

Horsham District Cycling Forum:

Initial Comments on Linden Homes Proposals for Novartis Site

This large development, along with other recent and forthcoming developments in the area, will significantly increase in traffic and congestion on the local roads making conditions more intimidating, unpleasant and hazardous for cycling.

- Novartis (Linden Homes) (160)
- Ringley Road (33 houses)
- Novartis (main site)
- Holbrook Club (60?)
- North Heath Lane (north end) (11)
- Littlehaven Lane (14)
- North of Horsham developments (2500)

There needs to be a significant improvement to the cycling infrastructure on the surrounding road network both to mitigate the effects of additional traffic from new development and to create modal shift by making cycling a safe, attractive and practical alternative to car use for the residents. This will reduce congestion and pollution for everyone and provide economic benefit because cyclists use local shops and businesses. Cycling benefits health and improves mobility for the young and those who cannot drive for financial or health reasons.

NPPF states that:

“The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.”

“[Developments should] give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements.”

“Decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up.”

This is backed up by local policy:

“[The Core Strategy favours] a rebalancing in favour of non-car modes as a means of access to services and facilities.”

“[Priority will be given to schemes that] enhance the facilities for pedestrians, including those with reduced mobility, and other users such as equestrians and cyclists.”

Policy CP19 of Horsham District Council’s Core Strategy

“[Development should be] integrated with the wider network of routes including public rights of way and cycle paths,[and it should give] priority to people with mobility difficulties, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.”

Policy DC40 of the Development Control Policies document

Strategic Policy for Horsham Town is to promote: *“high quality transport infrastructure which enables excellent pedestrian, cycling, bus and rail and vehicle accessibility for residents, visitors and business employees”*

HDPF Policy 5

And by Government guidance:

“We’ve got to, in future, ‘cycle proof’ all road developments.”

Patrick McLoughlin, Secretary of State for Transport

“Put simply, cycle-proofing is about ensuring that cycling is designed into all new roads and junctions. From this point forward the goal should be to make any new infrastructure safer for cyclists, more convenient and make it a more desirable thing to do.”

British Cycling

“[The DoT] expects local authorities to up their game in delivering infrastructure that takes cycling into account from the design stage.”

The Department for Transport

Provision for cycling in the Parsonage Rd area and from the development site to the town centre and local schools is already very poor. For example:

- Parsonage Rd itself, the surrounding roads and the roundabouts at North Heath Lane, Parsonage Way and King’s Rd are all CSNA Level 3 roads suitable only for skilled adult cyclists.
- The King’s Rd roundabout has a particularly poor safety record due to wide radius entry and exit points and high speeds on the roundabout.
- Wimbleshurst Rd is congested and narrow leading to dangerously close overtakes and making it impossible to filter safely past queuing traffic.
- Foundry Lane has poor visibility with bends and double parking coupled with a high proportion of large vehicles and reversing/turning movements.
- The North St railway bridge is congested, narrow and has a bend with poor visibility making it a risky place for inexperienced or unassertive cyclists who are too intimidated to protect themselves by ‘taking the lane’ and delaying the following traffic.
- The cycle lanes in Parsonage Rd and King’s Rd are extremely narrow, well below the recommended minimum in LTN2/08 –in fact they are narrower than the Bikeability recommended riding position away from the kerb. There is parking in the cycle lanes (especially at the eastern end of Parsonage Rd) that increases risk to cyclists as they swerve into the traffic.
- What cycle infrastructure there is gives up at the junctions which are the most dangerous points – 70% of all collisions to cyclists occur at junctions and, in the majority of cases, the motorist, not the cyclist is at fault.
- Along Redkiln Way there are substandard shared-use paths: they are narrow causing conflict with pedestrians; they have poor continuity where they join and leave the road and, once on the cycle path, cyclists need to give way at eight side roads increasing the conflict with motor vehicles and the risk of collisions.
- Cycle lanes are not maintained: the red surfaces and road markings have worn away; there is a nasty lateral ridge where the main running lane has been resurfaced, but the cycle lane has not. The cycle lanes are almost always covered in large amounts of debris and, in places, are overhung across their whole width by vegetation and brambles.

Improvements that should be considered include:

- **Segregated provision for busy distributor roads:**
 - High quality cycle track/s behind the trees on Parsonage Rd.
 - Convert shared-use paths on Redkiln Way to continuous segregated track with priority over side roads and removal of on-road parking to improve traffic flow and free up space for cycling.
 - ‘Continental’-style realignment of the roundabouts at Parsonage Rd/Foundry Lane, Foundry Lane/North St, Parsonage Rd/N Heath La, King’s Rd or junction signalisation
- **Safe routes to local schools:** Millais, Forest, Tanbridge, Holbrook, North Heath, Littlehaven, Kingslea, Collyer’s. School run traffic is the single biggest factor for congestion in Horsham. If children do not cycle, they are unlikely to cycle as adults. A link to Allcard Close will avoid the roundabout on the route to North Heath School. Improvement to the Booth Way-Depot Rd cycle path will help cycling to Millais and forest schools.
- **Safe routes to the station and town centre.** A Level 1 route can be developed along Richmond Rd and parallel to west of railway line to the station and/or to Hurst Ave or Hurst Court. This avoids busy roads including Foundry La, Wimbleshurst Rd and Hurst Rd and is quite direct. This route could link with both North St and Horsham Park (for example via Bowling Green Lane, the Fire Station passage or a new route, depending on redevelopment of Hurst Rd). This is compatible with the existing town plan.
- **Traffic reduction using filtered permeability.** Access-only restrictions with cycle exemptions on busy, narrow roads in the Wimbleshurst Rd / Richmond Rd area could encourage through-traffic to use the bypass or the B2195 Harwood Rd while making conditions more attractive to increase walking and cycling.
- **20mph zones** (currently encouraged and easier to implement with the introduction of relaxed regulations)
- The large size of this and other developments may provide an opportunity to improve connectivity across the railway line, for example: realignment of the North St railway bridge, a new road bridge across the railway from Searle’s Yard, a cycle/footbridge from the main Novartis site to Richmond Rd.

Within the development site itself:

- Really good permeability for cycling is recommended by ‘Manual for Streets’ and is a key factor in making cycling quick and convenient leading to people choosing to cycle rather than take the car. It also helps create a positive ‘overlooking’ of properties and a sense of community. We hope to see permeability both within the development and out to the surrounding area being given a high priority.
- A cycle link to Allcard Close is highly desirable; we understand that there may be a ‘ransom strip’ involved, but we would like to see negotiations to enable the link to be made. This is especially important to create a safe route to North Heath School avoiding the roundabout and narrow pavement at the southern end of North Heath Lane. A possible alternative may be a link to the nearby private driveway North Heath Lane or, even a link to one of the other minor roads.
- All pedestrian links should be of a sufficient width and designed for cycle use too.
- Motorcycle barriers should not be installed as they restrict access for cyclists and the disabled.

- Access roads to the properties should have low design speeds with smooth surfaces for comfortable cycling and, if any speed humps or tables are necessary, they should be designed with the safety and comfort of cyclists in mind.
- Cycle parking should be at least as convenient as car parking and not just be a couple of 'extra' feet at the back of a garage. Covered, over-looked, secure and conveniently-located external parking can benefit residents of houses with garages as well as flat-dwellers; it can double up as useful parking for mobility scooters and children's buggies.
- Internal access roads that are winding, illegible and slow are NOT a substitute for proper cycling provision along/alongside the key distributor roads

It is important that:

- A transport study thoroughly considers cycling and that cycle infrastructure is incorporated as an integral part of the design from the earliest stage
- Section 106 and CIL monies are allocated to cycle infrastructure in the immediate area and along the key routes (including to the town centre, schools and places of work) that will be used by the residents
- Design of the cycle infrastructure is carried out by persons with a high level of expertise and experience in this field because badly designed cycle infrastructure can waste money and can actually worsen conditions for cycling
- Provision is in line with current best practice including meeting or exceeding the standards of LTN 2/08, LTN 1/12 and Manual for Streets.

HDCF would like to work constructively with Linden Homes and the council to make the most of this opportunity to improve cycling infrastructure. The sooner the options for cycling infrastructure are considered, the more integrated, effective (and cheaper) the improvements will be.

We would like to be kept informed of your proposals as they develop and we will be very happy to meet you.

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 Horsham District Cycling Forum, 05 Jun 2014