



City Centre Active Travel Scheme Second Stage Consultation June 2022:

Submission on behalf of Manchester and Salford Ramblers

Introduction

This submission is on behalf of the Manchester and Salford Ramblers. We are the local organisation of the national walking charity, the Ramblers. We are dedicated to removing barriers so everyone can enjoy walking in green spaces and to preserving and improving hundreds of thousands of miles of well-loved paths, tracks and trails across England, Scotland, and Wales. We are committed to campaigning for the things that matter most to walkers.

Key Objectives

We fully supported the City Centre Transport Strategy's key objective of a transformational increase in the proportion of journeys to the city centre to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport and we accordingly fully endorse the aims of this scheme to encourage more people to walk and cycle, to join up walking routes and to expand the areas of the city where walkers have priority.

What follows are specific comments on the details of the proposals.

Area 2 Deansgate and Whitworth Street

Map 1

1.1 Deansgate/Quay St/Peter Street junction: There should be four 'Sparrow' lights-controlled crossings at this junction and the wait and crossing times should prioritise walking and cycling flows. It should be possible to easily cross at least two of the roads in one sequence.

1.2 Deansgate: We welcome the proposal that the footways be widened but would like to see more clarity on the details, particularly on how a footway at carriageway level would work and achieve the right quality of experience for walkers. In addition, on this section there should be continuous level footways across the side roads of Camp St and Tonman Street.

1.3 Deansgate/Liverpool Road/Great Bridgewater Street: There should be four 'Sparrow' lights-controlled crossings at this junction and the wait and crossing times should prioritise walking and cycling flows. It should be possible to easily cross at least two roads in one sequence.

More generally the whole scheme should meet and where possible exceed best practice for walking and cycling infrastructure and the final design should be undertaken in close collaboration with Active Travel England.

Map 2

2.1 Whitworth St West and Deansgate/Bridgwater Viaduct: We welcome build out and footway widening at this junction. However, the plans are unclear about the positioning of the footway and cycle lane on the north side of Whitworth St West, it is important that the integrity of the protected cycle lane and the widened footway be maintained. However, we believe that this whole junction needs to be developed to meet best practice for walking and cycling infrastructure.

2.2 Whitworth Street/Albion Street: In this section of the plans there is only limited treatment of the junction. There is a case for a major redesign of this junction. The existing crossing is slightly staggered but, in the plan, it looks more pronounced, there is no case for a staggered crossing here and we would want a direct route with crossing times and sequencing prioritising pedestrian flows. Generally, we are very supportive of bus priority approaches but we are not sure what the impact of a bus gate on Whitworth West would be on traffic flows and would like to see some modelling.

2.3 Bridgwater Viaduct: There is a cycle track bus stop bypass proposed on the outbound side of Bridgwater Viaduct, which is already narrow and it could be further restricted especially if it is a bidirectional cycle way at this point. We recognise that there are concerns about this by cyclists and would want very careful consideration to be given to ensure that cycle and walking flows are safe and attractive.

Map 3

3.1 Bridgwater Viaduct/Deansgate: The build out and narrowing of the junction with the original Deansgate and Bridgwater Viaduct is to be welcomed as is the provision of a controlled crossing just below that junction. However, we are not sure why it is a staggered crossing and as the intention is to narrow the carriageways here to slow down the traffic, we would strongly argue that a one sequence lights-controlled crossing would be appropriate.

3.2 The removal of the existing shared use path on the inbound side makes sense if the alternative provision for cycling is seen as better. However, there is broader point about the design of this section. The choice to retain two lanes of inbound motor traffic is problematic given that; a) there's only one lane outbound b) those two lanes will very soon be funnelling cars into one lane roads. Until very recently there was a construction site blocking one lane here for about 3 years and there was no negative impact on motor vehicle flows, arguably this should not have been given back to motor vehicles

3.3 Just at the edge of the Chester Road roundabout there is a note to say that the existing cycle facility would be redesigned – we assume that this is linked to the proposal to remove the shared use path, but would want to see the phasing of the existing lights-controlled junction and crossing times give sufficient priority to walking and cycle flows.

Area 3 Whitworth Street/ Fairfield Street/ London Road in the City Centre

We support all the proposed footway extensions and the crossing points but reiterate earlier comments on the need for the wait times and sequencing to be such as to prioritise walking and cycling flows.

Our main comment on this section is that it is important to recognise that just about 300 m from the Fairfield Street/London Road junction will be the entrance to Mayfield – the first city centre park for 100 years. We plan to divert the Manchester Green Trail through the park and we want to see significant improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure on the approaches to the various entrances. Whilst this does not fall directly within the boundary of the project it should be a significant factor in the design and in the ensuing activation work.