



City Centre Road Development – Consultation Response

28th October 2013

This document sets out Portsmouth Cycle Forum's comments and concerns about the proposed redevelopment of the road system in the city centre north area. For completeness this document includes (but is not limited to) the comments already provided in the course of a meeting between PCF members and the PCC project team on the 2nd October 2013.

General Comments

Traffic Data

PCF are concerned that much of the information on expected traffic volume will date back to 2005 or earlier, having been developed in the planning process for the previous Centros Miller Northern Quarter design. It is hoped that the assumptions are being scrutinised in light of national, regional and local guidance and best practice for sustainability, road safety and the environment.

PCF had sight of the modelling for the Northern Quarter which in 2005 assumed growth in motor traffic. However, the recent DfT report entitled "Creating Growth Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen" dated January 2011 explains the numerous benefits to the economy, environment and health of promoting active sustainable travel as a higher priority to creating more road capacity for motor vehicles. It therefore seems axiomatic then that traffic modelling conducted prior to 2005 for the Northern Quarter cannot reflect current government policy.

PCF understand that modelling was based on 'worst case' scenarios. This was understood to mean maximum growth rate in motorised traffic. PCF asks if modelling case studies included steady state (no change in motorised traffic) and best case (start of modal shift to active sustainable travel with corresponding increase in walking and cycling and reduction in motorised traffic).

It should be noted that when the Gunwharf retail centre opened cycles weren't welcome. Over time the management policy has changed to welcome cycles and today one can see the numerous cycle parking areas filled with cycles. PCF therefore suggest that traffic modelling of NMUs needs to allow for increases in numbers of pedestrians and cyclists as anticipated by national government and so there needs to be consideration of the capacity of the width of the OCRs to accommodate this traffic.

Standards

Local Transport Notes are the guidelines for all Local Authorities to ensure safe, consistent provision across the country. Any deviation from these standards, not approved by the DfT, will have serious implications should an accident occur in the future (as noted in the PCC Report to: Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation – 18 September 2008, Report by: Head Of Transport and Street Management written by Angela Gill, Subject: London Road – Zebra Crossing). PCF therefore requests that the justifications for deviations from standards are rigorously explained in the Transport Assessment and NMU audit.

Access to the Retail Development

It is essential that as well as providing good through routes for cyclists and pedestrians that suitable access points to the new development are planned from the outset. Cyclists will obviously not approach the development in the same way as motor vehicles, and therefore for the road design to work it is vital that cycle access is adequately considered in the road design.

Cyclists will not always travel along the same roads as cars to approach the development. Many will choose to use quieter streets, such as All Saints Street. The connectivity from these side-streets to crossing points on major roads should be considered and the onwards access into the development should be attractive, convenient and safe.



PCF welcome PCC's plans to provide cycle and pedestrian paths across the SUD areas. Again, convenient and safe access to the development and to the wider cycle network must be considered.

Connectivity to the city cycle network

PCF are concerned that the connectivity between cycle routes to and through the city centre north and the wider city cycle network are not adequate. For example, the planned primary off-carriageway cycle route bypassing the new development lies on the north side of Hope Street and Market Way. This connects badly to the wider city cycle network, which brings cyclists into the city on the Eastern Side of Mile End rd. This leaves cyclists with the not inconsiderable challenge of crossing Mile End Rd to access the planned route past city centre north.

Similarly to the East of the development the off-carriageway route becomes dangerously narrow along Market Way before ceasing altogether at Unicorn Gate. These issues (and others like them) must be addressed or that will be a brake on cycle use and prevent cyclists from using the proposed new retail area.

PCF suggest that the developer's Community Infrastructure Levy be used to address this lack of connectivity.

Specific Comments

Market Way north side from Unicorn Gate junction to Hope Street

The OCR on the north side of Market Way is intended to be the primary route for cyclists travelling into the city and onward towards the historic dockyard / Gunwharf Quays area. There appear to be two major drawbacks to this:

1. **Width.** Despite the note on the plans HWI779/4023 that all combined footway/cycleways are 3.5m wide, this section approximately 300m long will remain at current width (about 2.5 m tapering to 2m). For the expected traffic flows and this geometry with the OCR bounded by a high wall on one side and a busy carriageway on the other, the DfT recommended width is 4.0 m (DfT LTN 1/12 Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists refers). It is therefore disappointing that there will be no improvement to OCR width here. We welcome PCC's commitment to look at ways of removing street furniture obstructions such as the thick metal posts for road signs.
PCF propose that an option to mitigate the narrowing of the OCR along this section of Market Way would be to provide a convenient and attractive way for cyclists to cross the junction at the Hope St / Market Way junction. A single stage, signal controlled crossing activated by a cycle detecting sensor (as currently used at Tangier Rd) to allow cyclists to cross Market Way at the junction would provide easy access to the OCR on the south side, reducing the load on the constrained route on the north side.
2. **Access.** Cyclists entering the city are approaching on the Eastern side Mile End rd, having been forced to pass underneath the M275 around the Rudmore Roundabout area. This design, though, relies on cyclists approaching from the Western side of Mile End rd. This issue needs to be addressed or cyclists will be forced to use other routes which may impact other traffic flows. Potential ways of addressing this may be the improvement of crossing points of Mile End Rd (e.g. the dismal underpass to Prospect Rd) to enable cyclists to cross safely without delay. Other options may be to improve connectivity from Rudmore roundabout to the West of Mile End road to obviate the need for cyclists to cross over to the Eastern side.

Market Way south side from All Saints roundabout to St. Agatha's church

The OCR on the south side of Market Way will not appeal to all cyclists (especially faster cyclists such as cycle commuters) because it will involve about 8 road crossings, not all of which will be signal controlled.



Market Way eastern section

PCF welcomes that this will be shared space for buses, pedestrians and cyclists and that engineering will help in limiting vehicle speeds to 20 mph or less

Hope Street

PCF note that only two motor vehicle lanes exist in Market Way and two lanes continue into Hope Street where a third of the way along they widen into 3 lanes. The OCR on the north side will be only 3.5m wide less pinch points and street furniture and so will not meet DfT Standards. We question the need to have 3 lanes at this point as traffic leaving the CCN car parks will do so at the junction opposite Flathouse Road and it is only in the section of Hope Street to the east of that junction that is evident that extra road capacity will be needed for the two lanes of traffic coming from Unicorn Gate and the traffic leaving the shopping centre.

PCC have indicated that this is based on the worst case assumption (of increased MV traffic) which therefore constricts the OCR width to being narrower than DfT recognised standards. PCF have asked that Atkins expand the traffic modelling to reflect an alternative hypothesis that there is no need for a third lane at this point, based on best case assumptions (increase in NMU traffic and steady state or even reduction in MV traffic). This will then inform the decision as to whether or not 3 lanes are needed to the west of Hope Street.

Flathouse Road

The present cycle route crossing is inadequate. Cyclists have to detour north and then ride across the road with no marked crossing and no signage to warn drivers in either direction to expect cyclists crossing (Sign diagram 950 - Cycle Route Crossing would be useful here).

PCC have undertaken to investigate straightening the route here.

PCF are concerned that there is a serious pinch point on Hope Street north side east of Flathouse Road where the advertising hoarding constricts the OCR to about 1.5 m wide. PCC have indicated that they have, since 2nd October, been able to increase the width of the combined cycle and footway here to 3.5m

PCF suggest that PCC investigate ways of using Flathouse Road for extra capacity onward past the Continental ferryport and to Rudmore roundabout, thus connecting the planned OCR on Hope street to the wider cycle network. An ideal way of doing this would be to use the developer's Community Infrastructure Levy to fund an upgrade to the underpass at Prospect Rd. It is also suggested that the current narrow and sub-standard northbound cycle lane in Flathouse Road is widened to 1.5m.

All Saints Street

PCF suggest this be investigated as a quiet feeder road for NMUs into the development