



Leicester Cycle Campaign Group response to the A426 Bus Corridor consultation.

Intro

Leicester Cycle Campaign Group campaigns for cycle facilities usable by all, not just confident adults. We campaign to make cycle facilities suitable for people who are physically able to ride but are intimidated off the roads by the presence of cars, trucks and buses. For evidence of the number of people who would cycle if they didn't have to share with motor traffic, look no further than the annual Sky Ride (16,000 people in 2012¹). With this in mind, the proposals for the A426 Bus corridor are rather disappointing.

Comments

The A426 Bus Corridor project is planning to spend nearly £5 million. This is a major project and a once in ten or twenty years opportunity.

Leicester's 3rd Local Transport Plan (LTP) has some comments on cycle provision (highlights in bold type).

From the Network Management Plan²

“3.1.1 Planning for people not cars

We want to make Leicester a city for people and families, rather than a city for cars.

Over the next 25 years we will use the planning system and investment to transform Leicester into a city of attractive buildings, leafy walkways, cycleways and pleasant, open spaces.

This will not only change the feel of the city but by getting people out of their cars, will create a friendlier, safer feeling and a healthier city.

We want to make it easy to get from any part of the city to any other part of the city without using a car. Pivotal to achieving this is making sure that, **when any plans are considered, pedestrians and cyclists are considered first.**

Creating walking and cycling networks

We will develop a network of safe routes for cycling and walking. This network will cover **journeys into and around the city centre from all major destinations**, between key places within the city and **along routes used by schoolchildren to get to school.** We will create **safe, dedicated cycleways – not just lines painted on the side of roads** – and encourage school children to walk or cycle to school. We will also improve cycle training for children and provide more safe places to lock bicycles.”

From the Air Quality Action Plan³

“The following Core Strategy (CS) policies are relevant to local transport planning, in the context of Local Air Quality Management:

...

CS POLICY 3. DESIGNING QUALITY PLACES

Encourage walking and cycling by designing layouts that prioritise safe, well connected pedestrian and cycle routes and restrict traffic speed”

Sadly, the Leicestershire LTP only commits to increase cycling levels, largely through soft measures such as travel planning and cycle maps / training.

In the light of the quotes from LTP3, the cycle provision offered by the Aylestone Bus Corridor doesn't even reach the level of “disappointing”. These proposals basically say “It's a city for cars but we're making it better for buses. Cyclists get to share the bus lanes”. The LTP speaks of “safe dedicated cycleways - not just lines painted on the side of roads”. That would be fantastic. Bus lanes and paint on roads are what's on offer.

To build segregated routes is not cheap or easy but to build them as part of another project is far cheaper than starting from scratch. If we are serious about increasing cycling uptake and opening up cycling up to children, elderly and non confident cyclists, we must build proper Dutch-style segregated bike routes.

With this in mind, we call on the councils to stand by Leicester's LTP (in particular) and invest in cycle facilities which will have a real impact in reducing car traffic and massively increase cycling along Aylestone Road.

What we would like to see

1. Ideally, we would like to see segregated facilities (particularly near schools, as suggested by Leicester's LTP) which do not require people on bikes to ride alongside buses and motor vehicles and would allow safe passage through junctions and past side roads. This would enable children to use main roads to cycle to school, and people who are not confident riding in traffic to travel without using cars. A reduction in car traffic on Aylestone Road will be of benefit to bus users as well as other motor traffic.
2. Continuous bike facilities, not ones that run for a while and stop when it gets difficult (eg junctions). Cycle facilities are like pieces of string - a collection of short pieces doesn't get you anywhere.
3. All major junctions engineered to protect cycle users from conflict with turning traffic (eg Soar Valley Way, Middleton St, Saffron Lane, Raw Dykes Rd.
4. Two way cycling allowed on Disraeli St. This would allow cyclists coming along Middleton St to cut out the busy Middleton St / Wigston Lane junction as well as a significant length of Aylestone Road. This would be beneficial to children travelling to Granby Primary School. These cyclists will also not be using Aylestone Road, making it clearer for buses.

What we like about the proposals

1. 24 hour bus lanes. Bus lanes aren't much use to cyclists when they are being used or parked in by motor vehicles.
2. Enforcement of the 24 hour bus lanes (information from consultation at Tigers Ground 2nd Oct 2012). See comment (1)
3. Reductions in speed limits from 40 to 30mph.

What we dislike about the proposals

1. The section from Walnut St towards the city past the Tigers ground. The plans show cycling inbound on the bus lane but no provision going out of town. Welford Rd is the only legal alternative - a poor quality bus lane where cyclists have to negotiate 4 lanes of traffic if they wish to continue on Aylestone Road or Saffron Lane.
2. Aylestone Road / Saffron Lane junction. Heading out of town through this junction the L lane splits so users can go L on Saffron Lane or straight on along Aylestone Road. Due to the lack of white lines where the lane splits, cyclists are often forced / expected to go L even if they would rather go straight on. If the straight ahead option was marked with

white lines all the way through the junction, this effect would be lessened.

3. Grace Rd / Park Hill Drive & Aylestone Road junction does not appear on the consultation documents. This junction is currently hazardous for cyclists because the wide junction layout and gentle radius allows vehicles turning right off Aylestone Rd onto Grace Rd to cut off the corner at speed. Cyclists coming down Grace Rd are visible very late and an accident here would be very serious due to the speed of incoming vehicles. Cyclists are also at risk from vehicles turning from Grace Rd into Park Hill Drive without turning onto Aylestone Road (as they should) because this illegal turn is often unexpected and earlier than a turn onto Aylestone Rd. Junction narrowing and some central bollards would alleviate these problems.
4. The success criteria of this scheme is very narrow - it appears to be "if the buses are less delayed it worked". This means that a scheme which is completely hostile to vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists) but which speeded buses up would be judged a success
5. No details of how cyclists would be protected on the busy junctions
6. A lot of the bus lanes (from Monsell Drive inbound) are proposed and subject to funding. Without these sections, even longer stretches of the road will have no separation for cyclists from motor traffic, limiting the number of people who will cycle on this route.

We hope you will give consideration to the above points and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these proposals further with you.

Submitted by M and A Scull of Knighton Lane, Aylestone on behalf of the Leicester Cycle Campaign Group. Contact: info@lccg.org.uk

References

1. <http://www.goskyride.com/News/ShowArticle/Leicester-celebrates-pedal-power-in-style?retURL=/News/Index/3>
2. <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=76741&type=full&servicetype=Attachment> LTP3 Network Management Plan 2011-2015 Page 9