

# Public report Cabinet Member

Cabinet Member for City Services

15th November 2023

#### Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor P Hetherton

#### **Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability

### Ward(s) affected:

Wyken

Title:

Binley Cycleway – Section 7 (Clifford Bridge Road)

Is this a key decision?

No

#### **Executive Summary:**

Binley Cycleway was identified as a strategic cycle route connecting Coventry city centre with the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) via Binley Business Park within the West Midlands Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (WM LCWIP). Funding to construct the Cycleway was secured from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Active Travel England (ATE) from the Transforming Cities Fund, Active Travel Fund Tranche 2, and Active Travel Fund 3.

For ease of scheme design and consultation, the Cycleway was divided into two sections. Design and consultation on the first sections of the route was undertaken in 2020/21, and construction is well advanced, with the Cycleway completed and open for use between Gulson Road and Princethorpe Way. The next section, from Princethorpe Way to Clifford Bridge Road, is programmed to be completed in November 2023 once the installation of the new traffic signals along this section of the route has been carried out.

The section of the route between the UHCW and Dorchester Way / Clifford Bridge Road has also been constructed and is open for use.

Additional funding has subsequently secured from Active Travel Fund 4 for a scheme that would extend the Binley Cycleway along Allard Way connecting to the New Century Park residential estate, as reported to the Cabinet Member for City Services meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023.

The remaining section of the Cycleway, along the southern section of Clifford Bridge Road between Brinklow Road and Dorchester Way, has been subject to three specific rounds of engagement, the first of which was held in 2021 focussed on a fully segregated cycleway, the second held between September 2022 and January 2023 based on a revised design, and the

third, in July 2023, focussed on an alternative shared use path design in response to feedback on the first two rounds of engagement. The revised scheme design has also been reviewed by Active Travel England and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

The engagement in July has triggered two petitions, which require consideration. Both petitions oppose the shared use path scheme consulted on in July, with one asking for the Cycleway scheme to be dropped totally, the other supporting the original, fully segregated, cycleway that was originally proposed. Details of both petitions are contained within the main body of the report.

247 responses were received to the engagement in July, completing the Let's Talk survey. The consultation report is appended to this report, and key points made are summarised in the main body of this report.

The scheme has generated a lot of public interest, and a wide range of views have been expressed. These include the identification of alternative routes that could be taken for the Cycleway, avoiding this section of Clifford Bridge Road, and comments on detailed aspects of the scheme design, such as the impact upon car parking, access to driveways and side roads, pedestrian safety, vehicle speeds, access to the Hospital, and the need to deliver high quality cycle routes to encourage cycling. These issues are considered in detail within the main report.

A further design review is recommended taking these views into consideration. It is further recommended that this design review adopts the following principles:

- That there is an identified need for a high-quality cycle route on the eastern side of the city connecting local communities with key facilities such as the Hospital and the Binley Business Park.
- That the carriageway width of Clifford Bridge Road needs to be maintained at its current width, recognising that it will remain a two-lane single carriageway road.
- That the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure should be provided at a standard that is LTN1/20 compliant as the default position, maintaining segregation of pedestrians and cyclists from each other and from traffic, with any exceptions to this standard requiring robust justification.
- That no parking capacity should be removed along this section of Clifford Bridge Road.
- That appropriate visibility be maintained for vehicles exiting side roads and driveways.
- That community concerns about wider transport issues such as overspill parking from the school or the Hospital, vehicle speeds, and HGV traffic levels be addressed as part of standard City Council processes for such matters alongside the delivery of a revised scheme.
- That the impact on existing landscaped areas and trees be minimised or sufficiently offset.

Any revised scheme will also need to achieve the objective of a high-quality cycle route linking the Hospital area with Binley and will complete the Binley Cycleway. The full Binley Cycleway will provide a spine route from which further routes can link, with future route options including Hipswell Highway, a connection to Coombe Abbey Park, and a link through Binley to Willenhall. Subject to approval from the funding bodies, and any further engagement with stakeholders, the intention would be to construct the revised route during 2024.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

- Note the consultation feedback as captured within the consultation report, and the two
  petitions submitted to the City Council regarding this scheme, and to agree that full
  consideration be given to these when further developing the proposals for this section of
  the Binley Cycleway.
- 2) Request the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for City Services, undertakes a further review of the scheme design for the section of the Binley Cycleway along Clifford Bridge Road taking account of the consultation feedback and following the design principles set out in paragraph 2.11 of this report, and to implement the revised scheme design subject to any detailed design changes arising from the Road Safety Audit process, audits undertaken by Active Travel England, and any final detailed issues raised during further engagement processes agreed by the Cabinet Member.
- 3) Approve the advertising and subsequent making of Traffic Regulation Orders for the revised scheme design to make the Cycleway, and any associated measures required to implement the revised scheme design, to enhance the safety of users of the highway and particularly the Cycletrack.
- 4) Request the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability takes the issues highlighted in paragraph 2.13 of this report forward for consideration under the relevant Traffic Management and Road Safety processes for inclusion in the future capital programme subject to the outcome of investigation and prioritisation.

# **List of Appendices included:**

A - Scheme design from July 2023 Consultation

B - Binley Cycleway (Clifford Bridge Road) Consultation Summary Report

# **Background papers:**

CCC Cabinet – Draft Coventry Transport Strategy
City Services - Binley Cycleway – Scheme part-approval, way forward and petition responses

# 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?

Nο

**Report title:** Binley Cycleway – Section 7 (Clifford Bridge Road)

# 1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Binley Cycleway was identified as a strategic cycle route connecting Coventry city centre with the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) via Binley Business Park within the West Midlands Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (WM LCWIP) published in 2019. The WM LCWIP recognised that 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 and recognised a need for a clear and defined ambition to raise cycling levels, and the commitment and will to deliver this change. This ambition is in line with Government policy as set out in the Gear Change document published in 2020, and subsequently enshrined in Government's establishment of Active Travel England as a Government body aimed at promoting active travel modes, notably walking and cycling.
- 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 Coventry Transport Strategy which was approved by the City Council in December 2022.
- 1.3 Funding to construct the Cycleway has been secured from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Active Travel England (ATE) from the Transforming Cities Fund, Active Travel Fund Tranche 2, and Active Travel Fund 3, as summarised in the following table.

Funding Source	Amount (£million)	Notes
Transforming Cities Fund	5.25	
Active Travel Fund 2	0.72	
Active Travel Fund 3	2.89	
Active Travel Fund 4	0.55	For Allard Way extension
CRSTS Highways & LNIP	0.12	•
Total	9.53	

- 1.4 Public consultation was initially 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. Design amendments were made along the scheme and in October 2021, a report outlining these amendments was considered by the Cabinet Member for City Services. Approval was given for the construction to proceed on the Gulson Road to Brinklow Road section of the scheme, and this is substantially complete with full opening due in November 2023 with the installation of the new traffic signals at the Brinklow Road junction.
- 1.5 In addition, approval was given for the construction of the northern end of the route, from the UHCW entrance to Dorchester Way / Clifford Bridge Road, and this section of the route is now fully open for use.
- 1.6 The remaining section of the route, along Clifford Bridge Road between Brinklow Road and Dorchester Way, have been subject to further rounds of consultation, initially in 2021 and then, following scheme amendments in response to comments received, in September 2022 and then finally in July 2023. This latest revised scheme, which was based upon a shared use path as shown in Appendix A, has generated significant comment, with 247

- responses being received in response to the Let's Talk on-line survey, along with two petitions that have been submitted to the Council.
- 1.7 The consultation feedback report from July is included as Appendix B. This generated three main types of response, these being:
  - Those objecting to the provision of the cycle route along Clifford Bridge Road suggested that either no cycle route be provided or that another route should be chosen.
  - Those objecting to specific details of the scheme design.
  - Those objecting to the shared use nature of the scheme, suggesting that a higher standard cycle route that is compliant with LTN1/20 design standards be provided.
- 1.8 Within the following section of the report, outlining options considered, a table summarising the issues raised during the consultation, and the response that has been made to these topics, is provided.
- 1.9 In July, a petition, organised by a local resident and sponsored by Councillor Faye Abbott, was submitted to the Council. This petition was titled "Petition against Clifford Bridge Road Cycle Lane development" and specifically petitioned that "Both presented planning proposals for the Clifford Bridge cycle lane have been found unsafe and discriminatory against disabled people. The design approach does not adhere to the correct standards to provide safety for disabled users and other individuals. The interventions create hazards and will highly impact the safety of all residents and cyclists. The traffic in the areas will be severely challenged and there will be multiple safety concerns around parking spaces, navigation and priority for intervention vehicles". The petition asks that "we want this project to be re-evaluated and if any of the safety and accessibility concerns cannot be addressed we demand this development to be moved and redesigned in another area in order to keep all of the users safe and prioritise the resident's needs and wellbeing.". This petition was signed by 593 people.
- 1.10 In addition, an on-line petition was also raised, organised by another local resident. This was titled "Build the Binley Cycleway to a high quality standard and in full" and specifically petitioned that "the Council continue the delivery of the Binley cycleway onto Clifford Bridge Road maintaining the high quality standard where pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles are safely separated.". This petition was signed by 187 people.
- 1.11 The Binley Cycleway provides a physically separated space within the highway protected from motor traffic and away from pedestrians. However, on the Clifford Bridge Road section of the route there are significant challenges to achieving a fully segregated route, notably around balancing the competing demands for space between pedestrians, cyclists, car parking, through traffic, and accesses to frontage properties. These challenges have been reflected within the consultation responses, and the two petitions that have been raised, and accordingly the Council needs to undertake a further review of the Clifford Bridge Road section of the Cycleway. In addition, discussions have been held with the primary funding body, Active Travel England, and the WMCA's Walking and Cycling Commissioner, with the aim of identifying an alternative scheme design that addresses the various issues raised and meets the challenges to delivering a cycle route at this location. The following section of this report outlines the options considered as part of this process.

### 2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Some consultees felt that investment in cycling infrastructure is a waste of money, and that the funding should be diverted to other uses. There was also some comment that the completed sections of the Binley Cycleway are not used and that any further investment in

- cycling infrastructure, including the Clifford Bridge Road section of the Cycleway, would not provide value for money.
- 2.2 Whilst in many respects cyclists are not as visible to the casual observer as motor vehicles, and therefore people might not think that the Binley Cycleway is well used, the data from the monitoring equipment that has been installed as part of the scheme indicates that Binley Cycleway is already well used, with an increasing trend in usage already apparent. Prior to the construction of the initial phases of the cycleway, cycle usage on Binley Road averaged around 3,800 cycle trips per month. With the completion of the cycleway as far as Allard Way, the number of cycle trips on Binley Road have increased to a monthly average of 11,533, a trebling of the baseline figure with the full scheme yet to be completed.
- 2.3 The City Council is committed to the provision of a cycle network based on high quality infrastructure, with a core network of fully segregated cycle routes that will provide an attractive, and safe, cycling environment with the aim of encouraging more people to cycle for local journeys within the city. The Binley Cycleway was identified as a priority route within the WM LCWIP, and the business case submitted to support the case for funding identified that reasonable value for money will be achieved, with a BCR of 1.2:1. If the Binley Cycleway is not completed, and a gap is left along Clifford Bridge Road, then these benefits will be eroded. The baseline data for Clifford Bridge Road shows that around 100-150 cyclists use the route on a daily basis, despite the unattractive environment for cycling. Of these cyclists, it is worth noting that around a third cycle on the footway. Although this is illegal, as the footway is not designated as a shared use path, the fact that cyclists are electing to use the footway in preference to cycling on the road indicates that the road is not seen to be a safe environment for cycling.
- 2.4 Given the evidence of existing cycling levels on Clifford Bridge Road, and the data demonstrating that the construction of the Binley Cycleway has led to a significant increase in cycling elsewhere along the corridor, it is recommended that some form of improved cycle route is required along Clifford Bridge Road.
- 2.5 A second group of comments suggested that rather than routing the Binley Cycleway along Clifford Bridge Road, alternative routes should be considered. These included:
  - Hipswell Highway / Farren Road
  - Sowe Valley
  - Bridgeacre Gardens
  - Coombe Park Road.
- 2.6 The route along Hipswell Highway and Farren Road has some attraction as an alternative route connecting the existing Binley Cycleway, at the Allard Way junction, with the UHCW. It would also have the merit of providing connectivity between the Wyken and Stoke / Whitley areas of the city, linking to the Allard Way extension to the Binley Cycleway for which funding has been secured from ATF4. It is certainly a route that is worthy of further development and consideration for inclusion in the city's emerging cycle network. It would not provide connectivity between Walsgrave / UHCW and the Binley / Willenhall areas of the city, though, and discussion with the funding bodies has indicated that whilst they would be open to future funding bids for such a scheme, they would not support the existing funding award for Binley Cycleway being diverted to this scheme.
- 2.7 The construction of a LTN1/20 cycle route along the River Sowe valley from Binley Bridge to the Sowe Bridge would provide a more direct route to the UHCW from the Stoke area, but it would be challenging to deliver to the appropriate standard due to the topography, with significant earthworks being required in places, the need for lighting, which would

urbanise what is currently a rural area of the city, and the removal of trees and bushes to provide sufficient room for the cycle route alongside pedestrians. The route would also require significant drainage and would in part be within the River Sowe flood plain, meaning that it would not be available for use all year round. With limited overlooking of the route from housing, natural surveillance would be low level, meaning that some people may not feel safe using the route. It would also not provide the connectivity between Walsgrave / UHCW and Binley / Willenhall, and funding bodies have again indicated that they would not support the diversion of funds to deliver this option.

- 2.8 The options of diverting the route away from Clifford Bridge onto the parallel estate roads of either Bridgeacre Gardens (west of Clifford Bridge Road) or Coombe Park Road / Gainsford Rise (east of Clifford Bridge Road) have also been considered. The second option is superficially attractive, as it would also serve the Clifford Bridge Primary School. Either route would be delivered through a Quietway approach, without a dedicated cycleway, due to insufficient space to provide such a facility. The lower traffic levels on the side roads mean that they should be safer for cycling. Either route would be less direct for cyclists than keeping on the main Clifford Bridge Road, and the Coombe Park Road option would require cyclists to cross Clifford Bridge Road twice, at either end. These factors mean that such a route is unlikely to be well used by existing cyclists, who will almost certainly continue to use Clifford Bridge Road. These options will also be unlikely to attract new cyclists.
- 2.9 Therefore, it is recommended that the Hipswell Highway option be taken forward as a separate scheme, subject to securing funding for scheme development. The potential for a recreational cycle route along the Sowe Valley could also be considered as part of the Council's LCWIP. However, it is recommended that these alternative routes should not be considered as a satisfactory alternative to the originally proposed Binley Cycleway route along Clifford Bridge Road.
- 2.10 The shared use scheme that was the subject of consultation in July has generated a range of comments identifying specific features and issues that respondents feel could be improve. These include concerns over the impact that the scheme would have upon parking arrangements, concerns over the pedestrian / cyclists conflict that may arise from them having to share space, concerns over the risk that cyclists might travel too quickly on the downhill section of Clifford Bridge Road heading towards the River Sowe, concerns over the lack of visibility of cyclists for vehicles emerging from driveways and side roads (although this is an existing issue, given that the data shows that cyclists are already using the existing footway in reasonable numbers), and some views that a fully segregated scheme would be better for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- 2.11 In response to these concerns, and to those expressed in the petitions, it is recommended that the Council undertakes a further review of the scheme. This review should incorporate the following core principles:
  - That there is an identified need for a high-quality cycle route on the eastern side of the city connecting local communities with key facilities such as the Hospital and the Binley Business Park.
  - That the carriageway width of Clifford Bridge Road needs to be maintained at its current width, recognising that it will remain a two-lane single carriageway road.
  - That the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure should be provided at a standard that is LTN1/20 compliant as the default position, maintaining full segregation between pedestrians, cyclists and traffic, with any exceptions to this standard requiring robust justification.
  - That no parking capacity should be removed along this section of Clifford Bridge Road.
  - That appropriate visibility be maintained for vehicles exiting side roads and driveways.

- That community concerns about wider transport issues such as overspill parking from the school or the Hospital, vehicle speeds, and HGV traffic levels be addressed as part of standard City Council processes for such matters alongside the delivery of a revised scheme.
- That the impact on existing landscaped areas and trees be minimised.
- 2.12 It is recommended that a revised scheme, based on the principles listed above, is taken forward to detailed design, and be subject to Road Safety Audit and ATE audit processes.
- 2.13 Three further issues that were highlighted during the consultation will be taken forward for investigation separately from the cycleway scheme as they will be subject to separate prioritisation and funding processes. These are:
  - Requests for the investigation of a Residential Parking Scheme covering the estates either side of this section of Clifford Bridge Road, to address concerns over the impact of overspill parking from the Hospital.
  - Requests for the reduction in the speed limit on Clifford Bridge Road and the introduction of Average Speed Enforcement.
  - Requests for the introduction of an HGV restriction on Clifford Bridge Road.
- 2.14 It is therefore also recommended that the issues highlighted in paragraph 2.13 above be taken forward for consideration under the relevant Traffic Management and Road Safety processes for inclusion in the future capital programme subject to the outcome of investigation and prioritisation.
- 2.15 It is also recommended that the cycle scheme options listed in paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 above be taken forward for scheme development and consideration as part of the Council's LCWIP.

#### 3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 Consultation was undertaken in July 2023, and the appended consultation feedback report (Appendix B) summarises the responses received.
- 3.2 Two petitions were also received, as reported in paragraphs 1.9 and 1.10.
- 3.3 The scheme design was also shared with Active Travel England and the WMCA Walking and Cycling Commissioner, and comments received from them at a meeting held in September 2023.

## 4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 If the recommendation to proceed with a further revision of the scheme design is approved, then this work will commence immediately with the aim of developing the revised scheme for implementation during 2024, in line with the funding profile. Implementation of the revised scheme will require statutory processes to be completed under Section 65 of the Highways Act 1980 to create a Cycletrack as well as any Traffic Regulation Orders required for loading and parking restrictions. These will be advertised and will be subject to statutory consultation periods. In addition, notices of Intent will be advertised that will notify the public of the Council's intention to implement controlled pedestrian crossings within junctions and ramps in the carriageway across side-roads.

# 5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer

# 5.1 Financial implications

The funding secured for the Binley Cycleway from the Transforming Cities Fund and Active Travel Fund 2 and 3 is £8.98 million in total. Construction of the completed sections of the scheme has cost £7.4 million to date, leaving remaining budget of £1.58 million.

# 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 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 One Coventry 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, a prolonged bout of inclement weather delaying construction and any lasting impacts of the Covid 19 virus. Learning has been carried forward from the Coundon Cycleway scheme and the parts of the 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 Transport Capital Programme 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. Some of the civil engineering works are being and will be delivered for 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 the WMCA.

#### 6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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, hedges and verges 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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