

Middlewood Way Access Control Amendments

Report of Transport Strategy Manager

1. Introduction & Purpose

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Marple Area Committee of a desire to carry out amendments to several access control barriers located on the Middlewood Way to bring them in line with the Council's current access control policy.
- 1.2 In November 2022 the Council passed an Access Control Measures Policy Statement covering highways, public rights of way and greenspace. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the design and maintenance of different access controls across the borough are in line with current legislation and guidance. In particular the requirement under the Equality Act 2010 which places a duty on local authorities and landowners to ensure that traffic-free paths are accessible to all legitimate users so far as is reasonably possible.
- 1.3 The Council is working to map and survey controls in the borough to ensure they all provide the minimum recommended width of 1.5m or 1.2m were there is a risk of vehicular attack. At present 180 controls have been identified, as resources allow these controls are being surveyed and prioritised for amendments as necessary.

2 Access Controls and Legitimate Users

- 2.1 Access controls come in a range of forms including: A-Frames, chicanes and gates. The intended purpose of the controls is to prevent illegitimate users from using routes. However, often these barriers exclude many legitimate users such as those using wheelchairs, or mobilities scooters and people pushing buggies.
- 2.2 Where the route is also open to cyclists' users riding bicycles are also affected as often they have to dismount to pass through a barrier which can be difficult for anyone with a disability or with a child sitting on the rear of a bicycle. Users of non-standard bicycle such as cargo bikes or adapted cycles are also unable to navigate many of these barriers.

2.3 These barriers are often not effective at preventing illegitimate users, as motorbikes can navigate around or through controls and determined people will find alternative ways to access a route.

3 Proposed Works

3.1 Funding from the capital programme was allocated for the 2023/24 financial year to identify controls in the borough and prioritise upgrades, due to contractor issues works were unable to be progressed however we now seek to do this work in 2024/25.

3.2 As part of this we would like to improve controls at five sites in the Marple Area along the Middlewood Way.

3.3 The five controls are:

3.3.1 Rose Hill Recycling Centre (Marple North)

3.3.2 Wood Lane North (Marple North)

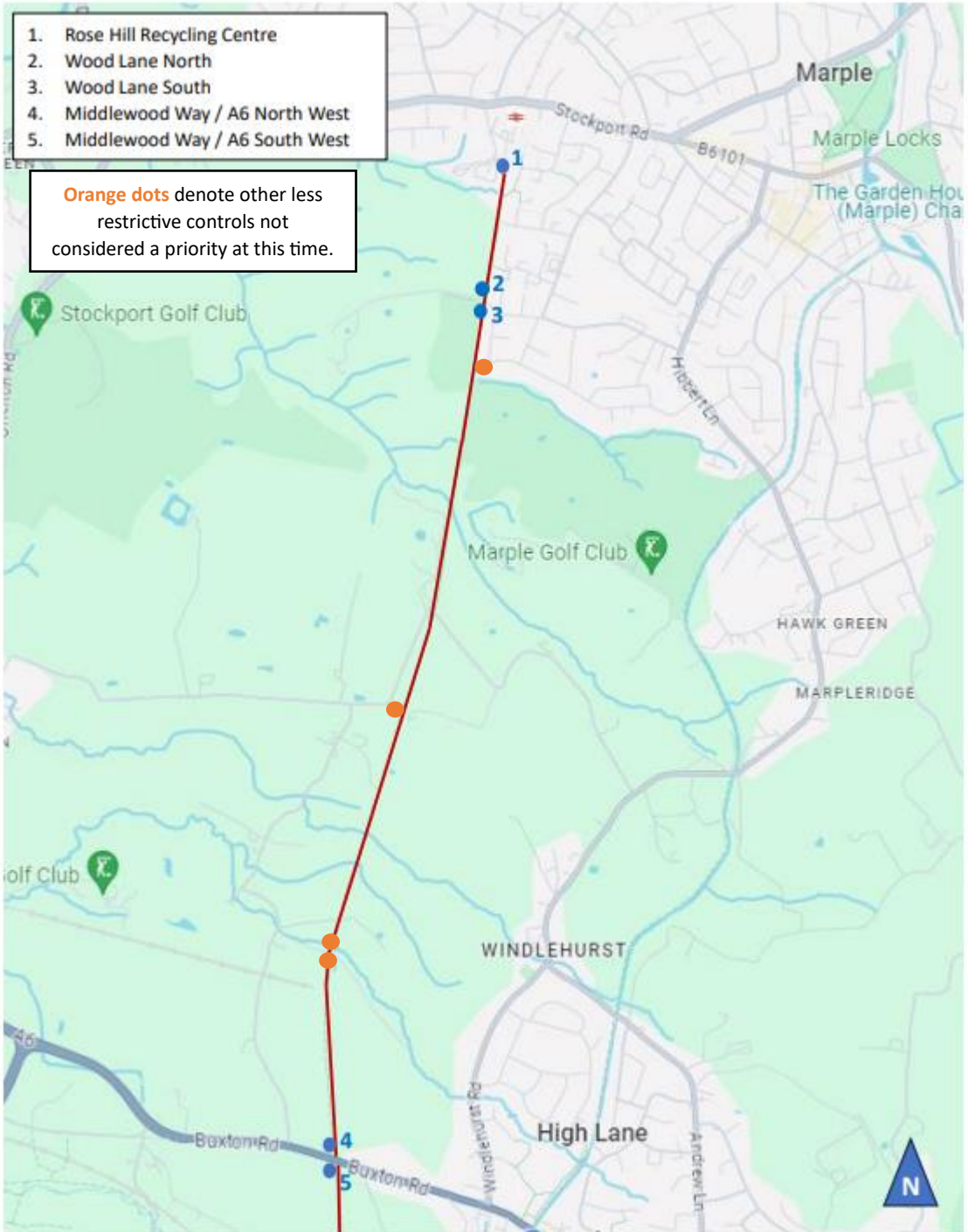
3.3.3 Wood Lane South (Marple North)

3.3.4 Middlewood Way / A6 North West (Marple South & High Lane)

3.3.5 Middlewood Way / A6 South West (Marple South & High Lane)

3.4 Images and full details of the proposed amendments are found in Appendix A.

3.5 Location of the access controls proposed for amendments on the Middlewood Way are shown in the map below.



4 Rational for Prioritising these Controls

- 4.1 An access control prioritisation matrix has been developed to provide a means to assess and score controls in the borough. Controls are assessed according to the benefits of amending them. The focus being on the ability for people to make short journeys by walking, wheeling and cycling. For example, controls close to district centres, providing access to public transport or schools will score higher than those further away from such amenities.
- 4.2 The prioritisation matrix is not used in isolation, local knowledge of the area and the wider transport network is also used to identify where there are benefits to completing works that connect up to wider routes. The access control prioritisation matrix showing the outcomes for these controls can be found in Appendix B.
- 4.3 On advice from our PRow Officer and Play & Infrastructure Officer the Middlewood Way was identified as a route where access control amendments could deliver significant benefits. The Middlewood Way is popular as both a leisure route and for people commuting, providing access to train stations, schools, greenspace and residential areas. Some of the controls in place are both restrictive to legitimate users and ineffective at preventing illegitimate use.
- 4.4 We have also received representations from members of the public regarding the inaccessibility of these controls.
- 4.5 Furthermore, upgrading these controls would complement similar control amendments completed by Cheshire East Council on their section of the Middlewood Way, moving the route significantly closer to being fully accessible along the entire 16km / 11mile greenway from Marple to Bollington. Other access control amendments are still needed for controls elsewhere on the route, however the five controls proposed will address the most significant issues.

5 Examples of Previously Upgraded Controls

- 5.1 The following three examples of recently upgraded access control barriers can be found in Appendix C.
 - 5.1.1 Cheshire East Council – Middlewood Way
 - 5.1.2 Manchester City Council – Fallowfield Loop
 - 5.1.3 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council – Lapwing Lane

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 The Area Committee is requested to approve the proposal to carry out works to upgrade these access control barriers.

7 Appendix A – Middlewood Way Access Controls

7.1 Details of current controls and proposed works.

7.2 Rose Hill Recycling Centre

7.2.1 Install Section 59 warning notices prior to works commencing.

7.2.2 Remove all existing controls & make good surface.

7.2.3 Entrance of route creates natural pinch point of 350cm, at this location:

7.2.4 Install one retractable bollard positioned at 175cm.

7.2.5 Install one fixed bollard on east side of entrance to protect against car ingress along verge.



7.3 Middlewood Way Wood Lane – North

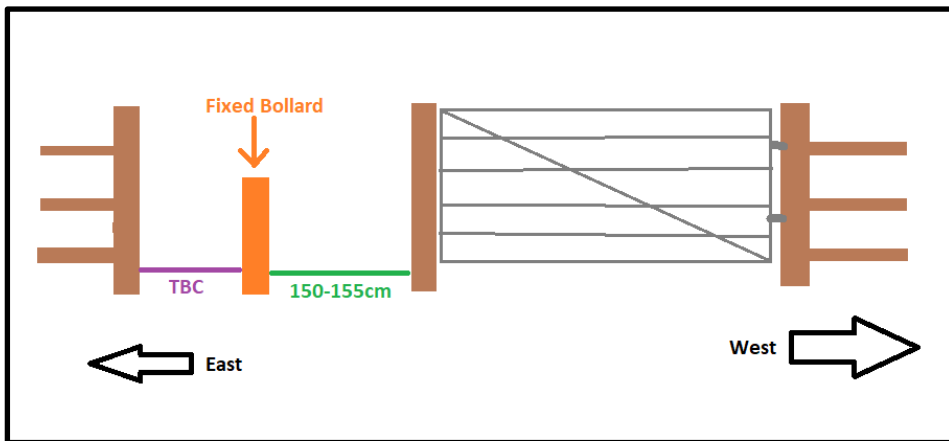
7.3.1 Install Section 59 warning notices prior to works commencing.

7.3.2 Remove A-frame and horse stile, make good the surface.

7.3.3 Install a fixed bollard off-set from centre to provide the required 1.5m gap.



7.4 Middlewood Way near Wood Lane – South



- 7.4.1 Install Section 59 warning notices prior to works commencing.
- 7.4.2 Remove A-frame and horse stile and gate. Advice from Neighbourhoods is to replace the gate with a shorter width gate of 300cm. Current gate is unusable.
- 7.4.3 Install new gate and gate posts to west side of path.
- 7.4.4 Gap remaining on east side to have a single fixed bollard positioned off-centre to ensure one gap is at least 150cm wide.
- 7.4.5 Make good the surface.

7.5 Middlewood Way A6 North West



- 7.5.1 Install Section 59 warning notices prior to works commencing.
- 7.5.2 Remove wooden structures shaded in red, keep remaining uprights and patch surface where required.
- 7.5.3 Install footpath only signage.
- 7.5.4 Advice from Road Safety Team is **no** RSA (Road Safety Audit) is needed.

7.6 Middlewood Way A6 South West



- 7.6.1 Install Section 59 warning notices prior to works commencing.
- 7.6.2 Remove A-frame barrier and fill in surface with compacted gravel.
- 7.6.3 Gap from wall to post is 1.4m
- 7.6.4 Advice from Road Safety Team is **no** RSA (Road Safety Audit) is needed.

8 Appendix B – Access Control Prioritisation Matrix

			Ward	Ped or Multi Use	Location	Control Type	State of repair	Manage livestock?	Land Ownership?	Signage present?	Connection	Public transport link	Surface quality	Links	Deductions	TOTAL
		22+														
		16 to 21														
		1 to 15														
Logic Field (GIS)	Details of Current Access Control	Map Link														Max. 30
93	Rose Hill recycling centre	https://maps.ap.p.goo.gl/r5JkzVdKHhMF5uZC6	Marple North	multi	Within 2km of DC	A frame	Good	No	Private	yes	Route to sport and leisure facilities (pool, gym, sports hall etc – not parks, see below)	Route to train station (high frequency station)	Sealed Surface - Good	Name route (Fred Perry, Alan Newton, others?)	None	21
95	Middlewood Way near Wood Lane (north)	https://maps.ap.p.goo.gl/GHdp5iLEMgNrbNA16	Marple South & High Lane	multi	Within 2km of DC	A frame	Good	No	Council	yes	Route to sport and leisure facilities (pool, gym, sports hall etc – not parks, see below)	Route to train station (high frequency station)	Sealed Surface - Good	Name route (Fred Perry, Alan Newton, others?)	None	22
96	Middlewood Way near Wood Lane (south)	https://maps.ap.p.goo.gl/7VeQaUjTGQDRxKb66	Marple South & High Lane	multi	Within 2km of DC	A frame	Good	No	Council	yes	Route to sport and leisure facilities (pool, gym, sports hall etc – not parks, see below)	Route to train station (high frequency station)	Sealed Surface - Good	Name route (Fred Perry, Alan Newton, others?)	None	22
165	Middlewood Way A6 NW	https://maps.ap.p.goo.gl/p9M1aaXievg2Rk1Y6	Marple South & High Lane	ped	Within 2km of DC	Gap under 1.2	Poor	No	Council	no	Access to Greenspace*	Route to bus stop (high frequency stop)	Sealed Surface - Poor	Name route (Fred Perry, Alan Newton, others?)	None	19
166	Middlewood Way A6 SW	https://maps.ap.p.goo.gl/eBMfX4y3jS3Vh5zP6	Marple South & High Lane	ped	Within 2km of DC	A frame	Good	No	Council	no	Access to Greenspace*	Route to bus stop (high frequency stop)	Gravel	Name route (Fred Perry, Alan Newton, others?)	None	17

9 Appendix C - Examples of Recent Access Control Upgrades

9.1 In 2022 Cheshire East Council responded to users request to remove barriers on the 7mile (11km) section of the Middlewood Way in their boundary. Narrow metal hoops have been removed and the control points made accessible to all users. The example below is from Brocklehurst Lane, Bollington (images taken from Google street view)



9.2 In 2023 Manchester City Council removed all restrictive controls leading into and along the length of the Fallowfield Loop, all controls are now 1.5m spaced bollards. The example below is from Ladybarn Lane. (images from Google street view and Stockport Council Officer)



9.3 In February 2023 owing to site access for maintenance the A-frame on Lapwing Lane in Brinnington was removed. In accordance with the Access Control Policy statement, this discriminatory barrier was replaced with an accessible bollard providing a minimum gap of 1.5m.

