

The Rt Hon Francis Maude MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Horsham District Cycling Forum
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Dear Mr Maude,

In a recent WSCT column you rightly highlight Horsham's poor road safety record. However, the overall figures mask the disproportionate danger faced by people who are cycling¹.

The Inspector's suspension of the Horsham planning examination provides a short window of opportunity to save lives and your intervention could make the difference. The urgent problem is that, to get to and from the planned North Horsham development, people on bicycles will have to cross the A264 Horsham bypass. This road already carries around 45,000 vehicles per day (roughly one per second) and to accommodate the significant increase in traffic there will be 5 widened or completely new junctions - in addition to widened roundabouts within Horsham itself.

Cyclists and pedestrians, including children going to school, will have to walk across up to 13 lanes of traffic via 5 separate stages². Amazingly, the developers say these junctions will be "*more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists*" than using underpasses or bridges.

Despite some feel-good references to cycling, the transport studies for this planned development contain absolutely no analysis of what is needed to provide for people on bicycles or to mitigate the adverse effects that these road 'improvements' will have on cycle safety. The only cycle-specific measure is the possibility of a short stretch of cycle lane – but this will not happen at all unless the railway station goes ahead and, even then, not until after the first 700 houses have been built.

The Secretary of State for Transport has said that "*We've got to, in future, 'cycle proof' all road developments*" yet, despite clear legal requirements in the NPPF to give priority to cycling, we have reached an advanced stage of planning without any meaningful consideration of cycling at all. There is not even a plan to make use of an existing railway underpass -although simply building a cycle path to link this up with the road network would create one much-needed safe crossing point on the A264³.

This is not an issue of lack of funding: tens of millions of pounds will be spent on new roads. It is a question of failure to prioritise or even consider cycling as a valid means of transport.

Just a tiny fraction of this money could create first-class cycling infrastructure that genuinely gives people a choice of how to travel. Enabling more people to cycle will have a strong benefit/cost ratio to the whole of society by improving health, reducing congestion, improving access to work, education and leisure and supporting local shops and businesses.

We know that you will want to ensure that Horsham gets the cycling infrastructure it needs and we trust that we will be able to meet very soon to discuss what you can do to help.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Fletcher
HDCF

¹ See injury statistics overleaf

² See developer's plan overleaf

³ See pictures overleaf

Poor infrastructure makes Horsham cyclists extra vulnerable

Just last month a Horsham man, Michael Dixon, was riding a bicycle on Kerves Lane and was hit and killed by a car driver. The previous month Robert Worrall was cycling on the A24 just north of the constituency at Beare Green and was killed in a hit and run collision.

In the whole of the Horsham-Broadbridge Heath area between 2005 and 2013, people on bicycles accounted for only about **1% of the modal share, but they made up 21% of the total road injuries**. (Source: Cyclestreets Collision Map)

Within Horsham town itself, the Rusper Rd/King's Rd roundabout is on the direct cycle route from the North of Horsham development. It is an important junction where five of the town's 'cycle routes' meet and it will be widened to cope with the additional traffic. Even before any widening, it is already very hostile to cycling: from 2005-2013 **11 out of a total of 18 road traffic injuries were to people riding bikes** (Source: Cyclestreets Collision Map). There are no plans for any mitigation.

Despite popular belief, national police figures confirm that in the majority of collisions it is the motorist, not the cyclist who is at fault. This is especially true for large roundabouts. Hop Oast roundabout on the Horsham bypass is so dangerous that almost all cyclists avoid it and **cyclists only make up about 0.1% of the traffic, but in the last 5 years they have accounted for 33% of all the serious injuries. In every case it was the motorist who was found to be at fault.** (Source: PIA data 01/03/09-28/02/14)

Developer's proposed junction plan

The most direct route for cyclists and pedestrians crossing the A264 between Horsham and the centre of the new development will be via the Rusper Rd roundabout, shown below, yet this will require **4 or 5 separate crossings of up to 13 lanes of traffic**, potentially including one uncontrolled crossing. This junction will not just be dangerous: by prioritising cars, it will make walking and cycling slower and less convenient and will reduce the opportunity for sustainable travel. The other planned junctions are similarly hostile. These massive junctions need grade separation for non-motorised users.



Railway underpass

This is the railway underpass across the A264. It was identified as long ago as 2001 in a study funded by WSCC as providing a vital link in the Horsham-Crawley cycle route -yet it remains unused and WSCC has confirmed that it is not part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It just needs a cycle path linking it with the roads at either end to create a safe crossing point for the new development.

