

Dear Lord Mayor, Councillors, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

We are the residents of West Park in North Leeds who are affected by the proposed alterations to the Lawnswood Roundabout and its vicinity. We are here to raise our concerns over the cost of the scheme, the lack of recent data to justify it and the impact on the area and residents. We are particularly concerned about the impact on the students at the adjacent Lawnswood School given the likelihood of significantly increased levels of pollution.

The proposals include crossings for cyclist and pedestrians as well as at least sixteen sets of traffic lights. Safety railings, some trees and grass verges will be removed. The planners accept that for most of the day vehicles will take longer to navigate the junction than at present due to being held at the lights and particularly so when traffic is held at the roundabout to ease the flow through Headingley.

Can I emphasise that we are not opposed to some additions to the roundabout in the form of the construction of toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists as per the existing crossing adjacent to Lawnswood School. This indeed was the focus of our alternative proposal.

The roundabout is busy in the morning rush hour due to traffic backing up from Headingley and with two lanes merging to make way for the bus lane just south of it. Traffic is also busier in the evening rush hour. For the other 20 plus hours of the day traffic runs freely and there is no justification whatsoever in having traffic lights on and near the roundabout apart from those attached to toucan crossings and certainly not 24/7.

Here are some of the consequences of implementing the proposals

Firstly. Increased likelihood of accidents. At present railings are in place which separate and protect pedestrians including the pupils from Lawnswood School from moving traffic. These will be removed and not replaced potentially putting lives in danger. Similarly, it is proposed that a joint use cycle lane and footpath be built adjacent to the front walls and gates of a number of houses on the Ring Road. There is a likelihood that accidents will occur between cyclists and residents and between cyclists and residents' vehicles.

Secondly. Increased pollution. Connecting Leeds have issued plans to improve traffic flow on the Armley Gyratory. Now according to a West Yorkshire Combined Authority report, the changes are expected to cause an increase of more than 100,000 tonnes in carbon emissions over the next 60 years. Putting This staggering amount of additional pollution aside for one moment let us acknowledge that at least research and analysis has taken place. There is no such analysis for Lawnswood Roundabout and the planners have taken very much a wait and see what it's like once the job is done approach . Not good enough, we need to know how many additional thousands of tons of carbon emissions will result from the changes. We cannot put the health of so many young people and the adults who work with them as well as residents at risk.

Thirdly, lack of data linked to vehicle, cycle and pedestrian use of the roundabout.

These plans are based upon data which was gathered in 2017 some five years ago and as we are all well aware the daily commute has changed significantly since then. Surely post covid data gathering and analysis is required before any alterations are made.

Fourthly, Impact on the environment. Due to the excessive number of sets of traffic lights, additional street furniture and loss of trees and grass area will degrade the area. It is over-urbanising an area that is adjacent to so valuable green space. It is also a pity that the planners have been unable to provide a visualised run through of the proposals.

Finally, value for money. It is sometimes the case that planners come up with over-elaborate plans and in so doing they take a sledgehammer to crack a nut. This is such a case. They have produced a technical solution which is neither necessary or appropriate to the locality. It will cost at least £10 million to implement and make detrimental changes which are totally over the top. Toucan crossings, at a fraction of the cost, would suffice.

Bearing these points in mind we would ask the council to.

1. Examine the value for money aspect of the proposal.
2. Determine and release the data for the expected increase in carbon emissions as a result of longer journey times through the junction
3. Release the data and simulation models showing the benefits of this proposal, share what alternatives have been considered and why these have been discounted.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns to preserve the status of this green gateway into Leeds.