

Woolton Road (Liverpool): Comments from the Merseyside Cycling Campaign (March 2016)

This is a compilation of comments from Merseyside Cycling Campaign members, together with suggestions for short-term measures and long-term aspirations. As a Council that aspires and is committed to sustainable transport, Liverpool City Council has to have a vision and use road space in a more democratic way for all users of the place through which the road passes.

Introduction

The Woolton Cycle Route is a main commuter route from South/East Liverpool to the City Centre and to the universities (Hope University; John Moores; University of Liverpool).

- Five primary/secondary schools (Childwall; Mosspsits; Bishop Eaton; Blue Coat; Archbishop Blanch) are served by this cycle route. About 50% of this cycle route consists of advisory cycle lanes, the other 50% runs through parks or on traffic-calmed roads (20mph) without cycle lanes and without any speed limit enforcement.
- Currently this cycle route is not fit for purpose and certainly *not safe for children*
- Child cyclist KSIs in Liverpool are now three times above the UK average¹.
- The number of children cycling to school in Liverpool is very low and the most quoted reason of not cycling in Liverpool is 'fear of traffic'. At the same time, obesity rates are above national average.

General comments for all road schemes in Liverpool

All road schemes should not be considered in isolation, but a more holistic strategic overview of the area and traffic management (including parking designations) should be made.

Traffic speeds need to be reduced, by enforcement and traffic calming to remain within reasonable levels below the speed limits of the road. In addition, if the route is a specific cycle route, motorised traffic should be encouraged to use alternative routes to reduce traffic volumes and hence air pollution and aesthetics would be improved. There is also an immediate need to reduce the high KSI figures for Liverpool¹.

MCC would prefer to be consulted on the actual plans that will be proposed at an early stage in the process with enough time for us as volunteers to discuss and produce a considered response.

Any road scheme plans need to be consistent with national and local guidance, plus take into consideration additional guidelines and best practice.

National Guidance includes the recent Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy² and related documents; Department for Transport guidance (UK Cycling Delivery Plan^{3&4}, UK Local Transport Notes (such as LTN 1/04⁵, LTN 2/08⁶, etc.); cycle design guidance (Sustrans⁷, Cyclenation⁸, Transport for London⁹, etc.).

Local guidance includes the Mayoral Sustainability Commission Report¹⁰ (strong recommendations in Section 3.3 recommend segregated cycling facilities) and Local

cycling guidance documents (Liverpool's Cycle Strategy¹¹).

Detailed comments on route by MCC members, together with suggested small scale improvements and future aspirations for each section or junction:

Fir Lane up to Church Road:

"I am never happy cycling up Fir Lane from the park exit to the lights. It is uphill, narrow and the speed cushions lead to erratic driving, downhill is ok. but space is tight for any extra provision here. Removal of traffic would be good here, I'm not in favour of the city's policy of having through routes round parks."

"Getting to/from Fir Lane from gates of Mystery is difficult and many cars do not signal at junction with Prince Alfred Road (the bit between Fir Lane and High Street) - it is a bit of a rat run."

"Enforcement of the 20mph limit needs to be made as vehicles travelling faster than this can 'suddenly appear' around the blind right angle bend just as a cyclist is trying to turn right into the Mystery"

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional traffic refuge to offer better protection to cyclists turning • Speed enforcement • Removal of centre line marking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point closures • Segregated cycle track for cyclists going uphill

Church Road junction:

"Crossroads at Church Road - quite wide entrance to Woolton Road from Fir Lane results in a funnelling effect, especially with cycle lane some distance from junction and cars approaching crossroads from Woolton direction which are turning right causing bikes to get 'pinched' unless you hold a primary position to prevent overtaking (with consequential friction that this can entail)."

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light segregation just at junction to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lane and reduce vehicle speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early start for cyclists at traffic lights

Between Church Road and Lance Lane:

"Cycle lane on playing field side of Woolton Road often has the odd car parked in it which can cause difficulties with fast moving vehicles as you try to move out"

"Always parked cars on housing side so can never use cycle lane"

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated parking areas with buffer zone for cycle lane • Speed enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated cycle tracks

Lance Lane junction:

"Staggered junction with Lance Lane is often chaotic at peak hours and a lot of inattentive rushing takes place."

"Cars approach along side roads too fast and are then at an angle making it difficult to 'sight' for any cyclists on Woolton Road – speed humps on Lance Lane (south side), traffic refugia and a point closure of Daffodil Rd may help here to constrain turning angles"

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic refugia to offer better protection to cyclists and stop vehicles cutting the corners • Road humps on Lance Lane (South side) • Point closure of Daffodil Rd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign junction to improve viewpoints and reduce approaching speeds • Point closures

Between Lance Lane and Heathfield Road:

“The obvious problem is parking on the stretch of cycle lane near Mossfits School; if there were yellow lines there, I think that would assist no end.”

“Poor parking by shops near Mossfits”

“Cars as a consequence encroaching into cycle lane as Mossfits Lane approached”

“Parking along cycle lane at Mossfits School at pick up and drop off times - encourages pavement cycling”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated enforced parking areas for shops • Speed enforcement and reduction to 20mph (for school and shops) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated cycle tracks separated from parking areas for shops

Heathfield Rd Junction:

“Nursery parking on cycle lane and obscuring viewpoints for all users of junction. Needs to be double yellows around junction to discourage this, and regular enforcement and education drives”

“Reduction of speeds and tighter entries/exits of side roads, Heathfield Rd/ Dunbabin Rd, would help to prevent left-hooks and traffic speeding through junction – I find I have to move right out into the road to make sure I am seen by all drivers from side roads (and see around the parked vehicles on the junction)”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double yellows around junction to improve viewpoints (including prevention of parking by nursery clients on cycle lane and junction) • Speed enforcement • Light segregation just at junction on all corners to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lane, reduce vehicle speeds and discourage 'left-hooks' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of junction to constrain entry/exit points to reduce speeds • Point closure of Woodsorrel Rd

Between Heathfield Rd and Queens Drive:

“Right turn into Beauclair Drive should be banned. If there is queuing traffic, traffic turning right into Beauclair Dr do not check the cycle lane properly. I have had several near-misses here! A point closure where Beauclair Dr joins Woolton Rd could be considered.”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light segregation on the lead up to the junction from both directions to allow cyclist more space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point closure of Beauclair Drive

Queens Drive junction:

“The lack of any kind of pedestrian crossing on Queens Drive is reprehensible and a cycle crossing is also required at this point. I feel that the Eastbound traffic lane from the Queens Drive lights is much

wider than it needs to be and space could be allotted for the Westbound on-road cycle lane to continue to the lights as there is little space for cycling at that point.”

“Crossroads at Queens Drive doesn't really accommodate cycles approaching on nearside”

“No ASL on Woolton Rd (Eastern side)”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASL on Woolton Rd (eastern side) • Light segregation just at junction to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lanes and reduce vehicle speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of junction to include improvements for cyclists and pedestrian crossings • Early start for cyclists at traffic lights • Point closure of Beauclair Dr

Between Queens Drive and Cromptons Lane/Taggart Ave (including Childwall Shops):

“Chaotic parking by Halfway House pub shops”

“Half-way house: permanent parking on the cycle lane. Unused car park right behind the pub.”

“So much parking and vehicle movements that you have to ride in primary position all the way through past the shops (to be seen and to be safe); cycle lane is too narrow and has no buffer around parked cars”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed enforcement and reduction to 20mph limit • Road humps/ constrained width (with cycle bypass) at entry and exit of village • Removal of centre line marking and addition of centre hybrid cycle lanes (to allow parking and encourage sharing of road) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a 'village' feel by only allowing vehicles to access section by shops if driving very slowly (a shared space area?) • Reduction in traffic volumes passing through • Segregated cycle tracks and designated defined parking places

Cromptons Lane/Taggart Ave junction:

“Junction generally is Ok, but you have to go in to primary position to stress that you are going straight on; vehicles don't always check their left hand mirror”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light segregation just at junction to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lane and reduce vehicle speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early start for cyclists at traffic lights

Between Cromptons Lane/Taggart Ave and Black Woods Roundabout:

“Hope University: staff & Students park every day on the cycle lane despite of a huge car park on Hope Campus.”

“20mph speed limit is widely ignored; more enforcement is needed. At school times this part is impossible as cars are parked within the cycle lane and drivers are very pushy”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed enforcement • Parking restrictions at School drop-off/collection times, and enforcement • Cycle/ walking buses for pupils of Childwall Primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated cycle tracks allowing pupils to cycle to school • Reduction in traffic to reduce air pollution levels

Black Woods Roundabout (Aldbourne Ave/ Childwall Park Ave Junction):

” There is a need for some sort of protection, in fact a wholesale redesign”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed enforcement • Light segregation at exits to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lane and reduce vehicle speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of roundabout to a continental design with constrained entry/exit points and constrained lane width around the roundabout to reduce speeds • Addition of segregated cycle infrastructure to enhance safety

Between Black Woods Roundabout and Blackwood Ave/Gateacre Park Dr Junction

“Lots of potholes in cycle lane”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better road maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated cycle tracks

Blackwood Ave/Gateacre Park Dr Junction:

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light segregation just after junction to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lane and reduce vehicle speeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early start for cyclists at traffic lights • Redesign to improve conditions

Between Blackwood Ave/Gateacre Park Dr Junction and Gateacre Brow roundabout:

“Vehicles don't always take care when pulling out of Cuckoo Lane so the cycle lane markings don't indicate where cyclists should position themselves to be best seen”

“Some protection needed on Woolton Hill Road junction as can be busy junction”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light segregation just after Cuckoo Lane junction to allow cyclists space to enter cycle lane and reduce vehicle speeds • Cycle logos to indicate better positioning for cyclists at Cuckoo Lane • Light segregation before and after Woolton Hill Road junction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of Cuckoo lane and Woolton Hill Rd junctions.

Gateacre Brow roundabout:

“...the roundabout at the top of Gateacre Brow, although bizarrely designed, to accommodate the gardens of its rich neighbours I feel, it is fairly safe for East/West traffic but most definitely not for cyclists, and indeed motorists, coming up Gateacre Brow, which is, of course part of the cycling network courtesy of a couple of blue signs and road markings (does anyone see anything remotely acceptable about that anymore?)”

Small-scale improvements	Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More segregated features • Speed enforcement • Better maintenance and cleaning of cycle cut-through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of junction to reduce vehicle speeds and provide segregated facilities, particularly for cyclists travelling uphill

General comments on Woolton Road from MCC members:

“It is important to get that route sorted out. Having a safe route to town could make a huge difference, in particular to all the school children (5 schools en route!).”

“There are good lengths of Woolton Road that have space for and would benefit from segregated cycleways and a physical control over parking (as opposed to yellow lines which we can't afford to enforce).”

“OK so it's not going to happen but at least re-lay, sorry, machine lay, the red cycle lane. If the City intends to continue to allow motor traffic to drive on it then it needs to be of a much higher spec than the surface currently in use. Also driving on it is one thing but parking on it is another, especially if it is accompanied by parents flinging the car door open because they are late getting their child to school (both junior schools are notorious for out of area children).”

“If these issues are addressed it will greatly help maniacs like us but a lot more needs to be done if we are to get children to cycle to school and elderly people to cycle to McNaughtons for their Daily Mail. Generally speaking though I feel safe on Woolton Road except for outside the two schools, oh and the nursery at Heathfield [Road], and cycling up Fir Lane”

“Schools along Woolton Rd: there is plenty of space for dropping off kids on the side roads. More kids would cycle/walk if it was safer. Currently children have a right to be dropped off at the school gate but no right to walk/cycle to school in safety.”

“Residents: 90% of residents have drive-ways for parking their cars, but chose to park on the cycle lane. Again, plenty of side roads are available for parking.”

“Advisory cycle lanes need to be **replaced by kerb-protected cycle lanes**. Since there is no funding/political will to enforce illegal parking in cycle lanes, enforcement needs to be built-in.

The DfT's [policies] on advisory Cycle Lanes is very clear: “Advisory cycle lanes are not recommended where they are likely to be blocked by parked cars.”. There is temporary and permanent parking along the Woolton cycle route and the council has chosen to ignore the advice of the DfT.

Recently motorists (mainly residents) started parking on the pavement on Woolton Road (instead of the cycle lane), probably out of consideration for cyclists. Shifting the cars from the cycle lanes to the pavement is not a solution. It endangers children that walk to school.

In principle, there is sufficient space on Woolton Road for all road users, pedestrians, cyclists, and cars. The current priority is motorists; pedestrians and cyclists are not taken into consideration. Making Woolton Road into a space where children can walk and cycle to school is possible, but it requires a vision for sustainable transport from the council which is not present at the moment. (For proper cycle lane design, please consult the Cambridge Cycle Campaign Guidance ⁸.)”

“The council needs to decide whether they are committed to sustainable transport such as walking or cycling. Currently, the council only caters for motor traffic along Woolton Road.”

Conclusions for Woolton Road

OVERALL: Small-scale improvements	OVERALL: Long-term improvements/ aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed enforcement • Double yellow lines surrounding ALL junctions to improve viewpoints and regular enforcement • Removal of centre line markings and wider advisory cycle lanes (to stress the sharing of the road area and allow a buffer for parked vehicles) • Extension of mandatory cycle lanes to reduce parking levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic traffic management to reduce vehicle volumes • Point closures • Designated parking areas • No parking allowed outside schools on Woolton Rd • 'School street' areas to reduce traffic during school drop-off/collection times so pupils can walk/ cycle to school with greater safety and less air pollution. • Floating bus stops • Segregated protected cycle tracks (possibly central to allow parking on sides of road or on pavement side of parking areas (but with maintenance considered)) throughout the entire length of the route • Protection of cyclists at junctions by early green lights at traffic signals.

In summary, there is a need to have a more democratic use of the road space and indicate to all road-users that they are sharing the space. Therefore wider cycle lanes, light segregation at junctions, comprehensive enforced parking restrictions and speed enforcement, removal of centre line markings and early green lights for cyclists would stress to drivers that this is a route shared with people cycling.

The small-scale improvements as listed above (for each road section/ junction and overall) could be put in at relatively low-cost, but there should be long-term aspirations to make this an exemplar route enabling people of all ages to walk and cycle and to use as part of a cycle network.

References

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