

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 8 March 2023

Present:

Members of the Board: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell (substitute for Councillor R Simpson)
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor A Masih
Councillor B Singh

Other Members (invited): Councillor J O'Boyle - Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change
Councillor P Hetherton - Cabinet Member for City Services

Employees (by Service):

Law and Governance G Holmes, M Salmon

Transportation and Highways I Lewis, R Smith

Apologies: Councillor R Simpson

Public Business

24. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

26. Cycling and Walking Update

The Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation and briefing note of the Director of Transportation and Highways, that provided the Board with an update on the Council's plans to encourage walking and cycling, including how the Council was engaging with the public to promote the benefits of cycling.

Coventry's Transport Strategy (CTS), adopted in December 2022, set out how the Council aimed to deliver a safe, sustainable, and reliable transport network for the City of Coventry. The promotion of walking and cycling for local journeys within the city was fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Strategy which were

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 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), set out detailed policies and infrastructure requirements necessary to support walking and cycling in the city. Currently a West Midlands LCWIP identified a strategic regional cycle network, that included the Binley Cycleway currently under construction. The LCWIP, developed in 2019, formed the basis for investment planning in new cycle routes at a regional level.

National Context: Active Travel England

The executive agency was sponsored by the Department for Transport. It was responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England. The objective was for 50% of trips in England's towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. By making every-day journeys simple, easy and fun, Active Travel England was working to give people the choice to leave their car at home.

Active Travel England worked alongside councils to fund new, protected routes and junctions, quieter roads & neighbourhoods and ensure that government investment on active travel delivered to new high national standards. It was a Statutory Consultee to embed active travel into major new developments.

Network and Route Development

Networks and routes should be Coherent; Direct; Safe; Comfortable and Attractive. On busier and faster highways, most people would not be prepared to cycle on the carriageway without protection, physically protected space for cycling would enable most people to cycle. On quiet residential streets, most people would be comfortable cycling on carriageways if speeds and traffic volume were low. Traffic calming and traffic management could help reduce motor vehicle speeds and volume (as in Liveable Neighbourhoods). Motor traffic free routes away from the highway could form useful links as part of the overall network.

Work was continuing, following the adoption of the CTS, on a local LCWIP for Coventry that would drill down into more local detail and enable the identification of the local cycling network necessary to complement the regional network that has already been identified. Engagement with the public, local communities and the business community on the development of the LCWIP was planned with the aim that the LCWIP would be adopted by the end of 2023.

The LCWIP would identify improvements to existing cycling facilities or the installation of new facilities. As well as dedicated cycle facilities on key routes, it would also identify areas where wider traffic management was appropriate due to lower traffic speeds and flows, such as the Liveable Neighbourhood approach, which could create a safe walking and cycling environment. The LCWIP would also consider walking, recognising the vast majority of journeys made by anyone would involve an element of walking or wheeling. It was important to ensure there was proper investment in the walking network, and to make sure that local and district centres provided high quality public realm for residents and visitors.

Significant improvements to infrastructure were already taking place and more were in development with the most significant length of new active travel infrastructure provided along the Coundon and Binley Cycleways. These were two-way cycle tracks, that had adjacent footways, segregated from motor vehicle traffic by kerbs, directly serving local centres with shops and community facilities and were within a 15-minute ride of the city centre. The routes could also widen travel horizons for active commuting and people walking and wheeling had also benefitted from new crossings at side roads along these routes.

Busy junctions could be a barrier to active travel, in this regard, improvements were already being made to crossings on the Ring Road including Junction 7 and Junction 9. Junction 9 formed part of a segregated cycle route from Upper Well Street to the Canal Basin which then connected with the walking and cycling route towards Radford and the leisure route National Cycle Network 52 along the canal towpath.

A high-level plan highlighted cycle schemes at different stages of development, including where routes met and connectivity. More existing and potential routes would be refined through the LCWIP.

The West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme usage was the best in the region with 47 local docking stations; 282 pedal bikes and 50 e-bikes; 173,643 pedal bike rides since launch; 41,959 e-bike rides since launch; an average hire duration of 14 minutes; and an average distance travelled of 1.95km.

Access to bicycles in the city had improved since the introduction of the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme. Residents of wards with the greatest health need had been able to apply for free minutes to use on the scheme through separate grant funding. As the bike docks were not in every ward the grant funding also supported a public bike giveaway initiative through the Cycling for Everyone Project, which was similarly targeted at areas of greatest health need. Residents who had surplus bikes had the option to donate them for recycling through local organisations and via the Recycling and Disposal Centre. Support had also been provided to organisations to upskill volunteers in cycle maintenance with a view to increasing the capacity to recycle bikes. There had also been free cycle skills training for residents, with a focus on delivering activity in areas of health need.

Walking maps and guides were available which covered various areas of the city, but a number of these were in areas of greater health need.

In considering the presentation and briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed the matters summarised below:

- The purpose of the initiative was to give people more choice of methods of travel and to provide equality of opportunity, not to remove options
- The importance of consulting the public on proposals and designs for cycle routes and listening to their needs – the Cabinet Member for City Services and officers worked closely with residents on proposals to install cycle lanes
- The Cabinet Member for City Services had received many thanks from cyclists for the installation of cycle lanes, making them feel safer on their journey
- Hollyfast Primary School had benefitted from the Coundon Cycle lane with many children now opting to travel by bike along the route to school safely

- The importance of locating benches along walking routes to enable rest points for those that need it
- Kenilworth Road Cycleway – improvements to signage, road markings and promotion of the route's availability were needed, which was recognised by the Cabinet Members
- City Centre area – reckless and erratic cycling, particularly by food delivery companies, causing many near misses and making pedestrians feel unsafe
- Inconsiderate cycling at pedestrian crossings in the central area – near misses with pedestrians
- Reckless riding - addressed by the Police, or in the City Centre, by the Council through the use of their Public Space Protection Order
- What constitutes an electric cycle - many different forms and speeds dependant of battery size, some motorised bikes should be classified as mopeds
- Current consultation proposing restricted vehicular access e.g., taxis, buses, emergency vehicles, on High Street and the Burges/Hales Street/ Trinity Street loop
- Ring Road Junction 9 – work almost complete on the cycleway, no plans for improvement of the Canal Basin bridge at present
- Ring Road Junctions 1,2,3,4 and 9 access improvements - proposals scoped and discussed with consultant
- Final section of cycle lane from Bablake School to city centre – being progressed. Consideration being given to making this area a low traffic neighbourhood
- Monitoring of cycle lanes – includes usage of lanes and where vehicles use private driveways and side roads that cross lanes
- Bike libraries – ensures cycling option available for all. Inclusion very important. The Council's Holiday Activities and Food Programme also offered cycle borrowing as part of their scheme
- Work being undertaken on cycling education e.g., recent meeting of the Cabinet Member for City Services with local community leaders in Foleshill to discuss, with a particular focus of educating women in the area. Education meeting for women cyclists also held for the Coundon area.
- Cannon Park Cemetery – issues with use of cycle lane and funeral vehicles near the cemetery. Urban traffic cameras will go in to monitor, after the scheme has completed
- Road Surfaces – dilapidation surveys carried out on road surfaces to ensure they are fit for the purpose of a cycle lane
- Bike donations – can be made through local organisations, including City Mission and via the Recycling and Disposal Centre. Suggest initiative that requests bike recycling by promotion of recycling/donation facilities available in the city
- Section 106 – Moving towards developers now including monies for cycle routes in Section 106 agreements
- North and East of the city – expansion of the West Midlands cycle hire scheme would be investigated, particularly for the University Hospital and Binley Business Park and Shopping Centre areas, subject to further funding
- Money secured through 106 Agreements for cycle routes covers whole routes including where they are cross border with neighbouring local authorities

- Water stations – explore possibility of locating stations along cycle routes
- The possibility of promoting Bike Hire and Docking Stations – via automated messages on buses and at bus stops to encourage use and advise of options for travel
- Encouraging take-up of cycle hire scheme - free minutes or reduced cost for first use of scheme

The Board requested that the Presentation slides be circulated to them. They also requested that officers be requested to explore the possibility of locating water stations along cycle routes.

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

- 1) **Notes the cycling and walking update.**
- 2) **Makes the following recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:**

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities be recommended to use the enforcement powers provided by the City Centre PSPO to address the issue of reckless riding of e-bikes and motorised cycles in the City Centre, to improve the safety of pedestrians.

27. Work Programme 2022/23

The Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, that detailed items that had been considered by the Board during the Municipal Year 2022/23 and the proposed issues to be included on the Board's Work Programme for 2023/24.

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

- 1) **Notes the issues considered at meeting of the Board for the Municipal Year 2022/2023 and the proposed issues to be included on the Board's Work Programme for 2023/24.**
- 2) **Requests that a further item headed 'Gigafactory' be added to the proposed issues to be included on the Board's Work Programme for 2023/24.**

28. 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 12.15 pm)