

Safer junctions and less road congestion

The Transport Secretary has rightly identified the need for more capacity on Council strategic road networks to complement the increase of capacity being achieved through the governments investment in more capacity on the national network. I am encouraging Wokingham and West Berkshire to come up with schemes and bid for cash to take advantage of this initiative.

Much of the congestion occurs at junctions. Mixed use junctions are also a place of maximum danger of accidents where cars, lorries, buses, cycles and pedestrians can get in each other's way. The more that can be done to provide safe separate routes for cyclists and pedestrians at main road junctions the better. The more that can be done to segregate turning traffic from traffic going straight on a main road, the safer the junction and the better the flow.

My local observations confirm my view that roundabouts usually increase capacity compared to light controlled cross roads. On the A329 Wokingham to Reading Road the busy junction with the Woosehill spine road normally flows well with a roundabout. In contrast the Winnersh crossroads, a little west of the Woosehill turning has a four way phased light set which causes traffic jams most of the day. The Earley peripheral road also flows well most of the time with a series of roundabouts. The jams occur at the main junction with the A 329 with light controls on the roundabout. This I accept is a busier junction anyway which poses additional design issues.

The best example of a roundabout scheme which has greatly improved flows and increased safety is the new junction with the A30 for the Eversley Road A 327. It should be an example for other schemes. Where roundabouts cannot be fitted light junctions need segregated right hand lanes, short phase right turn sequences, and priority phasing for the main route and flow at the junction. Where there is a main road with side roads the main road should always be green unless traffic sensors detect traffic wishing to join from the sides.