

Minutes

Cyclox Public Meeting – Wednesday Nov 5th 2003

East Oxford Community Centre

1 Introduction

Chair: Clare Savage

Present: 45

This month's meeting was dedicated to looking at **Cowley Road Safety Improvement Scheme**, and how people who cycle on Cowley Road can make their wants and needs known through the County Council's consultation process.

2 Start of meeting

Looking at and discussing the model of Cowley Road (supplied by East Oxford Action – thank you!). Everyone placed Post-its on the model describing problem areas. Cyclox is going to use these comments to feed into its own submission to the County Council about how Cyclox would transform Cowley Road. How to proceed with Cyclox's submission will be agreed at the next Cyclox public meeting, on Weds 3rd Dec.

NB Cyclox's submission to the County Council is separate to the discussion of this meeting, which describes consultation process involving everybody who uses Cowley Road (including cyclists).

3 Clare Symmonds and Charles Parrack from East Oxford Action (EOA)

EOA has been awarded the contract to undertake the Cowley Road consultation process on behalf of the County Council. Clare and Charles talked about the background to the improvement scheme and explained how the consultation process will work.

EOA will use pioneering methods in the Cowley Road Safety Improvement Scheme to reach not just residents and shopkeepers, but groups as diverse as all the ethnic minorities, the elderly, the homeless, taxi drivers, bus drivers, delivery drivers, car drivers, emergency services, pedestrians and, of course, cyclists. The opinions of all these groups in the community will be collected by a specially-trained EOA team. EOA will then sort through the results of the consultation and present the findings to the County Council.

The scope of the Cowley Road Safety Improvement Scheme includes Cowley Road between the Plain and Magdalen Road. It does not include the Plain (pity!) but it does include the first 10 metres down all of the streets off Cowley Road along that stretch.

The Consultation Process

- 1 Phase 1 of the public consultation lasts until Feb/Mar 2004. This means analysis of the current situation on Cowley Rd: what people like (and would like to keep) and what they don't like. As far as cyclists are concerned, EOA needs data on where **and when** problems / accidents occur.

EOA have trained a team of local people in consultation techniques. This team is responsible for consulting the various groups of people who use Cowley Rd, one such group being cyclists. The process involves the public completing EOA's blue survey form and, if possible, discussing the issues with the EOA consultant relevant to them.

The public consultation ends in Feb/Mar 2004 with 'design days': whole-day workshops at which the public can work with engineers to come up with solutions that incorporate the needs of all the users of Cowley Rd highlighted in phase 1.

- 2 A statutory consultation period starts: Halcrow draws up plans based on what they and the community have come up with and the plans go through the approval processes. Feedback from the public's comments on a model will be incorporated into a final design by Sept 2004.
- 3 Work will start Oct 2004 at the earliest and is likely to finish by March 2005. A website will be made accessible to the public with information updated as the consultation develops: www.eastoxford.com.

4 Anthony Kirkwood (Safety Planning Officer for Oxfordshire County Council) and Rachel White (Consultant from Halcrow) outlined the issues from the County Council's point of view.

Anthony applied to the Dept of Transport for a grant to make Cowley Road safer because its accident rate is 3 times higher than other roads in its class. Up to £1 million (not £1.3m as our posters advertised) has been earmarked for improvements to the general environment and specifically to safety on Cowley Road. Anthony talked about the cost of making changes to the road layout.

Rachel White said properly incorporating the needs of cyclists is a very important and challenging aspect of the scheme because the incidence of cycling is so high on Cowley Road – as is the incidence of every other form of road use! Rachel asked cyclists to keep in mind various constraints in any designs we come up with – the County Council will have to address the needs of all users of Cowley Road, including (e.g.) parking / loading for shops and access for emergency services. We should also bear in mind the road width which is too narrow in many parts to accommodate all the features we'd like ideally. We need to consider where most problems arise for the cyclist.

Dominic Scholfield asked for the official accident rate figures from Anthony Kirkwood.

5 Dominic Scholfield from Oxford Cycle Workshop (OCW) talked about how we can be involved with the consultation.

Dominic Scholfield is the EOA consultant for cyclists on Cowley Road. He has access to a wide range of cyclists through Cyclox (over 100 members and growing) and OCW (200 customers). He described the consultation process from the cyclist's point of view.

A blue EOA Cowley Road survey form was distributed. All those who received a form at the meeting should complete the form and mark it 'TC10A'. Please return your completed forms either to Dominic at OCW, or to Clare at EOA:

- OCW (Oxford Cycle Workshop): 39 Magdalen Road, OX4 1RB. tel 204799
- EOA (East Oxford Action): Sts Mary and John Church Hall, 276a Cowley Road, OX4 1UR (opposite Bartlemas Road). tel 791372.

If you didn't receive a blue form at the meeting (or if you weren't at the meeting), don't worry – Cyclox will be sending out another form to all 2003 Cyclox members with their membership mudguard stickers before Christmas. You can only fill in one form, so if you have two, give the other form to another cyclist for them to fill in.

Dominic would like cyclists to discuss the issues on Cowley Road and go through their completed blue form with him at OCW, any time until end Feb 2004.

Remember

All of the above describes **your** submission to EOA / the County Council as an individual. Cyclox will also be making its own submission to EOA / the County Council over and above everyone's individual input.

6 Questions and answers

We discussed the sorts of things £1 million can achieve on Cowley road (e.g. £35K for a pelican crossing).

The area for redevelopment under the scheme covers the entire road and the pavements, from shop front to shop front.

We asked Anthony for information about who uses Cowley Road the most cars, bike, pedestrians, etc.: concluded that there's a high mixed use by all user types.

10 mins' break

7 Graham Paul Smith (Oxonian CC and Lecturer in Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University)

Graham gave a brief but fascinating talk with slides about how other countries, notably Germany and Holland, have dealt with problem roads similar to Cowley Road in imaginative ways: road widths, carriageway treatments, creating environments such that motorists do not want to and cannot drive quickly (safer for cyclists), cycle paths bypassing traffic lights, traffic queues, going behind trees, etc. Imaginative solutions to controlled parking, loading, etc. through redistribution of road space. Graham's talk gave everyone valuable food for thought and – due to popular demand! – we've asked him if he would do a longer talk sometime soon at another Cyclox meeting: watch this space!

8 Group brainstorming

We split into small groups for a ten-minute discussion about what improvements are of most importance to Cyclox members, apart from the obvious: safe cycle lanes on the road in both directions.

Group 1

Move car parking to the centre of the road.

Redistribute road space to create kerbside space for bike-parking.

Slim carriageways for buses.

Bikes as positioned such that they slow traffic, as in Holland.

Reduce car speed to 20mph.

Instigate a culture of etiquette – a shared road space for all users, especially at crossings and junctions.

Group 2

Move the organised parking spaces off the road, into zones such as in the examples from Germany shown by Graham.

Introduce trees create a natural environment.

Look at the congestion around James Street and look at moving the bus stop.

Move the parking bays opposite at Manzil Way.

Group 3

Try to reduce certainty for motorists so that they drive more carefully; force people to slow down and take care: e.g. in a supermarket car park where everyone interacts and drives / slowly.

Make the road more communal.

Create a parking with zones.

Speed control 20mph.

Group 4

Segregated parking for cars.

No priority for either direction of traffic at junctions: cars and bikes both have to slow down to pass safely.

Better design of delivery / loading areas.

Education about mutual respect and rivalry on the road.

NEXT CYCLOX PUBLIC MEETING WED 3RD DECEMBER