



Creating a Cycling Culture in Wolverhampton



A Cycling Campaign affiliated to the CTC

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13th May, 2009

Dear Mr. Philpot,

Please find overleaf the consultation response from Wolves on Wheels Cycle Campaign on the draft Wolverhampton Road Safety Plan 2009 – 2012. This is a revised version of the 5 May submission.

Please note that any references to Pinchpoints are in relation to older schemes where WCC habitually created running lanes of between 3 and 4 metres that appeared enticing for motorists to attempt an ill-advised overtaking manoeuvre of a cyclist. This is covered e.g. in DfT Local Transport Notes 01/97 and 01/07. The City cycle forum has worked with WCC highway design to understand that running lanes of between 3.0 and 4.0 metres shall not be used in new design on plain stretches of road. It has been a thorny issue and its resolution is an important achievement.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'D Holman'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

David Holman

**CTC Right to Ride Representative, Wolverhampton
& on behalf of Wolves on Wheels Cycle Campaign**

WoWcc Consultation Response to Wolverhampton Road Safety Plan 2009 – 2012

General

The Campaign is happy to have this opportunity to comment on the draft Road Safety Plan.

The view on road safety from central government, DfT and the transport select committee is moving away from solely counting the bleak statistic of killed and seriously injured to one that includes the need to improve the quality of life. The present consultation from the DfT – A Safer Way – a consultation on making Britain's roads the safest in the world reflects this approach. The release of two other key documents from DfT need to be noted also. These are:-

- DfT Circular 01/2006 Setting local Speed Limits – the application of which enabled Portsmouth to become Britain's first 20 mph default speed limit city for less than £500,000.
- Local Transport Note 02/2008 Cycle Infrastructure Design is important for its endorsement of the Hierarchy of Provision [Table 1.2] which shows the order in which measures shall be made to encourage cycling and promote cycle safety.

Both of these have had ministerial endorsement. We would like to see these added to the documents mentioned in the introduction and the reference materials at the back.

The plan should also have a reference to [Cyclecraft](#) by John Franklin [pub. HMSO]. Cycle training and Bikeability are rightly celebrated as good achievements but the design of the highway needs to facilitate vehicular cycling such as that taught by WCC's own instructors. If people involved in delivery of the plan don't cycle they need to read this book. It shows how riding is best performed, demonstrates drivers' zones of surveillance and potentially counter-intuitive ideas like shared-use routes may be more dangerous than riding on the road.

Introduction

Suggest adding the fact that a road traffic incident is for people aged 2 -35 years the most common cause of death in the UK to lend extra gravity to the seriousness of the situation and the level of tragedy that road crashes bring.

Point out that DfT circular 01/2006 setting local speed limits represents a sea change in thinking and makes it easier for a bold local authority to set widespread 20 mph speed limits [not expensive zones] in pursuit of tackling speeding as unacceptable behaviour. A default 20 mph limit has recently been introduced to most of Portsmouth to achieve this end and reduce the fear of speeding in order that the inhabitants may lead better, more active lifestyles. 4 other major English cities are planning to follow Portsmouth's lead bringing *20's plenty* [and *life begins at 20*] to over 940,000 people. One of these, Oxford, is being converted next.

WoWcc wants to know when Wolverhampton, once a 20 mph pioneer, is going to add to this number?

WCC should refer to the aforementioned LTN02/2008 in order that the hierarchy of provision is enshrined in local road safety policy.

Our Targets – page 6

All WCC's targets are the killed and seriously injured variety. Theoretically you could lower the death toll and admissions to A&E by removing groups of people from perceived risk e.g. driving them to school in 4x4 cars and the vicious circle that that brings to the remaining vulnerable road users. DfT and , we suggest, Wolverhampton PCT are also very interested in **quality of life targets** which are much harder to measure.

WoWcc [with its Living Streets hat on] would like to see a commitment to surveying whether a scheme has improved people's levels of activity because of a reduction in real and perceived fear of danger from traffic. Traffic and, by extension, Road Safety affects public health. If WCC turns a street from a traffic corridor into a public open space which feels good to be in, then the inhabitants will walk, chat, rest, PLAY, jog, shop and maybe even cycle more than before. All are excellent outcomes for a scheme.

It is worth making reference to the excellent study entitled [*'Driven To Excess: Impacts of Motor Vehicle Traffic on Residential Quality of Life In Bristol, UK'*](#) by Joshua Hart April 2008 for the University of the West of England. This surveys the residents of three streets in Bristol with different levels of through traffic and evaluates their quality of life. At >10,000 vehicles per day, residents did not know their neighbours, their children were imprisoned in their homes and health was worse than on the lightly trafficked street.

Cycle counts are a measure of road safety that should form part of the targets. If roads are or feel safer, then cycle traffic will rise because there is a large, latent desire to cycle to work or school.

The 2011 Census may be a good opportunity to evaluate cycling progress. The 2001 Census had a travel survey which reported modal share by council ward. A good target is to compare the results of any 2011 census travel survey with its predecessor and see if there is a rise in cycling. 4% of journeys to work on average by bike would be a valid 2011 target.

Cyclists – Page 8

We wish to add the following observations in the light of the high number of youngsters now being taught proper vehicular cycling by WCC instructors that :-

- Roads need to be designed to promote the vehicular cycling techniques taught by Bikeability instructors. E.g. There's no point teaching riding in the secondary and primary positions if officers continue to sanction 975 mm gross width advisory cycle lanes. A rider's position varies according to the situation around them but a too narrow lane has a fixed width that alters a motorists zones of surveillance for the worse and makes cycling more difficult. WoWcc would like to see road design where LTN02/2008 and *Lancashire – a Cyclists' County* have been thoroughly consulted.

- Motor vehicle drivers need education that they are going to encounter Bikeability trained youngsters who are going to be riding assertively in at least the secondary riding position. WCC can expect adverse press coverage for this stance from the letters page of the Express and Star but we encourage the council to hold its nerve. Vehicular cycling is the only safe and legal form of riding that works.

There is good evidence to support the idea that **cycling gets safer the more people do it**. Yet despite this, many organisations are reluctant to encourage cycling for fear that this would increase the number of casualties on the roads. This approach fails to recognise the fact that cycling's health benefits greatly outweigh any risks involved – not to mention the benefits to the environment and people's quality of life.

The emphasis must now be on tackling the fears that prevent people from cycling more or not cycling at all. E.g. Most Wulfrunians, when questioned on cycling on the roads, say 'no chance – it's too dangerous'. This can be done by: improving driver behaviour, creating more welcoming and cycle-friendly streets and giving people the confidence to cycle more. This will be good not only for our health, but also for streets, communities and the environment.

Countries in Europe with high levels of cycle use tend to be less risky for cyclists. In Denmark, people cycle over 900 kilometres a year and it is a far safer country to cycle in than Portugal, where barely 30 km is covered by each person by bike annually. The CTC launched a campaign on 8 May 2009 called '[Cycling in Numbers](#)'.

Safer Roads page 9

WoWcc asks for a statement that **every effort will be made with new road layouts to avoid compromising cyclist safety through the introduction of features that make cycling more difficult and unpleasant**. It's no good solving an abysmal car overtaking problem if the solution scares away all the riders that you had on the route.

Improved Road Knowledge for Road users

Good section. More comment on the pages 17-19 and 21.

WoWcc would like to see a cyclists and buses leaflet, such as those produced in Oxford and Warrington, where riders and bus drivers have shared their concerns and issues to promote mutual understanding of good road behaviour.

Understanding the cause of collisions

WoWcc would like to see the council encouraging WM Police to take seriously every report of a collision involving a cyclist. The all too true comments in the draft plan about the number of unreported accidents stem from the woeful attitude of duty police officers on front desks to cyclist casualties. Some of our members have had personal experience of this over the years.

Local Safety Schemes page 11

Wolves on Wheels continues to work closely with the WCC Highways on local safety schemes through the Infrastructure sub-group meeting of the forum.

In respect of scheme monitoring we think it is a good idea to conduct cycle counts before and after a scheme is commissioned. Also a survey of rider attitudes to the road layout and issues on the streets concerned will have value. Monitoring casualties is important and necessary to evaluate cost benefit. However WoWcc says it is also important to know if the number of riders has gone up or down or has everyone switched to riding on the footway illegally as the least worst route? These may be a set of unpalatable truths but scaring away cyclists is not a great outcome for any scheme. I.e. a statement is needed about monitoring vulnerable road user responses to a new local safety scheme.

Page 12 Dudley Road scheme

In my role as a CTC Right to Ride representative I had a report from a CTC member that he'd been squeezed against the guard railing [pictured top right] whilst cycling by a Travel West Midlands bus and had sustained injuries because there was no escape route. The member did not choose to pursue the complaint further. I wonder if such an outcome had been considered in the design?

p13 refers to the "Castlecroft Road/Oak Road and Finchfield Lane" junction. On the road name plates and in the A-Z this Oak Hill.

20 MPH Zones page 14

This section is a HUGE DISAPPOINTMENT. Where is the trumpet fanfare or written equivalent for the **City Centre 20mph zone** and the casualty reduction figures resulting from implementing the UK's first 20mph city centre? Nowhere. Is WCC ashamed of one of its best achievements? Apparently so.

This plan has considerable casualty reduction ambitions. The experience of Kinston upon Hull shows that 20 mph zones are the way to achieve enormous reductions in casualties. But the DFT Circular 01/2006 allows WCC to set up wide areas of 20mph limits with just signs. Where is the explanation for the difference between speed zones and speed limits and the new powers you as a highway authority have over setting local speed limits?

Cycling groups – that'll be us and the Forum – support 20 mph speed limits rather than zones. Cyclists don't like humps and bumps either which are uncomfortable and can cause falls especially as WCC does not use sinusoidal form humps. 20 mph zones are better than 30 mph streets but they're so expensive that the council cannot satisfy the demand for residents for traffic calming in Wolverhampton. Witness the trial of Thermoplastic humps ["Thumps"] as a means of lowering costs to satisfy demand in the borough.

Wolves on Wheels is very vocal about a **default 20 mph speed limit for the whole borough** where arterial routes including the 10 'A' Roads radiating from the Ring Road, the A4039 and 'A' roads in Bilston and Wednesfield have their speed limits

‘raised’ to 30 or 40 mph. Residential roads including whole districts around schools will be islands of calm. Every driver will be within 3 - 5 minutes drive of a ‘normal’ 30 mph road. It’s easy for motorists to understand and equitable because there’s a fair chance that the majority of local road users will be benefitting from the lower speeds on the street where they live. So, in turn, they can understand the feelings of the people on whose street they are driving. Compliance is therefore more likely.

Default 20 mph speed limits are in place or planned for the whole of the following English cities:-

City	Population
Portsmouth	197,700
Oxford	151,000
Norwich	132,200
Leicester	292,000
Newcastle upon Tyne	189,000

The London borough of Islington [population 175,000] is going 20mph default and it is being trialled in whole districts of York and Warrington.

The Portsmouth scheme is complete. It cost less than £500,000 to convert the whole city to a default 20 mph with just signs and road markings 200 streets at a time on each Traffic Regulation order. The main motivation was to change the public attitude to speeding, remove fear and promote safety and levels of activity amongst vulnerable road users. Casualty reduction is a likely secondary benefit. Streets were changed after a speed survey satisfied DfT requirements that the average speed was 24mph or less. Arterial routes were changed to 30 mph though one where a particular tragedy occurred was reduced to 20 mph after public pressure. Streets that were too short for speeds in excess of 24 mph were left unchanged. Average speed reduction is already 3 mph. Scheme initiated by officers and completed with full support from the public and press. The police have agreed to enforce the 20 mph limits.

Wolverhampton should be doing this too. How bad do the public health issues, noise and pollution have to get before change happens? **The plan is set up to continue unsustainable car dependency as written.** It must change before it is published. People first please.

WoWcc ask for a plan to appear in the policy showing how the borough is going to convert to 20mph default limit in support of the casualty reduction, vulnerable road user support and public health targets for Wolverhampton.

Some further points raised in correspondence between David Holman and Tim Philpot are in Appendix 1

Safer Crossing Places

Support for WCC broad policy here. Please note that a Zebra crossing is always better than a pedestrian refuge in the opinion of cyclists and of Living Streets, especially as no pinchpoints are created. There is a recent TRL report that shows Zebra crossings work satisfactorily as cycle crossings – a manoeuvre that is at present illegal though a zebra crossing appears on Evans Street as part of NCN81.

Facilities for Cyclists

Agree strongly with the first statement and the role played by the cycling forum.

Many safety schemes have created dangerous pinchpoints that discourage cyclists in the past. This is a lesson that local highway engineers are taking on board.

Cycle lanes are mentioned as a positive thing here. Wolverhampton's default advisory cycle lane width is a miserable 1 metre wide and is therefore sub-standard and unhelpful to cyclists. See earlier comment under Cyclist page 8 and read *Cyclecraft* by John Franklin. The dynamic envelope for a rider on a standard solo bicycle is 1 metre wide [see [Lancashire – a Cyclists' County](#)] so a one metre wide lane including the drainage gully has our rider confined with cars driving to the line past their right elbow. You cannot fit a tricycle or a child trailer in such a lane. Our members have received verbal abuse from the public for even daring to ride wide cycles in your narrow lanes! The UK minimum width for a lane is 1.5m and the recommended is 2.0metres. A commitment to proper width advisory lanes in the plan would be welcome. Bus lanes and wide nearside traffic running lanes are preferable. Advisory lanes are good for marking out an uphill climbing lane and on contraflow and link routes. WoWcc rarely ever recommends them because they're always too narrow in this borough. This is in contrast with non-cyclists, councillors and people who don't ride a great deal but say that more cycle lanes would encourage them. The council has a government measure of performance for cycle lane kilometres created. Please let us use this sensibly.

In the light of what we've said about cycle facilities, we're looking for a WCC commitment that any new ones will make matters better for riders and **improve cycling convenience** such as routes that link blocks of quieter streets. The plan should announce the programme of local, signed cycle routes that John Fairchild and the city cycle forum are developing that will achieve just this aim.

Please alter all the bus lane signs to reflect the legal orders that are in force and show cycling is permitted. WoWcc has been shown the list of TRO's for bus lanes and all permit cycling except some of the bus showcase lanes.

We would like the plan to give a lead on cycling and street running tramways. The A41 tramway section is neither very safe for cycling nor pleasant to ride on and features an acute angle crossing of the rails on the shared use section near the New Inn. The majority of the remaining cyclists using the route can be seen riding on the footway. Mr Fairchild is considering what changes to make here as well as the design of the Wolverhampton – East Park – Bilston signed cycle route to avoid the slippery rails and difficult conditions. More street running tramways are possible if the city centre Metro extension is advanced during the life of this plan. Sharp tram rail curves at Bilston Street and Lichfield Street junction will make cycling very dangerous on wet slippery rails. Dew forms most mornings on cold rails. It's almost a case of where will you site the first aid posts? It is important to plan for this contingency by allowing off-peak cycling along Dudley Street as agreed in the city cycle forum during 2008 but not carried out. Fortunately the Transport Interchange has these issues already considered in the design and cycle/tram crossings are all at 90° .

Potholes – the plan should have a policy for mending potholes as quickly as they are found and for monitoring potholes reported on www.fillthathole.org.uk/ . Wolverhampton is listed on this website at 177th out of 206 authorities in the league table of repairs completed. A top ten position is best. This will improve cyclist and motorcyclist safety and save the council money compared to litigation costs.

Speed Management

We would like to see the effects of speed, including 30 and 35 mph, on casualties tabulated for clarity. The reader needs to see how quickly the risk of death rises with increasing speeds. Every opportunity to outline the link between speeding, fear and reduction in quality of life should be taken – not just in this section.

Mention that average speed cameras e.g. for a 20 mph limit area enforcement are now permissible.

Speed Activated Warning Signs

Very good. More permanent sign sites especially to discourage speeding by buses approaching the bus terminals. Use to collect speed data for 20 mph limits to satisfy DfT criteria.

Cyclists

Strong support for cyclist training programme. We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to train the parents of the school pupils in vehicular cycling. Parents and guardians make the decisions on the safety of minors and as non-cyclists they're going to prevent their young charges from making a local journey by bike based on their motorist perception. By way of contrast, the children of WoWcc members frequently complete supervised rides on the roads across the borough on their own bikes.

WoWcc would also like to see cycle training used as an alternative to fixed penalty notices issued by police for inconsiderate cycling on footways and red light jumping. Any fixed penalty notice for riding without lights should be redeemable against proof of purchase of cycle lighting as done in Oxford and York.

Drivers

Additionally drivers need to be educated about Bikeability cycling practices. We would like to see a programme on dreadful overtaking practices to prevent terrifying passing of cyclists too close or in a pinchpoint. Two vehicles driving abreast on a dual carriageway towards a cyclist also leads to peril and unpleasantness.

Young drivers

Strong support for the fire service involvement here. Cycle training for driving offenders please. Improvement training should include driving near cyclists and considerate overtaking.

School travel plans and Safer Routes to School

Strong support for school travel plans. WoWcc would prefer to see safer areas around schools. 20 mph solely outside the school moves the collision danger for school pupils to somewhere nearer their home. It would be far better to have a 20mph district around the school. Then all the routes would be safer. It works very well in *tempo 30* (km/hr) zones in Germany, Denmark, Netherlands etc

School Crossing Patrols

Comment here that the hazards facing your employees are very real e.g. the patrol on Bushbury Lane was in considerable peril for speeding cars.

The Cycling Forum

Please mention that the forum has a consultative role in relation to local safety schemes and cycling route development. It also gets involved in projects like the Wolverhampton Cycle Map.

Conclusion

Wolves on Wheels believes that Wolverhampton should have a road safety plan that not only proposes reductions in serious casualties but tackles quality of life improvements for residents. This in turn promotes more active lifestyles and a reduction in the fear of speeding traffic. City Cycle Forum members recall the presentation by Dr Massey on the poor state of public health in the borough and we want to do something about the issues raised.

We would like the plan to map out the path the borough should take to becoming a 20 mph default limit city. This may be in stages with an initial trial like those underway in Warrington or York or it may be whole borough with excellent community, press and police support such as in Portsmouth and Oxford.

We hope that our response in relation to the road safety issues facing cyclists and their presence or absence as an indicator of route safety and convenience will broaden the approach that the plan takes. Our group has huge first hand experience of utility cycling on which to draw, both here in Wolverhampton and further afield including in the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, that informs our viewpoints.

The Campaign hopes that this has been helpful and wishes to record its appreciation of the efforts made by WCC officers in relation to the activities of the City Cycle Forum.

Appendix 1 Casualty reduction in 20 mph areas

from **David Holman** <davidholman8183@**.com>
to Tim Philpot <Tim.Philpot@wolverhampton.gov.uk>
date 7 May 2009 11:05
Hello Tim

Some further thought occurred to me since submitting our draft consultation response. There's more background in our 2005 presentation to the [WCC scrutiny panel into cycling](#). See WoWcc website document archive for a copy. During my presentation I reported that "The Transport Research Laboratory has shown that when traffic is slowed to 20 miles per hour there is a 70% reduction in accidents to child pedestrians. Kingston upon Hull has shown that 20 miles per hour zones have reduced the crashes with deaths or serious injuries by 90% and child pedestrian casualties by 74%. (Hull City Council)".

I was in correspondence with Rod King of [20's Plenty for Us](#) and trying to find more on casualty reduction figures. Rod wrote :-

"It is recognised in Road Transport that a 1 mph reduction in average vehicle speed results in a 5% reduction in accident frequency (Finch et al 1999) This is referenced in about every government doc on speed limits including DfT Circular 01/2006 para. 17 and also the latest DfT consultation para. 2.23. I know of no traffic engineer disputing this.

In Portsmouth they have found that average motor vehicle speeds have dropped by 3 mph. Hence on face value this represents excellent value and return. The Portsmouth scheme has only been going for a year and therefore any statistics on speed or accidents are over a small timescale.

However the 3 mph is consistent with the Mackay findings of 1998 when they found a 2 mph reduction with signage alone. Take into account the community wide commitment developed by Portsmouth doing this as whole authority with lots of advertising, consultation, etc then you would expect to get more than just signage."

Is Wolverhampton a "Can do" or a "make do" authority? Are you as officers explaining "why we can't" or finding out "how we can"? The councillors need reminding that communities want lower speeds - see waiting lists of streets for traffic calming that WCC cannot afford all at once due to the high cost of engineering measures.

I'm sorry that 20mph limits are really boring for traffic engineers - paint and a few signs. But it could be the best value solution for the borough and the Director of Public Health will be pleased too. I'd gladly swap a few proposed Toucans and road humps for a safer borough - wouldn't you?

See you soon

David Holman