

WEST SUSSEX CYCLE FORUM RESPONSE TO A259 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The West Sussex Cycle Forum (WSCF) believes that the approach taken in the design and evaluation of this scheme is part of a wider issue within West Sussex which is failing cycling and cyclists. The WSCF makes two key points:

- **Cycling should be part of the solution** to reducing the economic costs of congestion; to meeting targets to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality; and to promote healthier lifestyles. The work that WSCF doing with WSCC on a new Cycling and Walking Strategy shows a significant demand for better quality cycling infrastructure between Worthing and Littlehampton. However, this scheme continues a piecemeal approach to cycling infrastructure that will deliver very few of the potential benefits. The WSCF urges a rethink that plans and designs high quality cycle routes as joined-up networks.
- **Cycling safety must be addressed as a significant issue.** The distribution of accidents already has a hugely disproportionate impact on cyclists. This has been ignored in the accident assessment and the WSCF argues that this scheme risks making the impact on cyclists worse not better. This problem is county wide, and the WSCF urges a rethink on cycling safety based on the Vision Zero approach adopted in the draft road safety framework for West Sussex.

CYCLING AS PART OF THE SOLUTION

The scheme does not follow the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement that *“The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel”* and that developments should *“give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements.”*

The WSCF supports the submission made by Sustrans that highlights the omission from the Transport Business Case of any monetarised benefits that would be achieved by increasing the modal share of cycle trips: the economic benefits of reduced congestion; the environmental benefits of reducing carbon emissions; the health benefits of improved air quality and active lifestyles. This is not acceptable given that the average economic benefit-to-cost ratio of investing in cycling & walking schemes is 13:1.¹

The cycling infrastructure along the A259 has been developed piecemeal over a number of years. At no stage has it been conceived or designed as a coherent cycle route that connects people to important destinations. It is difficult to welcome the additional cycle paths when the resulting infrastructure:

- Consists of an ad hoc collection of shared use paths, pavement conversions and service roads.
- Provides no protection for cyclists at any of a series of busy roundabouts.
- Offers no cycling infrastructure at key points, in particular at Goring Crossways roundabout which is a critical component in WSCC’s proposed Worthing Cycle Network.

- Will require cyclists to give way to vehicles at 22 points in the space of 2 miles between Ferring and Rustington.
- Includes ‘Cyclists Dismount’ signs.
- Will continue to lose utility value as new developments add access points and more vehicle movements across cycle paths.

The WSCF commends the Department of Transport’s statement as part of the Government’s Ambition for Cycling, which “*expects local authorities to up their game in delivering infrastructure that takes cycling into account from the design stage*”.

The WSCF urges a rethink that seeks to maximise the opportunity to deliver cycle routes that is direct and safe; that connect existing infrastructure and have the potential to link to new developments; that generate new cycle trips and removes cyclists from the A259 carriageway. This is the approach taken on the A270 Lewes Road out of Brighton, where an average increase of cycle trips of 13% was recorded for the first five months of 2015 compared to 2009².

CYCLING SAFETY

The number of cyclists killed and seriously injured (KSI) on roads in West Sussex more than doubled in the five years 2010 to 2014.³ Between 2007 and 2014 there were 20 fatalities and serious injuries on the 3-mile stretch of the A259 between Goring Crossways and Station Road, Angmering⁴:

- 12 of those 20 (60%) were serious injuries to cyclists. This is a hugely disproportionate percentage; the more so because cycling levels will be suppressed on such a busy road.
- Six of the twelve serious injuries to cyclists occurred in the two most recent years, 2013 & 2014.
- Six of the twelve serious injuries to cyclists are recorded at roundabouts.

It is not acceptable that the documents presented as part of the consultation provide no analysis of cycling levels or cycling KSIs. On that count, the WSCF challenges the credibility of the claim made in the Transport Business Case of “£14.3m worth of safety benefits arising from a reduction in accidents and casualties”. The WSCF argues that the proposed designs are inherently dangerous for cyclists and risk increasing the number of cyclists killed and seriously injured:

- Levels of cycling are rising nationally and as more housing is developed in this area, it is to be expected that more cycle trips will be generated (even though the modal share does not increase).
- As argued above, the quality of the cycle route alongside the A259 will remain poor, so the number of cycle trips on the road will increase.
- There is no protection for cyclists at roundabouts and the closure of at grade crossings creates a pressure to use the roundabouts to cycle across the A259.

- Improved journey times by car implies increased speeds and longer stopping distances. The consequences of accidents involving cyclists will become more serious.

The WSCF strongly supports the adoption of Vision Zero in the draft road safety framework for West Sussex. The approach taken in the accident assessment in the Transport Business Case illustrates exactly why Vision Zero is needed. The comparison between costs and benefits is not acceptable, where a monetary value is placed on life and health, and then that value is used to decide how much money to spend on a road network towards the benefit of decreasing how much risk.

The WSCF urges a rethink on cycling safety based on the Vision Zero approach, in which safety is paramount. Life and health should take priority over mobility and other objectives of the road traffic system, and road traffic systems should be designed to take account of human fallibility and minimise both the opportunities for errors and the harm done when they occur.

REFERENCES

¹ Cycling and the Economy, CtC, May 2015

http://www.ctc.org.uk/sites/default/files/file_public/economy1frv.pdf

² Lewes Road Interim Post-Construction Monitoring Report, Brighton & Hove City Council, January 2016

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/Lewes%20Road%20Interim%20Monitoring%20Report%20-%20January%202016%20FINAL.pdf>

³ West Sussex County Council: Road Accidents and Casualty Data

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/road-accidents-and-casualty-data/>

Viewed 12-Feb-2016

⁴ Cyclestreets Collision Data Reports (STATS19)

<http://www.cyclestreets.net/collisions/>

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The **West Sussex Cycle Forum** is an umbrella organisation working on strategic issues for cycling in West Sussex. The Forum works towards the creation of conditions in West Sussex so that cycling is perceived as **a valid and reasonable choice of transport** for both utility and leisure purposes.