

Proposed traffic and parking changes in Danestrete and Danesgate, Stevenage

Cycling UK Stevenage response to informal consultation TPE/03/22-5/B

Cycling UK Stevenage strongly object to the proposal to prevent people from cycling along the yellow paved section of Danestrete between Danesgate and Westgate known informally as the “Yellow Brick Road” (YBR).

On page 20 of the BDP(90)RPT001 Landscape and public realm design and access statement this was clearly identified as a spine to “Establish a connection between arrival zones” and “Allow access for pedestrians and **cyclists** and emergency vehicles”.

When Cycling UK met with SBC and HCC officers at Daneshill House on 8th February 2022, BDP presented the latest information available from Town Centre Regeneration Public Realm Guide. This indicated that in the longer term, the Danestrete route between Danesgate and Westgate is intended to be a cycle route. Following this meeting, we understand that a TRO was drafted and consulted on informally to include the removal of one-way restrictions on Danesgate and the “Yellow Brick Road”, the removal of the no-vehicles before 6pm restriction and the making of a new no-motor-vehicles at any time restriction (allowing cycles) on the Yellow Brick Road.

There is only one other north-south cycling route within the Town Centre dual carriageway ring and that includes the new section of shared use path alongside the new interchange. This section is shared by people cycling, walking, and using mobility equipment using the interchange as well as those travelling past it. This area will become even busier if this becomes the only north-south route that people cycling are permitted to use.

We were therefore very surprised and disappointed that, with no warning, and thus no consultation process, the Planning and Development committee decided at the actual planning meeting, that the yellow brick lane should not be used by cyclists.

The reason given to ban cyclists was “to safeguard pedestrians and other road users”. Cycling UK would like to express extreme disappointment that this statement implies that people riding cycles are inherently a danger to people who are walking. Throughout Stevenage and elsewhere, responsible cyclists share space safely with pedestrians; banning this responsible majority will not necessarily prevent dangerous and anti-social behaviour by a few individuals.

We would also like clarification as to who the “other road users” are. Access is to be maintained for emergency vehicles, maintenance, traders, events, or other exemptions. What other vehicles are likely to be included as other exemptions in the section where cycling is banned?

Cycling in a northbound direction is currently allowed along the yellow brick road section after 6pm and has been while the whole bus station area was inaccessible to pedestrians. Redevelopment gives considerably more space for pedestrians adjacent to

the yellow brick road and so its use by cyclists in both directions as proposed in the future in the Town Centre Regeneration Public Realm Guide would seem reasonable. By its very nature and design, the yellow brick road looks like a cycle route, feels like a cycle route and many people think it is a cycle route.

The proposal to ban cycling goes directly against the SBC Local Plan IT4 to support and encourage increasing mobility by sustainable and inclusive modes and IT5 making safe, direct, and convenient routes within developments for cyclists. Para 7.5.2 of the planning application states that the Highway Authority considers the proposed use of the space is easily accessible for trips by sustainable modes. The decision to remove cycle access along the spine means this is no longer the case – yellow brick road is the only access route avoiding the pedestrian only Town Square. Pushing a cycle, especially if loaded with shopping, or with a child in a child seat is difficult and potentially hazardous. Some people who can cycle quite efficiently find it difficult to walk any distance; others use adapted cycles and are unable to dismount. Banning people from cycling at a prestigious new public realm facility in the Town Centre appears to be completely at odds with Stevenage status as a Sustainable Transport Town.

Cycling UK Stevenage request that this proposal is reconsidered and that people cycling are allowed to use the yellow brick road in both directions.

20th July 2022