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Cabinet Member for City Services

8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**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:**

Earlsdon

**Title:**

Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhoods

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive summary:**

This report summarises the outcome of the consultation process for the Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, including two petitions raised regarding the scheme. The Council has secured £770,000 in grant funding for the Liveable Neighbourhood scheme and associated improvements to National Cycle Route 52 and commenced the engagement process in December 2022. The initial engagement identified transport and traffic issues within Earlsdon that the local community wished the scheme to address, and this informed the development of a package of measures that was subject to a further round of consultation in September and October 2023.

This second round of consultation generated 6,000 comments, and these have been considered in detail, resulting in an amended scheme that seeks to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment, reduce the impact of traffic upon the local community, whilst retaining access for residents and businesses within the area. Key features of the proposed scheme include an area-wide 20 m.p.h. zone, new pedestrian and cycle crossings at key locations, traffic management measures to deter through traffic and reduce vehicle speeds, and the creation of enhanced public space outside the library and primary school on Earlsdon Avenue.

This has been one of the most intense engagement processes undertaken by the Council for a transport scheme, and has generated significant interest within the Earlsdon community. That high level of interest and input has been invaluable, and whilst it is recognised that not all of the proposed measures will meet everyone's aspirations, it is considered that the recommended package of measures outlined in this report represents a cohesive and comprehensive scheme that will improve the quality of life within Earlsdon, and promote more active modes of travel within the community.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

- (1) Note the phase two consultation feedback as captured within the consultation report, and the two petitions submitted to the City Council regarding this scheme, and to note that full consideration has been given to these in developing the recommended scheme.
- (2) Approve the implementation of the Liveable Neighbourhood package of measures, as described in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.11 of this report and presented diagrammatically in Figure 2, and authorise the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability to take the necessary steps to implement the Liveable Neighbourhood scheme.
- (3) Approve the conversion of a section of footway on Albany Road between Newcombe Road and the Rugby to Birmingham railway line bridge to cycle track under sections 65 and 66 of the Highways Act 1980 as shown in Figure 3.
- (4) Instruct the Director of Transport, Highways and Sustainability to advertise Traffic Regulation Orders and Notices of Intent for those elements of the revised scheme, as outlined in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.11 of this report, requiring such Orders and Notices, and to either make those Orders should no objections be received or to bring a report back for consideration by the Cabinet Member for City Services should objections be received.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – Phase 1 consultation report, March 2023  
Appendix 2 – Phase 2 consultation report, November 2023

**Background papers:**

None.

**Other useful documents**

Liveable Neighbourhoods Business Case to Transport for West Midlands

Coventry Transport Strategy December 2022 <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/transportstrategy>

Cabinet 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022 – City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Report  
<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s54223/07%20-%20City%20Region%20Sustainable%20Transport%20Settlement.pdf>

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it 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: Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhood

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhood was approved for addition to the Council's Transport Capital Programme by Cabinet in August 2022 as part of the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement report following the award of Active Travel Fund grant for the creation of two Liveable Neighbourhood pilot schemes within Coventry.
- 1.2. The funding is part of a £200 million budget overseen by Active Travel England to fund measures that encourage more active travel across the country and support decarbonisation of the transport network. The focus of investment is to facilitate more walking and cycling in these areas, working with communities to identify opportunities to make positive changes. Locally, the Active Travel Fund is distributed and managed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the strategic transport authority.
- 1.3. Funding has also been awarded to the Council by Sustrans, the national cycling and walking charity, to improve National Cycle Route 52 and active travel routes to Coventry Station, and these measures overlap the Liveable Neighbourhood area. As a result, a single consultation process was undertaken, so that the community could fully understand and engage with the range of measures identified.
- 1.4. The following table summarises the funding secured for this scheme.

Funding Source	Amount (£million)	Notes
Transport for West Midlands	0.5	Active Travel Fund tranche 3
Sustrans	0.27	Across both Sustrans budgets
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.77</b>	

- 1.5. A Liveable Neighbourhood is somewhere where streets are designed around people rather than traffic. **It is shaped by the community**, through working with residents, businesses, and organisations to understand local priorities. The main objective of this scheme is to work with the local community to co-develop a package of measures to reduce the impact of traffic and increase walking and cycling levels in these areas, with an opportunity to create more attractive environments through public realm enhancements and greening.
- 1.6. Earlsdon will be the first Liveable Neighbourhood to be delivered in Coventry; if the pilot is successful and funding continues, the Council will consider a future programme of such schemes across the city. Earlsdon was chosen for the first pilot scheme as the community has historically reported traffic and transport issues that a Liveable Neighbourhood is well placed to tackle, including but not limited to speeding traffic, rat-running traffic, lack of pedestrian crossings, and parking issues both for motor vehicle and cycles.

- 1.7. There are good walking and cycling links between Earlsdon and Coventry and Canley Railway Stations, with the National Cycle Network Route 52 also serving the area, and as such it is well-placed to facilitate increased walking or cycling for local journeys. The zone comprises residential properties, many businesses including restaurants and cafes on bustling Earlsdon Street, and a primary school. In addition, there are currently several active community groups in Earlsdon, and there is also local support for speed reduction initiatives in these areas of Earlsdon. This makes it an ideal location for a community-led liveable neighbourhood scheme.
- 1.8. There have been two phases of consultation about the scheme. The first asked people to tell us what they felt the issues were in the area and how we could make Earlsdon a more Liveable Neighbourhood – this took place between December 2022 and February 2023. The consultation feedback report from phase 1 is included as Appendix 1. The second was based on a proposed package of measures based on the feedback from phase one – this took place in September and October 2023. The consultation feedback report from phase 2 is included as Appendix 2.
- 1.9. In September, a petition organised by a local resident, was submitted to the Council. This petition was titled “**Petition against the proposed bus gate on Spencer Road**” and specifically petitioned that “we the undersigned petition the Council to scrap the proposal to install a bus gate on Spencer Road. This bus gate will place significant pressure on Kenilworth Road, by increasing tailbacks at its junctions with Beechwood Avenue and Stoneleigh Avenue. These changes are going to cause huge disruption for local residents, the elderly, disabled, small business owners and delivery vehicles. The negative effects of this will fall disproportionately on care workers who travel throughout Earlsdon. This will impact the level of care for the vulnerable. It is seen as a money making exercise by the Council as there are little tangible benefits of its imposition. The public on a whole have not been consulted on these restrictions and the majority object strongly to their implementation.” This petition ran from 26<sup>th</sup> September to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and was signed by 24 people.
- 1.10. In October, a petition organised by a local resident and sponsored by Councillor Mattie Heaven, was submitted to the Council. This petition was titled “**Request a Pause In Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhood Programme**” and specifically petitioned that “We the undersigned petition the Council to request a pause in the proposed programme for measures relating to the Earlsdon 'Liveable Neighbourhood' programme, as we have been informed at meetings that this project is not time limited. There are 18 schemes identified within this complex proposal, not all of which are understood by the residents, and we feel that more time is required to ensure that the surrounding areas are aware of the ramifications of this scheme, are properly consulted, and can state their views.  
The majority of the scheme proposed will do little to improve our "liveability", and in some cases will make the environment and air quality far worse.  
We are unhappy with the lack of a public meeting, and the lack of overall engagement with Earlsdon residents, traders, and other stakeholders.  
It is felt that this scheme is being rushed through without an opportunity for the community to fully consider the outcomes.  
Those consulted so far are predominantly supportive of measures to reduce speed in the area, and improve road crossings. More transparency is required about the actual intention of the scheme.” This petition was raised on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023, and following

extension of the closing date it now closes on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. To date [14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – the original closing date for the petition] 277 have signed the petition.

- 1.11. In response to the first petition, the later section of this report explains how the concerns raised in this petition have been considered and responded to with the amendment of the scheme to remove the Spencer Road bus gate. Whilst the petition only received 24 signatures, there was significant feedback as part of the phase two consultation that opposed this proposal, and the scheme has been amended accordingly.
- 1.12. In terms of the petition requesting a pause to the process, this report highlights the considerable engagement process that has already taken place from December 2022 through to the current time. It should also be noted that a third phase of consultation would also take place should the scheme be approved by the Cabinet Member for City Services, in the form of the statutory consultation required as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process for certain measures proposed in the scheme, such as the 20 m.p.h. speed limit, changed parking restrictions and designation of shared use cycle route. Detailed notices and plans will set out exactly what is proposed, and the community will have its final chance to have its say or object to anything that is proposed. The Cabinet Member for City Services will be required to consider any formal objections at this stage, so there is still ample opportunity for the community to understand the proposals and provide further comment. Given the extent of consultation carried out to date, and the statutory consultation that will be undertaken, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member for City Services rejects the request made to pause the process, and asks officers to proceed with the scheme.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1. The scheme proposals presented during phase two of the consultation were based on feedback from phase one of the consultation. The scheme that was originally consulted on consisted of several traffic restriction points, designed to remove or reduce traffic from residential minor roads, as well as footway widening, new crossing points and traffic calming.
- 2.2. The key highlights of the consulted scheme were:
  - Widening of the footway (pavement) outside Earlsdon Primary School, Earlsdon Library and Elsie Jones House. This also shortens the crossing distance at the Zebra crossing outside the Library as it reduces the width of the traffic lane, and provides space for more seating, greenery and cycle hire docks.
  - Installing a new Zebra crossing on Earlsdon Street between Greggs and City Arms. This required relocation of some parking on Earlsdon Street, and this included relocating parking bays and taxi ranks into Moor Street.
  - Installing a new Toucan crossing on Albany Road at the entrance to Spencer Park. This will include the designation of short sections of shared use footway cycleway (see paragraph 2.12)
  - Introducing a Bus Gate on Spencer Road, east of Dalton Road

- Mode filters (point closures) on Arden Street, Shaftesbury Road, and Stoneleigh Avenue
- Point no entry or one-way systems on Warwick Avenue, Styvechale Avenue, Warwick Street, Moor Street, Berkeley Road North, Berkely Road South, Newcombe Road and Spencer Avenue.
- Exempting cycles from proposed and existing one-way streets and no entry points within the scheme.
- A comprehensive set of traffic calming proposals on Beechwood Avenue, including narrowing the road at Hartington Crescent mini-roundabout, and reversing the priorities at the Rochester Road junction so that traffic on Beechwood Avenue has to slow down and give way. This also shortens the pedestrian crossing distance at this location, because of the junction being narrowed to achieve the change of priorities.
- Provision for a “market gate” on Earlsdon Street to facilitate planned closures for community events. This was accompanied with traffic management changes in side roads, to facilitate temporary diversions of local traffic.

2.3. This was then all brought together with an area-wide 20 m.p.h. zone, which extended beyond the original scheme boundary to maximise its effectiveness by achieving consistency and avoid splitting Earlsdon into two with some roads being subject to the new speed limit and others not. The 20 m.p.h. will be a statutory speed limit change, and not an advisory one.

2.4. The proposals that were subject to the phase two consultation are set out in Figure 1 below.

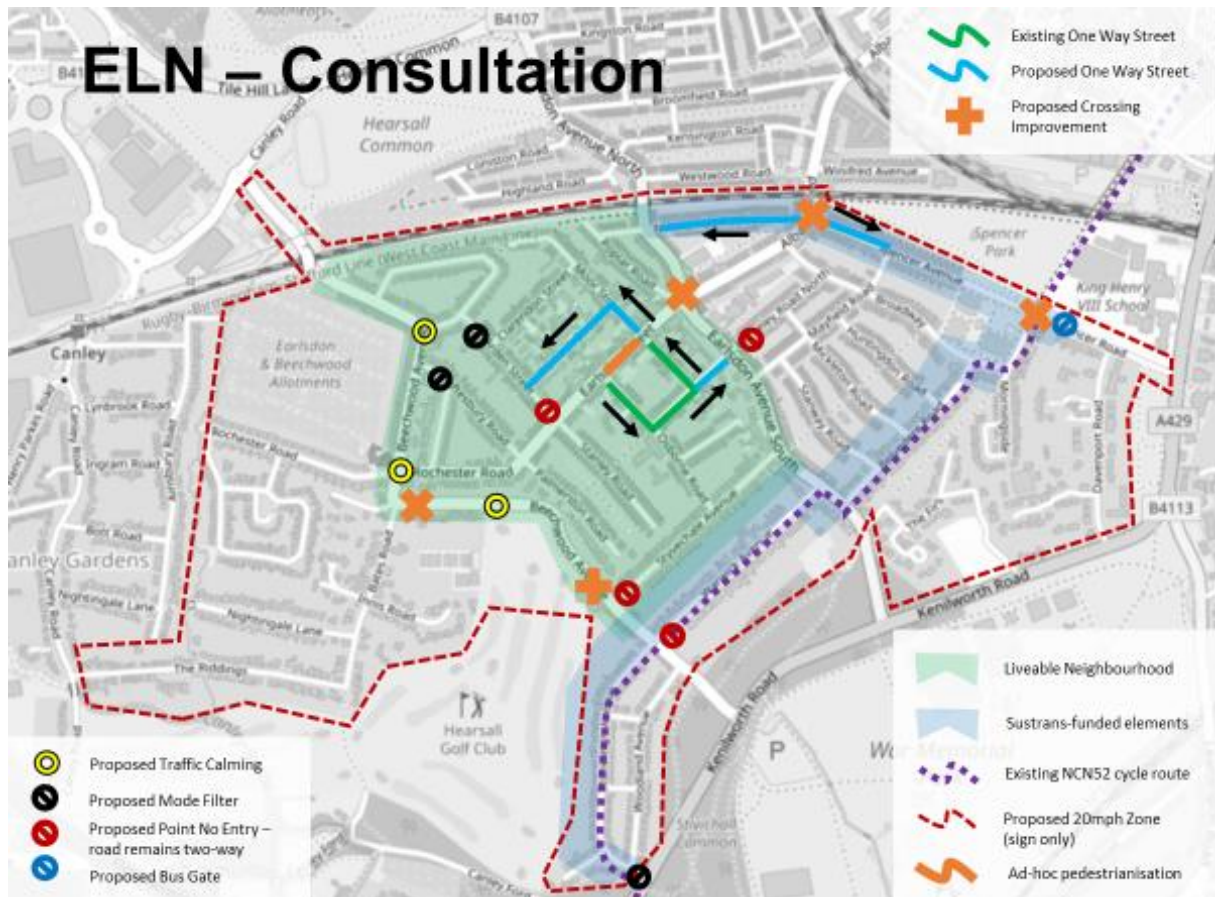


Figure 1 – original scheme, as consulted in September-October 2023

- 2.5. Following the second phase of consultation, the scheme was revised to consider feedback received.
- 2.6. Some of the traffic restrictions were scaled back or removed entirely, but the traffic calming measures on Beechwood Avenue were strengthened. Measures were also added to physically prevent obstructive parking on Earlsdon Street at the Zebra Crossing and to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance at Moor Street.
- 2.7. The revised proposals, which are recommended for Cabinet Member approval, are summarised below and highlighted in Figure 2 overleaf.
- 2.8. Unchanged proposals:
- Footway widening outside Earlsdon Primary School, Earlsdon Library and Elsie Jones House
  - Seating, planting, and futureproofing for West Midlands Cycle Hire dock outside Earlsdon Library
  - New Zebra crossing on Earlsdon Street, with corollary changes to parking on Earlsdon Street and Moor Street
  - New Toucan crossing on Albany Road, with designation of cycleway (see paragraph 2.12)
  - Point closures (mode filter) on Arden Street and Shaftesbury Road



- Cycle exemption to existing and proposed one way and no entry streets.

#### 2.9. Withdrawn proposals:

- Bus gate on Spencer Road, east of Dalton Road
- One-way system on Newcombe Road and Spencer Avenue
- No entry point on Warwick Avenue and Styvechale Avenue
- Market gates on Earlsdon Street, with corollary changes to traffic management in Berkeley Road North, Berekeley Road South, Moor Street and Arden Street

#### 2.10. Amended proposals:

- Mode filter on Stoneleigh Avenue changed to a point no entry – no entry into Stoneleigh Avenue from Kenilworth Road, but traffic can still exit at this point. This will enable the enhancement of the NCN52 cycle route at this junction.
- Strengthening of traffic calming proposals on Beechwood Avenue – see also 2.11 below – and a change to the proposed priority chicane at the Tennis Club entrance so that it is more effective.

#### 2.11. Additional proposals:

- Additional traffic calming measures are proposed on Beechwood Avenue, including reducing the lengths of proposed and existing double yellow lines so that parked cars can act as a traffic calming feature.
- Raised tables at the following junctions:
  - Beechwood Avenue / Warwick Avenue / Stoneleigh Avenue
  - Broadway / Belvedere Road
  - Spencer Road / Spencer Avenue / Dalton Road
- Improving the visibility by adding an island at Earlsdon Street zebra crossing to physically prevent vehicles parking on the zig-zags – this will provide space for cycle parking, benches, and low-level planting outside the pedestrian visibility splay.
- Narrowing the junction of Moor Street and Earlsdon Street to reinforce the existing No Entry and to shorten pedestrian crossing distance.
- Futureproofing for potential West Midlands Cycle Hire dock on Warwick Street.

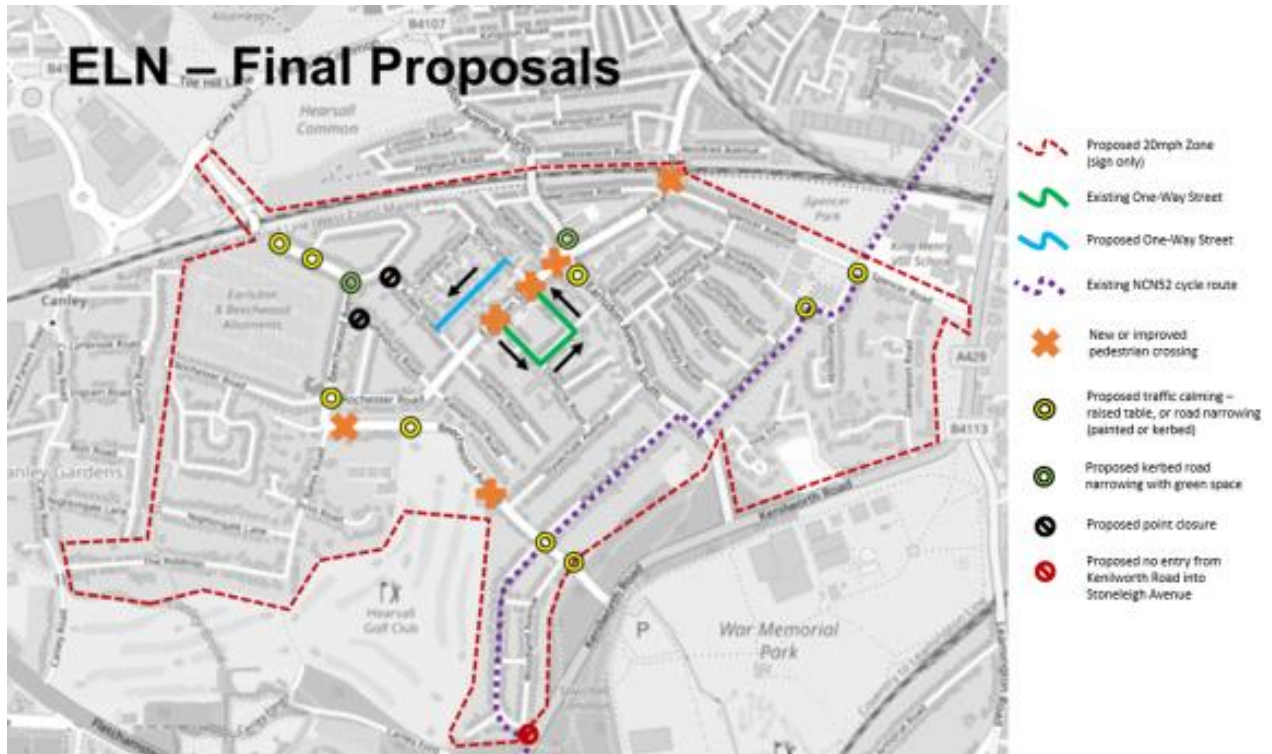


Figure 2 – revised proposals announced at public meeting in December 2023

2.12. To deliver the Toucan crossing on Albany Road, it will be necessary to designate certain parts of footway as cycle track (shared use, unsegregated) to enable cyclists to be able to use the crossing. This cycle track designation is under Section 65 and 66 of the Highways Act 1980, and the extents proposed are shown at Figure 3 below.

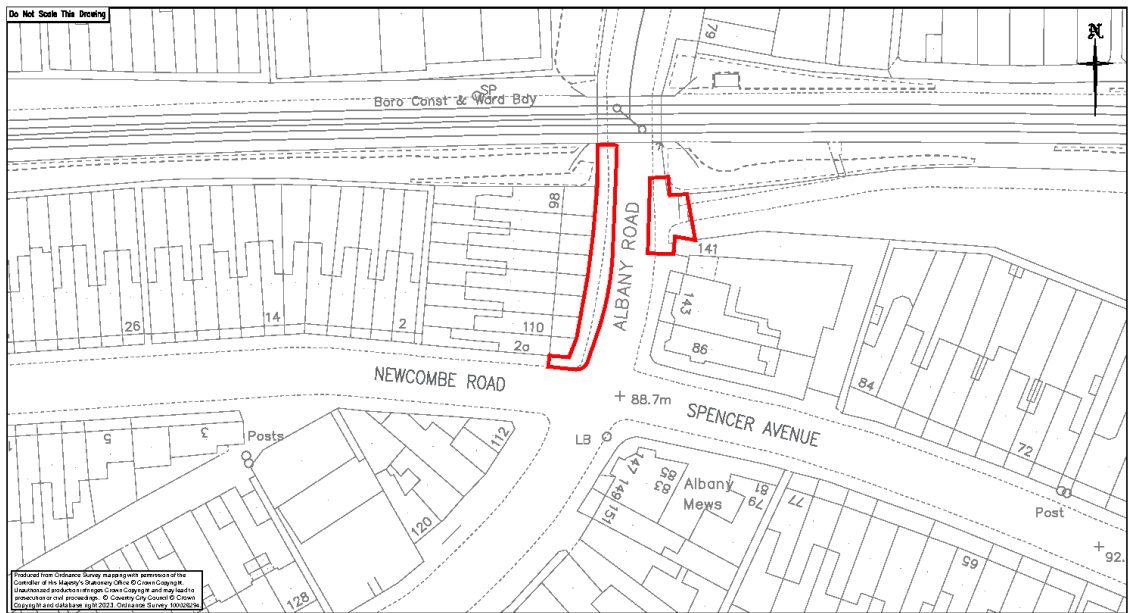


Figure 3 – extents of proposed designation of cycle track (shared use, unsegregated)

2.13. The elements of the scheme that were withdrawn or changed as a result of the feedback received during the second phase of public consultation are summarised in the table below.

<b>Withdrawn or amended proposal</b>	<b>Primary reason for change</b>
Bus Gate on Spencer Road	Concerns about displaced traffic on neighbouring streets such as Broadway and Mayfield Road
One-way system on Spencer Avenue and Newcombe Road	Concerns about displaced traffic on streets such as Poplar Road and Broadway
No Entry point on Warwick Avenue and Styvechale Avenue	Concerns about displaced traffic on streets such as Earlsdon Avenue South, Kenilworth Road, and Beechwood Avenue
Market Gates on Earlsdon Street	Concerns about additional street furniture on the footway that would cause permanent obstruction to pedestrians, especially as the gates may not be in use many times per year
Full mode filter on Stoneleigh Avenue, amended to point no entry	Concerns about exacerbation of existing right-turn difficulties at the junction of Beechwood Avenue and Kenilworth Road. Revision to point no entry means egress from Stoneleigh Avenue onto Kenilworth Road is unaffected.

*Table 1 – reason for changes to the principal elements of the scheme*

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1. Phase one of the consultation was undertaken from December 2022 to February 2023. This sought to find out what the key traffic and transport priorities were for residents and businesses in the Earlsdon area and was intended to help shape the proposals that might be implemented to best tackle these issues. In total 1,489 comments were received, and key issues identified were rat-running traffic, speeding, the need for improved crossing points at certain locations, parking, the need to improve walking routes, and the need for improved cycling facilities. The phase 1 consultation feedback report is appended as Appendix 1.
- 3.2. Phase two of consultation was undertaken in September and October 2023. The consultation was on the proposed scheme that had been developed to address the issues raised in the first round of consultation, and 6,000 comments were received. Some elements of the proposed package, such as the 20 m.p.h. zone and the proposed zebra crossing on Earlsdon Street at the Co-op, received strong support, other measures attracted a balanced response, and other measures, such as the Spencer Road bus gate and the proposed modal filters at Warwick Avenue and Styvechale Avenue, were opposed by the majority of respondents. The phase 2 consultation feedback report is appended as Appendix 2.

- 3.3. The consultation included the public, as well as specific user groups such as care homes, resident associations, business representatives, schools, bus operators, emergency services, and the council's internal service providers that might be affected by the changes.
- 3.4. Two petitions were also received in response to the second round of consultation, as reported in paragraphs 1.9 and 1.10.
- 3.5. The changes to the original proposals and the final scheme were reported via a Street News newsletter delivered to every property in and around the zone, updates on the Let's Talk webpage and a public meeting held on 12 December 2023 at The Albany Theatre. Approximately 90 people registered to attend, and the final attendance was 52.
- 3.6. Statutory consultation will also be undertaken for those measures of the proposed package that require a Traffic Regulation Order or a Notice of Intent, and this process will commence should the recommended package of measures be approved by the Cabinet Member for City Services.

#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1. If approval is given for these recommendations, the scheme will be implemented in 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.

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

##### **5.1. Financial Implications**

The scheme proposals are funded from a grant allocation of £0.50M from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund tranche 3, administered through the West Midlands Combined Authority, an extension of time has been agreed the Combined Authority to within the 2024/25 financial year.

A total of £0.270M is also contributing to the scheme, from two separate programmes administered by Sustrans.

No direct funding requirement is placed upon the City Council's own budget. Staff costs are being met from the grant funding allocation referred to above.

The installation of new street furniture and equipment such as the proposed toucan crossing on Albany Road will require future maintenance through the Council's Highways Maintenance budget. This additional maintenance requirement will be minor in nature, given the scale of these works, and will be offset in part through the reduction in road carriageway area, especially on Earlsdon Avenue where the carriageway is being narrowed and re-allocated as footway, with footways have a longer lifespan than highway in maintenance terms. Those local roads where traffic flows will be reduced, such as Arden Street and Stoneleigh Avenue, will have longer

lifespans as well through the reduced number of vehicles imposing wear and tear on the carriageway.

In summary, it is considered that there are no financial implications for the Council from the implementation of this scheme.

## 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 (TRO's) referred to in this report may be advertised pursuant to existing delegated powers in favour of the Director of Transportation and Highways and Sustainability made pursuant to powers contained in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984).

The council is obliged to consider any representations or objections received. If representations are received, these are considered by the Cabinet Member for City Services before any decision to make the orders permanent

In accordance with Section 122 of the RTRA 1984, when considering whether it would be expedient to make a Traffic Order, the Council is under a duty to have regard to and balance various potentially conflicting factors e.g. the convenient and safe movement of traffic (including pedestrians), adequate parking, improving or preserving local amenity, air quality and/or public transport provision.

The RTRA 1984 provides that once a TRO has been made, it may only be challenged further via the High Court on a point of law (i.e. that the Order does not comply with the Act for some reason).

Those proposed traffic calming measures referred to in this report will be provided pursuant to powers contained in S.90 Highways Act 1980.

The proposed pedestrian crossings referred to in this report will be provided pursuant to powers contained in S.23 RTRA 1984.

## 6. Other 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 Earlsdon area of 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.

A dedicated scheme delivery manager and team will control these risks on a day-to-day basis. The biggest risks will be reported to, and managed by, the Transport Capital Programme Board.

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

## **6.4. Equalities impact**

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. The increase in accessibility improves access to economic and social opportunities for households without access to a car. Reduced crossing distance and new pedestrian crossings also benefit people with mobility impairments. The widening of the footway on Earlsdon Avenue South improves the walking route for users of Earlsdon Centre for the Blind, who have reported difficulties with the narrow footway between the centre and Earlsdon Street.

## **6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

The scheme is intended to result in an increase in walking and cycling as modes of transport for local journeys by providing a more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists. This will in turn reduce car use for local journeys within Earlsdon, as well as ensuring that through journeys made by car remain on the higher standard roads, reducing traffic and emissions on local residential streets. The reduced emissions from road transport will support the objectives of the Council's Climate Change Strategy and improve local air quality. A reduction in impermeable surface area and

an increase in trees, hedges and verges will also benefit drainage and the discharge rate of rain water 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, and in turn use public transport. The scheme will also upgrade some bus stop infrastructure benefiting TfWM and bus passengers along the route. The scheme also makes provision for additional TfWM West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme docks to be installed, in an area where demand for this service has been traditionally high but unable to be met due to the absence of sufficient space for a docking station. By improving the access to the WMCH scheme for more people, this will support the scheme becoming more financially viable by driving increased usage.

**Report author(s):****Name and job title:**

John Seddon – Strategic Lead: Policy and Innovation

**Service area:**

Transportation, Highways and Sustainability

**Tel and email contact:**

John.seddon@coventry.gov.uk

07590443799

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Caroline Taylor	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	14.12.23	15.12.23
Jessica Weeks	Liveable Neighbourhoods Project Manager	Transportation, Highways and Sustainability	14.12.23	18.12.23
Mark O'Connell	Head of Public Realm	Transportation, Highways and Sustainability	18.12.23	20.12.23
Rob Parkes	Team Leader, Legal Services	Law and Governance	14.12.23	19.12.23
Tina Pinks	Finance Manager	Finance	14.12.23	18.12.23
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Oluremi Aremu	Head of Procurement and Legal	Law and Governance	14.12.23	21.12.23
Councillor Patricia Hetheron	Cabinet Member for City Services		19.12.23	20.12.23
Colin Knight	Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability	Transportation, Highways and Sustainability	20.12.23	20.12.23

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