another package of highway measures which were proposed to support the Marple Community Hub which received funding from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The consultation on the Marple Community Hub highway measures fed into the planning application for the development (planning application ref: DC/091420) and are not the subject of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The MACAWS scheme would complement the highway works proposed as part of the Marple Community Hub development. The highway measures associated with the Marple Community Hub include two new controlled 'Puffin' crossings on Station Road, a controlled 'Toucan' crossing on Stockport Road and a Zebra crossing on Hollins Lane. Works would also include an improved north-south cycle route through the Memorial Park from the canal to Stockport Road.
- 2.2. The MACAWS highway measures included changes to the signal crossing at Stockport Road / Station Rd / Church Lane, closure of Church Lane to through traffic at Stockport Road, conversion of the Hibbert Lane / Church Lane junction from a roundabout to signal control, traffic calming and additional crossings on Church Lane east of Hibbert Lane and cycle use of currently shopping pedestrianised areas. The works are described in more detail below.
- 2.3. There is no funding currently available to deliver any of the MACAWS measures and this was made clear to the public as part of the consultation.
- 2.4. The purpose of the consultation was to gauge public views on existing transport problems in Marple Town Centre and to see what level of support may exist for further bids for funding beyond the highway measures associated with the Marple Leisure Hub. The proposals were broken up into six elements to determine which, if any, ideas were worth taking further. The public were also given the opportunity to raise issues which were not specifically covered by the MACAWS proposals. Drawing on the results of the consultation recommendations will be made as to which elements of the scheme should be developed further for a future bid. Being able to demonstrate prior consultation and the support of the Area Committee and Cabinet Member for such a bid will greatly strengthen it and make the chances of securing funding significantly higher.

2.5. This report presents the consultation scheme, the consultation methodology applied by the Council, the response to the MACAWS proposals and amended proposals

3. PROPOSALS

3.1. Marple Town Centre has been identified as a possible location to improve the existing walking, cycling and public transport provision. The proposals of this scheme aim to make changes to the local highways to support the proposed new Marple Active Community Hub, which has received Levelling Up Funding, whilst promoting walking, cycling and public transport within the town centre.

3.2. The consulted MACAWS proposals are shown on drawings F/0287/01/002 and F-5194/D/002 in **Appendix A** and included:

- **Feature A: Stockport Road / Station Road / Church Lane.** The current signal junction is efficient for traffic but inconvenient for pedestrians and lacks off carriageway cycle facilities. The petrol station egress to Church Lane takes drivers into Marple Town Centre and back again to return to the junction, a diversion of about 800m. A full 'cyclops' type signal junction could be provided which provides segregated cycle and pedestrian crossings on all arms. A new north / south cycle route could be provided from Bowden Lane to Shirley Avenue via the new crossing at the signal junction. Consideration could also be given to a cycle link to Cross Lane. The existing bus stops to the west of the junction could be retained in their current positions, with on street parking laybys provided outside shop frontages at 128 – 138 Stockport Road. Church Lane would be closed to vehicular traffic from its junction with Stockport Road but allow cycle and pedestrian access. Church Lane would need to become two-way for at least part of its length and a new turning head would be provided at its new cul de sac end. The petrol station would exit into the signal junction under signal control, allowing drivers to leave without having to drive into Marple Town Centre.
- **Feature B: Church Lane from Stockport Road to Hibbert Lane.** Church Lane could become a two-way 'quiet street' suitable for cyclists to use on carriageway in both directions. Opportunities to pass will need to be reviewed with some possible short extensions to No Waiting restrictions required. If so, this would be subject to full and detailed consultation.
- **Feature C: Church Lane / Hibbert Lane junction:** The existing mini roundabout does not have adequate geometry such that cars drive over it without having to slow down enough and it also has poor pedestrian crossing points. It could be replaced with a new signal junction with pedestrian crossings on all arms. Such a junction has been tested and should have sufficient capacity to avoid queues back to Stockport Road.
- **Feature D: Church Lane (between Hibbert Lane and Brickbridge Road):** A new traffic calming scheme could be provided on Church Lane, including a new 20mph speed limit. A Zebra Crossing could be provided at the southern end of Market Street connecting to the new Co-op. A second Zebra or possibly a parallel ('Tiger') crossing for cyclists and pedestrians may be able to be provided between Mount Drive and Empress Avenue. A further zebra crossing could be considered just west of Waterside adjacent to the Ring O' Bells Public House.
- **Feature E: Derby Street / Market Street / Trinity Street:** Market Street could become a shared space for cyclists and pedestrians to make it easier for cyclists to

access local shops, although signs would make it clear that pedestrians have priority. A shared use link could be provided between Iceland and Superdrug joining Market Street and Trinity Street, with a new Zebra or possibly parallel 'Tiger' crossing placed on Trinity Street to link to Church Street.

- **Feature F: Stockport Road (between Station Road and Hollins Lane):** This section could operate largely as it does now with some minor changes to the existing highway layout. Additional queuing capacity could be provided for the right turn lane from Stockport Road to Hibbert Lane (to mitigate the closure of Church Lane). This would require the removal of approximately 15m of on street parking outside the old swimming pool with possible replacement parking provided on Union St. The existing off-set pedestrian crossing on Hibbert Lane could be moved to the junction with Stockport Road and a new 'all red' pedestrian stage provided. This would have some impact on junction capacity but would be more convenient for pedestrians to use.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- 4.1. A gyratory option was previously considered but was discounted as set out in the Capability Fund Progress Report – Marple District Centre Walking and Cycling Improvements submitted to the Marple Area Committee on 26th January 2022.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. A public consultation was held over a four-week period between 4th September and 9th October 2023. Over 11,000 letters were delivered to properties located within the Marple area. This letter included a description of the proposals and information directing residents and businesses to the consultation web pages to view the proposals in full. Information was also provided on two drop-in sessions which were held at Marple Library on 12th and 19th September. In addition, local Councillors were notified of the intention to consult prior to the consultation period commencing.
- 5.2. Temporary signage was erected throughout Marple Town Centre on lighting columns to raise awareness amongst visitors to the area, and those passing through.
- 5.3. Emails were sent to key stakeholders, including local interest and community groups and forums to introduce the proposals and direct to the consultation web page.
- 5.4. Ward Members for Marple North, and Marple South & High Lane were notified of the intention to consult prior to the consultation period commencing.
- 5.5. An online consultation was set up for the project on the following webpage: www.stockport.gov.uk/haveyoursay. This provided background to the scheme; information on the scheme proposals; scheme plans; a glossary to explain some technical terms (such as Cyclops Junction, Toucan Crossing, Tiger Crossing and Puffin Crossing) and an online feedback form which asked respondents to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the existing facilities needed to be improved and to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the highway measures. Respondents were also provided the opportunity to include open ended comments on the proposed measures. Paper copies of the response form were also available upon request.

- 5.6. A telephone helpline (0161 217 6043) and a dedicated email address (marplepoolproject@stockport.gov.uk) was active throughout the consultation period to respond to scheme/consultation queries and take associated comments.
- 5.7. There was a good level of engagement from the community in relation to the public consultation with 758 responses received to the online survey, and a further 13 paper responses received.
- 5.8. A detailed analysis of the public consultation feedback received has been undertaken. This analysis is presented in detail within the 'MACAWS – Consultation Summary Report' (dated May 2024) in **Appendix C**, with a high-level summary of the results provided below.

Existing Walking, Cycling and Public Transport Provision

- 5.9. Four questions were asked about the existing cycling, walking and public transport provision within Marple. A summary of the overall results can be seen in the table below. Each question will then be presented and analysed in more detail in the sections below.

Table 1: Existing Provision - Overall High-Level Summary Table

Option	Question: To what extent do the following need to be improved?							
	Walking in Marple Town Centre		Cycling in Marple Town Centre		Access to Marple Railway Station		Access to bus stops in Marple Town Centre	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agree / Strongly Agree	323	42%	278	36%	359	46%	94	12%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	232	30%	270	35%	151	20%	265	34%
Neither Agree not Disagree	149	19%	140	18%	186	24%	310	40%
Don't Know	4	1%	21	3%	10	1%	37	5%
Not Answered	62	8%	61	8%	64	8%	64	8%

- 5.10. It can be seen from the table above that there is a split in opinion within the community, but that more respondents agreed than disagreed that walking, cycling and access to Marple Railway Station need to be improved. Only 12% of respondents agreed that access to bus stops in Marple Town Centre needs to be improved.
- 5.11. The key issues raised within the comments provided on the existing walking, cycling and public transport provision are summarised within the following table.

Table 2: Summary of comments submitted on the existing walking, cycling and public transport provision

Ranking	Walking in Marple Town Centre	
	Comment	Number of Respondents
1	Existing facilities for walking in Marple are good	221
2	There is a need for more crossings within Marple Town Centre	136
3	Concern that there are areas within Marple where pedestrians are required to walk closely alongside speeding traffic	72
4	Wider pavements are needed within Marple	46
5	Pavements around Marple need to be repaired	45
Ranking	Cycling in Marple Town Centre	
	Comment	Number of Respondents
1	There is a need for cycling infrastructure within Marple's Town Centre	146
2	Traffic in Marple is currently considered to be a danger to cyclists	83
3	Cycling is already good in Marple	75
4	Cycling improvements should not be implemented to the detriment of pedestrians	64
5	There are not enough cyclists in Marple to justify any cycling improvements	62
Ranking	Access to Marple Railway Station	
	Comment	Number of Respondents
1	Pedestrian crossings are needed to provide a safe access to the station	135
2	Access to the station is already good	122
3	It is currently difficult to enter / exit the station's car park in a vehicle	87
4	Cycling to the station needs to be encouraged	28
5	The footways close to the station are very narrow, making access difficult	26
Ranking	Access to Bus Stops in Marple Town Centre	
	Comment	Number of Respondents
1	The bus stops in Marple are already good	191
2	The bus stops in Marple are in need of upgrading	27
3	The buses are not regular and are unreliable	23
4	The issue of people parking in bus stops needs to be addressed	22
5	There are too many bus stops in Marple	12

MACAWS Highway Measures

5.12. Respondents were firstly asked for their opinion on the overall aims of MACAWS to provide improved infrastructure and connectivity for cycling and walking whilst maintaining efficient traffic operation in Marple.

Table 3: Overall Aims of MACAWS Summary Results

Response	Agree / Strongly Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered
No.	344	220	93	10	91
%	46%	29%	12%	1%	12%

5.13. The table above shows that the majority of respondents who answered this question agreed with the overall aims of the MACAWS highway measures which is to provide improved infrastructure and connectivity for cycling and walking whilst maintaining efficient traffic operation in Marple.

5.14. Six questions were then asked about the Highway proposals which have been developed to improve cycling and walking in the Marple District Centre. A summary of the overall results can be seen in the following table.

Table 4: MACAWS Highway Measures High Level Summary Results

Measure	Highway Measure Location and Description		Response				
			Agree / Strongly Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered
A	Stockport Road / Station Road / Church Lane junction	No.	241	359	70	22	79
		%	31%	47%	9%	3%	10%
B	Church Lane Quiet Street	No.	205	381	78	26	81
		%	27%	49%	10%	3%	11%
C	Church Lane / Hibbert Lane Signalised Junction	No.	347	262	68	14	80
		%	45%	34%	9%	2%	10%
D	Church Lane Traffic Calming (between Hibbert Lane and Brickbridge Road)	No.	342	215	115	16	83
		%	44%	28%	15%	2%	11%
E	Derby Street / Market Street / Trinity Street Shared Space	No.	173	422	88	9	79
		%	22%	55%	11%	1%	10%
F	Stockport Road (between Station Road and Hollins Lane)	No.	297	251	128	12	83
		%	38%	32%	17%	2%	11%

5.15. The table above shows that more respondents agreed with the following measures than disagreed with them:

- Feature C: signalisation of the Church Lane / Hibbert Lane junction;
- Feature D: Church Lane Traffic Calming; and
- Feature F: Amendments to Stockport Road.

5.16. The table also shows that more residents disagreed with the following measures than agreed with them:

- Feature A: Proposed Cyclops Junction and closure of Church Lane to motorised traffic;
- Feature B: Amendment of the existing one-way system along Church Lane between Stockport Road and Hibbert Lane to a two-way 'quiet street' suitable for cyclists to use on carriageway in both directions; and
- Feature E: Conversion of Market Street to shared space for pedestrians and cyclists.

5.17. Following analysis of the responses and consideration of comments about the measures proposed in the consultation the following amendments to the scheme are recommended prior to bidding for funding for future scheme development and construction as and when opportunity arises.

A. Stockport Road / Station Road / Church Lane junction

Whilst there was opposition to the full Cyclops Junction at Stockport Road / Station Road / Church Lane there was some support for the provision of improved pedestrian and cycle facilities. The scheme has been re-examined and amended to show improved crossing facilities including a single stage crossing of Stockport Road for both pedestrians and cyclists in the form of a 'Sparrow' type arrangement. This segregates pedestrians from cyclists and would allow for the creation of a high quality cycle connection from Bowden Lane to Church Lane. Cycle crossings on other arms of the junction have been dropped. The exit from the petrol station into the junction has been retained in the design to avoid unnecessary vehicle mileage in Marple. The scheme also looks at improved walking and cycling connections to Shirley Avenue and Cross Lane. The amended scheme is included in **Appendix B** and is recommended for approval to support a future bid for funding.

B. Church Lane Quiet Street

Whilst the closure of Church Lane at the junction with Stockport Road and Station Road was not well supported, the analysis of the feedback received highlighted why this was so. It was not so much opposition to the principle of removing through traffic from the street rather concern amongst residents about the impact that this would have on congestion across the local highway network, the impact on rat-running through adjacent residential roads, the impact on on-street car parking and opposition to the two-way operation of Church Lane. The design has been revisited to seek to address these concerns.

We have analysed the impact on the wider network and are confident that, with some mitigation measures to improve the right turn from Stockport Road to Hibbert Lane, that there would not be any significant detrimental impact. Given that Stockport Road and Hibbert Lane are forecast to operate satisfactorily it is unlikely that the closure would result in increased rat-running on residential streets. If it did happen it would be likely to be on Edwards Way / Carver Road so any bid should include for a system of high quality traffic calming for those roads. In respect of on street parking it is now proposed that Church Lane would remain one way for motor vehicle traffic from Leigh Avenue to Hibbert Lane, with contra-flow cycle operation. This means that the junctions at Brindley Ave / Highfield Road and at Union Road would operate as they do now with no need to change waiting restrictions. At the

Leigh Avenue junction it would be necessary to ensure that a refuse vehicle can turn left in order to service the now cul-de-sac part of the street, which would require removal of two on-street car parking bays on Church Lane to facilitate the manoeuvre, and there would be a need for waiting restrictions in the new turning head at Stockport Road.

The amended layout is shown in **Appendix B** and it is proposed that this should form the basis for any bid.

C. Church Lane / Hibbert Lane Signalised Junction

The replacement of the roundabout junction at Hibbert Lane / Church Lane with a signal junction was generally well received. The layout would include advance stop lines for cycles and a pedestrian stage with green man crossings on all arms of the junction. The access / egress provision to the Hibbert Lane car park is likely to require amendment in order to facilitate signalisation of the junction with the egress moved from Church Lane to a combined in / out on Hibbert Lane.

D. Church Lane Traffic Calming (between Hibbert Lane and Brickbridge Road)

It is recommended to pursue further the implementation of traffic calming and improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities on Church Lane between Hibbert Lane and Brickbridge Road. This includes 3 new Zebra crossings (with one to Tiger crossing standard to allow parallel cycle use), speed tables, raised junctions and possible re-location and improvement of bus stops (subject to additional TfGM consultation). The location and extent of traffic calming features may be limited by the presence of underground services and culverts in this area, this would need review as part of scheme development.

E. Derby Street / Market Street / Trinity Street Shared Space

This measure was not well received and it is not proposed to include it in any future bid for funding.

F. Stockport Road (between Station Road and Hollins Lane)

This includes amendment to the Stockport Road / Hibbert Lane junction, including extension of the right-turn lane into Hibbert Lane with potential re-location of the off-set Puffin facility on Hibbert Lane to be part of the junction. It is noted that concern was raised by members of the public with regards to congestion on the highway network and the impact of relocating the pedestrian crossing and introducing an 'all red' phase at the junction. Providing this is also complicated by the presence of busy private access points into the junction. As such any bid is likely to include for extending the right turn lane (to mitigate closure of Church Lane to through traffic) but probably would not include amendments to the pedestrian layout under current usage.

5.18. Of additional measures raised by the public not subject to specific MACAWS plans:

- 1 An extended 20mph speed limit area around the Town Centre in particular to include the full length of Hollins Lane, Hibbert Lane from south of Church Lane to Stockport Road and Church Lane from the School warning sign south

of Brickbridge Road to Hibbert Lane. It may be necessary to investigate further, permanent, traffic calming measures to make sure that the speed limit is self-enforcing. This measure would need separate approval and advertising of TRO's.

2. Stockport Council has a policy of providing 20mph speed limits on residential estate roads and officers have identified that there may be road safety benefit to the implementation of a 20mph speed limit within the residential estates. It is considered that this would help encourage walking and cycling and may be required to support a successful future bid. The areas shown are indicative only and would be subject to further discussion and consultation should additional funding be secured to progress the measures.
3. There was clear demand for the provision of improved vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access to Marple Station. In particular car park access is difficult and improved crossing facilities on Brabyns Brow are needed in the vicinity of the Station. Design of a crossing in this location is complicated by the presence of access points, bus stops and a steep gradient. A topographic survey of Station Road has been commissioned and initial contact made with GMUTC over a possible crossing which could be subject to a future bid. A wider study is likely to be needed about access to the Station which goes beyond the immediate frontage on Brabyns Brow and examines alternative options for foot and cycle access to the Station.

5.19. The revised proposals are shown on Drawings F/5194/D/115 to F/5194/D/118 in **Appendix B**. Further work would be required to investigate the feasibility of providing a new crossing on Station Road to improve access to the railway station and so no drawing is currently available for this measure.

5.20. A more detailed analysis of the feedback, including a summary of the comments received is included within the 'MACAWS – Consultation Summary Report' (dated May 2024) included as **Appendix C**.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are currently no financial implications as no funding has currently been identified to progress the highway measures identified within this report.

7. TIMESCALES

7.1. The next steps of this process include identification of possible funding to progress the development and implementation of the highway measures set out within this report.

7.2. Should possible funding be identified for a bid then Ward Members and the Cabinet Member would be updated on the nature and progress of any bid.

8. EQUALITIES/COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1. Equal Opportunities

- To provide a suitable and safer environment for pedestrians and other road users. The scheme contributes to the Council's vision statement "Promote equal life outcomes for all by tackling known inequalities across the borough of Stockport".

8.2. Sustainable Environment

- To develop and sustain a healthy, safe and attractive local environment which contributes to Stockport. Stockport Council understands the responsibility it has to lead by example and help the broader community make a positive contribution to the local environment.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1. The Area Committee is asked to comment on this report and provide a recommendation to the Cabinet Member (Parks, Highways and Transport Services) on whether to approve any or all of the highway measures described within Section 5 of this report and shown in Drawing Nos F/5194/D/115 to F/5194/D/118 with a view to bid for funding for future scheme development and construction as and when opportunity arises.

Measure A: Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities at the Stockport Road / Station Road / Church Lane including a Sparrow Crossing of Stockport Road with segregated pedestrian and cycle facilities and cycle connections to adjacent residential streets.

Measure B: Closure of Church Lane to motorised vehicles at the junction of Stockport Road / Station Road, and introduction of two-way operation on Church Lane west of Leigh Avenue.

Measure C: Replacement of the Hibbert Lane / Church Lane roundabout with a signal junction.

Measure D: Traffic calming and improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities on Church Lane between Hibbert Lane and Brickbridge Road.

Measure F: Amendment to the Stockport Road / Hibbert Lane junction, including extension of the right-turn lane into Hibbert Lane.

Additional Measure 1: An extended 20mph speed limit area around the Town Centre in particular to include the full length of Hollins Lane, Hibbert Lane from south of Church Lane to Stockport Road and Church Lane from the School warning sign south of Brickbridge Road to Hibbert Lane (subject to approval and advertising of TRO's).

Additional Measure 2: An area wide 20mph speed limit on residential streets in Marple as indicated on Plan F/5194/D/118 in **Appendix B** (subject to approval and advertising of TRO's).

Additional Measure 3: A controlled crossing on Brabyns Brow in the vicinity of Marple Station and other improvements to walking and cycling routes to Marple Station.

Background Papers

Capability Fund Progress Report – Marple District Centre Walking and Cycling Improvements submitted to the Marple Area Committee held on 26th January 2022.

This can be viewed via the following link (Item 8):

<https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=27506&Ver=4>.

Anyone wishing further information please contact Caroline Aylmer-Shanks by email on c.aylmer-shanks@stockport.gov.uk

Appendix A – Consultation Drawings

Consultation Drawing – F/0287/01/002 and F/5194/D/002 (appended separately)

Appendix B – Revised Drawings

Amended Drawing Following Consultation – F/5194/D/115 to F/5194/D/118 [\(for approval\)](#)
(appended separately)

Appendix C - Marple Area Walking and Cycling Strategy (MACAWS) – Consultation Summary Report (May 2024) (appended separately)