

## **West Bridgford Commissioners – Final Report, November 2017:**

### **Comments from Pedals (Nottingham Cycling Campaign)**

#### **Introduction**

Pedals very much welcomes the report and the opportunity to make further comments. We are very glad to see that many other people in responding to the consultation have supported the case for more attention to the provision of more cycle routes and more cycle storage.

We have a particular interest in traffic and accessibility issues and the recommendations with regard to these issues and think it very important that some of these recommendations are seen in a wider context including the very strong need to reduce dependence on the use of private motor vehicles, for environmental and health reasons and particularly in view of the recently much increased concern with the very adverse public health effects of traffic derived air pollution, as well as the many positive reasons to promote healthier transport. Health benefits include improving the health and well-being of an ageing population, and growing use of ebikes and other technological advances can help much with this, as well as providing safer walking conditions,

Poor air pollution from motor traffic is already very serious in parts of the West Bridgford urban area, especially Trent Bridge and Lady Bay Bridge and their main approaches but is in serious danger of becoming even more pronounced with the plans for major new housing developments in and around West Bridgford in the next 10-20 years and the very strong risk of this causing even greater problems of traffic congestion and poor air pollution.

Alternative modes of transport, including the stronger promotion of cycling and walking for shorter trips, must therefore be vigorously promoted, as part of the comprehensive efforts needed to address these increasingly serious environmental problems. This needs to be given much more emphasis by the Commissioners as well as the protection of local green spaces which are so widely seen as so vital to the quality of life in West Bridgford, both in the town centre and more widely.

We are pleased to see the references to the importance of learning from good practice elsewhere but would like to suggest that this should include learning from good practice in the fields of traffic restraint and the promotion of sustainable transport, especially cycling, from elsewhere in the UK and also Continental Europe, e.g. Groningen in the Netherlands with its emphasis on allowing only bikes and buses through the centre, with a sector / zone approach, under which car movements between the sectors are banned. We would see this kind of approach as the ideal solution in Tudor Square. Experience in the Netherlands (Groningen, Houten, etc.) is that the policy of actively discouraging car usage has significant benefit to local businesses, contrary to what is often assumed in the UK, where the public tends to have little or no experience of such solutions. Furthermore, limiting unnecessary car usage can have a positive benefit on those who really do need to use vans and cars.

#### **Detailed comments:**

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We are very interested to hear that Rushcliffe Borough Council has commissioned two projects including a cycle route for the town as well as a Heritage Trail. We would welcome further details of the cycle route project and the chance to contribute to its development.

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Although we are well aware that (car) parking problems are of concern to many people we suggest that tackling these needs a wider approach than just to relax time restrictions, lower charges and provide more parking spaces. People should be encouraged to help reduce car parking pressures by

being much more selective in their use of private motor vehicles, especially in and near the town centre and for shorter trips in general.

We are also very concerned that moves to speed motor traffic flow in the Tudor Square area, for example by changing zebra crossings to signalled crossing, will probably have the effect of aggravating road safety by speeding up motor vehicles in this complex area. Some drivers who now are probably discouraged from using this route because of the lower speed limits (20mph) and the presence of zebra crossings with the suggested changes might be more willing to use this as a through route and at higher speeds, to the great detriment of the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. The proposed changes therefore need to be very carefully thought through to avoid these potentially very serious adverse impacts and to ensure that the safety of pedestrians and cyclists is given top priority.

Should any pelican crossing be introduced, the lights should default to green for pedestrians in the same way that lights at road/tram line junctions default to green for trams: seeing a red light acts as a traffic-calming measure. Pedestrian lights should in any case be linked to speed detectors that turn the light to red if traffic exceeds the speed limit, as in Stiphout in the Netherlands.

Central Avenue is a very important route for cyclists and we would strongly support any effective measures to restrict its illegal use by private motor vehicles, as well as other safety improvements in the vicinity.

For cyclists exiting from the south end of Central Avenue can at times feel very dangerous, particularly when they find their path cut across by speeding motor vehicles on the approaches (especially Rectory Road), and any changes to the layout of Tudor Square need to be designed to make this manoeuvre less intimidating,

Improving the wide path which now connects Bridgford Road near the Coop with Edward Road would also help to encourage safe cycle access to and from the town centre, especially if reinforced by more safe cycle storage. Careful siting of cycle stands is vital, to reduce the risk of damage by motor vehicles manoeuvring, as has happened by the shops on Melton Road, both with the older cycle stands and now also to the ones just recently installed.

The safety of cyclists and pedestrians would also be helped by the wider introduction of lower, e.g. 20mph speed limits, compulsory (not advisory) and well-enforced. This is particularly important on the many roads and streets which are too narrow to permit the inclusion of good-standard cycle lanes or cycle paths.

Any proposals for new roads, or changed road layouts, in the West Bridgford area, should be very carefully assessed as to how they could be used to promote safer cycle access to and from the town centre and other important local destinations, including to and from Wilford Lane, bearing in mind the current major severance of conditions on Loughborough Road (especially in the vicinity of its junction with Melton Road and Wilford Lane) and for trips to and from the proposed major new housing areas on the periphery of the town, and to and from Nottingham, connecting the proposed new foot-cycle bridge across the Trent between Lady Bay and Trent Basin / Trent Lane. This is the subject of a feasibility study nearing completion commissioned by several local organisations (Pedals, Nottingham Civic Society, Nottingham Local Access Forum, River Crescent Residents' Association and Blueprint Regeneration, the developers of the Trent Basin housing scheme), in close cooperation with Sustrans and the City and County Councils. This project now has been given the official support of the Leader of the City Council, Cllr. Jon Collins, as confirmed in a letter on 20 November 2017. The feasibility study includes a report from Sustrans on the economic impact of the proposed bridge and this is also nearing completion, taking account of some recent revised cost estimates.

A major project of this kind, including improved approach routes, could also do much, with the support (also of the County and Borough Councils, to raise the profile of West Bridgford and its town centre, and to encourage more walking and cycling generally in the area, for both leisure and commuting / utility purposes, especially if accompanied by the production of local maps and other publicity materials and the provision of public bike hire both in the town centre and other important local destinations. Growing use of ebikes would also reinforce this trend, helping both to encourage use of

bikes for longer distances and also more use of bikes in hillier areas including for trips between the town centre and the hillier southern parts of West Bridgford.

This project, and accompanying wider promotion, would also reinforce the image of Rushcliffe Borough as a sporting and healthy place to live.

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