

December



15<sup>th</sup> 2022

## **Cycleways' WCC proposal Warwick**

## **assessment of the for St John's**

### **Introduction**

WCC have recently proposed a number of changes at St John's, Warwick:

- Improve the connectivity and enhance the experience for pedestrians and cyclists in the St John's area.
- Accommodate increased vehicle flows to enable future transport changes for all highway users.
- Improve the public realm of this key gateway to Warwick.

Part 1 of this assessment, The Review, comments on the WCC scheme.

Part 2 of this assessment outlines Cycleways' scheme, and makes recommendations

### **Summary**

- This proposal fails to meet both national and county policies in respect of climate change.
- The proposal falls well short of its objectives due to its failure to follow the recommendations provided by the Dept. of Transport. Mixing cyclists with pedestrians is an unattractive solution for both groups, and will not enhance their experience.
- Measures to accommodate increased vehicle flows run counter to the Council's climate change objectives, and will reduce air quality in the St John's Air Quality Management Area.

## Part 1 - The Review

### Provision for cyclists and pedestrians

The WCC proposal is to convert the pavements in the St John's area to shared pedestrian and cycle use. This goes against proven best practice and guidance from the Department of Transport (DfT):

***Creating space for cyclists by taking existing footway space from pedestrians is generally the least acceptable course of action.<sup>1</sup>***

In its latest guidance the DfT goes much further:

***On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians<sup>2</sup>.***

The DfT is clear, that poorly designed schemes such as the one proposed by WCC, will not achieve positive outcomes. Cyclists will be discouraged from using the facilities, which will represent poor value for money:

***Inadequate cycling infrastructure discourages cycling and wastes public money<sup>3</sup>***

The proposal for shared pedestrian and cycling facilities in the St John's scheme faces some very particular difficulties:

- There is high pedestrian footfall, as the pavements in this area serve several key locations:
  - Warwick Railway Station
  - Warwick School
  - Warwick Technology Park
  - Warwick Nursery School
  - Coten End Primary School
  - Coten end shops
- There are some significant pinch points that make pedestrian/cycle conflict inevitable:
  - The pedestrian crossing at the foot of Priory Road, where the pavement width cannot accommodate pedestrians and two-way cycle traffic
  - The bus shelter north of the Paddocks
  - Numerous trees and street furniture

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<sup>1</sup> 1.3.3, p10, LTN 2/08, DfT

<sup>2</sup> 2, p41, Gear Change, 2020, DfT

<sup>3</sup> P20, Gear Change, 2020, DfT

- o The eastern side of the proposed Toucan crossing at the bottom of Coventry Road.

The DfT is clear:

***Cyclists and pedestrians must be segregated at crossings<sup>4</sup>.***

**To conclude**, what is being proposed is a very poor option for the cyclist and the pedestrian, their experience will not be enhanced, cycle use will not increase as hoped, and public money will be wasted.

## Accommodate increased vehicle flows

The St John's scheme has an explicit aim to accommodate increased traffic flows. This is contrary to the Council's climate change objectives, as set out in its draft Sustainable Futures Strategy (SFS),<sup>5</sup> which states,

***We want to have zero emissions surface transport across the County, increasing the use of sustainable modes of transport, with every resident having access to zero carbon private, public and active transport options.***

The key to this objective is closing the carbon emissions gap, with Active Travel playing an important part.

Rather than accepting increased traffic flows as inevitable, WCC should take a strategic, integrated approach with the aim to reduce traffic flows, in line with their own Climate Change objectives

## Poor air quality

Road traffic is recognised by the Council as a major cause of air pollution,<sup>6</sup> and St John's is no exception. The lower end of the Coventry Road is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Increasing traffic flows will exacerbate air quality problems.

The Council noted in its own report to the Cabinet in 2017<sup>7</sup>:

***It is this recognition of the need to reduce the number of vehicle journeys that underpins the promotion of the use of public transport, walking and cycling.***

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<sup>4</sup> 2, p41, Gear Change, 2020, DfT

<sup>5</sup> Draft Sustainable Futures Strategy November 2022, WCC

<sup>6</sup> Local Transport Plan Refresh, Report to the Cabinet, 9/9/2021

<sup>7</sup> Transport Related Air Quality Task and Finish Group, 24/1/17, WCC Cabinet Report

Over 75% of road transport particulate emissions come from tyre and brake-wear, not exhausts<sup>8</sup>, and abrasions from the road surface, hence the importance of a vehicle reduction strategy as part of any initiative on air quality measures.

The Climate Change Commission is clear that reducing vehicle use, even with the introduction of electric vehicles, is the key to improving air quality:

***Reducing the demand for car travel offers significant potential for reducing emissions, with the associated benefits for congestion, air quality and health.<sup>9</sup>.....***

## **Climate change and reducing carbon emissions**

Road traffic is the single biggest source of carbon emissions in the UK.<sup>10</sup> In south Warwickshire, including Warwick, it is the source of some 45% of carbon emissions.

As already noted, part of the measures recognised to address the AQMA and carbon emissions lies in reducing traffic volumes through Active Travel, and to substitute car journeys with walking, cycling, or public transport. This important objective is highlighted by the Climate Change Committee,

*Constraining the growth of vehicle mileage is vital to reducing emissions, even as EVs replace petrol and diesel cars. Car and van mileage can be reduced by 7-16% by 2030, and by 12-34% by 2050 against today's levels.....Shifting 33-35% of trips to walking, cycling and public transport such as shorter trips for cities can be higher<sup>11</sup>.*

The need for high quality active travel infrastructure is also emphasised,

***High quality public transport and active travel infrastructure to support a 6% reduction for car travel by 2030.<sup>12</sup>***

WCC recognise the serious problem of road traffic emissions, as is noted at its Cabinet meeting in 2021,

***Transport emissions are one of the biggest contributors to climate change.....poor air quality.....and to address the climate emergency declared by WCC.<sup>13</sup>***

It is for these reasons that the aims to increase vehicle flows is such a contrary objective.

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<sup>8</sup> P8, Speed, emissions & health, 2018, TfL, Transport for London

<sup>9</sup> P8, The Sixth Carbon Budget, Surface Transport, [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)

<sup>10</sup> P21, Reducing UK emissions, Report to Parliament, 2020, [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)

<sup>11</sup> P81, Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget, 2020, [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)

<sup>12</sup> P110, Reducing UK emissions: Progress Report to Parliament 2021

<sup>13</sup> Cabinet Report, 9/9/21, WCC

## Improving the Public Realm

This is an important objective, but it can be considerably strengthened with good quality provision for cyclists and pedestrians, as has been identified in numerous studies. Improving the public realm, coupled with improvements for cycling and walking in urban shopping areas, has led to a significant improvement in retail sales, by up to 30%.<sup>14</sup> Such measures also create more vibrant areas, as a detailed survey across the Business Improvement Districts in London found. With 83% respondents saying such measures attracted more customers and 90% felt that cycling and walking created vibrant areas.<sup>15</sup>

There is, therefore, a great incentive to get pedestrian and cycle schemes right and to provide high quality infrastructure that genuinely meets pedestrian and cycle needs. The St John's scheme, as proposed, does not do this and hence represents a missed opportunity.

## Part 2 - Cycleways' proposal for cycling infrastructure through St John's.

To deliver the cycling component of Active Travel and recognising the nature of the old and narrow streets in Warwick, Cycleways have drawn on the well-established experience of the DfT, who recommend,

***In older towns.....where space is at a premium, traffic calming would be the most appropriate means of facilitating cycling.***<sup>16</sup>

Such measures as 20 mph play an important part in safety, both for pedestrians and cyclists, all very relevant for the St John's area, as the DfT go on to note,

***The speed of the motor vehicle is one of the most critical factors in determining the safety and comfort of a link for cyclists.....and indeed for all road users....***<sup>17</sup> ***including pedestrians.***

Providing good quality on-road provision would encourage greater cycle use, and avoid conflict with pedestrians at key pinch points.

## Cycleways' proposal

For cyclists coming from the **north** via the Coventry Road cycle route, a Toucan crossing, just south of the rail bridge, would link them into Guy Street, a quiet residential street, that

<sup>14</sup> Lawlor, 2013, Walking and Cycling: the economic benefits, Transport for London, TfL.

<sup>15</sup> Aldred and Sharkey, 2017, Walking and Cycling: the economic benefits, Transport for London, TfL.

<sup>16</sup> 7.2, p22, Cycle-Friendly Infrastructure, 1996, DfT

<sup>17</sup> 10.2, p43, Cycle-Friendly Infrastructure, 1996, DfT

would by-pass the lower end of the Coventry Road with its problems. Guy Street provides a direct link into the planned Emscote Road cycle route.

As has already been noted, Cycleways are in favour of a 20 mph speed limit in built up areas, specifically in the Emscote Road from the Coten End School being essential. This measure should extend all the way through St Nicholas Church Street and Castle Hill, to Jury Street in Warwick.

Provision for protected cycle lanes, in line with DfT guidelines<sup>18</sup>, should be provided as part of the St John's scheme.

Installing traffic light controls for pedestrians and cyclists at the junction of St Nicholas Church Street with Castle Hill would significantly improve conditions for the cyclist and the pedestrians.

As part of the 20 mph zone, the pedestrian crossings of St Nicholas Church Street, Smith Street, and Priory Road should have raised tables.

Smith Street, which is used by cyclists heading east out of Warwick, should be 20 mph, again, another benefit to pedestrians. In addition, there would also be a considerable benefit to cyclists and pedestrians if Cross Street were closed off to vehicle traffic onto Smith Street.

There appears to be sufficient space on the carriageway from Priory Road/Smith Street to the signal junction at St John's to accommodate an advanced stop line for cyclists, served by a cycle access lane.

### **To conclude**

The scheme put forward by Cycleways, based on the recommendations of the DfT, is able to provide the basis for long term improvements for the St John's area, not only in the potential economic improvements, but also in the environmental, safety and social benefits.

### **Recommendations**

The current scheme put forward by WCC should be scrapped and a new scheme, based on the suggestions in this document, should be drawn up in consultation with the public.

*Rodney King*

*Secretary to Cycleways*

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<sup>18</sup> Gear Change 2020, DfT