

CHESTERFIELD AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

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Dear Sir,

Proposed East–West Chesterfield Cycle Super Highway

I am writing to ask whether a matter that has arisen in connection with the above scheme falls within the scope of your work.

Earlier this year Derbyshire County Council announced a plan to extend an existing cycle route through Chesterfield at either end. The controversial aspects of this proposal were (a) the closure to motor traffic of a road forming the proposed eastern extension, and (b) the building of a new two-lane high-speed cycle ‘super highway’ along a very busy main road (Chatsworth Road, A619) to form the western extension.

The county council engaged outside contractors to conduct an online public consultation concerning this proposal. Alongside other ways of publicising the consultation the contractors stated that they delivered 4,041 individual letters to the residents of 117 streets on or near the line of the proposal cycle route.

The Civic Society opposes both the eastern and western extensions. In the course of our campaign we have established that residents of at least eighteen of the 117 streets were not sent a letter about it, and so did not have a reasonable opportunity to take part in the consultation. The list includes Chatsworth Road and several minor roads leading off it, which will be the most badly affected.

We consider that this failure by the county council to deliver letters to individual households as they undertook to do constitutes grounds for either requiring the council to abandon the proposal or, at the very least, to conduct a new consultation. We take the view that the council were free to decide whether or not to send out such letters but that, having decided to do so, they must carry out their declared policy. We believe that their failure to do this renders meaningless the statistics in the consultants’ report, showing a majority in favour of the scheme. It is on the basis of this report that the county council proposes to go ahead with the project. I enclose a paper, designed mainly for the Secretary of State for Transport, which supplies further details.

I see from an article in today's *Sunday Telegraph* ('LTN road closures ignored older residents' needs') that you have severely criticised another local highway authority for the way in which it went about a road closure scheme.

It is for this reason that I am prompted to ask you whether you can intervene in this case and determine whether Derbyshire County Council's failure to consult in the way in which they said they had consulted makes it improper for them to proceed with their scheme. We are obviously not asking you to comment on the merits of the scheme itself.

I am happy to receive a reply to this letter by email and can supply further information if required.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Riden
Chairman
Chesterfield and District Civic Society