

MCCF Proposal for a Cycle Gyratory in central Maidstone

The Sustrans report “Walking and Cycling Assessment - Maidstone” April 2018 gives many recommendations for improvements to basic infrastructure in the town. The hub of many routes, and the hub of most traffic passing through the town is the Gyratory – consisting of the Broadway and St Peter’s Bridges. In reality, most cycle journeys in Maidstone will encounter this Gyratory, and the cyclist will be faced with very poor, unsafe and inadequate facilities.

The MCCF have reviewed the Sustrans report and endorse the majority of the recommendations for the improvements it proposes. To provide these real improvements for the safety of cyclists and walkers in Maidstone will require a sustained level of funding over many years to achieve them, but the result will be a safe infrastructure for all to use and that will encourage many more cyclists, including the growing number of e-cyclists onto the streets. Health and environmental air quality improvements are obvious together with a reduction in local road users as more take to their bikes and feet.

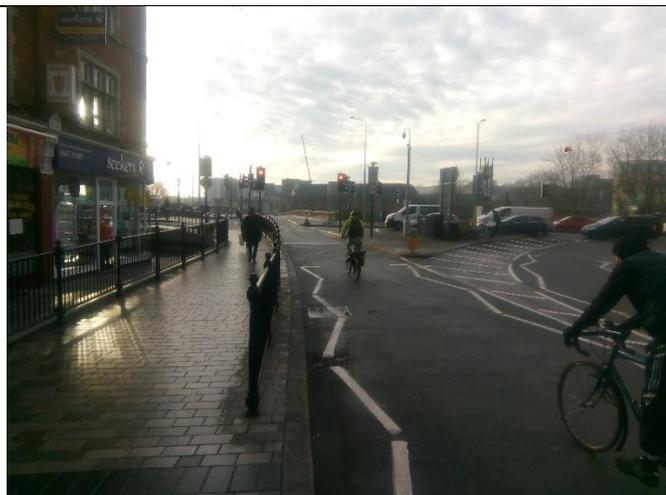
However, the Sustrans report, section A6, that tackles the Gyratory, does not recognise its importance to the cycling network as a whole, linking together many of the other routes in the town. The MCCF believe that the Gyratory is the hub, and we would like to see this improved as a high priority, linking and knitting together the other routes. Once this has been completed, the other Sustrans improvements could then be prioritised and implemented (provided adequate funding provision over a set timescale is allocated by MBC and KCC).

Our proposal is that the Sustrans proposal A6 is revised to become instead a “Cycle Gyratory” for the town. We would ask that MBC seek Sustrans views on this. Motorised traffic already has the facility, we propose similar for cyclists. In brief, the idea is a generally one way route, crossing both bridges in the same direction as motorised traffic and linked together using existing subways, ramps and paths (the majority of which already exist) so that cyclists, walkers and motorists can circulate to their ongoing routes and destinations, in safety, and with minimal interference between the groups.

In detail our proposal is as follows:

1] From the High Street heading towards the Broadway Bridge.

The traffic island facing the bridge can be reduced in size to increase the width of the road and provide two lanes, one for motorised vehicles and one 1.5m wide for cyclists. Similarly, the island in the middle of Bishops Way can be trimmed to allow passage of both motorised vehicles and cycles. New traffic lights for both lanes would be required together with a painted surface for the cycle route.



2] Across the Broadway Bridge.

A 1.5m wide, one way, cycle route across the bridge, in the existing near lane. This would require a realignment of the traffic lanes across the bridge but this can be achieved by a reduction in width of the little used far side lane. The cycle route to be at the level of the pedestrian pavement with the level change achieved by a short ramp. The cycle route to be appropriately coloured, red asphalt is suggested,



3] West side of Broadway Bridge to junction with Barker Street.

As the pedestrian pavement is wider here, it is proposed to reduce the intrusion into the road width to just 0.5m, achieving a 1.5m cycle route by reducing the pavement width by 1.0m. This would still allow two lanes of motorised traffic with 0.5m being taken from the traffic island on the far side and a realignment of the traffic lanes.



4] Barker Street to Hart Street

After the traffic lights, which would remain unchanged (allowing safe passage of pedestrians across the cycle route), the route would progress at road level to the entrance to the Crown Court car park. Road width can be increased to provide a cycle lane by moving the kerb line closer to the line of circular bollards. The route would be clearly indicated in an appropriate colour. Signage and a controlled crossing could allow a cycle route to access Maidstone West Station with a right turn into Hart Street, while the cycle gyratory turns left into the Crown Court car park.



5] Ramps down to Broadway Subway.

It is proposed to achieve a safe route between Barker Street and the ramp to the subway by simple improvements to the surface and marking, with one parking place in the car park, directly in front of the ramp, removed.

Two ramps lead down to the subway. Half of the width of the narrow one could be designated for cyclists with an appropriately painted surface.

Stainless steel mirrors could be strategically placed to allow visibility around the corner.



6] Within the Broadway Subway

A 1.5m wide route could be marked with an appropriate colour surface through the subway and up the wide ramp to the right-hand side of Broadway.



7] Top of ramp (RHS of Broadway)

A 1.5m wide cycle route circle, guiding cyclists to make a 180 degree turn at the top of the ramp could be marked with an appropriate colour surface. There should be an appropriate break in the cycle lane, with painted stop marking, to allow safe passage for pedestrians.

The Cycle Gyrotory then progresses in the direction of St Peter's Street on the pavement on a 1.5m wide marked path.



8] Crossing to St Peter's Bridge (1)

At the entrance to the commercial retail area there is a wide service entrance. Vehicles entering can only turn left off the main road and exiting, can only turn left out on to the road. There is therefore a central redundant space that could be used as a refuge for cyclists and walkers waiting to cross to the existing traffic island on a new controlled crossing.



9] Crossing to St Peter's Bridge (2)

From the island to the bridge and the existing marked route it is proposed to install a new controlled crossing.



10] Over St Peter's Bridge.

The existing cycle route could be marked with an appropriate colour surface, some surface improvements are required.



11] Ramp down and Subway under Fairmeadow.

Some surface improvements are needed and altered signage. Trip hazards affecting both cyclists and walkers should be removed. Mirrors are required ????



12] Fairmeadow Subway to High Street

A 1.5m wide route could be marked with an appropriate colour surface, some surface improvements required with more appropriately placed drop kerbs. The High Street pedestrian crossing could be improved to clearly show it as a cycle route crossing. Painted surface and additional lights are required.



Key location plan



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