
Cabinet Member for City Services

7th March 2021

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor P Hetherton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Transportation and Highways

Ward(s) affected:

Whoberley, Sherbourne, St Michaels

Title:

Air Quality Shared and Segregated Footway and Cycleway

Is this a key decision?

No – Although the matter affects three wards in the City, it is not anticipated that the impact will be significant

Executive Summary:

Air pollution is having a harmful impact on the health of people living, working and studying in Coventry.

Like many towns and cities throughout the UK, roadside pollution levels, especially those resulting from Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) emissions from traffic, are a concern. The Council have been told by Government to reduce NO₂ levels, especially on Holyhead Road where the levels are the highest in the city. If we cannot improve air quality the government will force us to introduce a charging zone.

The Council has developed a Local Air Quality Action Plan which we consulted on between March and May 2020. This plan includes work to reduce traffic on Holyhead Road and to direct traffic through a widened Spon End. To do this we will make changes to three areas around Holyhead Road, with one of these areas being Spon End.

These changes at Spon End include the provision of segregated and shared footway and cycleway (cycle track) which will link the existing cycleway at Upper Spon Street to the city centre. 15 toucan crossings are also proposed to accommodate the increase in cycle facilities.

The Council held a public consultation between 17th November and 15th December 2021 regarding the detail of the latest Air Quality proposals. 269 people completed the online questionnaire, 2,200 viewed the web page with 864 downloading associated documentation. 19 people emailed the air quality inbox to request further information or give feedback and 39 people attended a drop-in session.

This report is seeking approval of the incorporation of both the shared footway and cycleway and segregated footway and cycleway within the scheme.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the incorporation of the shared and segregated footway and cycleway as part of the Spon End/Butts Road highway improvements.

List of Appendices included:

A – Phases A and B General Arrangement drawings Sheets 1-4

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Environment Act 1995 (Coventry City Council) Air Quality Direction 2021

Coventry Local Air Quality Action Plan, CCC Cabinet Report, 21st July 2020

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: Air Quality Shared and Segregated Footway and Cycleway

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 On February 12th, 2020, the Council received a Ministerial Direction under the Environment Act 1995 to implement the local plan for NO₂ compliance for Coventry. This local plan comprises a package of measures to achieve NO₂ compliance within the legal threshold in the shortest time possible and no later than 2021. The Council received an updated Ministerial Direction dated 19th May 2021 following submission by the Council of the Final Business Case.
- 1.2 The Council held a public consultation between Wednesday 17th November and Wednesday 15th December 2021 which included information about how the shared footway and cycleway would fit within the street.
- 1.3 Poor air quality is a major public health burden and is the fourth largest risk to public health in the UK behind cancer, obesity and cardiovascular disease. Local Authorities have a statutory role in assessing and improving local air quality. The effect of a range of interventions to improve air quality has greater potential to reduce the associated burden of disease than any one intervention alone, and the Council's Local Air Quality Action Plan proposes a package of measures. Improvements at Spon End are part of the interventions within this package.
- 1.4 Public Health England recommends addressing air pollution by providing good quality infrastructure to encourage people to walk and cycle rather than drive. This can mean reallocation of road space to support walking and cycling and restricting vehicle access.
- 1.5 Motor traffic is the main deterrent to cycling for many people and fear for their safety is consistently the number one stated reason given in surveys as to why they do not cycle. Providing protected space for cycling has resulted in huge increases of cyclists on routes in London, Manchester and other major cities and is the basis for high cycling numbers in places such as the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Council is under a legal Ministerial Direction to implement the package of measures comprising the LAQAP, including the improvement through Spon End and Junction 7. As part of the public consultation on the detail of the scheme in November/December 2021, a series of face-to-face meetings were held with the public. Additional meetings were held with special interest groups such as residents' associations, schools and businesses.
- 2.2 As part of the optioneering a segregated cycle track was considered throughout the length, however this was not feasible in a number of areas further due to lack of available highway land. Any impact on existing carriageway to accommodate a cycle lane would have been fundamentally detrimental to the Air Quality scheme. The proposed design helps to facilitate connections to existing cycleways and well-used routes. Generally, toucans have been provided as 5m width to allow extra space for cycles and peds to use the crossing and provide some level of future proofing should additional segregated cycleways be possible throughout in the future.
- 2.3 As a result of this feedback from residents and stakeholders following the review of the Consultation Report, minor alterations and improvements have been made to the scheme design along the length of the proposed route. Sections under the Ring Road at Junction 7 will be made fully segregated cycle track.

- 2.4 The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to approve the post-consultation scheme in relation to the shared footway and cycleway. The scheme details are shown in Appendix A to the report.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The consultation period commenced with the delivery of a 'Street News' leaflet to approximately 5,700 properties along the corridor of the route. This provided details of the scheme and gave a web address to visit to view the detailed plans, along with a phone number and email address to call or write to provide comments and ask questions. The webpage had a pdf download showing the detailed annotated proposals along the route and a discussion forum to comment and discuss the proposals. There was also a map that allowed comments to be easily provided in relation to different sections of the route.
- 3.2 269 people completed the online questionnaire, 2,200 viewed the web page with 864 downloading associated documentation. 19 people emailed the air quality inbox to request further information or give feedback and 39 people attended a drop-in session.
- 3.3 The consultation was about the details of the AQ schemes and included the route and details of the shared use cycle facility from Spon End to Croft Road.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If approved the proposed cycleway will be installed by March 2023.

5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

The Air Quality programme is fully funded from the Air Quality Implementation Fund grant of £25.447 million already received by the City Council from Central Government. This grant is for the delivery of the Local Air Quality Action Plan as approved by the Council's Cabinet on 21st July 2020, which includes the provision of shared use and segregated facilities from Spon End to Croft Road. The changes to the scheme design that respond to the consultation do 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.

6. Other 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 and better public realm 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.

A dedicated scheme project manager and programme manager will control these risks on a day-to-day basis. The risks are overseen by the Air Quality Programme Board, which in turn reports into the Strategic Transport Board.

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 Air Quality Implementation Fund grant received from Government.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Air Quality Action Plan, of which this scheme forms part of the programme of works.

This identifies that the local plan scheme, by having a beneficial impact on air quality, 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. The scheme improves the walking and cycling environment and 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.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The scheme will result in improved air quality and provide improved infrastructure for people to walk and cycle.

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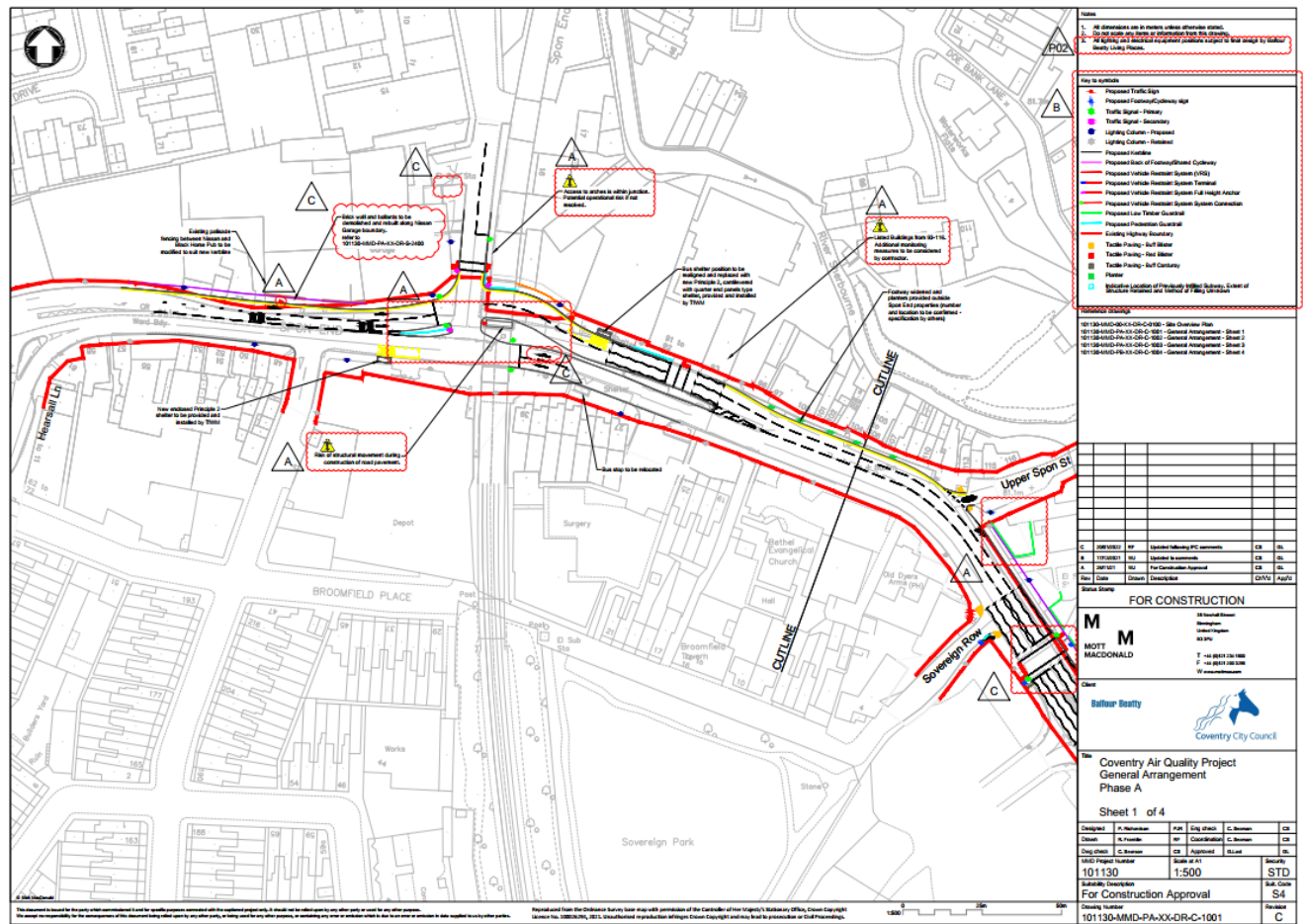
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101130-MMD-PA-XX-DR-C-1001 P2 – Coventry Air Quality Project General Arrangement Phase
A Sheet 1 of 4



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