



Policy on No Entry Exemptions and Contra-flow Cycle Lanes

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1. Summary

- 1.1. The local authority's aim is to increase cycling in the district. Unfortunately much of the highway infrastructure is presently geared to make cycling inconvenient. Adoption of the policies expressed in this document will help to achieve an increase in cycling.
- 1.2. Cyclists are inconvenienced by one-way streets and No Entry restrictions far more than motorists, however the reason for the imposition of these restrictions rarely needs to be applied to cycling. Thus Spokes believes cyclists should be exempted, by a variety of means, from the one-way and No Entry restrictions in all streets in West Berkshire. This document discusses these various ways of exempting cycles from one-way and No Entry restrictions.



Busy one-way street with contra-flow cycle lane.

Reasons behind restrictions are not applicable

- 1.3. West Berkshire Spokes anticipates no reason why all No Entry signs cannot be re-arranged to provision exemption for cyclists. Spokes also believes that many instances of one way streets may be simply converted to allow contra-flow cycling.

No Entry with cycle by-pass.



2. Clarifying Definitions

- 2.1. No Entry signs are used to prevent vehicular traffic passing in the direction which the sign faces. This is usually, but not exclusively, at one end of a street. However, placement of such signs does not mean that the street is consequently a one-way street; two-way passage may still be allowed. Where no one-way restriction is imposed, this is known as a false one-way street. In such streets any vehicle user may legally travel in either direction but not enter at the No Entry signed end.
- 2.2. One-way streets are those on which a one-way restriction is specifically placed, identified specifically by blue and white signing. No Entry signing is always placed at the end point of the one-way system.
- 2.3. Thus, the presence of a No Entry sign does not identify a one way street. This clarification becomes important later in this document.

3. Rationalising One-way Streets

- 3.1. There are two main reasons why a road is made one-way: width and traffic management.
- 3.2. A road may be made one-way because it is narrow - although this is far from an absolute principle; some very narrow roads (such as Russell Road and others in the West Mills area) are two-way. Of the many roads in West Berkshire's Towns and villages which are too narrow for two cars to pass, only a minority are one-way.
- 3.3. A road may be made one-way as part of a wider traffic management scheme, such as the streets in the Northbrook Road area.
- 3.4. We propose that a review be conducted of every one-way street in West Berkshire with the aim of opening up as many of them as possible to two-way cycling. Ideally this will be through the removal of the one-way restriction whilst retaining the No Entry restriction to make a false one-way street. Modification to provision a No Entry by-pass (see section) is required to complete the arrangement.



4. No Entry Exemption for Cyclists

- 4.1. Exempting cyclists from No Entry restrictions is a simple but very successful way of making cycling easier and more convenient. Recent experience elsewhere in the UK has shown that wherever an exemption has been introduced it has worked well and made a big difference to the convenience of cyclists.

Instant New Routes

- 4.2. Exempting cyclists from a No Entry restriction makes a disproportionately positive difference because it provides new routes to cyclists that did not exist before. There is **no** other way of creating a totally new cycle route as cheaply.
- 4.3. We would, therefore, like to see exemptions for cyclists from No Entry restrictions. Introducing an exemption is relatively simple (though we would like to see it made even simpler, see section 6) but the benefits are disproportionately positive. They are therefore a very good use of council tax payers' money.



*No Entry – except
cyclists may use the
No-Entry by-pass.*



5. Contra-flow for Cyclists

- 5.1. The local authority may consider it inappropriate to open-up a one-way street in some circumstances. Whilst we do not anticipate a valid reason for such a circumstance, this leaves the option of provisioning contra-flow cycling through the use of a mandatory on-carriageway cycle lane. Such an arrangement has been successfully employed in many other places in the UK.
- 5.2. The addition of a Contra-flow cycling will additionally require No Entry exemption in the manner described in section 6.



Entrance to one-way street with contra-flow cycle lane.

6. The Technicalities of No Entry Exemption

- 6.1. In the Netherlands and in Denmark, cycles can be exempted from a one-way street simply by placing an 'except cyclists' notice under the No Entry signs. For example, in Groningen in the Netherlands, every one-way street has such an exemption.
- 6.2. In Britain, however, cycles cannot be exempted from No Entry signs. Instead a traffic bollard must be constructed and a narrow 'gap' provided for cycles. This is relatively expensive and takes up a significant amount of road width. It is also visually intrusive.
- 6.3. Although we approve of the simplicity and cheapness of the Dutch and Danish arrangement, we do see that the British arrangement has some advantages. In particular, it helps prevent conflict between traffic waiting to emerge from the end of a one-way street and contra-flow cyclists turning into it. However, we believe that a physical bollard is unnecessary in many places and white road markings would be adequate particularly where the road is narrow.
- 6.4. An additional disadvantage of providing a traffic bollard is that it forces cyclists over to the far left-hand side of the road so that if a vehicle is parked close to the junction then cyclists must perform a sharp right turn to pass it. When this occurs cyclists frequently ignore the cycle gap and ride straight through the No Entry signs.



7. Making Exemption Universal

- 7.1. We believe that many more one-way streets in Newbury can and should be made available to cycle in both directions. In fact we would say that there should be a general presumption that all one-way streets be made available for two-way cyclists unless there is a good reason for not doing so.
- 7.2. We would, moreover, argue that there are very few one-way streets in Newbury which cannot be made two-way for cyclists. Most are similar in width and traffic levels to other streets that are still two-way to all traffic, and certainly to many that are two-way to cycles.
- 7.3. We see no reason, therefore, why even the narrowest one-way streets should not be made two-way for cycles. In our view, no street is too narrow to be made two-way for cyclists. There are already numerous examples of very narrow streets which are two-way for cyclists elsewhere in the UK. We believe this to work perfectly satisfactorily. One reason for this is that the very narrowness of the streets keeps traffic speeds low.
- 7.4. Perhaps contrary to what might be expected, any conflict between motor vehicles and cycles traveling in the 'wrong' direction is most likely to occur where a false one-way street is wider and traffic speeds are greater. Measures can, however, be taken to minimise such conflict. For example, an advisory contra-flow cycle lane can help avoid conflict, not by providing protection for cycles but by giving a visible reminder to motorists to expect oncoming cycles. In a one-way street with contra-flow cycle lane, the presence of speed humps, cushions or tables can keep traffic speeds low and reduce conflict between motor vehicles and oncoming cycles. Both of these arrangements can be found elsewhere in the UK.
- 7.5. We propose that a comprehensive review should be made of all one-way streets in West Berkshire with the aim of making as many as possible available for two-way cycling. The appendix at the end of this document contains a full list of all the one-way streets that we would like to see converted.
- 7.6. Many one-way streets in Newbury are already used, illegally, by cyclists in the 'wrong' direction. Because such illegal use provides strong evidence of a 'desire line' for cyclists, those streets that see most illegal use should be considered most urgently for conversion. At a time when cycling is being encouraged and levels of cycling are predicted to increase, the consequence of a lack of action can only lead to a worsening of this situation.



Appendix A Roads needing one-way restriction removal or contra-flow introduction

The following places should be converted for two-way cycling through the simple removal of one-way restriction (whilst retaining the road as a “false” one-way street) and addition of a No Entry Cycle By-pass:

- Station Road (western section)
- West Mills
- Wharf Street
- Bartholomew Street North
- Park Street
- Mansion House Street
- West Street
- Railway Road
- Stanley Road
- Livingstone Road

The following one-way streets should be converted for two-way cycling by addition of contra-flow cycle lane (in addition of a No Entry Cycle By-pass):

- Boundary Road (northern section)
- Wharf Rd – Park Way bridge
- Queen’s Road

Appendix B The East Fields Anomaly

Travelling westwards from East Fields (typically to the railway station or town) is not easy for a cyclist owing to the cycle-unfriendly implementation of the one-way system in the area.

Presently, the one-way system requires cyclists originating in Railway Rd, Stanley Road and Livingstone Road to travel westwards, joining Queen’s road, where cyclists must turn East, turn south into Boundary Road, then west into York Road, taking a detour of half a kilometre before joining Queen’s Road again some 30m west of the start-point on Queens Road.

The simple and obvious solution to this problem is to move the start of the one-way system eastwards by ~30m from its present point (at York Rd junction) to Livingstone Rd junction, and permit right turns out of Livingstone Rd **only** for cyclists. This simple measure eliminates the half-kilometre detour for cyclists, and sends a message that cycling is being accommodated and encouraged in the area.

