

Guildford Sustainable Movement Corridor (West) Consultation:

Response from Guildford Bicycle User Group (G-BUG), October 2017

General observations:

- The planned SMC (West) will have many stops and delays for cyclists. It is essential to minimise waiting times at junctions, exits etc, otherwise cyclists will be tempted to take risks, or just stay on the road, and the SMC will not fulfil its aim of encouraging a significant modal shift. Preferably, priority must be given to cyclists over motor traffic (eg dedicated lights, 'tiger crossings' or Dutch-style roundabout crossings).
- On dedicated cycle paths, provide separate marked lanes for cyclists and pedestrians (where shared use). Suggested total width MINIMUM 4m - 1.2m pedestrians, 2.8m cycles, and able to be swept by a mechanical sweeper: debris, especially leaf litter is a major hazard for cyclists.
- Turns for motor vehicles entering and exiting the side roads need to be tightened to make them safer for those crossing

Section 1: Gill Avenue

Give priority to cyclists at the various vehicle exits crossing this route. Also, two crossings to the south side of Gill Avenue are shown: make these priority for cyclists over motor traffic

Section 2: Egerton Road signals

Changing layout and signal timing to allow crossing in one rather than two stages is essential, but please also make the overall waiting time for cyclists as short as possible.

There seem to be no specific proposals to improve the crossing over to the Sports Park access road, where the same issues of waiting times presumably pertain (NB Many students and general users cycle to the Sports Park.) The current proposals will require pedestrians and cyclists to cross even more lanes in even more stages!

The proposal for a new cycle path across the 'green' in front of Tesco is welcome, but please give it a good all weather surface, wide enough for segregated two-way cycling and pedestrians. With this proviso, it is preferred to improving the existing route along the pavement. If improvements are made to the existing pavement path, they must give substantially more space around the bus stop, which is a dangerous pinch point, although we understand the drainage ditch limits scope for widening. (Consider removing the bus bay so that buses wait in the road, as is currently the case on the opposite side?)

Section 3: Tesco roundabout

The proposed controlled crossing of the busy and dangerous Tesco access road (Ashenden Road) is an essential priority; the waiting time must be as short as possible.

See comments under Section 2 re the proposal for a new cycle path across the 'green' in front of Tesco.

Notwithstanding the above additional provisions, a small but significant improvement for eastbound cyclists who choose to stay on the carriageway would be the provision of a dropped kerb at the top of the rise just beyond the Tesco roundabout, so eastbound cyclists can readily access the shared footway/cycle path which continues towards the A3 underpass.

The plan seems to show carriageway widening and rounder corners at and around the roundabout, which will encourage even faster traffic speeds in an area which is already intimidating to pedestrians and cyclists. If

traffic lights are to be introduced on all arms of the roundabout, they should include a crossing on the Western arm of Egerton Road (serving the Holiday Inn complex and the bus stop).

Section 4: Egerton Rd A3 underbridge

The creation of a new cycle path along the road is welcome, since cycle/pedestrian congestion is the key issue for cyclists. We are however concerned that this new route would be relatively hilly compared to the existing pavement, and also potentially uninviting if 'crammed in' beside the road traffic (rather threatening, noise, fumes etc, especially under the bridge itself). Probably not much can be done about the 'hilliness', but measures should be taken to address the other issues (a wide two-way lane, physically segregated from motor traffic). (NB The schematic on the Council's information panel shows both pedestrians and cyclists using the new path: it should be for cyclists only, with pedestrians using the existing underbridge.)

For those cyclists who continue to use the existing underbridge, there are currently metal barriers at the underbridge entrances: whilst it is recognised that these are to slow cyclists down, they are potentially dangerous. Could they be replaced by more explicit segregated cycle and pedestrian lanes? And in any event, improvements to lighting, security etc in the underbridge are welcome for all users.

Consideration should also be given to preferential flow for buses through the underpass.

Section 5: Cathedral roundabout

The proposed new crossings on the South and West sides are welcome, but should not be to the exclusion of the routes for cyclists around the North and East sides. In the latter case, it is necessary to cross University and Cathedral entrance roads, but these are generally quieter than the other roads, hence there is less interruption. (Notwithstanding, a priority or controlled crossing across the University entrance road would be a benefit.)

This location may provide scope for the introduction of a Dutch style cycle-priority roundabout: have your consultants considered such an option?

Otherwise, there is plenty of room here for wide and segregated cycling and walking facilities. (NB the plans show a number of sharp turns which are not good for those on cargo bikes, hand cycles etc.)

The subway under the A3 slips remains a pinch point. There are currently metal barriers at the subway entrances: whilst it is recognised that these are to slow cyclists down, they are potentially dangerous. Could they be replaced by more explicit segregated cycle and pedestrian lanes?

For cyclists coming out of Guildford up the Chase heading for Tesco, RSCH etc, there is already a useful shortcut avoiding the Cathedral roundabout, along St John's Road, across the bridge over Egerton Road on the pavement beside the A3, to join the SMC path heading West. This route could be better signed, and modest improvements made (esp access to the A3 pavement from St John's Road). The route would also benefit from a better crossing at the junction where St John's Road emerges onto The Chase.

Section 6: Cathedral roundabout to Guildford rail station

The route via Alresford Road/Ridgemount is already a relatively quiet if hilly alternative to The Chase/Madrid Road/Guildford Park Road, and the proposed improvements are welcome, except that sharp speed humps, pillows etc can be an impediment to cyclists.

Presumably, improvements to the latter route (Chase etc) have been ruled out. We also note that if Walnut Tree Close closure proceeds as planned, this would provide an alternative - if longer - route to the station

either via the University grounds and (improved?) Yorkies Bridge or along the (improved?) pavement beside the A3 to Woodbridge Meadows.)

When a cyclist gets to the rear entrance to the station, to progress to the town centre, they must either use the Farnham Road bridge, or the station footbridge (with a platform ticket). Improvements to these will presumably form part of the SMC (Central), but one quick improvement would be to add 'cycle gutters' to the steep steps on the station footbridge.

Possible additional route

The SMC for cyclists and pedestrians should be continued from Gill Avenue through the Research Park along Priestley Road, from where there is access at the North West corner of the Research Park to the foot/cycle path under the railway, linking to Applegarth Avenue. Improving this route (especially the access to, and surface of, the foot/cycle path) would, for a relatively low cost, provide a valuable additional route for cyclists and pedestrians needing to get from North to South Guildford. It would also link to the Christmas Pie Trail to Normandy and beyond.

Priorities

The consultation asks 'which proposals would be of most value to you'. Our priorities are as follows:

1. Sections 2 and 3: Especially controlled crossing over the Tesco entrance road, new path across green in front of Tesco, and better toucan layout and timings across Egerton road.
2. Section 4: New cyclepath avoiding underbridge
3. Section 5: New/improved crossings and cycle paths on Cathedral Roundabout
4. Section 1: Gill Avenue cycle path widening
5. Section 6: Improved Alresford Road/Ridgemount route to the station

Contact

G-BUG would welcome further discussion of the options. In the first instance, please contact

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