



CABINET: 12 JANUARY 2021

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**Report of:** Corporate Director of Place and Community

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor David Evans

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**SUBJECT: ORMSKIRK EASTERN GATEWAY AND USE OF S106 MONIES ON THE EDGE HILL CYCLE LINK**

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Wards affected: Derby, Knowsley and Scott wards

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To propose that the plans prepared for the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway in partnership with Lancashire County Council be subject to public engagement, and to seek authority to spend S106 monies from development at Edge Hill University on the delivery of the Edge Hill Cycle Link as part of the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway project.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the proposals for the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway set out within this report are publicly consulted upon, jointly with Lancashire County Council.

2.2 That the use of £276,480 of S106 monies from planning permission 2011/1079/FUL be agreed for the improved provision for cycling and walking access between Ormskirk town centre and Edge Hill University as part of the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals.

2.3 That it be noted that the proposals set out in this report would involve the commitment of the Council's £185,000 of Capital Funding allocated to the Moor Street public realm improvements and £565,000 of Heritage Action Zone funding to the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway, together with £1.25m of Lancashire County Council LTP3 funding.

2.4 That this report is barred to call-in because a separate report will be taken to Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to seek their views on the proposals.

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### 3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 For some time, this Council and Lancashire County Council (LCC) have held the aspiration to create better cycling and walking links between Ormskirk town centre and Edge Hill University, and to renovate Ormskirk bus station. Both projects are referred to in the Lancashire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), the West Lancashire Highways & Transport Masterplan and the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan.
- 3.2 In addition, the section of Moor Street from the junction with St Helens Road to the junction with Moorgate is cluttered and in need of improvement, with pedestrian safety a concern where pedestrians cross on the bend as Moor Street turns into Railway Road and where pedestrians cross Moor Street from the bus station to St Helens Road. Such improvements include the enhancement of the public realm in the pedestrianised section to Moorgate, to complement the works done by LCC further west along Moor Street (between Moorgate and the Clock Tower) a few years ago.
- 3.3 As these three projects were discussed with colleagues at LCC, and plans begun to be drawn up, it was clear that it is sensible to consider all three projects as part of one Programme of Works and that, together, the three projects will reinvigorate this gateway to Ormskirk Town Centre. As such, the projects have been brought together under the umbrella of the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway to ensure that all three projects are delivered in a complementary fashion and in a way which will create cost-efficiencies in their construction.
- 3.4 In terms of funding for this Ormskirk Eastern Gateway programme:
- The Council committed £185,000 of capital funding to the public realm improvements on the pedestrianised section of Moor Street;
  - The Council has received nearly £500,000 in S106 monies from Edge Hill University, related to developments on their campus, for "improvement to local transport infrastructure to improve accessibility to the University Campus by means other than private car";
  - LCC has earmarked £1.25m of LTP3 funding to the Edge Hill Cycle Link and Ormskirk Bus Station projects; and
  - The Council were successful in a bid to Historic England for a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) for Ormskirk Town Centre, which attracted over £750,000 of funding, £565,000 of which is earmarked to add to the various sources identified above to deliver the improvements to Moor Street, Ormskirk bus station and the Edge Hill Cycle Link.
- 3.5 As a result, and excluding the S106 monies already spent on the rail station to bus station path in 2019/20 as the first step in delivering the Edge Hill Cycle Link, there is a total fund of nearly £2.4m available for the delivery of these three

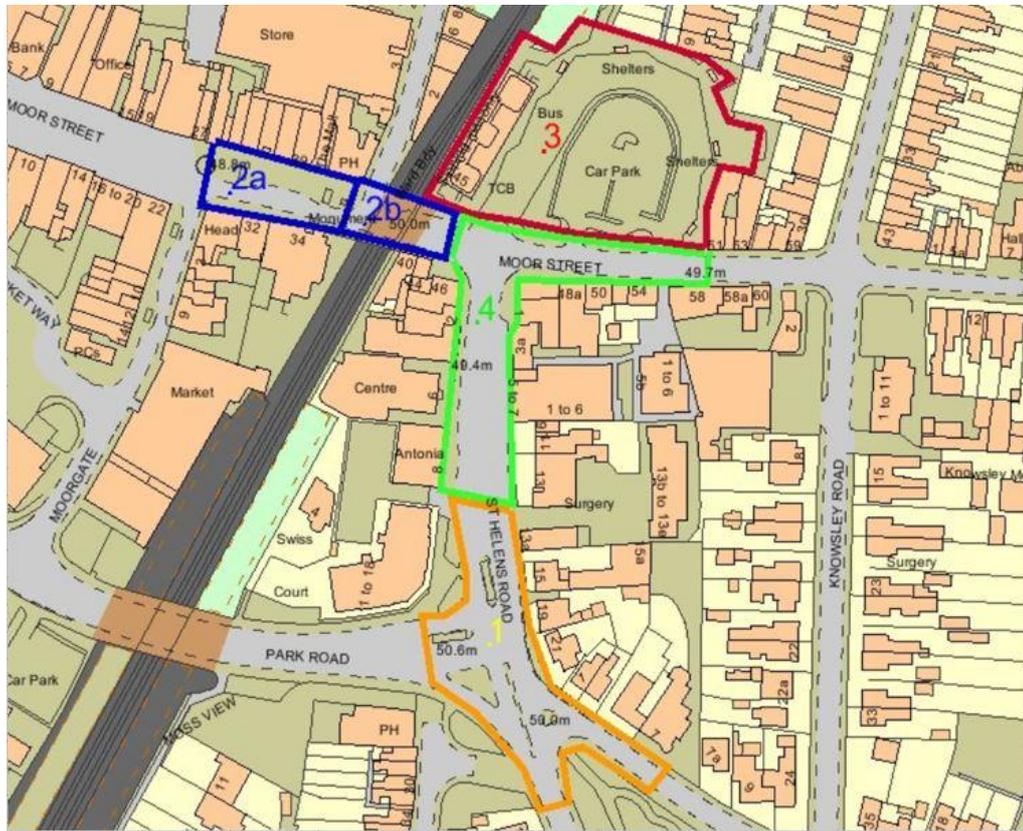
projects from a combination of the above funding. Approximately £250,000 of S106 and LTP3 monies has already been committed to the planned improvements to the Ruff Lane/St Helens Road/Park Road junction as part of the delivery of Edge Hill Cycle Link in Spring 2021. These Section 106 monies (£103,860) from planning consent 2009/1052/FUL were committed at the Council's Cabinet meeting in September 2020.

- 3.6 WLBC and LCC officers have now prepared proposals for delivering all of the projects within the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway between 2021 and 2024, and propose to put those proposals out for public engagement in January / February 2021.

#### **4.0 ORMKSIRK EASTERN GATEWAY PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The Programme for the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway can be split into the following phases, as show in the plan below:

- Phase 1 - Ruff Lane/St Helens Road/Park Road junction (the improvements already agreed and planned for Spring 2021)
- Phase 2a – pedestrianised section of Moor Street from Moorgate to Railway Road
- Phase 2b – Moor Street from end of pedestrianised section to Bus Station
- Phase 3 – Bus Station site (including bus station car park)
- Phase 4 – Moor Street / St Helens Road junction



- 4.2 The plans provided at Appendix A show proposals in more detail for each part of the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway. Phase 1 was agreed by Cabinet in September (in allocating S106 monies to it), but in relation to the remaining phases, in summary, the proposals are:

#### Phase 2a

- 4.3 This Council consulted on proposals for public realm improvements on this pedestrianised section of Moor Street in August 2019. These proposals, and the feedback received from the public, has been shared with LCC, who will now work-up and deliver the proposals for Moor Street, seeking to match the public realm created on the rest of the pedestrianised section of Moor Street a few years ago.

#### Phase 2b

- 4.4 The proposals for this small section of Moor Street, over the rail bridge, are seeking to de-clutter the public realm in this area and narrow the carriageway to force cars to slow down as they enter this part of the road and then turn right onto Railway Road. The entrance to this area from the St Helens Road junction will involve a segregated cycle path crossing from the bus station to travel down St Helens Road and a pedestrian crossing, and there will be removal bollards to enable access westwards onto Moor Street from the St Helens Road junction to be closed off for events and potentially for an extended Market. There will also be a defined pedestrian crossing of Railway Road for movement between the bus station and the pedestrianised part of Moor Street. Surface and public realm materials used in this phase will complement that provided in other phases and be in-keeping with the Conservation Area.

### Phase 3

- 4.5 In relation to the bus station site, the proposals involve the retention of the horse-shoe shaped road for buses and coaches using the bus station, with the car park sitting within the horse-shoe and fronting Moor Street. However, on that same basic layout, the proposals do involve quite significant changes to the bus station, including:
- The demolition of the existing bus station building;
  - The creation of segregated cycle path north-south across the western side of the bus station (where the building currently is) to connect from the station-to station path in the north down to the new cycle path on St Helens Road;
  - A new "Cycle Hub" for secure, sheltered cycle parking;
  - The creation of a new, smaller building on the eastern side of the bus station to accommodate public toilets and facilities for bus drivers;
  - A change to the exit from the car park;
  - A redistribution of the bus stands (although there will still be five stands, with new bus shelters, for regular bus services and a drop-off/pick-up stand specifically for coaches); and
  - New surfacing (in keeping with the Conservation Area) throughout the pedestrian areas of the bus station.
- 4.6 In addition, should additional funding be identified, the new toilet building could be expanded to provide a small new market office and storage room, to provide an on-site base within the town centre for managing the Market (this is currently provided within the existing building). If the additional funding is not forthcoming, the market office will relocate to Derby Street and the existing storage facility will be retained

### Phase 4

- 4.7 This last phase of works will involve the completion of the cycle lanes and new crossings on St Helens Road / Moor Street, to link the sections already provided through Phase 1 and Phases 2b / 3. In addition, the proposals see a reconfiguration of the junction of St Helens Road and Moor Street to remove traffic signals from the junction itself and replace it with a mini-roundabout, and create a toucan crossing of St Helens Road just south of the junction to enable safe crossing by cyclists and pedestrians. This phase will follow-on from the completion of Phase 3, as temporary bus stops will need to be located on St Helens Road while the bus station is closed for the implementation of Phase 3. Surface and public realm materials used in this phase will complement that provided in other phases and be in-keeping with the Conservation Area.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Due to the current COVID pandemic and associated local restrictions, the public consultation on the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals will be a virtual consultation held primarily online, and it will be a joint consultation between WLBC and LCC. It will be held for 4 weeks in January / February 2021 and will be promoted via the Council's social media platforms. For those without access

to the internet, there will be a display in the window of a vacant shop unit in Ormskirk Town Centre showing the plans and providing information, as well as a press advert in a local newspaper, and both of these will provide contact phone numbers and email addresses for any queries and comments.

- 5.2 While the public consultation will be focused on the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals, the material will need to make reference to LCC's proposals for the Derby Street Rail Bridge and the upgrade of the SCOOT / UTC system connecting the traffic signals around Ormskirk's gyratory system, as these factors have influenced the traffic modelling which the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals are a part of. It is also appropriate that the consultation acknowledges that those changes to Derby Street Rail Bridge are currently LCC's proposed solution to the maintenance issues associated with the bridge. However, the consultation will be clear that it is not seeking comments on the Derby Street Rail Bridge proposals.
- 5.3 Alongside the public consultation, a report detailing the proposals for the Eastern Gateway will be taken to Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee to seek their views on the proposals. The Committee's feedback will be reported back to Cabinet, alongside the feedback from the public consultation, in March 2021. As a result, recommendation 2.4 above bars this report to call-in, thus enabling the public consultation to take place as soon as possible and without delay to the overall programme for the Eastern Gateway proposals.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The delivery of the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals will bring various positive benefits for sustainability and the community, including:
- improving the public realm in the area, to enhance the historic character;
  - making walking and cycling easier and safer between the town centre and Edge Hill University (and Ormskirk Hospital, via Ruff Lane entrance); and
  - making the town centre more attractive as a visitor destination, and so supporting the town centre economy.
- 6.2 Furthermore, the traffic modelling undertaken by LCC suggests that the improvements will not significantly increase journey times for cars around the gyratory or create congestion, but will provide much better public transport facilities in the Bus Station.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The budget currently available for the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals is outlined in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 above, and comes to a total of nearly £2.4m. The cost of the various elements of the proposals comes to a total of approximately £2.9m, and this would rise to nearly £3.1m if a larger building is developed on the eastern side of the bus station, to accommodate the small market office and storage room, as well as the toilet and bus driver facilities.
- 7.2 As such, there is currently a budget gap of between £500,000 and £700,000 on the project. WLBC and LCC officers are looking at various potential sources of

funding to meet this budget gap, with the most promising source appearing to be LCC's recently created Economic Recovery & Growth Fund. WLBC have made an initial submission to LCC's Economic Development Service to apply for this Fund, and that submission includes funding to meet this budget gap on the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals.

- 7.3 Given that part of the funding for the project involves the remaining S106 funding collected from developments at Edge Hill University (£276,480 of S106 monies from planning permission 2011/1079/FUL), paragraph 2.2 above recommends that Cabinet agree to the allocation of this funding to the Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals, in order to commit the funds to the provision of improved walking and cycling infrastructure between Ormskirk town centre and the university campus.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 In relation to the recommendation at paragraph 2.1, given it is only proposing a public consultation on the proposals, there is not considered to be any significant risk associated with the recommendation. While there is always the possibility that some respondents to the consultation may not like aspects of the proposals, and this can bring a risk of reputational damage to the Council, this should not prevent the Council from making proposals and engaging with the public on those proposals, as consultation is a vital part of the process of bringing positive change to the Borough. The project will also reinforce the Council's image as a "green" Council committed to delivery improvements to walking and cycling, but also making connections that enhance the economy of the borough (in this case in relation to connections between Ormskirk Town Centre and Edge Hill University).
- 8.2 There is no risk to the Council of losing the S106 monies if LCC fail to deliver the scheme on programme as the monies have to be committed by 31 December 2022 and they are being committed through this report.
- 8.3 In relation to the other sources of funding, there is a risk that, should the Council not choose to move forward with consultation on these proposals, or subsequently not take forward any proposals for improvements to this area of Ormskirk Town Centre, that LCC and Historic England may withdraw their offer of match funding to reallocate it to projects elsewhere that are making progress.
- 8.4 Finally, there is also a risk that further funding cannot be secured to meet the budget gap. While it is considered that this risk is small, given the various opportunities currently being explored by officers, if the risk was to be realised, a review of the bus station element proposals would need to be undertaken to agree an acceptable scheme within the funding parameters. If the scheme has to be revised it is unlikely to have a material impact on the timescale for delivery.

## **9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals will have health and wellbeing benefits as they will make it easier to cycle and walk through this part of the town centre and to the south-eastern side of Ormskirk. They will also create a more pleasant

environment in this part of the town centre (which can benefit mental health), and improve safety at the Moor Street/St Helens Road/Railway Road junctions.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals are likely to have a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders and so an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared (see Appendix B).

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Plans of Ormskirk Eastern Gateway proposals

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment