



28<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## **Cycleways' Assessment of WCC's proposal for the Harbury Lane cycle route, as listed on the WCC web site**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the cycle route would be to serve the extensive development of the new housing schemes south of Harbury Lane, by providing a key E-W link to Warwick and the Technology Park, as well the link to cycle routes heading north towards destinations in Leamington.

### **Summary**

WCC's Proposal is by means of shared use footways, the least favoured option, and one that would be inadequate for any significant increases in cycling. The DfT, (Dept for Transport), also regard shared use paths as the least favourable option, and have long recommended that it is the road that should be made suitable for cycling.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the Proposal is sub standard in some of the detail, and a number of improvements are given in the Recommendations.

The new housing developments south of Harbury Lane are predominantly on a green field site, and should be interconnected with good pedestrian and cycle friendly road networks but this appears not to be the case, specifically with the Oakley Primary/Secondary School.

Climate Change- Cycling is classed as a zero carbon mode of transport hence its potential to any carbon reduction strategy has been included in the Assessment.

**Assessment of the WCC Proposal for Harbury Lane**, from east to west.  
*Comments in italics which need to be read in the context of DfT guidance, as follows,*

**The road network is the most basic (and important) cycling facility available, and the preferred way of providing for cyclists is to create conditions on the carriageway where cyclists are content to use it, particularly in urban areas.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> 1.3.2, p10, LTN 2/08, DfT

<sup>2</sup> ditto

On the **north** side of the Harbury Lane

An existing grit footpath provides a link from the Tachbrook Road cycle route to just prior of the roundabout with the Earl Rivers Avenue. The Proposal is to widen this path to 3m for shared use.

However, such a width is very inadequate as it does not take into account any expected increase in use. The DfT guidance is clear.

***Comment***

*3m is the minimum width.....and does not take into account the need for increased width to accommodate larger user flows. Wherever it is possible, widths larger than the minimum should be used. Practitioners should not use minimum widths as design targets<sup>3</sup>*

In addition, the footpath is bounded on its south side by a high hedge, while on the north side it is bounded by a mix of hedges and fencing.

***Comment***

*In all cases where a cycle track is bounded by a vertical feature an additional allowance should be made.<sup>4</sup>*

At the western end of the footpath, provision for cycling is made by an on road two-way cycle path, but the Earl Rivers Avenue roundabout will provide a serious obstacle for both cyclists and pedestrians.

***Comment***

*A much preferred option for a roundabout would be a signal junction since this could benefit both cyclists and pedestrians alike.*

Further on where Nightingale Avenue crosses the shared use cycle path, (sheet 5 of 5) a much preferred route to Europa Way would be to turn right into Nightingale Avenue, then into Swallow Drive, and then along a widened footpath to the end of the houses. Turn left to where residents have already created an informal route through the hedge into Heathcote Lane. A Toucan crossing could take the cyclists over to the existing shared use path on the north side of the Heathcote Road, then turn left, and continue to the Toucan crossing on Europa Way.

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<sup>3</sup>8.5, p42, LTN 2/08, DfT

<sup>4</sup> 8.5.3 and Table 8.2, p43, LTN 2/08, DfT

### **South side of Harbury Lane, east to west.**

Provision on the south side of the road is predominately by means of new shared use foot paths, *but there is no cycle provision to connect to the new Primary/Secondary Oakley School site*, currently still under construction, planned to open September 2024.

In addition, *there is a gap in the connection from the Heathcote Park mobile home park*

The other poor feature of the cycle path on the south side of Harbury Lane is that it has to *cross side roads, awkward and with no provision of speed tables to check traffic speeds.*

### **Climate Change**

Emissions from transport represent over half of South Warwickshire's emission profile, making them a fundamental source to target action.<sup>5</sup> Active Travel, which includes cycling, is recognised as a key constituent in any road transport carbon reduction strategy. As the Government advisers on climate change, the Climate Change Commission, highlight,

**Constraining the growth of vehicle mileage is vital in reducing emissions, even as EV's replace petrol and diesel cars, there should be a 33-35% shift of trips to walking, cycling and public transport<sup>6</sup> .....investment in high quality public transport and active travel infrastructure to support a 6% reduction in demand for car travel by 2030, relative to base line forecasts.<sup>7</sup>**

Sadly, as the comments contained in this report highlight, the Harbury Lane Proposal is not based on high quality infrastructure, hence it is difficult to see how any meaningful contributions to a carbon reduction strategy would be achieved.

### **Conclusion**

What is currently proposed is a very poor option, both for cyclists and pedestrian, neither meeting the objectives in WCC's Local Plan, LTP 4, or in the WDC Planning Brief:

- ***It is critical that sustainable transport improvements form part of the mitigation package to support the housing and employment growth within the District. Such improvements will:***
- ***Maximise the number of journeys made by sustainable transport.***
- ***Reduce the impact of car based travel on the local and strategic highway network<sup>8</sup>***

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<sup>5</sup> 6.3, Transport, Anthesis, Warwick & Stratford on Avon District Councils

<sup>6</sup> P89, Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget, 2020, [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)

<sup>7</sup> P106, Progress in reducing emissions, 2021,, Report to Parliament, [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)

<sup>8</sup> 5.6.3, District Wide Mitigation Proposals, Local Plan, 2013, WDC

## **Recommendations**

To improve on the existing proposal, the following are recommended:

- The existing grit path to the north side of Harbury Lane, should be widened to at least 4.5m, to allow for an increasing use by cyclists and to allow for the hedges bordering the path.
- The hedge between the existing grit footpath and Harbury Lane requires a proper assessment in its role as a wildlife corridor, also in its potential role to reduce the pollution and noise from the Harbury Lane impacting on residents to the north of the footpath.
- Sheet 5 of the Proposal, an alternative route via Nightingale Avenue should be evaluated.
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Shared use paths used by cyclists need to be clearly identified, such as by means of a cycle logo. Good signage is also important.

A preferred way of delineating cycle space and pedestrian space would be by means of a white line.

To meet its policy objectives as set out in its LTP 4, WCC need to provide cycling facilities that are attractive to use. Working to the guidance provided by the DfT, in LTN 1/20 and Gear Change, should be the starting point.

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