

Necessary evils

- Contra-flow cycle lanes
- No-entry 'plugs'
- Side-road crossings
- Access controls



'Necessary evils' refers to those cycle facilities that local authorities must, or think they must, use to deal with a specific situation – constrained by what the DfT considers appropriate or permissible. But how many of them are really necessary? There is certainly a growing body of support for a relaxation of DfT requirements for measures at locations that results in awkward to use, difficult to maintain and visually unattractive infrastructure.

The illustration here, in Stricklandgate, Kendal, is actually a relatively neat solution to enable cyclists to use the one-way street in both directions. (Also allowing buses to swing out to their right to make a tight left turn). I'm not sure how well it conforms to DfT guidelines though!



Good example of a contra-flow cycle lane in central Sheffield.



The usual response to enable cyclists to avoid a No Entry sign, in line with DfT regulations (which do not permit an 'Except Cycles' exemption plate on a No Entry sign), is to construct a cycle 'plug', which can be awkward to use and difficult to maintain.



Contrast this with the standard practice in Holland, where cyclists are generally permitted to use all streets in both directions, granted permission to 'ignore' the No Entry sign by no other means than a discrete sign.



Another example of where poorly designed cycle 'facilities' have generated visual clutter, here within the highway layout of a new residential development. Not to mention the unhelpfulness of all those closely spaced Cyclists Dismount signs! Why not keep cyclist on the adjacent quiet access road where they would maintain priority across side turnings and obviate the need for the succession of (likely to be ignored) 'Cyclists Dismount' bollards



Contrasting examples of access control barriers on cycle routes, to deter their use by unauthorised users, like motorcyclists. In general, however, it is preferable to avoid the use of barriers altogether. Not only do most of the designs look ugly, but they also often deter / prevent access to the route by some legitimate users. The DDA also recommends barrier-free routes wherever possible.