

Ipswich Road Active Travel Fund scheme

Norwich Cycling Campaign supported the original proposals for Ipswich Road which went out to consultation in August 2021, despite having some reservations with certain aspects of the scheme. By providing protected cycle lanes on both sides of the carriageway from the ring road and almost up to the St Stephens Road junction the scheme offered tangible benefits for existing cyclists and fulfilled the scheme objective of enabling more people to cycle. Making Ipswich Road a safe route for cycling would also be a first step in creating a cycle link to the Tuckswood and Eaton Rise housing estates.

However, the decision to approve an amended scheme which removes almost half the length of the inbound cycle lane means this scheme is no longer fit for purpose, nor is it compliant with Government legislation as described in 'Gear change' and LTN 1/20.

The bid submitted by Norfolk County Council to the Active Travel Fund was for the “provision of a new mandatory cycle lane facility with wands on both sides of the carriageway” from the Daniels Road junction to the St Stephens Road junction.

Our objections to the amended scheme can be summarised under three headings: Safety, failure to comply with LTN 1/20 and a lack of vision.

Safety

Ipswich Road is an important cycle route from the south of the city for large numbers of commuters, college students and school children. It connects the large housing areas of Eaton Rise and Tuckswood to the Hewett Academy, City College and into the city centre. It provides the most direct route so Ipswich Road needs to be a safe, accessible route for everyone, including potentially hundreds of children and students who may wish to cycle to the Hewett Academy and City College.

The explicit reason given for removing a section of inbound cycle lane (to provide car parking) goes against both the government policy outlined in “Gear Change” as well as the stated main objective of the scheme which is “to improve the environment for walking and cycling along this busy route”.

Under the amended plan, cyclists from the south of the city will need to ride on the unprotected southern section of Ipswich Road, having to negotiate past parked cars along a stretch of road which will remain a 30mph limit.

Failure to comply with LTN 1/20

The government policy document “Gear Change” states the following requirements for funded cycle routes:

“The routes must be direct. They must be continuous, not giving up at the difficult places. They must serve the places people actually want to go – often major public transport corridors – and the journeys they actually want to make. If it is necessary to reallocate roadspace from parking or motoring to achieve this, it should be done.” p16

The decision to remove a protected section of cycle lane so as to prioritise car parking would appear to run counter to this requirement.

LTN 1/20 has several summary principles which define the quality of cycle infrastructure necessary to meet the funding criteria. By failing to provide a continuous, safe cycle route on both sides of the road we believe the following principles have not been followed;

Principle 1: Cycle infrastructure should be accessible to everyone from 8 to 80 and beyond.

Principle 3: Cyclists must be physically separated and protected from high volume motor traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them.

Principle 5: Cycle infrastructure should be designed for significant numbers of cyclists, and for non-standard cycles.

Principle 8: Cycle infrastructure must join together, or join other facilities together by taking a holistic, connected network approach which recognises the importance of nodes, links and areas that are good for cycling.

Car parking bays

If it is felt necessary to keep some on-street parking on Ipswich Road, for the short sections of car parking deemed necessary, cycle bypasses should be provided, of the type described in section 6.2.40 of LTN 1/20. This would enable a continuous inbound cycle lane to be delivered, as promised in the original scheme and as required by LTN 1/20.

Lack of vision

The provision of protected cycle lanes along this section of Ipswich Road also forms part of the larger aspiration to provide a cycle link south of the ring road and would link up with the planned extension of the Yellow Pedalway out to Harford Park & Ride, as outlined in the draft Norwich Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). It could also potentially link up with the Purple Pedalway, as well as providing a safe route to school and college for the Tuckswood and Eaton Rise estates.

By not providing continuous protected cycle lanes the full benefits of the scheme will not be realised and we won't see the change in behaviour (switching from cars to walking and cycling) that the Active Travel Fund is designed to deliver.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Bearman, Chair
Norwich Cycling Campaign