

Report to the King's Lynn Town Board

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1. Overview Active & Clean Connectivity (ACC)

The project brings together a package of measures to support Active and Clean Connectivity across the town including:

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes

- Interventions to improve provision and uptake for active travel modes

Active Travel Hubs (ATH) on Enterprise Zone & Baker Lane

- Two multi modal travel hubs one on the outskirts of town and one in town centre

Travel Plan Fund for employers

- Access for up to 6 employers to receive data from Mobilityways on current and possible commuting options for staff.
- Funding to enact on data provided

Budget:	LCWIP	£3,082,518
	Travel Plan Fund	£88,000
	Nar Ouse EZ ATH	£2,197,973
	Baker Lane ATH	£745,900
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	Total	£6,114,391

Funding:	Towns Fund	£4,232,876
	Business Rates Pool	£2,022,750

The Towns Fund outcomes of the ACC programme look to:

- Improve affordability, convenience, reliability and sustainability of travel options to and from places of work and places of interest.
- Reduce congestion within the town by encouraging modal shift.

Doing so will deliver the following Town Deal outputs (as agreed in the Business case, approved December 2022):

- 1.555km of new cycle ways
- 5.632km of pedestrian paths improved
- At least 6 alternative fuel charging / re-fuelling points
- 55 new out of town car parking spaces
- Change in air quality surrounding the Gyratory
- 2 new transport nodes with new multimodal connections points

This report provides an update specifically on the LCWIP schemes from the ACC programme, following the Town Deal report in August 2024. In particular the report covers the largest/high impact LCWIP scheme at Tennyson Road, and discusses potential alternative pedestrian and cycle options that could be delivered in the short-term following the decision to delay the progression of the previously identified preferred option, due to inability to deliver a scheme that would meet Network Rail requirements within the Town Deal timescales.

2. King's Lynn Tennyson Road pedestrian and cycle crossing

2.1. Background

The present pedestrian and cycle crossing point adjacent to the railway level crossing on Tennyson Road is unsatisfactory, for the high volume of users, being just dropped kerbs, adjacent to a bend with lower than desired sight lines.

Tennyson Avenue was subject to a Pedestrian Crossing Assessment completed by Norfolk County Council in January 2022 following a request from the Local Member expressing concerns over the speed and volume of traffic and the effect which this had on the safety of pedestrians on Tennyson Avenue & Road.

A crossing in this area was also identified as a pivotal link in the King's Lynn walking and cycling network, which is defined in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) adopted in 2022, because it links the town centre, schools, residential areas and the hospital.

Through the Town Deal funding, it was therefore proposed to deliver a scheme at the most used crossing location, the desire line, adjacent to the railway level crossing and a budget of £520k was included in the ACC LCWIP programme for this scheme. Following discussions with Network Rail it was agreed that it would be possible to combine the railway level crossing with a pedestrian/cycle crossing to form a single signalised entity with vehicles queuing on opposite sides of the railway line. It was agreed that this solution was possible, but it would be challenging to deliver. The costs of this scheme were estimated to be in the range of £2-2.5m but would need to be delivered by Network Rail. It is likely that it would take about 5 years to bring the scheme into service due to the necessary feasibility and design work and construction on a live railway.

However, as raised with the Town Board in August 2024, to progress such a scheme Network Rail would first need to be commission to complete a feasibility before further design could take place. This would likely to cost £100-150k and would take 1 to 2 years to complete this initial feasibility and therefore the scheme would not be deliverable within the timescales of the Town Deal programme.

2.2. Options Appraisal

Due to the significance of the Tennyson Road pedestrian and cycle crossing scheme, the Borough Council have identified £100k that could be used from the ACC Business Rates Pool (BRP) match funding to take forward the initial feasibility work with Network Rail and the project team is currently engaging with Network Rail to confirm the scope, cost and when this work could start.

Due to the timescales associated with this, NCC and the project team have reviewed the previously identified options to assess if a complementary solution could be delivered under the Town Deal that improves the setting and safety of the existing layout, addresses as many of the aspirations set out in the LCWIP and Pedestrian Crossing Assessment as possible but would not impair the ability to deliver the full preferred scheme with Network Rail in the future.

To assist in making an informed decision on the strategy for improving the Tennyson Road pedestrian and cycle crossing the various options are presented in the table below:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1) Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not provide any physical improvement Does not improve safety
2) Combined level crossing and Signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing facility (preferred option)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the desire line Best fit for LCWIP as it provides the most convenient route for active modes Likely to encourage more pedestrians and cyclist Best scheme to encourage a mode shift to active travel May solve some of Network Rail's issues at the present crossing that needs to be manned 24 hours Would be delivered by Network Rail with NCC input for the crossing design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive at £2-2.5m Long lead in time to deliver up to 5 years due to constraints of working with Network Rail. May be difficult to produce a compelling economic case for funding
3) Signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing at Spar shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be delivered for £0.5m Could be implemented within 2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not on desire line Could be criticised for not being ambitious enough in LCWIP terms Unlikely to attract more pedestrians and cyclist Unlikely to encourage a mode shift to active travel May require the loss of trees in The Walks (park) alongside Tennyson Road Will require the re-routeing of paths within The Walks which may not get approval from conservation and heritage interests

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need unsightly and unfriendly fencing to prevent people from continuing to cross at the desire line • May need planning permission for new pathways across The Walks public space • May be seen as the solution making it difficult to justify a better scheme in the future
4) Single Zebra crossing outside the Spar shop, signage and a 20mph speed limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a safer crossing option compared to the Do-nothing scenario • Could be delivered for £0.2m • Could be implemented within 1 year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not on desire line • Could be criticised for not being ambitious enough in LCWIP terms • Unlikely to attract more pedestrians and cyclist • Unlikely to encourage a mode shift to active travel • May be seen as the solution making it difficult to justify a better scheme in the future
5) Two Zebra crossings outside the Spar shop and at Avenue Road, signage and a 20mph speed limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides two additional safer crossing options compared to the Do-nothing scenario • Could be delivered for £0.4m • Could be implemented within 1 year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not on desire line • Could be criticised for not being ambitious enough in LCWIP terms • Unlikely to attract more pedestrians and cyclist • Unlikely to encourage a mode shift to active travel • May be seen as the solution making it difficult to justify a better scheme in the future

2.3. Options Discussion

As previously identified, the preferred long-term solution is the combined railway level and pedestrian/cycle crossing with Network Rail. However, with an estimated cost of £2-2.5m and long timescales for delivery it is not deliverable within the Town Deal programme but could align to future funding options such as the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding.

Therefore, while work continues with Network Rail to develop this option, a portion of the previously allocated £520k of Town Deal funding for this project could be used to deliver one of the alternative crossings in the interim. This could provide a direct and permanent benefit to Tennyson Road in parallel with a future combined level crossing and signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing facility. Delivery of an interim option could make it difficult to justify upgrading to Option 2 in the future, however, this would be less of a factor if either Options 4 or 5 were to be implemented.

The alternative options have been reviewed by the County Council's Active Travel team who were responsible for producing the original LCWIP report. Their review identified that while the interim options don't fully address the issues identified in the LCWIP, the options scored well using the Active Mode Appraisal Tool with Benefit Cost Ratios of 2.15-2.17, mainly due

to the proximity and links to the wider network of the walking and cycling routes through the park.

2.4. Proposed way forward

From the above there is a key decision required relating to the approach to provide an enhanced pedestrian/cycle route across Tennyson Road. It is proposed to either:

1. Only progress the work with Network Rail to develop the combined level crossing and signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing facility with a view to delivering the scheme via a future funding stream. This could take up to 5 years to deliver.

Or

2. Progress the development of a complementary improvement alongside the work with Network Rail, to develop the combined level crossing and signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing facility. Utilising a portion of the Town Deal funding previously allocated to the Tennyson Road scheme, an interim improvement would address current issues comprising either Option 3, 4, or 5. This would derive a direct and permanent benefit in parallel with a future combined level crossing and signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing facility (option 2).

Decisions Required:

- 1) Agree the progression of a complementary improvement on Tennyson Road ahead of any future combined level crossing/signalised pedestrian/cycling crossing facility, as part of the Town Deal ACC project.**
- 2) Agree to the funding of any complementary scheme from a portion from the approved ACC LCWIP scheme budget previously allocated to the Tennyson Road scheme (£520k). Any underspend to be reallocated back into the ACC programme with a further decision on the final ACC budget to be considered by the Town Board in May 2025 once further work to update the Enterprise Zone Active Travel Hub costs are completed.**