

Abergavenny Public Realm / Active Travel improvements: Lion Street Cycle Contraflow

The problem

Lion Street is a one-way street (eastbound only). This forces cyclists coming into the town centre from east of the A40 to join the A40 for a portion of their trips. The A40 is a busy trunk road and can be hostile for cycling. The junction between the A40 and Cross Street (outside the Angel Hotel) is dangerous and making a right turn onto Cross Street is particularly hazardous manoeuvre for cyclists. This affects all cycle traffic from the east side of the town, which represents a sizeable local residential population, as well as those coming from the railway station.

The solution

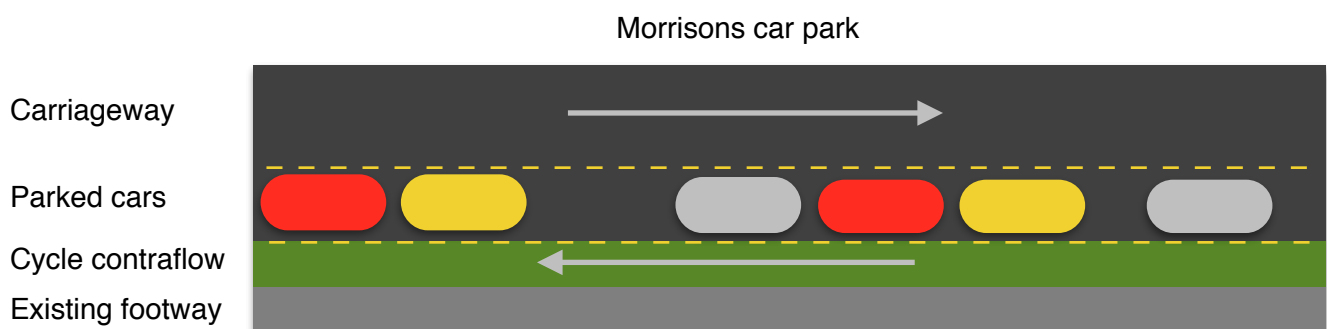
A cycle contraflow on Lion Street, from the A40 as far as Market Street, would address the problem and provide a safe and direct route to cycle into the town centre, though the junction of the A40 at Lower Monk Street could benefit from a formal crossing point if possible.

Benefits

- **Safe and direct cycling route into town centre** (from residential areas of eastern Abergavenny, also from the railway station). Also improves cycle access to Morrisons supermarket.
- Narrowed roadway will **reduce traffic speeds** to 20mph or less, improving the pedestrian environment and overall safety.
- **Preserve car parking**, esp. outside Abacus nursery for drop off and pick up.
- **Improve infrastructure for users of mobility scooters**, who can make use of the cycle track.

Design issues

Lion Street is narrow in places and if it is determined there is a need to retain as much of the existing car parking as possible, then road width will be the biggest design challenge.



We would prefer the cycle contraflow to be inside the parked cars, on the same level as the footway. This would mean it could be used by mobility scooters, wheelchair users, children cycling or scooting. As the cars will all be facing towards oncoming users of the contraflow, the risk of 'car dooring' is less. A unidirectional cycle lane should be a minimum of 1.5m wide, ideally closer to 2m wide. The narrower the cycle lane, the more important that it is at the same level as the footway, to provide 'swerve space' to avoid hazards such as car doors.

To prevent motor vehicles obstructing the lane, the contraflow should be a mandatory cycle lane, not an advisory cycle lane. A kerb between the cycle contraflow and the parked cars may reinforce this and car parking bays marked with paint on the roadway. In narrow sections of the road, where there is no space for parked cars, design elements will be needed discourage / prevent parking on the cycle contraflow. Flexible bollards, also known as 'wands' and / or ground level 'armadillos' could achieve this (see photos overpage).

Due to the narrowness of the road towards the eastern / A40 end the three easternmost parking spaces may have to be removed.

The contraflow lane should have priority over all side turnings on Lion Street (for instance the turning into Brewery Yard).

The contraflow lane should be visually consistently thought through, ideally in a colour that indicates clearly what it is, consistent with the design aesthetics of the street, which borders the town centre conservation area. A buff surface, or a green or red tarmac would achieve this, though blacktop would work too, as long as is sufficient signage.

At the junction with the A40 there will need to be a permeable buildout indicating the start of the cycle contraflow, and preventing motor vehicles from turning into Lion Street.

Map indicating the barrier presented to westbound cycle traffic heading into the town centre:



For the purposes of the Active Travel (Wales) Act, Lion Street is part of the Integrated Network of active travel cycling and walking routes as set out by MCC and approved by the Welsh

Government (route A23). The MCC audit of active travel routes notes the potential for a cycle contra-flow along Lion Street.

Detailed design guidance on cycle contraflows:

Sustrans design guidance on cycle contraflows:
http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/design_portfolio_contraflow_cycling_a06.pdf

Welsh Government Active Travel design guidance:
<https://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/141209-active-travel-design-guidance-en.pdf>



Abergavenny Cycle Group, October 2018