
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 14 December 2010
Subject: **Contra-flow cycle schemes in Leighton-Linslade – Review of Experimental Schemes after 6 Months of Operation**
Report of: Basil Jackson, Assistant Director of Highways and Transportation
Summary: To report to the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles the comments and objections received in the first 6 months of implementation of the three contra-flow cycle lanes in Leighton-Linslade (Church Road, Hockliffe Street and Hartwell Grove) and to decide if the schemes should be made permanent, revised or removed.

Contact Officer: Amanda Tarbox, Assistant Engineer
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Leighton-Linslade wards
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The schemes promote sustainable modes of travel.

Financial:

There is currently £10,200 in the 2010/11 programme (Capital) for Cycle Legal Procedures in Leighton-Linslade.

Legal:

None as part of this report

Risk Management:

None as part of this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as part of this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as part of this report

Community Safety:

The scheme provides alternative cycle routes to key destinations such as the town centre and the station; if these routes were not provided the routes that cyclists would need to take may be more hazardous.

Sustainability:

Retention of these schemes may encourage people to cycle instead of using less sustainable forms of transport, is in support of CBC and Government sustainability objectives and also the Leighton-Linslade Modal Shift Exemplar Town objective.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1.

- (a) **Hartwell Grove – that additional road markings are added on the approach to the one way section, close to the junction with Dudley Street and the experimental order on the advisory contra-flow cycle route is made permanent.**
- (b) **Hockliffe Street – that the order be made permanent on the advisory contra-flow cycle lane on Hockliffe Street with no amendments.**
- (c) **Church Road - that the extent of the advisory contra-flow cycle lane be reduced; the section of contra-flow cycle lane between Vicarage Road and New Road be removed and that the experimental order be made permanent on the remaining section of contra-flow cycle lane, between Vicarage Road and Wing Road.**

Background and Information

1. As part of the Growth Area Funded work Bedfordshire Highways carried out last financial year three advisory contra-flow cycle lanes were implemented on Church Road, Hartwell Grove and Hockliffe Street, Leighton-Linslade.
2. These were the first advisory contra-flow cycle lanes to be implemented within Central Bedfordshire; it was therefore decided to implement these under an experimental order rather than a permanent order which meant that any of the advisory contra-flow cycle lanes could be removed immediately if it were felt necessary to do so without going through a legal process first. An experimental order also means that there was up to 18 months from the date of implementation to review the three schemes and make any amendments before permanent orders are made, or the schemes are discontinued.
3. The three contra-flow cycle lanes were implemented in March / April 2010 under an experimental order. The purpose of this report is to review the first 6 months that the contra-flow cycle lanes have been in operation and to ascertain whether the schemes should be made permanent, amended or discontinued.

Support

4. The Police have given feedback on these schemes after the first 6 months of implementation (see Appendix A).

Objections

5. Throughout the first 6 months of these schemes a total of 11 people have made contact with the Council to give feedback about these schemes, 1 of which relate to Hartwell Grove, 2 concerning Hockliffe Street and 8 concerning Church Road. The majority of these comments were received immediately after implementation. Since these schemes were implemented no accidents have been reported.

Hartwell Grove

6. The aim of providing a contra-flow cycle lane on the short section of Hartwell Grove between Dudley Street and Hartwell Crescent is to provide a quieter alternative route for cyclists heading towards the town centre from National Cycle Route 6 (South Street and at the back of Morrisons). If this contra-flow cycle lane was not in place the alternative route for cyclists to take would be along the busier Morrisons service and Lake Street.
7. Hartwell Grove contra-flow cycle lane; the main points raised are as follows:-
 - *It is a one way street with limited room for even one vehicle to pass*
 - *Access to it is via a very sharp / blind bend that drivers take at speed*
 - *The footpath access used most often (on the right towards Dudley Street) is impossibly narrow and with a very steep camber that means most pedestrians feel forced into using the road instead*
 - *Since the signs have been changed from 'no entry' signs to 'no motor vehicles' signs people are misinterpreting the signs and are using the street in the wrong direction.*

8. Response
- Hartwell Grove is a lightly trafficked short street with good visibility along its length in both directions, therefore inter vehicle visibility is good which limits any potential conflict.
 - Whilst pedestrians may also use the carriageway rather than the narrow footways, again given the lightly trafficked nature of the road (both in cars and cycles) and the fact that it is short with good visibility this should not cause any particular issues.
 - It is intended to improve the visual clues to motorists on the approach to the start of the one way section on Hartwell Grove, close to the junction with Dudley Street by adding a give way line across the junction and adding a left arrow with 'turn left' road markings - see appendix C.
 - The 'no motor vehicles' sign is generally recognised less than the no entry sign by members of the public but currently the Department for Transport do not permit the use of the 'no entry' sign with the 'except for cycles' plate. Erecting this combination of signs would mean that they would not be enforceable by the Police.

Hockliffe Street

9. The aim of providing a contra-flow cycle lane on Hockliffe Street is to provide a quieter and more direct route for cyclists heading towards the town centre from either National Cycle Route 6 (South Street and Hartwell Grove) or from Hockliffe Road area. If this contra-flow cycle lane was not in place the alternative route for cyclists to take would be either via Leston Road and Lake Street or Leston Road and North Street. Alternatively cyclists would continue to use Hockliffe Street illegally without there being any warning to others.
10. The changes made to allow contra-flow cycling on Hockliffe Street included erecting advisory contra-flow cycle signs, marking cycle symbols and a lane on the ground and constructing a cycle bypass on Hockliffe Street at the junction with the access road to the library car park.
11. Hockliffe Street contra-flow cycle lane; the main points raised are as follows:-
- *It is dangerous at the junction with Market Square where the cycle lane meets a blind bend where busses and delivery lorries use the whole width of road to turn the corner*
 - *Vehicles park over the cycle lane which forces cyclists onto the pavement or into the oncoming traffic.*
12. Response
- The scheme has been subjected to a safety assessment conducted. Contra-flow cycle lanes are common in other parts of the UK and Europe; evidence shows that cyclists often feel safer travelling towards traffic as they can see it and react to it, rather than travelling in the same direction and being passed when not expecting it. In addition this route takes cyclists away from hazardous alternative routes such as Leston Road.

Church Road

13. The aim of providing a contra-flow cycle lane on Church Road is to provide a quieter alternative route for cyclists to use when leaving the station using the path through Linslade Recreation Ground to Vicarage Road for cyclists heading towards either Wing Road or the town centre via Church Road. If this contra-flow cycle lane was not in place the alternative route for cyclists to take would be via the busier Station Road and New Road.

14. The changes made to allow contra-flow cycling on Church Road included erecting advisory contra-flow cycle signs, marking cycle symbols on the ground and a lane marking around the bend, and changing the no entry signs at the junction with New Road to 'no motor vehicles'.

15. Church Road contra-flow cycle lane; the main points raised are as follows:-
- *It is dangerous*
 - *This contra-flow is putting cyclists at significant risk for no particular benefit*
 - *There is a blind bend; vehicles travelling around the bend keep encroaching in the cycle lane*
 - *It takes cyclists around the sharp corner by the Hunt Hotel where cars are forced onto the side of the road with the cycle lane by cars parked in the recently re-marked parking bays on the opposite side of the road.*
 - *The line of site by the bend is obscured by hedges*
 - *The marked bays opposite the bend are forcing vehicles into the cycle lane*
 - *The bend was a high risk collision area while it was 'one way' mainly due to the speed that motorists, particularly those late for the train, negotiate the blind bend.*
 - *It is the narrow parts of Church Road where cycle lanes are not marked out that cyclists should be separated from oncoming traffic.*
 - *Only a few discontinuous sections of road are marked out for the use of cyclists, one of which is through a chicane (not bypassing it).*
 - *Since the inception of the cycle route vehicles have started driving the wrong way along the route.*
 - *If the most favoured route is for cyclists to come from Vicarage Road why not remove the section of contra-flow between New Road and Vicarage Road which would then remove the section around the bend – the most dangerous part.*
 - *The entrance to the cycle lane from New Road puts cyclists into the middle of a junction in which vehicles are emerging from Church Road in both directions. I consider this to be highly dangerous.*
 - *While I can see the merits of allowing cyclists from New Road to reach Vicarage Road, I am dubious of the benefits of allowing them to continue along Church Road to Wing Road. They will have difficulties emerging from Church Road and will not be expected by motorists on Wing Road.*
 - *It appears to me that almost all the benefits to cyclists could be achieved much more safely by providing a cycle path adjacent to the footway on the western side of Church Road between New Road and Vicarage Road.*
 - *Why is the cycle route down Church Road against the one way system and not down New Road with the one way traffic flow?*

16.

Response

The scheme has been subjected to a safety assessment.

Contra-flow cycle lanes are common practise in other parts of the UK and Europe; evidence shows that cyclists often feel safer travelling towards traffic as they can see it and react to it.

- On the bend outside the Hunt Hotel there is sufficient remaining road width (discounting the parking bays and the marked cycle lane) for vehicles to negotiate the bend without encroaching in the cycle lane.

A cycle lane has not been marked out for the entire length of Church Road because the speed and volume of traffic does not warrant this. Church Road falls within Linslade Conservation Area; the general approach to highway design within a Conservation Area is to minimise the use of road markings and signs wherever possible without compromising safety.

The intention of the scheme is to encourage more people to cycle to and from the station.

In operation it has become apparent that the section of cycle lane between New Road and Vicarage Road is not as popular as was believed. It has also attracted the most adverse comment and it is therefore being removed.

Removing it would address some of the other concerns that have been raised. Alternative arrangements would be as at appendix C.

Wing Road is now traffic calmed with a 20mph speed limit. The junction with Church Road and Wing Road should act as any other give way junction; cyclists emerging from Church Road have to give way to traffic on Wing Road. There is a cycle route sign opposite the junction with Church Road on Wing Road.

The budget was insufficient for the widening of the footway on Church Road between New Road and Vicarage Road to construct a shared use path.

New Road becomes extremely busy during the evening rush hour as vehicles leave the station and is heavily parked at all times.

Promoting a cycle route from the station via Linslade Recreation Ground to Vicarage Road, and then right onto Church Road contra-flow cycle lane this should facilitate cyclists avoiding some of the rush hour traffic.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Police Response

Appendix B – Objections

Appendix C – Plans

Appendix A – Police Response

On the subject of the three contra-flow cycle lanes, as discussed, patrolling officers have received 'concerns' or 'opinions' from residents in the area of the contra flow lanes however we have not had cause to deal with incidents arising from the use of the contra-flow system.

The use of 'No Motor Vehicle' signs as opposed to No Entry signs has apparently lead to motorists electing to ignore the prohibition, again this has been voiced by residents. I am not aware of officers having observed this action as the presence of a patrol vehicle or uniformed officer appears to encourage compliance.

Regards,

Steve.

Steve Welham.

Bedfordshire Police Traffic Management.

Appendix B – Objections

Objection 1 – Hartwell Grove

From:

Sent: 12 April 2010 14:22

To:

Subject: Cycling access with regard to Hartwell Crescent

Dear Sir/Madam,

I live on Dudley Street and was very dismayed when I originally saw your contentious plan for making the one-way Hartwell Crescent into a two way cycling access as:

- it is a one way street with limited room for even one vehicle to pass
- access to it is via a very sharp/blind bend that drivers take at speed
- the footpath access used most often (on the right towards Dudley Street) is impossibly narrow and with a very steep camber that means most pedestrians feel forced into using the road instead.

On Saturday while walking back from town I personally witnessed 2 vehicles (a Tesco delivery van and a people carrier) use the street in the wrong direction. I said to the guy in the people carrier that it was a one-way street and he said "show me the sign" which I did - but he said it wasn't a 'no entry' and that the sign actually meant that vehicles and motor cycles could now use this street. So clearly people are misreading/misinterpreting this new sign. I have also heard from other neighbours that they too have witnessed vehicles using this road the wrong way since the signage has changed.

Given that we have had a hit and run cycling death last night in the immediate area and on a road that isn't comprised by so many problems - I think the decision made with regard to Hartwell Crescent could very likely result in deaths and/or serious injury to pedestrians/cyclists and motorists.

This was a flawed decision that needs to be urgently reviewed,

Dudley Street
Leighton Buzzard
Beds

Objection 2 - Hockliffe Street

From:

Sent: 24 May 2010 20:28

To: SELOUS, Andrew

Subject:

Seeing is Believing who ever heard of a cycle path going down a one way street the wrong way Well Leighton Council have just opened one in Hockcliffe street not only that but the path meets a dangerous blind bend at the foot of the hill where Busses and delivery lorries turn the busses actual almost touch both kerbs in turning You should send a road safety officer down to see this and not accept any excuses from the council Actuall what are Amey the council Advisers thinking about in putting this in to operation

Woodman close
leighton Buzzard
Beds

Objection 3 - Church Road

From:

Sent: 05 June 2010 16:41

To: Go Cycle

Subject: RE: GoCycle Email Update May/June V25

Afternoon,

Thank you for the regular GoCycle updates. They do encourage me to get out on the thing, although work has kind of got in the way.

Can you please tell me what GoCycle's view of the bike lane in Church Road, Linslade is? This is the one way street that leads up to the Hunt Hotel, and joins up with New Road as part of a one way system. Except the cycle lane is for bikes going *against the traffic*. The turning into Church Road from Wing Road is quite sharp, often requiring cars to use the full width of the road to negotiate the various banjos that populate the area, and the parking up by the Hotel force the traffic over to the right. In both cases, the cycle lanes are used by cars.

It seems to me to be absolute madness to expose even disciplined cyclists and drivers to head on collisions where the cyclist is bound to come off second best. And as I am sure you will appreciate, there are undisciplined cyclists and drivers that will end up killing someone; usually the cyclist. What makes the route even more baffling is that there would seem to be absolutely no advantage in allowing cyclists to take this route. New Road is only 100 yards or less to the east, and as the block is rectangular this hardly represents a short cut for cyclists.

I don't want to sound like Outraged of Tunbridge Wells, but when risk assessments abound, how can this farcical and dangerous bike lane make any sense at all.

Regards

From: Steve Lakin

Sent: 07 June 2010 10:11

To:

Subject: FW: GoCycle Email Update May/June V25

I pushed for the contra-flow lanes to be installed on Church Road, Hockliffe Street and Hartwell Grove having over some time observed cyclists going against the flow of traffic on each. I am also lobbying for all one-way streets within Bedfordshire to be made two way for cyclists unless there are particular reasons why not, making this configuration standard practice. Cycle contra-flows are common elsewhere and work fine. I have just this week for example seen them working in Utrecht, Holland. Many cyclists, myself included prefer to use a lane that runs against the flow of traffic where we can see and respond to the behaviour of approaching drivers rather than be passed close by vehicles travelling at speed. For this reason I am not an advocate of cycle lanes per se as they support the view of many drivers that cyclists should be segregated from cars on the carriageway.

With Bedfordshire Highways I will be keeping a very close eye on the Church Road scheme because of the bend outside of the Hunt Hotel, where drivers tend to cut the corner. At the end of the experimental period for the scheme it may be that we remove the section of contra-flow between New Road and Vicarage Road as this confers little advantage. I have also studied the entrance on to Church Road from Wing Road and believe there is sufficient space from cyclists to exit in safety.

You make a good point about undisciplined drivers and cyclists, who are a danger to all other road users. We have made a huge huge effort since the GoCycle project started to train the next generation of cyclists to be confident, courteous and assertive road users, offering Bikeability training for free for all children attending Leighton-Linslade schools. We also currently offering cycle training to adults for free in the knowledge that the awareness generated will help to make them better drivers.

The Cycling Town project is predicated on the assumption that it is continental levels of cycling (over 20% of local journeys) is achievable by consistent investment over 10 plus years. If we could achieve this in Leighton -Linslade it would transform the roads for the benefit of everyone. The issue with Church Road is that it is used as a rat run for people driving to the station, either to park or to pick up and drop off. The Cycling Town ethos is to challenge the need for this as many of these journeys could easily be made by bike.

Regards,

Steve Lakin

From:

Sent: 07 June 2010 14:02

To: Steve Lakin

Subject: Cycling Contra flows

Afternoon,

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to reply to me. I can see the sense in cycling contra-flows, but I would challenge you on a couple of points if I may. I have developed strong views about road safety over the years, and my issues are from that viewpoint, rather than any antediluvian opinion about the car being king.

Hartwell Grove is a straight (ish) road and I imagine the contra flow works well there. It also makes sense as it cuts down journey times.

I have my doubts about Hockliffe Street, which I experienced firsthand this morning. I note that the bend by the Roebuck has been widened (whether as part of this scheme or not is not important), which would have been my first argument. Unfortunately there were two vehicles parked over the cycle lane, which forces the cyclist onto the pavement or into the oncoming traffic in what is a busy and narrow through fare. It's all very well pointing out that parking there is illegal and it should be enforced, but since I have lived in LB it's always been a surprise not to find parked vehicles there – sometimes large lorries. Besides, this is little comfort to the friends and family of a cyclist who has been injured (or worse) by having to pull out against the traffic. And don't forget the poor driver who would be the other end of the collision, and would probably suffer nightmares involving cyclists hurtling across bonnets or into windscreens.

But I really must press you to reconsider the Church Road contraflow at the end of the experimental period. I maintain my argument that this particular contraflow is putting cyclists at significant risk for no particular benefit. To describe this road as a "rat run" to the station is unfair and does not take into account the needs of other road users. When the office was in Mentmore Road, this was the only route to the station. Yes, there are alternative routes, but that is like suggesting that an alternative route to Manchester from here would be via a 360 degree journey around the M25. Secondly, you use the phrase "cut the corner" to describe cars going around the bend at the Hunt, which may simply be a choice of words, but I would argue strongly if it was meant as a criticism. I was taught to drive using all of the road to which I am entitled. So that bend is approached on the left hand side to maximise visibility and the apex is clipped to keep the car smooth so that evasive action can be taken if it is necessary. Apart from that, cars are entitled to "cut the corner".

Which raises the question, what is the status of the cycle lanes? The intermittent nature of the road markings in Church Road suggest that they are advisory, but I am sure the law would take a dim view if a cyclist was hurt by a vehicle crossing the dividing line; but what choice do drivers have at that bend? And if a motorist can be prosecuted (presumably) for causing an accident in Church Road by crossing the dividing line when it was unsafe, then presumably the cyclist in Hockliffe Street will be prosecuted for doing the same thing, even if it was to manoeuvre around an illegally parked car?

I congratulate the whole team in raising the awareness of alternative means of transport, and I am certain you will concede there are times when the journey is much better by car . The installation of a cycle lane from Wing to LB encourages me to cycle to the station on occasion, which in turn has made me realise there are times when I could probably cycle into a meeting in LB rather than use the car. I have no doubt there are many successful contraflows in countries where the cycling culture has a greater hold, and I can see them becoming commonplace in the UK. I also accept the argument that the culture has to start somewhere but I would suggest that Hockliffe Street and Church Road are not a step too far, but a step to soon.

Regards

Objection 4 - Church Road

From:

Sent: 21 May 2010 16:00

To: Steve Lakin

Subject: Re: Cycle Lane - Church Road, Linslade

Steve,

I have two questions for you:

- do you feel safe for you & your family to cycle round this corner?
- do you take responsibility for the safety of others using this cycle lane?

Regards,

On 21 May 2010, at 15:50, Steve Lakin wrote:

Thank you for your email.

The cycle contraflow on Church Road is one of three experimental schemes recently introduced within Leighton Buzzard by Bedfordshire Highways as part of the Cycling Town project. The design of each has been scrutinised and approved by the DfT. As the scheme is experimental it will be carefully monitored, especially over the next month. I cycled it yesterday and will do so again next week with representatives from Cycling England.

The signed cycle route between the town centre and the railway station uses Linslade Rec and lane serving the Hunt Hotel car park. Cyclists heading towards town are directed across the Rec to join Church Road at the junction with Vicarage Road. Hence, I do not expect many cyclists to enter Church Road via New Road as New Road offers the most direct alignment at this location.

Regards

Steve Lakin

From:

Sent: 20 May 2010 19:32

To: Steve Lakin

Subject: Cycle Lane - Church Road, Linslade

Steve,

I left you a voicemail today, bringing to your attention what is, in my opinion, a dangerous implementation of a cycle lane in Church Road, Linslade.

It may well look suitable on a map, but you should witness traffic along this road to see how dangerous it is in practice - the hedge on the corner renders it a blind corner.

You may well be a man with a busy schedule who can't find time to see the results of his labours - so here's a short video on YouTube I shot today, showing you how, even with the lines all shiny & new, almost every car cuts the corner and across the cycle lane.

Bear in mind that this corner is blind - they can't see a cyclist coming.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQEzag3qepQ>

I'm urging you to come down here and see for yourself how dangerous it is. And then to have it removed.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Regards,

Objection 5 – Church Road

From:

Sent: 26 May 2010 01:23

To: Cllr Brian Spurr

Subject: Cycle Lane - Church Road, Linslade

Dear Mr Spurr,

I have to say that the cycle lane going the wrong way along the one-way Church Road in Linslade is the maddest and most dangerous thing I have ever seen in the town! It really is sheer madness! Apart from anything else, it takes cyclists around the sharp corner by the Hunt Hotel where cars are forced onto the side of the road with the cycle lane by the cars parked in the recently re-marked parking bays on the opposite side of the road. There are also sections of the road where the cycle lane just isn't marked as they are too narrow. Please, please, do what you can to get this madness removed before some unfortunate cyclist gets killed using it!

Whilst writing, I feel I should also comment on the zebra crossing over West Street at the Bridge Street junction. This does work well on weekdays (as do the other new crossings), but it is clear to me that pedestrian flows on Saturdays were not checked when surveys for the works were carried out. Simply put, there are far too many pedestrians cross it on a Saturday as they walk between Tesco's and homes into the town centre so as to make a continuous stream of people over it. This is what causes the traffic chaos every Saturday. I do think that the council should bit the bullet on this one and say "OK, good idea, but failed on this one count, so we'll put a light controlled crossing back."

Finally, I do support road safety measures being taken in the town in general, but the encroachment of 20mph limits seems to be almost daily! It also appears that they are a bit hotch-potch. I really can't understand the need for the length of Wing Road to be 20mph whilst I can scuttle along Mentmore Road at 30mph! Rosebury Ave is 20mph, yet the single lane section of Soulbury Road at the higher level directly in front of the houses is 30mph? Basset Road - 30 mph, but West St 20 mph? It also lends its self to abuse when the 20mph restrictions operate in the evenings etc when very little traffic (and fewer pedestrians) are about.

Hope you can consider these issues and if necessary, pass them onto others who may perhaps be in a better position to look into them and bring common sense to prevail.

Regards,

Dear Councillor Spurr

Contraflow cycle lanes, both with and without road markings, are tried and tested and used extensively in many European countries where the evidence is that cyclists often feel safer travelling towards the traffic, as they can see it and react to it, rather than travelling in the same direction and being passed when not expecting it.

Contraflow schemes are a new innovation within Bedfordshire, but over time we expect them to become the norm on quiet roads where the practice of cycling against the flow often already exists. The Church Road scheme, and similar schemes for Hockliffe Street and Hartwell Grove, have been introduced by way of experimental Traffic Regulation Orders and will be monitored for a period of time before any decision is made as to whether they should become permanent. As this scheme required special permission the DfT have been consulted and have given their approval.

Church Road has reasonable sight lines, therefore inter vehicle visibility is good, limiting potential conflicts. The issue you highlight is the potential for conflict on the bend opposite the Hunt Hotel. At this location there is a marked cycle lane that should serve to warn approaching drivers.

The signed cycle route between the town centre and the railway station uses Linslade Rec and lane serving the Hunt Hotel car park. Cyclists heading towards town are directed across the Rec and join Church Road at the junction with Vicarage Road. Hence, I do not expect many cyclists to enter Church Road via New Road as New Road offers the most direct alignment at this location.

This scheme was notified in advance to ward councillors and I understand approved by the Exec. It was also one of the schemes featured in the consultation on Wing Road traffic calming held at the White House.

I can advise that the operation of the scheme will continue to be monitored. I shall also be promoting a reduction to the speed limit on Church Road and consideration of a bus gate or similar just after the junction with Vicarage Road as this would eliminate rat-running. I would be delighted if you would help champion this.

Regards

Steve Lakin

From:

Sent: 26 July 2010 20:25

To: Steve Lakin

Cc: Cllr Brian Spurr

Subject: Fwd: Cycle Lane - Church Road, Linslade

Dear Mr Larkin,

Brian Spurr kindly copied me your reply regarding the cycle lane in Church Road, Linslade.

Whilst I appreciate that for most of Church Road sight lines are quite good, the issue with the corner by The Hunt Hotel is not that a marked lane has been provided, but that as cars park in the marked bays on the opposite side of the road at the corner, vehicles travelling along Church Road are forced into the cycle lane on that corner and therefore have the potential for a 'head on' with a cyclist using the cycle lane. If you persist with what I consider to be an unsafe scheme and don't remove the car parking on the other side of the road, sooner or later, someone WILL be hit and get either seriously injured or killed there. Try it - get in an average sized car or van and drive along there and see if you can get round that corner without going into the cycle lane. If as you say, most cyclists coming from the station cross the recreation ground and come along Vicarage Road, surely the best thing to do would be to remove the contra-flow between New Road and the Vicarage Road Jn as this is the most dangerous part?

The fact that you had to get special permission from the DfT worries me considerably as from first hand knowledge, I know that there are no experts there - just people who rely on external consultants - and they have to cut back on them now as well!

Regarding the rest of Church Road where the cycle lane isn't marked, cyclists I have spoken to consider that it is precisely those narrow parts where there is no marked lane that they need to be separated from the on coming traffic.

I'd be grateful if you would advise me as to what you mean by the term 'bus gate'. It seems to me that your aim is to make every road within Leighton Buzzard a 20mph limit. I'm sure this will go down really well with local motorists! I should add that although I don't cycle (had too many stolen in the past and other reasons) I tend to walk where ever I can (3 to 4 miles no object) rather than use my car, however I have daughters who do many sporting activities at clubs within town and I often need to drop one off a Tiddenfoot for 2 hours of swimming and collect another from Van Dyke after hockey or netball practice within a short while - and get them back for home work and GCSE course work, so I do have to drive around in the evenings just to fit everything into the day. I would use buses except at the times I wish to use them and the places they go to, I can't because there are none!

Appreciating that you have responded to Mr Spurr with your 'Sustainable Communities' hat on, I do hope that he will personally consider what is best as a whole for Leighton - Linslade rather than just one element of road users in the town.

Yours sincerely,

Objection 6 – Church Road

From:

Sent: 05 May 2010 16:43

To: Steve Lakin

Subject: Cycle lane in Church Road Linslade

Mr. Lakin,

I called Wendy, your colleague in Highways to report what I felt sure was an error in marking out a cycle lane on Church Road, Linslade, indicating that cycles would be in contraflow to car movements.

Wendy has just called to say that there is no error, and that the intention is to conduct a trial of cyclists riding in contraflow. Apparently, such things are commonplace on the continent.

I have lived in this locality since 1982, using the route in question almost daily, and feel that the proposed trial would end in disaster. The line of sight from 'The Judges House' area is impaired by hedges, and the road is narrowed at that point by cars parking on the left of the road. This naturally leads drivers to move to the right of the road, into the area which would become the cycle track.

Whilst I am aware that the speed limit is likely to be reduced to 20mph, that would still be too fast for a car driver to avoid an oncoming cyclist, whose speed would be likely to increase the movement towards each other to 35-40 mph. These calculations are based on drivers obeying the speed limits, not always a 'given' in routes frequently used as a 'rat run'.

Furthermore, visibility along the road is quite poor in Winter. I suspect it would be difficult to see cycle lane markings after dusk, and difficult to see cyclists, even if they were wearing the proper hi-vis clothing and using good lights on their cycles, which is, regrettably, rarely the case.

I implore you to persuade the appropriate persons to reconsider this decision.

Regards,

Linslade

Objection 7 – Church Road

Mr S Lakin
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Beds SG17 5TQ

Dear Mr Lakin,

CYCLE ROUTE – CHURCH ROAD, LINSLADE.

Much has been said in the Press and at Public discussion about the above cycle route, so I will not waste too much of your time.

I own and live at [redacted] and have done so for over 10 years. The location of my main front windows overlooks the most dangerous blind bend in this town. It was a high risk collision area while it was 'one way' mainly due to the speed that motorists, particularly those late for the train, negotiate the blind bend. There have been many 'near misses' and minor collisions over the years but, thankfully, not anything serious.

However, since the inception of the cycle route, things have got seriously silly. This week alone 4 emergency vehicles, not on blue lights or on call have driven the wrong way along the route. We used to have the odd vehicle doing that, now it's about a dozen a day. That coupled with the ordinary traffic and a cycle route is a recipe for disaster.

I have talked to officials and town/county councillors until I am blue in the face about the potential for this disaster, to no avail. All I can say is when we do have a serious accident or, God forbid, a fatality, I will be the very first person to say 'I told you so'. That will be of little comfort to the parents, wife or husband of the unfortunate deceased.

I LIVE HERE AND SEE THIS POTENTIAL DISASTER HAPPENING EVERY DAY, SO PLEASE BE WARNED, IT IS SIMPLE COMMON SENSE TO REDUCE THE RISK AND ABANDON THIS FOOLHARDY DECISION.

Yours faithfully

Church Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.

Objection 8 – Church Road

From:

Sent: 02 June 2010 14:50

To:

Subject: - LB cycleway

Took a call from [redacted] who says he had a very near miss with a cyclist. He was very 'worked up' about the scheme using words such as stupid, diabolical, overpriced, idiotic, shambles, dangerous etc.feels the scheme should be ripped out and taxpayers given a rebate. He believes that Basil is responsible and should be removed from his position.

He wishes to have answers to the following questions:

How much did the scheme cost

Who drew it up and who signed it off

Who is responsible is there is accident on the contra flow

If the scheme is proved to be a disaster will the person who implemented it resign from his post and 'cease to be a leach on tax payers'

Dear

Thank you for your comments on the cycle contraflow scheme recently installed on Church Road. I can advise that the scheme was designed by Bedfordshire Highways and cost less than £10,000 to implement, the major component of which being the associated Traffic Regulation Order. This order was advertised earlier this year and attracted few objections. The plans for the contraflow were exhibited at the White House alongside plans for traffic calming along Wing Road.

The scheme is part of a range of improvements within Leighton-Linslade's relating to the successful bid for Cycling Town status. When signing up to the Cycling Towns Agreement, Central Bedfordshire Council committed itself to meeting certain quality levels of design in infrastructure, conforming to Cycling England's (CE's) recommended design portfolio including opportunities for contra-flow cycling. CE's guidelines state that two-way cycling should be the default option whenever it is proposed to introduce one-way working for general traffic and that "any decision not to provide cyclists with this facility should only be taken after a thorough examination of the proposal has shown that such an arrangement could not be made to operate safely. Since many one-way streets were originally two-way working it is likely that most could be converted to rectify this omission."

Research by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) has found that properly designed contraflow schemes can function satisfactorily in a variety of conditions. TRL states "Safety practitioners should note that this research found that in none of the cases studied had cyclists had been put in a position of serious conflict, and the behaviour of cyclists was not judged to have endangered pedestrians. A well-designed scheme should not, therefore, give rise to undue safety problems. Any specific concerns identified during a safety audit should be balanced against the likely hazards faced by cyclists forced to use alternative routes if contraflow cycling is not allowed. The audit should also take into account the fact that if no contraflow facility is provided a certain proportion of cyclists will travel in the contraflow direction illegally and, therefore, at increased risk due to the lack of formal provision." The opportunity to introduce contraflow cycling on three roads in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, of which Church Road is one, was taken in discussion with Cycling England having considered 'desire lines' and observed cyclists behaviour. The three schemes were introduced under Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) powers as this ensures that their impact will be kept under review.

The liability for any accident on Church Road would depend on the circumstances and users would be expected to observe the road signs and to drive or cycle with the appropriate care and attention.

The Cycling Town team at Leighton-Linslade are offering free cycle training to all adults within Leighton-Linslade and I would commend this offer to you. They can also offer a free loan bike should you wish to try cycling to the station, which would, depending on the time of day, be quicker than travelling by car.

Regards

Steve Lakin

Objection 9 – Church Road

Highways

140653

22 December 2009

Central Bedfordshire Council,
Priory House, Monks Walk,
Chicksands,
Shefford,
SG17 5TQ

1 2 JAN 2010

Dear Sirs,

Proposed Contra-flow Cycle Lane on Church Road, Linslade

COPIES		

3-12

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed contra-flow cycle "lane" on Church Road, Linslade. My concerns are these:

1. Although referred to as a cycle lane, it is nothing of the sort. A cycle lane is a continuous section of road which is marked out separately for the use of cyclists. Only a few discontinuous sections of road are marked out for the use of cyclists, one of which is *through* a chicane (not bypassing it). Between these discontinuous sections there are build-outs with trees and parking bays for motorists on what is for them the offside of the road. These offside parking bays reinforce the appearance to motorists that they are on a one-way road. Although signs are proposed to indicate the existence of a contra-flow cycle lane, the road layout belies this, creating danger for both cyclists and motorists.
2. The entrance to the cycle lane from New Road puts cyclists into the middle of a junction in which vehicles are emerging from Church Road in both directions. I consider this to be highly dangerous.
3. Parking bays are proposed to be retained outside numbers 13 and 21, Church Road and the Hunt Hotel. These have the effect of forcing motorists into the middle of the road, taking them into the path of oncoming cyclists rounding the bend. I consider that physical separation is required at this bend, e.g. a kerb separating the cycle lane from the roadway.

While I can see the merits of allowing cyclists from New Road to reach Vicarage Road, I am dubious of the benefits of allowing them to continue along Church Road to Wing Road. They will have difficulties emerging from Church Road and will not be expected by motorists on Wing Road. By contrast, motorists expect vehicles, including bicycles, to emerge from New Road.

It appears to me that almost all the benefits to cyclists could be achieved much more safely by providing a cycle path adjacent to the footway on the western side of Church Road between New Road and Vicarage Road. I consider that such a cycleway should be separated from the roadway by a kerb, and possibly be at the same level as the footway.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Department for Transport to alert them to these proposals and to ask them not to authorise the special road signs which are required.

Yours faithfully,

Objection 10 – Church Road

From: Sue Freeman
Sent: 04 May 2010 22:54
To: Leighton Buzzard-ed
Subject: letter for publishing

May I congratulate Dave Chamberlain on noticing, with his Mum, one of the problems with the new cycleways. I raised my concern at several council meetings that suddenly having cycles travelling against the normal traffic flow in a one-way street is an accident waiting to happen. I requested, and received, assurances from the reporting officer that these systems would have sufficient warnings to pedestrians that cycles may approach from the direction they do not expect.

I welcome all attempts to encourage the use of cycles rather than motor vehicles but am often regarded as a "heretic" because I am yet to be persuaded that the use of a bicycle is inherently virtuous. This town has a long tradition of "walking down-to-town" and I would hate to see this form of exercise becoming more difficult.

As a Linslade ward councillor I was voicing my concern about the Church Road scheme in particular, but the other schemes for contra-flow cycleways are equally worrying.

Sue Freeman
L-L Town Councillor, Linslade Ward
7 Station Road
Linslade

Objection 11 – Church Road

From: Cllr Brian Spurr
Sent: 27 April 2010 09:28
To: Cllr Tom Nicols; Cllr David McVicar; Basil Jackson; David Bowie; Jim Tombe; Ann Rowland
Cc: Cllr Roy Johnstone; Cllr David Bowater; Cllr Ken Sharer; brian.sadler@leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk
Subject:

I trust with the list above I have the correct person to look into a daft situation we have .

In Linslade around the station we have a one way road system that works O K

Church Road is one way going to the station and New Road is one way coming from the station, these road are parallel to each other and both have residential parking. Both roads are well used going to and from the Station

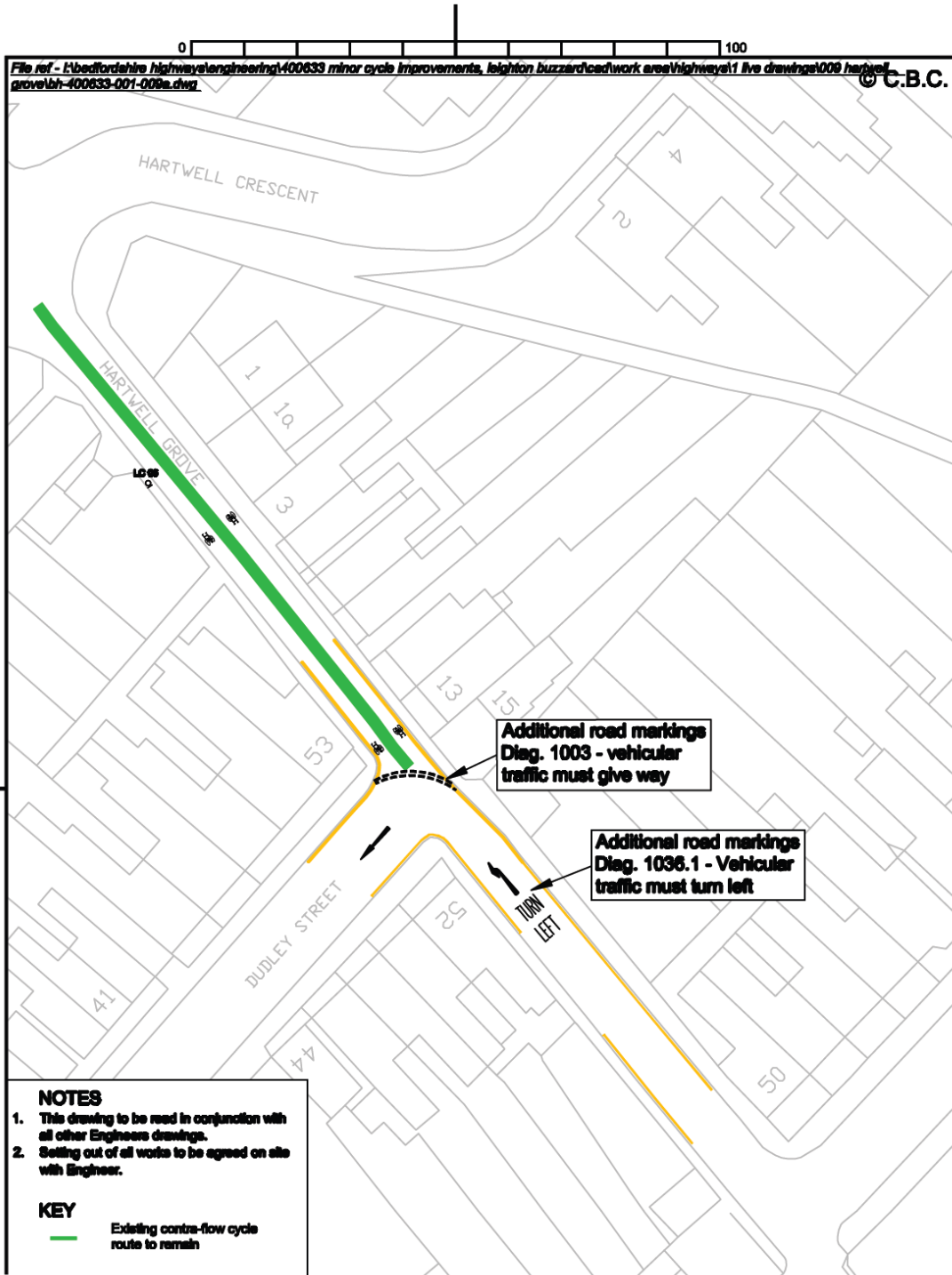
WHY DID WE PUT A NEW CYCLE ROUTE GOING DOWN CHURCH ROAD AGAINST THE ONE WAY SYSTEM the tight bend and parked cars on Church Road by the Hunt Hotel make this a blind corner, cars can not/could not see a cyclist. The road is narrow cars must drive in the cycle route .

Can someone explain why the cyclist route is down Church Road AGAINST the one way system NOT down New Road with the one way traffic flow

Unless someone has a very good reason why not Please immediately change this before we have an accident

Brian Spurr

Appendix C



NOTES

- This drawing to be read in conjunction with all other Engineers drawings.
- Setting out of all works to be agreed on site with Engineer.

KEY

— Existing contra-flow cycle routes to remain


Rev	Revision details	Chkd	Appd	Date
Drawn: AMT	Preliminary			
Design: AMT	For comment			✓
Chkd: SJOH	For tender			
Appd: NOL	For construction			
Date: 26/11/10	As constructed			
	Other			


Project Name
Leighton-Linslade Cycling Schemes

Drawing Title
BH - Transportation

Proposed amendments to Hartwell Grove contra-flow

Original Drawing Size : A4
 Scale : 1:800 Dimensions : -



Client


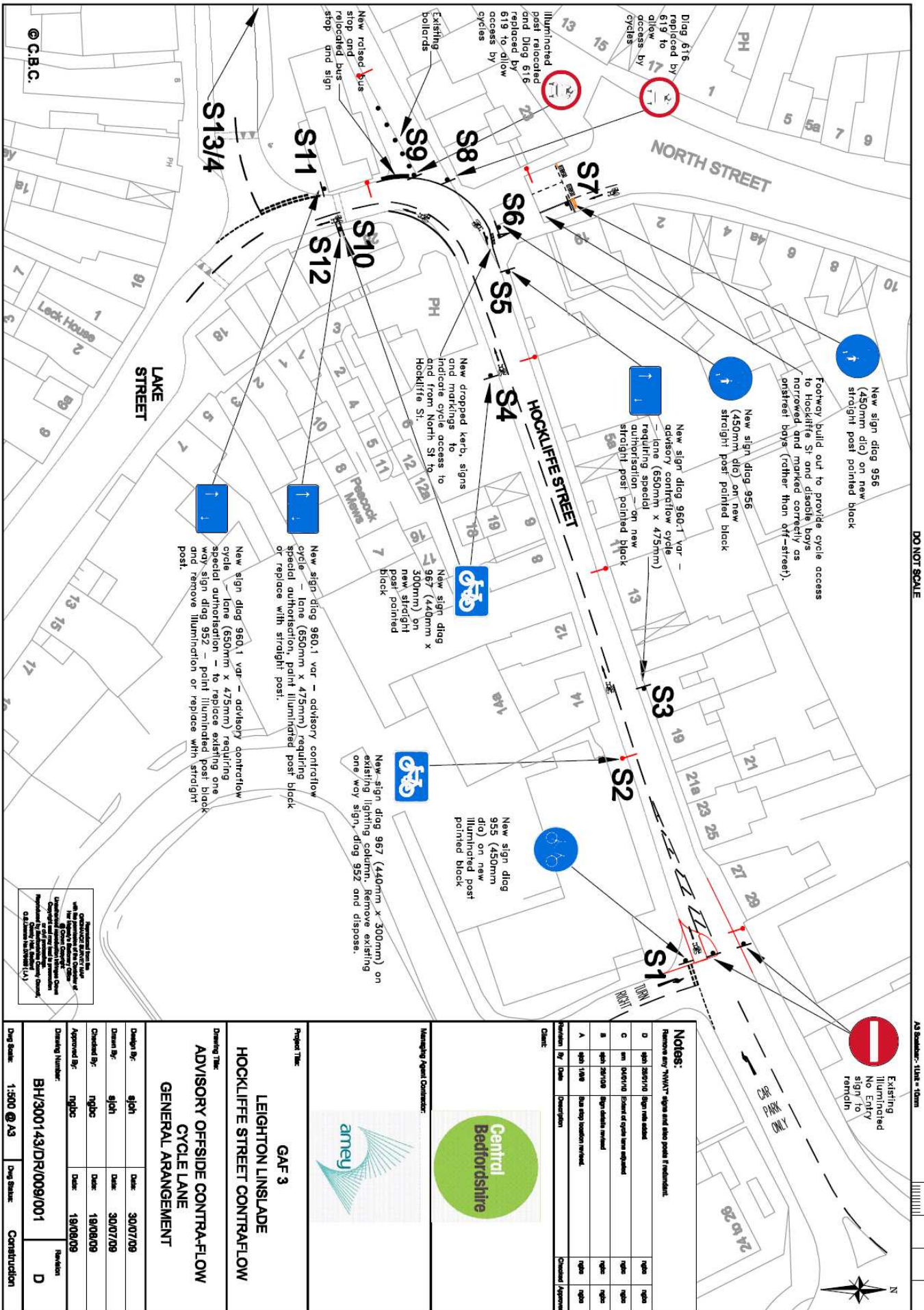
Drawing No
BH-400628-001-004

Rev



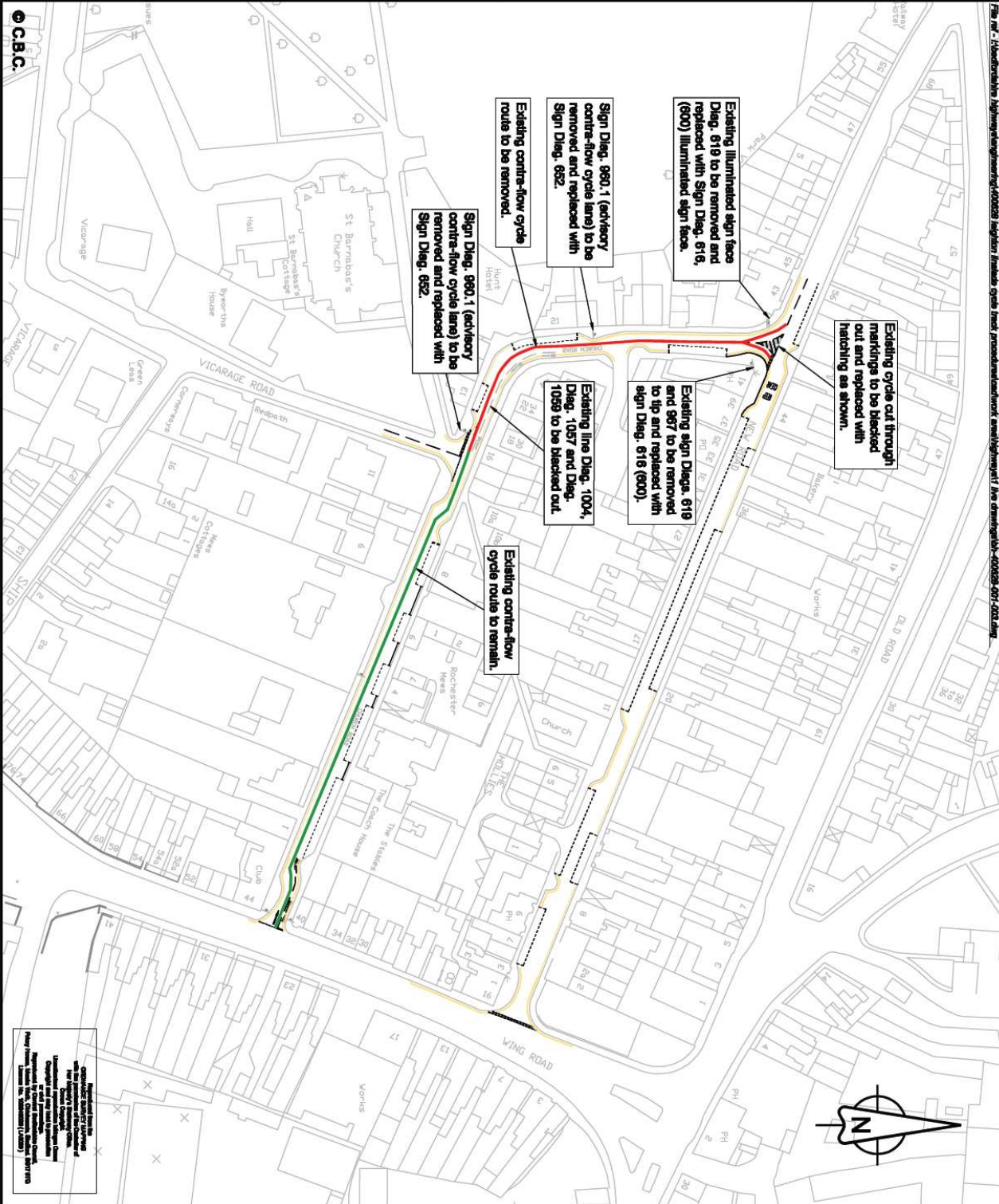
DO NOT SCALE

A3 Scale: 1:100 = 10mm



Approved for use by the Client only. This drawing is the property of the Client and is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of the Client. The Client is responsible for ensuring that this drawing is used in accordance with the terms of the contract. The Client is also responsible for ensuring that this drawing is used in accordance with the terms of the contract.

<p>Notes: Remove any 'NMT' signs and also post if redundant.</p>																
D	sign 1207/10	Sign not added	sign	sign												
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<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Revision</th> <th>By</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Checked</th> <th>Approved</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Revision	By	Date	Description	Checked	Approved						
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<p>Managing Agent Contractor:</p>																
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<p>Drawing Title:</p> <p>ADVISORY OFFSIDE CONTRA-FLOW</p> <p>CYCLE LANE</p> <p>GENERAL ARRANGEMENT</p>																
Design By:	sign	Date:	30/07/09													
Drawn By:	sign	Date:	30/07/09													
Checked By:	ngbc	Date:	19/08/09													
Approved By:	ngbc	Date:	19/08/09													
Drawing Number:	BH/300143/DR/009/001			Revision												
Dwg Scale:	1:500 @ A3	Dwg Status:	Construction	D												



Notes:

- 1. All dimensions are in meters unless otherwise stated.
- 2. All dimensions are to the centerline of the road.
- 3. All dimensions are to the centerline of the road.
- 4. All dimensions are to the centerline of the road.

- NOTES**
- This drawing to be used in conjunction with all other Engineering drawings.
 - Setting out of all works to be signed on site with Engineer.
 - All signs to be in accordance with The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.
 - All signs removed to be returned to depot for re-use.

KEY

- Existing contra-flow cycle route to remain
- Existing contra-flow cycle route to be removed
- Sign Diag. 616
No entry for vehicles with no entry for vehicles with
- Sign Diag. 602
One-way traffic
- Sign Diag. 619
Motor vehicles prohibited
- Sign Diag. 967
Route recommended for pedal cycles on the main carriageway of a road

Rev	Revision details	Chd	Appl	Date
1	Issue for comment			
2	Issue for comment			
3	Issue for comment			
4	Issue for comment			
5	Issue for comment			
6	Issue for comment			
7	Issue for comment			
8	Issue for comment			
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100	Issue for comment			

Client:

Project Name: Leighton-Linslade Cycling Schemes

Drawing Title: BH - Transportation Proposed amendments to Church Road contra-flow cycle lane

Scale: 1:1000

Original Drawing Size: A3

Dimensions: -

Drawing No: BH-400628-001-003

Rev:

