



PROOF OF EVIDENCE

THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(A429 COVENTRY ROAD, TOWNSEND CLOSE,
PHILLIPES ROAD AND HUDDISDON CLOSE,
WARWICK)

CYCLE TRACK ORDER 2022

A429 Coventry Road Cycle Scheme

1. Introduction

- 1.1 I am Dan Morris and I hold the post of Principal Transport Planner within the Transport Planning Group at Warwickshire County Council (WCC), where I have been employed for 6 years. I am responsible for supporting the delivery of the active travel strategy within Warwickshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and the delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure included in Warwickshire's draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- 1.2 The A429 Coventry Road is a key transport corridor that experiences high traffic volumes because of its geographical position as a main route for motor vehicles travelling to Warwick and other onward destinations to the south. No existing cycling infrastructure exists along the A429 Coventry Road which is also limited by the physical barrier created by the Grand Union canal between north Warwick and the town centre, limiting active travel trips to local employment sites, Warwick rail station, secondary schools and for leisure purposes.
- 1.3 The Cycle Track Order (the Order) is needed to deliver the northern section of the A429 Coventry Road cycle route, a route that was identified as a high priority by the 2018 member led Task and Finish Group on cycling infrastructure.
- 1.4 During 2018/19 WCC's Traffic and Road Safety Group allocated Casualty Reduction funding to the Coventry Road cycle scheme (the Scheme) and commissioned feasibility and outline design work in response to the number of collisions involving cyclists. At this time there was insufficient funding to progress the scheme to delivery and consequently, work was paused.
- 1.5 In August 2020 WCC was awarded £1.9 million from the government's Getting Building Fund through the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP to deliver a package of priority cycling schemes, including the Coventry Road route. The funding bid was supported by Warwick Town Council and Warwick District Council. In January 2021 the Leader of WCC approved acceptance of the Getting Building Fund grant and the addition of the funding to the capital programme.
- 1.6 In 2022, WCC secured an additional £0.205 million from the Government's Cycle Rail Routes to Station Fund administered by Sustrans. The purpose of the fund is to improve cycle routes to National Rail stations and increase rail passengers or help existing passengers to switch from car use to cycle. A requirement of the funding is that the route design aligned with Department for Transport's 'Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20): Cycling Infrastructure Design'. This required a design review and refinements to be made to the scheme.
- 1.7 The Scheme involves two locations that require the conversion of footpaths and highway verge to cycle tracks in the vicinity of Huddisdon Close and behind the

residential properties on Phillippes Road and Townesend Close (See Cycle Track Order Plan – Appendix 1)

1.8 Regulation 4 of the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 states that objections to the Cycle Tracks Orders can be made during a consultation period, a period that took place between 15th December 2022 and 13th January 2023 (at the same time as the traffic regulation orders required for the southern section of the scheme)

1.9 During the consultation period 6 residents (2 on Huddisdon Close, 1 on Hayle Avenue and 3 on Townesend Close) submitted objections to the Order, which have been summarised as:

1. The Scheme is not within highway land.
2. The Scheme contravenes the Warwick District Council Local Plan; Policy BE3
3. There will be adverse ecological impacts due to the removal of trees.
4. There will be negative environmental issues due to the impact of the streetlighting, increased noise, littering and anti-social behaviour.
5. Design of the scheme (alternative alignments)
6. The Scheme will cause safety issues due to cyclists using the proposed cycle track in front of properties and using the carriageway.

1.10 A residents' meeting was held on 13th March 2023 at the nearby Woodloes Tavern to discuss the concerns and issues surrounding the cycle track objections and to demonstrate through engagement with WCC officers (Lead Engineer for Warwickshire's Engineering Design Services and Team Leader for Warwickshire's Minor Works Team) that there were some issues that could easily be explained, and some which could be designed into the scheme. The meeting was also attended by the three local District Councillors, who all supported the scheme, but were also very interested in resolving the issues.

1.11 One of the actions from the residents' meeting was to provide the two residents of No. 8 and No.9 of Huddisdon Close with a clearly marked out alignment of where the proposed cycle track between Primrose Hill and Huddisdon Close would be, so that there could be no confusion about where it linked to (see image 1, Appendix 3). This did not result in the removal of any objections.

2. Scope

2.1 WCC fully supports the Order. The objections to the Order have all been considered and the evidence within this Proof should demonstrate that those objections are either not valid or are objections where adaptations to the scheme can be made. The conversion of footpaths to cycle tracks for this scheme is consistent with policy and guidance and sets out to improve safety for all users

by constructing a walking, cycling, and wheeling track that is away from carriageway and able to connect into the wider cycling network.

3. Scheme Design

- 3.1 Cycling, walking, and wheeling are ideal modes of transport for short, local trips. These modes are low-cost, accessible, healthy environmentally friendly and efficient. Nearly two thirds of Warwickshire residents live in urban areas; where distances to key destinations are often short, and combining active travel with bus or rail travel offers opportunities for longer distance journeys and creates a viable transport choice that reduces the reliance of the private motor vehicle for local trips.
- 3.2 The Government published the first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in 2017 with an ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or part of a longer journey. The Strategy included guidance for local authorities on the preparation of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP); a programme of prioritised improvements to facilitate more walking and cycling for everyday journeys.
- 3.3 WCC's draft LCWIP builds on previous improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, supports our current programme of safe and active travel initiatives and responds to recent feedback from local communities. The LCWIP reviews, updates, and formalises the walking and cycling network development plans for each of the main urban areas and sets out a prioritised programme of delivery for cycling schemes for the next 10 years and beyond. This will ensure that high quality infrastructure is in place - to encourage sustainable travel patterns for everyday journeys and provide inclusive access for leisure activities - meeting the demands of a growing population and supporting a vibrant economy.
- 3.4 In 2020, the Government provided a clear commitment to walking and cycling with publication of Gear Change and cycle infrastructure design guidance (Local Transport Note 1/20). A second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published in March 2023 and set out the Government's ambitious target that 50% of all journeys in towns and cities should be walked or cycled by 2030.
- 3.5 During 2022 and 2023, Active Travel England (ATE) was established as an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport. ATE's purpose is to raise design standards for active travel infrastructure, hold local authorities to account for their investments in active travel, provide advice on how to improve walking, wheeling, and cycling provision, and to increase skills and capacity within local authorities to deliver high quality schemes.

- 3.6 WCC's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) was adopted in 2023, comprising of a core strategy and six key strategies which active travel forms part of. It sets out a transport hierarchy for Warwickshire roads, with active travel at the top of that hierarchy. Included are measures to provide more transport choice by making it easier to walk, cycle, wheel, and access public transport.
- 3.7 The Scheme is listed as a 'Programmed' cycle route in WCC's LCWIP and has been planned and designed in accordance with national guidance including the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/20 '*Cycle Infrastructure Design*' (LTN 1/20). LTN 1/20 sets out five core design principles which represent the essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot, based on best practice both internationally and across the UK.¹
- 3.8 The five core design principles which represent the essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot must focus on routes that are: **Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable** and **Attractive**². The cycle tracks within the Scheme provide a cycling alignment that meets these Core Design Principles within the scope and budget of the scheme.
- 3.9 LTN 1/20 states that on busy strategic roads where a significant reduction in traffic speeds and volumes is not appropriate, safety will need to be achieved by providing dedicated and protective space for cycling³.
- 3.10 No suitable alternative off-road design has been achieved for the section of the Scheme where the cycle tracks are proposed, due to the physical barrier created by the ditch and treeline that runs parallel to the footway on the A429 Coventry Road. To achieve the desirable widths for walking, cycling and wheeling along this route, set out by LTN 1/20, significant works would be needed to culvert the drainage ditch and the removal of nearly all of the trees and vegetation along this section would be required.
- 3.11 The proposed cycle track will be built as a 3m tarmacked route for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelers. The section behind the properties on Townesend Close will merge onto a relatively new east/west cycle track (Woodloes Cycle Track) providing cycling connections to 1) the A429 Coventry Road cycle scheme 2) the well-used canal path network which provides an off-road route to Leamington Spa (to the east) and towards Hatton (to the west), and 3) connections to the wider Woodloes Park residential estate providing a cycle route to Aylesford Secondary school in the south-west of Warwick.

¹ Local Transport Note 1/20 '*Cycle Infrastructure Design*' (Department for Transport) 1.5.1, page 7

² Local Transport Note 1/20 '*Cycle Infrastructure Design*' (Department for Transport) 1.5.2, page 7

³ Local Transport Note 1/20 '*Cycle Infrastructure Design*' (Department for Transport) 4.2.11, page 31

3.12 The Woodloes Cycle Track mentioned above in 3.11 used the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 to confirm sections of this route as a cycle track in 2014, and 2022.

3.13 In terms of quality of provision for both pedestrians and cyclists, shared use paths across open spaces can generally be differentiated from the conversion of footways adjacent to roads. The former is recognised as more desirable as they can provide convenient, direct and attractive traffic-free facilities suitable for all ages and abilities of cyclists. These paths do not generally experience problems sometimes associated with shared use routes alongside carriageways, such as high-volume traffic, interruptions from side roads / driveways, street furniture obstructions and physical width restrictions.

4. Objection theme 1: The scheme is not within highway land.

4.1 The sections of the proposed cycle track which are subject to the Order will be over land which is already within the highway boundary and for which WCC, as highway authority, is responsible. The strips of land where the cycle tracks are proposed, together with the estate roads, were dedicated as highway maintainable at public expense under an agreement pursuant to section 40 of the Highways Act 1959 (which has been superseded by s38 of the Highways Act 1980) between the developers and Warwick District Council which was the Highway Authority at the time.

4.2 The land register which covers the areas involved in the Cycle Track Order shows the land is owned by the Crown following the dissolution of the previous owner company (the housing developer of the Woodloes Park). The Highway Extent plan can be viewed in APPENDIX 2a and 2b.

5. Objection theme 2: The Scheme contravenes the Warwick District Council Local Plan Policy BE3

5.1 The Local Plan must be taken into consideration by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) when considering applications for planning permission. Warwick District Council is the LPA, but it should be noted that WCC does not need to make an application for planning permission for works in the highway. This is because highway works are classified as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015, Schedule 2, Part 9.

6. Objection theme 3: There will be adverse ecological impacts due to the removal of trees

6.1 The cycle tracks will seek to minimise the impact on the local ecology and existing green spaces. Part of the route (see Order Plan – Appendix 1) will utilise existing residential streets and where it joins the off-carriageway sections, it will

follow an informal footpath worn by pedestrians and cyclists over time (see images in Appendix 3) to the side and rear of properties along Phillippes Road and Townsend Close. For this section of the route, care would need to be taken when working in close proximity to existing mature trees and to avoid damage to tree root systems. A 'no-dig construction' would be adopted for all sections of the route near trees.

6.2 However, to accommodate a desirable, safe cycle track width and to provide good sightlines for active travel users, an Ash tree and a Sycamore tree would need to be removed behind the properties of Townsend Close. WCC's Forestry Officer has been consulted and has confirmed the loss of these trees is not of concern. Mitigation will be provided through the planting of replacement trees on a 2 for 1 basis in the local area. An assessment of potential bat roosting sites has been undertaken, this confirms the trees to be removed are of low or negligible suitability for roosting bats. The Bat Survey can be seen in Appendix 4.

7. Objection theme 4: There will be negative environmental issues due to the impact of the streetlighting, noise, littering, anti-social behaviour.

7.1 Cycleways and shared surface paths that are situated within the highway are required to be lit as, outlined in the Warwickshire Design Guide⁴. The Scheme includes a streetlighting design that has been prepared in sympathy with the local environment, choosing apparatus that illuminates only the target areas and minimising unwanted spill light in accordance with the guidance provided by the Institution of Lighting Professionals.

7.2 Street lighting is to be provided on all routes where cycling can be expected after dark. Lighting helps users to detect potential hazards, discourages crime and generally supports a feeling of security and confidence amongst its users.

7.3 For user safety and comfort, the cycle tracks would be illuminated during the hours of darkness through the provision of streetlights mounted on street lighting columns at regular intervals along the cycle track. Those streetlights would be positioned so the lanterns face away from residential properties and towards Coventry Road (where larger 10m columns illuminating the A429 Coventry Road are already in place).

7.4 Streetlights will be fitted with lanterns that direct light on to the cycle track and will be fitted with back shields to minimise undesirable light spillage to adjacent areas. The light sources will be altered to a different colour temperature to negate any impacts of lighting on bats along the Scheme.

⁴ Warwickshire Design Guide, Part 8 – Street Lighting

8 Objection theme 5: Design of the scheme (Managing expectations and alternative alignments)

8.1 At its northern end, the Scheme requires a cycle track across a short 15 metre section of grass verge opposite No. 9 and No.11 Huddisdon Close, where cyclists would then join Huddisdon Close to travel along a short 93 metre section of signed on-carriageway route before connecting to the off-road section proposed behind the houses of Phillippes Road and Townesend Close. No changes, other than painted bicycle symbols, will be made to the carriageway.

8.2 Alternative route options for the Scheme have been considered with one option using the existing footway along the west side of the A429 Coventry Road adjacent to the carriageway (see Appendix 5, Route Option 2). It would not be possible to provide a consistent route of sufficient width to safely accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists while retaining the existing hedgerow and trees directly to the rear of the footway. Removal of the hedgerow and trees would remove the landscape buffer between the road and the adjacent residential properties which the proposed scheme would not do. It is considered that this alternative route would offer no benefit in helping to overcome the stated reasons for objection.

8.3 Another alternative route option has been explored, using a signed on-carriageway route (see Appendix 5, Route Option 3) via the residential streets of Townesend Close, Phillippes Road and Huddisdon Close, and connecting to an existing Cycle Track that provides access to the Coventry Road. This route option would still require the Order between Primrose Hill and Huddisdon Close to be confirmed, otherwise WCC would need to widen and convert the existing footway directly in front of No.9 and No.11 Huddisdon close, using its general power of improvement under the Highways Act 1980 to remove the status of footway (under section 66(4) of the Highways Act 1980) and then create the cycle track (under section 65(1)). This option would be a less direct option and therefore may be less attractive for cyclists and is likely to result in the informal path being used by cyclists.

9 Objection theme 6: The Scheme will cause safety issues due to cyclists joining the carriageway in front of properties and cyclists using the carriageway.

9.1 The short section of proposed cycle track fronting 9 & 11 Huddisdon Close is required to provide access to the existing cycleway north of Primrose Hill junction (National Cycle Network Route 52). This section of the route is considered to have limited impact on the adjacent residents as it will not affect their existing

access arrangements or introduce additional conflict or safety issues for cyclists or pedestrians.

9.2 The provision of a signal-controlled crossing (toucan crossing) across Primrose Hill is currently being investigated outside of the scope of this scheme. The crossing is looking to provide a safe crossing point the proposed cycle track within the Order, and National Cycle Network Route 52.

9.3A Road Safety Audit (Appendix 6) raised no concerns regarding the conversion of footpaths to cycle tracks.

10 Conclusion

10.1 The conversion of these footpaths to cycle tracks will create a high-quality facility for all users, providing local residents and commuters with a safe and direct active travel route which will help encourage local journeys by sustainable modes of transport.

10.2 Approval of the Order will enable WCC to complete a key missing link in the cycling network, as featured in Warwickshire's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

10.3 WCC therefore invites the Inspector to recommend that the Order be confirmed.