

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

6 July 2022

Report title	Noose Lane to School Street Active Travel Route	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Steve Evans City Environment and Climate Change	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	East Park	
Accountable Director	John Roseblade, Director of City Housing and Environment	
Originating service	City Transport	
Accountable employee	Steven Edwards Tel Email	A454 Programme Manager 01902 551798 Steven.edwards@blackcountrytransport.org.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	City Housing and Environment Leadership Team Meeting	7 June 2022

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to approve:

1. The construction of a segregated cycle route from Noose Lane to School Street, a project that will form part of the A454 corridor active travel scheme.
2. The commencement of Early Contract Involvement totalling a spend of £15,000.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is asked to note:

1. Approval of a capital budget for delivery of the scheme, subject to a signed grant agreement, will be sought as part of the Capital Budget Outturn 2021-2022 including Quarter One Capital Budget Monitoring 2022-2023 report at this same meeting.
2. The Director of Finance will review and enter into the grant agreement for Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 for delivery of the scheme.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the construction of a segregated cycle route from Noose Lane to School Street (residing in the East Park ward).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council, supported by Black Country Transport, have been successful in their bid to receive funding from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 (ATF3). £1.905 million from this Department for Transport funding stream has been awarded to the construction of a segregated cycling route from Noose Lane to School Street.
- 2.2 The project will form part of the wider A454 corridor programme. This programme aims to provide high quality cycling infrastructure and tackle traffic congestion along the A454 (from Wolverhampton ring road to Walsall ring road).
- 2.3 The spending commitment deadline for this scheme is March 2023, therefore this would be the first section of the A454 corridor programme to be delivered.
- 2.4 The scheme would be complimentary to the scheme approved for development at Neachells Lane (City East Gateway Phase 3).

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

- 3.1 We have commissioned consultants to produce high-level designs of the possible cycling routes that could be delivered along the section of highway. We have consulted the relevant officers and stakeholders and asked for comment regarding these drawings.
- 3.2 The designs have fully incorporated the existing drawings that have been produced for Phase 3 of the A454 corridor programme (which is immediately west of the proposed Noose Lane to School Street route). This ensures consistency along the corridor.
- 3.3 Two different options were provided for consideration: a route along the central reservation and a route on the north side of the highway. After evaluating the options provided, we currently believe that the cycling route within the central reservation is the most viable option. This is due to the frontages on the north side of the carriageway being an obstacle in potential construction and making the route less user friendly. Along the central reservation cyclists will have no interaction with other highway users and whilst for east / west bound travellers it does mean an additional crossing of the carriageway, it does provide better links to the south along New Street and on to Darlaston.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 If this recommendation were to be dismissed, there would be a gap in the A454 corridor scheme, as the section from Noose Lane to School Street would be unfunded. This would be an impediment to the programme's aim of delivering a consistent end-to-end cycling route from Wolverhampton ring road to Walsall ring road.

4.2 If delegation of authority is rejected, this would delay the programme which has been scheduled, and majorly risk missing the March 2023 deadline to have spend committed.

5.0 Reasons for decision(s)

5.1 The route from Noose Lane to School Street would form an integral section of the A454 corridor programme, which is currently in its development stage. Phases 1 and 2 between Middle Cross and Hickman Avenue and Phase 3 around Neachells Lane have already been approved for development and funding is being sought to allow implementation.

5.2 The scheme would provide a safe and direct cycling route along the carriageway, which is completely segregated from road traffic. This will encourage residents to shift from using cars to using active travel modes.

5.3 Providing residents with high-quality cycling infrastructure will give them more opportunity to lead healthy and active lifestyles and will also contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions (as there will be a safe and convenient option to travel by bicycle).

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 Approval will be sought for supplementary capital budgets of £1.905 million for delivery of the scheme Noose Lane to School Street Active Travel Route (forming part of the A454 corridor) as part of the Capital Budget Outturn 2021-2022 including Quarter One Capital Budget Monitoring 2022-2023 report at this same meeting as follows:

	2022- 2023 £000	2023- 2024 £000	Total £000
Capital Expenditure			
Noose Lane to School Street Active Travel Route	500	1405	1905

6.2 This will be fully funded through Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 (ATF3) grant awarded by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) from the Department of Transport and subject to a signed grant agreement with WMCA and the Council. The Director of Finance will review and accept the grant on behalf of the Council.

6.3 To meet the required commencement on site date it may be necessary to commence some activities before the ATF3 grant agreement has been formalised. Any advanced activities will be initially funded through the approved A454 Transforming Cities Fund (TCF2) budget.

[ES/21062022/F]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 As detailed in the body of this report, the Noose Lane to School Street Active Travel Route forms part of the wider A454 corridor programme. The Council needs to be mindful of the potential of adjoining land owners serving the Council with blight notices, pursuant to Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992. In such circumstances, the Council will need to consider each claim on a case by case basis and may need to serve counter-notices. In these circumstances, Legal Services will be able to provide advice on the appropriate course of action. The proposed scheme sits wholly within the existing highway boundary so the risk of third party objections should be minimal.
- 7.2 Subject to the recommendation in this report being approved, the Council propose to enter into a grant agreement. The Council in accordance with its Constitution is permitted to enter into such agreements.
- 7.3 Legal Services will review the grant agreement and continue to provide advice in relation to this transaction.
[JA/MP/25052022/T]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 The scheme will be designed in accordance with all Department of Transport guidance to ensure it is accessible to all members of the community. It will also be subject to a Road Safety Audit to ensure that the scheme will operate safely for all users.

9.0 All other implications

- 9.1 The scheme seeks to promote active travel as part of the wider commitment within the A454 corridor to provide good quality walking and cycling facilities thereby promoting modal shift away from the car. This will have benefits in supporting the Council's commitment to carbon reduction and the wellbeing of residents.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 Report to Cabinet (Resources) Panel; [City East Gateway A454 - Willenhall Road Phase 3 Consultation Feedback](#) 3 March 2020

11.0 Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Noose Lane to School Street ATF scheme drawings.