

LRAG News Update – 30 January 2024

Recipients of these newsletters may recall that it was reported in [Issue #41](#) of 7 November 2023 that SCC had been asked to explain the statement in their [letter](#), announcing the start of the public engagement, that “**the road will remain the same width as it is currently**”. Many people thought this statement was not clear, straightforward or accurate. Studies of the drawings presented by SCC, online and at drop-in events, showed that space that currently acts as a “**right of way for passage of vehicles**” was being significantly reduced in width, and reassigned for **cycle tracks**.

LRAG finally received the courtesy of a reply on 26 January 2024, clearly far too late to assist the public in shaping their responses to the public survey. It said: “**Our statement was addressed to a wide and varied audience and we used the word ‘road’ because we were addressing a wide audience and we thought it was the more appropriate word to use. Technically, the more accurate term is ‘carriageway’ and not road. By this, we mean carriageway as defined in The Highway Code 1980 and LTN1/20.**”

The Highway Code does not offer a definition of “carriageway”. It is more likely that the reference above should be to **The Highways Act 1980**, which remains valid today, and is what the Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20 alludes to.

So, for “road” read “carriageway”, and the 2 definitions are as follows:

The Highways Act 1980 (S 329)

“carriageway” means a way constituting or comprised in a highway, being a way (**other than a cycle track**) over which the public have a right of way for the passage of vehicles;

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“carriageway”: A way constituting or comprised in a highway (**other than a cycle track**), over which the public have a right of way for passage of vehicles. [Highways Act 1980 (S329)].

Cycle lanes are part of the carriageway.

The distinction between the terms **cycle track** and **cycle lane** should be noted. A **cycle lane** is a marked lane on the road for the exclusive use of cyclists. It is marked with a white line (which may be broken) along the carriageway. The Highway Code does not permit vehicles to drive in a **cycle lane** marked by a broken white line **unless it is unavoidable**. However, this action is regularly observed on London Road, because of necessity for avoidance of oncoming traffic on the stretches of already narrow carriageways.

On the other hand, a **cycle track** is a separate route for cycles and not motor vehicles. Cycle tracks are often separated from the road by a physical barrier. The illustration on the following page may aid understanding.

The conclusion, therefore, has to be that using the space previously allocated for **cycle lanes** to convert them to **cycle tracks** must require the **carriageway (“road”)** to become **narrower**. As Winston Churchill might have said: “Assertions to the contrary must be deemed a terminological inexactitude”!



- A. The carriageway
- B. A cycle lane
- C. The Highway
- D. The footway (pavement) – could be a cycle track if shared use is permitted
- E. Space between painted lines. It has no formal definition, but vehicles may only cross a broken white line when it is unavoidable (such as when threatened by oncoming traffic on narrow carriageways?)