

POST-EVENT SUBMISSIONS RE PLANNING INSPECTORATE ISSUE-SPECIFIC HEARING on 24 OCTOBER 2023.

Cycle Advocacy Network wish to challenge the applicant over statements made in respect of their decision not to upgrade the crossing of HS1 adjacent to Hares Bridge to be suitable for use by people cycling.

Mr Roberts speaking for the applicant, sets out that the existing structure is unsuitable for people to cycle across and that the reason the applicant is not upgrading the structure is that alternative routes exist (Transcript p119, 21-29).

The alternative routes to the west, with approximate distances as measured along the line of the A2, are:-

0.9km, overbridges of the A2 and HS1 of identical design to the Hares bridge arrangements, with footpath approaches. This is unarguably unsuitable for people to cycle.

1.45km, underbridges of the A2 and HS1 at the A2/A227 Tollgate junction. At this location people cycling are required to cross the entry/exit slip roads of the A2 at grade on uncontrolled crossings. It is a hostile environment wholly unsuitable for people to cycle. This is not an acceptable alternative during or after construction.

2.5km, Hogs Lane overbridge is the closest suitable alternative crossing. The full length of any diversionary route would be considerably longer, there being no direct route between the two crossing points to the south of the A2. This is not an acceptable alternative during or after construction.

The alternative routes to the east, with approximate distances as measured along the line of the A2, are:-

0.5km, Henhurst Road overbridge. A remodelled overbridge is part of the applicant's post-completion routing of National Cycle Network Route 177. However the route will not be available until construction is complete. Furthermore the applicant has inexplicably chosen not to create a safe multi-user path adjacent to Henhurst Road that would connect this high quality infrastructure to Jeskyns Park. This is not an acceptable alternative during construction and without a safe direct connection to Jeskyns Park it will not be an acceptable alternative after construction.

2.0km, Thong Lane overbridge. A remodelled overbridge is part of the applicant's post-completion routing of National Cycle Network Route 177. However the route will not be available until construction is complete. The full length of any diversionary route would be considerably longer, there being no direct route between the two crossing points to the north of the A2. This is not an acceptable alternative during or after construction.

The question that I would ask the applicant is that if suitable alternative routes exist, why have they chosen the Hares bridge alignment for their preferred cycle route?