

CTC reply to the consultation document Basingstoke top of the town



CTC National
Cycling Charity

Masterplan 2014

As local representative of the CTC national cycling charity and CTC North Hampshire the comments below are related to cycling. It is to be hoped that they will be found useful in revision of the Masterplan.

The first three vision points are particular relevant to cycling, whether utility or for leisure/tourism. We are concerned that although the barriers to cycling are recognised, any proposals to remedy them are omitted. We give some detail as to why it is so important for the economic well being of this area for cycle access to be easy and attractive. Quotations are given italics.

- 1. To improve the shopping and food offer in Top of the Town so that it becomes a more attractive destination – with a focus on independent and specialist shops and cafes;*
- 2. To ensure that Top of the Town is easy to get to by car whilst enhancing accessibility by other modes including bus, bicycle and foot and to locate car parking and bus stops where this helps to channel footfall through Top of the Town;*
- 3. To improve the connections both within Top of the Town and to other parts of Basingstoke by car, bus, bicycle and foot creating a more integrated place;*

Comments

Page 27, para 2.4

Road network

It is significant that there is no vehicular traffic throughout a large area of the town. The road network map shows how inimical access is to the top of town by bicycle and bus. This means that people who are no longer fit and able but not disabled enough to use mobility scooters are severely restricted, the distances which need to be walked are immense so that even travel by car is not attractive. Partial pedestrianisation with buses and cycling allowed is a good answer. At present bus stops are distant from most of the shops and venues. In Exeter the city centre is vibrant but the bus stops are spaced out at frequent intervals down the central spine street, there is also plenty of seating to allow you to rest – shopping can be an exhausting experience. Exeter is a marvellous city to go shopping by public transport.

Parking

The well positioned multi-storey carpark can free up roads many of which are used for storing cars rather than allowing cars, pedestrians and cyclists along them. No

mention is made of cycle parking, there needs to be widespread short stay cycle stands throughout the town in all streets as well as long term lock up storage for workers. Cars parked on the road mean that there is insufficient space for cycling and restricted vehicular flow. (e.g. Southern road and Jubilee road have been made one way in order to cater for parking). Street car parking is only necessary because of plans to remove the many convenient cheap short stay car parks surrounding the top of town. These car parks are very close to all parts of Top of Town making it easy and convenient for both the quick visit by car and also the disabled. An alternative to on street parking is setting down and pick up points which function in the same way for cars as bus stops do for buses. There is no demand for on street bus parking

Cycling

Basingstoke is an ideal sized town for cycling, but offers poor facilities. The existing cycle route network is fragmented and there is a lack of dedicated cycle facilities on main routes. The large-scale junctions across the town discourage cycling. Cycling is prohibited on pedestrianised streets in Top of the Town (with a max £500 fine) and there is limited cycle parking facilities.

The barriers to cycling are recognised and well summarised, but not a single proposal is made about overcoming any of these.

OBJECTIVE TWO To ensure that Top of the Town is easy to get to by car whilst enhancing accessibility by other modes including bus, bicycle and foot and to locate car parking and bus stops where this helps to channel footfall through Top of the Town

It is difficult to understand the reasoning behind this objective. The top of town is already easy to reach by car.

Changes to the road network and increased parking will make it even easier to travel by car which contradicts the aims of the county LTP (Local Transport Plan) to reduce motorised travel demand. There are no proposals to increase accessibility by bus or bicycle and the changes to the roads and increased traffic created will make cycling much more difficult. The train and bus stations are not positioned centrally, but at one end of the town, discouraging people from going to the far end of town, the Top of town.

“there is no evidence of any connection between the availability of extensive and cheap (or even free) on-street parking, and high street vitality¹. If there is any relationship, it is often entirely masked by other (much more important) variables. There is no clear relationship between footfall (what matters) and the cost and availability of parking².

Transport for London research has shown that those who arrive on foot, or by public transport, on the high street spend more (much more) over the long-term than those who arrive by car³. These results are mirrored by similar studies in other⁴ areas, including

¹ Marsden, G.R. (2006) The evidence base for parking policies - a review. Transport Policy, 13 (6). pp. 447-457. Available at <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/2023/>

² http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Re-thinking_Car_Parking.pdf

³ Transport for London, Town Centre Study 2011. Available at <https://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/customer-research/town-centre-st...>

⁴ The past, present and future of Acorn Road. Available at <http://newcycling.org/news/20130529/past-present-and-future-acorn-road>

Germany⁵. More revenue is generated on the high street in Denmark by people who arrive by bike, than those who arrive by car⁶.” Quoted from Cycling Embassy⁷

Objective Ten

To enhance the streets and spaces throughout Top of the Town and remove unnecessary visual clutter

Visual clutter includes on street car parking. This valuable space needs to be available for pedestrians and especially cycling.

Cycling

page 46 map of proposed road network structure showing urban roads and pedestrian roads and map page 48 showing land use.

It is not clear how this will improve the cycle network.

Para 4.2 spatial plan page 49

“Creating a more connected and legible urban fabric “

“The concept masterplan aims to address this through promoting a number of new connections through Top of the Town including:

- 1. A new east-west pedestrian route linking Wote Street and Church Street (reproviding the historic Potters Lane that was lost when the shopping centres were developed);*
- 2. A new north-south route linking festival Place to London Road via May Place; and*
- 3. A north-south connection linking New Road to Southern Road across the current Castons car park.*
- 4. 8 Cross Street will become part of a new west to east route across the Top of the Town enhancing footfall on this street and bringing more activity o the northern end of Church Street.”*

A grid network can either benefit or prevent cycling depending on how it is implemented, this is not explained. In Manual for Streets a grid layout can benefit both cyclists and pedestrians:

- It can reduce traffic density and congestion by dispersing traffic over a larger area
- It can reduce traffic speeds if frequent junctions are non-priority i.e. everyone gives way
- If permeability is reduced for cars but not foot and bicycle flows e.g. by virtual one way streets (no entry at one end and not at the other)
- If rat running is prevented by limited permeability

⁵ Cycling to shopping - evidence from research. Available at <http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/en/transferstelle/downloads/cye>

⁶ City of Copenhagen, 2012 Are cyclists good customers? Available at http://velo-city2013.com/wp-content/uploads/20130612_mariekastrup.pdf

⁷ <http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/news/2014/02/12/response-to-dft-consultation-on-local-authority-parking>

Enhancements to pedestrian permeability are needed but what about the cycle permeability which is non-existent, not just in need of enhancing? Backstreets in Brighton are attractive to both cyclists and pedestrians, because of the grid pattern but also because there are few cars going through or parked. It is important that cycling is permitted on all parts of the grid, including of course Wote street, Church Street, London Street, Winchester street and the restoration of the Potters lane.

There is no mention of how cycling is to be accommodated on either the streets for motorised traffic or in the pedestrianised areas. There is no plan to introduce buses to Winchester street and London street. The large area of the town out of bounds to environmentally benign vehicular traffic does not seem to have changed. Bus users from the north of town cannot get here unless they change buses in the bus station. As already stated in the previous consultation on the Top of Town cyclists need to access the south of town, a very difficult thing to do in view of the one way system, and even more so if there is a multi-storey carpark in Southern road. The southern road car park was a key access route to and from the town centre. The only solution provided by planners was signposting – but how do you signpost the way out of the town centre the wrong way down oneway streets?

Redevelopment of the various carparks will adversely affect cyclists unless dedicated routes across these areas are provided. At present they provide the only permitted permeability routes in the southern half of town. On the other hand providing a multi-storey carpark with reasonable rates for local residents will certainly reduce on street carparking as most home owners have no private space/building for their car.

It is stated that New road will be a two way road, but no mention is made of space for cycling. New road is not a quiet back street, it is a spine road, where will be the space for cycling, none is shown in the illustration. At least 2m wide cycle lane is needed on both sides of the street, total 4m. Where cars are parked additional space is needed to allow for the opening of car doors. Where is the cycle network for it to link into?

Increasing economic viability – Shopping and cycling

(linking vision points 1,2,3)

Much is made of attracting custom from other towns (i.e. increasing number of car trips and length of trips which contradicts Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) by providing upmarket shops. This does not address the question as to why locals do not use the Top of Town. It is surmised that as they are mostly in a lower income bracket they will not frequent this type of shop.

We need to question why local residents do not want to use the Top of Town, rather than assuming it is the environmental appearance or lack of car access. All shops on the edge of towns have reduced passing trade compared with the centre, the Top of Town is geographically on the edge of town. The planners have correctly observed that it is also isolated by the road design system, but this isolation only applies to pedestrians and cyclists, not to cars. It is convenient and quick to shop by car in the top of town, or anywhere else for that matter as carparks are provided in all locations,

on every edge of town and also in the centre of town. In other words car accessibility is not a problem at present and a grid of roads would maintain the already excellent accessibility for cars. (It is essential that any grid of roads reduces permeability for cars whilst increasing that for pedestrian and cycling in accordance with **planning advice in Manual for Streets**.) Ample car parking is also not a deterrent to shopping, only the price. Car parking prices for shoppers need to be the same for all shoppers whether out of town, in or near town.

No analysis has been made of the economic benefits to the community of shopping by bike, perhaps the planners are unaware of the research in this area. CTC has made a separate submission on this to the borough (see separate appendices). No attempt is being made to improve trade for the one cycle shop which is in the Top of Town. Interestingly there has been one here on this site since at least the mid 50's. Competition is tough the shop near the Anvil and one at the station both closed down. However since these bike shop closures cycling has started to boom⁸. If more cyclists were encouraged to come to this shop (good cycle network, and cycle parking outside the shop) they would also be likely to frequent other shops as well. Cycle sales, Cycle sport and Cycle tourism are growth industries in a time of economic downturn. Cycle tourism benefits the hospitality sector (bars and restaurants) provided there is good cycle access. Cyclists enjoy having a destination for their cycling – markets, special events, museum so this links in with other vision points. Utility cycling (commuting and shopping) is also increasing.

No analysis has been given as to why so many shops have closed down so that we only have cafes and restaurants. As a pedestrian and cyclist there is nothing which requires me to come here on a regular basis, either daily or weekly. Apart one food shop for people of Asian origin there are no food shops in the old town centre, nor is there much in the way of utility shops, in other words there is no NEED to come to this part of town. Tescos, Iceland, Sainsburys and soon Waitrose are all situated centrally or on the northern edge, they are visited by people frequently. The former fish shop always had lots of customers whenever I visited, but the owner told me he was closing because he could not afford the rent and rates, not because of lack of trade. Apart from luxury boutique shops, no analysis has been given of what type of shop the top of town should/could attract.

CTC has already sent documents on the economic case for cycling to the borough council. These are appended separately.

Conclusion

⁸ Global Bicycles Market to Exceed US\$77.7 Billion by 2015, According to a New Report by Global Industry Analysts, Inc the **bicycle market** enjoyed a **growth** of 5.2% in 2011
<http://www.colibi.com/docs/issuu/European%20Bicycle%20Market%20&%20Industry%20Profile%20-%20Edition%202012.pdf>
http://velo-city2013.com/wp-content/uploads/20130612_mariekastrup.pdf
LSE report on cycling <http://www.bikebiz.com/news/read/bicycling-is-booming-says-top-economist/011721>
https://corporate.sky.com/documents/pdf/press_releases/2011/the_british_cycling_economy

We laud the vision of making the top of town attractive and accessible to cycling, we deplore the lack of any proposals to achieve this. We ask planners to produce a masterplan which prioritises sustainable transport modes, especially cycling.

It is regrettable that planners have failed to listen to cyclists who are major stakeholders, after all CTC is officially recognised as a stakeholder both locally and nationally. A comprehensive analysis of the barriers to cycling and proposals to overcome them was submitted in to the Basingstoke Town Access Plan consultation. Presumably the planners have read this as they have highlighted the fact that the town is inaccessible and disconnected for cyclists. We would therefore urge planners to revise the masterplan to address these major issues.

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