

Dear Sirs

## **A249 – Bearsted Road Improvement Scheme**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this scheme, which I do so on behalf of the MCCF.

My first comment is that, although the scheme does include provision for cycling, this does not conform to the Maidstone Borough Council Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011 - 2013. The main objectives of that strategy are spelt out in section 5.2. One is to create new links and another is to create a safer environment for walking and cycling.

Your scheme proposes the creation of a new shared footway / cycleway on the north side of Bearstead Road, but it is not clear from the proposal how one would safely access that cycleway from the existing cycleway RR19 on Hampton Road which ends on the south side of Bearsted Road. As a minimum, a safe crossing should be provided with a fully compliant cycleway to that crossing from RR19. Signage improvements will also be required.

My second comment is with regard to the shared footway / cycleway on the north side of Bearstead Road. This is noted on the 6th page of your presentation and illustrated in a visualisation on the 9th page.

I refer to Sustrans Design Guidance of April 2014 - Cycle Friendly Design. Table H8 of that document states a minimum width requirement of 3m for an urban unsegregated route. By following this guidance, users, both walking and cycling, would be presented with a safe environment in compliance with the MBC Strategy. Although no dimensions are given in this proposal, it is clear, from the necessity to create a new retaining wall, that the site is space constrained. However, it is important to provide users, both walkers and cyclists, with safe facilities that are compliant with current guidance. Especially in the context of this new facility adjacent to a busy urban road.

MCCF favours segregation of walking and cycling through clear markings, similar to the Ashford Road (Huntsman Lane to New Cut Road) Cycle Way, to avoid unnecessary confusion of users of the route.

I hope these comments are of help to you and that your proposal will result in improvements for all users of the new facilities. If you could reassure the MCCF on the points raised above we would be most grateful. If you would like any further clarification of these points please contact me.

***John***

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