

Response from Jacqui Goodall, Headteacher, St. Edmund's School

Dear Tom

Thank you for the copies of the study into cycle routes between Laverstock and the city centre.

As a Sports College, we are clearly in favour of healthy alternative ways to travel to school. Relatively few girls choose to cycle to St Edmund's School and one of the main reasons quoted is that the roads are not safe for cyclists. There are other reasons of course, but many parents feel that unless there is a dedicated route, as in the Cycle Path to Bishopdown, then the risk is too great.

The issue will be whether the cycle routes and strategies suggested in the study would overcome these risks, or perceptions of risk.

If there was any way possible, we would choose a dedicated cycle route but it is clear in the Study that this option is not feasible. Having discussed the Study with colleagues and the Chair of Governors, we feel that the plan to create cycle lanes on the road while removing the central markings would not make a significant difference unless drivers were convinced to slow down, which could cause considerable traffic jams. While a reduction in speed would be a positive feature, it is felt that if motorists became impatient, as they often do now, it would increase the risk to both cyclists and pedestrians.

In particular, the following points were raised:

- There are many places along the route where cars would be parked from time to time, including the Church and Primary School. This would make cyclists swerve out into the central area putting themselves at risk. Is it realistic to expect a no on-street parking ruling to be adhered to?
- There would be no clear rules of right of way between two cars waiting to pass while there were cycles in the cycle path.
- The current 'Crossing Point' is considered dangerous by many road users. Cars do not stop to let people cross and cyclists have a tendency to cycle straight over crossings without stopping. More such 'Crossing Points' would increase the risk it was felt.

In summary, it was considered that for the scheme to be successful, the cycle lanes should be very clearly painted and marked and no on-street parking should be allowed. We feel that the latter expectation is unrealistic. Unfortunately, we don't feel that the scheme is likely to encourage the girls' school community to increase cycle usage. The Proposal to build an Academy on the Laverstock schools site may impact on the final decision if it goes ahead, as it is hoped that there would be a new entrance system to the school to reduce traffic build-up at peak times.

I will pass on the Study to other staff and Governors now and they may well add further comments.

Thank you for at least trying to find a solution! It is much appreciated and I hope that we will be pleasantly surprised if a trial is implemented.

Best wishes

Jacqui Goodall
Headteacher - St Edmund's School