St Helens LCWIP **Active Travel Route Delivery**

Lea Green to Whiston Hospital (Phase 1)

Engagement Note August 2024



















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Background to the Engagement

The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy sets out the Government's aim to make walking and cycling the natural choice for all short journeys, or as a part of a longer journey. It sets out the aim to double cycling by 2025, and increase walking activity, particularly for children walking to school.

Our Borough Strategy 2021-2030 highlights the Council's aspiration to increase levels of walking and cycling across the borough, thereby improving health, boosting access to employment, and tackling the climate emergency. Successful delivery of the Council's Local Plan, Highways Asset Management Strategy, Active Lives Strategy, Climate Response Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, amongst other strategies, will all contribute to increasing the proportion of local trips taken by walking and cycling.

Residents and businesses increasingly expect the Council to put active modes of transport at the forefront of local policy and plans. Polling conducted by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority shows that most residents want to see greater investment in walking, cycling and public transport, with only 27% of residents thinking that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

To enable active travel, the Lea Green to Whiston Hospital Active Travel Route is proposed between James Roby Way, (formerly the Linkway) at the junction with Elton Head Road and the hospital. The route forms part of the adopted local (St Helens) and sub-regional (Liverpool City Region) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan's.

Due to the length of the route, the project has been divided into distinct phases, with delivery scaled to funding availability. The Council working with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have successfully secured funding from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund, to deliver Phase 1 of the improvements, with funding still to be secured for the further future stages.

Previous Engagement to Date

In 2022 a six-week consultation was held with the community on the outline proposals for the full route (Lea Green to our western borough boundary). Local residents, businesses and stakeholders have helped to shape the project and have a say on the designs from an early stage.

The consultation process was commenced by a letter drop to all stakeholders within a localised area surrounding the proposed Lea Green to Whiston Hospital Active Travel cycleway.

During the previous round of consultation, an in-person consultation event was held in August 2022 at Reeve Court Village Hall, alongside an online survey, online consultation event and intercept survey on 14th July to ask the community about the outline design proposals.

Through the intercept survey residents using the route were asked what their current transportation habits involved, and their opinions on the current infrastructure and the proposed changes.

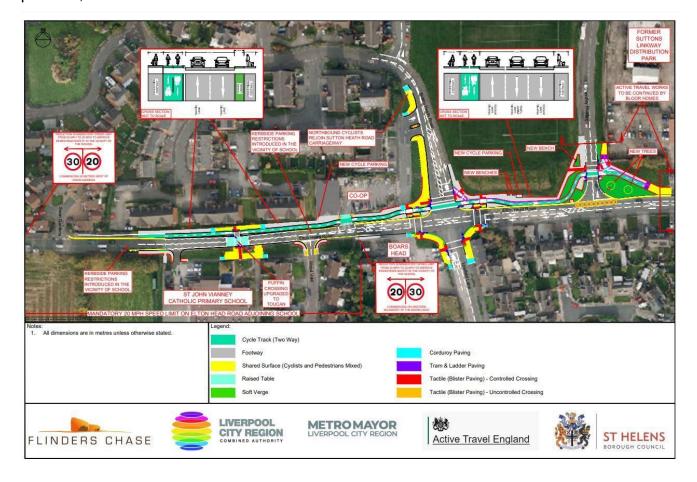
An overview of the key results for Phase 1 can be shown below:

- 57% of respondents supported the idea of having a protected cycle route along Elton Head Road, between Sherdley Road and Rainhill Road (only 32% disagreed and 11% with no preference).
- 63% of respondents agreed with extending parking restrictions in the vicinity of St John Vianney Catholic Primary School to make the road safer for pedestrians and cyclists (only 20% disagreed and 17% with no preference).

The feedback from the previous consultations have helped to inform the final designs. The percentages provided are based on a subset of the total questions as not all questions were completed by participants, and nil responses classified as no preference.

Current Engagement Overview

Considering the previous engagement, the current design proposals were developed by St Helens Borough Council. Officers reviewed the comments, with designs being amended, if possible, to consider the feedback from local residents and stakeholders.



The final design proposals, as summarised above, were shared via various channels, including online activity and physical leaflets, during July 2024.

A drop-in engagement session took place on Thursday, July 18, 2024, from 3pm to 7pm at St John Vianney Catholic Primary School on Elton Head Road.

This event allowed officers to answer any questions about the proposal and listen to any concerns or recommendations. The event was scheduled to coincide with the school pick-up period and the early evening. The event was held at the school to maximise accessibility for those immediately affected.

Various political and public stakeholder groups were also contacted via email for feedback on the final designs, as well as an invitation to the drop-in engagement session. Ward councillors, disability groups, emergency services and public transport operators were among the groups who were contacted.

We collaborated closely with St John Vianney Catholic Primary School to ensure that information was communicated with parents and staff, and over 1,000 letters showing and describing the proposals were distributed to residents and businesses in the geographic area shown below.



Posters were also displayed to notify the local community of the drop-in engagement event.

The Council's Communications Team led on the content, comment management and the launch of all social media advertising across the St Helens Borough Council website and Facebook.

To summarise, the following methods of engagement took place:

- In-Person Engagement Drop in Event: One event hosted along the route throughout the afternoon and evening (as seen in appendix 5).
- Social Media Advertising: Existing social media channels were used to notify
 residents, businesses, and stakeholders within the Borough of the final designs and the
 drop-in engagement event (as seen in appendix 2).
- Press Activity: Press releases were issued to key local publications, with references to the drop-in engagement session (as seen in appendix 3).
- Dedicated Active Travel Proposed Route: Lea Green to Whiston Hospital Website:
 An established dedicated page updated to reflect the Lea Green to Whiston Hospital project (as seen in appendix 1), including the final designs, the consultation feedback report, and an invitation to the public drop-in engagement event.
- Posters: Several posters highlighting the final designs and the in-person drop in engagement event were distributed.
- Stakeholder Social Media Posts: Stakeholders were encouraged to publish their own social media posts with reference to the drop-in engagement session and the final designs (as seen in appendix 4).
- Targeted Emails: Interested parties were also invited to email their views on the final designs and formally invited to the drop-in engagement event.

Drop In Engagement Event - Key Findings

Several comments and suggestions were obtained during the in-person drop-in engagement event, which had 30 attendees from 3pm to 7pm.

Main Engagement Feedback Themes

Wood Vale - Parking

Main Themes	Officer Comments
Some residents of Wood Vale, a small cul-de-sac next to St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, expressed their concerns around	Council officers are aware of the reported parking difficulties encountered in Wood Vale during pick-up and drop-off hours.
parking. Furthermore, they thought that implementing parking limits	During on-site reviews, officers observed that the street's parking demand is already at capacity, implying that the implementation of parking restrictions along Elton Head Road is unlikely to
outside the school on Elton Head Road would worsen the	exacerbate difficulties further.
existing parking issues and congestion during school pick-up and drop-off hours.	Civil enforcement officers employed by the Council can only enforce parking restrictions that are governed by the requisite Traffic Regulation Order and relevant lining and signing.
	The Council can confirm that any vehicle parked preventing the exiting of a vehicle from an access point could constitute obstruction of the highway, which is an offence.
	It is the Police who have the statutory powers to deal with this specific offence, and that of double parking, and only the Police can determine if obstruction has occurred or not, and not the Council.
	If obstruction occurs, residents are advised to contact the Police direct via their website to report a road traffic incident
	https://www.merseyside.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/report-a-road-traffic-incident/ to ensure prompt action.
Several residents requested advice on how to stop people	It was explained that the Council can only enforce parking restrictions that are specified by the
from parking over their drive.	appropriate Traffic Regulation Order and relevant lines and signage. In the cases of obstruction, the

Police have the statutory authority to deal with this particular offence.

It was advised that the installation of access protection markings (H Markings) can be used to highlight to motorists who are unfamiliar with an area that an access exists at the location of the marking.

Should residents wish to request a H Marking, please visit the below website https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/3130/Request-an-H-Marking.

Alongside this, it was advised to report the incident using the police website http://www.merseyside.police.uk/ to ensure prompt

action.

Elton Head Road - Parking Restrictions

Main Themes	Officer Comments
Many attendees highlighted the current parking problems on the northern side of Elton Head Road near the school.	The Council has listened to earlier consultation concerns and has incorporated the necessary lining and signs into the proposals. This ensures that those who park in violation of the rule can be subject to enforcement.
It was explained that the current shared use path on the northern side of Elton Head Road is routinely utilised for parking during drop-off and pick-up hours.	As part of this approach, the Council will request that the Civil Parking Enforcement Team visit the site on to deter people from parking on the cycling track.
Those who raised this concern requested that current parking limits and prohibitive infrastructure be expanded within	Also, given that this concern was previously expressed through consultation, the design includes a higher-than-average kerb to physically prevent people from readily bumping up and parking on the path.
the proposal.	Following feedback, it was agreed that this prohibitive infrastructure would be included in the plans up to Swan Gardens, through the introduction of a bollard to prevent vehicle access.
It was raised to officers' attention that not only does parking occur along the northern side of Elton Head Road, along the shared-use path, but also on the southern side as parents and guardians park on the grass verge.	Noting this parking and safety concern, the designs have since been amended to include a knee-high rail or the provision of bollards to prevent vehicular access across the grass verge.

Parking concerns were raised, with It is expected that the implementation of a highone resident asking where parents quality segregated cycling and pedestrian facility will and guardians should drop off their provide a safer route for local parents, guardians, and child at pick up and drop off times. students, enabling them to walk, wheel, or cycle to and from school. For those who are unable to travel sustainably, it is advised to park and stride. This reduces traffic, congestion and road danger around the school gates whilst allowing children the chance to get active for the last part of their journey. Council Officers have also been in communication with the school to suggest alternative locations to park within a 5-minute walking zone, such as the laybys provided on Sherdley Road.

Elton Head Road - Speed Limit

Main Themes	Officer Comments
The majority of residents who attended were in favour of reducing the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph on Elton Head Road.	Following feedback from the engagement, the proposed 20mph limit has been extended further west to connect with the current 20mph limit at the Broads.
In fact, the majority of respondents requested that the speed limit be extended from James Roby Way (previously the Linkway) and include the full length of Elton Head Road.	
Only one member of the public opposed the introduction of the 20-mph limit.	The proposed 24 hour speed limit reduction will be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which requires a separate consultation process.
They enquired if the 20-mph zone could only be in effect during school hours.	A part-time 20mph speed limit has been examined, but has not been implemented since it would not give the same degree of benefits, particularly outside of regular school hours when demand at the school is expected. This includes after-school groups, breakfast clubs, and events.

Elton Head Road - Speed Enforcement

Main Themes	Officer Comments
Many attendees asked for additional speed enforcement.	Upon completion of the scheme, vehicle speeds will be reviewed. Officers will work with Merseyside Police if further enforcement is necessary.
Some residents also suggested the below complementary	Additional markings to improve conspicuity of the
measures:	speed limit to be included within the design.
 Flashing speed indicators (Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) Speed limit roundels/ road markings 	Vehicle Activated Signs will be deployed on Elton Head Road, as part of the borough wide programme.
The placement of a raised table at the proposed toucan crossing was widely supported as a means of reducing speed.	Comments noted.

Elton Head Road - Maintenance

Main Themes	Officer Comments
One resident requested that overhanging vegetation on Elton Head Road be cut back so that the full width of the path can be utilised.	The concern will be raised with our Highway Inspector for action in accordance with powers contained within the Highways Act.

Junction - Timings

Main Themes	Officer Comments
A few residents voiced concern about the safety of the Elton Head Road/Lowfield Lane/Sutton Heath Road crossroads and requested longer pedestrian crossing durations.	Noted. This will be raised with our Traffic Signals team, with the signal phasing reviewed upon commissioning.
One person raised difficulty experienced turning right out of Elton Head Road into James Roby Way (previously the Linkway) and	The Council has recently reduced the speed limit to 40mph and upgraded all the crossings to be toucans, meaning both pedestrians and cyclists can use this provision. It has been noted that the junction is being reviewed as part of road safety measures.

enquired whether the plans included upgrading this junction.	The funding to complete this scheme is ring-fenced for active travel and therefore cannot be used to
	upgrade the junction for motorist use at James Roby Way.

Proposed Seating

Main Themes	Officer Comments
It was asked where the seats would be placed on Elton Head Road, near Platt's Playing Fields, with the suggestion that they be backless so that people may use them as they wished.	Comments have been noted, and benches will be specified accordingly.

Future Phases

Main Themes	Officer Comments
Some feedback was received on the route's next phase, with a mainly favourable outlook on connectivity from Lea Green to Whiston Hospital.	Due to the length of the route, the project has been divided into distinct phases, with delivery scaled to funding availability. The Council working with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have successfully secured funding from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund, to deliver phase one
Questions were raised about when the future phases would be developed.	of improvements, with funding still to be secured for the further future stages.
	The Council will continue to lobby for additional funding for the next phases.
One comment received had concerns that sections of the route, for example on Elton Head Road near Nutgrove Hall Drive, would not be wide enough to facilitate a segregated cycle facility.	The route is currently being designed to Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 Guidance, which sets out the requirements for safe and inclusive cycle infrastructure. In sections of the route which are 'pinch points' small sections of shared use may be required.
	The final designs for the subsequent phases are still to be shared following additional funding.
Although most residents were positive surrounding the whole Lea Green to Whiston Hospital Route, some residents asked for further monitoring of Elton Head Road, (to the west of Phase 1) to be investigated as there is a perceived speeding issue which	Comments noted, to allow for additional monitoring and evaluation ahead of the construction of the next phases, temporary flashing speed indicators (VAS signs) will be placed throughout the route as an enforcement measure prior to infrastructure changes.

residents would like to be	
monitored.	

Other Queries

Main Themes	Officer Comments
One parent/guardian who attended the engagement session had questions regarding mobility scooters and the impact of the	As a consequence of prior engagement, extra dropped kerbs will be erected as part of the proposal, providing increased accessibility.
scheme upon disability access.	Recent changes in guidance has since permitted the use of both Class 2 and Class 3 mobility scooters on cycle tracks (https://www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules/print).
One resident raised the issue that cars mount the pavement on Elton Head Road, when driving westbound from James Roby Way and turning right into Sherdley Road.	The proposed scheme will not change the kerb line at this junction. Officers will pass the information to our Traffic Management team for review.
They stated that when a larger vehicle is turning right there is not sufficient space for vehicles to pass and continue down Elton Head Road, causing impatience and therefore people mounting the kerb.	
One resident questioned why the red plastic temporary fences remained near James Roby Way, and asked if these could be replaced with the appropriate guard railing.	Officers will pass this request to our maintenance team.

Ward Member Briefing Comments

Ward Member Briefings was conducted prior to the engagement drop-in event, undertaken Thursday 11th July and Wednesday 17th July via Microsoft Teams.

Main Themes	Officer Comments
A query was raised about when the future phases will be built. It was recognized that the scheme must be phased but questions were asked to understand timescales. Another Member was interested to find out more about the whole of	Council officers reassured that they would continue to lobby for funding to complete the whole route, but this will be complete on a phases proportional basis. Council officers explained that the route links into existing infrastructure on Elton Head Road, which then links to Lea Green Station all the way to Whiston Hospital. The route will link key origindestination points and links people to key transport interchanges.
the route and where the destination point is. Concerns were noted over the Heron Foods application as construction has stalled with no further development since.	Members were reassured that council officers are working with the planning application applicant to make sure the active travel scheme links into the development.
Members reinforced that they receive regular complaints about the parking outside and near St John Vianney Catholic Primary	It was reinforced to members that council officers will work closely with the school to recommend '5-minute walking zones' which allows a park and stride method to and from school and reduces congestion.
School. Members recognised the need for parking restrictions outside St John Vianney Catholic Primary School as it becomes very congested	Council officers reinforced this need as it will discourage people parking dangerously and blocking visibility for people walking.
during school pick up and drop off time. It was asked if such parking restrictions could be extended and how they will be enforced.	The Council has listened to earlier consultation concerns and has incorporated the necessary lining and signs into the proposals. This ensures that those who park in violation of the rule can be subject to enforcement.
now they will be enforced.	As part of this approach, the Council will request that the Civil Parking Enforcement Team visit the site on to deter people from parking on the cycling track.
	Also, given that this concern was previously expressed through consultation, the design includes a higher-than-average kerb to physically prevent people from readily bumping up and parking on the

	path.
	Following feedback, it was agreed that this prohibitive infrastructure would be included in the plans up to Swan Gardens, through the introduction of a bollard to prevent vehicle access.
There were concerns over James Roby Way, formerly the Linkway, and how it can be daunting to cross as a pedestrian.	It was explained that the Council has recently reduced the speed limit to 40mph and upgraded all the crossings to be toucans, meaning people walking and cycling can use this provision. It has been noted that the junction is being reviewed as part of road safety measures, however James Roby Way will not be impacted by the proposals for this route.
Members enquired what will be different as there is already provision for people cycling along	It was explained that currently, in some places along this section, there is a shared path with a white line.
Elton Head Road.	The new proposed plans will encourage segregation through a fully protected cycle track along the northern side of Elton Head Road.
A query was raised about how the public and school will be updated throughout the process.	Council officers reassured that the school will be continuously engaged throughout the construction process, with an introductory meeting already taken place.

Pre-Engagement Comments

Prior to the drop-in engagement event to share the final designs for Phase 1: Lea Green to Whiston Hospital Scheme, key stakeholders were emailed to invite them to a bespoke engagement session and to formally note any comments.

Comments from St John Vianney Catholic Primary School were gathered from a meeting Wednesday 17th July via Teams.

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

Main Themes	Officer Comments
It was queried how construction will affect the school, and how the school will be aware of what is happening?	Council officers will provide construction phasing plans as well as a governance chart, ensuring that the headteacher has the email addresses and phone numbers of all necessary contacts.
It was stressed that key dates should be avoided which may cause additional disturbance to the school due to events.	The school will share major event dates such as: Christmas plays, Christmas fair, and parents evening so the contractor can work around this schedule.
A query was raised on whether there any options nearby for parents and guardians to park their car and walk the rest of the way.	It is envisaged that through the implementation of a segregated cycle and pedestrian facility this will provide a safer route for parents, guardians and pupils and enable them to walk, wheel or cycle to and from school.
	For those who are unable to travel sustainably, it is advised to park and stride. This reduces traffic, congestion and road danger around the school gates whilst allowing children the chance to get active for the last part of their journey.
	Communications are to be held with the school to identify alternative locations to park within a 5-minute walking zone, such as the laybys provided on Sherdley Road.
What parking restrictions will be put in place, and can this be arranged to be enforced?	Noting that this concern was previously shared through consultation, the scheme will hopefully be self-enforcing as there will be a higher kerb to physically prevent people from easily parking on the path.
The school confirmed their willingness to work with the contractor on potential social value activity.	Council officers discussed with the school that they hope to secure social value contributors from the contractor, including but not exclusive of:

Cycle storageRe-signing and lining for the playground
Council officers are currently reviewing the long list of social value offers and prioritising these to the schools' requirements.

Conclusion

St Helens Borough Council Officers have considered the responses received during the engagement process and have considered the comments and concerns of the residents and stakeholders and have updated the final designs. The final design changes are summarised below:

You said	We Listened
The extents of the proposed speed limit reduction should be extended.	The proposed 20mph limit has been extended further west to connect with the
	current 20mph limit at the Broads.
Additional measures should be provided to	The designs have been amended to include
prevent parking on the verge outside St John Vianney School.	a knee-high rail or the provision of bollards to prevent vehicular access across the
John Vianney School.	grass verge.
The proposed benches near Platt's Playing	The benches proposed will allow users to
Fields, should enable people to either face	face either way.
the park or road.	T 0 " " 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Key dates in the school calendar should be avoided to minimise disturbance.	The Council will work with the school and the contractor to minimise disruption. The school will be made aware of the
	construction phasing plan and a governance chart will be provided for ease of contact.
Repeater 20mph along Elton Head Road to remind people of the change in speed limit.	Roundels to be provided.
Additional vehicle prevention measures to	A dropdown bollard will be included east of
be extended to Swan Gardens.	Swan Gardens to prevent vehicle incursion along the cycle track.
Additional speed enforcement measures to	Vehicle Activated Signs will be deployed
monitor and evaluate ahead of the	temporarily on Elton Head Road, as part of
construction of the next phases.	the borough wide programme.

St Helens Borough Council is confident that these infrastructure improvements will improve active travel connectivity from Lea Green and allow local residents travel choice for short journeys.

We wish to thank everyone who attended the drop-in engagement event and prior consultations undertaken by the Council, and consequently informed the final designs for the Phase 1 delivery of our Lea Green to Whiston Hospital Active Travel Route.

Additional information will be published onto the St Helens Borough Council website in due course.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Dedicated Active Travel Proposed Route: Lea Green to Whiston Hospital



Head Road, St Helens, WA9 50T, to share details of the final designs for phase one of the Lea Green to Whiston Hospital route. George Cox and Sons Ltd habeen appointed by us to construct the scheme, with scheme construction scheduled to start from late Summer 2024 and completion by Winter 2024.

The drop-in engagement session will allow the community and local stakeholders to understand the plans, with council officers available to answer an questions.

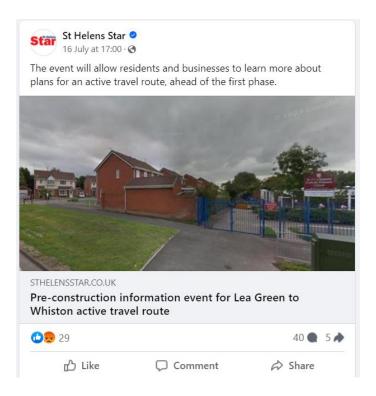
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Appendix 2:Social Media Advertising:



Appendix 3: Press Activity:



Appendix 4: Stakeholder Social Media Posts:



Appendix 5: Drop- In Engagement Event















