

A602 planning presentation 25 Jan 2018
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Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the safety concerns of cyclists on these two A602 improvement applications.

I would like to start with some general points, then to talk about each of the two applications separately.

I am a member of South Herts CTC with 1000 members riding from Hertford, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and St Albans and The Forty Plus CC with 800 elderly members riding midweek from Hertford, St Albans, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Harpenden and Letchworth. Within 18 miles of this scheme there are 83 different cycle clubs, plus solo cyclists and informal groups.

2018 is Hertfordshire Year of Physical Activity. When 1 in 4 adults takes less than 30 minutes exercise a week, our cycle clubs play a major role in keeping people active, improving physical and mental health and reducing obesity, although we do stop at pubs and cafes to help the local economy.

The A602 is a major barrier to cyclists [*map*]. Any cyclist going north from the towns in south Hertfordshire has to cross it. The need to remove such barriers is recognised in the Hertfordshire Local Plan and Simon Brown, the Road Safety Programme Manager, says "the biggest barrier to more cycling is that people don't feel safe".

More than 100 cyclists were killed on British roads in 2016. A further 3,397 were seriously injured, a 5 per cent increase in 12 months.

The 2017 Local Transport Plan says "All transport measures delivered by the county council must be in accordance with the LTP policies".

This scheme goes against LTP Policy 1; that the needs of vulnerable road users come above those of motorised users, Policy 8 which aims to deliver a step change in cycling, Policy 12 which encourages alternatives to car use, Policy 15 on speed management, Policy 18 on not deterring active travel.

The applications admit that they also break several policies in the East Herts Local Plan 2007 [*TR1, TR9 & TR12*] and I would add TR10, which talks about creation of suitable alternative or better facilities when cycling routes are affected.

I had a useful meeting in October with Andrew Morris and Chris Wilkinson of Herts Highways to go through our consultation responses and we concluded that improvements to the original designs would meet most of the concerns raised by cyclists. These improvements are practical and proportionate. *[National Planning Policy Framework para 35]*

We welcome that "All elements of the proposed improvements to the A602 have been designed in accordance with ... the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#)". The DfT guidance covering cycle traffic, which is a full part of this design manual, says that **cyclists should be separated from traffic where the speed limit is 40 mph or greater**. It also says that **suitable crossing points of roundabout exits should be provided**. *[According to Phil Jones, the consultants who wrote it, [IAN195](#), is a full part of DMRB]*

So the statements that the Stage 1 Road Safety Audits highlighted no safety issues for cyclists surprise us greatly.

Indeed *[[HD 19/15](#) para 2.25]* of the manual says "Road Safety Auditors must examine the overall layout of the Highway Improvement Scheme. All users of the highway shall be considered including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians... Particular attention should be given to vulnerable road users..." And it specifically asks

- "Have the needs of cyclists been considered especially at junctions and roundabouts?"
- "Have pedestrian and cycle routes been provided where required?"

Others have raised concerns for any cyclists wishing to travel from Watton-at-Stone towards Ware on the A602. We don't believe it is safe to cycle on the A602 now or in the future and all guidance says that cyclists should not mix with motors on a road with this volume of high-speed traffic. The daily **traffic count in 2016 was 21,494 including 862 HGVs**. This explains why so few cyclists choose to use it unless they have to. The only safe option is for a parallel segregated cycle track along the whole A602, which others have suggested.

However, for the purposes of these planning applications, South Herts CTC is focussing on a safe way to avoid the A119 roundabout and for safe routes around the Stony Hills and Sacombe Pound junctions.

A119 Junction (Agenda item 2)

The A119 is a useful, flat and direct route to Hertford with relatively little traffic outside rush hour. It is preferable to the route via Datchworth, which is 70% further and considerably hillier. *[4.0 miles 56ft climb vs 6.9 miles 259ft climb]*

We are disappointed that traffic lights at the A119 junction were ruled out on the basis that they were not in keeping with a rural location.

You may have read our consultation response *[Appendix 5 on page 34 of the Application document]*.

Our primary concern is for cyclists travelling from Watton-at-Stone onto the A119 towards Hertford. The dangers to cyclists of large two-lane roundabouts are well known and we are seeking a condition to any approval that a safe cycle route should be provided on the South West corner, either as a segregated or a shared use cycle path.

The long established [LTN 2/08](#) standard, covering cycle infrastructure design, on which parts of the Roads in Hertfordshire guidance is based, says “[9.7.2] Many studies show there is a higher risk of cyclist injury accidents at roundabouts compared with other junctions. Injury accident rates for cyclists at roundabouts are up to fifteen times greater than for car occupants. Large, unsignalled multilane roundabouts are generally the most hazardous and intimidating for cyclists”. It goes on to say that for large roundabouts the first consideration should be “Can an alternative, relatively direct route be provided for pedestrians and cyclists to avoid the junction altogether?” We say that is practical and proportionate.

Sacombe Pound – Stony Hills (Agenda Item 3)

This 0.4 mile stretch of the A602 is an essential link for cyclists between south and north Hertfordshire.

You may have read our consultation response on this *[Appendix 5 on page 46 of the Application document]*. I don’t have time to repeat all of the arguments, but I would say that the design makes it even more dangerous for cyclists than it is now.

The proposal says the scheme is designed to the current standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and that the Road Safety Audit highlighted no issues relating to safety for cyclists. *[7.30]*

However, the designers have not followed the guidance that cyclists should not mix with motors on a road with this volume of high-speed traffic. As I have said, the daily traffic count in 2016 was 21,494 including 862 HGVs, but cyclists do have to use this essential short link on the A602 Ware Road.

In fact a member of the Forty Plus club [*Gladys Bray*] was hospitalised when a speeding lorry did a hit and run approaching the Sacombe Pound junction and we have seen other cycling casualties here over the years. Another member was blown off his bike by a passing caravan and ended up in hospital. So we only use this stretch because there is no alternative.

The new design for a single lane dual carriageway, while we welcome the waiting area for turning cyclists, provides **elongated pinch points** that would endanger cyclists approaching or leaving the junctions. Cyclists will be intimidated into using the 1 metre hard strip and the **draft from large, close passing vehicles** is particularly hazardous. Even at 30 mph the minimum road width for a bus to pass a cyclist is 5.05 metres. [*LTN2/08*].

We believe that the general realignment and reduction of gradients is likely to increase maximum traffic speed and reduce driver concentration. Insurance company surveys have shown that [over half of lorry drivers admit](#) to using their mobiles while driving.

The only safe option is for a parallel segregated cycle track along this part of the A602.

Herts Highways should be able to provide a 2-way cycle track on the west side of the new road, possibly using parts of the old road. To ensure this actually happens South Herts CTC is seeking a condition to any planning approval that a safe cycle route is provided between Stony Hills and Sacombe Pound.

The other important crossing is direct from the new **Stony Hills bridleway** into Sacombe Park. This crossing is already dangerous and I have experienced 2 near misses here myself [*photos*]. Some traffic exceeds the 60 mph speed limit and the visibility is poor due to a bend to the south and a hidden dip to the north.

The Hertfordshire Way crosses the A602 into Sacombe Park here and I have spoken to the chairman of the Herts and Middlesex Ramblers [*Roger Bangs*]. They support the application for a central refuge on this A602 crossing point.

DfT guidance for a cycle route crossing a 60 mph road is for grade separation i.e. a bridge or tunnel. However a signalised crossing is possible with 40 or 50 mph speed limits. This is preferable to a central refuge and would not require additional land to widen the road here. We believe this is essential for safety reasons. It would need to be located far enough away from the bend to the south and visible to traffic coming up hill from the north, so the crossing may need to be moved a little further north than its present location. South Herts CTC is seeking a condition to any planning approval that a safe crossing – a central refuge or signalised crossing - is provided for the bridleway into Sacombe Park.

Conclusion

I would conclude by saying that for cycling these plans fail to comply with Herts and East Herts Transport Policies [*TR1, TR10 and TR12*], they fail to comply with DfT design guidance [*LTN2/08; DMRB – IAN195*] and the Road Safety Audits have not properly assessed the risks to cyclists.

We believe it is essential, practical and proportionate to adapt these plans to meet our concerns.

To summarise we are asking that these applications should only be approved on condition that a safe bypass is provided for cyclists on the SW corner of the A119 roundabout, that a safe cycle track is provided along the A602 between the Stony Hills and Sacombe Pound junctions, and that a safe crossing is provided for the bridleway at Sacombe Park.

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Background material:

Herts Policies - Local Transport Plan (LTP4 Nov 2017)

- Transport infrastructure such as roads and rail lines can limit accessibility by severing communities, and by acting as a physical barrier to walking and cycling.
- ...there may be other benefits from [longer distance interurban cycle routes] such as in support for recreational cycling and tourism,
- The potential public health benefits of increased levels of active travel indicate this should be a high priority, and a key feature of the future transport system we are planning for.

- Active travel helps to improve physical and mental health and reduce obesity. Obesity causes a range of chronic health conditions ranging from cardiovascular disease to dementia.
- Physical activity can also help increase staff productivity and reduce absenteeism.

Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy

To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:

- Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel
- Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
- Passenger transport user needs
- Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
- Other motor vehicle user needs

Policy 8. Active Travel - Cycling

The county council aims to deliver a step change in cycling, through:

- a) Infrastructure improvements, especially within major urban areas to enable and encourage more cycling.
- b) Implementing measures to increase the priority of cyclists relative to motor vehicles.
- c) Improved safety for users including delivery of formal and informal cycle training schemes.
- d) Supporting promotion campaigns to inform, educate, reassure and encourage cycling provision and education, such as Bikeability.
- e) Facilitating provision of secure cycle parking.

Policy 12: Network Management

As part of its Network Management Duty the county council will seek to manage, and where feasible reduce traffic congestion, prioritising strategic routes. Activity will focus on making more efficient use of highway network capacity via:

- c) Reducing levels of single occupancy car use and encouraging travel by walking, cycling and passenger transport.

Policy 15: Speed Management

The county council through its Speed Management Strategy, a joint working strategy with the Police, will seek to manage the network to achieve appropriate speeds in the interests of safety, other road users, and the environment.

Policy 18: Transport Safety and Security

The county council will seek to improve the perception of safety and security on Hertfordshire's transport system where this could deter

people from travelling, particularly by active modes and passenger transport. This includes ensuring the county’s transport system is resilient and prepared for instances of major alert.

East Herts Local Plan 2007

TR10 Cycling – Protection of Cycle Routes

Account will be taken of the needs of cyclists whenever development would affect cycling routes. Development will only be permitted in such cases where the creation of suitable alternative or better facilities are achievable, at no significant inconvenience to cyclists, and would be provided at the expense of the developer. In order to maintain permeability for cyclists, the District Council will also seek to protect informal cycling routes.

NPPF Para 35

35. Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to:

- accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies
- give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities
- create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones
- incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles
- consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport

Design Guidance LTN 2/08

Table 1.3 Approximate guide to type of provision

Traffic flow	85th percentile speeds			
	<20 mph	20–30 mph	30–40 mph	>40 mph
<1,500 vpd, or <150 vph				Cycle lanes or tracks
1,500–3,000 vpd, or 150–300 vph			Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle lanes or tracks
3,000–8,000 vpd, or 300–800 vph	Cycle lanes may be appropriate	Cycle lanes may be appropriate	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle tracks
8,000–10,000 vpd, or 800–1,000 vph	Cycle lanes	Cycle lanes	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle tracks
>10,000 vpd	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle tracks

Table 2.3 Total width required for overtaking

Vehicle type/speed	Total width required (metres)
Car passing at 20 mph	3.8 m
Car passing at 30 mph	4.3 m
Bus/HGV passing at 20 mph	4.6 m
Bus/HGV passing at 30 mph	5.05 m

Road safety

More than 100 cyclists were killed on British roads in 2016. A further 3,397 were seriously injured, a 5 per cent increase in 12 months.

Hertfordshire (2013-15) 6,401 Slight / 981 Serious / 82 Fatal (over 3 years)

Cost per annum £187M (cost of prevention DfT 2014)

Hertfordshire ranked 43 of 78 counties.

Serious crashes in the county fell by 0% between 2010-12 and 2013-15.

Source:

<http://www.roadcrashindex.org/results/hertfordshire/safety-rank>

[Map showing current speed limits on UK roads](#)

Traffic counts (AADT)

The daily traffic counts on the A602 between the A119 and the A10 junctions in 2016 was 21,494. This included 862 HGVs, 3345 light goods, 83 buses, 17019 cars, 186 motorcycles and 5 bicycles.

Active Travel

£32 billion is spent on transport annually, while a tiny fraction £287 million or 0.9% goes on walking & cycling. This is due to fall to £147 million or 0.46% by 2020 (Department for Transport).

Health benefits of physical activity, road traffic accidents prevented, cleaner air and lower emissions give a ROI of £5.50 for every £1 spent.

Health – diabetes

One example is type 2 diabetes, due to a combination of obesity and a woeful lack of exercise. The UK is now the sixth fattest nation in the world and 1 in 4 adults takes less than 30 minutes exercise a week when the NHS recommends 150 minutes.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/27/men-weight-type-2-diabetes?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=254298&subid=8561215&CMP=EMCNEWEML6619I2

Health – pollution

Source: Royal College of Physicians 30/10/2017

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news/research-shows-44-uk-cities-breach-world-health-organization-guidelines-air-pollution>

Each year, outdoor air pollution is estimated to cause 40,000 premature deaths in the UK, 6 million sick days and cost the country £22.6 billion.

Cycling

28% of miles cycled is on rural minor roads. That's 0.92 billion miles a year in the UK.

A602 Stony Hills crossing usage

Strava Heatmaps can be used to compare the relative usage:

http://labs.strava.com/heatmap/#15/-0.077_20/51.84861/blue/bike

Sources:

Source	Link
Herts Transport policy and supporting strategies	https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/transport-planning/transport-policy-and-supporting-strategies.aspx
Highways Development Management, including 'Roads in Hertfordshire' design guide	https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx
Cycling Statistics (Cycling UK)	https://www.cyclinguk.org/resources/cycling-uk-cycling-statistics
Cyclescape thread	https://www.cyclescape.org/threads/3439
DMRB	http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/ha/standards/dmr/index.htm
IAN195	http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/ha/standards/ians/index.htm
LTN2/08	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-208