

Chesterfield Cycle Campaign

Response to Chesterfield station HS2 masterplan

February 2021



Background

Chesterfield Cycle Campaign have had several meetings with Borough Council officers including a site (cycle) visit to demonstrate our ideas to improve cycle infrastructure and connectivity in and around the masterplan area.

Outside the immediate station area there are several strategic cycle links including:

Trans Pennine Trail (TPT)

There are currently two 'arms' of the TPT approaching the station from the north, the flatter route which approaches the town from the Chesterfield Canal but nearer the station uses advisory cycle lanes along Brimington Road and Malkin Street. This 'arm' should eventually approach the station area through the Waterside development although details of that are unclear.

The hillier route which approaches the area along Crow Lane. A subsidiary cycle route from Hady Hill goes through the Riverside housing area using a traffic free path and joins Crow Lane before going under the existing railway bridge. Derbyshire County Council are planning to permanently close a subsequent section of Crow Lane to provide a safe walking and cycling route to the Royal Hospital.

Stonegravels Way

This route approaches the area from the west side of the A61 and Chesterfield College. It forms part of the cycle route from Dronfield to Tupton. The route crosses Brewery Street using a Toucan and continues through a small car park and segregated route to Corporation Street and the existing foot/cycle bridge over the A61.

Corporation St

Although not a dedicated cycle route many cyclists use the road to access the town centre. The road has been closed to through traffic with the Emergency Active Travel Fund.

Station Link Cycle Path

This shared path links the southern side of the station along an old branch line to the skate park area and was built recently at a cost of £1M by Derbyshire County Council and a government grant administered by Sustrans. It leads to a continuous cycle route (mainly traffic free) to the south leading to Tupton and the Five Pits Trail. To the west it connects to the Hipper Valley and Holmebrook Valley Trails giving cycle access to the large residential areas to the west of the town centre instead of having to climb up into the town. There is also a short cycle 'spur' to the Queen's Park Sports Centre.

Summary

The station link cycle path and TPT are already well used by cyclists and the station area forms an important link between the north - south routes. High quality infrastructure linking all these routes together will not only encourage greater use of cycling to the station but also facilitate more cross town cycle journeys reducing the need for car use.

The potential for cycle tourism has largely been ignored so far in Chesterfield. The station forms the southern end of the Trans Pennine Trail linking Chesterfield, Sheffield, Leeds, York, Hull, Manchester & Liverpool and stretching from east to west coast. As a gateway to the midpoint of the network there is considerable potential.

To the west the planned route leading to Holymoorside gives the potential to access the Peak District along quiet roads and the increasing use of electric bikes makes the gradients less daunting. A future link to the Monsal Trail will transform the use of that route.

To the east there is already an almost complete 40 mile traffic free loop from the station with at least two other shorter loops partially complete.

Cycle tourism has the potential to contribute to the Chesterfield and wider area and based on the station promotes low carbon tourism.

The provision of a cycle hub is welcomed and will provide a focus and information centre for all these routes and can incorporate various other cycling initiatives in the town making it vitally important the connections from the station are high quality and compliant with Local Transport Note 1/20.

We believe that to make the most of these opportunities it is vital that all these routes are connected together with the best possible infrastructure. Whilst we agree with many of the overall vision statements and also that at present the area is confusing and not welcoming **we cannot give our support to much of the cycling infrastructure proposed** because it is downgrading what is already there.

We will deal with each area in more detail below:

Approaching the station from the south (along the existing station cycle link)

At present the link is along a shared path alongside the railway sidings until it meets the station car park access road. Cyclists and pedestrians then share the road as far as the station forecourt. Pedestrians have a red coloured path across a car park entrance entrance to the station building. In practice cyclists going to the station often use this too which has cycle parking adjacent. The road to the car park is lightly trafficked and causes little conflict.

The masterplan has the shared path turning left to access a planned two way segregated cycle route (with adjacent footway) running from the A632 junction to the realigned Crow Lane alongside the proposed 'Station Link Road'. This means that cyclists and pedestrians will have to cross at least five vehicle entry and exit points, three of which will be buses, taxis and drop off private cars/minibuses.

LTN 1/20 deals with cycle routes crossing side roads in chapter 10.5.

10.5.11 shows different layouts to accommodate these arrangements. 10.5.12 states that it is preferable that cycle tracks are **one way only** when crossing side roads.

If two way a cyclist going in either direction will have to turn their head over 120 degrees to spot potentially conflicting vehicles. In the UK drivers are unlikely to give cyclists priority and regularly ignore the Highway Code at side roads. Vehicles waiting to turn out of the side road will inevitably block the cycle path.

Our conclusion is that the arrangement shown does not comply with LTN 1/20 (contrary to what is stated in the masterplan) and that the cycle route should be routed away from any conflicts with vehicles.

Coming (see fig 1 below) from the south the shared path should continue between the railway sidings and plot C1 to avoid the first side road crossing. At the entrance to the sidings which is rarely used it becomes a two way segregated path with adjacent footway which then bears right towards the station building avoiding the two more side road crossings which will be very busy. The cycle path then swings around into the station forecourt retaining its segregated status until the crossing of the new link road. There will be a wide 'zebra' crossing allowing pedestrians to cross the cycle path from the bus/taxi area.

Crossing the new link road, boulevard and Corporation St

The planned 'segregated Toucan' (there is no such official infrastructure) says it is prioritising pedestrians and cyclists. This is not the case, a signal controlled crossing defaulting to green for vehicles is not prioritisation. We suggest that this should be a 'parallel crossing' (LTN 1/20 10.4.12) which is uncontrolled and demand led leading to less waiting times for pedestrians and

cyclist giving them more priority. Whether the crossing is on a raised platform or not the surface treatment should make it clear this is a non vehicle prioritised area.

The road appears to be planned as three lanes wide here. We suggest there is a refuge in the middle filling the central lane with raised areas on either side to visually narrow the carriageway to reduce speeds.

We welcome the separate cycling area along the boulevard but on the artists impressions shown it appears to be compromised by pedestrian sitting areas and crossing points, it is important to visually steer pedestrians away from confliction points, not encourage confliction.

We welcome the resurfacing and partial creation of wider footways and a cycle route on Corporation Street, however we understand that vehicles will still be able to use the road so traffic calming measures such as staggered planters/trees will create an area that is unwelcoming to vehicles.

Crow Lane

Crow Lane gives cyclists access to the hillier TPT route, the Royal Hospital and the Riverside estate. The planned crossing on Crow Lane adjacent to the new forecourt building is unclear whether this is controlled or not. However it should give cyclists a relatively safe way of accessing Crow Lane but visibility is a real issue for vehicles approaching the station so we suggest there needs to be traffic calming to slow them down to 10mph on the approach.

As Crow Lane descends to go under the railway as a single track road we believe a Dutch style 'cycle street' should be provided. Whilst innovative for the UK, in London there are many signs stating 'Cyclists ride in middle of lane' and 'Do not overtake cyclists'. This sort of approach will make Crow Lane safer. On the two way section if there was a cobble 'rumble strip' along the centre line this would discourage overtaking.

The masterplan suggests an extra footway will be provided along the south side of Crow Lane from the Riverside housing estate. It is difficult to see how that can be accommodated under the railway bridges.

Connections to Stonegravels Way, TPT/Brimington Road

The masterplan mentions connections along Brewery Street towards the Northern Gateway but then appears to ignore any actual connections!

There is also shown a potential link from the Crow Lane crossing to Brimington Road but no mention of whether this is for cycling. In the phasing stage of the masterplan this link seems to disappear and the plot it goes through is very late on it phasing anyway.

We think that a cycle link should be established alongside the planned riverside walk on this plot. That would give direct access to Waterside having only to cross Brimington Road and not ride on it.

The existing southbound advisory cycle lane which is the TPT has disappeared from Malkin Street so there is now less provision for cyclists on that route and no obvious way for them to access the station safely. This is why the riverside walk link needs to be cyclists too.

To access the College, TPT north and the Stonegravels Way there is the crossing of the new link road (see above) then a shared path along the south side of Malkin Street rejoining the carriageway just before the roundabout at the end of Brimington Road. This is poor and dangerous design.

To access the Stonegravels Way cyclists will go the same way as above. LTN 1/20 6.5.4 states 'shared use should be regarded as a last resort', because this whole plot will be rebuilt we see no reason why this cannot be a two way segregated cycle path with adjacent footway to continue the similar facility nearer the station.

There is an existing (old style) segregated path after the roundabout leading to the Toucan crossing Brewery Street. These two paths must be linked together to provide a continuous route without cyclists having to use the roundabout.

To access Brimington Road and the TPT going north using the Malkin St path will mean cyclists are deposited onto the road in a very dangerous position to make a right turn. This is not acceptable.

Whilst not a cycling issue there is a conflict for pedestrians walking from the station to the college where they cross the end of Brimington Road, poor sight lines and speed of traffic make this dangerous.

We suggest that the roundabout is removed and traffic signals installed to make this a T junction. There could then be crossings for cyclists to get from the Malkin St/Brewery St side to the planned shared path on the west side of Brimington Road. Also a pedestrian crossing across the end of Brimington Road.

Other connections

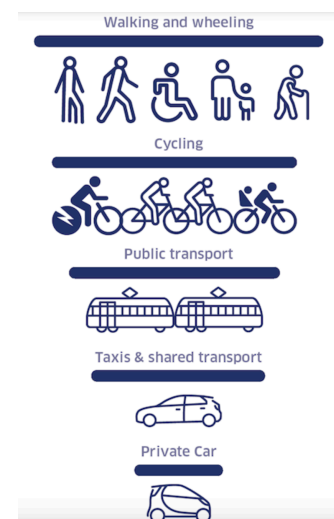
The current segregated cycle/footway that runs from the A61 bridge to the Brewery St Toucan is not shown on any of the drawings. This link needs to be retained and enhanced.

Prioritising sustainable transport

We note that apart from pedestrians it is private cars that can get the closest to the station building followed by taxis, bicycles and then buses!

We suggest that the private vehicle drop off area is situated in the multi storey car park (erroneously called a 'transport hub'). Taxi parking/holding area is where the buses are shown and buses stop where the taxi/drop off area is shown. With a realigned cycle approach from the south this will give the correct priority of getting closest to the station building.

Hierarchy of transport shown by the graphic with walking and cycling as the first priority. The masterplan virtually reverses the rest of the modes of transport!



Conclusions

Many of the cycling features shown are not compliant with LTN 1/20. When changes are being planned that will be in place for many years to come it is vital that they comply with at the very least the current design standards.

Approaching the station from the south the planned route is compromised by many road crossings and needs to be rerouted to avoid these conflicts.

The pedestrian and cycle crossing of the new link road needs to actually prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and not just 'pay lip service' whilst actually prioritising vehicles.

The cycle route into the town centre is generally good as long as conflicts are managed well by final design.

Cycle (and foot) connections to Waterside and the College area need much more thought and higher priority with phasing. Cycle and foot connections should be a higher priority than vehicles (as per the Local Plan) and be completed first or at the very least at the same time as the new link road.

We understand that little traffic modelling has been done nor detailed highway design work by Derbyshire County Council. What evidence is there that a new through road is actually needed?

It must be very obvious which are the cycling routes. We suggest that a red coloured surface is used for all cycle areas.

Please note the Local Plan SS7 - 'improved access to the station by all modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle links to Waterside and Town Centre' - the masterplan does not comply with this statement.

The masterplan states - 'the plan should recognise the station areas importance within the walking and cycling network and prioritise walking and cycling as much as reasonable' , 'enhancing existing links to Waterside and Brewery Street and improve the north south pedestrian and cycle connections' & 'indicative sustainable approaches no 8 reducing the dominance of the car' - we don't agree that the masterplan complies with these statements.

Chesterfield Cycle Campaign does not support this masterplan in its current form.

We have included two plans modified from those shown in the masterplan to illustrate the issues described above. Fig 2 shows the forecourt area in more detail with our amendments.

Fig 1 General cycle infrastructure



Cycle Design Analysis as prepared by AECOM (please refer to Chesterfield MP Public Realm Strategy for further review)

Fig 2 Station forecourt detail

