Active Travel Strategy Document

The following notes refer primarily to the Active Travel Strategy Document, as published at:
https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/insights-service/local-transport-plan/supporting_documents/02%20Active%20Travel%20Strategy%201.pdf

General comments

Positives

- It is good to see the clear positives of moving away from car dependency and car-centric transport listed from the outset.

- The public support for active travel provision, as detailed on page three, is important and good to see. This should be emphasised in the document with supporting data as a counter to any public and councillor opposition or challenge, which may well be a minority view, but a highly vocal one.

Could be improved

- Every cyclist visually depicted in this document, whether on the cover image or elsewhere, is wearing a helmet. The majority of these helmets should be removed given the benefits are negligible, especially for everyday cycling as depicted. This would be a subtle indication to the type of environment and network that Warwickshire should be building, akin to the environment in the Netherlands where helmets are rare for everyday cycling given it is an inherently safe activity.

- While it is true to say that Warwickshire is predominantly rural, this opening statement does not consider the urbanised area of Nuneaton and Bedworth, touching on North Warwickshire, nor the interaction of the county with Coventry. Therefore, there is a significant urban corridor (with gaps) stretching from Atherstone in the north, down to Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa in the south.

- This document starts by focusing on the interconnection between towns, and given the close proximity of some, this is important. However, with 68% of all trips in 2019 being under five miles[2], it is important to also highlight the number of journeys being made *within* the bounds of a town that can be captured by active travel.

- Similar to comments made earlier, this document makes reference to *"encouraging"* a modal switch. This should always be preceded by *"enabling"*, where the provision of high quality, well-connected, direct infrastructure will mean people naturally wanting to choose active travel as the easiest and quickest transport option.

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[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020/national-travel-survey-2020

Negatives

- The images depicting cycling throughout this document feature no "non-standard" cycles – there are no tricycles, handcycles, side-by-side tandems, tagalong cycles, trailers in tow, cargo cycles. There are no children cycling, nor can any adult be identified as an older person. Graphics must be more inclusive of the various types of cycle and rider as a steer what infrastructure must accommodate.

Focus on: Active Travel Policies

- The numbered Active Travel policies suggests these may be in a particular order of preference or priority e.g., that AT1 is more important than AT3. It should be clarified whether this is or is not the case.

- **AT1 –** This policy states that *"the Council will seek to promote…"*. The use of the term "seek to" waters this policy down to a potentially meaningless commitment. Remove these words so that the statement reads, *"the Council will promote…"*.

- **AT2 –** This is a positive policy and it is good to see the core principles of LTN 1/20 included. A reference to providing high-quality infrastructure designed to LTN 1/20 standards should be included, to enforce a commitment to providing infrastructure designed to current standards.

  Again, remove the word *"seeks"* with regard to the hierarchy of travel choices to reinforce the position that active travel must be accommodated first.

  Also, the word *"local"* should be removed from this paragraph where active travel may not only be useful for in-town travel, but can be useful in connections to neighbouring areas that are still close by (e.g., Nuneaton to Bedworth, Nuneaton to Bulkington, Warwick to Leamington Spa, Warwick to Kenilworth). These slightly longer connections must not be neglected where they can help easy congestion on corridor routes and give non-drivers options to access neighbouring towns and communities. This is especially relevant given the rise of e-cycles which extend the range that people are able to travel by cycle.

  Given this policy references safety, the Safe Systems Approach should be included here, reinforcing that broader street design is fundamental in managing driver speed and behaviours. This is essential for streets where dedicated separated cycling provision is not appropriate and at places where cycle routes intersect with general roads. Cycling will never always follow specific dedicated routes and it is important therefore that general road design is appropriate to accommodate all-ages, all-abilities cycling.

- **AT3 –** The policy is essentially an expansion of the word, "encouragement". While information and provision has a role, it is significantly less important than actually getting safe routes built quickly and to a high standard, removing friction and barriers that might currently exist to cycling, and adding barriers to local motor transport – not preventing driving, but making it less attractive than other options.

  If active travel is seen as easy, safe, quick, and convenient, it will sell itself. Given the

importance of sensible allocation of limited funds, resources spent on communication must not come at the expense of actual infrastructure.

An exception to this can be through high quality on-route signage that can clearly indicate travel times to key destinations so that people can see the benefits of walking and cycling before trying it themselves. If a driver heading to a town centre is sat in congestion and can see a free-flowing cycle route that shows they could be at their destination in a few minutes, that's a strong incentive to leave the car behind next time.