

The short and winding road to the Leisure Centre

Disappointments

- Not all conditions applied to the Leisure Centre referring to the route in the planning decision have yet been complied with (especially the on-road cycle scheme on Barfield Close)
- The plans drawn up chose the western option for a cycle lane offered in the WCHAR report and have been ignored
- The minimum dimensions set out in the report and on the plans have not all been met
- No satisfactory plans for a cycle route from Barfield Close to the Leisure Centre across Bar End Road have been drawn up or are on file and current *ad hoc* arrangements are poor
- The cycle route, as constructed, does not comply with current DfT standards, especially at the eastern end
- The section close to the roundabout is incomprehensible and uncyclable and the rest of the route is difficult

Why this matters

- Much emphasis is currently being placed on encouraging a modal shift towards cycling as a way of reducing CO₂ emissions from transport
- This will happen only if cycling infrastructure is attractive and easy to use, and is well promoted
- The DfT papers “Gear Change” and “Cycle Infrastructure Design” set out clearly how this can be achieved
- If proposals under the City of Winchester Movement Strategy are to boost the share of cycling in Winchester and reduce CO₂, design and construction practice needs to be reformed radically
- A close look at this scheme shows us how much current practice needs to change



Planning Conditions: complied with in parts

In November 2020 works were carried out to meet some of the conditions imposed when the Leisure Centre was given planning approval. Condition 17 of the 1 November 2018 consent included:

17 The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a S278 agreement is completed with the Highways Authority to secure **off-site highway works that will include the following improvements identified within the Walking Cycling and Horse-riding Assessment and Review report:**

- i. Domum Road Street lighting scheme
- ii. Widening and lighting of the cycle/footpath link between Domum Road and Barfield Close
- iii. **On road cycle scheme along Barfield Close**
- iv. Roundabout and associated cycle/ pedestrian crossing points to form new access

These works to be agreed by the highway authority and completed prior to first public use of the leisure centre.

The Walking Cycling and Horse-riding Assessment and Review report (WCHAR) (1)

The conditions require the review's proposals be implemented, including one of the options for cycling facilities along Barfield Close. Plans were produced for option 1 but not carried out.

- 2.8 Two options have been developed to meet the requirements of the study.
- 2.9. The proposed routes utilise the existing footpath link and ramp from Domum Road to Barfield Close which is owned by Winchester City Council. Both options propose to widen both the ramp and footpath to a minimum of 2.5m. A section of wall at the western end of the footpath between the two depots will be removed to widen the existing pinch point to approximately 2.0m. From this point onwards along Barfield Close to the entrance to the WS&LC is located on Hampshire County Council owned land.
- 2.10. Both options will link into the proposed new roundabout access to the WS&LC on Bar End Road.

The Walking Cycling and Horse-riding Assessment and Review report (WCHAR) (2)

Option 1 – Shared Use Facility on the Western Side of Barfield Close

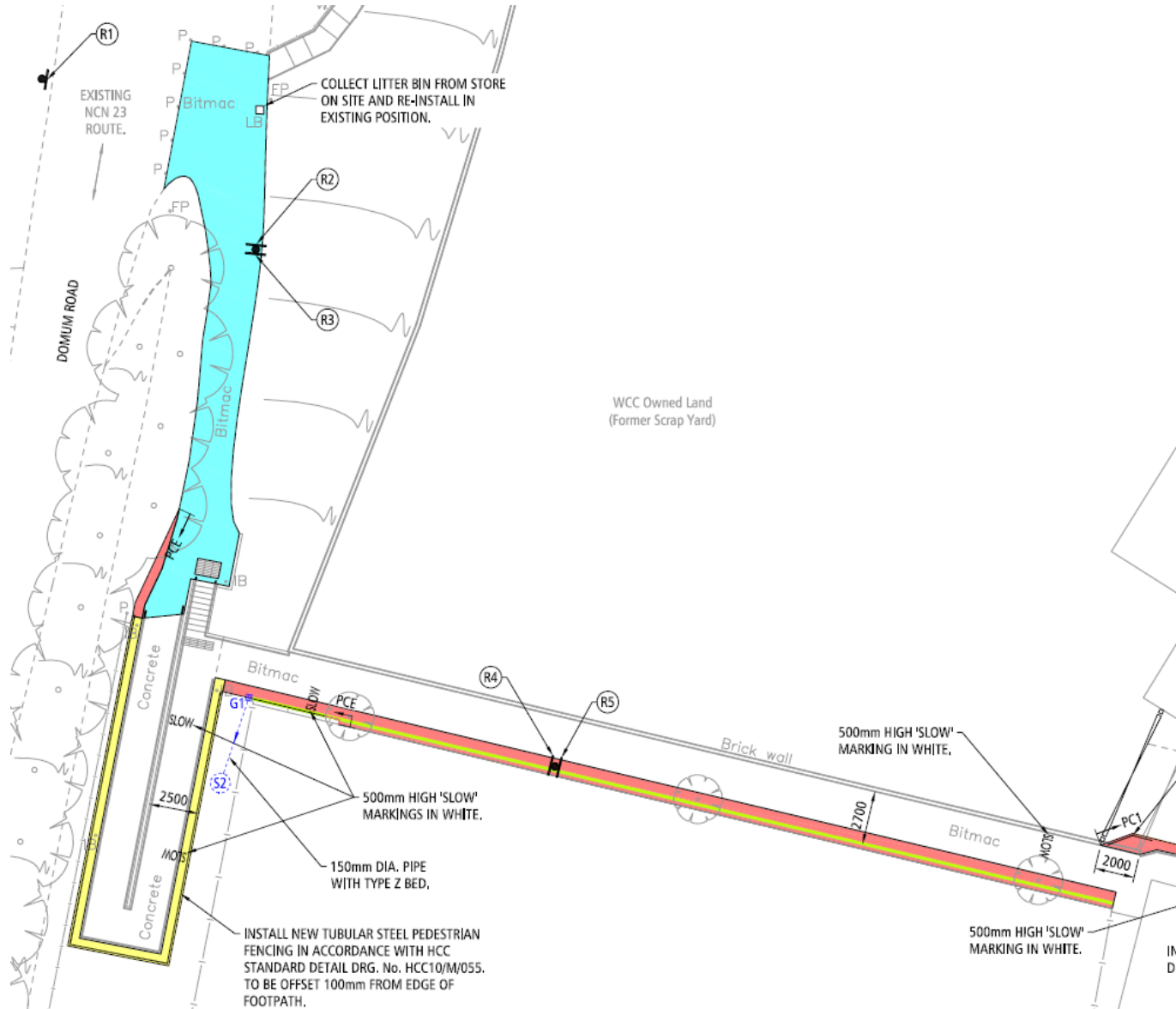
2.11. This proposal provides a 2.5m shared use facility from Domum Road, along Barfield Close on the western side to the proposed new roundabout on Bar End Road. In order to achieve a minimum width of 2.5m the existing carriageway has been narrowed to approx. 6.8m along the entire extents of the narrowing. The route will be indicated by new signage.

Option 2 – Shared Use Facility on the Eastern Side of Barfield Close including 2 No. Park & Ride Bus Stops

2.12. This proposal provides a 2.5m shared use facility from Domum Road, along Barfield Close on the eastern side to the proposed new roundabout on Bar End Road. The carriageway will be narrowed as per option 1 and the route will be indicated by the same signage.

2.13. Option 2 includes the provision of two bus stops on Barfield Close. These will be available for park and ride buses that will be available for use by visitors to the WS&LC.

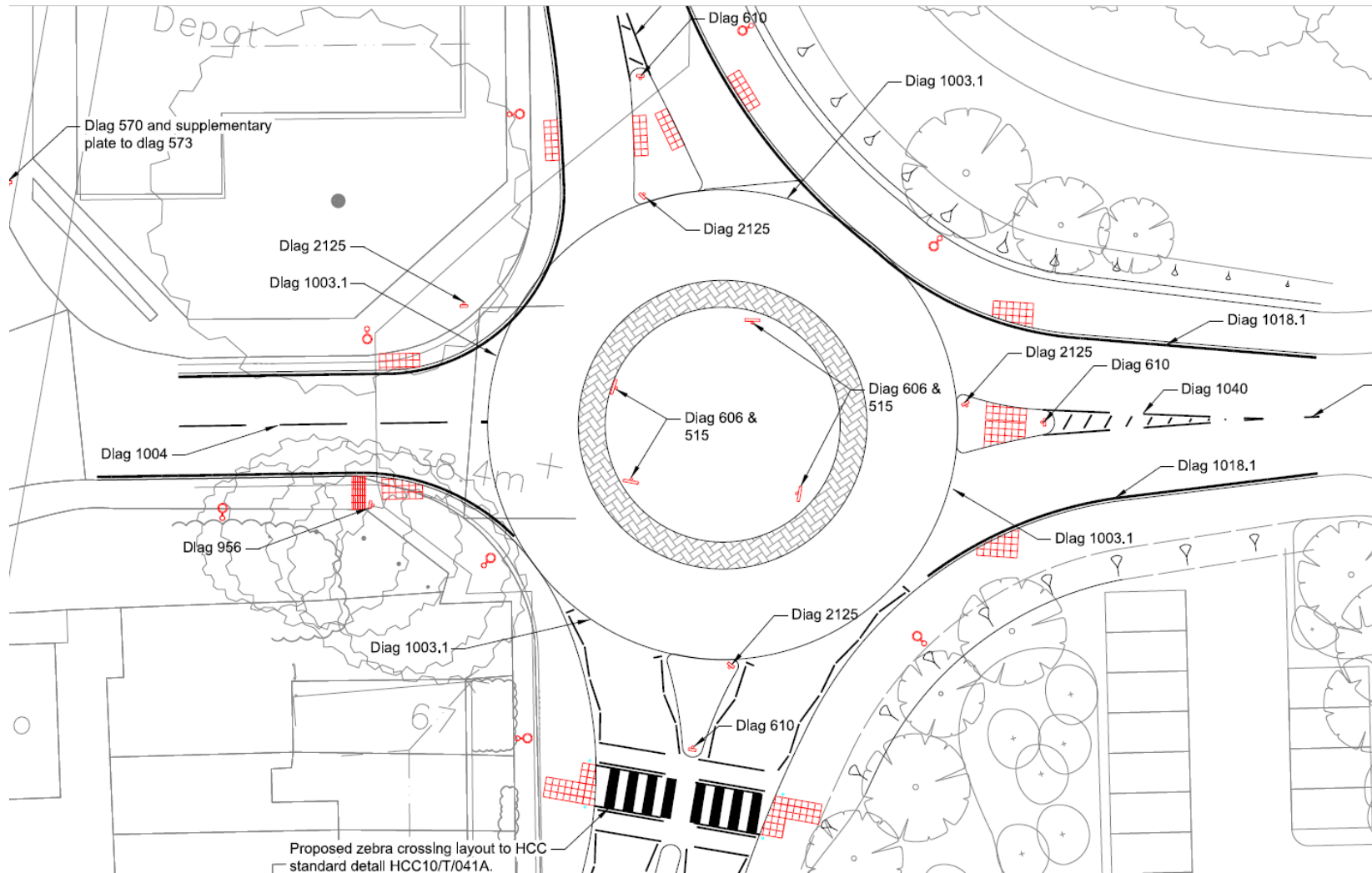
The Drawings (1)







KEY

- FOOTWAY TYPE 1B IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/045.
- FOOTWAY RESURFACING USING FOOTWAY TYPE 1B MATERIALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/045.
- EXISTING FOOTWAY TO BE REINSTATED AS REQUIRED USING FOOTWAY TYPE 1B MATERIALS.
- 165mm THICK CONCRETE CLASS C40 IN ACCORDANCE WITH BS 8500-1 & BS EN 13877-1. EXISTING EXPANSION JOINTS TO BE MAINTAINED AND WIDENED TO SUIT NEW FOOTPATH WIDTH.
- 400 x 400 x 50 BUFF COLOUR TACTILE/BLISTER PAVING LAID AS FOOTWAY MODULE TYPE 2 IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/045.
- 400 x 400 x 50 BUFF COLOUR TACTILE/CORDUROY PAVING LAID AS FOOTWAY MODULE TYPE 2 IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/045.
- PC1 PC1 KERBS LAID IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/010.
- PC3 PC3 KERBS LAID IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/010.
- PC4 PC4 KERBS LAID IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/010.
- PCE 50 X 150 PCC EDGING TYPE EF.
- PRECAST CONCRETE DISHED CHANNEL TYPE CSD LAID FLUSH.
- G1 GULLY TYPE 1 IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/D/015.
- S2 SOAKAWAY TYPE S2 IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/D/075.
- B • GLASDON 'NEOPOLITAN' BOLLARD INCLUDING A 150mm WIDE YELLOW RETRO-REFLECTIVE STRIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH HCC STANDARD DETAIL DRG. No. HCC10/C/130.
- R1 PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGN REFERENCE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROPOSED SIGN SCHEDULE INCLUDED ON THIS DRAWING.

The Drawings (3)



Key

-  Proposed buff coloured tactile paving to HCC standard detail HCC10/C/060 type 2
-  Proposed traffic sign
-  Proposed street lighting column type 2A to HCC standard detail HCC10/L/015 (lighting design and specification TBC)
-  Proposed corduroy hazard paving

There is no drawing for this section that details arrangements for cycling; the WCHAR report thought the larger roundabout was sufficient for cycling safety

From Domum Road to the Leisure Centre and back



Cyclists are tempted away from the NCN 23 to visit the Leisure Centre. This will be disappointing and frustrating until the leisure centre is opened. Meanwhile the sign should be covered up. Inaccurate information like this will not encourage more cycling

The Bar End Switchback



“18. Cycle routes must flow, feeling direct and logical. Users should not feel as if they are having to double back on themselves, turn unnecessarily, or go the long way round. Often, cycling schemes – when crossing a main road, for instance – require cyclists to make a series of ninety-degree turns to carry out a movement that a motor vehicle at the same location could do without turning at all. Schemes should be based on a proper understanding of how people actually behave rather than how they might be expected to behave.”

The planning committee drawing specifies a width of 2.5m, and new tubular steel railings offset 100mm from the edge of the path. The railings actually installed are inside the edge and restrict the usable width to 2.3m. It is difficult for bikes to cross here, and the 180 deg corner is not easy. The WCHAR report is right to say this bend “does not conform to ideal standards for a cycle route.”

This breaks principle 18 of Gear Change and also principle 5: “We also want to see increasing numbers of cargo bikes to replace some van journeys. Cycle routes must be accessible to recumbents, trikes, handcycles, and other cycles used by disabled cyclists.”

Table 5-2 of DfT’s Cycling Infrastructure and Design 2020 gives 3m as the desirable width for two-way cycle lanes.

The Bar End Pinch



At the end of a stretch of 2.5m wide shared use path is an “offset” where the carriageway narrows without warning to 2.1m. Principle 2 of Gear Change says: “Cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians.” Table 5-2 of DfT’s Cycling Infrastructure and Design 2020 gives 3m as the desirable width for two-way cycle lanes.

Barfield Close (1)

It is not at all clear how cyclists are expected to proceed along Barfield Close to the Leisure Centre, since there is no helpful signage; only four signs telling cyclists that the cycleway has ended. This feels passively hostile.

The best guess at the intended route suggests cyclists are expected to cross six streams of traffic, and manoeuvre through eight sharp right-angled turns.



Initially cyclists arrive on the pavement from the right of the picture, turn 90° right round a blind corner with no signage, turn 90° left, cross two lanes of traffic on an unprotected crossing, and turn right to make their way south along Barfield Close.

A sign invites cyclists to rejoin a carriageway they have not been on. It is assumed cyclists know which way to go.

Barfield Close (2)

The only clue where to go is an unexplained image of a bike and an arrow. It is the closest the route gets to the “on road cycle scheme along Barfield Close” in the planning conditions, but is nowhere near compliant.



Barfield Close (3)

Following Barfield Close round a left-hand corner to face east, the cyclist reaches the most confusing feature of the route. At a point hidden by the sharp corner the cyclist is urged to join the pavement through a sharp 90° left and then a sharp 90° right turn of the sort proscribed in DfT guidance. This then leads to an “end of cycle route” sign in only 2.3m. If this is not a practical joke at the expense of cyclists, it is difficult to know what was intended by the route designers. The point of leaving the carriageway for a 2.3m cycle route is obscure.



A forest of “End of Route” Signs

In the area near the roundabout there are four “end of cycle route” signs, and five on the whole route, The DfT cycle infrastructure design guidance says these signs should be used **sparingly**. It would be good to replace these signs with **positive** direction signs telling cyclists where they should go, rather than focus on **negative** messages about where they should not go.

13.4.3 The END OF ROUTE sign to TSRGD diagram 965, and the END marking to TSRGD diagram 1058, are not mandatory, and should be used sparingly. As with CYCLISTS REJOIN CARRIAGEWAY, where their use appears unavoidable, designers should be able to defend their decision and why it cannot be avoided. When deciding whether to use them, consideration should be given to the purpose they are meant to serve. If the end of the route is obvious, they are redundant. If the cycle route cedes priority on ending, GIVE WAY signing is used instead. See also Chapter 6 on use with cycle lanes.

Crossing Bar End Road

The simplest and safest way to cross Bar End Road would be to cycle round the new roundabout, giving way on entry and then having priority. This would be safer if Manchester-style cycle lanes were provided. Two additional options seem to be offered:

1. Turning on to the left pavement and getting stranded at the “end of cycle lane” sign see *two slides back*
2. Turning right across two lanes of Barfield Close, one on the blind side of a corner, and using the ‘parallel crossing’ recently constructed. This involves four sharp right-angle turns and a dangerous carriageway crossing, but there can be no other purpose for the eastbound direction on the ‘parallel crossing’



The Parallel Crossing



Parallel crossings

10.4.12 The parallel crossing is similar in form and application to a zebra crossing, but with a separate parallel cycle crossing alongside the zebra crossing. The layout is prescribed in TSRGD diagram 1001.5, and includes yellow globes, a controlled area indicated by zig-zag markings, and a give-way line (See Figure 10.7). Drivers must give way to pedestrians and cyclists using the crossing. It provides a more demand responsive and lower cost solution compared to signalised facilities. Parallel crossings can be used on links and on the arms of priority-controlled and roundabout junctions.



The markings seem to reflect the DfT diagram in their 2019 traffic signs manual chapter 6 (see next slide). Perhaps more important, it may be worth reassuring cyclists, and warning drivers that bicycles have priority, since parallel crossings date only from 2016, and many people will not have seen them before. 'Cycle crossing' warning signs, and contrasting colour surface could improve safety. While the crossing itself follows the DfT guidance closely, the approaches from both directions are highly unsatisfactory.

The Parallel Crossing

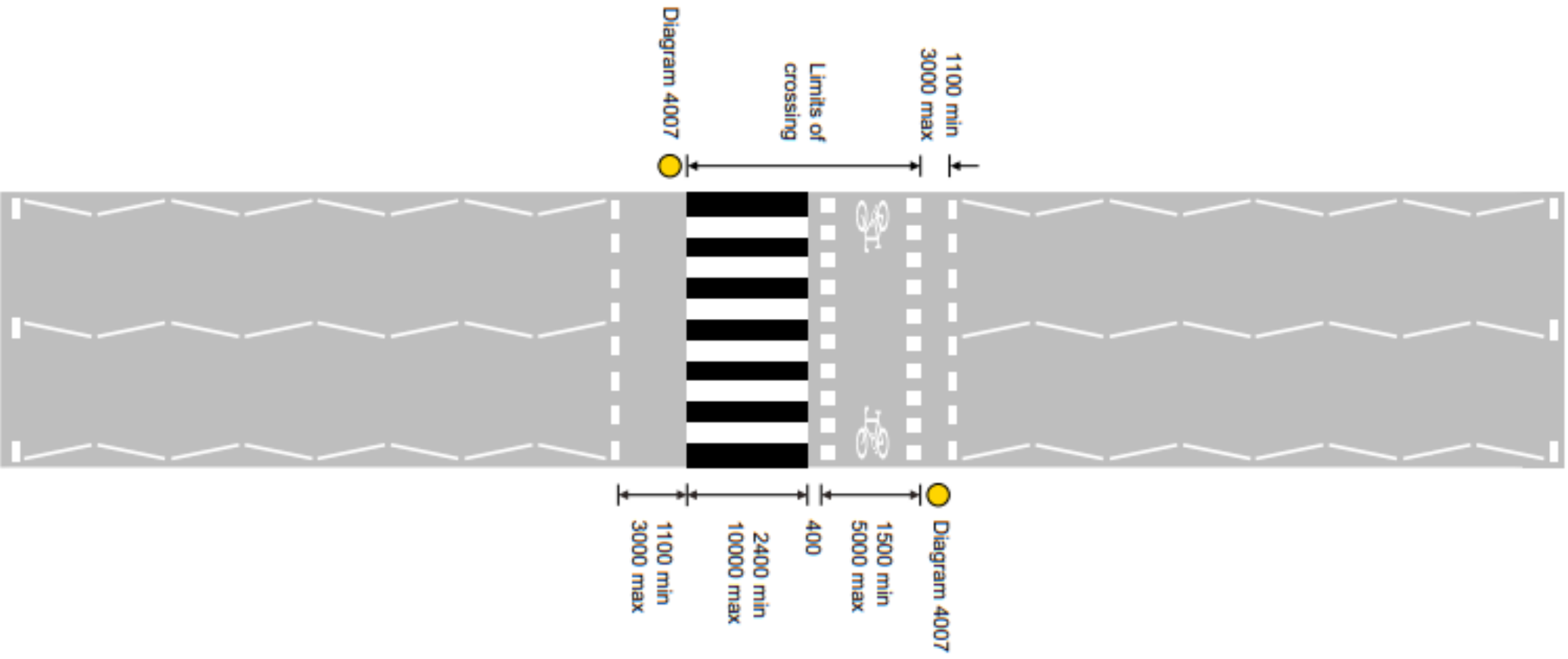


Figure 17-1 Diagram 1001.5 (S14-2-53): Road markings indicating a Parallel crossing

The Return to Domum Road

The issues encountered on a return journey have much the same flavour as on the outward trip. Some of the detail is different

It is easier to access the parallel crossing than it was on the outward trip, but using the roundabout would still seem to be a simpler and safer way of crossing Bar End Road.

The transition from the parallel crossing to Barfield Close is poor; it involves 4 sharp 90° turns and it joins a carriageway on the blind side of a sharp corner.



The Hidden Left Turn

The left turn off Barfield Close is not well marked. The direction sign is obscured by other clutter and it would be easy to miss. As in the other direction it has 3 non-compliant sharp right angle turns and involves an unnecessary blind corner (there was no reason for the designers not to make creative use the minor road)



Back to Domum Road

This detailed analysis of the shortcomings of the Domum Road to Leisure Centre cycle route hopefully indicates the fundamental change in approach needed in providing cycling infrastructure. Winchester must offer the type of cycling experience that will bring about the scale of modal transfer that will increase cycling and reduce transport emissions to net-zero by 2030.

Unfortunately it is typical of cycling infrastructure in Hampshire. Similar features can be found in a new installation in west Alton.

