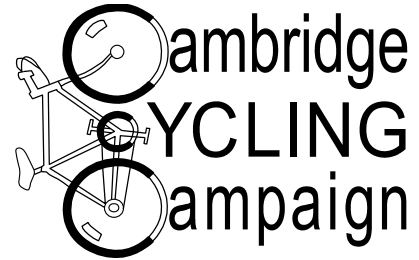


July 19, 2013

Our ref: RH13007

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Dear Daniel,

### **Histon Road Consultation Response**

Cambridge Cycling Campaign is concerned about the proposals for the "improvements" to Histon Road which has the potential for many thousands of bicycles a day. Our concerns and suggestions to mitigate these concerns are enumerated below in priority order.

#### **1. Wider advisory cycle lanes**

We consider a cycle lane of only 1.3m to be totally unsafe. LTN 2/08 defines that the dynamic width of a bicycle is approximately 1 metre wide, and it defines that a bicycle needs a minimum passing distance of 1.5 metres for cars travelling at 30 mph. We also note that the Cambridge County Council Highways Policies and Standards April 2011, §2.1 states: "Policy: On carriageway cycle lanes, both advisory and mandatory, shall generally have a minimum width of 1.5 metres. On roads where cycle flows and vehicle speeds are low the width may be reduced to an absolute minimum of 1.2 metres, subject to a satisfactory safety audit."

Given that the roadway available is only approximately 8.6 metres wide, we believe that two cycle lanes of 1.5 metres wide could be provided. We accept that the resulting 5.6m of carriageway is below the minimum desired width for buses to pass side by side, but the use of advisory cycle lanes would allow the buses an extra 1.5 metres of space to safely pass each other, though of course not whilst overtaking a bicycle. We believe that this approach is the best compromise between the safety of bicycles, the safe overtaking of the majority of vehicles, and the rapid movement of buses along the roadway.

We strongly object to advisory cycle lanes that are only 1.3m wide. We very strongly request that the cycle lanes are a minimum of 1.5m wide, and wider wherever possible.

We strongly request that at the pedestrian crossing the cycle lanes are continued in red tarmac all the way through the crossing to encourage cars not to violate the safe space required for people on bicycles.

## **2. Complete removal of off-peak motorised vehicle parking**

The proposed scheme suggests that parking for residents' motorised vehicles is provided outside of peak traffic times. This does provide some benefit for people who choose to use a bicycle instead of a car, however this benefit is limited to only a few hours of the day when the car traffic is typically moving slowly. When the proposed car parking restrictions are removed, the speed of traffic will be higher, exactly at the same time when better segregation of fast moving vehicles and vulnerable road users is needed the most.

It should be noted that a number of the collisions involving bicycles along this stretch of road occurred outside of the proposed parking restrictions, and therefore the risk of these collisions happening again would not be mitigated by this proposed scheme.

We have observed a number of bicycle users riding illegally along the pavements on this section of roadway. This would generally indicate that the roadway is currently considered unsafe to cycle along. Therefore we strongly suggest that by making the roadway feel safer - by providing wider cycle lanes - the incidence of footway cycling should reduce, just as it has on Gilbert Road. The perception of a safer cycle route can be best achieved by removing all on-street parking at all times of the day and providing a continuous cycle lane throughout.

We strongly object to any on-carriageway parking provision along this stretch of roadway. We would like to see double yellow lines, with advisory cycle lane markings, as is successfully demonstrated on Gilbert Road.

## **3. Removal of the centre line markings**

Gilbert Road has shown that the removal of the centre line has reduced traffic speeds along this section of road with the commensurate increase in perceived safety for people using bicycles. We cannot see any reason why this same logic cannot be applied to Histon Road, especially considering the very narrow proposed cycle lanes. Given the narrowness of the roadway, the removal of the centre line will also stop cars from only keeping within their lane when overtaking people on bicycles, increasing the perceived safety for those on bicycles.

We strongly request that centre line markings are only used in the approach to traffic signal controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings, and removed along all other sections of this road.

#### **4. Red tarmac**

The proposed scheme appears to show that red tarmac surfacing is only used at a limited number of traffic junctions. This coloured surfacing should however be used at all possible conflicting point to remind drivers and cyclists of the possible conflicts. Red tarmac should be extended over all commercial premises and driveways.

Given the extremely narrow lanes proposed, and even the narrow 1.5m lanes requested, we would like to see the continuous cycle lane be in red tarmac. Any cycle lane that is less than 2.1m wide is considered a sub-standard cycle lane by the Cambridge Cycling Campaign, especially for a route that could have the potential for many thousands of bicycles a day travelling along Histon Road. Note: we think that 1.5m wide cycle lanes, while still sub-standard, are still preferred over 1.3m wide lanes.

We would also like to see the red tarmac continue across the Gilbert Road / Warwick Road / Histon Road junction so that cars and bicycles have a clear idea of where each other will be going.

We would like to see that the road surface is cold-planed out and red tarmac is machine laid such that the surface is as smooth and as durable as possible. Painted surfaces would not be suitable on this route as the volume of traffic would rapidly degrade the surface making them uncomfortable to ride on, as in Newmarket Road.

#### **5. Gilbert Road / Warwick Road / Histon Road junction**

The biggest deterrent for people who don't currently use a bicycle, whether young or old, is the fear of traffic junctions. This scheme provides an excellent opportunity to reduce the fear of cycling at the critical Gilbert Road, Warwick Road, Histon Road junction, especially in light of the school located near by, yet does not propose any significant changes at this time. Whilst we welcome the removal of a traffic lane so that a bicycle lane can be provided all the way up to the traffic lights, we are concerned about the safety of bicycle users once the lights turn to green.

We would therefore propose four possible ways to reduce the conflicts at this location.

##### **a) All-ways-green cycle/pedestrian phase**

When watching traffic on this junction, a number of people on bicycles move onto the pavement and "become pedestrians" to cross this junction. The traffic lights are already phased to provide an "all-green" pedestrian only phase. These "pedestrian cyclists" cross at this time completely safely. We would therefore suggest that this approach is encouraged such that people on bicycles can cross the junction at the same time as walkers are crossing the junction. We would also suggest that this is done on a trial basis such that if it is successful Cambridge can become an exemplar for bicycle infrastructure and it could also be implemented in other sub-urban areas.

b) Segregated cycle facilities within existing green space

The traffic junction is contained within the middle of a relatively large expanse of space. There is sufficient space around the junction to provide significant safe bicycle infrastructure that can both increase the volume of people that can pass through the junction and also make this traffic move safely.

c) Advanced green lights for bicycles

If neither of the above proposals is acceptable, then a minimum mitigation for the safety of cyclists at this junction would be to introduce advanced green lights for bicycles. Experience from Copenhagen has shown that even just a couple of additional seconds of an advanced green light for bicycles significantly reduces the risk of an accident.

d) Reduced bicycle waiting times

One of the easiest ways to increase the attractiveness of a junction for cyclists, whilst not decreasing delays for queuing traffic further down the road, is to increase the cycle times for the traffic lights. Dutch traffic engineers would recommend a maximum wait of 60 seconds. We therefore would propose that a short "pedestrian / cycle" phase is provided frequently to allow this traffic to be prioritised through the junction safely.

## 6. Other Details

We assume that all the potholes and deteriorating road surfaces within the proposed cycle lanes will be repaired. These are most prevalent near the bus stops where the road surface has failed to cope with the very heavy buses pulling into and out of these locations frequently, and also on the southbound approach to the Gilbert Road junction. As guided by LTN 2/08, additional space should be provided where such imperfections are found.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Robin Heydon  
Campaigner