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Dear Hiong Ching,

Outstanding concerns regarding active travel provision for the new A2300

Thank you for your recent letter in response to our objection to the dualling of the A2300 without adequate active travel provision.

We are pleased to hear that you are looking at making improvements to the scheme such as widening the shared path to 3m wide to meet minimum standards and creating other paths south of the A2300. We understand additional land is being considered for purchase to enable this, but another way around this could be to reduce the width of the carriageways slightly and / or the central reservation. If this was combined with a speed reduction from 70mph to 50mph that would reduce air and noise pollution as well as making the road safer (and cheaper to build).

If land acquisition is an issue to enabling a wider shared path, this must be an even bigger issue for the new footway / cycleway on the south of the A2300 to connect the uncontrolled crossing points to Pookbourne Lane and Bishopstone Lane. These paths will also need to be 3 metres wide and with safe separation from the traffic and therefore will require significantly greater land take.

However, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) still appears to be failing to understand, let alone address, the very real needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the area. To start with we

would dispute the claim that public highways are not designated routes. Equally they are more significant than most rights of way as having a tarmacked surface are far more accessible, particularly for disabled and less able persons. The loss of these routes will impact on people's health and well-being and restrict the quiet routes available for people to cycle along in particular.

The failure to provide any help for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A2300 is shocking. Uncontrolled crossings on a 50mph road, let alone a 70mph dual carriageway, as this will be, are nothing more than tokenism. They are far from pleasant and safe and will prejudice younger and older people, whose judgment of speed can be poor, from using these facilities. Regardless of this, crossing a 70mph road without any lights or bridge is like playing a game of chicken when traffic levels are moderate to high as they are likely to be here much of the time.

If this road is to be built it needs to come with proper controlled or grade separated crossings which make it safe and easy to traverse. Without these, parents won't allow their children to walk or cycle here while many others will find it too daunting or too intimidating to use. Therefore, the scheme will not encourage active travel. Indeed, it is likely to do the reverse with the increased severance it will cause, which will only encourage more people to drive and increase congestion in the area.

This is also true for movement along the A2300. Currently the shared path is disrupted at every roundabout along its length where pedestrians and cyclists are abandoned, being expected to cross high speed junctions with no help whatsoever. Regardless of whether people can safely cross the A2300, it's unlikely they will be able to safely travel along its length even with the new path. This is a major part of our objection which WSCC has failed to address.

Equally, we are far from convinced that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists can be left to detailed design with a few tweaks made to sight lines, tactile paving, dropped kerbs and signage. The whole design of the junctions needs to be radically rethought to prioritise active travel to make it easy and safe to use. Only then are these proposals likely to conform to the new National Planning Policy Framework and promote active travel.

In your letter you also refer to another scheme to help walkers, cyclists and equestrians in the area, but that is irrelevant to the design of this scheme. Equally, the new housing development will need more than a shared pathway / cycleway to the roundabout on the A2300 if it is to encourage walking and cycling.

Once built this road will form a concrete barrier to movement unless major changes are made. Retrofitting improvements is an expensive way of working: far better to get it right from the start. If it would be helpful, we are still willing to input into the design process to help get this right, as I am sure would others.

I trust this is clear, but if you would like any further clarification please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

(Mr) Chris Todd

Planning & Transport Campaigner
Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth

cc Councillor Roger Elkins, West Sussex County Council
Councillor Joy Dennis, West Sussex County Council
Councillor Kirsty Lord, West Sussex County Council
Councillor Garry Wall, Mid-Sussex District Council
Councillor Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Mid-Sussex District Council
Councillor Norman Webster, Mid-Sussex District Council
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