



To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Date: 5 February 2025

Subject: Development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Innovation Plan

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress on the development of Coventry City Council's (CCC) Local Cycling and Walking Innovation Plan (LCWIP).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) is recommended to:
- 1) Consider the content of the briefing note.
 - 2) Identify any recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

3 LCWIP overview

- 3.1 LCWIP is a planning tool for local authorities to develop networks of walking and cycling routes, providing a policy framework for active travel that supports the implementation of the Coventry Transport Strategy, adopted by the Council in December 2022. National guidance exists to help local authorities write effective LCWIPs. A core focus of an LCWIP is planning networks based on travel demand. A good LCWIP will consider not only existing travel demand, but also potential travel demand – including scope for mode shift (changing travel choices) and amended travel patterns due to new developments.
- 3.2 The existing pictures for walking and cycling are quite different. While both modes encounter severance and other barriers to use, the walking network is largely complete. Interventions for walking are likely to focus on “point” infrastructure such as crossings, as well as area-based improvements such as traffic calming or area-wide footway improvements. It is worth noting that virtually all journeys involve an element of walking, with even journeys made by car, train or bus generally involving a walk to / from the car park, railway station or bus stop. This places an emphasis on ensuring that the walking network is well maintained and provides a high-quality environment for people at all stages of their journey.
- 3.3 The “walking” element should consider wheeling – meaning the use of the highway by people in wheelchairs, and other mobility aids – reflecting the diversity of people who use the highway network. As such, there needs to be a significant focus on accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that the walking network is easily used by all these categories of pedestrian. This places an emphasis upon not only the existence of a footway, for example, but also on ensuring that footway is usable,

without barriers caused by, for example, pavement parking, street furniture, lack of dropped kerb crossings and other obstructions.

- 3.4 On the other hand, the cycle network is somewhat more sporadic. While there may still be a need for “point” and “area-based” interventions – like walking and wheeling – an LCWIP is also likely to identify corridors to join up cycling routes together and build-up a city-wide network.
- 3.5 LCWIPs are intended to be live documents that can be updated as priorities evolve.

4 Why have an LCWIP?

- 4.1 Having an LCWIP puts the council in a stronger position to obtain funding, either from central government or other grant-giving bodies, or when negotiating settlements with private developers through the planning system. An LCWIP gives public bodies confidence that the council is delivering against an agreed set of priorities and principles, thus reducing uncertainty. An LCWIP means developers are less able to challenge infrastructure asks as being unfounded, as the complete picture of the planned network is clearly set out.
- 4.2 Delivering walking and cycling (active travel) improvements can help achieve the council’s corporate priorities.

One Coventry Value	How achieved through active travel
Increasing the economic prosperity of the city and region	Walking and cycling provide a low-cost means of accessing job opportunities, particular in sectors such as warehousing and logistics where places of work tend to be spread out and on the edge of the city, a development pattern that is hard to serve by public transport.
Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities	Health inequalities are a significant challenge for many communities, and reducing the barriers to active travel can help more people make healthier life and travel choices.
Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change	Active travel is a significant opportunity to decarbonise transport, with many journeys by bike being competitive with driving by car. Across the West Midlands, approximately 41% of car journeys are less than two miles. ¹

¹ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/10493/west-midlands-walking-and-cycling-index-2021.pdf>

One Coventry Value	How achieved through active travel
Continued financial sustainability of the Council	As an upstream intervention, active travel that supports healthier lifestyles can reduce social care and healthcare costs later in life.
Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader	Many people want to make more active travel journeys, but lack of infrastructure is often cited as a significant barrier. Providing safe and attractive infrastructure is an enabler of change at the personal level, which is impossible without leadership.

4.3 Active travel also aligns strongly to the Marmot goals, which CCC has shown strong commitment to since 2013.

Marmot goal	How achieved through active travel
Give every child the best start in life	Active travel to school improves concentration and for younger children promotes self-reliance
Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives	Promotes independence, and reduces costs associated with personal mobility
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all	Active travel can be an easy way to build-in physical activity into daily routines
Create fair employment and good work for all	Our Coventry South package is geared up to connecting people to employment opportunities at the Gigafactory
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities	People who walk and cycle are fundamentally more connected to their communities
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention	Active travel is a significant upstream intervention

4.4 Finally, active travel is a key theme in CCC’s latest Transport Strategy.

Transport Strategy objective	How active travel delivers it
Supporting the city’s economic recovery and enabling long-term growth	Active travel widens transport choice, meaning citizens have greater access to jobs and other economic opportunities. Providing alternative transport choices also reduces traffic congestion, making the city a more attractive place to invest and reducing barriers to development.
Delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system	Active travel is a naturally low-carbon mode of transport.
Ensuring equality of opportunity	Active travel has a low barrier to entry, improving access to opportunities.
Maximising health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.	Active travel builds activity into everyday life, promoting health and wellbeing.

5 LCWIP progress so far

5.1 A regional LCWIP was published by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) in 2019. This identified a core regional network of cycle routes, branded the Starley Network. In Coventry, the three routes identified were:

- City Centre – east to University Hospital via Binley
- City Centre – south to University of Warwick via Earlsdon
- City Centre – north to Coventry Arena via Coundon and Holbrooks

5.2 The regional routes are those expected to provide connectivity to significant employment sites or other major trip generators. Since publication of this plan in 2019, all three routes have seen some form of delivery of infrastructure improvements.

Regional LCWIP route	Delivery since 2019
East	Binley Cycleway – expected to be completed in 2025
South	Charter Avenue Cycleway, Lynchgate Road Cycleway, Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhood
North	Coundon Cycleway

5.3 TfWM will be updating its regional LCWIP in 2025.

5.4 In Coventry, funding from TfWM in 2024-25 is being used to develop Coventry’s LCWIP. This work had been in progress since before then, but the availability of this funding has allowed progress to be stepped up dramatically by allowing

technical support from consultants to be procured. Consultants will be undertaking a number of baseline studies that will inform the LCWIP. The LCWIP itself will be officer led, with input from members and stakeholders.

5.5 The baseline studies focus on:

- Travel demand – where are there the greatest concentration of short trips on the existing network, and factoring future development? By looking at where short trips are most prevalent, we can identify where to prioritise investment in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure.
- Quality of existing cycle routes – what is the level of service on the existing cycle network? Many people are happy with the quality of newer cycling routes, but by understanding where there are deficiencies on legacy infrastructure, we can identify how the LCWIP can include provision for upgrades of older schemes.
- Maintenance of footways and cycleways – the National Highway Survey also provides evidence that there is general dissatisfaction over the quality of the footway and footpath network, and the LCWIP will also identify the actions, and investment, required to reverse this through targeted improvements to the network.
- Accessibility – are existing off-road routes and parks and open spaces accessible, including for people in wheelchairs and adapted cycles? Many of these are under-utilised spaces currently, and colleagues in our public health team have identified parks as having a huge role to play in making Coventry healthier. While there may be non-infrastructure barriers, understanding physical accessibility and inclusion helps us identify proposals that can be included in the LCWIP.
- Cycle parking – what is the existing provision for cycle parking in our city centre and local / district centres? What is the demand for future cycle parking going to look like if more people start cycling, and are there opportunities for paid-for premium cycle parking services, that can generate a revenue for the council?

5.6 Officers will review the findings of the baseline studies. Depending on what they report, the studies may be shared directly with stakeholders for comment, or officers may take the studies and work up a plan that considers their recommendations, alongside the existing strategic objectives of the council, especially those set out in the Transport Strategy.

6 Timescales and next steps

6.1 Baseline analysis is currently underway. This is expected to conclude in spring 2025. After this time, a draft network plan will be assembled, for consultation later in the 2025-2026 municipal year as per indicative programme overleaf.

Date – provisional	Step reached	People involved
Spring 2025	Conclusion of baseline technical analysis	CCC-appointed consultants / CCC officers
Summer 2025	Review of baseline, development of initial ideas, engagement with cabinet member	CCC officers / CCC cabinet member
Autumn 2025	Engagement with community and other stakeholders	CCC officers / CCC members / public / stakeholders
Late 2025 / Early 2026	LCWIP finalised and approved by Cabinet	CCC officers / CCC members

7 Expected outcomes of the LCWIP

7.1 The LCWIP is expected to identify and recommend the following interventions:

- Additional strategic and local cycle routes to create a “joined up” network across Coventry, giving every citizen equitable access to high-quality cycle routes, enabling them to access jobs, social and other life opportunities.
- A series of Key Walking Zones closely linked to existing District Centres where investment in walking infrastructure improvements will reduce barriers and friction for people accessing their local shops and services on foot or by wheeling
- A roadmap of neighbourhood-based interventions, fanning out from the Key Walking Zones. Neighbourhood-based interventions will not be identified in detail, but their scope could include pedestrian crossings, 20mph zones, liveable neighbourhoods and rationalisation of footway parking.
- Recommendations for how walking and cycling infrastructure is maintained, including how maintenance is funded and actions for the Highways Design Guide to consider.

7.2 The exact scope of each intervention will not be precisely laid down, but enough known to be able to ascertain a budget cost. Consultation and engagement with local communities will take place during the project development process once schemes are funded and are on the programme for implementation.

8 Funding

8.1 The implementation of the LCWIP is likely to require external funding. The document itself is part of the process to obtain that funding, by setting out a clear rationale for investment and how it fits together and within the wider strategic context.

8.2 This is particularly relevant at this time, with the impending change to West Midlands Combined Authority funding, which is going to be receiving a single financial settlement from central government, rather than specific pots for transport. Having an established LCWIP and a strong evidence base and track record of

quality delivery will help Coventry make the case for continued regional investment in active travel.

- 8.3 This investment in active travel will help our communities lead healthier, happier lifestyles, with improved transport choices and reduces transport costs. In the long term, enabling active lifestyles through infrastructure changes will reduce health and social care costs in future years.

9 Health and Inequalities Impact

- 9.1 A full Health and Inequalities Impact Assessment (HEIA) will be undertaken as part of the LCWIP. An LCWIP is expected to deliver positively for protected groups, as per the table below.

Protected group	How positively impacted
Age	<p>Young people in particular tend to rely more on active travel and can be negatively impacted by transport and planning decisions that focus on car-based mobility.</p> <p>Older people who have given up driving due to health conditions or personal choice may also be more reliant on active travel modes.</p>
Disability	<p>Improved conditions for active travel can reduce barriers for people with disabilities. Many disabled groups are unable to drive and as such may be more reliant on active travel and public transport. Some disabled people use cycles as a mobility aid.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity.	<p>Improving the walking environment is particularly beneficial for this group, as footways that are poorly laid and without dropped kerbs can present a significant barrier to mobility.</p>
All groups	<p>Active travel is a significant upstream intervention, tackling health inequality.</p>

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