

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 3.15 pm on
Tuesday, 21 January 2025

Present:

Members:

- Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)
- Councillor M Ali
- Councillor J Gardiner (Substitute for Councillor G Ridley)
- Councillor A Jobbar
- Councillor L Kelly (Deputy Chair)
- Councillor J Lepoidevin
- Councillor C Miks
- Councillor R Singh
- Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members Present: Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member for City Services)

Councillor E Reeves (By invitation – Green Group non-voting representative)

- Councillor F Abbott
- Councillor J Blundell
- Councillor A Hopkins
- Councillor M Lapsa
- Councillor T Sawdon
- Councillor R Thay

Employees (by Service Area):

City Services and Commercial: A Walster (Director), M O'Connell, T Wetherhill

Law and Governance: J Newman (Director), S Bennett, G Holmes, E Jones, A West

Apologies: Councillors S Nazir and G Ridley

Public Business

67. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

68. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

69. **Consideration of Stage 2 Call -in - Binley Cycleway - Section 7 (Clifford Bridge Road)**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Director of City Services and Commercial which indicated that the decision by Cabinet Member for City Services to approve the construction of Section 7 – Clifford Bridge Road cycleway had been the subject of two call-ins. The Committee also considered a Briefing Note of the Director of Law and Governance which detailed the call-in procedure.

The call-ins related to a report approved by the Cabinet Member for City Services on 9 December 2024 entitled 'Binley Cycleway – Section 7 (Clifford Bridge Road)' (Minute 35/24 of that meeting refers), a copy of which was appended to the Briefing Notes. The Cabinet Member had agreed to:

- 1) Note progress in response to the recommendations made within the 15 November 2023 Binley Cycleway – Section 7 (Clifford Bridge Road) report.
- 2) Consider the responses, representations and objections to the Tree Felling Notices, Notice of Proposal and Notices of Intent.
- 3) Consider the petitioners concerns relating to the proposed cycleway and tree felling.
- 4) Approve the construction of Section 7 – Clifford Bridge Road Cycleway.

The first call-in was from Councillors J Blundell, M Lapsa and T Sawdon, all of whom were present at the meeting and spoke in support of the call-in. The reasons given for the call-in were as follows:

- The report fails to take account of a key safety report which is omitted from the report.
- The report contains misleading information regarding the health of the trees
- The report does not give sufficient weight and fails to evaluate and cost the alternative routes as set out in the report

The second call in was from Councillors F Abbott, A Hopkins and R Thay, all of whom were present at the meeting and spoke in support of the call-in. The reasons given for the call-in were as follows:

- There has been no consideration of any disability reports. Sight of these reports has not been forthcoming, and freedom of information requests have not been fulfilled. A decision cannot be made without a disability assessment. (It had been clarified that this relates to “the outcome of consultation with disability groups and their views”)
- The report does not sufficiently evidence that residents’ concerns have been resolved, particularly considering residents at the meeting were saying that their concerns had not been resolved to their satisfaction and issues remain at specific properties along the road. (It had been clarified that this relates to “the ability of people at specific properties to have safe access to and from their drives”)

The Committee considered the decision made by the Cabinet Member on 9 December 2024; the reasons for the call-ins; and the contents of the Briefing Note, which included the background to the Cabinet Member’s decision and material facts relating to the specific reasons for the call-in.

The Councillors responsible for the call-ins and the Committee asked questions, received answers and made comments on a number of issues including:

- The Stage 2 Road Safety Audit (RSA2) – It was confirmed that this would be undertaken by an external company prior to the construction commencing and any recommendations arising from that Audit would be considered and responded to by the Council’s design team. This process was a standard and best practice approach undertaken nationally by Local Authorities and was no different to that followed for every other significant transport scheme within the Council’s capital programme. Construction would not commence until the RSA2 had been completed and any issues identified in that, considered and responded to.
- Why the cycle route to the UHCW Hospital was proposed and the funding available for the route. It was noted that Clifford Bridge Road was a key route to the Hospital, which was the City’s largest employer, and formed part of the Council’s strategy to find and encourage alternative travel modes across the City.
- Detail was provided in relation to potential alternative routes available and investigated and why these had been discounted/not proceeded with.
- It was noted that the Council’s Disability Equality Action Partnership (DEAP) had not been consulted on the proposals so far. Officers indicated that it was intended to take the proposals to DEAP once detailed design was completed and prior to construction commencing.
- The reasons earlier designs for the cycleway had been rejected/amended following public consultation and in response to petitions received.

- It was confirmed that there were “pinch points” in the scheme, which were unavoidable due to existing infrastructure, but which had been accepted by the funding body. These would be further considered as part of the RSA2.
- It was confirmed that none of the trees proposed to be removed were the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Details of the replacement trees were provided. It was confirmed that the trees were only being removed to facilitate the scheme.
- Details of the consultation undertaken since 2019 were outlined.
- Clarification was provided in relation to a number of technical questions including reversing manoeuvres and being able to stop on the cycleway as part of those manoeuvres to ensure safety; the “floating” bus stop, which had been designed in accordance with guidelines; the width of the roads running lanes, which would not change; and recommendations from disability groups which had been accepted. It was also confirmed that there would be more parking bays than currently provided and that these would be suitable and, where there are existing marked disabled bays, these would be fit for purpose for disabled parking.
- It was noted that an EIA had been completed and was an iterative process.
- The implications of not proceeding with the cycleway were sought and provided.

Following the detailed and comprehensive discussion, the Committee then considered all of the points raised within the call-ins, noting that, in accordance with the Constitution, the following options were open to the Committee:

- a) To accept the original decision of the Cabinet Member.
- b) To make recommendations to the Cabinet Member to amend the decision.

RESOLVED that, having carefully considered the reasons detailed in the call-ins and the issues raised at the meeting, together with the information provided in the Briefing Note and at the meeting, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee accepts the decision of the Cabinet Member for City Services made on 9 December 2024 in relation to the “Binley Cycleway – Section 7 (Clifford Bridge Road”, enabling that decision to become effective immediately.

70. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2024/2025**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received and noted their Work Programme and outstanding issues for 2024/25.

71. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 6.05pm)