

CAMCYCLE



Tuesday 22 June, 2021

Statement to the Highways and Transport Committee by Camcycle trustee Matthew Danish

Dear Members of the Highways and Transport Committee,

We understand that the police have recommended a scheme of this nature. However, with some essential changes it could create a much better, safer and more accessible environment for all.

King's Parade is famous around the world, but it is not a museum: it is a heavily-used and well-loved public space at the heart of our city. It is also one of the country's busiest streets for cycling under the typical everyday conditions we knew before the pandemic and hope to see return. It deserves to have a really beautiful and practical design that is also safe and inclusive. With the new administration, we hope that councillors will encourage officers to tackle these issues in a more visionary way living up to the latest standards of design.

- Appendix 3 of the officer's report claims that 'there has been little change in the level of personal injury accidents reported'. We find this to be an unsatisfactory response:

(a) pretty much the entire experimental period has been spent battling a worldwide pandemic which has suppressed the usual flow of students, shoppers, commuters and tourists here. We do not know when normal activities may resume, but it is going to happen some day. The temporary barriers are not suitable for the circumstances in which thousands of students are rushing to lectures all at the same time without any alternative but to cycle on King's Parade, in addition to all the residents and visitors trying to get around. The lecture rush happens periodically throughout the day so it cannot be addressed by opening the barrier only in the morning;

(b) personal injuries are rarely recorded if a motor vehicle is not involved and police are not called to the scene.

- In practice, we can see that the temporary barriers are creating conflict and the particular arrangement of them severely reduces accessibility. There are nominally three openings to walk or cycle past the barrier, but at least one is usually blocked. Then it turns into a free-for-all, with people walking through the cycle route or cycling through the walking route, whichever happens to be available. The cycle gap is of substandard size and, to make matters worse, half of it is in the gutter. That can cause people to slip and fall while trying to manoeuvre through the tight space. Some people have told us that they have stopped using King's Parade as a result of not feeling safe trying to pass through the small gap in the barrier, especially with cargo cycles.

- Therefore if the council is going to press forward with this scheme then we ask that this committee push for a better design for the barrier. It is entirely possible to balance the DfT's imperative for inclusive cycling, LTN 1/20, with counterterrorism goals to create a workable solution for all. The pavements on both sides should be kept as clear as possible so that people walking or using wheelchairs or mobility scooters are fully accommodated. Within the carriageway, there should be at least two gaps for cycling, northbound and southbound, each having sufficient clearance for cargo cycles, tricycles and disability-adapted cycles. The surface quality should be even and smooth within those gaps, instead of straddling the gutter.

The rising bollards that have been deemed suitable for the northern end of King's Parade would be a fine solution at the southern end. But if that's not enough, then we'd be happy to work with the officers to find a better solution.

Thank you.