

What follows was submitted as part of Cambridge Cycling Campaign's evidence following Sustrans' withdrawal.

> ----- Forwarded message -----  
> Date: Mon, 22 Nov 2004 18:37:41 -0000  
> From: nigel brigham <susteast@waitrose.com>  
> Reply-To: nigel brigham <nigelb@sustrans.org.uk>  
> To: Pam Perceval-Maxwell <pam.percevalmaxwell@btinternet.com>  
> Cc: Jim Chisholm <JC235@hermes.cam.ac.uk>  
> Subject: Guided Bus and maintenace track surface  
>  
> Dear Pam  
>  
> I have been advised that there has been discussion about the surfacing of  
> the maintenance track/ access route at the Public Inquiry.  
>  
> I must admit that I am surprised that the Inspector is going into this  
> level of detail, because when we withdrew our objection regarding surfacing  
> it was on the understanding, from the County Council that surfacing was a  
> matter that could and would be discussed in future. If it is a key issue for  
> now we are keen that our viewpoint is registered.  
>  
> Sustrans view is that without a tarmac surface there will not be the level  
> of cycling usage that there should be. Poor surfaces give lower levels of  
> usage particularly for commuters and we consider that high levels of usage  
> are vital.  
>  
> The greatest potential for commuting cyclists is clearly around Cambridge :  
>  
> - Histon to Science Park and to the River,  
> and Trumpington to Cambridge Station,  
>  
> but for North Stowe to be a "sustainable community" it needs high levels of  
> cycling and we would expect North Stowe to aim to reach the levels of  
> cycling achieved in Cambridge. For this to happen traffic restraint clearly  
> needs to be built in from the start, but also some really high quality cycle  
> provision is needed. North Stowe to the Science Park is an easy cycling  
> distance, but so is North Stowe to Swavesey and Swavesey to St Ives, so  
> really the whole route has commuter potential. The only section, which we  
> would give lower priority to would be the route around North Stowe, since

> the main cycle route must go through the middle of the new development, to  
> serve the main population.

>  
> Sustrans has a lot of experience of railway paths and finds that people are  
> willing to commute considerable distances on them, even further than the 5  
> miles that is typically regarded as a reasonable cycling range. This is  
> probably because most railway paths have very good continuity, few  
> gradients, attractive surroundings and few at-grade road crossings; thus  
> once a cyclist has started a journey it is easy to keep going. The Bristol-  
> Bath railway path, which was Sustrans first project started off as a stone  
> path, but is now tarmac over its whole length. This is not because most  
> people commute the whole way from Bath to Bristol, but rather because every  
> part of the railway path has commuting usage even if those journeys are only  
> a part of the total.

>  
> We consider that the whole of National Cycle Route 51 between Huntingdon and  
> Cambridge should be tarmac so that it can serve as a real focus for high  
> levels of cycling along that corridor. A good example is the recently opened  
> path on Eastside Common, Godmanchester. This path is on a bridleway and  
> forms part of the continuation route from St Ives- Godmanchester and  
> Huntingdon, to link with the Guided Bus route. This is tarmac and a good  
> surface and was the sort of surface that we envisaged between Huntingdon and  
> Cambridge.

>  
> The issue of surfacing is one that comes up regularly for Sustrans and a  
> lot of recent and current work goes into resurfacing stone paths with  
> tarmac, in order to increase usage. (This is currently happening in  
> Chelmsford and  
> Braintree on the National Cycle Network, with the help of grants from  
> Department for Transport.)

>  
> Some stone paths can be good, but they can be damaged by water, vehicles  
> and horses. In any case they typically need resurfacing after about 8 years,  
> whereas tarmac paths typically last more than 20 years. For users tarmac  
> gives a smooth all weather surface that stands up well to use by horses,  
> vehicles and others. It is a surface that cyclists like.

>  
> I understand that the issue of drainage and permeability has been raised  
> and cannot understand the relevance of this. All paths should be designed  
> to drain naturally to the side, so need to be laid with a slight camber,  
> because standing water is a real problem for any path and standing water  
> will lead to pot-holing and other problems. The main issue must therefore be  
> about permeability of the ground besides the path, which is not usually a

- > difficult issue, for a well built path. It should be noted that levels do
- > need careful consideration and drainage needs careful thought, but there
- > should be no problem ensuring that water drains from the path into adjoining
- > land.
- >
- > Whilst stone paths can be good there are too many cases of problems and a
- > smooth, durable surface is very hard to achieve with stone paths. Stone
- > paths can also be a real problem after wet weather to the extent that after
- > rain some stone paths are really only suitable for those on mountain bikes,
- > who are able to change their clothes when they get to their destination,
- > because dirty spray can make both cyclist and bicycle filthy. Cyclists
- > really should be able to commute to work in their work clothes and not have
- > to worry about showering, because this then removes some of the time
- > advantages that
- > cyclists get. British people often quote concern for their clothing as a
- > reason for not cycling, although this does not seem to be an issue for the
- > Dutch or many Cambridge cyclists, who are happy to cycle in their suits.
- > However it is obvious that arriving at work in a dirty suit would be a real
- > deterrent for many people.
- >
- > Sustrans is always very sensitive to the needs of horse-riders who share a
- > lot of the problems that cyclists experience, but I am really not aware
- > that horses have a problem with tarmac, although riders do object where soft
- > surfaces are replaced with tarmac. In this case there is no existing soft
- > surface bridleway and we were re-assured by BHS and others that their main
- > interest
- > was in securing rights for horses and the surface was not a big issue for
- > them. My understanding though is that for horses stone surfaces can be a
- > bigger problem, than tarmac, because horses do not like sharp stones.
- >
- > Tarmac can be slippery for horses above a certain gradient, but that should
- > not be a problem along a disused railway and can be dealt with by special
- > design at any specific location.
- >
- > The needs of walkers need also to be considered, because for traffic-free
- > sections of the National Cycle Network they make up more than half of users
- > and again this is a mode that we wish to encourage. Sustrans experience is
- > that better surfaces encourage more use by walkers. A lot of walkers want to
- > be able to walk in their good shoes, perhaps pushing a buggy and tarmac
- > suits them, as it does wheelchair users.
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- > I gather that Cambridge Cycling Campaign have been discussing this matter
- > with the Inspector and am copying this to them.

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- > If you would like any more information or have any queries please let me
- > know.
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