

**PUBLIC INQUIRY FOR THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (FOOTPATH ADJACENT TO
HARBURY LANE, WARWICK) CYCLE TRACK ORDER 2024**

OPENING STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. This matter relates to the Warwickshire County Council (Footpath adjacent to Harbury Lane, Warwick) Cycle Track Order 2024 (“the Order”) which was made by Warwickshire County Council (“the County Council”) – as local highway authority – on 28 November 2024 pursuant to its powers under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 (“the 1984 Act”).
2. Following receipt of objections to the Order from 4 local residents, the County Council submitted the Order for confirmation to the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to s.3(1) of the 1984 Act. This is how we find ourselves in this public inquiry.
3. Two preliminary points:
 - a. First, the County Council can confirm that it has complied with the relevant statutory requirements;
 - b. Second, the County Council wishes it to be noted that there are no outstanding objections to the conversion of the existing footpath to a shared use track itself.

THE SCHEME

4. The proposed Harbury Lane Cycle Track (“the Scheme”) forms part of wider measures to upgrade existing paths and facilities, to deliver new footways, cycle tracks and crossing facilities to improve and increase local active travel connections, known as the Harbury Lane Active Travel Connections Project (“the Project”).
5. The area around Harbury Lane has seen significant ongoing development in recent years including homes, shops and schools. This has led to an increased local population and the need to adapt and cater for increased travel in the area. Existing footpaths, footways and cycle tracks within housing developments north and south of Harbury Lane have been identified as variable in quality with poor overall connectivity.
6. The Project is a programmed route in Warwickshire’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (“LCWIP”) because of its strategic importance to the local cycling, walking and wheeling network and the funding that has been secured to deliver it. The

Project has been designed in accordance with LTN 1/20 and evolved in response to design reviews and local engagement and feedback.

7. The Scheme covers approximately 1 km of existing footpath running north and adjacent to Harbury Lane, between Tachbrook Road and Garrett Drive, with a connecting section of footpath between Harbury Lane and Earl Rivers Avenue (“the Footpath”). The Scheme is focused on providing an all-weather and year-round, safe and direct cycling and walking route, linking to existing footpaths and cycle tracks via new pedestrian and cycle access points along the Footpath. Its purpose is to enable more people to make more journeys by sustainable forms of transport, consistent with local and national policy goals of improving active travel infrastructure.
8. In particular, the Scheme creates and increases safer connections to directly link new housing lying north and south of the Footpath and two new schools serving the area, Heathcote Primary School and Oakley School, which lie to the south side of the Footpath, utilising existing traffic-free shared use routes to the schools.
9. The proposals involve widening and surfacing the existing Footpath to a width of 3 metres (consistent with LTN 1/20) and introduction of street lighting along regular intervals followed by conversion of the upgraded path to shared use footways/cycle tracks for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelers (including mobility scooters and pushchairs). New pedestrian and cycle access points will be created between local streets and the Footpath.
10. This is required because:
 - a. The existing Footpath was too narrow to enable use by both pedestrians and cyclists including families and people with disabilities.
 - b. The existing Footpath was poorly surfaced and unlit, therefore being particularly difficult to use in the winter and during wet weather conditions.
 - c. Harbury Lane is a busy road where a significant reduction in traffic speed and volume is not appropriate and therefore the Scheme provides a dedicated and protected cycling route parallel to the highway (in accordance with LTN 1/20)
 - d. There is poor connectivity currently between the residential areas north and south of Harbury Lane and to the new schools and amenities.

THE OBJECTIONS

11. Following the County Council’s advertisement of making the Order on 3 December 2025, it received five objections in total, four from residents of Achilles Close and one from Cycleways, a local cycling lobby group, the latter since withdrawn. The remaining four objections are primarily concerned with the access point on Achilles Close and relate to:
 - a. Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and potential criminal activity
 - b. Land ownership and powers of the County Council

- c. Current access to Footpath is adequate for residents
 - d. Impact on property value
 - e. Concerns over impact of works on private property
12. The County Council organised a drop-in meeting for the resident objectors on 4 February 2025 to discuss their concerns with officers and councillors. Two residents advised in advance they would not be attending and the other two did not attend.
13. The County Council will present evidence from Alison Kennedy- Principal Transport Planner responsible for delivery of the County Council's active travel strategy - in response to all of these objections.

CONCLUSION

14. The context here is highly relevant:
- a. The County Council and local councillors fully support the Order
 - b. One objector has now withdrawn their objection to the access point on Achilles Close on 4 November 2025, stating their support for it now. Therefore, only three objections remain.
 - c. The proposals are consistent with policy and guidance regarding conversion of footpaths to cycle tracks where the goal is to improve safety for all users by constructing a walking, cycling, and wheeling track that is separated from carriageway and able to connect into the wider active travel network, improving connectivity to the local residential areas and amenities.
 - d. If the Order is not confirmed, the upgraded Footpath will remain as it is and access points, from and to the Footpath, for pedestrian access will still be provided by the County Council, using their powers under the Highways Act 1980.
15. Given the importance of the Scheme and the fact the County Council's evidence will demonstrate that the objections are not valid, the County Council invites the Inspector to recommend that the Secretary of State confirm the Order.

Dated 13 November 2025

PRU JAKUES
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County Council