

Council

17 December 2019

A452 Kenilworth to Leamington Spa Cycling Scheme

Recommendation

That Council approves an allocation of £4.749 million from the Capital Investment Fund to the Kenilworth to Leamington Spa Cycling Scheme and its addition to the Capital Programme.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 The 2019/20 capital budget resolution agreed by Full Council in February 2019 included a specific priority that by September 2019 investment proposals for additional cycle routes in response to accident data and air quality would be brought forward for decision.
- 1.2 In response, allocations from the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) were sought in September for three priority cycling schemes, namely Kenilworth to Leamington Spa Cycle Route, Nuneaton and Bedworth Cycling Connections and A47 Long Shoot Cycle Route (Hinckley to Nuneaton).
- 1.3 On 14th November 2019, Cabinet considered a report on CIF funding and approved the allocation of £1.012 million funding to the Nuneaton and Bedworth Cycling Connections scheme and £0.438 million to the A47 Long Shoot Cycle Route and the addition of these two schemes to the Capital Programme. Cabinet also approved the allocation of £4.749 million from the CIF and recommended that Council approve £4.749 million for the A452 Kenilworth to Leamington Cycle Route (K2L) and its addition to the Capital Programme.
- 1.4 The K2L scheme will deliver a new 5 km off-carriageway cycle route connecting Kenilworth and Leamington Spa along the A452 and B4115 / Rocky Lane (see plan at **Appendix**). Provision of a high quality, safe, direct, continuous dedicated cycle track on this corridor is essential to overcome the main barrier to cycling, which is the fear of danger posed by motor vehicles.
- 1.5 The current lack of safe segregated cycling provision, high traffic volumes (around 30,000 vehicles per day), narrow carriageway and large roundabouts on the A452 create conditions which are not conducive to cycling. The A452 is

currently the only direct route between the two towns and there are no suitable alternative routes for cyclists.

- 1.6 There is significant public support for the K2L scheme and a petition presented to Cabinet on 15th October attracted over 3,000 signatures. The scheme emerged as the highest priority new cycle route in the County during a prioritisation exercise carried out as part of the Task and Finish review of Cycling Infrastructure. This process was based on a methodology recommended by the Department for Transport, with schemes evaluated using the criteria of effectiveness, policy, deliverability and economic criteria.
- 1.7 The K2L scheme is expected to release considerable suppressed demand for cycling on the A452 corridor. The scheme will enable everyday cycling journeys between the two towns, as well as supporting cycle access to the University of Warwick, Stoneleigh Park, JLR Whitley and Coventry. It will also provide an important sustainable transport link for the 1400 new dwellings and new employment planned in east Kenilworth. The development of 4000 new houses at Kings Hill to the north of Kenilworth will further increase demand for this cycle route.
- 1.8 The scheme has been assessed by external consultants using established methodology as having a benefit cost ratio of 2.1 which is categorised by the Department for Transport as providing high value for money. It should be noted that the forecasting method used to predict levels of post-scheme cycling for these calculations may not fully reflect the current level of suppressed demand and severance created by the poor cycling conditions on the A452 or the lack of alternative routes available for cyclists. The growing popularity of electric bikes and the potential this offers for widening the appeal of cycling, particularly for longer journeys, is another factor which the forecasting methodology does not take into account.
- 1.9 K2L is a named scheme in the Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2011-26. Policy CY2 Cycle Networks and Policy CY3 Prioritising cycling schemes includes an action to 'Seek to develop dedicated cycle infrastructure on key inter-urban links: Kenilworth – Leamington Spa'.
- 1.10 The scheme will contribute towards a range of objectives, including those on congestion, air quality, carbon emissions, safety and health. Delivery of high-quality cycling infrastructure will encourage a switch from car-based travel to sustainable modes and reduce carbon emissions from transport.
- 1.11 On approval of the funding allocation, further design work will be carried out. A key challenge for the scheme is providing a safe crossing of the River Avon and associated flood plain. There is no scope for cycling provision on the

existing narrow road bridge. There may be an opportunity in the future to provide cycling infrastructure on this section as part of the proposed A452 (Thickthorn – Bericote) highway scheme, which is included in the Warwick District Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The current proposal to enable delivery of the K2L scheme is to construct a modular cycle / pedestrian bridge structure over the river and flood plain. This structure can be removed and relocated elsewhere if required should the highway scheme come forward in the future.

2.0 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The scheme has been estimated to cost £4.749 million and CIF funding will be used to fully fund this key scheme to ensure it can be brought forward at the earliest possible opportunity. An appropriate level of contingency has been built into the cost estimates to reflect the current stage of design.
- 2.2 External funding is being sought for the scheme in order to reduce the amount of CIF required. Potential sources of funding include developer contributions, HS2 Road Safety Fund and Highways England cycling funding. Where external funding is secured and received which contributes to this scheme, an amount equal to the value of the external funding will be returned to the Capital Investment Fund for use on future projects.
- 2.3 The impact on maintenance budgets of constructing new cycle track is considered to be minimal, any ongoing maintenance costs will be absorbed into the general highways and bridge maintenance budget.
- 2.4 Monitoring of the capital project costs will be reported as part of the quarterly financial monitoring report to Cabinet.

3.0 Environmental Implications

- 3.1 Developing cycle route networks to make cycling a viable transport choice is key to reducing carbon emissions from transport and tackling climate change. The schemes will enable residents and commuters to make positive steps towards reducing their carbon footprint by switching from driving to cycling for short local journeys.

4.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 Approval of the CIF funding allocation and the addition of the K2L scheme to the Capital Programme will enable detailed design work, land acquisition and other statutory processes necessary to deliver the scheme to be progressed.

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