
Cabinet Member for City Services

2nd August 2023

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:

Lower Stoke

Title:

Binley Cycleway – Allard Way Extension

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

Binley Cycleway is a 6km long segregated cycleway that will connect the City Centre with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire once completed. It is a regional priority cycle route forming part of the Starley Network, the West Midlands' network of planned walking and cycling routes.

In May 2023, Active Travel England (ATE), an executive agency of the Department for Transport, announced funding allocations from the Active Travel Fund. £550,000 of this is to create a spur off Binley Cycleway with a segregated cycleway along Allard Way between Binley Road and Second Avenue, and to improve the crossing of Second Avenue. This will connect multiple neighbourhoods including Stoke Aldermoor and Ernesford Grange to Binley Cycleway and the destinations along it.

The scheme is fully funded with capital grants from the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Government.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the scheme design and the construction of the Cycletrack along Allard Way between Binley Road and Second Avenue to be fully funded by grant from the Active Travel Fund tranche 4.

- 2) Where necessary, to undertake the necessary procurement required to facilitate the construction of the Cycletrack along Allard Way between Binley Road and Second Avenue.
- 3) Delegate authority to the Director of Transportation and Highways following consultation with the Chief Legal Officer to undertake all actions necessary to bring into effect the recommendations contained in this report.

List of Appendices included:

A - Scheme Details

Background papers:

CCC Cabinet – Coventry Transport Strategy dated [12 October 2021]

City Services - Binley Cycleway – Part-approval of Phase Two and Update on Programme and Finance dated [30 November 2022]

Other useful documents

WMCA Board – *A Common Approach to Cycling and Walking in the West Midlands*

Sustrans - *Bike Life West Midlands Report*

Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design

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 – Allard Way Extension

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Cycling levels in the city and across the West Midlands are currently below those of many other metropolitan areas and core cities across the UK (Coventry is 257th out of 351, and WM is 289th out of 351). The successful areas near the top of the list are not 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 Coventry has constructed two schemes using this approach since 2020, Coundon Cycleway and Binley Cycleway. Data collected from Coundon Cycleway has shown an increase of between 350% and 500% in people cycling compared to before construction. Binley Cycleway, the more recent of the two, has been constructed in sections since January 2022. Early data collection from completed parts of the route show significant increases in people cycling, for example from around two thousand cycling trips per month in June 2022 to over ten thousand in June 2023 by Bulls Head Lane, and from eight thousand cycling trips per month in June 2022 to fifteen thousand in June 2023 close to Gulson Road.
- 1.3 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 Coventry Transport Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in October 2021. Safe and segregated cycling infrastructure also enables other forms of micromobility to take place such as mobility scooters, scooters, skateboards and many adaptive cycles.
- 1.4 In January 2023, Coventry were asked to submit bids for funding from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4. To be successful, any scheme would have to be able to be implemented within a short timeframe, score highly on ATE’s Cycling Level of Service tool, and meet objectives of supporting safety of women, create an uplift in people cycling and walking, and improving access opportunities to jobs and services from areas of multiple deprivation.
- 1.5 The council submitted a bid for a link to connect the Binley Cycleway, which was at the time under construction at that location, from Binley Road along Allard Way to Second Avenue, with a new cycle crossing facility at Second Avenue. There is an existing shared-use footway/cycleway from Second Avenue to Yew Close in Stoke Aldermoor, and to Ashdown Close in Ernesford Grange. This scheme fills in the missing link for safe cycling by connecting these two neighbourhoods to Binley Cycleway and therefore all destinations served by it.
- 1.6 Public consultation was held on the Council’s online consultation platform, Let’s Talk at the beginning of July 2023, and residents from Second Avenue and some of the surrounding streets were informed of this via a letter drop.

- 1.7 The design of this cycleway continues on from the recently constructed Binley Cycleway and Coundon Cycleway with a 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 enable people to switch modes and cycle for some journeys. The scheme design meets the standards set out in the latest guidance from the Department for Transport, LTN1/20.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Option 1 - To proceed with the scheme design and the construction of the Cycletrack along Allard Way between Binley Road and Second Avenue (Recommended)

- 2.1 The construction of the Cycletrack as detailed in this report will provide the benefits stated in paragraph 1.3 and 1.7 above.
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member for City Services is therefore recommended to approve the scheme as shown on the scheme details appended at Appendix 1 of this report, with allowance for any minor amendments that may be required during the detailed design or construction process.

Option 2 – Do Nothing (Not Recommended)

- 2.3 Not implementing this scheme requires existing cyclists to mix with traffic on a 40mph road, or cycle on a narrow footway, neither of which are desirable in road safety terms. To attract new people to cycling and help achieve the objectives of the Coventry Transport Strategy, high quality, safe and segregated cycling facilities are needed.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The consultation was undertaken on the Council's online consultation platform, Let's Talk. This hosted a downloadable set of plans and a survey asking for any feedback on the proposals. Properties on Second Avenue and those served off it were letter dropped, with information about the scheme and a signpost to the consultation webpage.
- 3.2 The consultation ended on Wednesday 19th July.
- 3.3 There were 10 comments received. Eight of the comments were in support of the proposal and some of these asked for the scheme to extend further along Allard Way. Two comments were against, one due to concerns of traffic delays during the construction period and the other person believed there was already a cycleway in this location.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Approving this scheme will allow for the Cycletrack to be taken forward. Detailed design will commence immediately and once completed, this will be added to the ongoing construction programme for Binley Cycleway. The targeted construction start date is late summer with substantial completion by the end the year. It should be noted that the traffic signals work may have to be scheduled for early 2024 due to long lead times for these specialists works.

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

5.1 Financial implications

The scheme design, construction and management will be fully funded by a grant from the Active Travel Fund tranche 4. This grant will be passported via the West Midlands Combined Authority and is subject to submission of an updated business case for Binley Cycleway, and the signing of a grant agreement. The grant funding of £550,000 includes an allowance for contingency and is considered by transport officers to be sufficient to deliver the scheme in full.

Most aspects of the scheme will be delivered by the Council's Direct Labour Organisation, with just the traffic signal works to be delivered by Yunex, and traffic signs by Balfour Beatty, both via existing contracts. Spend will be monitored throughout construction. In the unlikely event of a shortfall, options to value engineer the scheme will be considered and then actioned to keep within the £550,000 budget.

We are currently developing a strategy for maintaining our new and existing cycle routes and any revenue implications will be reported at a later date.

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.

Where required, the Council will need to ensure that any procurement activities associated with the construction of the Cycletrack is undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 (where applicable) and/or the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

6. Other implications

Any other specific implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

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

- improving the health and wellbeing of residents 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 is 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, and a prolonged bout of inclement weather delaying construction. Learning has been carried forward from the Coundon Cycleway scheme and the parts of Binley Cycleway constructed to date as many of the delivery risks encountered are common to the rest of the Binley scheme.

A dedicated scheme project manager and multi-disciplinary project management team will control these risks on a day to day basis. The biggest risks are discussed weekly with senior infrastructure delivery officers and reported to the Active Travel Board, which in turn reports to the Strategic Transport Board.

Construction will continue to be principally undertaken by the Council's Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). Specialist support will continue to be provided by Balfour Beatty for electrical works and works at height, and by Yunex for traffic signal installation and commissioning. Both of these companies are already in contract with the Council.

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 the WMCA.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment was prepared for the Binley Cycleway. This assessment is also relevant to this scheme as it is a spur off 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.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

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