

Response from COGS

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Dear Mr Gardner,

Thank you very much for forwarding the consultation document on the Laverstock to City Centre cycle facilities.

May I say that on initially reading your letter that I was disappointed that the 2006 proposal to link Laverstock with the City centre was being dropped and that yet another proposal was being considered? However, now having digested this latest proposal I would like to say that I am very impressed by the common sense approach that has been taken by the consultants Mouchel to provide an on-carriageway scheme.

The document produced by Mr Cashman contains all the background information that demonstrates why an on-carriageway proposal is a more constructive and positive way forward for the whole community. COGS welcomes this approach, specifically the aims of following current guidance & best practice and commends them on their review of schemes elsewhere and the intention to benefit from what has been learnt from these. Planning and designing high quality infrastructure can involve developing site specific solutions and it is pleasing to see this approach taken here.

As can be noted in the Department for Transport Local Transport notes 2/08 (October 2008 - <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/ltnotes/ltn208.pdf>) "the road network is the most basic (and important) cycling facility available, and the preferred way of providing for cyclists is to create conditions on the carriageway where cyclists are content to use it". The redistributing of the highway space integrates cyclists as part of the road infrastructure and provides a more convenient direct route for cyclists who might otherwise have had to use off road shared facility with pedestrians leading to conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

Additional benefits of the on road cycling infrastructure is the continuous crossing of the junctions – whereas with a shared use facility cyclists have to give way at junctions as is the case on Southampton road. The dangers of this can be seen with the recent accident where a cyclist was run over by a motorist driving across one of the junctions – the cyclist had not been observed. Hence the on road cycle route can be safer for cyclists.

There are a number of major bonuses that this scheme provides for the community as a whole.

This is particularly demonstrated by the reduction of traffic speeds to 20mph. Not only will this create safer and more comfortable conditions for cycling and walking but this in itself may possibly lead to lower traffic volumes as motorists will avoid this route – particularly at peak times.

The removal of the white central line seems to be crucial in the introduction of this route as it is part of the key in maintaining that speeds remain at approx 20mph without the introduction of a number of humps or other highway engineering speed reducers. Initial trials in Devizes, Wiltshire (Wiltshire County Council/TRL, 2003/4) suggest that removal of centre lines contributed to a reduction in traffic speeds and where this was accompanied by the introduction of cycle lanes, traffic speeds were found to have fallen further.

By provision of the cycle route, it is envisioned that more children will cycle to school. There is clear evidence from London that an increased number of cyclists actually leads to a decrease in the number of accidents as car drivers are more alert to the presence of cyclists. Increased numbers of children cycling will result in less children being driven to school - hence less traffic. Increased numbers of children cycling to school will also result in the children themselves being fitter and in this day and age when obesity is such an issue then the exercise provided will be an additional benefit.

Please note that: On page 4, I think Figure 4 in fact shows Manor Farm Road and Shady Bower (rather than Manor Road and Milford Hill). Likewise we think that the sentence above those pictures should refer to Manor Farm Road and Shady Bower (rather than MR & MH).

COGS would like to see a reference to 'the Golden Way' route into Salisbury, as we believe this offers an attractive route for those who are hill averse or wanting to get to the south or west of Salisbury city centre (including of course College, Cathedral and Hospital). Perhaps there should be a new para 2.2.4 to cover this "2.2.4 Alternative route via Piggy Lane/Southampton Road", with an explanation of the route this takes from where it branches off the route proposed (Whitebridge Road, Riverbourne Close, Milford Mill Road, Piggy Lane, Southampton Road).

In addition to the scheme the following must also be considered:

Signage – finger posts with names places, distances and cycle travel times to connect the Salisbury to City Centre route to the rest of the Salisbury Cycle Network i.e. i) the Laverstock to city centre route should link trip origins and key destinations, including public transport access points (including park and ride); ii) links to Bishopdown; iii) links to Ford and Old Sarum via Green Lane – all very important routes in the Salisbury Cycle Network.

Maps – this route should become a major part of the travel plans of the schools and be advertised as such by the production of localized maps for the schools and also be incorporated in to the school web sites. With the provision of this route it would also be time to consider updating the Salisbury Cycle Map.

Training - with the Laverstock schools present along the road there is an unmet demand for cycling from the children. This can be enhanced through increased introduction of schemes such as Bikeability Cycle Training which delivers national standard training at a number of levels (provided by fully qualified trainers by Wiltshire County Council's Road Safety Unit roadsafety@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Cycle parking - it is clear that when this route is built that more covered and secure cycle parking will be required at the school. Travel grants are currently available.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this route to Link Laverstock to Salisbury City Centre. COGS would very much support this latest proposal as it provides so many positive aspects to enhance travel through Laverstock not just for cyclists but would benefit pedestrians and the community as a whole in reducing traffic volumes and speeds. Whilst the proposal may not initially be seen as a step forward, particularly by motorists, it is clear from the evidence that Mouchel provided in this report that such schemes do overall provide a solution that will benefit this community and the three secondary schools on the route.

I look forward to future correspondence on this route. If I can of assistance at any time then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Dr. Jimmy Walker
COGS Chairman