Response to plans for Cheetham Hill cycleway and Wilmslow Road cycleway 2nd January 2015

Introduction

The Love Your Bike campaign is based in Greater Manchester. We aim to promote cycling and to help make it an attractive, accessible and fun way to get around. Cycling is far more than a leisure activity: it is the low-carbon transport of the future. Co-ordinated by Manchester Friends of the Earth, we aim to work closely with other like-minded organisations.[1]

Love Your Bike actively supported and helped campaign for the Greater Manchester Cycling City Ambition Grant (CCAG) bid proposals as outlined in the Velocity 2025 document:

> "Our partners in this bid include cycling organisations like British Cycling, Sustrans and the CTC; **our NGO-led cycling campaign Love Your Bike is also on board**"

Having helped to convince Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) that the proposed Oxford Road Bus Priority Route had to include segregated cycle provision we supported the inclusion of similar cycling infrastructure in the Velocity 2025 bid.

The bid document outlined how the national CCAG (and subsequent) funding would enable Greater Manchester to "Deliver 56km of largely segregated cycle route across Greater Manchester" (p7) and that "Our Hub & Spokes model is based on a network of more continuous cycle highways that are segregated whenever possible" (p9). [2]

This commitment was also highlighted in the successful CCAG Business Case presented to the Department for Transport, which outlined how the bid would deliver "a network of high quality, newly built or enhanced cycling routes that will be segregated from other traffic, wherever possible and which will connect employment centres, schools and training opportunities with each other and with the regional centre." [3]

Given our on-going commitment to the ambitions of Velocity 2025, we feel that the current plans do no deliver against them. In this response we set out why we believe this to be the case and provide suggestions for the routes, at both detailed design and strategic levels.

2. Key design criteria: The Cycle Route Audit Tool.

Love Your Bike believes that most people would like to cycle more often, but just like the majority of people identified as “Interested, but Concerned” in the Portland research, they want safe and comfortable cycling routes before they will cycle regularly or allow their children to cycle.

> **“Riding a bicycle should not require bravery. Yet, all too often, that is the perception among cyclists and non-cyclists alike. No person should have to be "brave" to ride a bicycle; unfortunately, this is a sentiment commonly expressed to those who regularly ride bicycles by those who do not.” [4]**

We have recently updated our manifesto “Getting moving: a cycling manifesto for Greater Manchester” which has the support of national cycling organisations including British Cycling, CTC and Sustrans as well as a growing range of local businesses and agencies.[5]

The manifesto contains five headline themes and 25 actions which we believe are required to help Greater Manchester become a cycling city and reach our goal of 20% of journeys under 5 miles being made by bike by 2020.[6]

The manifesto also outlines six key design principles which need to underpin all route planning and designs, namely that cycle routes need to be: Safe, Coherent, Direct, Comfortable, Attractive and Future-proof.

Designing our cycle routes to meet these criteria will be essential to ensuring that our routes meet the simple test outlined below:

"A bicycle way that is not safe for a 8-year old [or 80 year old] is not a bicycle way." Enrique Penalosa, Mayor of Bogota [our addition]

The criteria "for successful and effective cycling infrastructure" adopted in the TfGM Greater Manchester Cycle Design Guidance reflect the same key criteria, namely: safety, coherence, directness, attractiveness and comfort.[7]

The TfGM guidance also highlights the criteria for coherence which states: "the cycle route must be easy to find and intuitive to navigate; be consistent in quality; and offer route continuity and completeness" and also that **"it is not acceptable to leave gaps in cycle route provision"** (Page 1, our emphasis).

As part of our research for this consultation response we recognised that we needed a framework to evaluate the routes and have made use of the **Cycle Route Audit Tool developed for the Wales Active Travel Act**.[8] This tool has been developed to assist local authorities in the auditing of routes and can be used for both existing and proposed routes. Whilst it is possible to look to northern European countries for exemplary cycle design, this Welsh tool has been selected because it is designed to operate within the same regulatory context that applies to Greater Manchester.

This Audit Tool uses the same 5 key criteria or requirements (with a range of indicators): Cohesion (3 indicators), Directness (5 indicators), Safety (8 indicators), Comfort (4 indicators) and Attractiveness (5 indicators).

The route is scored against each of the factors using the following scale:

0 for poor provision;

1 for provision which is adequate but should be improved if possible;

2 for good quality provision.

Any route which scores less than 35 points (out of a potential 50) would require further development before it is deemed acceptable.

Additionally, some of the criteria have been given a 'critical' rating. Routes which fail to pass any of the critical factors are deemed to require further development

Recommendation: We would urge Manchester City Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to use the Cycle Route Audit Tool developed for Wales Active Travel to assess all cycling routes being developed across Greater Manchester.

Love Your Bike would be willing to assist in scoring the proposed and future routes.

3) Strategy, policy and process concerns.

Over the last 12-18 months Love Your Bike members have attended a series of presentations outlining the various Velocity 2025 designs. On 30th August this year, we wrote to Manchester City Council councillors, officers and TfGM to raise our concerns regarding the proposed designs.

During the consultation periods we have walked/cycled all of the proposed routes and our detailed concerns and issues regarding the proposed Wilmslow Road Cycleway and Cheetham Hill routes are outlined in section 4 below.

However, we would like to raise more strategic points in relation to the Velocity 2025 design and implementation process.

3a) Taking the time to get the best possible schemes.

The very short time period given by the Department for Transport (DfT) for the Cycling City Ambition Grant (CCAG) funding bids provided little time for detailed design of the routes included in the Velocity 2025 application.

The initial deadline delivering for the Velocity 2025 routes was March 2015. This appeared to be because the current Government wanted to have all the schemes finished in time for the May 2015 General Election.

We understand that numerous challenges raised by meeting the March 2015 deadline has resulted in the DfT shifting the delivery deadline to September 2015.

In this case, the DfT have already accepted that the schemes will not be delivered until after the General Election and that the funding can be carried over to the 2015/16 financial year.

Love Your Bike are concerned that the desire to meet a September 2015 deadline is driving a process that results in the adoption of sub-optimal designs.

We would urge Manchester City Council and Transport for Greater Manchester take the time to develop the best possible designs that can be implemented.

Recommendation: MCC/TfGM negotiate with DfT to allow additional design/implementation time. Love Your Bike would be happy to publicly support this request to DfT if this is considered to be beneficial.

3b) Delivering less, better.

All of the proposed Velocity routes seem to be 'stretching too far'. We do not understand the rationale behind some elements of the proposed routes. We would prefer to see route designs that 'deliver less, better'.

Put bluntly, we do not accept that the Cheetham Hill proposals meet any of the ambitions outlined in the Velocity bid.

In particular, it does not meet the ambition that "Our Hub & Spokes model is based on a network of more continuous cycle highways that are segregated whenever possible". [9]

We would argue that the proposed cycling provision is not continuous and certainly is not "segregated whenever possible" as the proposal contains no provision for protected facilities.

The Cheetham Hill proposal does little to address the currently poor cycling infrastructure on this route. We would therefore suggest that it does not merit consideration for Velocity funding.

3c) One-off intervention or rolling programme?

We fully understand that change takes time and that not all desirable design elements on the proposed cycle routes can be achieved at the same time.

The Velocity 2025 bid document states that "beyond the two-year government grant, TfGM and the district councils are committed to continuing to deliver the Vélocity 2025 strategy by rolling out further investment in cycling across Greater Manchester over the following decade."[10]

However, our concern is that we have not yet seen any policy or process commitment that acknowledges that it may (will) be necessary to return to these schemes to re-assess and if necessary to modify the design of the cycle routes.

A pertinent example of why this is a necessary element of any cycling network delivery programme is the Chester Road/Deansgate Roundabout. Installed at least 20 years ago, there has – to the best of our knowledge – been no additional modifications made since the initial installation. This is despite clearly identified problems with access / exit to the cycle route.

Where certain schemes have major challenges that cannot be met during the initial design and delivery stages we believe that most people would be prepared to accept

the proposed designs if they can see a commitment and timetable for dealing with the challenge.

Without such a policy and funding commitment we are concerned that key problems we identify during the Velocity consultations will remain in place for decades to come. This is not acceptable.

4) Love Your Bike concerns with the current Velocity 2025 designs

In the following sections, we use the aforementioned Cycle Route Audit Tool to assess parts of the Velocity plans. We include comments and concerns based on our analysis of the plans and visits to the sites of the proposed works. This provides an example of how the Cycle Route Audit Tool can be used by planners in Greater Manchester to assess the routes.

4a) Cheetham Hill Road.

The consultation website states that: "We would create new cycle lanes on the approach to Queens Road junction, and a traffic-light by-pass for cyclists going north past Manchester Fort. At New Bridge Street we intend to change the traffic island to create southbound cycle lanes and a shared cycleway-footpath over the railway to Corporation Street."[11]

The specific designs are outlined as including work at two locations:

Elizabeth Street to Queens Road junction: near Manchester Fort down to New Bridge Street near Victoria would be resurfaced and cyclist markings provided. We aim to make the junction at Elizabeth Street safer for cyclists by creating extended advanced stop lines. There would also be new cycle lanes on the approach to Queens Road junction, and a traffic-light bypass for cyclists going north past Manchester Fort. See technical drawings of the proposals.

and

Cheetham Hill Road New bridge Street junction: At New Bridge Street we intend to change the traffic island to create southbound cycle lanes and a shared cycleway-footpath over the railway to Corporation Street. See technical drawings of the proposals.[12]

The drawings available for this proposal were not numbered and did not provide scale information.[13] The following subsections comment on specific elements of these designs.

4a1) Cheetham Hill southbound from Queens Road junction.

The proposed Velocity route contains no suggested substantive changes to the existing cycle route travelling south on Cheetham Hill from the Queens Road junction. The 'Detail 1' diagram suggests that the existing 'green paint' approaching the turn off to Manchester Fort Shopping Park will be refreshed.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor "Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway". This is based on the design principle that "Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions".

The Critical category for this factor (defined in the Tool as routes that fail to pass any of the critical factors require further development and should not be included on Existing or Integrated Network maps) is defined as >1000 vehicles per peak hour and between 2-5% HGV traffic. We could not locate specific traffic data for the southbound Cheetham Hill route. However, according to Highways Forecasting and Analytical Services data from 2008, for the Cheetham Hill Road section approaching the Queens Road junction, the PM evening Peak Hour total PCUs was 1591.[14]

If the southbound data is of a similar magnitude then this would place it within the Cycle Route Audit Tool "Critical" category indicating a "fail".

As the photographs below illustrate – the existing white/green paint provides no separation between cycles and motorised traffic. The current 'advisory' design requires motorised traffic to drive across the 'cycle lane' to access the Manchester Fort access road.

'Cycle lane' sandwiched between No.135 'bendy buses' and motorised traffic.

Encouraging traffic to drive over cycle lanes.

People new to cycling will be expected to cross between buses pulling into and out of the bus stop to the left, negotiate vehicles driving across the “cycle lane” to turn left into Manchester Fort and with motorised traffic merging from Queens Road.

We do not believe that the proposed cycling facilities will enable more people to cycle with confidence on this route.

4a2) Cycle lane southbound to North Street and extended advanced stop line (B on Detail 1 diagram)

The Detail 1 diagram indicates that the existing cycle lane on the Cheetham Hill southbound carriageway will be refreshed between the Manchester Fort junction and North Street.

Existing cycle lane on Cheetham Hill Road southbound

Currently only 1.4 metres wide.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor “Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway”. This is based on the design principle that “Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions”.

The Red category (a score of zero) is defined as 500-1000 vehicles per peak hour and between 2-5% HGV traffic. The traffic volume for this section of Cheetham Hill Road is likely to place it within the Red category which would score zero on the Cycle Route Audit Tool.

The existing advisory cycle lane is currently 1.4 metres wide. See photographs above. The TfGM Cycle Design Guidance states that the 'Desirable Minimum for Mandatory or Advisory Cycle lanes' is 1.75 metres and that the 'Absolute Minimum' is 1.5 metres. The guidance further notes that the "Absolute minimum width of 1.5m does not generally provide sufficient effective width for cyclists to overtake or to cycle side – by - side within the confines of the cycle track or cycle lane."[15]

The proposal indicates that an "extended advanced stop line" will be introduced beyond the traffic light at this location. We understand the rationale behind this measure but would note that from such an 'advanced' position it is currently not possible to see when the traffic lights change and so any advantage gained from being in advance of the traffic would be lost.

We also wish to highlight that the current proposals do not deal with the potential conflict between cycles and motorised traffic introduced by the pavement 'build out' on the southside of the North Street junction. See photographs below.

Pavement 'buildout' southbound view

Pavement 'buildout' northbound view

Potential conflict introduced by pavement ‘buildout’

Not much space.

Refreshing the green paint of the advisory cycle lane and introducing an extended advanced stop line does little to reduce the potential conflict designed into this junction.

4a3) Cheetham Hill Road between North Street to just before New Bridge Street junction.

We note that the Cheetham Hill Cycleway proposal contains no cycling provision on either the southbound or northbound sections from North Street to just before New Bridge Street. For example at Broughton Street or Lord Street. We note that there is currently not even any ‘advisory’ cycle lane provision on this section.

There are however, a coach stand and a bus stop on Cheetham Hill Road (southbound) after Lord Street which, when in use, reduce the southbound carriageway to one lane requiring anyone cycling to pull out into a busy motorised traffic stream. See photographs below.

Coach Stand on Cheetham Hill Road – after Lord Street (southbound)

Bus stop on Cheetham Hill Road – after Lord Street (southbound)

4a4) Cheetham Hill Road / New Bridge Street junction.

The proposed route at the Cheetham Hill Road / New Bridge Street junction indicates that the advanced stop line (ASL) boxes will be refreshed and that feeder cycle lanes will be extended or introduced (See Detail 2 Diagram).

The diagram does not provide scale or measurements so it is not possible to see if this includes any reallocation of roadspace for cycles. However, this does not appear to be the case.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor “Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway”. This is based on the design principle that “Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions”.

The Critical category (routes that fail to pass any of the critical factors require further development and should not be included on Existing or Integrated Network maps) is defined as >1000 vehicles per peak hour and between 2-5% HGV traffic.

According to Highways Forecasting and Analytical Services data from 2012, the Mon-Fri peak time average vehicle flows for Cheetham Hill Road between Corporation Street and New Bridge Street (North west bound) wass greater than 1000 PCUs throughout the day with the highest number of vehicles (1748) at 5pm.[16]

We believe that the current junction design "fails" on this Critical category.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category also includes the "Risk of Collision" factor. The Indicator is described as "Segregation to reduce risk of collision alongside or from behind."

The scoring categories for this factor are described as:

> Critical: Cyclists sharing carriageway – nearside lane in critical range between 3.2m and 3.9 wide and traffic volumes prevent motor vehicles moving easily into opposite lane to pass cyclists.
>
> Red (0): Cyclists in unrestricted traffic lanes outside critical range (3.2m to 3.9m) or in cycle lanes less than 1.8m wide
>
> Amber (1): Cyclists in cycle lane s at least 1.8m wide on carriageway; 85th percentile motor traffic max 30mph.
>
> Green (2) Cyclists on route away from motor traffic (off road provision) or in off-carriageway cycle track. Cyclists in hybrid/light segregated track; 85th percentile motor traffic speed max 30mph.

The photographs below show the lack of space on the southbound carriageway on Cheetham Hill Road at this location. The space between the motorised traffic and the kerb at the traffic lights (left hand photo) was 65cm. It is unclear from the Detail 2 Diagram how the roadspace will be reallocated to introduce a 1.5 metre cycle lane on both sides of this junction.

We believe that the current junction design "fails" to meet the Cycle Route Audit Tool "Segregation to reduce risk of collision alongside or from behind" category.

Once across the junction, the width of the current advisory cycle lane is 1.2 metres.

Cheetham Hill Road (southbound) space for a cycle lane?

Current cycle lane width = 1.2 metres.

The TfGM Cycle Design Guidance states that the 'Desirable Minimum for Mandatory or Advisory Cycle lanes' is 1.75 metres and that the 'Absolute Minimum' is 1.5 metres. The guidance further notes that the "Absolute minimum width of 1.5m does not generally provide sufficient effective width for cyclists to overtake or to cycle side – by - side within the confines of the cycle track or cycle lane."[17]

4a5) Shared pathway from New Bridge Street junction to Corporation Street (south and northbound)

Travelling southbound on Cheetham Hill Road towards Corporation Street the proposed route suggests that people should cycle on the shared pathway, which is 1.85 metres wide. (See photographs below).

The TfGM Cycle Design guidance states that the absolute minimum for an unsegregated shared footway/cycleway is 2.5 metres.[18]

In addition, the Disability Discrimination Act guidance states that:

> "A clear width of 2000mm [2metres] allows two wheelchairs to pass one another comfortably. This should be regarded as the minimum under normal circumstances".[19]

The guidance does acknowledge that 1.5m or in very unusual circumstances that 1m may be acceptable.

We were unable to locate pedestrian count data for this section of shared footway/cycleway – however observations would suggest that this is a very busy pedestrian route during walk to work peak times – and likely to increase with the construction of additional residential housing in the locality.

Shared pathway – southbound.
Minimum width = 1.85 metres

Shared pathway – northbound.

Multiple signposts.

Minimum width = 1.3 metres.

The current design of shared footway/cycleway does not meet TfGM Cycle Design guidance.

Also, we do not believe that the design of this route can be considered to be a case of “unusual circumstances” – such poor shared footway/cycleway unfortunately appears to be the norm and could be argued to breach the Equality Act (Disabled Discrimination Act) requirements.

4a6) Pedestrian and Toucan crossings to access Corporation Street

From the shared footway/cycleway at the end of Cheetham Hill Road there are four crossings to negotiate to access Corporation Street. The first crossing does not appear to be a Toucan crossing so technically people could be required to dismount from their bicycles to cross.

In total it took over 3 minutes to ‘legally’ cross all four crossings to gain access to Corporation Street.

Pedestrian crossing only?

4 crossings to get from Cheetham Hill shared footway/cycleway to Corporation Street.

4a7) Rejoing the carriageway on Cheetham Hill Road (northbound) just before New Bridge Street junction.

For those people wishing to cycle in a northbound direction on the shared footway/cycleway the Detail 2 diagram (see below) indicates that people will be expected to rejoin the carriageway just before the New Bridge Street junction.

This appears to be a very poor design. People wishing to cycle northbound up Cheetham Hill Road will be required to cross in front of / between motorised traffic in the ‘left turn’ lane at an acute angle to access the ‘straight-on lane’.

Alternatively, they will be required to cycle a short distance on the left turning carriageway and then access four Toucan crossings to rejoin the carriageway just past the Cheetham Hill Road / New Bridge Street junction. During the AM/PM traffic peaks the wait time is likely to be high.

Rejoin the highway?

Detail 2 diagram: Rejoin the highway and go where?

Recommendation: This design clearly needs to be reconsidered.

4a8) Traffic-light bypass on Cheetham Hill Road (northbound)

The Detail 1 diagram indicates that a traffic light bypass is being proposed on the Manchester Fort junction traffic lights (northbound) on Cheetham Hill Road.

In principle, we support the installation of traffic-light bypass facilities as they can help provide a more convenient and continuous route for people cycling.

However, we have concerns that the proposed bypass is at a location where pedestrians cross between two retail shopping parks and where their sight lines could be blocked by vehicles. See photographs below.

Proposed site for traffic light bypass

Traffic light bypass: Potential conflict with pedestrian desire line?

4a9) Conclusions on the proposed Cheetham Hill Cycleway route.

As noted above we do not consider that the Cheetham Hill Road Cycleway proposals provide a consistent 'route'.

Using the Cycle Route Audit Tool we assessed this route to have a score of 26 out of 50 (best case scenario). However, it failed on two of the critical factors. This indicates that the current design requires further development.

Recommendation: The Cheetham Hill proposal does little to address the currently poor cycling infrastructure on this route. We would therefore recommend that it does not merit consideration for Velocity funding.

Higher resolution versions of all of the photographs used in this section of our response, as well as additional photographs are available on the Manchester Friends of the Earth Flickr account.[20]

4b) Wilmslow Road Cycleway.

The consultation website states that: “This project is part of 7km of carefully planned, mostly segregated cycle routes with new features for cyclists along Wilmslow Road and Oxford Road into Manchester. It will make cycling safer and easier for everyone – new and established cyclists, young and old, shoppers and commuters. The Wilmslow Road Cycleway will improve the cycling infrastructure with features like segregation from other traffic, bus stop bypasses that keep cyclists out of the traffic flow, 20mph speed limits, advance stop lines for bikes (see photos of cycleway features), and changes to crossing points specially for cyclists and pedestrians.”[21]

Of all the Velocity proposals this route has the clearest rationale – providing a direct cycle route connecting Didsbury, Withington, Fallowfield and surrounding areas to the City Centre.

However, the separate consultations on the different sections of this route: Oxford Road (Cross City Bus Programme), Didsbury to Platt Lane and Rusholme (yet to be published for consultation) illustrates the disjointed approach to developing cycle networks in England. It also makes it more difficult to ensure that consistent designs are applied to all sections of the cycle route(s).

It is clear that people want safe, comfortable, direct and consistent cycle routes. The photograph below was not staged – it was taken by a Love Your Bike volunteer when surveying the Didsbury route. People often choose to cycle on the pavement because they do not feel safe cycling on the road – particularly with their children. This reinforces the observation from the Green Lane Project that ‘ Every person biking on a pavement is really just casting a vote for a protected bike lane’.[22]

4b1) Wilmslow Road from Barlow Moor Road junction

The proposal indicates that the route will start northbound from the Barlow Moor Road/School Lane junction. (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/001). The drawing indicates that the proposed route would require people to cycle between a 'stopped' bus and the moving motorised traffic. See photographs below.

Wilmslow Road from Barlow Moor Road (northbound)

Existing bus stop and on-street car parking

The Outline Design diagram (Drawing number 208235/1A-1.1/0000/0001) indicated that the proposed cycle lane width for this section is 1.5 metres. The TfGM Cycle Design Guidance states that the 'Desirable Minimum for Mandatory or Advisory Cycle lanes' is 1.75 metres and that the 'Absolute Minimum' is 1.5 metres. The guidance further notes that the "Absolute minimum width of 1.5m does not generally provide sufficient effective width for cyclists to overtake or to cycle side – by - side within the confines of the cycle track or cycle lane."[23]

We understand that the Rusholme section of this Velocity route plans to put the cycle lane in between the pavement and the on-street parking with a buffer zone to allow for opening car doors.

It would appear that the Didsbury – Platt lane route is not intending to use this approach. Consistency of design and layout should be a key criteria of cycle infrastructure. If the objective is to deliver cycle routes that provide segregation / protection from motorised traffic we would suggest that requiring people to cycle between parked vehicles, vehicles crossing into the parking areas and moving traffic will not achieve this objective.

It is not clear what junction treatments will be installed and what priority will be given to the cycle route(s) where they cross Norgate Street and the Aldi entrance (northbound) and Moorland Road and Bellfield Road (southbound).

What priority and junction treatment for cycle route at entrance to Aldi?

4b2) Route width - Northbound between Bellfield Road and Clothorn Road.

Shortly after the bus bypass section of the northbound route the Outline Design (Drawing number 208235/1.1-1/0000/0002) indicated that the 2 metre cycle route is reduced to 1.5 metres for a short section (approx 20 metres).

It is unclear from the later version on the consultation website (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/002) whether this width reduction is still planned. It is also unclear from visiting the site why this was proposed.

4b3) Junction treatments / priority: Parkfield Road South, Marlowe Drive and Anerley Road.

It is not clear what junction treatments will be installed and what priority will be given to the cycle route(s) where they cross Parkfield Road South and Marlowe Drive (no through road) (Northbound) and Anerley Road (southbound). (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/002).

4b4) Junction with Fog lane / Lapwing Lane

At the Fog Lane / Lapwing Lane junction the route reverts to a standard signalised junction with Toucan crossings. (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/002). See diagram below.

Proposed junction at Fog Lane / Lapwing Lane.

It is well documented that most crashes, injuries and fatalities involving bicycles and motorised traffic occur at junctions. The proposed route designs are introducing protected/segregated facilities along parts of the route. However, this protection is removed at the very locations that have been proven to be the most dangerous.

The photographs below also show why the width of the central islands will be insufficient for any people using bicycles that are longer than the ‘standard’ cycle (approx 1.7 metres). Such as parents with child trailers, trikes etc.

All of the pedestrian islands are 1.76 metres wide. Where would a bicycle with cycle trailer or child trailer go?

We would recommend that alternative designs for this (and other signalised junctions) along the route be evaluated and incorporated.

	
Pedestrian island	‘Standard’ bicycle approx 1.7 metres. Where does the child trailer go?

Recommendation: that alternative designs for signalised junctions along the route be evaluated and incorporated.

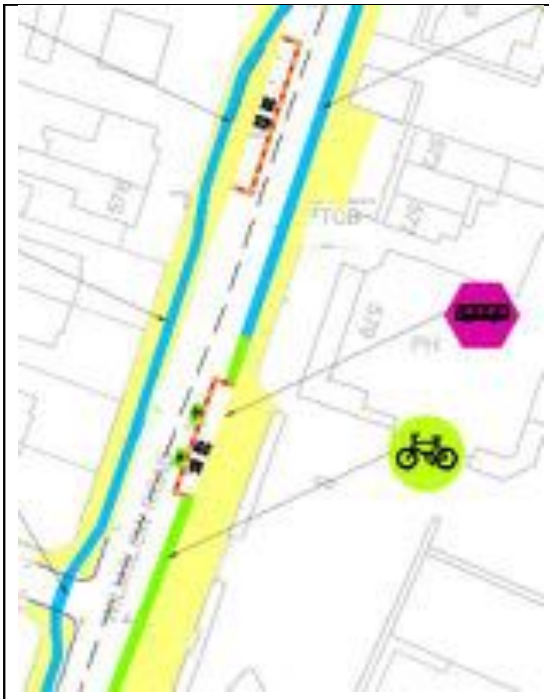
4b5) Bus stop bypass northbound of Fog Lane / Lapwing Lane junction.

The Outline Design (Drawing number 208235/1.2/0000/0003 indicated that the cycle lane width behind the bus stop would be reduced to 1.5 metres from the 2 metre width of the connecting route. It is not clear from the updated consultation drawing (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/002) whether this width restriction is still planned.

4b6) Bus stop near Ferndene Road (southbound)

The proposed southbound route near Ferndene Road (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/004) indicates that there will not be a bus stop-bypass at this location.

Therefore people will be required to cycle out into the motorised traffic separated by small green cycle icons. See diagram below.



Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/004

We understand from local councillors that this land has planning permission as part of the Christie Hospital development. As the photograph below illustrates there is space for a bus-stop bypass at this location but that there is currently uncertainty about the location of any planned entrance(s) to the site.

We would recommend that discussions be held with the developer to identify a better solution for the cycle route.

As we acknowledge in Section 3c above - we fully understand that change takes time and that not all desirable design elements on the proposed cycle routes can be achieved at the same time.

However, this example illustrates this broader policy issue – the longer term requirement to introduce a policy or process commitment that acknowledges that it may (will) be necessary to return to these schemes to re-assess and if necessary to modify the design of the cycle routes.

If it is not possible to resolve the situation at this bus stop location in time for the initial construction and delivery of the Velocity route - securing an agreement to implement a redesign at a later date will encourage people to support the scheme.

Finding a better location for the bus stop would improve the route design.

4b7) Oak Road junction (northbound)

The proposed route design at the Oak Road junction (Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/004) does not seem to match the current layout. See photograph below.

Oak Road junction.

4b8) Cotton Lane junction (southbound)

It is not clear from Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/005 how the route that crosses the junction with Cotton Lane (southbound) will be a “segregated cycle lane / cycle lane on footway” (blue lane) as it crosses the Cotton Lane carriageway. See diagram below.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor “Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway”. This is based on the design principle that “Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions”.

The Red category (a score of zero) is defined as 500-1000 vehicles per peak hour and between 2-5% HGV traffic. The traffic volume for this section of Wilmslow Road is 537 (All motors) southbound in the PM peak and 544 (All motors) northbound in the AM peak which would score zero on the Cycle Route Audit Tool.[24]

Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/005

The same queries apply to Arnfield Road (southbound) and Marriott Street (northbound).

4b9) Cycle route before Tatton Grove (northbound)

The Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/005 indicates that on the northbound route just before Tatton Grove that the cycle lane will be located between the footway and on-street parking. See Diagram below.

Drawing number 208235/E1/COM/005

However, it is not clear what buffer space there will be between the cars and the cycleway to allow protection from door opening. As the photographs below highlight the existing on-street parking space appears to be insufficient for many vehicle drivers who park on the existing footway.

Existing space for vehicles is 1.5 metres

Cars parking on existing footway.

4b10) Withington village

Beyond introducing a 20mph speed limit this section of the proposed route provides little new separated cycling infrastructure. (Drawing number 208235/E3/COM/001).

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor “Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway”. This is based on the design principle that “Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions”.

The Amber category (a score of one) is defined as 100-500 vehicles per peak hour and <2% HGV traffic. The traffic volume on Wilmslow Road (North-East bound) was 409 vehicles during the AM peak when measured in March 2014.[25]

The 4-way junction at Wilmslow Road, Palatine Road, Burton Road and Parsonage Road is a busy junction, particularly at peak times. The proposed design provides little alternative to cycling across 2 lanes of traffic for people cycling southbound from Wilsmlow Road to Palatine Road and negotiating 2 lanes of traffic to head northbound from Wilsmlow Road towards the City Centre or make four Toucan crossings.

4b11) Bus stop by Withington library

The diagram (Drawing number 208235/E3/COM/001) indicates that by Withington Library the route would direct people to cycle between the ‘stopped’ buses and motorised traffic. Green cycle icons would designate the cycle route. See diagram below.

Proposed route by Withington Library bus stop

The reasons given were that there is insufficient space to the north end of the bus layby to provide an adequate bus-stop bypass route.

Approach to Wellington Road

Existing bus stop layout

However, one option would be to alter the Wellington Road / Wilmslow Road junction. Moving the junction neck several metres to the south would provide additional pavement space outside the library entrance and allow the bus layby to be moved to make space for a bus-stop bypass.

4b12) Mauldeth Road junction

The Drawing (number 208235/E4/COM/001) indicates that at the Wilmslow Road / Mauldeth Road junction the existing pedestrian crossing islands will be removed and replaced with Toucan crossings as well as green tarmac lanes across the junction. See Diagram below.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor “Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway”. This is based on the design principle that “Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions”.

The Red category (a score of zero) is defined as 500-1000 vehicles per peak hour and between 2-5% HGV traffic. The traffic volume for this section of Wilmslow Road in the AM peak is 516 (All motors) northbound and 735 (All motors) for all exits.[26]

Mauldeth Road junction

People with child carrier cycling on the pavement having turned left from Mauldeth Road onto Wilmslow Road.

It is unclear what the proposed design will provide that would enable the people cycling with their child (see photo above) to use the cycling infrastructure rather than continue to cycle on the pavement at this junction.

This reinforces the observation from the Green Lane Project that ‘ Every person biking on a pavement is really just casting a vote for a protected bike lane’.[27]

4b13) Bus stops north of Mauldeth Road junction (north and southbound)

Heading north from Mauldeth Road the proposed design has two bus-stops (north and southbound) where the protected route once again simply stops. (Drawing number 208235/E4/COM/001). See diagram below.

From protected lane into moving traffic.

This section highlights the lack of consistency with the cycle infrastructure along this route. Within the space of 100-200 metres the cycle provision switches from ‘kerb segregation’ protected cycle lane, to cycle lane on carriageway to being required to move out past ‘stopped’ buses requiring people to cycle out into motorised traffic lanes.

4b14) Derby Road junction (southbound)

It is not clear how the route across Derby Road junction will be a “Segregated cycle lane / Cycle lane on Footway”. See diagram below. (Drawing number 208235/E4/COM/001)

Protected lane across Derby Road?

4b15) Bus stop outside Post Office sorting office (Granville Road)

The proposed route does not include a bus-stop bypass outside the Post Office sorting office by Granville Road (northbound). Drawing Number 208235/E4/COM/002. See diagram below.

Again, this example illustrates the broader policy issue – the longer term requirement to introduce a policy or process commitment that acknowledges that it may (will) be necessary to return to these schemes to re-assess and if necessary to modify the design of the cycle routes.

Proposed ‘cycle route’ by Post Office Sorting Office

Space available behind bus stop

If it is not possible to resolve the situation at this bus stop location in time for the initial construction and delivery of the Velocity route - securing an agreement to implement a redesign at a later date will encourage people to support the scheme.

4b16) Bus stop opposite the Friendship Inn (northbound)

The proposed route does not include a bus-stop bypass at the very busy bus stop opposite the Friendship Inn (northbound). Drawing Number 208235/E4/COM/003. Effectively the route provision simply stops with the exception of green cycle icons that direct people to cycle between ‘stopped’ buses and moving motorised traffic. See diagram below.

Opposite Friendship Inn (northbound)

The TfGM cycle design guidance highlights the criteria for coherence which states:

"the cycle route must be easy to find and intuitive to navigate; be consistent in quality; and offer route continuity and completeness" and also that **"it is not acceptable to leave gaps in cycle route provision"** (Page 1, our emphasis).

As we acknowledge in Section 3c above - we fully understand that change takes time and that not all desirable design elements on the proposed cycle routes can be achieved at the same time.

Once again, this example illustrates the broader policy issue – the longer term requirement to introduce a policy or process commitment that acknowledges that it may (will) be necessary to return to these schemes to re-assess and if necessary to modify the design of the cycle routes. Have the possibilities to negotiate / CPO some of the land behind the current bus stop been explored?

Can the space to the left be used?

A very busy bus stop and traffic route. Note position of cycle icon

4b17) Armadillos proposed on shared footway/cycleway near Sainsbury

We agree that the existing bollards on the shared footway/cycleway near the Sainsbury store need to be removed. See Diagram below (Drawing number 208235/E5/COM/001).

However we are concerned about using devices like Armadillos on such area. Armadillos will provide little deterrent to prevent vehicles from parking on the cycleway. Also, we are concerned that due to their shape and size that they may result in people being ‘flipped’ into the road.

Proposed use of Armadillos.

Existing bollards.

4b18) Wilsmlow Road / Wilbraham Road junction.

The diagram below shows the proposed provision at the Wilmslow Road / Wilbraham Road junction. (Drawing number 208235/E5/COM/001).

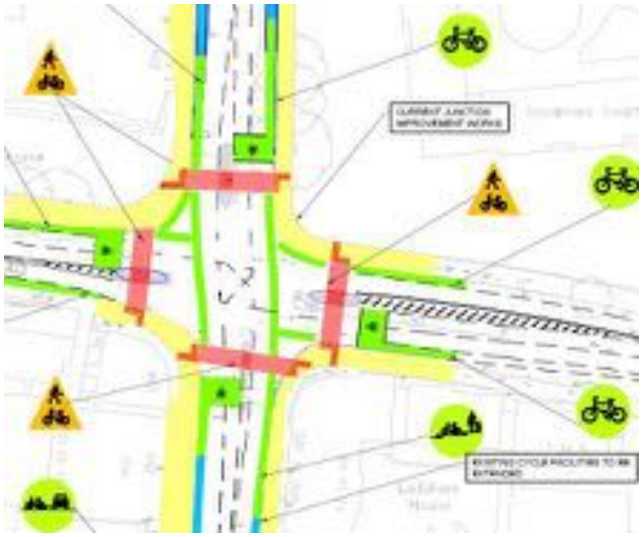
It is well documented that most crashes, injuries and fatalities involving bicycles and motorised traffic occur at junctions. The proposed route designs are introducing protected/segregated facilities along parts of the route. However, this protection is removed at the very locations that have been proven to be the most dangerous.

The Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category includes the factor “Avoid high motor traffic volumes where cyclists are sharing the carriageway”. This is based on the design principle that “Cyclists should not be required to share the carriageway with high volumes of motor vehicles. This is particularly important at points where risk of collision is greater, such as at junctions”.

The Red category (a score of zero) is defined as 500-1000 vehicles per peak hour and between 2-5% HGV traffic.

The traffic volume for this section of Wilmslow Road was AM Peak: 528 (All motors) North-east bound and 487 (All motors) South-west bound and for the PM Peak: 596 (All motors) North-east bound and 545 (All motors) South-west bound. This junction

has therefore been allocated a Cycle Route Audit Tool safety category score of zero.



Wilmslow Road / Wilbraham Road junction

4b19) Existing cycling provision by Owens Park in Fallowfield.

It would appear that this route does not plan to make any substantive changes to the cycling infrastructure by Owens Park. (Drawing number 208235/E5/COM/002).

The two photographs below illustrate why the provision at this location needs to be improved

“On-cycle lane” parking.

Because it is common for vehicles to block the northbound cycleway people are often forced to cycle in the road. As the route approaches the main northbound bus stop people are expected to cycle in the traffic conditions shown below. We do not see anything in the proposed designs that will change this.

This is where we are asking people to cycle.

4b20) Bus stop opposite Furness Road (southbound)

Yet another location where the cycle provision simply stops. (Drawing Number 208235/E5/COM/001). See diagram below.

Bus stop opposite Furness Road (southbound)

4b21) Platt Lane – Dickenson Road junction

The diagram below shows the proposed design for the Platt Lane to Dickenson Road junction. (Drawing number 208235/E6/COM/002)

It is well documented that most crashes, injuries and fatalities involving bicycles and motorised traffic occur at junctions. The proposed route designs are introducing protected/segregated facilities along parts of the route. However, this protection is removed at the very locations that have been proven to be the most dangerous for people cycling.

Platt Lane to Dickenson Road.

4b22) Consistent 20mph speed limit along the route

It is not clear why only certain sections of the route are proposed to have a 20mph speed limit applied. Much of the route that remains designated as 30mph is as residential as the sections currently designated to be 20mph.

Reduced traffic speeds are a key requirement to help reduce people's fear of cycling. Applying a consistent 20mph speed limit would also make it less confusing for vehicle drivers and reduce the invitation to accelerate through the 'faster' sections and then possibly speed through the 20mph areas.

Recommendation: Introduce a consistent 20mph speed along the whole proposed route.

4b23) Conclusions on Wilmslow Road Cycleway route

This route has some elements that are to be welcomed – the protected sections, the bus-stop bypasses at some of the bus-stop locations and the route is certainly direct.

However, the overall objective of creating a safe, continuous and consistent cycle route is undermined by the lack of safe facilities at many of the junctions and also at many of the busy bus stop areas.

The Cycle Route Audit Toolkit has a Safety Design Principle which highlights that:

"A high proportion of collisions involving cyclists occur at junctions. Junctions therefore need particular attention to reduce the risk of collisions. Junction treatments include: Minor/side roads – cyclist priority and/or speed reduction across side roads. Major road – separation of cyclists from motor traffic through junctions."

The indicator for this Design Principle is described as "Conflicting movements at junctions" and has the following scoring descriptions:

> Red (0): Side road junctions frequent and/or un-treated. Major junctions, conflicting cycle/motor-traffic movements not separated.
>
> Amber (1): Side road junctions infrequent and effective entry treatments. Major junctions; principal conflicting cycle/motor traffic movements separated.
>
> Green (2): Side roads closed or treated to blend in with footway. Major junctions: All conflicting cycle./motor traffic streams separated.

In terms of the crossing of side roads and major junctions along the route we would describe the Cycle Route Audit Toolkit score for this section as Red (0).

Overall, using the Cycle Route Audit Tool we assessed this route to have a score of **32 out of 50** (best case scenario). This score indicates that the current design needs further work.

Higher resolution versions of all of the photographs used in this section of our response, as well as additional photographs are available on the Manchester Friends of the Earth Flickr account.[28]

5. Summary of comments and recommendations.

Overarching Points

Recommendation: We would urge Manchester City Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to use the Cycle Route Audit Tool developed for Wales Active Travel to assess all cycling routes being developed across Greater Manchester. Love Your Bike would be willing to assist in scoring the proposed and future routes.

Recommendation: MCC/TfGM negotiate with DfT to allow additional design/implementation time. Love Your Bike would be happy to publicly support this request to DfT if this is considered to be beneficial.

5a) Cheetham Hill proposal

We would argue that the proposed cycling provision is not continuous and certainly is not “segregated whenever possible” as the proposal contains no provision for protected facilities.

The Cheetham Hill proposal does little to address the currently poor cycling infrastructure on this route. We would therefore recommend that this proposal does not merit consideration for Velocity funding.

5b) Wilmslow Road cycleway (Didsbury to Platt Lane)

This route has some elements that are to be welcomed – the protected sections, the bus-stop bypasses at some of the bus-stop locations and the route is certainly direct.

However, the overall objective of creating a safe, continuous and consistent cycle route is undermined by the lack of safe facilities at many of the junctions and also at many of the busy bus stop areas.

Overall, using the Cycle Route Audit Tool we assessed this route to have a score of **32 out of 50** (best case scenario). This score indicates that the current design needs further work.

Love Your Bike

1st January 2015.

EndNotes

[1] See www.loveyourbike.org

[2] http://cycling.tfgm.com/Pages/velocity/Velocity2025_vision.pdf

[3] http://www.tfgm.com/journey_planning/LTP3/Documents/V%C3%A9locity-2025-Business-Case.pdf

[4] Geller, R (2006) Four Types of Cyclists http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/264746

[5] See Signatory list at http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/loveyourbike/cyclingmanifesto/

[6] http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/loveyourbike/cyclingmanifesto/

The headline themes are:

1) Political leadership & governance that facilitate the transition
2) High standards of design to enable all people to cycle confidently and safely
3) Sustained promotion of cycling as a mode of transport
4) Safe cycling and safe driving through facilitation and enforcement
5) Integration of cycling with other modes of transport

[7] Greater Manchester Cycle Design Guidance http://cycling.tfgm.com/pages/pdfs/GM-Cycle-Design-Guide.pdf

[8] Cycle Route Audit Tool . See page 232 – 241 http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/consultation/140430-active-travel-design-guidance.pdf

[9] http://cycling.tfgm.com/Pages/velocity/Velocity2025_vision.pdf

[10] http://cycling.tfgm.com/Pages/Velocity.aspx

[11] http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200102/cycling_and_walking/6415/cycleway_upgrades_and_proposals

[12] http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200024/consultations_and_surveys/6665/better_by_cycle/6

[13] http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6087/cheetham_hill_road_cycleway_technical_drawings

[14] GMCOUNTS Traffic Surveys Database. A665 Cheetham Hill Road. North Bound. Queens Road and Rayburn Way. 16 April 2008.

[15] http://cycling.tfgm.com/pages/pdfs/GM-Cycle-Design-Guide.pdf

[16] GMCOUNTS Traffic Survey database. A665 Cheetham Hill Road btwn Corporation Street & New Bridge Street (North west bound), 23 October 2012.

[17] http://cycling.tfgm.com/pages/pdfs/GM-Cycle-Design-Guide.pdf

[18] http://cycling.tfgm.com/pages/pdfs/GM-Cycle-Design-Guide.pdf

[19] Highways Agency DDA. Compliance Programme. Design Compliance Assessment Guide. DDA Training Spring 2010 http://assets.highways.gov.uk/specialist-information/guidance-and-best-practice-dda-compliance/Highways_Agency_DDA_Compliance_Programme_-_Design_Compliance_Assessment_Guide_DDA_Training_Spring_2010.pdf

[20] https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterfoe/sets/72157649626938892/

[21] http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200024/consultations_and_surveys/6665/better_by_cycle/5

[22] http://www.peopleforbikes.org/blog/entry/a-brilliant-trick-to-find-the-best-streets-for-protected-bike-lanes

[23] http://cycling.tfgm.com/pages/pdfs/GM-Cycle-Design-Guide.pdf

[24] Data supplied by HFAS. B5093 Wilmslow Rd / Cotton Lane, Northbound and Southbound. June 2009.

[25] Data from HFAS. TDC/8744/2 B5093 Wilmslow Road/U Parsonage Road. March 2014.

[26] HFAS data, TDC/8744/5 B5093 Wilmslow Road/C Mauldeth Road. March 2014.

[27] http://www.peopleforbikes.org/blog/entry/a-brilliant-trick-to-find-the-best-streets-for-protected-bike-lanes

[28] https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterfoe/sets/72157649045801118/