

Introduction

In general, we think there is much to welcome in this document and are very pleased to see that Nottingham City Council is making such a commitment to high-quality cycling facilities. We are particularly supportive of the policy of giving cyclists priority over turning traffic and the measures that are being proposed to implement this.

The detailed and interesting document makes a useful start by acknowledging and describing user needs, particularly with reference to cycling in primary and secondary positions.

We also welcome the commitment to make provision for a range of cyclists, both less and more experienced and confident, and sometimes with differing views on the relative importance of perceived safety and directness, for example. However, providing for a range of cyclists should not, as some fear, be used as a pretext for sub-standard facilities.

Similarly, we welcome the commitment to ensure that the quality of standards of provision is consistent with the principles of National Standards Level 2 / Bikeability training, provided that this is not used as a pretext for trying to make substandard provision acceptable. An example of this is the very constrained situation for cyclists on the new Toton NET route by the Chilwell High Road tramstop where the shared path behind the stop (on the north side) is very narrow and prone to conflicts with pedestrians, but at the same time many cyclists are hesitant to pull out across the tram tracks on the approaches to the tram stop if they wish avoid the much criticised narrow shared path behind it. Some cyclists are concerned that training in line with cyclist training standards can sometimes appear to be about mitigating the worst effects of our current inadequate road environment

While welcoming the draft guidance we do have qualifications about the way some of the proposed measures have often been applied in practice and we would underline the importance of consistency in the raising of standards.

We are concerned that several of the photographs don't match up to the diagrams and descriptions. As an example the pinch point shown on Bramhall Road (p.12) does not match the description. It is a very poor implementation of what could be useful - in reality this facility is making the road less, not more, cycle-friendly, as the space on the outside of the bollard is far too narrow and will simply fill with debris.

Several of the illustrations used are not good quality examples, e.g. those of the controversial cycle lanes on Haydn Road. We would like to see more examples of images of good practice from Continental Europe and also more which reflect the not that uncommon reality for local cyclists of riding in wet weather.

General comments:

1. Cycle facilities and motoring facilities

Some current so-called "cycling facilities" are misnamed; they can be seen as "motoring facilities" designed to get cyclists out of the way of motorists (so that they can drive at higher speeds without interruption) rather than to facilitate cycling.

An example is the path alongside Victoria Embankment: it brings cyclists into conflict with pedestrians and is particularly unsuitable for cycling home from work during periods of darkness when the shadows caused by cars driving alongside the path make it difficult to see pedestrians (and their animals). The Guide appears to announce a very radical change in attitude; we very much hope this will be the case in practice.

2. Reducing accidents by reducing the number of junctions.

It is well known that the most serious accidents occur at junctions. Minimising the risk of accidents

can be greatly helped by reducing the number of junctions cyclists have to cope with, in addition to other measures such as reduced speed limits, greater speed limit enforcement, safer road layouts, better quality of cycling provision, and the general encouragement of safe driving and cycling standards. This may sometimes mean building bridges, subways and/or tunnels.

The route from the Jubilee Campus to the Main Campus of the University of Nottingham is a prime example of an unacceptable number of high-volume junctions: following the signposted route requires a cyclist to cross 6 lanes of high-density, fast-moving traffic, a situation that we know can have fatal consequences. We would like to see a policy on the reduction of junctions and how this might be achieved in the final version of the Guide.

3. Speed limits adjacent to cycle paths.

Where cycle paths are adjacent to a road, the speed limit on the road should be dictated by the separation between the cycle path and the road. Where the cycle path is immediately adjacent to the road with no separation, the speed limit should be no more than 30mph. This is particularly important on roads with higher speed limits or which are unrestricted.

While most of these are outside the City, we appreciate, this is also very relevant to the Nottingham Ring Road and to help reduce conflicts between drivers turning off it into minor roads crossing cycle paths. We would therefore like to see a general reduction of the speed limit on this road to 30mph.

We would emphasise that the speed limit should be dictated by the separation and not the other way around. In order to afford motorists the opportunity to drive faster, a greater separation should be an integral part of the design but where the separation is not possible the speed limit should be reduced. Such a reduction should complement other measures such as ensuring that there is a raised surface for the cycle path across the mouth of the junction and clear priority signs and markings.

4. Signage (see also comments below, relating to page 44)

The policy of making turning motorists cede right of way to straight-through cyclists and pedestrians is sufficiently radical in the UK (sadly, even though it is in the Highway Code - see rule 170) that we think it advisable to erect signs along the main carriageways alerting motorists to the change in policy, in the interest of cyclists' safety.

It is also very important that the signage is properly addressed. An example of what NOT to do is the signage outside Nottingham railway station which states that *cyclists* should beware of turning traffic. This we think is sadly typical of ingrained pro-motorist and anti-cyclist attitudes in the UK. The signs must state that *turning traffic* should beware of and give way to cyclists and pedestrians.

Signing must be clear, consistent and coherent, but this is not always the case even with newer signing. For example the new signing on the tramside path between Wilford Lane and Ruddington Lane does not include cycle logos, to make clear that this is a shared path. This must be rectified.

Destinations shown on signs must be consistent with others shown on signs on that route, and more broadly in the network, and this also applies to any distances shown. With several of the new signs erected in connection with the new NET routes there are clear inconsistencies and inaccurate use of distances, as well as orientation of signs. This lack of attention to detail does not give cyclists confidence in using the network, especially if they lack local knowledge, and where the routes for cyclists are very different from the road system and the best routes for drivers.

5. Traffic light default.

Careful consideration should be given to which direction the default green light should favour. It would appear that such consideration is already being given to whether motorists or trams should be favoured by a default green light. For example, on the Victoria Embankment side of Wilford Bridge it would appear that the lights default to green for trams but are set to quickly change to green for motorists and cyclists if there is no approaching tram. The same consideration should be given to junctions between motorists and cyclists; it should not always be the case that motorists are favoured.

An example where cyclists and pedestrians should be favoured by a default green light is the cycle crossing under the north side of the Dunkirk Flyover. The volume of vulnerable traffic to and from Nottingham University and QMC etc. is sufficiently high to amply justify such a default.

6. Maintenance

(see also comments below with reference to pages 47-48). We welcome the mention of sweeping of cycle paths and not just cutting back of vegetation. Proper maintenance is vital if cycling is to become an everyday activity.

7. Concern for older and disabled cyclists.

There appears to be nothing in the Guide that is particularly addressed to the needs of older and/or disabled cyclists. Such cyclists are more prone to (monomial) accidents when mounting or dismounting because they take longer to reach a stable speed.

The use of bollards is an example of how older and disabled cyclists can be severely affected. Bollards, though preferable to other forms of access control such as A-frames and staggered barriers should be used sparingly. Where they are used they should be painted in bright colours so that they are clearly visible, and there should be white centre line markings on the approaches, as in common in the Netherlands. There should also be sufficient separation to allow (cycle) trailers to pass comfortably. Consideration should also be given to fitting lights to bollards.

Taking into account the special needs of disabled cyclists must include measures such as lowering the height of signal buttons to be seen by people in recumbents etc. These are typically 75cm wide, and have a much greater turning circle than traditional cycles. For disabled cyclists and others who ride non-traditional bikes it is important that routes are wide enough to accommodate them, have adequate turning at access and egress points and where there are crossings with traffic lights that the buttons are at a suitable height. Many people who use mobility scooters could and probably should also use these tracks and have similar issues.

8. Uniformity and consistency across council boundaries.

Many cyclists do not live in Nottingham City but do commute and/or shop in the city. It is therefore very important that there is uniformity of provision and standards across the council boundaries, with close coordination with the County Council as the other Local Highway Authority in Greater Nottingham, and with Highways England in the case of trunk roads.

A significant example is crossing the Suspension Bridge from The Meadows. Once over the bridge and into West Bridgford, cyclists and pedestrians are faced with the daunting task of how to cross to Melton Road from Welbeck Road: the only truly "safe" option on the West Bridgford side is to walk the long way around, negotiating 6 separate traffic lights (designed to maximise the length of the walk), or to cycle via the much more circuitous route via the toucan crossing on Loughborough Road by Millicent Road. This is an example of a major route where active travel is positively discouraged by a failure to achieve consistent good provision across the City / County Boundary.

The need for this consistency will also be very important in other proposals such as the foot-cycle bridge between Trent Lane and The Hook and its approaches from both sides, and in the plans for the Southern Corridor route to and from Clifton, which must also be used to provide much better links for cyclists to and from the proposed new housing areas south of Clifton in Rushcliffe Borough, as well as other major housing developments due to go ahead soon south and east of West Bridgford. The same principle applies on the west side of Nottingham for routes connecting to and from the new housing areas in Broxtowe Borough.

9. The need to future-proof the Design Guide

We would be very interested to know how the Council intends to future-proof the Design Guide so that it cannot be simply ignored by a new administration.

Long-term consistency and commitment, as well as close coordination and communication between all relevant authorities, is also vital to help raise general standards of cycling provision and making the network coherent and attractive to users.

Detailed comments relating to specific pages:

Page 1

London example shown in the picture is a lightly segregated lane in the door zone. These armadillo separators can easily get destroyed by motor vehicles, we understand.

Page 2

The "sensible 12 year old" target could be seen as excluding all primary school children cycling to school. Please make this target more ambitious.

"Where more confident cyclists choose not to use any facilities provided" - If they do this then the design may be failing and there is a need to think about why.

Page 3

Fig 2 is perhaps too weak and something like this might be more reasonable:

"If traffic speeds are high (85th percentile above 20mph) or volumes are high (above 2,000 PCU per day), then cycles should be segregated from motor vehicles. Where these limits are exceeded, designers can therefore choose to either reduce traffic volumes (e.g. by point closures rendering the route no longer a through route for motor vehicles) or provide physical separation. These are upper limits: in no circumstances should they be deviated from, but they are not lower limits - in many circumstances separation will be desired even when speeds or volumes are lower (for example if the vehicle mix consists primarily of HGVs).

Please see London Cycling Campaign's note on this subject. The diagram here appears to be based on DfT LTN 2/08, which is too weak and has too strong a preference for on road cycle lanes.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/lcc_production_bucket/files/5906/original.pdf?1376047072

Page 6

The Broad Street example shows somebody cycling the wrong way, and it is not a great example anyway as the through motor traffic and illegal driving and parking (which some think is persistently unaddressed by the City Council) detract from the quality of the area.

Please don't show the Castle Boulevard example as the current (pre- October 2015) scheme is bad and should not be emulated.

Page 10

There is no way that a low speed environment where people on foot are "integrated" with people in cars is pleasant for everyone. We suggest removing the traffic instead. This video is very relevant:

<https://youtu.be/NOObDPOSm-g>

Carlton / Broad Street (pictured here) is an example of this. In reality pedestrians may feel bullied out of the way by motor vehicles. Other such schemes may be bad if they do nothing to reduce traffic volumes and so the area remains extremely unpleasant to walk and cycle around.

A further problem with the Carlton Street / Goosegate shared space is that the ample cycle parking is sited in such a way to make a pinch point on either side (close to shop doorways) causing conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

Page 12

Pinch points like this can make traffic overtake cycles too closely, and large vehicles may well overrun the cycle lane dangerously.

Page 13

Please don't cite the Haydn Road scheme as it's not good practice (really bad cycle lane, severe encroachment, no road layout changes (other than removal of the centreline) meaning adherence to the 20mph limit is poor).

Page 14

Cycle streets (*Fietsstraat*) should remove through motor traffic to create more pleasant places for residents and pedestrians/cyclists.

<https://aseasyasridingabike.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/screen-shot-2013-06-12-at-12-41-59.png>

Page 15

Light segregation often gets destroyed (see Royal College Street in London), so please use it with caution.

While we know that an indirect 2-stage turn can occasionally be advantageous in helping cyclists to turn right at busy junctions, as at the bottom of Maid Marian Way, we think that advocating wider use of the Copenhagen-style 2-stage indirect turn arrangements at major junctions, as trialled in Southampton, may be dangerous and needs to be approached very cautiously:

http://www.aviewfromthecyclepath.com/search/label/copenhagen_left

<http://www.aviewfromthecyclepath.com/2013/08/tfls-terrible-two-stage-right-turn.html#southampton>

Suggest you include what the previously linked blog calls "Simultaneous Green", where cyclists can go from all junction arms at the same time, as pioneered in the Netherlands.

Page 17

How busy is this road? There's a dooring risk here, and a risk from turning motor vehicles (in and out). The Castle Gate contraflow lane example is all right because the street is one way, not a general through street, and is quite wide.

Page 18

The "advisory lanes may be used" DfT guidance point is worrying because such lanes are often blocked by parked motor vehicles. Who wants to have to pull around a loading vehicle into oncoming traffic? Segregation would be more helpful, with loading happening from the general lane across the cycle lane, or loading taking place from a nearby location and not on the street itself.

We would prefer mandatory cycle lanes, not advisory ones, to be the default type, in the interests of enforcement and helping such facilities to fulfil their potential, unless there are exceptional reasons why advisory ones have to be used, in specific circumstances, to accommodate large motor vehicles turning.

Page 19

Suitable for very low volume/speed streets only. Consider removing through motor traffic first to achieve this.

Page 20

Consider motor vehicles turning into the one way street where cycles are exiting (against flow) and overrunning the cycle lane. A Nottingham example is the Victoria / Carlton Street junction which has this problem with buses.

Page 21

Introduce a standard for a maximum waiting time to cross a junction as a cyclist/pedestrian. Consider separate cycle phases if possible.

There must never be traffic signals which do not detect cycles, especially if they default to red until they detect motor vehicles. Two Nottingham examples of where this happens are Radford Road / North Gate and Haydn Road / Hucknall Road. Default crossings to green for pedestrians and cycles and red for motor vehicles.

Page 22

Avoid multi stage crossings where possible as has been done very successfully at Abbey Street by the Dunkirk flyover junction and NUAST. The Waterway Street toucan crossing is one location that cries out for such improvement, particularly in view of the fact that it forms part of the proposed Southern Corridor improvements linking Clifton with the City Centre etc.

Consider a "green wave" for cycles (turning green at approx 12mph), as in Copenhagen, and conversely a "red wave" for speeding vehicles.

Page 24

When is this type of arrangement appropriate? (on low speed/volume roads)

The arrangement where left turning motor vehicles apparently cut across the cycle lane is extremely worrying. Better to use early green type signals for cyclists as common in some other European countries and now being trialled in London etc.

Cycle lanes do not always help cyclists and poorly designed, poorly maintained and poorly enforced examples are worse for new and less-confident cyclists than the absence of cycle lanes. One example is where cars park in the absence of double yellow lines and/or proper, visible enforcement of parking restrictions, interspersed with lengths of road where cars are not parked and the cycle lane deviates to and from the kerb. Therefore, cyclists following the cycle lane are forced into and away from the sight of drivers.

We would like to see an objective that Nottingham City Council starts a programme to phase-out the combination of cycle lanes and permitted kerbside parking (single-yellow lines/no restrictions). We would also ask that all future kerbside cycle lanes do not have any kerbside parking, and all kerbside parking does not include an adjacent cycle lane which deviates to and from the kerb. Mandatory cycle lanes should be the default type of cycle lane.

Page 25:

To help Advance Stop Lines fulfil their potential for assisting cyclists making right turns at major junctions, the inclusion of good standard approach cycle lanes is essential, along with clear markings (preferably in colour) and measures to ensure that the ASLs and the cycle lanes are respected by drivers.

Page 26

Making cycles merge with traffic at roundabouts can be very intimidating, especially for less experienced and confident cyclists who most need to be encouraged. Better to provide separate facilities instead (e.g. as on the proposed the western corridor bypass at The Grove) though important also to try to avoid a significant time penalty for those cyclists who use the segregated route.

Page 27

Looks mostly nice but important to provide a good horizontal separation of cycle tracks, especially at speeds exceeding 30mph (see also comments above in the general comments section). Sometimes what was a good separation area between the cycle path and the carriageway has been made far too narrow by a decision to squeeze in an extra general traffic lane as on the west side of Clifton Bridge in the mid-1990s.

Page 30

"particularly waiting and loading" - loading can take place from the carriageway across the track if necessary, just as it does across the pavement now.

Page 31

We would like some more explanation please of the very good reasons why segregated cycle facilities should not always be provided on key routes.

Provide low level push button signals for cyclists, as now installed in London.

Talk about motorists' visibility with respect to side roads.

Bollards must be installed with care to provide for disabled cyclists / cargo bikes / trikes and to not pose a danger (see also general comments above)

Page 32

Ensure motor vehicles waiting to turn don't wait on the cycle path.

Page 33

This looks disturbing and could result in motors bullying everyone else out of the way (it'll function like a normal crossing).

Page 35

Nottingham hasn't really removed cycles from along tram route, both on Line One and the two NET extension lines, so best to change this wording. Much of the section about the tram is disappointing - it does not admit that the development of the tram has in many places been to the detriment of direct and safe cycle routes, especially where the trams route is on-street and there is inadequate space for any cycle lane or cycle path alongside, as in the High Road / Chilwell Road area.

Page 37

Say that cycles should never be expected to cycle close to tram tracks or cross them at a shallow angle in any facility.

It is very important in planning any further NET extension routes to ensure that the needs of cyclists are comprehensively and systematically considered from the outset and that tram routes should not be chosen if there is not scope for cycle lanes or cycle paths alongside or for cyclists to be offered convenient, direct and nearby continuous parallel alternative routes.

Kerbside tramstops are much harder for cyclists to have to negotiate than island tramstops, especially if they lack adequate space behind for a cycle lane or cycle path, so should be avoided in future routes if at all possible.

Some existing tramside shared paths are below the recommended minimum standard of 3 metres width, e.g. on the Clifton NET route both west and north of the Ruddington Lane tram stop.

These sections need to be widened, particularly in view of their status as part of the proposed Southern Corridor route improvements, and the potential for extending these to serve the major new housing development south of Clifton and other major destinations such as Rushcliffe Country Park, and be part of the Sustrans NCN route 50 to and from Leicester via Rushcliffe Country Park and Watermead Country Park on the north side of Leicester (where cycling provision benefitted greatly a few years ago from being part of the Sustrans Connect 2 Project), with links also to NCN Routes 6 and 48.

The comments on the use of rubber track fillers to help cyclists at particularly difficult (shallow-angled) crossing points are too dismissive of the case for these, taking account of wider international experience, e.g. in countries such as Germany and Switzerland, with the use of VeloStrail.

Page 38

Unsegregated paths may create conflict, only use them when pedestrian and cycle flows are light. A particularly glaring example is the tramside path on Wilford Bridge during the peak going to school period, the subject of much local concern.

Although bollards are preferable to other forms of access control such as A-frames and staggered barriers they interfere can with many types of cycle, so should be use with caution (see comments above in the general comments section). A single one should be good enough if there are problems with cars. Never install barriers.

Page 40

Paths must be free of clutter (poles etc). There are still too many examples of poles intruding into cycle paths, even on some of the newer cycling provision related to the new NET routes, e.g. on the riverside path just west of the north end of Wilford Bridge.

Page 41

Opportunity to specify maximum waiting times.

Page 42

"Option 3" apparently requires merging into traffic and waiting in the middle of the road in very limited space, which is hostile. An example of this is the central refuge on Castle Boulevard opposite the access point to the footbridge over the canal towards the towpath on the south side of the canal, etc.

Page 43

Require no barriers.

Page 44:

Destination signs must be securely fixed or they get easily loose and swivelled round and then become very misleading to people without good local knowledge. They must also be clear, coherent and consistent in the destinations they show, including the distance figures. On several of the new tram route-related signs these are very inaccurate!

Page 45

Show how the Nottingham station cycle parking is a little too close to the wall to be comfortable to use and the spacing between the stands is also substandard. Should be a minimum of 1 metre to enable easy loading and unloading of panniers, with 2 bikes attached to each stand.

Page 46

Very important to limit car journeys from the start of developments before car-dependent habits get ingrained!

New developments and redevelopments should be permeable to cycles but motor traffic limited to specific routes, i.e. with filtered permeability. Make sure that parking is provided in a way that people use it instead of parking over the foot or cycleway.

Link cycling provision within and to and from new developments to existing major and minor routes, particularly with the proposed Southern Corridor and the major housing areas proposed south of Clifton.

Page 47 (see also general comments above on maintenance)

Ensure cuttings are swept away to not risk punctures or slips of passing cycles.

'clear drainage channels and gullies'; 'sweep debris'; 'the Council is currently looking at options to ensure key cycle routes remain usable all year round'

We would like acknowledgement of the reality that water ponding can include but is not limited to, surfaces near to (blocked) channels and gullies. Furthermore, there is no mention of (mechanically) sweeping leaves and removing snow/ice (e.g. from on road cycle lanes) as such routes do not benefit from passing motor traffic to push leaves or snow out of the way.

Who determines what is a 'key cycle route'? We hope that Nottingham City Council has the ambition to ensure that all cycle routes remain usable all year round.

Page 48

The "drainage" picture shows a barrier type (A-frame) that should never be used as it is next to impassable for many types of cycle and disabled people. This was shown clearly in the trials of different types of barrier organised in 2007 by John Lee and his Rights of Way colleagues with the support of the former Cycling England Local Authorities Professional Support Team.

It is important to eliminate ponding as this is risky for cyclists, both in terms of getting wet and how it can hide dangers.

Snow clearing is mentioned whilst the hazard of (wet) fallen leaves is not recognised. Furthermore, such routes can become waterlogged/muddy and typically need improved, appropriate design for slopes and materials.

Page 51/52

The results of monitoring would be interesting to stakeholders such as cycle campaigners too.

Page 53

We still would like to see Road Safety Audits published in the interests of openness and helping to learn from experience, both good and bad.

Page 54

How will you make "guest streets" work in practice? If streets are visually the same then it is doubtful that anyone will change their behaviour significantly.

HMcC, 30.10.15