

## Case Study Safer Rural Rides

### Protecting cyclists on Bedfordshire's country lanes

**When Central Bedfordshire Council wanted to improve protection for cyclists on winding country lanes, it turned to Jacobs Engineering Group and SWARCO, who recommended AGD's 318 traffic control radar as part of the solution**

A priority for Central Bedfordshire Council when it applied for government funding for a cycle innovation scheme was looking at ways to protect cyclists on the county's busy roads. This is as much a priority in rural areas as in an urban setting, with cyclists feeling vulnerable on country lanes where there is often limited visibility.

Paul Wright, the technical estimator at SWARCO who designed the scheme, takes up the story: "Jacobs asked us to design a scheme that would allow cyclists to be detected so that motorists could be alerted to their presence. The sites they had in mind were rural lanes that wind between fields bordered with high hedges that make it difficult for drivers to see what's on the road ahead."

The solution that SWARCO designed uses a warning sign at each end of a defined detection zone that is about 750m long. "When a cyclist passes into the zone, a signal is sent to the signs at either end of the zone from either direction. Once the demand period is triggered, any motorists who approach the zone will see an illuminated sign to warn them that there is a cyclist in the area." Because vehicles tend to travel at speed on this road, the solution was designed to warn drivers to slow down, as well as alerting drivers to the presence of cyclists.

### Proven effectiveness

After assessing the effectiveness of a thermal detector, Paul chose the AGD 318 traffic control radar to supply the detection element: "We felt that AGD provided a much more robust solution and, because AGD already had a lot of cycle detection in place, they had plenty of experience," he explains. "We have worked with AGD for a long time on vehicle detection but this was a new avenue for SWARCO. It was good to know they had the expertise to understand the type of features we needed."

The scheme, which is fully self-sustaining as it is solar-powered, also includes data logging, so that the authority can see how drivers are behaving and make adjustments if required. "The solar solution is excellent," says Wright. "You just need a south-facing aspect with no obstruction from trees or buildings to provide a reliable self-sustaining supply."



Traffic & Pedestrian Control



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The non-intrusive AGD 318 radar offers proven effectiveness in cycle schemes, accurately detecting cyclists within a defined speed range and distance. “The 318 is a lot more economical than the solution we looked at originally,” continues Wright. “We were mindful that Jacobs is our client and it wasn’t just about the technical side of things – we had to be budget-conscious too.

“The radar is really simple to set up using a smart phone or tablet, and AGD supported us very well with the configuration and testing. This solution now provides SWARCO and its clients with a blueprint for a really effective, flexible system. Jacobs’ plan is to monitor driver behaviour in the months ahead, after which time the design will go into Jacobs’ design book. We are confident that the success of this innovative solution will lead the way for future local authority schemes on dangerous rural roads to ensure the safety of vulnerable cyclists.”



The AGD 318 Traffic Control Radar

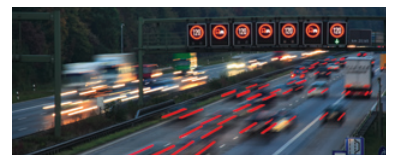
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