

Traffic & Transportation Cabinet Decision Meeting

16th January 2025

PCF Deputation

Agenda item 3: Rudmore Square (Port) - Design Approval

Portsmouth Cycle Forum are concerned about the changes being proposed for this location as outlined in the report.

While we understand why the project has been brought forward, the operational requirements of the port and the reasons behind the design change from lights to a roundabout, we do not see how the design as presented in this report achieves two of the points raised as reasons for recommendations.

The report itself states in Paragraph 6.2 that it will:

- *Improve the safety of non-Port traffic, particularly cyclists and pedestrians.*

The removal of the traffic lights is detrimental to the journey of cyclists, particularly those travelling north as they will now be required to mix with motor vehicle traffic (much of it as HGVs) without travelling within their own protected phase of traffic flow. Drivers who are trying to work out where they are supposed to be heading and may be distracted and not be aware of smaller vulnerable road users in the area. There is no method to stop vehicles from blocking the roundabout if there is a queue out of the dock / weighbridge area which further reduces visibility and accessibility for all road users.

The general arrangement (GA) drawing at the end of the report shows the addition of a central crossing island being created, the crossing points themselves are not controlled, leaving pedestrians and cyclists to cross two lanes of port entry traffic at their own risk.

The GA drawings also do not give enough detail to assess how pedestrian and cyclist safety is improved outside this immediate area. It clearly shows three marked areas that presumably indicated further drawings giving a more detailed view of the scheme's design and the changes implemented, but it is not clearly stated what these are anywhere, and the drawings are not included in the report itself. On that basis it is not possible to give any further detailed response.

For northbound cyclists wishing not to use the road and new roundabout, there is no way to access the new crossing point legally via the existing footpath around the eastern side of the Vivid building as this is not currently designated as a shared use path. This path would also require an upgrade as it does not meet current design guidance for the minimum width for combined walking and cycling. The zebra crossing to access this point should also then be upgraded to a parallel cycle crossing (in lieu of the further points raised below regarding routing through the site).

It should be pointed out that not all people who cycle can dismount and walk the required distance as they may use their cycle as a mobility aid.

For all users, the northbound crossing point of the southbound lanes are poorly sited on the inside of the carriageway bend. When we visited the site with the project team in October 2024 we raised this issue, pointing out that the view of oncoming traffic from the roundabout is also obscured by a tree and the upright column of the port entry signage. While vehicles entering the port will probably be seen by vulnerable road users, there is a distinct possibility that they themselves might be obscured from the sightline of drivers entering the port, particularly those who are trying to understand which lane they are supposed to be in depending on their destination.

For southbound cyclists, it is not clear how cyclists arrive at this crossing point. The footpath that is currently designated a shared use path to the north of the project site alongside Whale Island Way also does not meet current design guidance for this use. Signposting would need to be improved to show the route 'to the port and city centre to ensure cyclists use this path, as the option of being able to cross from Whale Island Road to Wharf Road has been removed in the new scheme. The same issue of a lack of shared path around the Vivid building is also relevant for south bound travel, however the sightlines on the outside of the bend are much better for all road users.

- *Provide phase 1 of a wider strategic objective in delivering improved cycling and pedestrian facilities linked to the Western corridor.*

With reference to the second point about linking to the proposed Western Corridor, it is disappointing not to see how the proposed scheme might integrate with any 'western corridor' that we have heard about the intention of creating for several years now.

The [port's own website](#) highlights the easy of cycle accessibility to travel there:

"It's easy to cycle to Portsmouth International Port. We're just off National Cycle Network Route 22, and the majority of the cycle route to the Port from Portsmouth and Southsea train station is on a shared-use cycle path."

It is therefore disappointing that there appears to be little thought and consideration about how their visitors and passengers can safely access the site once they arrive by cycle given that currently the through routes on this side of the M275 pass through the International Port Site.

The report shares no information about how an increase of HGV vehicles using Wharf Road to access the Border Control Point may further reduce the safety of pedestrians and cyclists travelling through the port to the south of the project site.

As we raised with the project team, walking and cycling around this area is of secondary importance to the movements of motor vehicles. The current designated route for active travel users requires them to cross NINE lanes of carriageway and travel around the Brittany

Ferries building rather than the much more simple route alongside the M275 slip road towards the previously mentioned Vivid building.

A dedicated walking and cycling route could be created by removing the current lane marked as dedicated to MMD and parking. This in turn would connect to the path around the vivid building to the proposed crossing point and create a more direct, consistent and connected route for all users.

There may be a 'wider strategic objective' but have not seen any further details about nor master planning of this route, so that it could be built as and when funds and adjacent schemes (such as this one) are developed. The city centre north project is another that could assist with the development of such a route.

In conclusion we are disappointed at the level of detail that addresses the assertion that the scheme improves the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. It appears that these users are left to find their own way through this site, but does not highlight any way as to how future development outside of this scheme will improve the situation in the longer term.

Therefore at the time of the decision meeting, we would be against the the recommendation as do not believe that the scheme as presented meets the City Council's own Local Transport Plan to *'create a people-centred, connected, travel network that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport to help deliver a safer, healthier and more prosperous city.'*