

X-FLO Detector Pads - Kerbside Detection at PUFFINs

For information.

In light of the on going problems with kerbside detectors, I now have a total of 24 X-Flo detector pads installed; 16 around one traffic signaled junction and 8 at two puffin sites. 8 more units are about to be installed at two new sites within the next month.

So far they have proved very reliable and at a similar cost to an overhead unit plus installation, they appear to be a very cost effective solution, even more so due to the reduction in maintenance calls, ladder H&S issues etc.

The X-FLO detector pad is remarkable in its simplicity - operating in exactly the same way as 'D' loops do with a metal plate moving in relation to a coil. They are proving to be extremely reliable and observation here shows that people very quickly learn to use them.

Reliable detectors mean reduced congestion AND improved safety for pedestrians. And while standards must be accepted, my concern is more for the road user. Standards have an annoying habit of taking years to be decided, in the mean time, pedestrians need to remain safe and congestion managed. If kerbside detection is to be used, it must be reliable and must only insert a demand 'if' someone is actually waiting to cross.

With regards to positioning, if one person wishes to cross, they tend to stand near the pole. If more than one person is waiting, it is fairly normal that at least one of them will stand near the pole. The entire crossing does not need to be covered with these pads. Also, the position adopted in Sefton follows discussions with two groups; a group of non- visually impaired people responsible for disability standards - who were more concerned with the shade of pink used, and a group of visually impaired and people with other disabilities - such as wheel chair users. I arranged to have a pad taken around to these groups for them to make their own judgments, all were very happy for me to trial them and were most grateful for being asked to comment.

The visually impaired are taught to find the edge of the kerb with their cane and stand approximately 150mm back - hence the positioning of the pads. They even detect the weight of a single wheel on the corner of a child's buggy...AND cater for up to 7.5 tonnes.

The question is; which is more important, continuing with something that does not work reliably, or fitting something that works, is cheaper and safer to maintain and helps reduce congestion too? If colour and measurement are more important than people then maybe all kerbside detection should be removed and we treat them similar to pelicans...and just accept the extra congestion.

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