

Kenilworth Town Council
Cycling Delivery Group Report
6th April 2023

There have been two key meetings in the last cycle.

On March 10th members of the group met with Alison Kennedy, Cllr Wallace Redford and a large number of officers from WCC and WDC to discuss progress on cycling infrastructure across the town. This included the results of traffic surveys where the need for infrastructure has been identified. These included Borrowwell Lane, Bridge Street, Mill End, Rawnsley Drive, Dalehouse Lane, Station Road, Warwick Road, Windy Arbour/Glasshouse Lane and School Lane/NCN52 junction. They showed that in some places there are a significant number of journeys being made but there are other junctions which appear to be a no-go zone for people on bicycles. And journeys by car still dominate.

These have been used to inform the initial feasibility sketches which have now been progressed for:

- Borrowwell Lane and Bridge Street – at either end of the proposed Abbey Fields routes
- Warwick Road from the cricket ground up to St John's Church
- Windy Arbour
- Rawnsley Drive
- School Lane/NCN52 junction

Initial feedback was provided by the group. Other schemes are also being worked on and the intention is that these initial feasibility drawings will now be developed into designs and eventually costed. This is an important step as it makes it easier for applications to be submitted when funding becomes available.

The Cycling Delivery Group also met for the last time on 27th March and used the time to take stock of progress against the strategy and to make recommendations to be considered by the next administration.

Review of the Strategy

The Cycling Strategy set out an overarching objective to increase the proportion of journeys in Kenilworth conducted by bicycle. It set out three more detailed objectives.

Objective One: Improving facilities for cyclists

Objective Two: Helping cyclists (and potential cyclists) feel more confident

Objective Three: Educating all road users about the needs of cyclists

The strategy always recognised that the Town Council couldn't do this on its own and in many cases would need to work with other partners to bring schemes and activities forward. These objectives became three priorities with more detail against each.

Priority One - Improving cycling infrastructure and linking up existing cycle routes

Route 1 – Abbey Fields connection of Sustrans Route 52	WDC preparing consultation exercise on a preferred route
Route 2 – Kenilworth to Leamington (K2L)	Funding for the route was agreed in early 2020 by WCC. Progress has been slow but the first stage of the project (which wasn't originally in the scope) is now underway. The

	project has been broken into the following phases with some indicative timelines: Phase 1a – Leamington to Northumberland Road - under construction: 2023 Phase 1b – Northumberland Road to Blackdown 2023-24 Phase 1c – Blackdown to Bericote: 2024-25 Phase 2 – River Avon and flood plain crossing: 2025-26 Phase 3a – Ashow Road to Kenilworth via Rocky Lane: 2024-25 Phase 3b – Chesford to Kenilworth via Thickthorn: 2024-25 There is still considerable work to be done on the stretch from Bericote Island to Kenilworth including crossing the river. There is also some discussion about whether K2L will enter the town via Leamington Road or Rocky Lane and a decision is needed.
Route 3a K2L Connection with the Kenilworth Greenway	Initial drawings for a route along Rawsley Drive presented and further work in train around Dalehouse Lane, Woodmill Meadow,
Route 3b – East to West connectivity across the Leamington to Coventry Railway Line	The conversion of the railway bridge at St John's, largely funded by Town Council has now been completed. It's a small but vital link in the chain.
Route 4 – Kenilworth to A46 Leek Wootton Junction	Some progress on the route as far as the Pavilions
Route 5 - Linking the Coventry Cycle route (A429) with the Kenilworth Greenway	Funding secured from HS2. To be progressed by WCC

The strategy also highlighted the importance of routes for schools across the town. All the routes that we have begun to progress with WCC as well as those identified in the initial strategy will contribute to this.

There is more opportunity to expand the remit of the infrastructure workstream to address the need for better cycle parking e.g. under cover, secure etc.

Priority Two – Improving signage around the town to improve way-finding, safety and awareness for people who cycle.

This is an area that hasn't been progressed significantly. As new infrastructure is delivered it will come with new signage (like the Clarke's Ave bridge) and there is limited value in pursuing additional signage separately to infrastructure.

Priority Three – Promote cycling across Kenilworth through cycling related events.

We have adopted a strategy of making cycling part of town-wide events rather than holding separate events. These have also created opportunities to engage with residents about cycling which has been overwhelmingly positive. It's also provided an opportunity to support the Pedal to Protect group and to involve the young people in our town.

Specifically we have had a presence at:

- The Christmas Markets and Lion's Community Group Event
- Took part in Kenilworth Carnival
- Offered free bike maintenance through Dr Bike and bicycle security marking thanks to the local Safer Neighbourhoods Team
- Attended the EcoFayre twice
- Accompanied the High Sheriff of Warwickshire on her (cold and wet) charity ride
- Supported the launch of the WCC Road Safety Campaign launch
- Supporting Bikeability for children in schools with additional sessions during holidays

There is more opportunity to raise awareness about the needs of people on bikes through the 'More than a Cyclist' campaign (in conjunction with WCC) and there is support for bringing Operation Close Pass to the town (which we have tried a number of times to secure.)

Overall Impressions

It's easy to be frustrated by the lack of new infrastructure. However, the group were keen to remind each other that when our work started, none of the schemes that we were looking at had been funded and few existed beyond a line drawn on a map. In that context, to now have at least partial funding in place for four of the priority schemes and a number of feasibility drawings complete is a significant achievement. Sadly, these things do take a long time to progress.

The involvement of local residents had undoubtedly been helpful to council officers, both as a source of feedback but also to demonstrate support for the schemes that they are developing. It's helpful to show that it's residents asking for it, not just councillors.

The group also pointed to evidence of a growing level of awareness of cycling in the town. The Pedal to Protect petition was well supported as was the K2L campaign, engagement at local events has been positive, work done on a census of users of the Greenway showed large numbers of people opting for cycling as a leisure activity. In the past there had been a perception amongst some that there is little interest in cycling in the town. This is demonstrably not the case.

The group unanimously supported the idea that the next Town Council administration should follow our example and establish a group to continue the work of the Cycling Delivery Group. The last four years has established a strong foundation to move forward from and there is a sense that we are close to making significant progress. It was also felt that the group should retain its focus on cycling rather than expand to try and take on a wider active travel remit.

In closing

I'd like us as a council to put on record our thanks to the members of our community who have been part of the Cycling Strategy Group and the Cycling Delivery Group. Their involvement has been helpful, insightful and encouraging.

I would also propose that we write to Alison Kennedy at WCC on behalf of the Town Council to thank her for her hard work and support. Her willingness to actively engage with us has been transformative in the progress we've been able to make.