

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 9 February 2022

Present:

Members: Councillor C Miks (Chair)
Councillor J Clifford (substitute for Councillor Lancaster)
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor P Male
Councillor B Singh

Other Members: Councillor P Hetherton – Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor G Hayre – Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport
Councillor L Bigham – City Council Representative on West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee
Councillor P Akhtar – City Council Representative on West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee

Others Present
(by invitation): Adam Tranter, West Midlands Walking and Cycling Commissioner

Employees (by Service):

Law and Governance: G Holmes, Place Directorate
M Salmon, Resources Directorate
Transportation and Highways J Seddon, Place Directorate
R Smith

Apologies: Councillor K Caan
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor E Ruane and A Tucker

Public Business

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

25. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note and presentation of the Director of Transportation and Highways that gave an update on the Local Cycling and Walking infrastructure Plan, a Plan that provided a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements as part of a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks over a 10-year period as part of the Government's strategy to increase trips on foot or by cycle. The Cabinet Member for City Services, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport and the City Council's two representatives on the West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee, attended the meeting for this item of business. The West Midlands Walking and Cycling Commissioner also attend the meeting for this matter.

The key outputs of the Plan were:

- a network plan for walking and cycling which identified preferred routes and core zones for further development
- a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment in the short, medium and long term
- a report which set out the underlying analysis carried out and provided a narrative which supported the identified improvements and network
- to ensure that consideration was given to cycling and walking within both local planning and transport policies and strategies
- made the case for future funding for walking and cycling infrastructure

The Plan offered opportunities for walking and cycling to benefit people who lived, worked, studied or visited the city and the Coundon Cycleway, which improved connections to primary and secondary schools and shops along the corridor and was connecting onwards to the city centre, where new cycle parking had been provided, including at both the railway and bus stations, was an example of this opportunity. Access to bikes for visitors and residents had been improved by the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme, which covered the city centre and both university campuses. Opportunities for walking had also been improved through campus improvements and as part of the city centre public realm, including a new pedestrian wayfinding system.

The Department for Transport supported the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) with funding awarded to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to prepare a regional Plan prioritising cycle routes for development across the region and further funding for the City Council to develop and implement the Binley Cycleway via the Transforming Cities Fund. Additional funding had been provided from the Local Authority Capability Fund, to develop a more detailed LCWIP for Coventry in 2022 which would be informed by the draft Transport Strategy.

Coventry's draft Transport Strategy included 'Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Walking and Cycling', a national strategy focusing on a long-term shift towards active travel. Gear Change included a commitment to ensure that by 2030, 50 per cent of all journeys in towns and cities would be made by walking and cycling. The Strategy noted that although Coventry was a relatively compact city, the number of people walking and cycling was not as high as it could be. A lack of convenient and safe routes for cyclists was likely to be a barrier to higher levels of uptake. The

Coventry Household Survey in 2021 found that only 52 per cent of residents agreed that it was easy to travel around Coventry by bike, this was significantly fewer than the number who felt it was easy to walk, drive and travel on public transport.

Walking and cycling contributed to all of the Strategy objectives: supporting the city's economic recovery and enabling long-term growth; delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system; ensuring equality of opportunity; and maximising health and wellbeing.

The LCWIP would help to realise the Transport Strategy's aim to reduce the city's reliance on car travel, by identifying the opportunities to significantly improve conditions for those who walk and cycle through measures including developing Core Walking Zones, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, School Streets and a network of dedicated cycleways within the city. It would also identify opportunities to improve connectivity by cycle to neighbouring areas of Warwickshire and Solihull, including key development sites such as the proposed Gigafactory and UK Central. Longer commutes by bike would be enabled by the expansion of the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme with more e-bikes and an expanded network of docking stations.

The Plan would follow a process of scoping; information gathering; network planning for cycling; network planning for walking; prioritising improvements; and integration and application.

The next steps were to invite the respondents to the Transport Strategy consultation to sign up for the cycle newsletter to receive updates on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. Opportunities to participate would also be promoted via council channels to residents, community and business groups and other interested stakeholders, including neighbouring authorities, National Highways and others. It was important that the process had broad engagement with people who already walked and cycled, but also those who would like to be able to in the future if conditions were improved. This approach meant not only looking at how to get along busy corridors, but also how to cross them and how to make adjoining areas more pleasant for residents, businesses, and visitors. This also extended to improving routes through green spaces for recreation but also to connect to local services.

The Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed the following issues:

- Foleshill Transport Package and Local Plan - would address the removal of heavy goods vehicles from Foleshill Road and Longford Road to using Keresley Link Road and A444, making walking and cycling safer along residential roads.
- Safer cycle routes and footways and quality bus travel to incentivise use.
- Educating the public to consider alternative forms of travel.
- Electric and hydrogen buses - options for the future.
- Planning process would determine cycle connections for new developments in Eastern Green.
- Charter Avenue and Canley cycle lanes – funding secured for permanent cycle routes that would link up to a wider network. Communication and consultation with residents' key.

- E-scooters – part of the future Transport Strategy, but there needed to be decision from Government on their legal usage
- Towpaths – engagement of users to be considerate and integrate with all users of the facility.
- Brookstray/Eastern Green area – external funding being sort to improve existing path. Consultation with residents and Ward Councillors to determine future requirements for path use.
- Making Walking and cycling an attractive offer to secure public buy-in.
- Pedestrianised streets – sign-posted for pedestrian use at specific times.
- The need for decent lighting - to ensure safety and make walking and cycling routes attractive.
- Restricted access to streets to create safer cycling or walking environments.
- The links within the Strategy with Planning Policy.
- Learning and gaining feedback from current schemes to inform future of schemes
- Coundon Cycle Lane – first of its kind. Recognised regionally as a high-quality provision. Monitoring feedback.
- Existing cycling and walking routes – asset management for maintaining existing and new footways/cycleways.
- Footpaths – consideration of quality of footways and lighting provision to ensure safe and attract use.
- Public consultation – positive outcomes of co-created schemes.
- Public Health – walking and cycling promotes health and wellbeing. Communication of public health message for active forms of travel important.
- Emergency Active Travel Fund – fund for cycling, parallel fund for footways (for making footpaths usable and safe during Covid). Active Travel Fund third round currently underway. Future funding for footways not yet known.
- Section 106 Agreements - opportunity for developers to include maintaining existing paths/roads in any plans/proposals.
- Binley Cycleway - £8m Scheme, 7 Kilometre route from Coventry University to University Hospital, funding secured for the project from WMCA (national government funding devolved through the Combined Authority).

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the update provided.**
- 2) Agrees to engage with the Plan development going forward.**
- 3) Makes no further recommendations to the Cabinet Member.**

26. **Regional Active Travel Update from TFWM**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note and presentation from Transport West Midlands that gave an update on regional progress towards increasing active travel. The Cabinet Member for City Services, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport and the City Council's two representatives on the West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery

Committee, attended the meeting for this item of business. The West Midlands Walking and Cycling Commissioner also attend the meeting for this matter.

The Starley Network was the vision for cycling across the West Midlands, which included both the existing network and the planned future network, which was identified in the West Midlands Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) as well as the LCWIP of the Local Authorities who had published them (Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull). The aim was that other local authorities would follow suit through the development work of the Local Authority Capability Fund to build on the local connector LCWIP routes. The West Midlands LCWIP was updated in June 2021, moving from phased delivery to delivery specified within 1, 4 and 10 years, as required by Department for Transport (DfT). The longer routes were still expected to be delivered in phases, and these had been split up over years where appropriate.

The Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, had appointed Adam Tranter as the region's first Cycling and Walking Commissioner; one of his key objectives was to accelerate the delivery of the Starley Network and improve the quality of infrastructure across the region.

The Active Travel Fund and the Transforming Cities Fund investment had allowed accelerated delivery of LCWIP schemes, including the Binley Road route in Coventry. The Full Business Case for Binley Road was endorsed by WMCA Board in September 2021. There was an ask for this scheme in the region's application for Active Travel Fund Capital 2021-22, for which a decision was currently awaited. Coventry's plans for the Binley cycleway would be the benchmark of the quality aimed for across the West Midlands.

Bike Life was the biggest assessment of cycling in cities and urban areas across the UK and Ireland. The 2019 Bike Life Report was published in March 2020 with the next report expected Spring 2022. The 2022 report would expand to include walking and a measure of neighbourhood connections to local services such as education and grocery shops. From the 2019 report, many West Midlands residents supported the delivery of measures that allowed for safer cycling, e.g. 76% think space should be increased for people socialising, cycling and walking on their high street, and 65% supported building more cycle tracks, even if that meant less room for motor traffic.

The West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme had been operational within the West Midlands since March 2021. There were a total of 1,350 pedal and 150 e-bikes in 8 regional locations across the 7 West Midlands Metropolitan Authorities. Scheme sponsorship was currently being sought to support the Scheme financially. Scheme usage within Coventry to-date had been positive, with key stats / observations from Coventry's usage indicating that the city outperformed other locations.

The Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed the following issues:

- The installation of Bike Hire Schemes in more deprived areas of the city to address health issues.
- Support from developers to encourage cycling and walking as modes of travel

- Far Gosford Street – currently being considered for pedestrianisation. Consultation and liaison with partners essential.
- Docking Stations in Gosford Street were among those most used in the City.
- E-Scooters - need to be legislated before being considered as an alternative form of travel.
- E-Bikes - well used. Not many in the fleet but very well used, with high demand.
- Mobility Hubs – being investigated, to include cafés/quick stops. London had good examples of these hubs.
- Air Quality - benefits of being active, running, walking, cycling, far outweighed any negative impact of poor air quality. Impact surveys/studies being undertaken to provide accurate information on how the implementation had impacted on health.

The Board requested that Adam Tranter's email address be forwarded to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Note the updates on regional progress towards increasing active travel.
- 2) Agrees to champion the continued investment in active travel within Coventry.
- 3) Had no further recommendations for the Cabinet Member or representatives on the TfWM Transport Advisory Committee.

27. Active Travel to School

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a Briefing Note and presentation of the Director of Transportation and Highways that provided an update on support to schools to increase active travel. The Cabinet Member for City Services, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport and the City Council's two representatives on the West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee, attended the meeting for this item of business. The West Midlands Walking and Cycling Commissioner also attend the meeting for this matter.

Active Travel included walking, cycling and other non-motorised forms of transport and could provide an affordable way for children and adults to build physical activity into their daily routines. This could benefit their own health and wellbeing and also help to improve local air quality for the benefit of the wider community by reducing short car trips. Parking outside schools had traditionally been discouraged through waiting restrictions and enforcement, but new approaches were being explored such as School Streets, where vehicle access was limited during school drop off and pick up times. This was trialled as part of the Air Quality Early Measures project.

The consultation on Coventry's draft Transport Strategy, approved by the Cabinet in October 2021 (their minute 34/21 referred) and considered at a previous meeting of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) (minute

08/21 referred), included reference to active travel and schools as part of the vision of a safe, sustainable, equitable and resilient transport system, which enabled residents, visitors and businesses to thrive.

The draft strategy included four objectives: supporting the city's economic recovery and enabling long-term growth; delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system; ensuring equality of opportunity; and maximising health and wellbeing. The Council could deliver some aspects of the Strategy with other being delivered by, or in partnership with, partners in the region.

One of strategy's themes was encouraging behaviour change including engaging with schools, which would help to meet sustainability and health and wellbeing objectives. Enabling active travel to school could also support economic and equality objectives by reducing travel costs for families and allowing older children to travel independently.

The Briefing note set out details of School travel trends, providing statistics on walking, cycling, bus use, car travel, lengths of journeys and ages of pupils undertaking each mode of travel, Local School Travel Data. It provided statistical information on Cycling to secondary school in Coventry providing statistical information; Bikeability Training, Walk to School, Go Ride Schools, and national charity Sustrans Smarter Travel Support.

Building on the experience to date, schools were being offered support to promote active travel in connection with the local air quality action plan, which focussed on the Holyhead Road corridor in particular. Support had already been provided to a number of schools in the target area with a particular focus on schools along the Coundon Cycleway. For example, support was already being provided to Coundon Court Secondary School at the western end of the route and St Osburg's Primary School at the eastern end. Discussions had also been taking place with Bablake School which located directly on the cycleway route.

Over 100 people had participated in adult cycle training from summer 2021 and beginners' sessions had moved inside over the winter. Cycles were available for people to borrow at the training. Outreach activities had been undertaken via public events including CycleFest, where bikes could be donated for recycling for refugees. This event included supervised cycle parking, Dr Bike maintenance checks with Cycling UK, test rides and inclusive cycling with Parkride/Midland Mencap.

A holistic package of support would be provided to maximise opportunities for walking, scooting and cycling to school and also for other journeys. If parents were confident cycling, they were more likely to allow their children to cycle to school and may then be able to continue to their destination by bike. The elements of the programme taking place over the next 2 years were: School Travel Planning; Learn to Ride; Bikeability in School; Go Ride Coaching; Cycle and Scooter Parking at School; Route Development; Public Events; and promotional campaigns.

Details of how work to support walking and cycling to schools and local communities would be complemented by further engagement programmes targeting businesses across the city, were detailed in a Plan in the Briefing Note.

The Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed the following issues:

- Government had provided funding for work with schools on schemes – provide tools and best practice.
- Schools engaged and were keen to promote – the tools and infrastructure needs to be in place to enable the travel changes to be implemented.
- Investing in working with schools, businesses, communities to deliver training on travelling more sustainably.
- Would like to work with all schools in the City, but funding is always an issue.
- Important to get the message out to children early to have best outcomes.
- St Osburg's School – Air Quality Action Plan had been consulted on.
- Upper Hill Street – impact of proposals to open up Upper Hill Street raised concerns from Members. The Plan could change due to any adverse impact it may cause, but the Government would require an alternative to improve air quality in that area.
- Bikeability – Implemented in Schools to provide cycle training to equip children with vital life skills. Pupils not only learned to cycle, but gained independence, social skills and a sense of wellbeing.
- Education of adults to cycle – work being undertaken.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) **Notes the update on support to schools to increase active travel.**
- 2) **Supports ongoing activity to promote active travel to school as part of the Local Air Quality Action Plan.**
- 3) **Makes no further recommendations to the Cabinet Member.**

28. **Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for the final meeting of the Board for 2021/2022 and the suggested items for the Board for 2022/23.

The Board were informed that an additional item to those listed on the Programme would be considered at the 9th March 2022 meeting, headed 'WMCA Local Transport Plan 5 Core Strategy Consultation'.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) **Notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for the final meeting of the Board for the Municipal Year 2021/2022, with an update to the Programme to include 'WMCA Local Transport Plan 5 Core Strategy Consultation' on the agenda for the 9th March 2022 meeting.**
- 2) **Notes the suggested items for meetings of the Board for 2022/2023.**

29. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 5.00 pm)