
Cabinet Member for City Services

20th October 2021

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Service – Councillor P Hetherton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Transportation and Highways

Ward(s) affected:

St. Michaels, Lower Stoke, Binley & Willenhall, Wyken,

Title:

Binley Cycleway – Scheme part-approval, way forward and petition responses

Is this a key decision?

No – although the scheme covers a number of wards, it is not considered that the impact will be significant

Executive Summary:

Binley Cycleway will be a 6km long segregated cycleway connecting the City Centre with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire. It is a regional priority cycle route forming part of the Starley Network.

Consultation for the scheme took part in two phases due to the size and length of the proposals. The first took place in September and October 2020 mainly covering Binley Road and the second in March and April 2021 covering Clifford Bridge Road. The consultation took place online due to Covid-19 restrictions on face to face meetings, but over 10,000 leaflets were delivered informing residents of the consultation.

A petition was received in favour of the proposals and asking for more safe cycle lanes to be built across the city. A second petition was received opposing an element of the proposals around Biggin Hall Crescent junction with Binley Road.

The report is seeking approval to proceed with 75% of the scheme, with the design of the remaining 25% being amended following consultation feedback. This will then be subject to a further public consultation exercise on the amended design.

The scheme is expected to be fully funded from the West Midlands Combined Authority and government grants, a Full Business Case for which is currently going through the relevant assurance framework process.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

- 1) Note the first petitioners support and the second petitioners concerns.
- 2) Consider the high quantity and value of feedback received during both phases of public consultation and the amendments to the scheme that have been made as a result.
- 3) Approve the scheme design and the construction of the Cycletrack for the sections of the route between Gulson Road and Brookvale Avenue, and between UHCW and Tesco Clifford Bridge access roundabout.
- 4) Approve the review of scheme design for the section of the route between Brookvale Avenue and Tesco Clifford Bridge Access roundabout, and the holding of a further public consultation on the revised scheme design.
- 5) Note the advertising of Traffic Regulation Orders to enhance the safety of users of the highway and particularly the Cycletrack.

List of Appendices included:

- A - Scheme Details
- B - Binley Cycleway Consultation Summary Report

Background papers:

CCC Cabinet – Draft Coventry Transport Strategy

Other useful documents

WMCA Board – *A Common Approach to Cycling and Walking in the West Midlands*
Sustrans - *Bike Life West Midlands Report*

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Binley Cycleway – Scheme part-approval, way forward and petition responses

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Cycling levels in the city and across the West Midlands are currently significantly below those of many other metropolitan areas and core cities across the UK. The successes these areas have had has not been by chance, but due to a clear and defined ambition to raise cycling levels, and the commitment and will to deliver this change. The biggest barrier to cycling is consistently stated to be ‘fear for safety’. Addressing the safety concerns of existing and potential cyclists has been fundamental to increasing cycling elsewhere. Physically protected infrastructure is the basis for high cycling numbers in places such as the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.
- 1.2 Cycling has an important role to play in addressing the challenges the city and region face, which include reducing congestion, carbon and pollution, supporting economic growth and employment, tackling obesity and creating places where people want to live, work, learn, shop and do business. Cycling offers an affordable, convenient and low-cost travel option to access jobs, education and leisure opportunities, particularly for people without access to cars. One in three households in Coventry do not have access to a car. Investment in high quality cycle routes is a priority set out in the draft Coventry Transport Strategy which went to Cabinet earlier this month.
- 1.3 During the West Midlands wide Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) development process, potential strategic core routes were evaluated and prioritised. A route connecting Coventry University and the city centre with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) scored amongst the highest within the West Midlands metropolitan area. Now referred to as Binley Cycleway, this route was developed throughout 2019 and early 2020, with an allocation of funding being made available from the Transforming Cities Fund in December 2019.
- 1.4 Public consultation was held in two phases due to the length of the scheme. The first phase took place in September and October 2020, and the second phase in March and April 2021. Further details are in section 3 of this report.
- 1.5 A petition with 398 e-signatures was received in March 2021 showing support for the new Binley Cycleway and requesting more safe cycle lanes across the city. This petition was responded to earlier in the year.
- 1.6 A second petition was received with 162 signatures requesting Binley Cycleway was stopped so Biggin Hall Crescent was not made exit only. The petition advises: *‘Coventry City Council has released plans for the proposed Binley Cycleway. The plans propose Biggin Hall Crescent junction to be signalised and made egress only. As vehicles will not be able to gain access to Harris Road this will negatively affect my regular trading and custom. This petition will be included in a letter addressed to Coventry City Council requesting they do not prevent vehicular access. Thank you very much for your support.’*
- 1.7 Detailed design for some sections of the scheme is well underway. This has enabled many ‘unknowns’ to be investigated and project risks to be reduced enough to produce a Full Business Case (FBC). The FBC was submitted to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in August to secure the budget for the full scheme. This is currently going through the final stages of the WMCA assurance framework and is expected to be approved in October 2021.

1.8 The Binley Cycleway proposes the continuance from Coundon Cycleway of the step-change in the quality of cycling infrastructure in Coventry. It will provide a physically separated space within the highway protected from motor traffic and away from pedestrians. It will be safe, coherent, direct, comfortable and attractive, which are the core design principles for high quality cycling infrastructure required to encourage people to switch modes and cycle for some journeys.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 As part of the scheme development process in 2019 and early 2020, officers considered options around the alignment of the cycleway and how it could be positioned within the extents of the current highway. This included how the cycleway might operate on either side of the road. Highway safety aspects along with traffic flow data, trees, parking, green space and private accesses were considered in developing the alignment and proposals in the public consultation.

2.2 As a result of feedback from residents and stakeholders, minor alterations and improvements have been made to the scheme design along the length of the proposed route. These amendments are listed in Appendix B to this report for the sections of route seeking approval. One section in the middle of the route has more significant design issues that require addressing and this section will be subject to further consultation.

2.3 The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to approve the revised post-consultation scheme for the sections of the route between Gulson Road and Brookvale Avenue, and between UHCW and Tesco Clifford Bridge access roundabout. Following the consultations, the section between Brookvale Avenue and Tesco access roundabout will require a further design review and the amended design will be re-consulted on in early 2022. The scheme details are shown in Appendix A.

2.4 As with any proposed changes to the public highway, not everybody who responded to the consultation was in favour of the scheme. Whilst the majority of respondents to both consultations were in favour of the scheme, 18% of respondents to the phase 1 consultation and 30% of those responding to the phase 2 consultation were opposed to the scheme. Many of the technical issues or concerns raised relating to the phase 1 scheme can be accommodated through the detailed design process, but those with very specific and localised concerns in the phase 2 scheme will require slightly bigger amendments. These will be addressed where possible in revised proposals to be re-consulted on next year.

2.5 The scheme proposes changes in the general traffic management around Stoke Green. The existing right turn ban from Binley Road into Bull's Head Lane will be lifted and the right turn from Biggin Hall Crescent into Binley Road will be better and more safely accommodated through signalisation of the junction. For this layout to work satisfactorily in traffic capacity terms, and for the traffic signals to link and co-ordinate well with those on Church Lane 125m away, the movements into Biggin Hall Crescent are proposed to be banned. It is this aspect of the proposals that are the subject of the petition. Motorists turning left into Biggin Hall Crescent would have to travel between 225m and 850m further and go via Bull's Head Lane. Conversely, motorists usually turning right into Biggin Hall Crescent, who going forward will be able to turn right into Bulls Head Lane could reduce their journey length by up to 550m.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 The consultation was undertaken in two parts due to the size of the scheme. Phase 1 covered Gulson Road up to Brinklow Road and took place between 28th September and

31st October 2020. Phase 2 covered Brinklow Road to UHCW and took place between 1st March and 18th April. Both phases were online with a questionnaire accompanied by downloadable plans.

- 3.2 Phase 1 included delivery of 6,000 'street news' leaflets showing the route plan, artists impressions, some of the key aspects and web addresses to locate the online plans and survey. 76% of respondents stated that they supported the idea of segregated cycleways like this. The most common response was that people would like to see this go further and reach more destinations. The biggest concerns were how this might affect traffic congestion, parking concerns and the local economy. On street parking and traffic capacity are not affected in this section of the proposals. People were asked if they cycle and those that answered no were asked a follow up question of why they do not cycle. The biggest reason given was that it is not safe cycling on the road with traffic. These findings are consistent with nearly all surveys undertaken across the country asking the same question. Phase 1 proposals stopped short of the city centre and the survey asked which destinations we should take cycling infrastructure to within the city centre.
- 3.3 Phase 2 included delivery of 4,500 'street news' leaflets showing the route plan, artists impressions and web addresses to locate the online plans and survey. This phase mainly took place during the third lockdown. As restrictions started to ease the consultation period was extended to enable some socially distanced on-street engagement to take place on Clifford Bridge Road, once it was legal to do so. Although this wasn't advertised or formal, there was a very good turnout allowing valuable and detailed feedback to be received.
- 3.4 62% of respondents in phase 2 supported the idea of segregated cycleways. The biggest positive comments were that they'd like to see it go further and connect to more locations. The biggest concerns were around reduction in on-street parking on Clifford Bridge Road, narrowing of Clifford Bridge Road and that safety of the road is a concern in general. There were lots of detailed comments that can in many cases be addressed. It is recommended that, for this section of the route, those amendments that are possible are drawn up and a further consultation period take place.
- 3.5 A consultation summary report is included in Appendix B.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Approving the scheme (in part) will exercise powers under section 65 of the Highways Act 1980 to create a Cycletrack. Traffic Regulation Orders will be advertised that will enhance the safety of users of the Cycletrack and the rest of the highway. Following the completion of the detailed design process, the scheme will start on-site investigatory works in late autumn with full construction starting in January 2022.
- 4.2 The section not being approved at this stage will be brought back to seek approval following the further consultation period, analysis of feedback and any subsequent amendments.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

The development stage and delivery of the Binley Cycleway scheme is estimated to cost in the region of £8.6m, all of which will be capital grant funded as per the table below:

| Scheme Stage | Grant | Status | £ |
|--------------|-------|--------|---|
|--------------|-------|--------|---|

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| DEVELOPMENT STAGE | Transforming Cities Fund (WMCA) | Secure | 250,000 |
| | ITB Scheme Development (CCC) | Secure | 25,000 |
| DELIVERY | Transforming Cities Fund (WMCA) | Secure | 5,000,000 |
| | Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 (WMCA) | Secure | 583,000 |
| | Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 (WMCA) | Bid Stage | 2,700,000 |
| | ITB Scheme Development (CCC) | Secure | 36,000 |
| Total Grant Funding Secured | | | 5,894,000 |
| Total Grant Funding Sought | | | 8,594,000 |

The largest funding contribution is from the Transforming Cities Fund which is secure, along with the Active Travel Fund tranche 2. The £2.7m Active Travel Fund tranche 3 element is not as yet secure, but is currently being considered by WMCA following the submission of a Full Business Case by the council. Once approved by WMCA, this will be taken to a future meeting of the Council for acceptance and to include in the five year capital programme. The combined cost estimates and funding of £8.6m includes contingency considered by transport officers to be sufficient to deliver the whole scheme, including the technical re-design changes required following the public consultation.

The scheme is being delivered in sections by the DLO and its sub-contractors and spend profiles will be monitored throughout. In the unlikely event of a shortfall, options to value engineer will be sought.

There are no additional revenue implications of the scheme as the plans will reduce the area of carriageway through reallocation of road space within the public highway. Cycleways are significantly cheaper to maintain than carriageways over their lifetime because wear and tear is directly related to vehicle loading. The scheme will also resurface parts of the existing carriageway and replace traffic signals with new installations. This effectively resets the maintenance cycle back to its lowest cost point.

The potential future amendments to the scheme design in response to the future consultation should not affect the budget required to deliver the scheme. There are therefore no additional financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.2 Legal implications

The Council in its capacity of Highway Authority and pursuant to S.65 Highways Act 1980, may in or by the side of a highway maintainable at the public expense construct a cycle track which forms part of the highway.

Those Traffic Regulation Orders referred to in this report may be advertised pursuant to existing delegated powers in favour of the Director of Transportation and Highways and made pursuant to powers contained in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

6. Other implications

Any other specific implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

These proposals support the Council's core aims, as set out in the Council Plan, by:

- improving the health and wellbeing by improving air quality through the reduction in traffic generated emissions.
- creating an attractive, cleaner and greener city by providing improved cycle routes, better public realm and more greenery on key routes into the City, and;
- making the city more accessible for businesses, visitors and local people through increasing mode choice.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There are inevitably a mixture of risks associated with such an infrastructure project. Some of the main risks are securing the statutory approvals to implement the scheme, the unknown effects on utility providers' apparatus once the ground is opened, the cost of construction increasing due to external market factors like material costs or plant hire costs, a prolonged bout of inclement weather would affect the programme for delivery and the ongoing impacts of the Covid 19 virus. Learning will be carried forward from the Coundon Cycleway Cycle Route scheme which is nearing completion, as many of the delivery risks encountered will be common to the Binley scheme.

A dedicated scheme project manager and programme manager will control these risks on a day to day basis. The risks are overseen by a dedicated multi-disciplinary project team that reports to the Strategic Transport Board.

Construction will be principally undertaken by the council's Direct Labour Organisation. Specialist support will be provided by Balfour Beatty for electrical works and works at height, and by Siemens for traffic signal installation and commissioning. Both of these companies are already in contract with the council. Additional civil engineering gangs are available to the DLO via a framework of subcontractors.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

There is no impact on the organisation, as all resources required to deliver the scheme will be funded through the grants received from government and WMCA.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Binley Cycleway. This identifies the scheme, by having a beneficial impact on air quality and levels of personal activity, will have a beneficial impact upon those groups of the community who are particularly vulnerable to respiratory disease, such as children and younger people, elderly people, disabled people, people from black and ethnic minority background, and women who are pregnant. New cyclists will benefit from an increase in personal activity which helps combat the health issues associated with inactive lifestyles. The increase in accessibility improves access to economic and social opportunities for households without access to a car.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

The scheme will lead to an increase in cycle use as a mode of transport which will reduce car use. This will reduce the emissions generated by road transport, supporting the Climate Change Strategy and improve local air quality. A reduction in impermeable surface

area and increase in trees and hedges will also benefit drainage and the discharge rate into natural watercourses.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The scheme will result in improved air quality and levels of activity and provide improved infrastructure for people to walk and cycle. The scheme will also upgrade some bus stop infrastructure benefiting TfWM and bus passengers along the route.

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Appendices