Mr.Chairman, Councillors, thank you for allowing me to address this meeting. I do so wearing two hats, the first is as a representative of the Reading Cycle Campaign.

The campaign’s over-riding concern is for the safety of all who cycle in the area and also to see that any monies that are spent on road and infrastructure improvements are spent wisely and to the best effect. My colleague, John Lee had prepared a short presentation on the technical limitations and errors of the scheme, but as these are all detailed in the reports that we sent to Cllr.Page a few weeks ago, I trust that you are all aware of our concerns in this area.

However I want to make a larger point. As someone who has cycled in the area for over 40 years and has in recent times spoken to many others who also cycle the local roads, I can confidently say that nothing in the scheme makes me feel safer on my bike and that many things make me feel more unsafe. There is one aspect of the scheme which I believe is a potential death trap for cyclists.

Whoever designed the scheme either did not know or maybe thought it not important that Redlands Road goes up quite a steep hill. To arrange things such that downhill traffic get effective priority means that vehicles are now coming past the end of Allcroft and down past the hospital faster than ever. I see this every day.

Dog walking neighbours commented within days of the scheme being implemented that someone would get killed unless changes were made. There have been many near misses and I have seen some myself.

As I said in my part of the report, I have cycled safely in the area for over 40 years but since the scheme was put in I have now had seven near misses. Most are due to vehicles moving over to the centre of the road to straddle the speed cushions without slowing. One of these was a Reading bus.

I now no longer cycle up Redlands Road as I regard it as too dangerous and I see many more cyclists using the pavements. Surely this is not what the scheme was intended to achieve.

The other hat I wear is as a local resident. In the 43 years I have lived on Redlands Road, nothing has caused my wife and I, and I also speak for other local residents, more disturbance and distress than the noise made by vehicles as they pass over and often hit the speed cushions and bumps. We get woken in the night by cars scraping the road going over the savage full width humps in Morgan Road. Even with treble glazing, the noise from heavy vehicles such as demolition trucks, bouncing over the cushions at full speed in Redlands Road, is very intrusive. We never really used to notice the noise in the past.

As a taxpayer, I am concerned that this costly, badly designed and ineffective scheme will be held up as some sort of improvement. At the very least the part South of Allcroft Road should be rethought and the vicious humps in Morgan Road replaced with ones that cause less local noise. But it would be better if a full scale review was done to see if the schemes objectives have been met.

I would hope that any future schemes would benefit from involvement of people with local knowledge, and especially the involvement of the cycling community. Can I suggest that safety auditors and lead councillors cycle any schemes before they are approve? Can I also suggest that the council carry out proper evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of what they implement?