



Obstructions in Cycleways and Access Controls Policy

Obstructions on cycleways and footpaths should be eliminated wherever possible in order to reduce the risk of collisions and to enable access for people of all ages and abilities. Where there is a proven need for access controls such as bollards and cattle grids, they must be designed to be clearly visible and easily and safely negotiated by all types of riders, using a variety of cycles, during all hours, seasons and weather conditions.

Obstructions are often left on cycle routes where the cycleway has been an afterthought or are placed on a route where poor planning and implementation have resulted in a compromised result. These obstructions can be hazardous and reduce accessibility.

Access controls are common on cycleways and their installation was often motivated by safety concerns for path users and the amenity of local residents. However, they can cause serious injury, substantial inconvenience and, in some cases, exclude people using non-standard and larger cycles. Measures that prevent access by people with disabilities are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) has placed inclusive design and accessibility at the centre of its guidance. It sets out the much higher standards that are now expected for cycle infrastructure and highlights the past failings caused by cycleway obstructions and poor access control measures which are now strongly discouraged. With this in mind and the need to create more space for cycling, Camcycle has put together the following policy statements.

Policy asks:

- 1. Cycleways must be kept clear of dangerous obstructions**
- 2. There must not be access controls on cycleways unless there is a proven and ongoing need**
- 3. Any necessary access controls must allow the cycleway to be accessible to people of all ages and abilities, on all types of cycle**
- 4. Access controls must comply with LTN 1/20 and be safe for all users; they should have clear sightlines and sensible approaches, and be located away from other hazards**

1. Cycleways must be kept clear of dangerous obstructions

Street furniture on cycleways obstructs them and is a collision hazard, especially in poor light. This includes sign poles, lighting columns, utility cabinets and trees.

- *Street furniture should not obstruct the cycleway, but be located on a verge alongside the cycleway, with any vertical obstruction at least 0.25m away from the edge of the cycleway and ideally 0.5m or more, in accordance with Table 5-3 of LTN 1/20. If street furniture cannot be moved, then the cycleway should be realigned to take a different route.*

2. There must not be access controls on cycleways unless there is a proven and ongoing need

Many shared-use paths and cycle tracks already have access controls: bollards, chicanes, barriers or gates to prevent unauthorised use by motor vehicles. They obstruct the cycleway, making the experience of cycling less safe and less agreeable. Access controls are not always needed: many cycleways in the region have operated for years without access controls.

- *Access controls should be introduced only if there is a current and evident need for them.*
- *Where access controls are already installed on cycleways and there is no current and proven need for them, or they are causing an obstruction, they should be removed.*

3. Any necessary access controls must allow the cycleway to be accessible to people of all ages and abilities, on all types of cycle.

Poor access control infrastructure can reduce the usability of a route for everyone and may exclude people riding non-standard and larger cycles. The access control used must match the context. For example, a cycle route through grazing land and an off-road shared-use path will need different access controls.

- *Cycle access to grazing land should be controlled by cattle grids, not gates. The cattle grid should be designed for use by cyclists, with bars close together and a surface finish to make them less slippery when wet. They must be at least 1.5m wide to allow all types of cycle to pass. On busy cycleways two cattle grids should be provided to allow for simultaneous two-way traffic.*
- *Bollards are often the most suitable access control method for people of all ages and abilities on all types of cycle. The bollards must be placed in a single row, with gaps of at least 1.5m between them. If the cycleway is wide enough then use an odd number of*

bollards to provide an even number of gaps of at least 1.5m each. This allows cyclists to pass in both directions without being forced into conflict. If the cycleway is not wide enough to allow a pair of 1.5m gaps then use two bollards, with a single gap of at least 1.5m between them.

- *Where access control is temporary or on a wide road, planters or other similar barriers may be used to control access. Planters must be maintained in good condition without protrusions or sharp edges.*

Chicanes have been used as access controls in the past, but should not be used any more, and should be changed to a policy-compliant solution at the earliest opportunity. Chicanes are difficult to cycle through, especially for those riding non-standard and larger cycles. Chicanes can cause particular difficulties for cyclists carrying children on child seats because they find it harder to manoeuvre. Chicanes often cause conflict between path users (such as oncoming cycles, or between cyclists and pedestrians), are inconvenient, and reduce the capacity of the path. In addition, a chicane just before a junction may cause the rider to become preoccupied with navigating the chicane and distract them from the hazard just beyond it.

- *Summary Principle 16 in the Local Transport Note 1/20 states "Access control measures, such as chicane barriers and dismount signs, should not be used" (p12).*
- *Hazards on cycle routes should be mitigated by proper route and junction design, not by placing obstacles such as chicanes in the path of cyclists.*

It is impossible to exclude motorcycles without also excluding legitimate cycleway users using non-standard and larger cycles. Barriers used to prevent motorbike access may also block legitimate non-cycling users such as pedestrians with double-buggies or those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters. The possibility of motorcycles using a cycleway does not justify harming legitimate cycleway users.

- *Access controls designed to exclude motorcycles, such as A-frames, K-frames and "kissing gates", must never be used. Sinusoidal humps have been used successfully to deter motorbikes from speeding along cycleways. The sinusoidal profile of the humps minimises the discomfort for legitimate path users such as disabled cyclists who may be using adapted cycles with less shock absorption capability.*
- *If the use of a cycleway by people on motorcycles is found to be a persistent problem then the appropriate remedy is enforcement, not physical barriers that cause problems for legitimate cycleway users.*

4. Access controls must comply with LTN 1/20 and be safe for all users; they should have clear sightlines and sensible approaches, and be located away from other hazards

Access controls can create a potential collision hazard and cause serious injuries. The danger they present can be mitigated by careful design that allows cycleway users to anticipate their presence and navigate instinctively and safely around them, even in low light conditions, if (or when) they are obscured from view by cycles in front.

- *Bollards must not be placed on a bend or close to a junction as it creates a potential hazard. Furthermore, they must not be situated in the natural path of travel.*
- *Taper markings on the ground (lines or hatching) should be used to guide cyclists away from any bollard placed directly in their path to help in the cases when users' view of the bollards may be temporarily screened by other cycleway users.*
- *Bollards must be clearly visible and easy to see from a distance at all times of day, in all weather conditions and by all people including those with vision impairments. They should contrast in lightness and colour to the surroundings, be reflective, well lit, and be tall enough to be easily seen.*
- *Collisions will nevertheless occur, so bollards must be designed to cause minimum harm when struck. They should be cylindrical in shape with no protrusions and ideally made of materials that are less likely to cause injuries if struck by a cyclist.*
- *Sometimes it is necessary to allow access for maintenance or emergency vehicles. If a separate gate cannot be provided then the bollards should be fully retractable or removable, without leaving an open or protruding socket. Bollards designed to fold down should be avoided as they are hard to spot when folded down and create a collision hazard. Other barriers which are not accessible to larger and non-standard cycles, such 'paper clip' style swing chicanes, must not be used.*

Case studies – Examples of good practice

Eastern end of Midsummer Common, Cambridge



Source: www.cyclestreets.net/location/145785/

Two separate cattle grids, for use by cyclists in each direction. This is a very busy cycle route so a single cattle grid would cause congestion. To the right of the picture there is a swing gate.

Red Cross Lane, Cambridge



Source: <https://www.cyclestreets.net/location/93325/>

Formally, Red Cross Lane was awkward to negotiate by anybody trying to get through to Addenbrookes from the East by bike. It was gated with no dropped kerbs, a rough surface and there were barriers to stop you accessing the road from the path. This well-placed bollard at the end of the new connection to Red Cross Lane has made this route accessible and safer.

North side of Cutter Ferry Bridge, Cambridge



Source: www.cyclestreets.net/location/145788/

Note the absence of any bollard. Until a few years ago there was a single bollard in the middle. However, because the approach ramp is less than 3m wide this meant the gaps on each side were too narrow. The bollard was therefore removed.

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To provide feedback on this draft policy please contact Camcycle at contact@camcycle.org.uk