

Danny Yee – Sheep Street ETRO

While creating a special status for disabled cyclists is a good idea, this is not something that any other local authority in the UK has done and it is unclear how it could effectively be implemented. We suggest that officers be asked to explore the options for such a scheme, but that creating one not be a requirement for either continuing the ETRO or making it permanent.

It may be relatively straightforward to issue permits to people with disabilities who are reliant on cycling and request an exemption, but how would such a permit be used and displayed? Since, unlike a blue badge, it would authorise movement rather than parking, it would need to be attached to a moving cycle in such a way as to be clearly visible to people from all directions.

And would such a token or permit be understood and recognised by people? Blue badges are managed by local authorities but are used nationally -- and are still not universally understood.

My fear is that this will create a situation where some people with disabilities are authorised to cycle but where that authorisation is not recognised or understood, leading to abuse and hostility being directed at them. Being subsequently able to show a permit is hardly a satisfactory resolution of that. So if disabled cycling permits are introduced, the county would need to run an outreach/education program to explain them.

One option, either in conjunction with a permit scheme or independently, would be to put up "cyclists dismount unless a mobility aid" signs, though combining that with time restrictions would make for a complicated message.

However implemented, any such scheme would only address part of the problem. It would do nothing, for example, to help people who are pregnant and can cycle but not easily walk, or anyone with a tricycle or cargo cycle that can't easily be pushed.

One of the respondents said "Allowing cycling on some days and not others is confusing for people" and others made similar comments. It would seem simpler to just allow cycling on Sheep St at all times of the week and let the high density of people on market days control their behaviour. Both my own experience and studies suggest that pedestrian-cycle conflicts are rare when a space is very crowded, because people cycling have no choice but to slow down and give way, or dismount.

More generally, I would like to commend officers on their robust monitoring and evaluation of this scheme.