



Concept for possible cycle bridge at Neasden unveiled

A meeting was held in November of Brent's Cycle Forum, which has a new Chair, Councillor Liz Dixon. Cllr Dixon is – no, let's avoid saying 'keen cyclist', as that always creates the wrong impression – a *person who uses a bike*, often to get from her home in Cricklewood to the Civic Centre in Wembley. Hence she is well-aware of the issue of the difficulty and danger of crossing the North Circular Road on a bike, and the way this road severs the communities of Brent, the infrastructure around it forcing people into cars.

It was therefore good timing that on this occasion we received a summary from officers on the outcome of the TfL-funded study that considered possibilities for a new cycle and pedestrian crossing of the North Circular in Neasden. This is a concept that has been a priority campaign of Brent Cyclists for several years: it was central to our 'Cycle Plan for Brent' published in 2013, and then part of Brent's first bid for mini-Holland funding. Andrew Gilligan, the last Mayor's cycling commissioner, agreed that it should be on the agenda, and we were consulted in the study by consultants Urban Movement.

The consultants considered the possibilities of a surface-level crossing, an improved or rebuilt subway, and a new bridge structure. Brent Cyclists has tended to favour the idea of rebuilding the existing subway connecting Neasden Lane to Neasden Lane North to make it suitable for walking and cycling, with changes to the traffic systems on either side to connect up Dudden Hill Lane, Neasden Lane and Blackbird Hill safely for cyclists. The study concluded that this would be physically very difficult and expensive.

The study suggests instead the ambitious bridge alternative shown below. This leaves the main roads unchanged, but re-connects the minor roads that were severed when the underpass carrying the A4088 under the North Circular was constructed. In contrast to the existing poor footbridges, this would be 4m wide and designed for both foot and cycle traffic. It would integrate with Quietway plans to connect up to Wembley and Harrow. *Please note that it is just an initial concept: it is still subject to TfL modelling, the report is described as a 'draft', and there is as yet no decision from the new Mayor on whether this is a project that will be funded.* However, we'd be interested to hear what you think of it. How helpful would this be in facilitating the cycle journeys you'd like to be able to make more easily in Brent?

Birse Crescent

Balnacraig Avenue

Ballogie Avenue

Winslow Close



Elm Way

The report for TfL and Brent conceives this I-shaped bridge structure that effectively decks-over the length of the Neasden Underpass to provide multiple new walking and cycling connections. It could be delivered far more cheaply than a new tunnel under the A406.

Consultation takes place on Carlton Vale cycle tracks

That other long-term Brent Cyclists campaign, for a semi-segregated route on Carlton Vale, Kilburn, took a major step towards reality in November with the issuing of the public consultation on the latest designs. These had been altered to meet objections from Westminster Council, who control the south-western part of the road (in addition to the whole of the road east of the Kilburn Park Road junction). They seem determined to oppose not only any real physical cycle facilities, but even 20 mph on their part of the road – resulting in an absurdity that near the roundabout the road will have '20' marked on the eastbound carriageway, the Brent side, and '30' marked on the Westminster side. Also, where there is parking on the Westminster side, it will be outside the cycle lane, but the separation will only be a white line, not the Orca lane separators planned by Brent.



An artists' impression of the scheme from the consultation

Brent Cyclists responded to the consultation, and encouraged all supporters to respond similarly, welcoming the scheme but pointing out the problem of the Westminster parking, and also the defective design of the Fernhead Road junction, also in Westminster, where cars waiting at the stop line will obstruct the cycleway.

Harrow's major plans continue to ignore cycling

Harrow is planning a £2.8 million redevelopment of the roads around Wealdstone town centre. There are also changes planned to Station Road (A409) between Harrow town centre and the civic centre and redevelopment of the Harrow View / Parkside / Headstone Road crossroads. Unfortunately all these schemes ignore the necessity of providing a dense network of cycle routes free of fast or heavy motor traffic. There are some minor improvements such as removal of pedestrian guardrail and a 20mph speed limit in Wealdstone town centre. There will be a shared use section of footway along Ellen Webb Drive, under the railway bridge.

However, the plans threaten to sever existing cycle routes without providing any additional routes. There will be new one-way systems on High Road and Palmerston Road without a cycle contraflow. Trinity Square, which links Ellen Webb Drive and Canning Road (on an existing section of the Cross-Harrow cycle route) is envisaged as a public square and marketplace, and it is unclear if a segregated cycle route will be provided.

Parkside / Headstone Road was the route of the council's proposed Cross-Harrow cycle route, and currently has advisory cycle lanes, but this seems to have been abandoned, as the new crossroads does not include any provision for cycling. The A409 / Palmerston Road roundabout remains as a dangerous oversized dual-lane roundabout with no zebra crossings. The proposed Heart of Harrow cycle route along Station Road has also been abandoned with the excuse that the road is too narrow. However this road has central islands and hatching, which mean that space could be reallocated to provide cycle lanes, albeit with slight narrowing of traffic lanes and footways. This is a clear cycling desire line which means that no provision for cycling, as currently exists, is not acceptable. There will be a few shared use paths through the new Kodak redevelopment but these routes will not link up with any useful routes outside the network.

Cllr Barry Kendler, Chair of the council's Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel, wrote to Harrow Cyclists in November urging the group to 'Keep their expectations realistic', by which he seems to mean not to expect any real progress. Harrow cyclists wrote back to tell him the council must stop basing road design decisions on computer models that fail to account for walking and cycling, and that the London Cycle Design Standards must be put into practice by Harrow's engineers, which they so far have not been.

Anoop Shah and David Arditti

Forthcoming events

Wed 7 December: Brent Cyclists Christmas Meal 7pm at Panasia restaurant at the Clayton Crown hotel, Cricklewood. Please book via info@brentcyclists.co.uk

Wed 4 January: Brent Cyclists Meeting 7:00pm Pret a Manger, London Designer Outlet, Wembley (2nd Wed)

Wed 8 February: Brent Cyclists Meeting 7.00pm Atrium of the Clayton Crown Hotel, Cricklewood Broadway

Wed 1 March: Brent Cyclists Meeting 7:00pm Pret a Manger, London Designer Outlet, Wembley

Harrow Cyclists meetings check the Harrow Cyclists Yahoo! group or website

Brent and Harrow Cyclists Contacts

Brent Cyclists Co-ordinator and newsletter editor:
David Arditti, 94 Stag Lane, Edgware HA8 5LW, phone 07866 456390, coordinator@brentcyclists.org.uk

Harrow Cyclists co-ordinator: Tony Levene, 60 Longley Road, Harrow HA1 4TH, phone 07828 580931, tony.levene@tiscali.co.uk