

Background Information from previous AbITS Members Working Groups

5 October 2006

The following options for the contra-flow cycle lane were tabled:

- Implement a contra-flow cycle lane from Lombard Street to Bridge Street, or
- Do nothing (cyclists dismount).

A revised loading bay will be shown on both options.

A vote taken by members on the proposals resulted in 3 for the second option of 'do nothing (cyclists dismount)' and 1 in favour of implementing the contra-flow cycle lane. In addition; a letter written by a non-attending member prior to the meeting stated support for the proposal.

28 June 2007

A number of councillors disagreed with the idea of implementing a contra-flow cycle lane at the northern section of East Saint Helen Street as it would impede on the visual effect of the County Hall / Museum and possibly affect the siting of a lift to the rear of the building. The argument was also made that the contra-flow cycle lane should be implemented as it was part of NCR 5 and it would go against Oxfordshire County Council's policy if it was not put in.

22 November 2007

The issue of the contra-flow cycle lane on East Saint Helen Street was considered at the meeting for Delegated Decisions by the Cabinet member for Transport (CMDT) on the. The meeting resolved to "authorise officers to take forward the design as shown on Annex 2 (now Annex 1) and investigate the acquisition of land required to implement the scheme by negotiation, or if necessary, by compulsory purchase".

5 December 2007

It was agreed that a discussion between Oxfordshire County Council and Abingdon Town Council would need to take place to establish the land that would be needed to be purchased in order to implement the cycle lane. The question was raised of suspending the contra-flow cycle lane at such times when East Saint Helen Street became the main route for traffic (i.e. during the fairs) and also whether Oxfordshire County Council would cover the cost.

9 June 2008

The MWG Officer Report noted the need for formal consultation which could not take place until a full review of the town centre schemes had been completed and a decision on how High Street phase 2 should be progressed had been made.

17 November 2008

Oxfordshire County Council agreed to carry out a formal consultation on the East Saint Helen Street contra-flow cycle lane as soon as possible with the final decision being taken to the Cabinet Member for Transport meeting.

14 July 2009

It was noted in the AbITS MWG officer report that funding for High Street phase 2 (which includes the contra-flow cycle lane) had been spilt between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years. This was due to Abingdon Town Council seeking a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant for the County Hall with funding available from April 2010. Given that the County Hall and surrounding footways could impact the town centre scheme both on High Street and East Saint Helen Street (including the contra-flow cycle lane), it was decided the County Hall area of the scheme would be deferred until the 2010/11 financial year.

6 November 2009

Officers reported to the AbITS MWG meeting that an informal consultation on the principle of a contra-flow cycle lane in East Saint Helen Street was planned for early 2010.

Summary of comments received during informal consultation Friday 5 February 2010 to 1March 2010.

No	Respondent	Date Received	Comments	Officer Comments
1	Resident, Abingdon	06/02/2010	1) There have been numerous potential collisions between cyclists, cars and pedestrians. 2) The current location of the taxi rank is a concern. 3) Residents parking should not decrease and the free space from the relocation of the taxi rank used towards more resident and disabled parking. 4) How can the contra-flow be implemented without something else being cut.	1) There have been no reported accidents between cars, pedestrians and cyclists in the Lombard Street / East St Helen Street/Bridge Street area within the last 5 years. 2) The taxi ranks are to be relocated to Broad Street & Queen Street. OCC has completed the physical works and is now waiting for the Vale of White Horse District Council's Licensing Team to amend the order. 3/4) If the contra-flow cycle lane is implemented there will be a loss of five pay & display (P&D) spaces. A disabled bay will be introduced outside No8 East St Helen Street.
2	Saint Helen's Dental Practice	09/02/2010	1) Concerned about illegal parking on double yellow lines. 2) Concerned about the lack of visible authority (traffic warden, community officer). Therefore proposed cycle lane could potentially be obstructed without proper enforcement. 3) People still cycle on the pavement.	1/2/3) These are enforcement issues covered by the police.
3	Abingdon County Hall Museum	10/02/2010	1) As the plan suggests the contra-flow cycle lane will be in the part of East St Helen Street outside of County Hall. Therefore, space	1) Interpretation of the plan is correct; the back of County Hall will be unaffected as the contra-flow cycle lane will be on carriageway on East

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			<p>between back of County Hall and existing roadway will be unaffected.</p> <p>2) Are you aware of museum's impending development involving new disabled access arrangements to cellars of the building?</p>	<p>St Helen Street.</p> <p>2) Oxfordshire County Council, Abingdon Town Council and Vale of White Horse District Council officers met on 11 March 2010 to discuss work taking place at Abingdon County Hall Museum. Following a decision on the contra-flow cycle lane another meeting will be required to progress detailed design of the County Hall area.</p>
4	Ock Meadow Parish Councillor (via Abingdon Pedestrian & Cycle Association)	10/02/2010	<p>1) Contra-flow is an absolute must.</p> <p>2) Issue is talked about by people in south Abingdon</p> <p>3) There is strong public support</p>	
5	Caldecott Parish Councillor (via Abingdon Pedestrian & Cycle Association)	11/02/2010	<p>1) Will contra-flow cycle lane narrow the turning arc for vehicles going from Bridge Street into East St Helen Street?</p> <p>2) Something should be put in place to slow traffic coming along Stert Street so nobody can do above 20mph.</p> <p>3) Would cyclists be asked to dismount before crossing from refuge?</p>	<p>1) Turning circle will not be narrowed; tracking has been done to certify this.</p> <p>2) A 20mph limit for Abingdon town centre was consulted upon December 2009 and agreed in February 2010. Stert Street was included in the list of streets that would be changed to 20mph.</p> <p>3) Cyclists would not be asked to dismount.</p>
6	Abingdon Town Council Officer	18/02/2010 and 01/03/2010	<p>1) Who has been involved in the informal consultation?</p> <p>2) Will OCC go ahead, whichever way, after an informal consultation and not go to formal</p>	<p>1) Frontagers in the vicinity (residents and businesses), AbITS MWG attendees, key stakeholders & Choose Abingdon Partnership.</p> <p>2) If scheme went ahead, then a TRO would</p>

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			<p>stage?</p> <p>3) Lack of safety, loss of residents parking space and interruption of the historic view of the area with traffic signage.</p>	<p>be required with a legal requirement for the County Council to formally consult. The scheme could not be implemented without that consultation. Informal consultation assesses opinion on the scheme and enables a decision to be taken to either move to formal consultation and detailed design or to remove it from town centre scheme.</p>
7	ON Communication / The Media Lab	18/02/2010	<p>1) Believe that cyclists coming from Lombard St create a real danger for anyone crossing the northern section of E St Helen Street.</p> <p>2) Convinced that contra-flow cycle lane will not make it any less dangerous and may even create a greater hazard with pedestrians, cars and delivery trucks</p> <p>3) Cannot believe this scheme is a priority and not happy to see public money being spent on unfounded projects.</p>	<p>2) A safety audit will assess this.</p>
8	Thames Valley Police	18/02/2010 and 23/02/2010	<p>1) During a site visit, it was clear that cyclists chose to ignore the cyclists dismount sign at the Lombard Street junction and cycle against the flow of traffic on East St Helen Street.</p> <p>2) The current road width does not allow for this practice to be formalised. The taxi bays and P&D parking on nearside of the road reduce the carriageway width.</p> <p>3) Adjacent to the Punch Bowl PH and Philosophy Hairdressing the road is narrowed.</p> <p>4) Amendments would need to be made to</p>	<p>1) The scheme is trying to address this issue by making it legal to do so.</p> <p>2) These will be removed.</p> <p>5) Cannot park on that side of the road due to the narrowness. Any parking would cause a disruption and be illegal.</p> <p>7) Cyclists are expected to carry on straight across and continue on National Cycle Route 5.</p>

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		<p>current parking and taxi bay TRO's.</p> <p>5) An informal cycle lane does not prevent some motorists who choose to park on that side of the road (i.e., Blue badge holders).</p> <p>6) Need advance warning to drivers where the cycle lane crosses the junction of High Street, Bridge Street and Stert Street.</p> <p>7) On reaching giveaway marking on the central island, what is expected of the cyclist from this position (cycle along Bridge Street or cross towards the Abbey grounds in conflict with pedestrians using the footways?</p> <p>8) If the proposals proceed then additional contra-flow signs are needed on East St Helen Street approaching Lombard Street.</p> <p>9) Considerable ponding was present at the side of the road along East St Helen Street.</p> <p>10) Although proposals legalise current practice, it is considered they will not adequately address the question of making the practice legal.</p> <p>11) While it is appreciated that this road is subject to speed limit change, removing taxi bays and P & D parking, speed may increase.</p> <p>12) East St Helen Street is part of a strategic diversion route for through traffic during events held within town centre where all traffic is diverted.</p> <p>13) This type of facility may have worked well in Oxford but Abingdon has different road</p>	
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			environment and general use by cyclists.	
9	Resident, Abingdon	18/02/2010	<p>1) Happy with the eventual removal of the taxi ranks.</p> <p>2) Concern over the lost of residential P&D parking spaces.</p> <p>3) There is shortage of parking spaces; would residents parking be added where the taxi stand was?</p>	<p>3) Due to the lack of space, residents parking would not be introduced where the taxi rank is currently sited.</p>
10	Chairman of Abingdon Pedestrian & Cycle Association	23/02/2010	<p>1) Welcome provision of safe contra-flow instead of pushing bike from Lombard Street up East St Helen Street.</p> <p>2) Instruction to dismount is more than a decided irritation. When pushing the cycle up the street, it takes up a width of at least 2 pedestrians walking side by side. This presents problems when other pedestrians are walking in the opposite direction. Cyclists would then move on to the road.</p> <p>3) No footpath on the left hand side of the road between the Punchbowl and High Street junction. Cyclists are forced to stay on road along this section or cross over and face the same problem with oncoming pedestrians.</p> <p>4) Actual precedents close at hand – (wall to wall) St Helens Wharf adjacent to St Helens Church is 21ft wide and distance between parapets of bridge over the Ock is 21ft. Cyclists are permitted to cycle both ways on a</p>	<p>4) St Helen’s Church area is a two way street therefore ‘shuttle working’ (priority system) currently operates at this point. East St Helen Street is one way so the movement is currently illegal.</p> <p>6) There has been a lack of formal response from Abingdon Town Council.</p> <p>7) It is very difficult to provide such facilities of adequate width in historic towns due to available widths and highway land.</p>

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			<p>one way street. Compared to East St Helen Street (at narrowest point) is 24 ft wide, there is more room and therefore illogical to ask cyclists to dismount.</p> <p>5) Cyclists emerging from East St Helen Street heading from St Helens Wharf have worse visibility than at the Punchbowl as the road adjacent to the church is only just wide enough for a cycle and car; and when travelling in opposite directions it is possible for them to come unexpectedly face to face.</p> <p>6) Abingdon Town Council (ATC) should support any reasonable measures to promote cycling as a means to reduce car use.</p> <p>7) Should provide safe alternatives to the footpaths or main roads such as cycleways / cycle tracks to keep children / young adults safe.</p> <p>8) Cyclists will cycle safely if there is adequate provision.</p> <p>9) Should extend and improve cycle provision where necessary to encourage cyclists.</p> <p>10) Contra-flow will also close one remaining gap in the local section of Sustrans Route 5.</p>	
11	Vale of White Horse District Council	01/03/2010	<p>1) Vale officers consulted both Vale AbITS members and Abingdon members and as a result the Vale can not provide a single view corporate response.</p> <p>2) In respect of the three AbITS members, views were split 2:1 in favour of the scheme.</p>	<p>(2 for the scheme and 3 against the scheme – 5 consulted in total). Even though the District Council have chosen not to provide a formal response to the consultation, it would seem clear from the members that they consulted that they are</p>

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			However, the two Abingdon members opposed the scheme on safety grounds.	more against the proposal than in support.
12	Vale of White Horse District Council Officer	01/03/2010	1) At officer level, the Vale has expressed concerns over the safety of contra-flow cycle lanes. 2) Assumes that OCC have undertaken a safety audit to satisfy concerns over safety.	2) Feasibility stage safety audits have been undertaken previously. If we do go to formal consultation, a new safety audit will be carried out as part of detailed design.
13	Abingdon Town Council	01/03/2010	The Town Council was advised that this was a corporate matter and not enough time was given for debate and recommendation to be made to be made at full Town Council.	The consultation was undertaken over 21 days which is the usual length of time for an informal consultation.
14	Various Town Council Members via the Abingdon Town Council Planning and Highways Committee	01/03/2010	The following comments were made: 1) Members were advised that the consultation was a corporate matter because of its potential impact in planning terms, on the residents' parking scheme and on Town Council owned land, and that any view expressed would require a recommendation to Town Council which does not meet until 24 March 2010. 2) The Abingdon Town Council Planning and Highways Committee (22 February 2010) was advised that any comments made by members would be minuted and forwarded to OCC, however due to the timescale these should be viewed as comments made by various members of the council and not a town council view. 3) No reference of the council's eventual recommendation may be made by either the	6) This will be undertaken as part of the detailed design stage. 11) Track templates have been undertaken – the width is still wide enough to complete the turning movement easily. 15) This is part of a conservation area therefore, we would not put colour of tarmac. 18) We are consulting on the principle, not the detailed design. 19) The consultation period was over three weeks as per Oxfordshire County Council standards. ATC only receiving their consultation letter late can only be attributed to a delay at the post office as all consultation letters were sent out at the same time and we started receiving responses from the 6 Feb 2010. * This topic has been discussed at numerous

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		<p>length of the order of the various points made.</p> <p>4) Contra-flow would complete Sustrans Route 5 which would be welcomed by the cyclists who use it.</p> <p>5) Would help to maintain a growth in and encourage cycling and sustainable transport within the town centre.</p> <p>6) Not convinced it is safe, would need a full safety audit.</p> <p>7) Opportunity lost to add or enhance pedestrian footways at the rear of County Hall.</p> <p>8) Loading bay width is narrow and lorries would obstruct the cycle lane.</p> <p>9) Concerns over the island in middle of junction with fast flowing traffic from Stert Street giving little or no indication of which way it intended to travel.</p> <p>10) An area of historic interest and conservation – would require intrusive street signage and street lighting in a very sensitive area.</p> <p>11) Turning access to East St Helen Street from Bridge Street would be more difficult (disabled drivers can park on double yellow lines).</p> <p>12) Loss of 4 parking spaces which form part of the Residents Parking and P&D bays. Needs more not fewer.</p> <p>13) Could impact on the rest of East St Helen Street with cyclists using the rest of the street</p>	<p>AbITS Members Working Group meetings (09/08/2007 and 05/12/2007) at which Abingdon Town Council is represented.</p>
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			<p>as contra-flow.</p> <p>14) Concerns that cyclists would need to slow or stop twice at what are only give-way lines.</p> <p>15) Could consider coloured tarmac for any cycle lane.</p> <p>16) Present situation of cyclists having to dismount at the end of Lombard Street means cyclists have to walk contra-flow in the road as the pavement is too narrow.</p> <p>17) The contra-flow works at St Helen's Wharf.</p> <p>18) Whilst it was appreciated that this was an informal consultation members considered that the plans lacked the requisite amount of detail required for any meaningful recommendation.</p> <p>19) Members were disappointed that after a number of years of waiting for this consultation, the response period for the informal consultation was so short, particularly as the consultation letter was received on 17 February 2010 although dated 5 February 2010.</p>	
15	Sustrans	01/03/2010	<p>1) East St Helen Street is on National Route 5 of the National Cycle Network and at present constitutes one of the main gaps in provision on the route south of Oxford. We are keen to see this gap closed and welcome the County Council's proposals.</p> <p>2) Northbound cyclists have 2 options – either to get off and push their bikes along the street or to press on against the traffic flow. In the</p>	<p>2) Cyclists should dismount and not cycle contra-flow to traffic.</p>

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		<p>absence of a contra-flow cycle lane, this can cause unnecessary conflict with pedestrians and motorists.</p> <p>3) A contra-flow cycle lane will have numerous other benefits. It will complete National Route 5 of National Cycle Network through Abingdon. Make the route more attractive for both local and long distance journeys. Encourage a greater take up of cycling with all the associated health and environmental benefits.</p> <p>4) There is at least the 4 metre width of carriageway suggested by the DfT as the minimum necessary to accommodate an advisory cycle lane on a road like East St Helen Street where traffic pressures are low. The relatively low volume of traffic on the street makes it desirable as a cycle route – and provides a safer route through the town than the more heavily trafficked alternatives.</p> <p>5) There are many examples of successful contra-flow cycle lanes around the country including Little Clarendon Street in Oxford which is a similarly narrow street.</p> <p>6) Also welcome the proposed build-out at the north end of East St Helen Street and would ask that consideration also be given to a crossing of some sort on Bridge Street itself to assist the safe passage of pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	
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