

Portfolio Holder Decision

A425 Radford Road, Leamington Spa: NCN41 improvements

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
Date of decision	13 October 2023
	Signed

1. Decision taken

- 1.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves the proposed Toucan crossing on Radford Road near Sydenham Drive as part of improvements to the National Cycle Route 41 (Leamington Spa to Radford Semele).

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 Where objections have been received to proposed traffic management schemes, it is necessary for the Portfolio Holder to decide whether to proceed with the proposals.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Warwickshire County Council is committed to improving provision for active travel to support accessibility, address the climate emergency, improve air quality, reduce congestion and improve health. There are ambitious plans for improved infrastructure in and around Warwickshire's towns so that more people will choose to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys and outdoor recreational activities.
- 3.2 The A425 is a busy main road between Leamington, Radford Semele and Southam. The speed limit on the A425 Radford Road changes from 30mph to 40mph just east of Sydenham Drive, Leamington. National Cycle Network 41 connects Leamington town centre and railway station with the Offchurch Greenway and Lias Line disused railway via Newbold Comyn (although the foot/ cycle bridge at Radford Meadows is temporarily closed), A425 Radford Road and Grand Union Canal.
- 3.3 Sustrans, a national transport charity and custodian of the National Cycle Network (NCN), has undertaken detailed audits of the condition and quality of provision along the NCN. Locations on NCN41 identified as needing improvement included

the existing refuge crossing on the A425 Radford Road, steps to Grand Union Canal and towpath surface.

- 3.4 In March 2022, the Department for Transport allocated funding to Sustrans (National Cycle Network Activation Fund Tranche 6) to upgrade NCN Route 41 between Newbold Comyn and Radford Semele. This funding is for crossing improvements on the A425 Radford Road near Newbold Comyn, two new access ramps to the canal and resurfacing of the Grand Union Canal towpath between the new access ramps.
- 3.5 Following [County Council approval in January 2023](#), Sustrans and Warwickshire County Council signed a grant agreement enabling the County Council to progress design and delivery of the crossing and associated connections on the A425 Radford Road near Newbold Comyn, subject to input from stakeholders and the public on a detailed scheme design and consultation on the required legal orders. This report sets out the results of this consultation process.

Proposed scheme

- 3.6 In August 2023, Warwickshire County Council gave notice of its intention to install a Toucan crossing on Radford Road near Sydenham Drive as part of improvements to National Cycle Route 41 (Leamington Spa to Radford Semele). Appendix 1 is the consultation plan for the proposed Toucan crossing. Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 requires a local authority to consult the police and give public notice of the proposal before establishing a new crossing.
- 3.7 Resurfacing and widening of existing shared use footway/cycle track on both sides of the crossing is also proposed. Appendix 2 is a general arrangement plan showing the proposed Toucan crossing and the resurfacing/ widening. There is no statutory requirement to consult in relation to this element of the scheme.
- 3.8 The aim of providing a signal-controlled Toucan crossing and widening of the footway/ cycle track is to encourage more walking and cycling by providing a safer crossing point and to enable access for more users. The existing crossing refuge can present difficulty for less confident pedestrians and cyclists, and those with disabilities. The proposed signal-controlled crossing would provide a single stage crossing with audible and tactile signals for blind and partially sighted users.
- 3.9 Scheme information, drawings and public notices were provided on the County Council's website and the scheme was publicised through site notices as well as emails and letters to local residents and stakeholders. Any objections and representations were requested to be received by 8th September 2023.
- 3.10 Eight written representations were received. There were three objections, two of which related to the removal of a tree to install the traffic signals and one relating to the position of a control box for the signals. Six respondents said that they welcomed or supported the proposed crossing. In response to the feedback, the scheme design was reviewed. The table below provides a summary of the objections and representations as well as the County Council's responses and recommendations.

Objections and representations

County Council Response and Recommendation

OBJECTION to removal of tree on the south side of Radford Rd.

(2 respondents)

- Negative impact on this semi-rural, tree-lined road
- Loss of a healthy and well established tree with nesting birds in summer
- Inconsistent with WDC and WCC climate policies
- No need for a crossing

The removal of the tree is considered necessary:

- to install the primary (nearside) traffic signal where it can be seen clearly by drivers heading west into Leamington
- to improve visibility between drivers and pedestrians/ cyclists waiting at the crossing
- to reduce shadows on the crossing in hours of darkness, which could also restrict sightlines and visibility of the crossing
- to remove trip hazards around the crossing and provide sufficient space for all users to safely access the crossing



Tree to be removed. Looking west towards Leamington

Following the objection, further discussions took place between designers and officers in road safety, traffic signals and forestry teams, to look again at alternative options. These are detailed below, with reasons why they were rejected:



Looking east towards Radford Semele.

<i>Options considered</i>	<i>Reasons for rejection</i>
Do nothing – retain existing crossing refuge, or signpost people to Sydenham Drive traffic signals	Crossing too narrow and unsuitable for people with disabilities. Volume and speed of traffic make it difficult to cross. Signal controlled crossing at Sydenham Drive is too far away for people to use when travelling along NCN Route 41 and in opposite direction
Relocate crossing a few metres west from the tree	Negative impact on property accesses
Relocate the crossing much further east, away from Leamington	Removal of additional trees (possibly 3-4) on the north side of Radford Road, as well as additional widening of the footway to accommodate the cycle track, with potential loss of hedgerow.



	<p>Cut the tree branches back and raise the canopy height</p>	<p>Future maintenance would still be required to keep signals clear, and other safety issues would remain - of visibility due to tree trunk and uneven surface due to tree roots</p>	
	<p>County Council officers met with one of the objectors on 5th September 2023 to outline the reasons for removal of the tree and to describe other options that had been considered.</p> <p>Recommendation – remove tree to install new crossing. Plant additional trees in local area to help offset this loss.</p>		
<p>OBJECTION to the position of the Traffic Signal Controller to enable private works on driveway access (1 respondent)</p>	<p>County Council officer met with the objector on 5th September 2023 and agreed a revised position for the Signal Controller</p> <p>Recommendation – include revised position for Signal Controller within final scheme</p>		
<p>Comments (3 respondents) on the ongoing issue of pavement parking blocking use of the existing footway/ cycle track</p>	<p>The Toucan crossing includes zigzag markings which will be legally enforceable and help to prevent parking near the crossing. The zigzags can be extended and other physical measures, possibly bollards, can be added to protect the footway/ cycle track.</p> <p>Recommendation – amend designs to maximise the extent of zigzag markings and add physical measures to protect widened sections of footway/ cycle track</p>		
<p>Request for maintenance of vegetation along the existing route on north side of Radford Road which prevents users seeing each other.</p>	<p>Recommendation – ensure vegetation is trimmed as part of the scheme implementation, to provide safe passage along footway/ cycle track, and work with County Highways and Sustrans to monitor encroachment in future</p>		
<p>Comment on connecting better with the existing shared use path on the north side of Radford Road to the west towards Leam Terrace</p>	<p>The existing shared use path on the north side of Radford Road connecting with Leam Terrace will become the temporary diversion route for NCN41 for the duration of the closure of the foot/ cycle bridge at Radford Meadows, and will require some upgrading.</p> <p>Recommendation – include correct tactile markings and shared use signs for full length of shared use path on the north side of Radford Road between Leam Terrace and proposed crossing</p>		
<p>Request for confirmation of eastern extent of scheme on south side of Radford Road</p>	<p>Current scheme encompasses existing section of NCN41 along Radford Road between Newbold Comyn and Grand Union Canal. Design work is underway for</p>		

	<p>future eastern extension to Gullimans Way and Radford Semele</p> <p>Recommendation – continue design work for eastern extension along A425 Radford Road</p>
Request for reduction in the speed limit to 30mph	<p>This is not within the scope of the current scheme but the new signal controlled crossing could contribute to a reduction in traffic speeds</p> <p>Recommendation – review speed data following installation of crossing</p>
Request for change to traffic lane markings near Sydenham Drive to reduce exit to one lane and advisory cycle lane and approach lanes changed to left turn only and straight ahead	<p>This is not within the scope of the current scheme. However, the request was forwarded to Road Safety Engineering team for consideration.</p> <p>Recommendation – none</p>

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Approval to enter into a grant agreement with Sustrans, and the allocation of £0.252 million funding, was given by the Deputy Leader of the Council on [24 January 2023](#).
- 4.2 This amount was based on cost estimates for a Toucan crossing and widening of adjacent footways/ cycle tracks and included some contingency.
- 4.3 The scheme construction will be delivered through the Balfour Beatty Living Places Highways Maintenance Contract and the cost estimate has been established using standard contract prices for materials and construction.
- 4.4 There is potential to descope this scheme should costs increase beyond the budget, but this would be at the cost of desirable infrastructure that would prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists. A lower quality scheme would not meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and would not attract people to use it.
- 4.5 The financial implications of not constructing this scheme would be the possible clawback of grant funding, including expenditure to date. Any expenditure already incurred would have to be written-off as revenue cost.

5. Environmental implications

- 5.1 Transport is the single largest cause of carbon emissions in the UK. The A425 Radford Road NCN41 improvements will enable more journeys to be made by walking, wheeling and cycling, thereby contributing to reduced carbon emissions as well as lower levels of congestion and improved air quality.
- 5.2 In addition to local journeys, these improvements support longer term plans to

provide high quality, traffic-free and step-free connections between Leamington Spa town centre, Newbold Comyn, Radford Semele, Long Itchington and Rugby, including sections along the Grand Union Canal, Offchurch Greenway and Lias Line.

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Urgent matter?	<i>No</i>
Confidential or exempt?	<i>No</i>
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	<i>No</i>

List of background papers

Appendix 1 – consultation plan for the proposed Toucan crossing

Appendix 2 - general arrangement plan showing the proposed Toucan crossing and the resurfacing/ widening of adjacent sections of footway/ cycle track.

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Jan Matecki

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal – Caroline Gutteridge

Finance – Andrew Felton

Equality – Delroy Madden

Democratic Services – Amy Bridgewater-Carnall

Councillors –

Jonathon Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group), John Holland (Leader of the Labour Group) Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)

Local Member(s): Councillor Will Roberts (Leamington Willes)