

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

Chairman: Philip Riden
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9 October 2021

Dear Resident,

Proposed cycle super-highway on Chatsworth Road, Brookside

I am not keen on sending out unsolicited circulars about planning matters but I can see no other way of contacting residents quickly about this scheme, which you may or may not be aware of.

Some months ago the county council announced their intention of building a two-lane, two-way high-speed cycle 'superhighway' along the north side of Chatsworth Road between Holymoore Road and Storrs Road. The council also launched an online 'consultation exercise' and engaged contractors to deliver a circular to 4,041 residents of 117 streets on or close to the route advising them of the scheme and the consultation.

It has gradually become clear to the Civic Society that a number of streets were omitted from this house-to-house distribution, including most crucially Chatsworth Road, the road that will be worst affected by the scheme, and roads leading off it.

After the consultation ended, nothing further was heard from the county council until this week, when a cabinet paper was issued recommending that it go ahead. This will be considered at a meeting of the county council's cabinet on 14 October.

The Civic Society objected to the western section of the cycle route when it was announced, on the grounds that it would seriously damage the appearance of an attractive suburban street, would be hazardous to residents living on the north side of Chatsworth Road and to pedestrians, and would be little used by cyclists. It would also pass in front of Brookfield School, Stephenson Court and Chatsworth Road Medical Centre, where it would be a particular hazard.

Originally, the cycle route from Holymoorside to Somersall Park was to follow an existing footpath from Greendale Avenue (off Holymoore Road) to Somersall Lane, and there join the present cycle route through Somersall Park, Walton Park and Queen's Park to the station. We do not believe that the county council has sufficiently explored the possibility of using this route. There is in any case an alternative route for cyclists via Cotton Mill Hill, Walton Back Lane and Yew Tree Drive.

If anything, our more serious objection is that the county council has failed to consult in the way in which it has claimed to. It could have elected not to make a door-to-door distribution to householders, but having announced that it was going to do this, and made a list of 117 streets on which circulars were to be delivered, it must in our view honour that commitment.

We suspect that if all the householders affected by the western end of the route in particular had been sent a circular, there would have been far more objections than those recorded by the consultants. There is an analysis of responses in a lengthy annexe to the cabinet paper already mentioned.

We consider that the county council should take no further steps towards the construction of this route until it has conducted a fresh consultation and taken proper notice of all the objections to it. We intend early next week to write to the Secretary of State asking him to intervene and require the county council to do this.

In the meantime, it is important that local residents who will be adversely affected by the section of the route along Chatsworth Road should make their views known to the county council before the meeting on 14 October. The best way of doing this is to email the cabinet member responsible for transport, County Councillor Kewal Singh Athwal (kewal.singh.athwal@derbyshire.gov.uk).

It is possible that if County Councillor Athwal is made aware of the strength of feeling against the scheme, and the failure of the county council properly to consult the residents most directly affected, he will recommend to the cabinet that further consideration be postponed.

If you would like to discuss this with me, you are welcome to email or phone. I can also send by email the relevant documents.

Yours sincerely,

PHILIP RIDEN

Chairman
Chesterfield and District Civic Society