

Title: Newbold Comyn Cycle Trails

Lead Officer: Marianne Rolfe

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Ian Davison & Councillor Jim Sinnott

Wards of the District directly affected: Leamington Clarendon and Brunswick

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	22/4/2024	Councillor Ian Davison, Cllr Jim Sinnott
<b>Finance</b>		Jonathan Huxley
<b>Legal Services</b>		Kathryn Tebbey
<b>Chief Executive</b>		Chris Elliott
<b>Director of Climate Change</b>		Dave Barber
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	22/4/2024	Marianne Rolfe
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>		Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>		Graham Leach
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>		
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	Yes	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	Yes – no allocated budget for recurring costs	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	Yes – The report includes a confidential Appendix which is exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	N/A	

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## Summary

The report is to seek approval from Cabinet to commence the procurement of an external operator for the cycle trails at Newbold Comyn, to advertise for a cafe operator for a commercial lease on the cafe in the Hub at the cycle trails, and to note the allocated funding to complete the fit out of the Hub.

The trails officially opened in October 2023 and have been managed with the support of specialist contractors, a local cycle club and British Cycling. The "Hub" based in the adjacent grade II listed barns has been completed but as yet not "fitted out". There is further work required to ensure that the Hub buildings are secure before the current hoarding can be removed, and landscaping completed.

## Recommendations

- (1) That Cabinet agrees to the procurement of an operator to manage, monitor and maintain the trails on a day to day basis along with ancillary roles to promote cycling, as set out within the Confidential Appendix E to the report.
- (2) That Cabinet delegates the detail of the procurement to the Head of Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Safer Healthier Communities based on the feedback from the January 2024 soft market testing exercise and discussions with British Cycling and Sport England.
- (3) That Cabinet notes there will be increased recurring costs for the maintenance of the security systems which will be identified for consideration within the 2025/26 budget setting process.
- (4) That Cabinet agrees to the advertisement of a commercial lease for a small café to be based in the Hub.

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## 1 Reasons for the Recommendations

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Construction of the cycle trails formed one component of the Newbold Comyn Masterplan that was formally approved by the Cabinet in November 2020. The project was made possible by a successful bid to the British Cycling/Sport England "Places to Ride" funding stream and was seen as a valuable addition to the outdoor sports opportunities in the district providing a free to use facility for all levels of cyclists.
- 1.1.2 Construction of the trails, conducted by On Track, commenced in Summer 2022 and was completed in summer 2023. Works to the old "golf shop" section of the barns was completed in late 2023 to provide a shop area and café to work in conjunction with the trails.
- 1.1.3 The trails construction project was overseen by the Newbold Comyn Project Board who approved the approach taken and use of the funding available from Sport England and the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

1.1.4 In early 2023, a short procurement exercise was undertaken to identify an external operator who would take on the responsibility for the trails for 24 months, allowing the trails to be opened as soon as possible, and allowing the Council to understand more about the requirements for the longer term operation of the site. This procurement activity was unsuccessful with no operator coming forward. Feedback from this exercise informed the Council that the short term nature of the contract and the short turn around required was not attractive to the market.

1.1.5 In late summer 2023, to complete works so that the trails could be officially opened, specialist contractors were engaged to support officers in terms of monitoring the trails, undertaking maintenance and repairs, and to advise the Council on best way to operate a safe facility. Royal Leamington Spa Cycling Club also provide on the ground monitoring of the trails and gather feedback from users.

1.1.6 In November 2023 approval was granted for additional officer resource to plan and undertake supplementary soft market testing and if appropriate lead on a procurement exercise to appoint an external contractor for the facility as per the approach defined by the Newbold Comyn Project Board.

**1.2 Current Position**

1.2.1 Since the Trails opened, they have been well used and officers have received very positive feedback about the facility.

1.2.2 The main trails have stood up remarkably well given the extremely wet winter and have remained open throughout. There have been a small number of incidents where it is suspected that intentional vandalism has taken place, with obstructions placed on the trails, but these have been identified and remedial action taken to ensure the trails were safe.

1.2.3 The Learn to Ride (LTR) area has suffered with drainage issues from mid-December, forcing the Council to close the area. On Track returned to site to address these issues in late January and the LTR area re-opened in early February.

1.2.4 Works to the 4 Cross area, the old BMX track, were completed in late summer 2023 and the track is now open. There have been some incidents of vandalism in the area adjacent to the 4 Cross area which officers are aware of and are working on measures to deter this in the future.

1.2.5 Trail counters were installed on the main trails and the LTR area in January 2024, which will allow officers to monitor usage of the trails. There are currently four counters installed, picking up usage of key routes. the table below shows the number of rides counted for January to April 2024 is as follows:

	January	February	March	Total for quarter
Learn to Ride (Lower area)	1,884	793	3,155	5,832
Learn to Ride (Upper area)	1,239	3,879	8,751	13,869

Main trails (Easy)	3,365	3,397	3,868	10,630
Main trails (Difficult)	3,269	2,902	2,998	9,169

1.2.6 Weekends show significant peaks in usage together with New Years Day 2024. Officers are investigating the validity of the data for the LTR area given that it was officially closed for most of January, however we are aware that many riders ignored the "trails closed" signage and hazard tape and used the facility regardless.

1.2.7 The Council is subject to grant conditions associated with the funding provided from Sports England. The terms and conditions the council signed require over the next 15 years the council to:

- deliver cycle trails, cycling facilities, and a cycle hub building.
- deliver the Development Plan: required to review and update the Operations Plan every 24 months, ensuring it aligns with the Programme and incorporates feedback from Sport England and British Cycling.
- Ensure that the Facility achieves and maintains key performance indicators (KPIs) (within 18 months of opening) and provides them to Sport England.

1.2.8 The Council had discussions with Sports England in terms of the grant conditions in March 2024. This conversation centered on the releasing of the final element of grant funding and required evidence of decision taken by the Project Board on the agreed approach for service delivery, namely, to procure a contractor, the timeline for operator procurement and estimated commencement date of the new operator.

### 1.3 **Soft Market testing**

1.3.1 Given the change in the cycling market since inception and the unsuccessful previous procurement exercise officers considered it important to undertake a detailed soft market testing (SMT) exercise was required to fully understand the state of the market in terms of potential operators for the cycle trails, shop, and café within the Hub.

1.3.2 Prior to undertaking the SMT, Officers engaged with Sport England, British Cycling, and a range of other cycle trail facilities to understand how such facilities are being managed elsewhere and what the viable solutions for Newbold Comyn may look like. This allowed a range of informed and pertinent questions posed during the SMT process.

1.3.3 The SMT process went live in mid-December and remained open until 12th Jan 2024. Officers ensured that potential interested parties were made aware of the opportunity to be part of the SMT process and included Sport England, British Cycling, local cycle organisations and retailers, Sustrans, and leisure operators.

1.3.4 There was limited response to the SMT process, with only two local enterprises taking the opportunity to engage with the Council.

1.3.5 Everyone Active expressed some interest, but on balance they decided that the trails were not something that they could support without having an impact on their core leisure centre business. The local Everyone Active team have however stressed that they would be happy to collaborate with the Council and any future operator to promote the trails and cycle related activities.

1.3.6 Appendix A summarises the roles and responsibilities of a trail's operator and the Council. Whilst Appendix B summarises the main challenges to the operation of the trails during the soft market testing.

#### 1.4 **Options for service delivery.**

1.4.1 The outcome of the soft market testing was reported to the Project Board in January 2024. The Project Board was presented with three options,

- To retain the operation of the trails "in house" with a separate lease advertised for the cafe.
- To procure an operator for the cycle trails with a separate lease advertised for the cafe.
- To investigate the option to return the funding received from Sport England in order to remove commitments to funding conditions including the development plan, service level agreements with cycle club(s) and user groups, restrictions on spending and governance, marketing etc.

#### 1.4.2 **Option 1: In house option (not recommended option).**

1.4.3 The In house option refers to council officers managing and operating the trails. Within this option officers would also deliver the grant funding conditions from Sports England.

1.4.4 This option would require significant additional resources over and above those currently available within the Sports and Leisure team. It is believed that two additional posts would be required, in order to provide a service which is open every day of the year and able to deliver the services outline in the grant condition performance indicators and delivery plan.

1.4.5 The above posts would be in addition to the 2FTE posts that incorporate the management of the trails at present. These existing posts are fixed terms and expire within the next 12 months and the above posts would free up a small proportion of their capacity to return to original duties. However, both of these posts are required in order to provide resilience and management arrangements for the trails.

1.4.6 The current in-house team also lack the expertise to deliver the "Development Plan" approved by British Cycling as part of the Places to Ride grant conditions, and the knowledge to operate the shop/information service based in the Hub. Therefore, the in house team would need to expand in terms of expertise which would clearly come at a cost. It is estimated that a training budget would be needed annually to ensure the necessary training for officers.

1.4.7 Officers are heavily reliant on specialist contractors to provide technical advice and undertake inspection and maintenance of the trails. There is no funding for this support beyond September 2024.

1.4.8 In addition, the in house team would be looking for volunteers to assist with the trail's development plan.

1.4.9 There remain operational costs for delivering the service in house. This includes those costs outlined in appendix E attributed to the operator. Namely, service charges, asset maintenance, cleaning, and compliance checks.

1.4.10 The costs of fitting out the hub would remain and have been dealt with in section 1.7 onwards.

1.4.11 This option would also require a second lease for a small cycle shop, which could provide specialist cycling advice and courses. It is estimated that the rental income per annum for this would be £4,000-£6,000.

1.4.12 The risks associated with this option include :

- The ability to recruit suitably experienced officers, with experience of cycle trails, community engagement, specialist cycling knowledge and the ability to deliver cycling courses. Failure to do so would require the following option to be considered.
- Securing a cycle retail offering as a lease arrangement for the shop area who will also deliver learn to ride courses and provide specialist cycle knowledge.
- The recurring staffing and operational costs impact on the Council's General Fund and would increase the deficit of the council.

1.4.13 This option is not recommended due to the high costs for the council and the high risk of not being able to recruit specialist and skilled officers in order to deliver the development plan.

## 1.5 **Option 2: Procure an operator (Recommended option)**

1.5.1 It was very clear during the soft market testing that there was no model that would see the cycle trails being run without a cost to the Council.

1.5.2 Until the procurement exercise has been completed it is impossible to specify the level of subsidy that the Council will need to make to the operation of the trails. Dependant on the timeline for procurement of the trails operator, the management fee for 24/25 would be adjusted accordingly.

1.5.3 The level of any income that the operator could generate from retail sales, cycle skills courses and events is unknown. Again, the only way to quantify these figures is to complete the procurement exercise.

1.5.4 Officers will be constructing the procurement exercise in such a way that potential operators will be required to outline a costed business plan for the contract term. This will allow them to demonstrate how the business will develop over the term of the contract, with the expectation that the cost to the Council will reduce over the contract period.

1.5.5 Officers intend to draft the contract in such a way that a "income share" arrangement is established for income generated from courses and events, so that it would be in the interests of the operator and the Council to promote such activities. Further advice from legal colleagues is required to confirm the best approach.

1.5.6 The council would require officers to oversee the contract management of this contract. It is believed that this would take a large proportion of the existing two fixed term contracts. However, prior to the outcome of the procurement exercise it is impossible to determine the FTE percentage. Therefore, the full cost figure of £106,500 is included for context and comparison. As stated in 1.2.5 These existing posts are fixed terms and expire within the next 12

months.

1.5.7 The risks associated with this option are:

- Unknown value of management fee required from WDC to operator which is unfunded and will increase the Council's deficit.
- Lack of interest in the procurement exercise or unsuitable tenders received.
- Short term nature of any contract and break clauses within the contract give the Council no long term certainty on the operational model and exposing a risk of further procurement in short/medium term.

1.5.8 Given the feedback from the soft market testing, the costs and review of all of the options, the recommendation from officers and confirmed by the Newbold Comyn Project Board was that the Council should seek to procure an external operator for the trails.

### 1.6 **Option 3: Return Funding received (not recommended option).**

1.6.1 The option involves approaching Sport England to negotiate the repayment of the grant funding which could free the Council from its obligations to use the Hub building in the prescribed manner and its delivery of the development plan.

1.6.2 The Funding terms defined the expected service and facility delivery for the £423,500k grant funding received.

1.6.3 Returning the funding or attempting to alter the terms and conditions of grant delivery is considered to be highly risky in terms of reputational damage to the Council with Sport England and those individuals who have been opposed to the scheme from its inception. The Council have enjoyed a positive relationship with Sport England for many years and have received significant sums of funding from in support of sport and leisure provision. Returning this funding could undermine the relationship with Sports England and the ability to secure future funding.

1.6.4 There would still be a need for an officer resource to manage the trails along with specialist contractors as per option one as this is similar to the current operational position.

1.6.5 The need to provide a café, small shop, courses or develop cycling with this district would be removed if the grant were to be repaid. The hub building could be used for other uses as outlined in the masterplan.

1.6.6 Officers believe that this option would not deliver the aims and ambitions of the Corporate Strategy and would reduce the benefits of the facility. The facility has a good reputation and there is a desire for the hub to open an offer the facilities and activities previously described.

1.6.7 The Risks associated with this option are:

- Reputational damage in the eyes of persons opposed to the trails and the decision to progress this project from the start.
- Reputational damage to the Council's relationship with Sport England who have been a valuable source of funding over many years and with who the Council enjoys a good relationship.
- Further delay in confirming the use of the Hub building and potential risk to

- the Hub whilst it remains unoccupied and associated additional costs.
- Increased pressure on the officers to manage the trails with little or no support from British Cycling and or local clubs.
- Increased financial pressures on the Council.

1.6.7 This option is not recommended due to the costs of managing and operating the trails, the reputational damage to the council from stakeholders and partners coupled with the additional pressure of repaying the grant.

## 1.7 **Hub building**

1.7.1 Adaptation of the barn buildings, previously the golf shop and changing rooms, that will become the Hub and will house the small shop, café and toilets has been completed but areas within it have yet to be fitted out. It was originally envisioned that this work would be completed once the operators have been identified so that the fit out was appropriate for their use. However, it has become essential that the building is made secure as soon as possible in order that the unsightly hoarding can be removed, and members of the public can see what facilities will be provided in the near future. The removal of the hoarding also allows works to the soft landscaping in front of the Hub to be completed as soon as possible.

1.7.2 Quotes from contractors suggest that a budget of £65,000 is required to complete a basic fit out the Hub, install appropriate security and safety systems, complete the soft landscaping and remove the hoarding around the building. This sum currently includes some provisional sums for works that cannot be finalised until an operator is appointed and details of fit out are confirmed. It is hoped that in practice the works can be delivered for less than this sum.

1.7.3 It should be noted that some recurring maintenance costs will be incurred by the 'fit out works' which will need to be considered as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process. These will include annual testing of alarm systems, CCTV maintenance and statutory building compliance activities.

1.7.4 In addition to the cafe and toilets, the Hub will include an area that will allow the running of a small cycle shop, selling consumable cycling equipment (helmets, gloves, spare parts etc), be an information point for customers wishing to use the trails, promote cycling courses at the site, and sign post visitors to other cycling opportunities in the area. The shop will also be the meeting point for volunteers working on projects on the trails.

1.7.5 The soft market testing suggested that there could be a market for a small bike hire operation from the Hub, but this requires storage space to be identified on the site; officers are currently considering options for this.

1.7.6 Officers are conscious of the opportunities that the national cycle route 41 and other development in the local area linking cycling routes could offer in terms of Bike Hire for road riding as well. Thus, increasing the need for storage.

1.7.7 If the recommended option would see the shop included in the procurement for a trails operator. However, if the alternative options are selected then a small shop lease could be advertised as outlined in 1.2.11 with an annual rent payable to the council.



## **1.8 Café facilities and Toilets**

- 1.8.1 From the inception of the project, the intention has been for a small café to operate from within the Hub, providing hot and cold drinks and snacks for cyclists and other visitors to the Comyn. The soft market testing was clear that this would not be a service that the cycle operator would provide, and in discussion with legal colleagues and based on experience of other park based cafes within the district, it is considered that a commercial lease is advertised to run a small café from the Hub, with an annual rental payable to the Council each year.
- 1.8.2 It is estimated that that the annual rental payable to the Council for such a lease would be £6,000.
- 1.8.3 Subject to Cabinet approval of the funding as detailed in this report, it is intended to advertise the lease for the cafe as soon as possible, in parallel with the works to complete the fit out, and with the intention that there will be a cafe service available for the summer of 2024.
- 1.8.4 The toilets were intended to provide services to the café and the trails operator clientele. It is intended that the toilets will be part of the café and or the trails operator leases. Therefore, the toilets would open in conjunction with the opening of the café or trails operator.
- 1.8.5 There is a risk that there would not be any interest in leasing a café in this location. Therefore, an alternative option for a café offering could be to offer a 'consented pitch' for a mobile street trading unit to be placed close to the Hub subject to the relevant permissions being obtained. This offering would be similar to that offered temporarily in Abbey Fields.
- 1.8.6 Whilst this would slightly reduce the fitting costs within the hub building, it would also not afford the Council a similar income. It would however, free up space within the Hub building to be used for a greater bike shop/hire, storage space for the operator or for a teaching space when courses are run at the trails or volunteers are working on the trails.
- 1.8.7 This option would require the toilets remain closed until the trails operator is appointed or be added to the existing public toilet contract. It is estimated that this would costs £8,000 annually.

## **2 Legal Implications**

- 2.1 If the recommendations in this report are agreed, Officers will work with colleagues from Procurement and Legal Services to ensure that the procurement process is compliant and that all relevant legal considerations are made.
- 2.2 Engagement will continue with Sport England to ensure that the Council comply with the terms of the Places to Ride grant award and that procedures are put in place to ensure appropriate reports are sent to Sport England as required going forward.

2.3 There remain two unresolved variations to the original Planning Conditions that were approved in May 2021. Officers continue to work to resolve these outstanding conditions. Until this has been resolved, and given the sensitivity of the site, legal representatives have advised that the Council should be mindful about commencing any formal procurement processes for a trails operator until they are resolved. Officers are mindful of the legal comment and will begin any procurement exercises at the correct time and with further legal advice.

### **3 Financial Implications**

3.1 The financial implications of the three options are tabulated in Appendix E.

3.2 The estimated management fee per annum to fund the operation and maintenance of the cycle trails is currently unfunded. It would need to be funded from the base budget without any additional base budget funding, thus increasing the overall Council deficit. As outlined in para 1.5.3 of this report potential operators will be required to demonstrate their businesses plans and their reducing reliance on council funding. This will form part of the evaluation of tenders.

3.3 It is recommended that any additional costs (such as staffing in Option 1) associated with 2024/25 will be funded from the Services Transformation Reserve. Subsequent years will be factored into the base revenue position as recurrent growth, as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

3.4 The monies identified for the additional works to the Hub (£65,000) is to be paid from already secured outdoor sports S106 funding. The table in appendix C shows the scope of works and estimates/quotes for the Hub works. Whilst the table below shows the separation of actual verses estimated costs.

<b>Works required</b>	<b>Provisional cost</b>	<b>Actual/Estimate</b>
Quotes received	£46,700	Actual
Quotes estimated	£19,000	Estimate

3.5 Estimated income from the cafe lease is expected to be in the region of £6,000 per annum.

3.6 Potential income from the cycle trails, shop, and courses remains unknown until the procurement exercise has been completed. The potential for requiring a "profit share" as part of the contract with the trails operator is an option to be considered with legal colleagues.

3.7 The anticipated increase to maintenance budgets for security systems at the Hub is estimated to be approximately £3,000 per annum. This will be identified within the 25/26 budget setting process.

### **4 Corporate Strategy**

4.1 The creation of the free to use cycle trails on Newbold Comyn has been a key project within the previous Business Strategy of Warwick District Council since 2021.

4.2 The free to use cycle trails contributes directly to Priority 3 of the current

Corporate Strategy i.e. Creating vibrant, safe and healthy communities for the future. The preferred option of procuring an external operator is underpinned by Priority 1 i.e. to deliver valued, sustainable services.

## **5 Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

- 5.1 Refurbishment of the Hub included the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump. Other potential opportunities to make the Hub more environmentally sound were unfortunately not possible, owing to the listed status of the building. These included conservation planning objections to the installation of PV panels, double glazing and upgrading the insulation of the external walls to the Hub.

## **6 Analysis of the effects on Equality**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment for the cycle trails construction project and for the design has been completed and was included as an Appendix to the November 2020 Cabinet report. It is not believed that there are any changes required to this EIA.

## **7 Data Protection**

- 7.1 There are no specific Data Protection implications of the proposal.

## **8 Health and Wellbeing**

- 8.1 The project will make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Leamington and the wider district. Usage data so far shows how popular the cycle trails are and usage levels can only continue to increase once an operator for the trails, and a café are in place. This will contribute to the levels of physical activity of the district's residents of all ages.
- 8.2 The latest LG Inform benchmarking data is included in appendix D which covers the year 2022, the graphs highlights the percentage of people within the district who engage in cycling and walking for leisure activities at least once per week, once a month and are classed as physical active for 150 minutes per week.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 Risk assessments were completed at the initial stages of the project when deciding to progress the project and apply for Places to Ride funding.
- 9.2 In terms of current risks associated with the proposed procurement of an operator these can be summarised as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation to date</b>	<b>Residual risk</b>	<b>Alternative options</b>
Procurement of an operator fails to attract interest from suitable operator	Soft market testing; discussions with British Cycling and Sport England	Amber	Revisit the option of running the trails in house with specialist contractors and volunteers in support.

Management fee required by an external operator considered to be too high by Cllrs	Soft market testing	Amber	Revisit the option of running the trails in house with specialist contractors and volunteers in support.
Insufficient funds to fit out the Hub to ensure it is secure and appropriate for intended use	Quotes for works; consider option to exclude café from Hub	Green	Negotiate with successful operator re contribution to fit out of shop and cafe
Lack of interest in lease to run café or consented pitch vender on site	Informal discussions with café operators.	Amber	Install vending machines - need discussions with Sport England to see if this is acceptable within the terms of the grant funding

9.3 Within the project risk registers the risk of 'not providing a service that was cost neutral of income generating to the council' was not identified. However, there are a number of identified risks which overlap this risk. These risks have been realised. A project conclusion review will be undertaken to evaluate the project and identify learning outcomes (LOs). It will be important for future projects to ensure that these LOs are applied.

9.4 It should be noted that all options presented and appraised within the report will require capacity from Warwick District Council staff to manage any agreed arrangement. As present this work is incorporated into the work of 2FTE posts. However, these are both currently appointed on a fixed term basis, with contracts due to expire within the next 12 months. The cost of these posts is approximately £106,500. These will be subject to a separate review of the service.

## 10 Consultation

10.1 Consultation on the options and costs was held with Newbold Comyn Project Board.

### Background papers:

Newbold Comyn Masterplan

## **Appendix A- Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Role of the Operator**

- Manage, monitor and maintain the trails on a day to day basis
- Operate the shop, with potential for a hire service if storage can be provided
- Delivery of learn to ride and cycle skills courses
- Work with volunteers and local cycle clubs
- Act as the point of contact on site for members of the public with queries relating to the facility and cycling more generally
- Maintain and clean the internal areas of the Hub

### **Role of WDC**

- Contract management
- Oversight of the café lease (if that is the preferred model)
- Provide data as required by the Funding Agreement to Sport England/British Cycling
- Ensure the Management Group required by the Funding Agreement is established and be a member of the group
- Provide materials for routine day to day repairs to the trails
- Agree major repairs as necessary and procure the appropriate specialist contractor.

## Appendix B – Outcome summary of the Soft market Testing

- The most obvious challenge for the Council is the absence of a financial model that would see an income stream for the Council from the cycle trails. The original vision that underpinned the proposal to create cycle trails on the Comyn, and the bid to British Cycling for capital funding to allow this to happen, was based on the assumption that a solution could be found that would see some income generated for the Council or at the very least be cost neutral.
- The sport of cycling has experienced some significant changes in the last 2 years and having spoken to British Cycling and commercial operators, this has limited the market and the number of operators prepared to take on contracts that require a payment to the local authority or landowner.
- Any income for an operator would come from the retail offering on site (the shop), courses that would be offered, and any event fees. All of these would take some time to become established, consequently leaving an operator nervous about entering into a contract that tied them to a financial commitment to the Council. The contract would require the operator to carry the costs for the roles and responsibilities outlined
- Potential operators were also concerned about the length of the contract that the Council would be seeking with an operator. Given the current volatility of the cycling market and the national economy, operators were not willing to consider a long contract (ideally 5 – 10 years) and would be looking for a significantly shorter term, with break clauses throughout the term. This is not ideal for the Council as it provides no long term solution for the facility and could mean further procurement in the medium term which comes at a cost of officer time.
- There was a question raised by the potential operators regarding insurance and who would take on the liability for insurance of the trails, given that the area is open to members of the public and therefore cannot be controlled at all times. This is a very different position to that of say a leisure centre operator who would insure against accidents/ incidents in a leisure centre where they can control access and manage activities with detailed operating procedures. The advice from the WDC Insurance Officer is that given the nature of the public access to the area, there is a strong case for the Council to take on the liability for the trails, providing that the contractor can evidence that they have been monitoring, managing and maintaining the trails as per the contract. Insurance for the Hub buildings, and any contents, however, would sit with the relevant operator i.e. the shop and the café.
- Construction of the Hub building is complete, but the hoarding remains in place to offer some protection to the buildings as security has yet to be installed (awaiting the outcome of operator procurement). Officers propose to get quotes for security to be installed as soon as possible, to allow the hoarding to be removed, the soft landscaping to be completed, and a cafe operator to be secured and the cafe open for users of the Comyn. There is currently no funding allocated for security measures or soft landscaping.

- If there is to be a “hire operation” run from the Hub, then on site storage needs to be identified. Discussions are ongoing to understand what space may be available in the barns on site.
- Based on experience since the trails opened in the autumn, an issue has been raised about access to the car park for cars with roof mounted cycle racks, and cyclists who transport their trail bikes in camper vans. The car park is currently protected by a height restrictor which prevents such vehicles entering, and consequently they park up on local roads which is not popular with local residents.
- There has been some comment that if the facility is to be a “local facility for local people” then there should be no need for users to transport their bikes in these ways, and they should be able to ride to the Comyn. In practical terms, trails cyclists would not ride their trail bikes on roads and need to find a way to transport them to the Comyn. Therefore, a solution needs to be found regarding the height restrictors.
- Until a solution can be found to operate the trails, the responsibility for overseeing the facility, coordinate the specialist contractors, local clubs and liaise with British Cycling and Sport England is falling on a small team who are already stretched with other duties. This is not sustainable without it impacting on other services managed by this team.

## Appendix C - Breakdown of the Hub Building Fit out costs

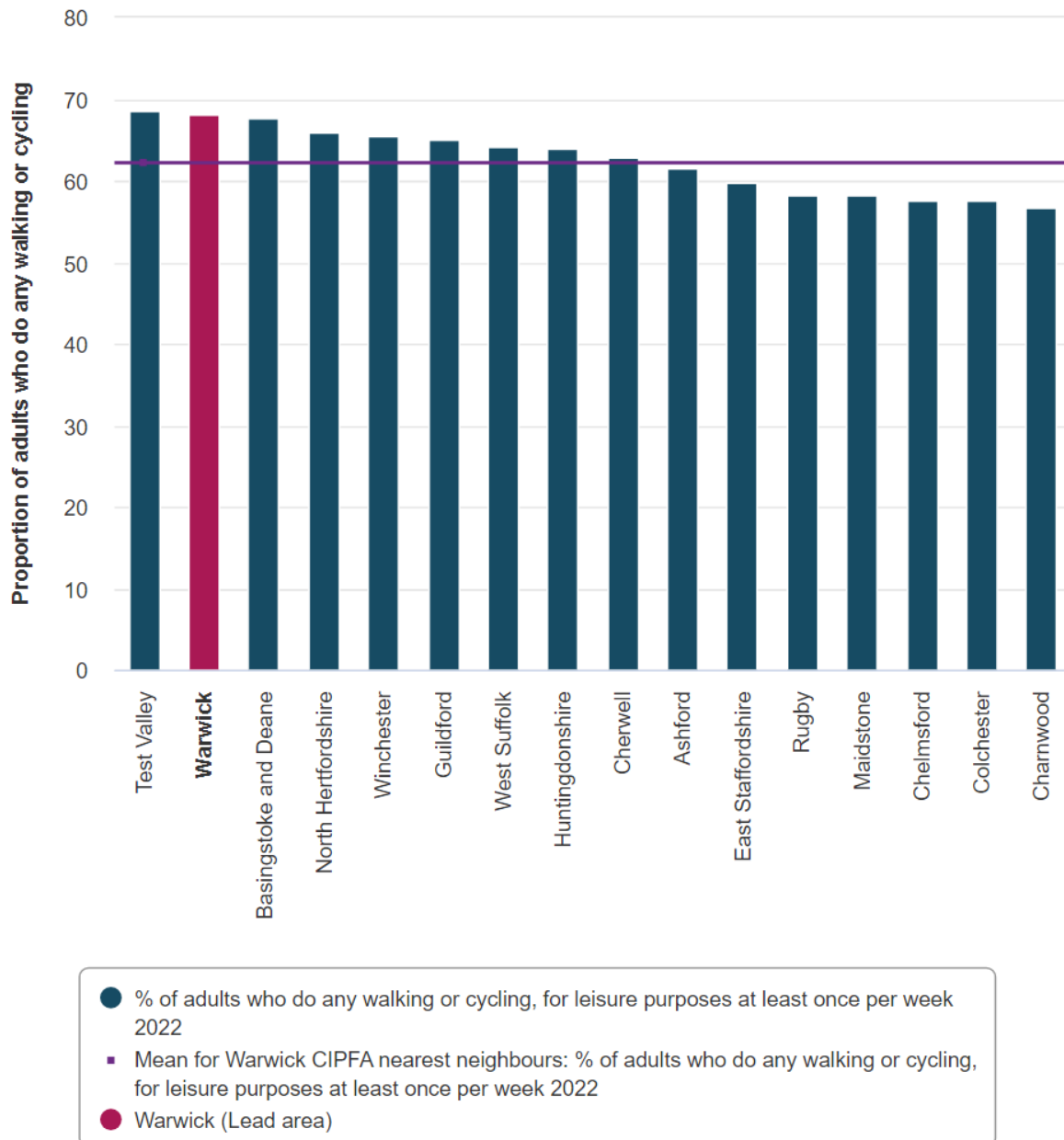
<b>Works required</b>	<b>Provisional cost</b>	<b>Actual/Estimate</b>
Removal of hoarding	£1,500	Estimate
Landscaping in front of Hub	£15,000	Estimates and actuals
Fencing	£11,000	Actual
Electricity and plumbing	£2,500	Estimate
CCTV	£7,000	Actual
Fire alarms	£7,000	Actual
Intruder alarms	£5,000	Estimate
Security shutters	£11,000	Actual
Phone line/data	£5,000	Estimate
<b>Total</b>	<b>£65,000</b>	



## Appendix D



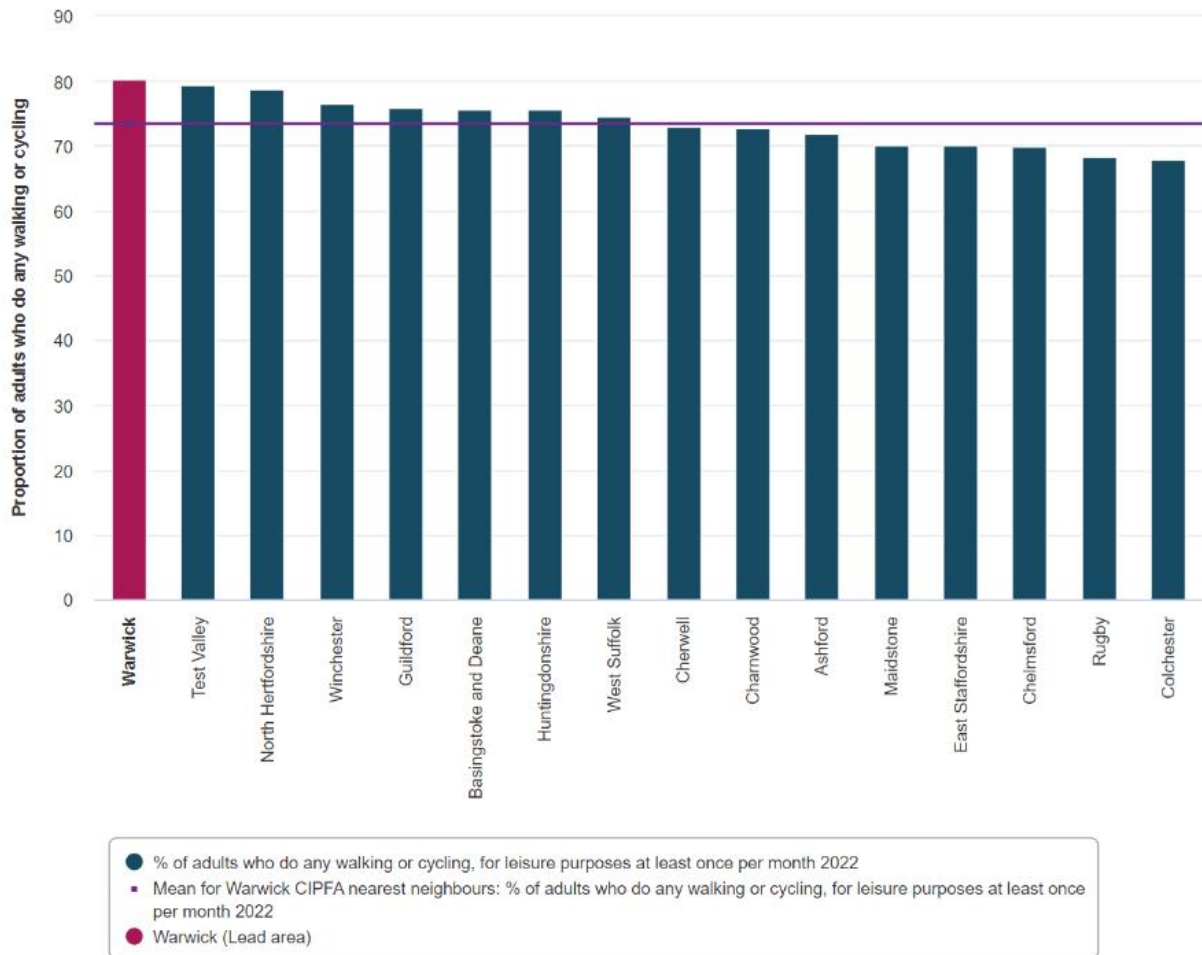
### Proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for leisure purposes at least once per week (2022) for Warwick & Warwick CIPFA nearest neighbours



Source:  
Department for Transport



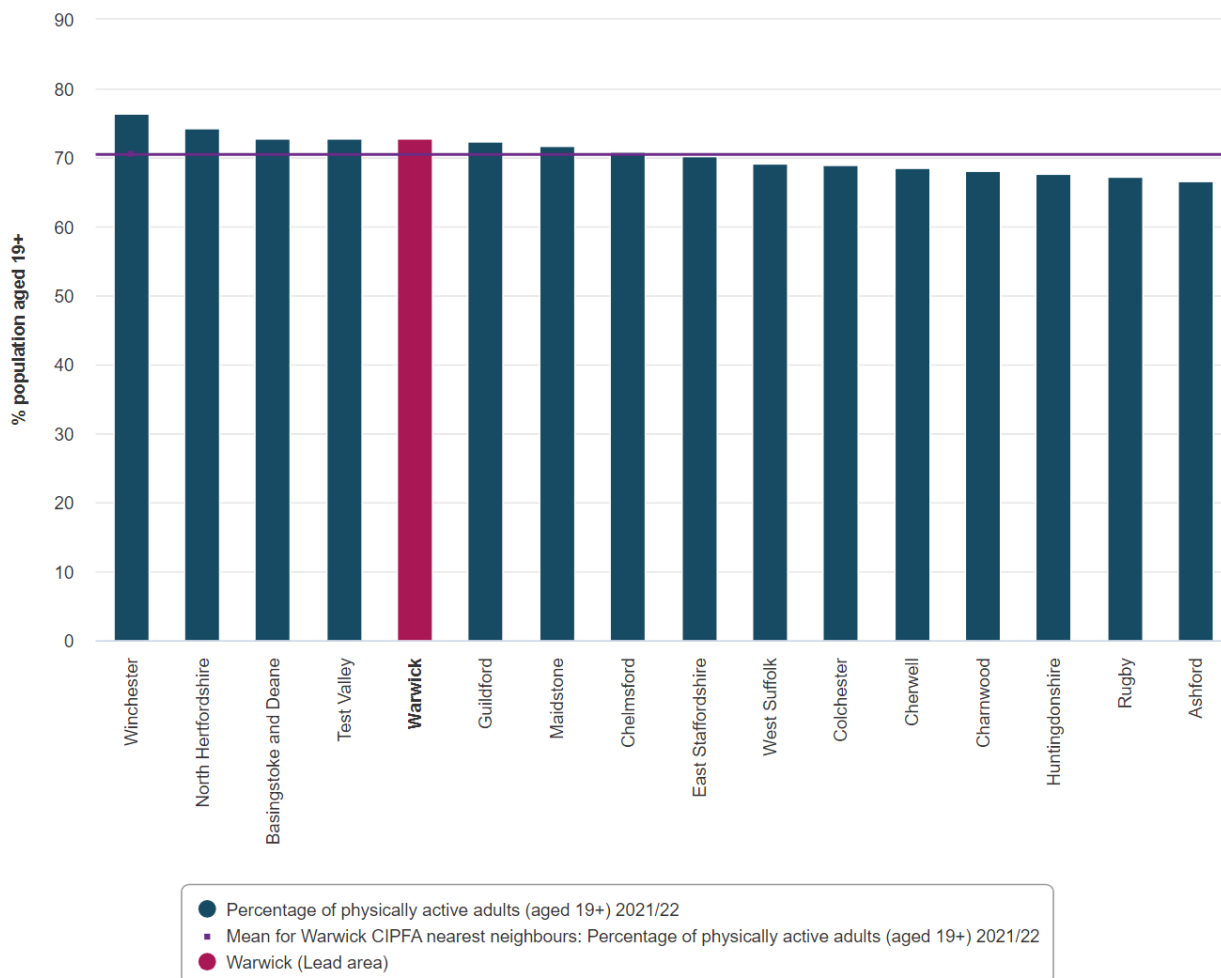
### Proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for leisure purposes at least once per month (2022) for Warwick & Warwick CIPFA nearest neighbours



Source:  
Department for Transport



### Percentage of physically active adults (aged 19+) (2021/22) for Warwick & Warwick CIPFA nearest neighbours



Source:  
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

