**SOME CONCERNS ABOUT THE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME FOR LONDON ROAD**

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The Local Transport Note 1/20 “Cycle Infrastructure Design” provides guidance and good practice for the design of cycle infrastructure and provides a recommended basis for those standards based on five overarching design principles and 22 summary principles. Local authorities are required to demonstrate that they have given due consideration to this guidance when designing new cycling schemes, and, also when applying for Government funding that includes cycle infrastructure.

The problem with the proposal to provide segregated cycle paths along the London Road is that there simply isn’t enough room. There are three separate pinch points where the width is severely restricted: (1) outside the Guildford High School (2) for at least 100 metres in both directions outside the Emporia and (3) by the Kingpost Parade. In each of these areas there is insufficient space to provide the minimum widths for cycle paths, therefore SCC have reverted to pavements shared between cyclists and pedestrians, which, according the Local Transport Note 1/20, should only be used as a very last resort.

**The three pinch points**

1. **At the** **High School**, because of the restricted width caused by the embankment, all cyclists are required to cross the road onto a shared pavement outside the High School. This pavement will have to accommodate pedestrians travelling in both directions and cyclists travelling in both directions. Bear in mind that this is immediately outside a busy secondary school where girls are walking to and from the station and to and from their sports facilities. In addition, there is no provision for coaches to drop off visiting teams or pick up girls travelling to away matches and, when they do step off the coach, they will do so into the path of cyclists.
2. **Outside the** **Emporia**, for at least 100 metres, the restricted width forces pedestrians and cyclists to share long stretches of the pavement which are typically only 1400 wide on both sides. Moreover, because the cycle path is next to a wall more than 600 high, the recommended minimum cycle path of 2000 should actually be increased in width by 500 to 2500.
3. **At the** **Kingpost Parade** the restricted width mean that, at this busy shopping area, most of the pavements are shared between cyclists and pedestrians. The bus stop at Kingpost Parade has no segregation between pedestrians and cyclists nor for people waiting at the bus stop.

**Other key issues**

The permitted overall width of HGV’s, and wide vehicles generally, is 2950 mm to the wing mirrors. Some of the carriageways have been reduced to 3100 which means that the wing mirrors of HGV’s and busses travelling in opposite directions will miss each other by only 150 mm (6 inches). These carriageways are far too narrow for that recommended for an urban A road carrying busses and HGV’s which should normally be expected to be 3650 mm.

LTN 1/20 recommends a minimum 500 mm separation between cycle paths and carriageways in a 30mph urban zone (refer to Table 6-1 on page 54). No such separation has been provided anywhere.

There are no laybys at bus stops which means all traffic will be held up behind busses and unable to pass at the bus stops. Nor is there any room for central reservations for cars turning right which is another possible cause of congestion at peak periods.

Because of the narrow carriageways and raised kerbs, in the event of an accident, the emergency services will be unable to pass the queues of traffic held up in the London Road.

The scheme has introduced five additional pedestrian crossings controlled by traffic lights along the London Road which is bound to increase traffic congestion considerably. The pedestrian crossings at each end of the Cycle Street outside the High School have been introduced to allow cyclists to cross the road because there is no southbound cycle path along this stretch of the road. These pedestrian crossings are therefore likely to be very busy and will exacerbate traffic congestion.

The introduction of parallel crossings at the roundabouts at Woodruff Avenue and New Inn Lane contradicts the advice of the Cycle Embassy of Great Britain which states that parallel crossings should never be used to link sections of shared pavement, and, although these crossings are fundamental to the concept of the cycle route, they are likely, in practice, to cause further congestion due to stationary traffic on these roundabouts.

Long stretches of the cycle paths are only 1400 wide which is far narrower than the recommended minimum widths in LTN 1/20. Moreover, a high percentage of the total route is designated as shared pavements which, according to the LTN 1/20 should only be used as a very last resort. It does seem incongruous that the majority of the new cycle paths are designed to minimum standards, or even less than minimum standards, rather than optimum standards. 1400 wide cycle paths are clearly unsuitable for cargo bikes which would be unable to safely overtake pedestrians.

The introduction of a Dutch Style Roundabout at such a busy junction is likely to cause severe delays at peak times and is bound to cause safety issues where traffic is supposed to give way to cyclists and pedestrians both while approaching, and when leaving, the roundabout. Their own traffic modelling states that “the Dutch Style roundabout created poor performance on all arms. With an 11% decrease in overall capacity, queue lengths and delay times increased to unsuitable levels. A 260.1 second delay was anticipated as the longest queue”.

In order to introduce cycle paths beside Stoke Park they have removed approximately 180 metres of parking which equates to approximately 30 parking bays depending on the size and length of the car.

Bus stops generally have not been designed in accordance with LTN 1/20 in that bus stops tend to be located in an area of shared pavement rather than directing a segregated cycle path around the back of the bus stop with designated crossing points for pedestrians to access the bus stop. Pedestrians waiting at the bus stop are not separated from cyclists.

The introduction of a section of “Cycle Street” immediately outside the High School is not consistent with the concept of “quiet mixed traffic streets” as described in Chapter 7 in the LTN 1/20. This road is a busy arterial route to and from the town centre carrying heavy goods vehicles as well as being a major bus route. Moreover, the restricted carriageway widths do not allow vehicles to safely overtake cyclists. It also seems confusing to provide a Cycle Street next to a shared pavement designed for cyclists and pedestrians. How are cyclists to know which route to take?

The introduction of cycle paths has resulted in the removal of one of the south bound traffic lanes approaching the York Road crossroad. This will result in traffic waiting to turn right into York Road holding up traffic progressing straight ahead and will inevitably cause further congestion.

These proposals for Active Travel should be attempting to improve matters for road users by making it safer for cyclists and pedestrians. In reality, because there is insufficient space, the proposals are likely to make it more hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians and are likely to increase traffic congestion and air pollution in the area.

**Niels Laub 20th September 2023**