

Appendix B – History of consultation on attitudes towards cycling and proposed routes across Abbey Fields

1. In February 2016, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) commissioned Sustrans (A national walking and cycling charity and custodian of the National Cycle Network) to undertake a feasibility study of a cycle route across Abbey Fields, Kenilworth. The main objective was to explore options for provision of a safe, accessible, convenient, and attractive cycle route, connecting to the existing cycle routes to the east and west of the park (NCN 52 at Bridge Street and Borrowell Lane). The options were based on ideas from local stakeholders.
2. Sustrans recommended the following measures were taken forward (See Appendix 1 – Plan 2): -
 - A new 3.0m wide shared use path along the north side of Finham Brook
 - Reconstruction of footbridge near the Leisure Centre to latest standards
 - Warning signage for cyclists to give way to pedestrian on shared routes
 - New 3.0m wide path on eastern side of hedgerow
 - Relocation of existing crossing and provision of Toucan Crossing on Borrowell Lane.
3. There was engagement with key stakeholders on the 2016 Sustrans report. Whilst there was widespread support for the proposal, this was not universal, and a decision was made not to move forward with the proposal at this time.
4. Kenilworth Town Council produced a Kenilworth Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2029, which stated that: -
 - “Proposals to create new priority cycle routes to connect the town to the University of Warwick and to link in with other proposed routes such as K2L particularly within the corridors indicated on the Policies Map, will be supported” (Policy KP9: Cycle Routes)
 - “New cycle routes should preferably be created off the highway on either dedicated routes or routes shared with pedestrians when it is safe to do so...” (Policy KP9: Cycle Routes)
 - “Linking through Abbey Fields is a contentious issue as it is difficult to find a suitable safe route without mixing pedestrians and cyclists though the route ranked 4th out of 10 projects in the Questionnaire. A route will only be supported subject to it being shown to be safe for pedestrians and cyclists and having a minimal impact upon heritage assets” (Paragraph 5.41)
 - “The aim should be to create safe cycling routes between the centre of Kenilworth and the external cycle paths to Warwick University, Sustrans route 52 and the proposed K2L...” (Annex A. Sustainable Transport. A.8)
5. Over November and December 2019 residents and community groups in Kenilworth were invited to have their say on “Fields for the Future” in a public consultation organized by Warwick District Council (WDC) which was to be used to inform a Management Plan for Abbey Fields. There were 902 survey responses, and the questions were asked about what people wanted from the park and what they valued the most. Question 11 of the survey asked, “Please give your thoughts on Cycling at Abbey Fields?” Of the 790 people that responded to this question, 633 were in favour of cycling at Abbey

Fields. More detailed results of this question can be found in the abstract of the report (See Appendix E).

6. During 2021, in anticipation of a revised Local Transport Plan (LTP) WCC undertook a County wide consultation. It was divided into themes and the responses included the issue of cycling. The following is the link to the Local Transport (LTP) Key Themes – Consultation Analysis Report, [Consultation Analysis Report](#)

There were key messages that came from this consultation, which included: -

“There was significant consistency in the issues raised by respondents, both between questions and across respondent groups. There was also considerable repetition in the main issues, challenges and solutions raised in response to different questions, with some clear areas emerging, both in addition to, and in relation to, the four main themes presented. These were:

- *Improving active travel facilities for walking and cycling to support active lifestyles and contribute to improvements in the environment.*
- *General improvements in/encouragement to use sustainable (public) transport*
- *Planning to reduce the reliance on private cars and to enable electrification*
- *Environmental concerns relating to road layout and traffic (e.g., congestion, air/noise pollution, climate change, loss of habitat, and green spaces)*
- *Recognising the importance of transport on quality of life (particularly mental health and physical wellbeing) and for access to health and wellbeing services (e.g., doctors, medical centres)*
- *Concerns around the pressures of housing developments and/or increasing populations on the existing road network(s)*
- *The long-term impact(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport and the existing transport network including changing travel patterns, home-working and an increase in online shopping”*

7. During Summer of 2021, WCC undertook a survey on walking and cycling to help them develop their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This was an opportunity for residents to comment on where they think new improved cycling or walking facilities are needed.

This survey showed strong support for an Abbey Fields cycle route, for example the comment “Abbey Fields needs a cycle path to run from Castle Farm to the car park entrance had 47 “agreements” The following is a link to the Commonplace website [Commonplace website](#)

Kenilworth Town Council Cycling Delivery Group submitted their thoughts as part of this consultation and mentioned a cycle route across Abbey Fields directly by saying: -

“The desire to create a cycle route through Abbey Fields enjoys considerable support locally. With the planned Leisure Developments at Abbey Fields and Castle Farm the idea has added importance as part of a potential green travel plan to service the new facilities.

Whilst the issue has proved contentious with some people, removing restrictions on cycle access to this area of the town is seen as vital to facilitate East-West travel and form better connectivity.”

The above quote comes from Kenilworth Town Council's Cycling Strategy – December 2019 (Page 6), with the following being a link to the document [Kenilworth Town Council Cycling Strategy](#)

8. During 2021, the proposed cycle route recommended by Sustrans in their 2016 feasibility study was revisited and there was further liaison/discussion between WCC, WDC and Historic England. It was agreed that Option 2 with C would be recommended for approval. (See Appendix A – Plan 3). This was based on the following rationale: -
 - Minimise new construction through a Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - Provide cost savings by creating shared use on existing infrastructure
 - Use existing footbridge
 - Avoid entrance to proposed new Leisure Centre

9. The Green Space Team within WDC produced an Abbey Fields Management Plan (completed in November 2022) and it has the following action relating to cycling: -

Action No. 7. Further opportunity to reconsider cycling on routes to and through the Fields – Consult with Sustrans, Warwickshire County Council Transport Planning to consider potential cycle routes through and/or around Abbey Fields that connects with existing off road cycling provision through Kenilworth. And consider mitigation measures to restrict cycling to only the proposed Sustrans entrances, should this be implemented.

10. In November 2021 a campaign, called “Pedal to Protect” was started to persuade WCC and WDC to build a safe cycle network for the new Kenilworth School which is due to be completed in 2023 and gained approximately 2000 signatures. As part of this several Kenilworth Councillors put forward a motion to WDC for consideration which includes allowing cycling through Abbey Fields at certain times of the day

11. During the summer of 2022, WCC undertook a consultation on the draft Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and this showed support for the Abbey Fields cycle route. Using criteria based on Department for Transport recommendations, the Abbey Fields cycle route was scored as “very high” priority.