

31 July 2019

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director Policy &amp; Corporate</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Owen Howell</b> ☎ 282518
<b>Title</b>	<b>Public Initiative - Cycleway issues</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	N/A		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines concerns expressed by Councillor Robert Johnstone, of Myland Community Council, regarding the way in which Essex County Council/Essex Highways installs cycleways on existing footways, especially where this results in a shared cycle/footway. Councillor Johnstone wishes to address the Panel as part of the 'Public Initiatives' agenda item.

## 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Policy and Public Initiatives Panel to consider whether to recommend to Cabinet that the Panel be authorised to add this as a topic for further consideration to its work programme.

## 3. Background Information

- 3.1 Councillor Johnstone seeks to raise a number of concerns and considerations relating to the current practice by Essex Highways regarding installation of cycleways on existing footways. More specifically, he wishes to raise questions regarding the planning, installation and funding of shared cycleways and footways in parts of the Borough by Essex County Council, and asks the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel to recommend to Cabinet that the Panel be asked to conduct a review of all provisions for cycling within Colchester Borough. The submission from Councillor Johnstone can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.2 Factors which Councillor Johnstone believes are affecting the implementation and use of cycling measures and cycle lanes include:
- Essex Highways' efforts to reduce traffic congestion on highways face constraints regarding space on carriageways and limited budgets available.
  - Relevant advice, regulation and statutes include the Local Transport Note 1/12, Highway Code Rule 64, and the Highways Act 1980.
  - Cyclist, Pedestrian and Driver safety. Education and enforcement of regulations and statute.
  - Unenforceable and confusing signage, particularly for shared-use foot- and cycleways.
  - Lack of consultation on options for cycleways. County Council consultation could include the Borough Council, parish councils, cycling organisations and local groups, schools and others.
  - Lack of ability for borough/district councils to be involved in the design of highways and cycleways at the planning stage, as well as in identifying areas for concern and issues regarding signage and maintenance.

- Potential for cyclists to mistake footways for cycleways and drivers expecting cyclists to be in designated cycleways (or shared pavement routes) rather than on the road.
- As pedestrian and cyclist numbers may increase over time, what extra capacity do footways/cycleways have and are they feasible in the future?

#### **4. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

4.1 There are no equality, diversity or human rights implications to this report.

#### **5. Standard References**

5.1 There are no particular references to consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

#### **6. Strategic Plan References**

##### Growth

- Help make sure Colchester is a welcoming place for all residents and visitors
- Ensure residents benefit from Colchester's economic growth with skills, jobs and improving infrastructure
- Develop jobs, homes, infrastructure and communities to meet the borough's future needs by creating new Garden Communities

##### Responsibility

- Promote responsible citizenship by encouraging residents to get involved in their communities and to identify solutions to local issues
- Create new routes for walking or cycling and work with partners to make the borough more pedestrian-friendly.

##### Opportunity

- Promote initiatives to help residents live healthier lives.

##### Wellbeing

- Help residents adopt healthier lifestyles by enabling the provision of excellent leisure facilities and beautiful green spaces, countryside and beaches.

#### **7. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

7.1 As the subject of this item relates to Essex County Council/Highways functions, there are no direct implications, however there may be implications to recommendations which may potentially be made by Colchester Borough Council to Essex County Council.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Text of Councillor Robert Johnstone's submission.

Appendix B – Photographs provided by Councillor Johnstone of cycling measures and challenges.

## Appendix A

**Please note that this is a submission by Cllr Robert Johnstone (of Myland Community Council) and is not the work of officers or elected members of Colchester Borough Council.**

I intend tonight to tell you how the shared cycleway/footways in Mile End Rd – and other places – were:

- Not consulted on;
- Poorly planned;
- Badly implemented;
- Not transparently funded.

I shall quote from Government guidance, Local Transport Note 1/12.

Firstly, consultation, or rather the lack of it. - There had been no discussion of it at Essex County Council when this scheme was first mentioned – at least Anne Turrell was not aware of it, there was no consultation with CBC, or with Myland Community Council, Colchester Cycling, or local schools, or even residents. This shared cycleway/footway was not asked for by any cyclists or by any councillor or resident. Mile End Rd traffic has decreased considerably since the opening of the Northern Approach Rd.

Then planning and design – there was a Public Information event held locally in which we were told what was going to happen. But when it was pointed out to Essex Highways that the proposed design involved cyclists having to dismount and make three crossings of Mile End Road - it was soon amended.

The implementation phase fared no better – originally scheduled to last 14 weeks (*Photos provided of Sign showing date and Cycleway creation*) and cost £750,000, it actually took 28 weeks – but somehow still cost £750,000!

The scheme was funded by the non-elected South East Local Enterprise Panel – SELEP – an extremely difficult body to get any information at all from. One officer from Essex Highways confided to me that “at least it wasn't going to cost ECC Highways anything as SELEP were paying for it.” I replied that Essex Highways may not be paying for it, but the tax payers of Mile End Road certainly were.

There are many obstructions found on a footway that are unlikely to be found on any carriageway -

lampposts, parking signposts, utility installations, pillar boxes, waste paper bins and on Fridays (in M.E.R [Mile End Road]) many rubbish bins and boxes, bus stops, children playing and pedestrians!

And, of course, there may be other cyclists coming the other way.

In addition, there are 75 driveways on Mile End Road. And, as the pavement was widened, so the road was narrowed - making it harder to overtake cyclists safely.

Pedestrians as I am sure we all know are an unpredictable lot – often wearing headphones, reading or talking on a phone, carrying large bags, or wheeling suitcases. Sometimes a group walks three abreast. Sometimes they are walking dogs. Sometimes they pat their pockets and turn round without warning! They may be elderly, infirm or with hearing or visual impairments

However the worst possible danger comes from parked cars – being doored. This happens when a car parks and a few moments later, after collecting their belongings a driver, or more likely, a passenger opens a door at the moment when a cyclist is passing.

Signposts related to shared cycleway/footways is often misleading, contradictory, unenforceable and quite probably a complete waste of money! *(Photo Confusing signs)*

Maintenance is practically non-existent. *(Photo Poor Maintenance)*

The recommended **minimum** width of any shared use cycleway/footway is three metres. LTN 1/12 states that this minimum will need to be increased if the route is bounded by a road or a wall. The cycleway/footway in Mile End Rd is an **average** of three metres. It will also need to be increased if usage increases. It is unsustainable.

In new developments, currently open fields, there are no space restrictions, and yet even with a 20mph speed limit, cyclists are to be encouraged to cycle on the pavement with no cycling facilities on the road. ECC Highways seem to be saying that it is impossible to build safe on road cycling whatever the space available. Other countries manage it! LTN 1/12 says that shared cycleway/footways should **never** be the first (or only) option. *(Photos Armadillo and Danish Cycleway)*

Some pedestrian safety features have been removed in order to accommodate the cycleway/footway – a traffic island (refuge) in Mile End Rd and railings at the roadside edge of the footway at North Station Roundabout.

It may also be worth mentioning that the “pinch point” under North Station bridge is merely one metre wide – to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists in both directions. There are no clear sight splays around this bend under the bridge.

I believe it is essential that CBC debate the whole issue of cycling provision and they should **not** accept the current situation.

In conclusion to quote LTN 1/12

*“Shared use routes created through the conversion of footways or footpaths can be controversial. There are many such examples that have been implemented inappropriately and/or poorly designed, particularly in urban areas. It is essential for designers to understand that shared use is not the ‘easy fix’ it might appear to be.”*



*'Work commencing' signage*



*Cycleway construction*





*Confusing Signage*







*Armadillos in use*



*Danish Cycleway*