

Cycling UK Stevenage – Call for Action on Cycleway Maintenance

We strongly believe that the current state of cycle path maintenance in Stevenage is unacceptable and represents a significant barrier to cycling adoption in our town.

Our recent [Cycleway Surface Audit](#), which examined 50 random locations across Stevenage's cycle network, found that in 77% of cases, the adjacent road surface was preferable to cycle on compared to the dedicated cycle path.

This disparity clearly demonstrates that despite Hertfordshire County Council's stated commitment to prioritise active travel in their Local Transport Plan transport hierarchy, the actual maintenance outcomes reveal a consistent prioritisation of motor vehicle infrastructure over cycling facilities. The systematic underinvestment in cycle path maintenance not only contradicts HCC's own policies but also contributes to transport inequality, particularly affecting the 20% of Stevenage households without access to a car and others who do not drive.

Most people cycling need to use roads to access the cycle network, and many destinations lie beyond the reach of dedicated cycle paths. Potholes, cracks, and uneven surfaces at the edge of carriageways—where cyclists typically ride—can force dangerous swerving manoeuvres and cause serious accidents.

In addition, frequent flooding of some paths and underpasses suggests that cycleway gullies are cleaned significantly less often than those on the road network.

The potential of Stevenage's pioneering cycle network cannot be fully realised until surface quality issues are addressed systematically rather than sporadically.

We call for the following actions:

- 1. Cycling infrastructure maintenance outcomes to be in accordance with the transport user hierarchy in HCC's Local Transport Plan. For example, Footways and Cycle Routes Research – Task 3 Cycle Service Levels and Condition Assessment (UK Roads Liaison Group, referenced in LTN 1/20 15.4.3) to be clearly implemented.*
- 2. The Defect Management Approach and other relevant maintenance regimes/schedules to be revised to ensure that cycle specific infrastructure is maintained to at least the same standard as it would be for cars (for example on adjacent roads).*
- 3. Road maintenance assessments to recognise that cyclists are uniquely vulnerable to surface defects that may pose minimal issues for motor vehicles. The location, not just the size, of road defects must be a critical factor in determining repair priorities with specific consideration for cycling safety.*
- 4. Create the conditions and the necessary policies to increase standards for surface repairs after utility installations under cycle paths.*
- 5. HCC to engage directly with cycle user groups and conduct regular user surveys to properly assess and address the priorities of people who cycle. Results to be published.*

Cycling UK Stevenage is committed to working constructively with Hertfordshire County Council to address these issues. We will continue to advocate strongly for immediate improvements to maintenance standards. The quality of our cycling infrastructure directly impacts public health, transport equity, and our community's ability to meet climate goals through increased active travel.

We call on Hertfordshire County Council to commit to concrete actions that will remedy this unacceptable situation and unlock the full potential of Stevenage's cycle network.