

Danny Yee – St Clements experimental bus lane proposal

Bus lanes are a key active travel concern.

The space taken up by bus lanes often makes provision of adequate walking and cycling infrastructure impossible. And in many cases people cycling use bus lanes, either because no other provision exists or because the alternative provision is of poor quality. Where cycle "tracks" are too narrow or shared with pedestrians, lack priority over side entries, have trees in the middle of them, and so forth, using the bus lane is often simpler and safer. There are obvious examples on Botley Rd, Woodstock Rd, and London Rd. But this kind of "dual" provision, where some people cycle in a bus lane and others in an adjacent cycle track, runs counter to Sustainable Safety and inevitably results in a choice between substandard options.

We do not believe that there is anywhere inside the ring-road where bus lanes can be provided without unacceptable compromises to walking and cycling provision. Bus prioritisation needs to be achieved by inhibiting use of private motor vehicles, not by taking essential space away from active travel.

So we support the proposed bus lanes on St Clements, but only as a temporary measure until the traffic filters are in place. The space they use should then be reallocated to improve the footways and cycle infrastructure. And this should be given high priority -- the success of the traffic filters will depend on modal shift, and making cycling on St Clements more accessible will be one key to enabling that. It might not be the best possible design, but a "Quickways" style layout could be implemented quickly and cheaply.

(The London Place double junction needs to be completely redesigned, with walking and cycling movements prioritised over motor traffic throughput, but that is a much more expensive, longer-term project.)

More generally, schemes involving bus lanes and bus prioritisation need to be planned, designed and implemented in conjunction with the active travel team, and with a coproduction process involving active travel groups as well as the bus operators. I understand that the four million pounds left for the Woodstock Rd corridor improvements is being used for a scheme focused on bus lanes; unlike with the earlier planning for that corridor - under the previous administration - active travel groups have not been involved in that at all.