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DEVELOPMENT

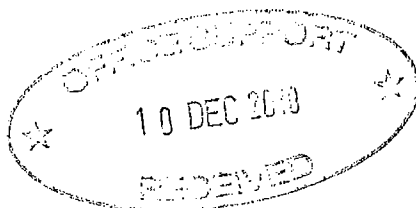
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Your ref: 820203-8

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ACCESS & INFRASTRUCTURE

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06 December 2010



Dear Mr Hickman

NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 23 PROPOSAL THROUGH M3, JUNCTION 9

Thank you for your letter dated 6 September 2010 detailing the proposal, submitted on behalf of the Winchester Cycling Group, for a cycle route to pass through junction 9 on the M3 at Winchester. I have now discussed your proposal with our MAC specialists and the Highways Agency's (HA) Route Performance Manager for the M3.

1.0 Introduction

As you are already aware, this location as a proposed cycleway does not meet current HA standards. Although this does not mean your proposal has automatically been rejected, consideration necessarily must be given to this, when considering the detail of the proposals presented.

It is clear from our site meeting, which took place on 24 June 2010, and from your proposal, that cyclists currently use both the footways and subways on a daily basis. However, as this is a designated 'footway', cyclists are not legally permitted to do so and do so at their own risk. This is not encouraged by the HA on safety grounds.

You have mentioned in your report about the alternative routes being '*much longer and in part more heavily trafficked*', although these routes (via B3047 and Worthy Road or Long Walk, Fair Lane, B3404) are used safely and legally, and there are also safer crossing points.

It is important to record that, design work has already taken place for the route from Tescos in Easton Lane to the City Centre without prior agreement with the HA to use junction 9 as part of the route.

The HA does encourage sustainable travel, however, we must take into account the safety of all highway users and, therefore, proposals must meet the strict and current standards before agreement can be met. We have yet to see the cyclists personal injury report mentioned in the proposal and therefore cannot endorse your statement of



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'there have been no reported cyclist injury accidents on the traffic free route through the junction or on the roundabout above the M3 in the past 10 years'.

As I have mentioned briefly already, this route is currently designated as a 'footway' and therefore cyclists do not have the legal right to cycle along it. I would therefore suggest that this would not give cyclists the acquired rights you have mentioned. The use of footways and subways by cyclists at this location has not been challenged by the HA - we are not an enforcement agency; this role would need to be performed by the Police. Cyclist should dismount when using footways and subways that are not designated as a shared facility.

The sign that is situated at the Winnall roundabout and referred to in your proposal, is not a regulatory sign and therefore does not give permission to cycle, only guides towards the subway. The correct sign giving permission to cycle would be Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2002 diagrams 956/957 and would need the supporting Order in place. The sign is also outside the HA boundary and therefore has not been erected by us. It is unlikely that we would have given approval.

2.1 Forward Visibility

The current HA standard for forward visibility is 26m at 25kph (TD36/93) and not the 15m you have stated in the proposal. We also feel that the proposed barriers, which you have said will *'guide the cyclists away from the inside of the corner where visibility is restricted'* will also guide the pedestrians onto the same restricted width as the cyclists and therefore, may in fact increase the potential for conflicts. The use of half barriers would need further investigation before we could comment.

2.2 Widths

2.2.1 Subways

We agree that the flows are low and the width could be reduced to 3m. However, if they were below 3m, there would remain a safety concern.

2.2.2 General Width

We are of the view that this could be brought up to the required 3m width by cutting back the vegetation and widening the footway.

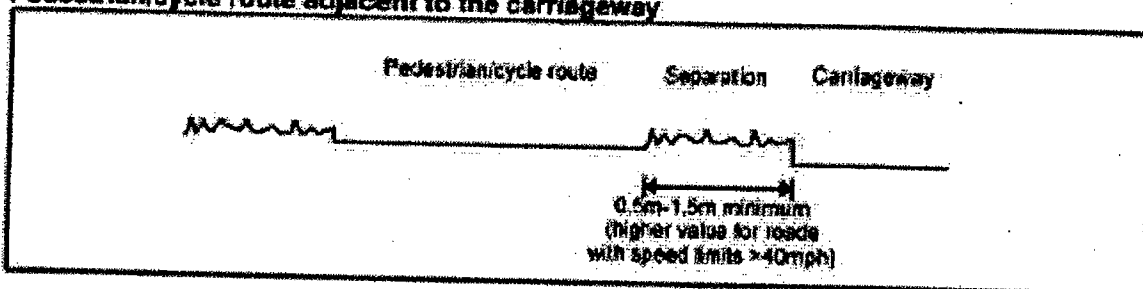
2.2.3 Overbridge

You have quoted DMRB: TA90/05 7.2 in your proposal, giving the acceptable minimum width for an unbounded cycle track as 2m, with a width of 1.5m over short distances. However, 7.2 relates to cycle routes only, and this would be an unsegregated shared facility. Paragraph 7.16 agrees that where flows are below 200 per hour a width of 2m has operated satisfactory. However, this is for all sections other than the overbridge which is narrower than 2m.

Due to the parapet wall being greater than 1.2m, we need to add the 0.5m for kerb shyness, giving a 2.5m gap between the parapet and the edge of the footway/cycleway. Currently, you have stated in the report, this measures 1.95m, which is below the current minimum standard by 0.5m - 3m, would be preferred.

There is a minimum recommendation for separation between the shared route and carriageway of 0.5m to 1.5m (1.5 being preferred) with the higher being the separation on roads in excess of 40mph speed limit. This measurement can include the 1m hard strip. **Including the 1m hard-strip on a road with speeds 40mph or greater, we would need a total width of 4m minimum on a shared facility bounded by a wall over 1.2m in height and allowing a 1.5m between Non Motorised Users.** Currently we have a total width of 2.95m, which is 1.05m below the required minimum. As you are aware, the only way to get the extra 1.05m would be to redesign the bridge, which would be of considerable cost.

Pedestrian/cycle route adjacent to the carriageway



We have no record of a speed survey having been carried out at the M3 junction 9 roundabout. As there is a legal requirement to inform the HA of any surveys (for safety reasons) and obtain the correct permissions, we cannot include your comments in our response. However, please note that the HA standard states speed limits of 40mph or greater and NOT the 85%ile or mean speeds.

We have not commented on the guard railings, as the requirements for the overbridge cannot be met.

3.0 Subway Heights

Although it is likely that the subways were designed identically, this was not confirmed at the site meeting as suggested in your report. It is also unlikely that the subways have been resurfaced; the discrepancies are more likely to be down to the installation process. This therefore, still leaves the subways below the required 2.4m standard required.

It was also not agreed during the site meeting that the HA/EnterpriseMouchel would consider a 'Departure for Standard' (DfS) of 2.3m in height. The DfS would first need to be submitted by your design team and endorsed by the HA on safety grounds; as stated at the site meeting. It was also made clear during the site meeting that on safety grounds, we would not promote a substandard cycleway.

I would like to reiterate that rejection of the cycle route is based on several factors, the main being the width of the overbridge being below the absolute minimum required.

In Summary

The Highways Agency has now spent considerable time on this proposal, via written correspondence and site meetings. All the safety concerns were raised during the site meeting held on 24 June 2010. These do not seem to have been fully addressed in this proposal. The main safety concerns being the width of the overbridge, at 1.05m below the absolute minimum for a shared cycleway, and the other being the height of the subways.

With all of the above concerns in mind, we will not be formally approving the M3 junction 9 footways and subways as a cycle route on safety grounds. I can understand this is not the response you are looking for, and I can appreciate the amount of time you and others involved have spent on this. However, we must have the safety of all road users at the forefront of all decisions made. This proposal does not bring the cycleway up to the absolute minimum required and can therefore not be given approval as it currently stands.

Yours sincerely



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