



## **Cycling Embassy of Great Britain**

### **Submission to Consultation on proposed changes to the streets that run parallel to the Oxford Road corridor (Manchester)**

The Cycling Embassy of Great Britain aims to bring best practice in cycling provision to this country so that we can have a truly mass cycling culture, rather than cycling remaining a minority activity. This submission make the case for Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to provide dedicated cycling facilities throughout the roads affected by the proposed changes to be made to the roads around the Oxford Road bus corridor.

We submit:

- The creation of high quality cycling infrastructure creates a high quality environment for everyone.
- Manchester has already benefited from restricting motorised traffic elsewhere in the city.
- Better separated walking and cycle routes that are safe and inviting to use generate more customers for local businesses, around the clock.
- Manchester, in line with its stated ambitions<sup>1</sup>, could make itself a modern showcase rivalling British and European competitors, and be a greater pull for business and those wishing to study.
- Bicycles are an efficient use of space in a congested city.
- People are more likely to become frequent visitors, use their bicycles, and spend more within the city if it has facilities that normalise the act of riding a bicycle.
- The area, its residents, workers and visitors will benefit from increased health, wellbeing and social safety, combined with reduced noise and air pollution.

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<sup>1</sup> **Manchester Evening News 6/6/12** - Council in bid to make Manchester 'cycle city' with bicycle hire scheme ([http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1580735\\_council-in-bid-to-make-manchester-cycle-city-with-bicycle-hire-scheme](http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1580735_council-in-bid-to-make-manchester-cycle-city-with-bicycle-hire-scheme))



We believe that cycling should be an integral and equal part of transport planning. Cities throughout Europe - from Amsterdam, to Copenhagen, Brussels, Munich and Paris have shown how the provision of pedestrian and cycle-friendly infrastructure provides a pleasant urban environment which treats users of all modes of transports as equals.

A number of recent studies have shown that visitors who arrive on foot and by bicycle will linger longer in an area, and over a given period tend to spend more than those arriving by car. Traders tend to overestimate the proportion of their trade that arrives by car, as opposed to on foot, or by bicycle, or by public transport; likewise they tend to overestimate how much shoppers arriving by car will spend, by comparison with those that arrive by other modes. In practice there is little or no difference in the long-term average spend by mode, with non-car users spending less, but more often; research in fact suggests that they spend more overall. Bicycles also represent an efficient use of public space - 8-10 bicycles can be parked in the space required by one motor vehicle. More bicycle use means that more street space can be freed up for public realm improvements, and increases the amount of parking available overall.

In other words, research consistently shows that creating a civilised environment for walking and cycling, at the expense of private motorised transport, should have no negative effect on retail spend, and may indeed boost it through increased footfall. This is especially true of the Oxford Road corridor, which already has excellent public transport connections.

The corridor, and the surrounding roads which are directly addressed in this consultation, see a great deal of pedestrian traffic and a reasonable amount of cycle traffic. Upper Brook Street is home to many businesses and residents. Furthermore the 24-hour economy of this University-dominated area means that alternative methods of transport are of huge importance to those using Manchester's Universities, pubs, restaurants and clubs. Manchester's student population is central to the economy of the Oxford Road corridor, yet this group is generally very unlikely to travel by car. As the proposals currently stand, the changes to Upper Brook Street in particular will diminish the quality of life for residents, suppress local business, further inconvenience pedestrians and actively endanger cyclists. The unique demographics of this area make it the perfect choice for re-designing our roads.

The United Kingdom is currently enjoying an ongoing rise in cycling and it is seeing more and more 'utility' cycling - people just getting on a bicycle to do chores and to get around. In London, this year Mayor Johnson has signed up to the London Cycling Campaign's Go Dutch agenda; there is now serious momentum behind the creation of comfortable and inviting environments that normalise cycling across London, places where families are content to cycle. Manchester should be leading the movement towards liveable, civilised cities, not playing catch-up. We suggest taking advantage of this opportunity to change Upper Brook Street, Upper Lloyd Street and Oxford Road to provide better facilities for



cycling and walking which will benefit everyone by making it the safer, more pleasant and more convenient option for everyone.

There are several notable examples in Manchester which already demonstrate this. Grosvenor Street has shown remarkable resilience in the face of hard economic times since the capacity of this road for motor vehicles was reduced and the protected contra-flow cycle lane installed. Elsewhere in the city, for example around the cathedral, efforts are being made to reduce the impact of traffic. By taking the same principles and taking them further, this success can be recreated and built upon in and around the Oxford Road corridor.

The benefits would include:

- A more pleasant environment through lower traffic pollution (Greater Manchester's LTP3 noted daily EU limits for particulate matter are often exceeded in Manchester).
- A safer environment where everyone can get around more easily and more comfortably. Lower traffic speeds resulting from cycling and walking will also result in fewer deaths and injuries.
- Less congestion - this is of itself a financial benefit. Different reports have costed congestion as a £10-22bn burden on our national economy, and the Oxford Road Corridor, criss-crossed by busy roads, stands to benefit financially from any reduction.
- Greater throughput of people on foot and bicycles means more potential trade.
- Support for the Oxford Road Corridor's late-night economy when public transport becomes patchy or non-existent, such as early in the morning and during University holidays, especially for low-paid and workers who can't use taxis and have no access to a car.
- Increased health and wellbeing for workers, residents and shoppers alike.
- A better environment for the residents of the Oxford Road Corridor.

Cycling and walking can be made viable options for the average person by following the examples pioneered by The Netherlands and Denmark. A dense, high-quality bicycle network, provides better guidance and more inviting conditions, not just for cyclists of all ages, but also improves conditions for pedestrians, especially the visually impaired. This must include:

- The creation of safe, pleasant routes for cycling - separated from motor traffic - on the major arterial routes in Manchester.
- Where streets have been pedestrianised, cycle access should be maintained (where width and pedestrian volume permits),
- To avoid rat-running, minor streets should be made difficult to use as through-routes for motor traffic, while remaining permeable for bicycle use.
- Bicycle parking - very important as part of an integrated plan for a city centre, as safe storage is an important consideration in the choice of transportation.



Such dedicated facilities, created to a high standard, would make the area unique in Great Britain and therefore a further pull for the public. Manchester should be looking to act as a beacon to other parts of the UK by designing its roads in a manner which is fair to pedestrians and cyclists, residents and businesses. The proposal as it currently stands would represent an enormous step backwards for Manchester if it wishes to be a civilised city which values those travelling on foot, cares about the quality of life of all of its residents and places the lives of those travelling by bike above risible gains in convenience for motorists.

### **Specific Issues:**

We at the Cycling Embassy of Great Britain feel that the proposed changes to the roads surrounding the yet-to-be finalised redesign of Oxford Road represent a serious step in the wrong direction. Many of the proposed changes actively increase the danger to cyclists by increasing conflict with motorised traffic where additional lanes are squeezed in. The discontinuous nature of the extra vehicle lanes south of Grafton Street will cause dangerous increases in motor vehicle traffic speed along Upper Brook Street where additional lanes exist, followed by conflict where two lanes are forced to merge back into one. Because there is no extra capacity for motor vehicles at the end points of the road, this design will not even yield an improvement in journey times for motorists.

Similarly, the changes offer no real benefits to pedestrians; we welcome extra crossing points, but their current designs make them slow, inconvenient and unappealing. The dangerous changes to the road layout, particularly the addition of an extra lane for vehicular traffic on Upper Brook Street/Anson Road, will make the road even harder for pedestrians to traverse where crossings are not present. Cyclists and pedestrians are also put in conflict where inappropriate 'shared use' footway conversions are used.

Successful cities need to accommodate people on foot and on cycles. While we welcome the proposed improvements to public transport on Oxford Road, it should not be at the expense of the convenience, safety or even lives of those travelling on foot or by cycle. Good design should remove unnecessary conflict from our roads by separating vulnerable road users from fast heavy traffic as much as is practical.



## Recommendations:

The current proposed designs need to be changed to accommodate safe and convenient cycling, preferably based on the successful Dutch or Danish design models. In addition to the linked materials below, it would be invaluable to send the designers on a cycle infrastructure study tour to The Netherlands. David Hembrow offers study tours<sup>2</sup> which explain the impressive road design and engineering achievements (both their grand undertakings and the essential small design details) of the Dutch, from a uniquely British perspective.

In brief we suggest:

- kerb-separated tracks alongside the carriageway on both sides of Upper Brook Street, combined with junction designs where turning movements for each type of traffic (foot, cycle, motor) are separated to prevent conflict, as described in greater detail in the CROW design manual for bicycle traffic.<sup>3</sup>
- Cycle tracks must have priority over side roads, and the turning geometries of these side roads must be tightened up to prevent motor vehicles being able to turn in and out of these streets (and thus across the cycle tracks) at inappropriately high speeds.
- Pedestrians should not be expected to cross each arm of a junction in more than one stage, or to wait longer than users of any other mode of transport. They should not be forced to deviate significantly from desire lines, and where the pavement crosses minor side roads, the pavement should continue across the side road to imply pedestrian priority.
- The entire length of Upper Brook Street should be reduced to one lane for motor vehicles in each direction, giving space for the improvements suggested. Because of the bottlenecks at various points along its length, and the limited capacity for motor vehicles at the city centre end of the road, this will paradoxically smooth traffic flow and reduce pollution and have a minimal effect on journey times for motorists.

For more information on the Cycling Embassy: <http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/faq>

Supporting papers for this submission can be found at:

<http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/documents>

Including a paper from Bristol City Council, which shows the positive value of engaging cyclists and pedestrians as shoppers:

<http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/document/spend-high-streets-according-travel-mode>

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.hembrowcyclingholidays.com/studytour.html> for details.

<sup>3</sup> Available from <http://www.crow.nl/nl/Publicaties/publicatiedetail.aspx?code=REC25>

