WinACC comments on HCC active travel schemes Autumn 2023,

Overview

WinACC welcomes all active travel schemes.

We hope that WCC and HCC will agree soon on a network of walking and cycling routes across the whole of Winchester town, enabling people to walk and cycle to the shops, schools, doctors' surgeries, recreation facilities, and the railway station along routes that are quiet, safe, and pollution-free. We hope too that they will develop a plan to reorganise buses so that all routes will serve the railway station, the High Street and the Leisure Centre, and provide good connections between all bus routes, and with train services.

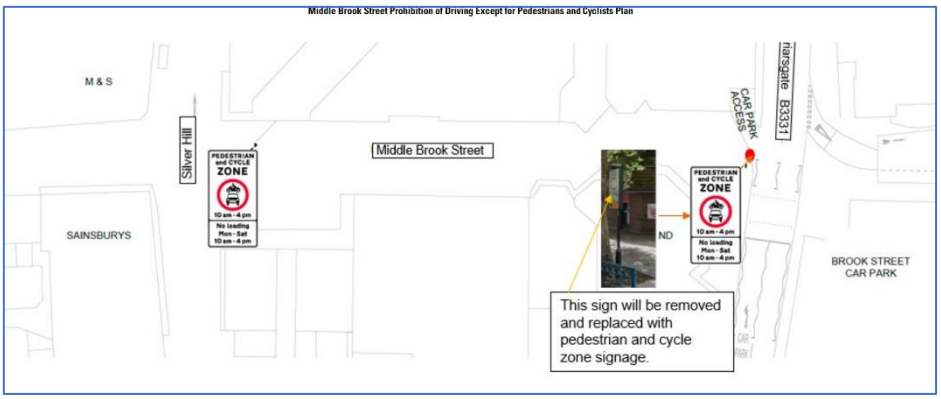
We believe that such plans will provide attractive ways of reducing the current reliance on the private car, and will bring about a major shift from types of transport that currently emit large amounts of greenhouse gas and pollute the city.

It's good news the County Council has received funding for a small group of schemes. It is also good to see that the County Council still regards active travel as an important part of the Winchester Movement Strategy.

We are disappointed, however, that these schemes are such small steps in the right direction, and that they will have little impact. The schemes are too marginal and incoherent to deliver the scale of change we desperately need. We must do far more if we are to reduce the unsustainable level of greenhouse gas polluting emissions produced by existing transport arrangements in Winchester town.

The schemes themselves need some detailed improvements if they are to achieve even their limited potential.

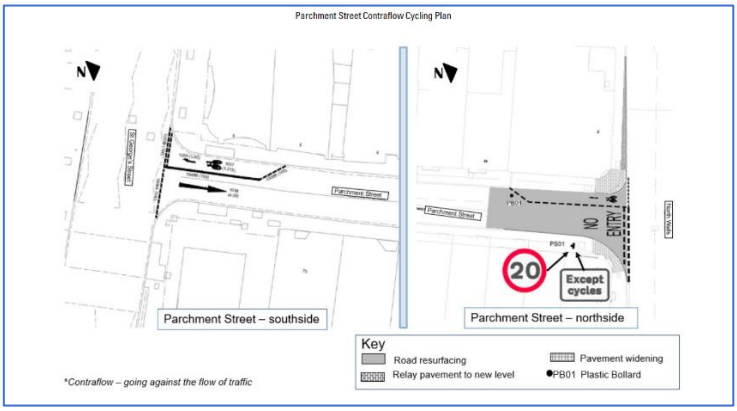
Middle Brook Street Prohibition of Driving Except for Pedestrians and Cycles



This scheme seems to involve signage only. It will be of limited use unless:

- The one-way street to the south of scheme (between Sainsbury's and Marks and Spencer's is made two-way for bicycles.
- There is greater clarity about the crossing arrangements at Silver Hill.
- The crossing of Friarsgate to the north is not made easier for cyclists travelling in both directions.
- The loading and motor vehicle access proposed before 10 and after 4 (currently not permitted) is not introduced – there are sufficient loading bays elsewhere, and why is vehicle access being introduced? Surely this is a mistake.
- There is greater clarity about the surfacing or surface markings to clarify where bicycles and pedestrians should go.

Parchment Street Contraflow Cycling



This scheme will be of limited value without more proposals:

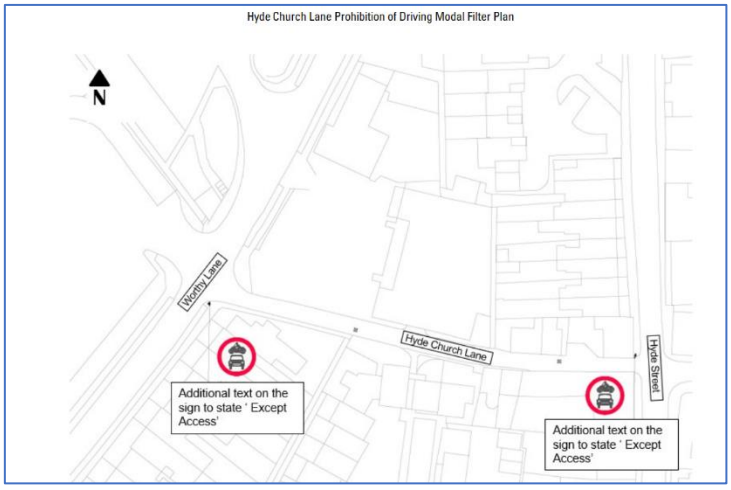
- to help cyclists gain access to the High Street, perhaps removing the 'no vehicles' sign and installing cycle parking on the southern continuation of Parchment Street



- to help cyclists gain safe access from the north, and Hyde Abbey Road
- to clear Parchment Street of parked cars.to provide a safe segregated lane for cyclists (the scheme seems to require that they cycle on the right-hand side of the road – this will surely be unsafe unless the lane is segregated)

Cyclists will still have to take risks and break rules to make full use of this proposal. It will help cyclists do a loop from North Walls (eastbound) to St George's Street (westbound) but more thought is needed about how it can be made more useful. Many cyclists are deterred by the traffic on North Walls and St George's Street, but this scheme should exploit more completely the potential to attract cyclists from the Hyde direction with a good safe crossing of North Walls. A cycling contraflow could prove more useful in Upper Brook Street to make use of a feeder route across St Peter's Car Park. Subsequently this could be designed in to the proposed housing development there.

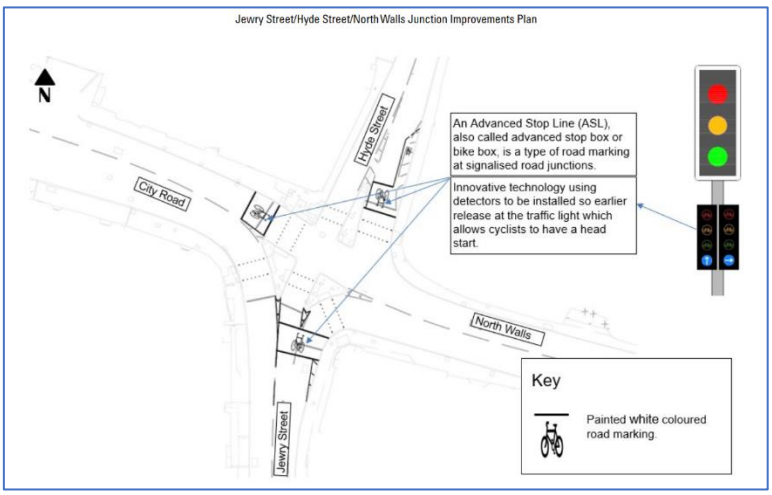
Hyde Church Lane Prohibition of Driving Modal Filter



This will be a useful scheme for strictly local walking and cycling, but will be of extremely limited impact without further work on how it could be part of longer routes. At the very least it could be linked to improving routes across Worthy Lane / Cattle Market Car Parks and proposals for signage of longer routes for both pedestrian and cyclists. It could, for example be promoted as part of a walking route from the northern car parks to the centre of town, or part of a safe cycling route from King's Barton to the centre.

Jewry Street/Hyde Street/North Walls Junction Improvements

In that this proposal introduces advance cycle stop lines to Winchester town, this is a long-overdue innovation and hopefully will pave the way for many more at, for example, the Albion road junction. However, the detail of the proposal suggests that this will, again, be of very limited value.



On both Jewry Street and City Road, without protected cycle access lanes like the one proposed for Hyde Street, it is difficult to imagine how cyclists will gain access to the advance boxes, unless there is no traffic queue, in which case the advance boxes will not especially be needed. Worse, cyclists will be tempted to weave their way to the front of the queue and risk a serious accident, especially on Jewry Street where traffic will be to both the right and the left. In situations like this it is surely necessary to narrow the traffic lanes to make space for safe (kerb separated?) lanes for cyclists. The cycle access lane on Hyde Street should surely be longer than two car lengths.

What cyclists really need here is a return to a cyclist- and pedestrian-only Hyde Street, and a southbound contraflow along Jewry Street. This proposal feels like a relatively pointless compromise.