

December 22, 2004

Our ref: NA05003  
Your ref:

Alistair Frost  
Environment & Transport Department  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Castle Court, Shire Hall  
Castle Hill  
Cambridge CB3 0AP



**Cambridge Cycling Campaign**

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Dear Mr Frost,

### **Junction Improvements in North Cambridge**

We are very concerned that these plans do not take cycling as a transport mode seriously, and strongly oppose them as currently formulated. They will, in effect, force many confident cyclists who currently use the road onto sub-standard shared-use paths. If substantial changes to the cycling provision are not made before submission to Councillors at the Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee, we shall be lobbying Councillors and asking them to reject the proposals in total.

These proposals degrade the quality of provision for cyclists using the new cycle bridge over the A14. This was a major investment and has vastly improved accessibility for cyclists in this area as well as those in Milton. At the count conducted following the opening of the bridge some 900 cyclists were using this route each day

We viewed the present plans at the Stakeholder meeting and, given our strong objections voiced at that meeting, are concerned that, following those comments, no changes appear to have been made to the plans issued for public consultation.

We have a number of objections in principle, and some more detailed objections proposing a number of specific changes.

#### **Our objections in principle are:**

1. Although much work has clearly been done to model motor traffic flows, absolutely no information has been presented about the nature or volume of cycling. We believe that, at the least, information on the flows of cyclists, both on road and on 'shared-use' paths in this area, should have been collected and presented as part of this exercise.
2. It is clear that no 'Cycle Audit' can have been done on this scheme. Under the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2004-11<sup>a</sup> there is a commitment to undertake such audits. The LTP says:

- “Year1: Undertake a Cycle Audit of all new schemes (including estate developments) and significant alterations to the highway [Table A4.3 Walking and cycling strategy].

The English Regions Cycling Development Team, in its review of Local Authority Performance on Cycling 2003 specifically mentioned the lack of Cycle Audit procedures in Cambridgeshire, and then in 2004 the report says<sup>b</sup>:

- *Cycle Review of Cambridge and other urban centres should be undertaken, looking at how cost effective, on-road measures could enhance the existing networks more quickly*
  - *Cycle Audit should be introduced*
  - *Review of guidance and standards, and continued awareness training, will ensure that best practice design is applied more consistently*
3. Given that this work is being done using Growth Area Delivery Grants (GADG), with monies direct from Central Government, which are supposed to help support 'Sustainable Communities', the lack of consideration for sustainable modes in the present scheme is of great concern.
  4. These plans will effectively force cyclists off the 'on-road' route from the Jane Coston bridge. The alternative provision is abysmal, only just meeting the absolute minimum specified in Cycle Friendly Infrastructure (CFI) on a route that is likely to see over 1000 cyclists each day in the near future.
  5. We do not believe that the County should be increasing the capacity for motor vehicles in this area, but should more effectively manage demand. The County should provide vastly better facilities for cyclists in this area, which is perhaps one of the most hostile for cyclists, even at present.
  6. PPG13 states that developments should be permeable for cyclists and pedestrians. On the Science Park routes that have been available for such modes have recently been closed, and to the east of Milton Road no attempts have been made to use the several opportunities that have arisen to improve access (e.g. a link for pedestrians and cyclists from Cambridge Business Park to Nuffield Road). In this area we see little effort to follow the Guidance in PPG13.

### **Our objection to the detail of the plans are as follows:**

#### **Removal of the 'on-road' route on Cowley Road used by many cyclists**

Off-road routes for cyclist in Cambridge are slower and less convenient for many cyclists due to the need to slow down and give way at side roads, as well as the need to be aware of any vehicles exiting from premises. Less experienced cyclists may feel secure on such off-road paths, but they are often unaware of the risks. There have been crashes resulting in injuries on the existing section of the Cowley Road shared-use path, as well as on the Trumpington Road shared-use path.

The proposed changes to much of Cowley Road remove any possibility for an 'on-road' route for the vast majority of cyclists.

#### **Width of the main cycle route**

The width of the cycling section of the shared-use path from the Jane Coston bridge to the 'underpass' beneath the old railway line is shown as 1.5m wide throughout its length. The DfT publication 'Cycle Friendly Infrastructure'<sup>c</sup> states (para 12.1.2):

*Cycle tracks should be a minimum of 2m wide and 3m when intended for two-way use. An absolute minimum of 1.5m may be acceptable in exceptional circumstances.*

This route will carry a large volume of cycle traffic. There are no exceptional circumstances to permit a 1.5m section, and there is ample space for a 3.0m width that would fully meet the requirements of CFI. With a segregated path it is an offence to cycle on the pedestrian section, and to safely pass a cyclist on a tricycle or with a trailer on such a width is almost impossible. In document CCC.B253 submitted to the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus Inquiry, Bob Menzies of the County Council states (bottom of page 2):

*The minimum width of a cycleway is 2 metres in order for bicycles to pass*

Given the high flows to be expected, we consider that a width of 3.0m should be provided for cyclists throughout this length. If this means that part of the route is adjacent to the kerb it is important that parking is prohibited on such sections to prevent car doors being opened into the paths of cyclists. This section of Cowley road is a very generous 10 metres wide. It could easily be narrowed to 7.5 metres to provide extra space or grass margins.

### **Lack of continuity of cycle route**

Unlike the existing on-road route, the shared-use path is most likely to be broken by 'Give Ways' at the entrance to Orwell Furlong. We consider that this exit should be closed completely, with the other exit adjacent to the Park & Ride site used for all traffic. As well as improving the continuity of the cycle route and removing a point of conflict, this would also prevent 'rat-running' by motor traffic through Orwell Furlong to avoid the new traffic lights.

### **Visibility at Anglia Water Exit**

We also consider that given the increased flow on the shared-use path, modifications are required to this exit. Cambridgeshire still does not have a 'Cycle Design Guide' but most such guides include specifications for 'visibility splays' as are required on a public road. If it is not possible to move back the boundary at this location, a similar improvement to visibility could be achieved by narrowing the currently generous width of the road and moving the cycle path further out.

### **Crossing of Milton Road**

The provision of a 'three stage' manoeuvre for cyclists crossing Milton Road via the Toucan crossing is bad, but the small size of the 'cages' created by pedestrian barriers on the two central islands are totally unacceptable for safety reasons. The narrow width of these refuges together with the narrow offset entrances and exits means that cyclists could get trapped on the road unable to get to the safety of the refuge when that is already occupied by other cyclists waiting to leave. This is especially likely if the bike has one of the child trailers now common in Cambridge. Evidence of this type of problem can be seen at the not dissimilar arrangement at the two stage Pelican crossing of Trumpington Road near the junction with Fen Causeway, where cyclists often avoid the refuge completely.

### **Lack of a route for northbound cyclists**

Cyclists travelling north on Milton Road from the Golden Hind junction already have problems crossing over to the east side of the northern fringe. Many use the route via the 'bus gate' to access Cowley Rd and others cross at the pedestrian crossing to the south of the old railway crossing, with others using the existing lights to turn right. The 'bus gate' route will disappear and the right turn via the three sets of lights will become very intimidating for cyclists. Better provision needs to be made for this common manoeuvre by cyclists. For instance the pedestrian crossing north of the Golden Hind could be upgraded to

a Toucan crossing and provision could be made to assist cyclists cross from the 'shadow' island in the centre of the road just south of the Cambridge Business Park junction to the shared-use path on the east of Milton road.

### **Use of MOVA controlled signals when there are cyclists and pedestrians**

Although 'MOVA' (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) is the preferred method of traffic light control on trunk roads, we have concerns over the use of MOVA to control lights in an area with significant cycle and pedestrian movements. As originally designed MOVA used extended signal phases to shift large volumes of traffic. The resulting long waits could be unacceptable for cyclists and pedestrians. We wish to see information regarding the additional delays caused to pedestrians and cyclists by using this method of control.

### **Conclusion**

It appears that little thought has been given to the needs of cyclists in this scheme. This area is already one of the most hostile areas for cycling in Cambridge. The present scheme makes it worse rather than better, and the use of Cycle Audit procedures should have prevented this. Changes need to be made before this scheme is put to Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Jim Chisholm

cc	County Councillor for East Chesterton	Julian Huppert
	County Councillor for Milton	Jane Coston
	Chair Cambridge AJC	Sian Reid
	City Councillors for East Chesterton:	Jenny Bailey
		Donald Adey
		Jennifer Liddle
	Eastern Region Cycling Development Officer	Rob Marshall
	Deputy Ass. Director, Highways, Cambs. CC	Bob Menzies

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<sup>a</sup> Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004-11

<http://www3.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D58E7E90-A244-4EAA-B661-CEC90FE383C2/0/LTP04A4.pdf>

<sup>b</sup> National Cycling Strategy/ English Regions Cycling Development Team

[http://www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk/assets/go\\_2004/Eastern/Cambridgeshire.pdf](http://www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk/assets/go_2004/Eastern/Cambridgeshire.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> Cycle Friendly Infrastructure: Department of Transport/ Cyclists' Touring Club/ Institution of Highways and Transportation, (ISBN 0 902237 17 9).