

Mayals Road: Hybrid cycle tracks

Why they are unacceptable.

What is proposed.

1.5m wide cycle tracks with no buffer on the road side. One on each side of the road along the central half mile section of the reconfigured length where it falls about 50m from west to east.

The design codes.

Of three codes the Welsh Active Travel Guidance give a *desired minimum* width of 2.0m with an *absolute minimum* of 1.5m, the National Code LTN1-20 gives the same desired and absolute minima but allows the latter only to be used *where there are constraints*, Parkin in his book "Designing for Cycle Traffic" (Section 6.3) requires a minimum of 2.0m plus a buffer of 0.5m on the road side. All the codes require greater widths for traffic speeds above 30mph or for heavy cycle use (More than 150/hour.) There is no mention of hills or driveways in the codes. One precedent has been found of an uphill hybrid track on a hill similar to Mayals Road. It is on the Bradford-Leeds cycle, illustrated overleaf. Here the track includes a buffer with an overall width of about 2.5m. No precedent for a downhill hybrid cycle track on a long hill has been found.

The shortcomings.

- The recommendations of the above three codes are not met. That the tracks meet the *absolute minimum* requirement of the AT Guidance does not stand up to scrutiny. Not only do they not meet the requirements of the other two codes but the website of the Company of Phil Jones (who was the principal author of the AT Guidance) identifies LTN1-20 as a code to be followed, hence implying it also applies to the AT Guidance.
- The suitability of the guidance to tracks such as this, particularly downhill where they cross drive ways (as on the north side), is questionable. No precedents have been found. (The Bradford precedent is uphill and meets guidelines.)
- One critical requirement (ie which must be met) of the Cycle Audit (Appendix C in the AT Guidance), which Swansea Council claim has been met, appears not to have been. This is in the Safety Section where a "Narrow cycle lane 1.5m or less (including any buffer) alongside parking/loading." is a critical requirement. It is understood that loading adjacent to or in the driveways will be allowed. The Council are therefore incorrect to score this item 2, implying that it meets the requirement.
- Both experienced cyclists and less confident local residents have stated that they would not use them (at least the downhill track.) as they would not feel safe. Furthermore, due to their narrow width overtaking would be difficult, potentially dangerous.
- Cyclists using them, in particular the downhill one, would be at greater danger from cars emerging from driveways than if they were using the carriageway. This is because they would not have the space to 'hold the lane' when descending. Also they would be in danger due to the lack of a buffer as they could be hit if both they and a passing vehicle were riding/driving close to the edge of their respective lanes.
- Road cyclists would be subject to abuse from motorists for not using the adjacent tracks.

Alternatives.

An uphill hybrid cycle track such as that used on the Leeds-Bradford cycle route which meets guidelines could be provided on the south side of Mayals Road if the north side track were omitted. The dividing line in the Bradford example suggests that descending cyclists are allowed to use it. Being on the left side it would mostly be used by uphill cyclists. As there is a footway for pedestrians they would not be endangered by speeding downhill cyclists.

This is not the only alternative, a shared use path such as has been provided on the west side of Cockett Road would be an alternative to a hybrid track.

Conclusion.

The proposed hybrid cycle tracks are unsafe. The north side (downhill) one should be omitted and on the south side either a hybrid track which meets guidelines or a shared use path provided.

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Barkerend Road between Otley Road and Killinghall Road on Leeds-Bradford cycle route.

Screen shot from Google maps