

17 OCTOBER, 2019

05

Petition: A Marked, Safe Route along National Cycling Route 5

Ward(s) Pelsall, Rushall-Shelfield, St. Matthews

Portfolios: Councillor A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Executive Summary:

This report provides a response to a petition calling for improvements to complement the National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) in north Walsall. It outlines a way forward to further investigate and design such improvements, and ultimately implement them with funding from the West Midlands 'Better Streets Community Fund' before July 2021.

Measures to encourage walking and cycling are in accord with the Council's Transport Strategy, the Strategic Transport Plan for the West Midlands, and the Black Country Core Strategy.

Reason for scrutiny:

The Chair of the Committee has requested a report to be prepared following receipt of a petition with more than 500 signatories.

Recommendations:

- 1 That the Committee note the intention to undertake initial feasibility work to consider the suitability of the proposed measures;
- 2 That the Committee agree to receive a further update report in six months' time.

Background papers:

- Transport in Walsall: 2017-2022 (Walsall Council, published 2017)
- Movement for Growth: The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (West Midlands Combined Authority, published 2016)
- Black Country Core Strategy (Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Councils, adopted 2011)

Resource and legal considerations:

Better Streets Community Fund capital monies up to £150,000 have been identified to develop and implement this scheme, subject to further approvals by West Midlands Combined Authority; grant agreement; and inclusion in the Walsall Council Capital Programme for 2019/20 and 2020/21. The risk of any abortive spend (should a capital asset not be enhanced or created as a consequence of the feasibility work

not being able to demonstrate safe, effective and affordable physical measures) will need to be underwritten by the Council, from an appropriate revenue budget. Whilst the likelihood of this risk occurring is 'medium', the value of this risk is 'low'.

The risk of time and cost overruns will be managed by reserving an element of the overall capital budget as a contingency fund. This risk will be actively monitored and managed by the designated project manager.

NCN5 is a shared-use cycle route across private land. Walsall Council as Highway Authority for the area has no statutory duty, requirement or authorisation to maintain routes on private land which are not recorded as definitive public rights of way and adopted highway maintainable at public expense. Responsibility for maintenance of routes on private land rests with the land owner.

Under the Equalities Act 2010, Walsall Council has a statutory duty to consider the requirements of people with protected characteristics, including disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments to enable access to services.

In accordance with the Crime, Disorder and Drugs Misuse Reduction Act, Walsall Council has a duty to consider the impact of its actions on crime and antisocial behaviour.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

'Movement for Growth' and 'Transport in Walsall' support the Council's vision that 'Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised' and purpose 'To create an environment that provides opportunities for all individuals and communities to fulfil their potential' as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2018-2021. Further, it underpins delivery against the Council's priorities, including: -

- Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses;
- People have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities.

The proposed improvements promote cycling and walking and will help encourage residents and stakeholders to pursue active and healthy lifestyles.

Citizen impact:

'Movement for Growth' and 'Transport in Walsall' delivery programmes have been tested against the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are:-

- Giving every child the best start in life – *programmes include measures to support travel to school by sustainable modes, which is part of a rolling programme across the Borough;*
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – *measures to promote sustainable modes help promote healthy and independent travel choices;*
- Creating fair employment and good work for all – *improved transport networks help people access employment and training opportunities;*
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all – *access to paid employment is facilitated by improved transport networks;*

- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – *programmes include active travel, public transport and road safety measures, which all support sustainable places and communities;*
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – *healthy travel choices, such as walking or cycling, can help prevent ill health.*

The proposed improvements make sustainable travel – cycling and walking – available to all residents and stakeholders in this corridor.

Environmental impact:

The proposed improvements are intended to enhance conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, and help improve road safety.

Through its delivery of a transport capital programme, the Council identifies good practice for adapting to, and mitigating the effects of, climate change and promoting environmental and economic sustainability. This includes promoting walking and cycling as part of our transport networks.

Performance management:

Scrutiny of the Council's efforts to promote the 'Movement for Growth' and 'Transport in Walsall' agendas will help promote efficiency of service delivery. Transport policy is continually developing and evolving with regard to local issues. Project and programme delivery adapts and responds to current and future challenges.

Reducing inequalities:

As part of the delivery of 'Movement for Growth' and 'Transport in Walsall', consideration has been given to ensuring that the needs of all sections of the community are considered in transport projects. Further, 'Movement for Growth' has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Delivery programmes will assist in improving facilities for all modes of transport by focusing on improving access to key services and facilities such as education, job opportunities and health care facilities. The improvements envisaged will help reduce inequalities by ensuring that NCN5 is easily accessible to recumbent cyclists, mobility-aid users and disabled people.

Consultation:

Planning, Engineering and Transportation
Community Safety, Resources and Transformation
Regeneration and Development

Contact Officer:

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Report

1 Petition

- 1.1 A petition has been received by the Council with over 1,000 signatures requesting a marked, safe route from the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 5 at Ryecroft Cemetery on-street to the town centre, with additional improvements to include a cycle crossing at Harden Road/Station Road, Rushall and modified anti-motor cycle barriers at a number of locations to make the cycle route more accessible for various users – see **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 This report has been developed in response to that petition.

2 Better Streets Community Fund

- 2.1 The West Midlands Mayor and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is administering a 'Better Streets Community Fund', which was launched to help improve local streets by making them a better place to live and move about in. Across the West Midlands, £2 million funding is being made available for community-led projects that make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
- 2.2 Several proposals were put forward in the Walsall area, including a bid which is in line with the received petition. Initial assessment of the various bids by officers at the local authorities and TfWM has concluded that this bid is worthy of further consideration and it has been included in a draft programme with indicative capital funding of £150k. Subject to further approvals, all schemes are to be delivered by July 2021.

3 Anti-Social Behaviour in this Corridor

- 3.1 Separate to the proposal for an improved cycle route, NCN Route 5 has seen a high level of anti-social behaviour, especially the unauthorised use of motorcycles on the route and adjacent public footpaths. A multi-agency response to this in 2016 saw the introduction of anti-motorcycle barriers. Whilst these barriers have curtailed some of the anti-social behaviour, work is still ongoing in 2019 to develop a corridor-wide strategy to tackle these and related issues.
- 3.2 An element of the proposed cycle improvements includes modification of some of the anti-motorcycle barriers at certain locations, and therefore requires the consideration and acceptance of other officers, agencies and landowners before installation can be agreed.
- 3.3 At Harden Road/Station Road, Rushall a previous signal-controlled 'Toucan' (pedestrian and cycle) crossing was also repeatedly vandalised and subsequently removed in response. The petition and bid proposes the reintroduction of a 'cycle crossing' at this location, which will require further consideration by officers in the Black Country Urban Traffic Control (UTC) Team and Road Safety Team.

4 On-Street Cycle Facilities

- 4.1 In addition to the cycle crossing at Rushall, the proposal also includes on-street facilities from Ryecroft Cemetery to Walsall town centre. An indicative route along

Cartbridge Lane South, Lichfield Road and through the Butts is outlined.

- 4.2 There are two potential options for accommodating a safer cycle route; a shared route on the footway or an on-road marked route. The aspiration appears to be to develop a shared route on the footway along Cartbridge Lane South and the A461 Lichfield Road to Westbourne Road, before continuing through the Butts.
- 4.3 A widening of the footway to create such a facility may necessitate the narrowing of the carriageway in certain locations. The initial assessment is that this may potentially affect pedestrian refuges and the centre hatched area on Lichfield Road in the section between Butts Road and Westbourne Road. A possible alternative may be to develop a route using Borneo Street, which is already a 20mph Zone and has also been the subject of requests for further traffic management measures.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Given the strong local support for cycle improvements from NCN Route 5 to the town centre and the availability (subject to further approvals) of capital funding from the Better Streets Community Fund to implement such improvements, the proposed way forward is to: -
 - **Feasibility Assessment** – undertake an initial feasibility assessment of the suitability of the proposals with various stakeholders, including Community Protection, Public Rights of Way, Road Safety and Urban Traffic Control colleagues; landowners; Sustrans; and West Midlands Police. This will involve a review of the design of the proposed modified anti-motorcycle barrier; cycle crossing; and on-street facilities. This initial work will take up to three months, and be complete by mid-January 2020.
 - **Development & Design** – providing that all feasibility issues can be resolved to the satisfaction of all stakeholders, further development and design work would be undertaken in preparation for scheme implementation. This will take up to three months, and be complete by mid-April 2020.
 - **Implementation** – subject to all design issues being resolved and the availability of the Council's highways contractor, the scheme would be delivered in spring 2020.
 - **Monitoring & Evaluation** – the improvements would then be monitored and evaluated for a pilot period throughout spring and summer 2020, with this work concluding in autumn 2020.
- 5.2 If the monitoring and evaluation outcome required no changes to the implemented scheme, no further action would be taken, except routine maintenance by the various infrastructure asset owners. However, if there were unintended negative impacts as a result of the measures delivered, remedial action would be required before the conclusion of the Better Streets Community Fund period in July 2021.

Nation Cycle Route 5 (NCN 5)

From Pelsall to Walsall via Cartbridge Lane South,
Walsall Arboretum and Walsall College

Access for All legitimate Users

By Andrew Moulton and Peter Hubbard

Disabled Cyclists

Supported and Sponsored by Cllr Richard Worrall

Definition of Inclusive Cycling

Cycling networks should:

- Link trip origins and key destinations
- Continuous and Coherent Routes
- Crossing Provisions for crossing busy roads
- Safe access for **ALL** Pedestrians, Mobility Scooters, and **All** Cyclists during road works and any works in trimming or undergrowth.

“The needs of **ALL** people with or without various types and degrees of disability must be taken into account through consultation and design”

Barriers on NCN 5

- Were installed by Walsall Council to prevent entry by motor cycles and vehicles
- Access Issues and equal opportunity problems for cyclists, mobility scooters, disabled people, able bodied people and families when initially designed and installed to exclude motorcycles and vehicles.
- **Barriers present issues for**
 - users of tricycles, recumbents and semi recumbents
 - Hand cranked cycles
 - Wheelchairs/carers
 - mobility scooters
 - Disabled people using walking aids
 - Families

Barriers should be accessible not inaccessible to legitimate users of NCN 5

Inclusivity



Real Risks of adapted cycles on the roads

- **Vulnerable**: Due to width and height of adapted cycles, e.g. using a Hand Cycle you **are not able** to indicate with hands as you are **not able** to steer or pedal.
- **Higher visibility**: expensive indicator systems, high vis lights, mirrors, high vis clothing
- **Manoeuvring**: Requires waiting for opportunities and extra wide gaps in traffic to.
- **Health Risks**: In direct line of exhaust fumes from vehicles

Why Cycle NCN 5

- **Safe environment for ALL Cyclist & Pedestrians**
- **Easy to ride, walk and run. A good sound surface**
- **Near to residential areas**
- **Relaxing & Scenic Route**
- **Possible direct route into Walsall**
- **No traffic**
- **No fumes or emissions**

NO Access onto NCN 5 via 'n' barriers
at Station Rd, Pelsall
for adapted cycles, Trikes, Mobility Scooters etc.



'n' barriers on Station Road Pelsall are **NOT** wide enough to get adapted cycles, trikes, Mobility Scooters etc. through.
A RADAR lock has been fitted to the gate by Sustrans, however grass cutting is not done often enough giving NO access!

NCN 5 Pelsall



National Cycling Route 5 with a cyclist heading toward Brownhills

Impassable Barriers on NCN 5 Victor St, Pelsall and Station Rd, Rushall



No Access at Station Road - 'P' Barriers 21" apart (Movable 'P' Post and Cycle Crossing required)



The 'P' Barriers at Station Rd, Rushall and Cartbridge Lane South are 21" apart and are NOT wide enough to allow a adapted cycle, Trike, mobility scooters etc. through let alone a disabled person with sticks or crutches etc.

No Access at Cartbridge Lane South



Again these 'P' Barriers are NOT wide enough to allow a adapted cycle, Trike, cycle, mobility scooter etc. through let alone a disabled person on sticks or crutches etc. 21" wide P to P.

Possibility of a continuous safe route to Walsall Arboretum, Town Centre and Walsall College

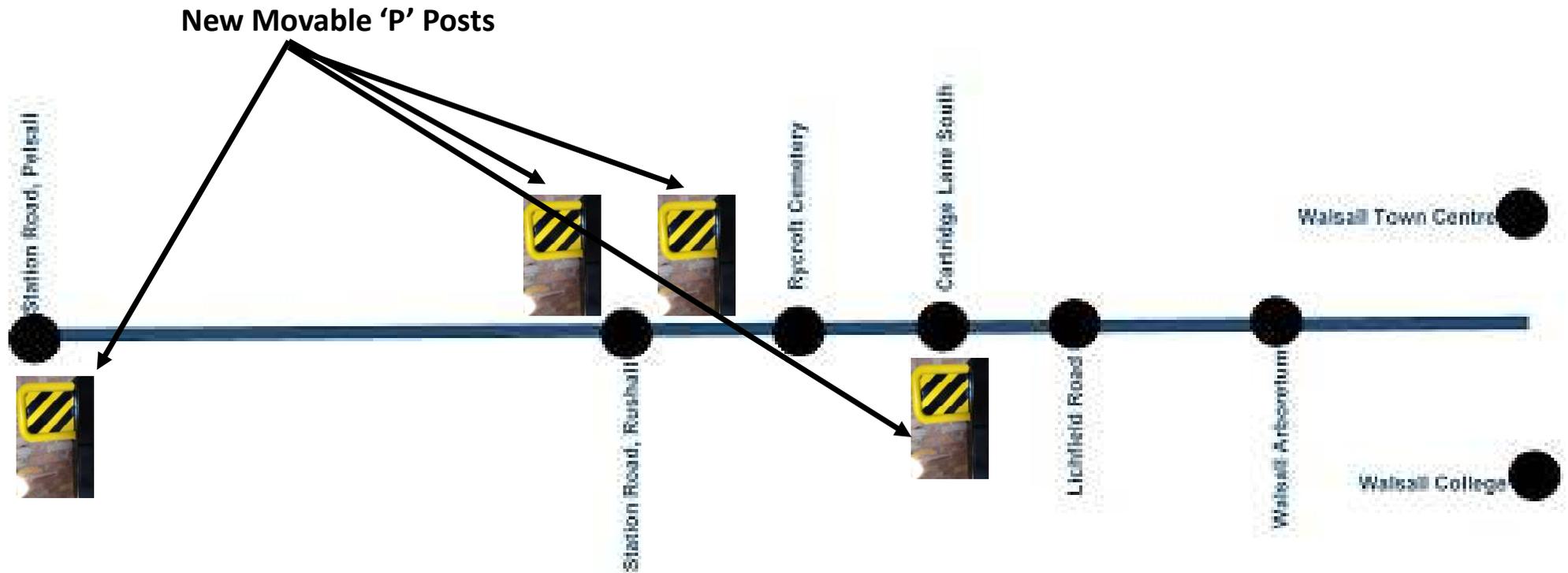
- NCN 5 stops at Rycroft Cemetery
- Access down NCN 5 via movable 'P' Posts that are lockable and safe for **ALL**
- Possible access into Cartbridge Lane South via a movable 'P' Post
- Existing 'P' Posts – 'P to P' are only 21" apart P to P.



Benefits of Modified 'P' Barriers

- Gives access to ALL cyclists and ALL Pedestrians.
- Use of **RADAR** key to unlock and lock movable 'P' barrier
- Pilot on NCN 5 from Pelsall to Walsall.
- Discussions have been had with Walsall Council, Sustrans, TFWM and Cycling UK.
- Supports Disability Discrimination Act and LTN 2/08
- No Maintenance
- Anti Vandalism
- No Entrapment

Proposed Route into Walsall from Pelsall on NCN 5



The Proposed Route

- Station Rd, Pelsall (Movable 'P' Post required)
- Station Rd, Rushall with Cycle Crossing (Movable 'P' Post required)
- Cartbridge Lane South (Movable 'P' Post required)
- Lichfield Rd with a Safe Marked Shared Cycle/Pedestrian pathway
- To the Arboretum middle gate
- Or via Butts St and Upper Forester St to Walsall Town Centre and Walsall College via Existing Cycle/Pedestrian pathway

Station Rd – Pelsall. 'n' Barriers (Movable 'P' Post required)



National Cycle Network Route 5 – Pelsall Ln.



Station Rd, Rushall - 'P' Barriers 21" apart
(Movable 'P' Post and Cycle Crossing required)



Cartbridge Lane South – ‘P’ Barriers 21” apart (Movable ‘P’ Post required)



Lichfield Road – requires a marked shared Cycle / Pedestrian Pathway (Thin Blue Line)



Walsall Arboretum

Access via the Middle Gate on Lichfield St



Town Centre accessed via Upper Forester St and Lichfield St



Walsall College accessed via Upper Forester St onto the existing cycle / Pedestrian Pathway



With Thanks to all who supported the Thin Blue Line Petition

- Village Café Pelsall (Angie) **234** collected
- Pelsall Hub **17** collected
- NISA Shelfield ('H' and Jodie) **296** collected
- Rushall Hub **11** collected
- Walsall Heart Care **29** collected
- Russell Cycles (Sue) **31** collected
- Walsall College (Helen Harvey) **58** collected
- Cllr Richard Worrall **40+** collected
- NCN 5 Users **156** collected
- 38 Degrees on-Line petition **134** collected
- A total of **1028** Petition Signatures Collected