



Birmingham's voice for cycling

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Push Bikes in response to the City Centre road improvements consultation finishing on 21st March 2018. Push Bikes is Birmingham's cycle campaign and a key stakeholder involved in the consultations around Birmingham City Council's Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR). We have been active in campaigning for better cycling conditions in Birmingham for over 40 years, and we have been very pleased to see the improvements that are being made for cycling in Birmingham now. However we are concerned that there is still a lack of planning for cycling in many of the highways projects that are put out to consultation and we are disappointed that the proposals for the Sheepcote Street scheme have actually become worse since the original consultation in March.

We strongly object to the changes to Grosvenor Street West. The introduction of two-way motor traffic on the whole length of Grosvenor Street West, and the banning of the right-turn from Grosvenor Street West onto Sheepcote Street, removes an important piece of permeability for cycle users here. We guess that the changes to Grosvenor Street West are intended to remove motor traffic from Broad Street and Sheepcote Street, and bring it onto Friston Avenue, and then Grosvenor Street West. However, Birmingham City Council needs to be actively reducing the volume of motor traffic inside the Middleway, in order to meet the target reductions in air pollution. Road space should be freed up by restricting and discouraging private motor vehicle trips, rather than opening up new routes for motor vehicles while reducing permeability for cycles.

We also object to the proposed changes to the junction layout at St Vincent Street and Sheepcote Street. The changes will make it more dangerous for the numerous families crossing here each morning to reach the local primary schools because the motor traffic on St Vincent Street will be moving much faster. It will also be more difficult for cycle users to turn off St Vincent Street onto Sheepcote Street. One solution would be to have a mini roundabout at the junction of Sheepcote Street and St Vincent Street, with pedestrian crossing islands on each arm. This would slow down motor traffic as well as providing safer crossing points on the pedestrian desire lines, making the junction better for cycle users and pedestrians.

Without making positive changes to facilitate both walking and cycling journeys, this scheme will not "reduce reliance on car journeys through encouragement of modal shift", a stated aim on the consultation page.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Lowe
Chair of Push Bikes, Birmingham's cycle campaign.