



The Widcombe Association

Paul Garrod,
Team Manager,
Traffic Management and Network,
Bath and North East Somerset Council,
Lewis House,
Manvers Street,
Bath BA1 1JG

12th March 2021

RESPONSE FROM THE WIDCOMBE ASSOCIATION ON THE PROPOSALS FOR THE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES.

The Widcombe Association has considered the three proposed schemes to encourage cycling. Two of them affect Widcombe, either directly or indirectly.

1. Bath University to Combe Down via Copseland, Quarry Farm and existing off-road path.

The Widcombe Association supports the principle of a safe route for cyclists from the direction of Combe Down to the University that may also provide better access in the future to Ralph Allen School. However, we have reservations on two aspects of the proposal.

The first is the new crossing of Widcombe Hill by its junction with Copseland. Just downhill of the proposed crossing, Widcombe Hill is restricted to one lane due to the line of parked cars by Clarence Terrace. It is particularly difficult to manoeuvre past these vehicles as the sight lines are poor. The spaces in front of the Terrace are the only parking option for the residents. We are concerned that the introduction of the new crossing for both cycles and pedestrians just above this restricted length of road will increase uncertainty for drivers and make this stretch of road more dangerous.

Our second concern is the formation of the off-road section of the proposed route along paths that are heavily used by walkers. Combining walkers and significant numbers of cyclists on a rural route in open countryside is questionable from a safety perspective. It is important, too, that the upgrading of the route is not too urban in style. It is noted that work on how this might be achieved is still to be carried out and we will reserve our opinion until the details of the design of the cycleway/footpath are known.

2. City centre to Bath University via Beckford Road and North Road.

This proposal does impinge indirectly on Widcombe. We find it difficult to understand how the Council came to select North Road as the principal route for cyclists from the City Centre to the University. The principal locations for students living within the City are further west in areas such as Oldfield Park and Widcombe. Widcombe Hill is already more heavily used by cyclists going to the University than North Road and Bathwick Hill combined. It is unlikely, even with the installation of the scheme on North Road, that cyclists bound for the University would cycle all the way along Pulteney Road and Beckford Road or Sydney Road to reach North Road. Thus, we suspect that even with the installation of North Road as an Active Travel Route, there will still be more cyclists travelling to and from the University using Widcombe Hill.

It is not clear from the information provided so far the degree to which the Council has considered the diversionary effects of the closure of North Road. We would expect that there would be a significant diversion of vehicles to Bathwick Hill, but we would be concerned if there was any increase in vehicles on Widcombe Hill as a result of the restrictions on North Road. This information on displacement ought to be available so that a proper judgement can be made on the proposed scheme.

We are aware that our ward councillors have suggested that Widcombe Hill be selected as the Active Travel Route in place of North Road. The Widcombe Association has not yet taken a view on this proposal, though we can see the benefits. As mentioned above, Widcombe Hill is already a popular route for cyclists and pedestrians to and from the University. However, there is a record of accidents involving cyclists travelling too fast downhill, especially at the bend by Macaulay Buildings. The Council has installed a series of warning signs and did lay a special non-skid surface (now badly worn) on the road at the bend, but incidents still occur.

There is recognition within the community of the traffic and travel problems on Widcombe Hill and there is some support for measures to restrict travel and encourage cycling and walking. We believe that an Active Travel Scheme could contribute to addressing safety issues at Oakley, Copseland and the bend by Macaulay Buildings, traffic speeds on the hill and congestion at the White Hart junction. However, there are also residents in Widcombe who are concerned about both the displacement and diversionary effects of restrictions on Widcombe Hill.

We conclude that the problems on Widcombe Hill need to be addressed irrespective of the implementation of the Active Travel Scheme. The resources available for that scheme could be used to implement a radical solution on Widcombe Hill and secure better access for cyclists and pedestrians between the City Centre and the University. We believe that this should be investigated by the Council.

3. Upper Bristol Road

The Widcombe Association has no comments to make on the proposals for an Active Travel Scheme on the Upper Bristol Road.

We would be happy to discuss any of these points with you if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Boss

**Chair
Widcombe Association**