

Proposed West Bridgford Strategic Cycle routes: some comments from Hugh McClintock (Pedals) to follow up the meeting held on 18 May 2016 at Trent Bridge House with Mike Elliott, Paul Hillier and colleagues from Notts County Council, and Hugh McClintock, Roland Backhouse and Paul Abel from Pedals.

Including further general and detailed comments added in July 2016 following the public consultation (from page 4 of this document)

Introduction

We welcome in principle the proposed new routes and the aim of promoting cycling to help reduce serious local problems of traffic congestion and air pollution, as well as to promote physical activity through encouraging the use of healthy means of transport

Priority should be given to commuter routes, especially those connecting across the River Trent towards the City Centre and elsewhere in Nottingham, though incorporating a series of feeder links and other secondary routes, some of which may also be of great benefit in promoting cycling to and from schools and leisure facilities, particularly if they involve good segregated facilities. The most important (safe) commuter routes to and from Nottingham including the existing Suspension Bridge, Wilford shared path cum tram bridge, and Clifton Bridge (with its segregated cycle path), as well as the proposed new foot-bridge which Pedals and several other groups are now proposing between The Hook, Lady Bay, and Trent Lane, Nottingham.

Cross-town routes are also important, especially in the flatter parts of West Bridgford and where they connect to other existing and proposed routes, e.g. upgrading the present fragmented routes between the town centre and the west side of Compton Acres via the Rushcliffe Arena and the David Lloyd Fitness Club, including the new tramside path between Compton Acres and Wilford, part of the City Council's proposed Southern Cycling Corridor route between the City Centre and Clifton, on which work started on 24 May. Improvements to this route should include upgrading the present short link between the Compton Acres roundabout and Ascott Gardens, as well as a safer link to the north of the roundabout, and the proposed upgraded crossing of Loughborough Road (A60).

There is also a need to improve the present fragmented links east of the town centre, connecting to and from Gamston and the Grantham Canal towpath. These will be of even greater importance with the proposed major new housing developments in the Gamston-Tollerton area.

While focusing initially on the existing urban area it is also very important to think in terms of more extensive upgraded and new links, particularly connecting to all the proposed major new housing area, including those in the Sharp Hill / Melton Road area, and south of Clifton. These plans must also be coordinated with those of other agencies such as Highways England and the Canal and River Trust, e.g. taking advantage of the CRT's stated willingness (on page 5 of their 2015 Better Towpaths for Towpaths: A national policy for sharing towpaths Consultation Paper), in consultation with Local Authorities, to modify some towpath barriers to make them easier to ride through.

Trunk road cycling schemes of particular importance in this area include the upgrading of the subway under the A52 south of Sharp Hill (connecting Edwalton and the east side of West Bridgford with Ruddington etc), and further safe links of the A52 Gamston-Lings Bar road, including a new crossing west or north-west of Tollerton to supplement the existing toucan crossing east of Gamston, and west of Bassingfield. We would also much welcome other cycling provision by and across the A52 in this area, e.g. between the A606 and Radcliffe Road roundabouts, and in the vicinity of the Nottingham Knight (A60) junctions. This would help to overcome what is now a major barrier for cyclists (and pedestrians) and will be all the more important in future to reduce the risk of the major new housing areas becoming highly car-dependent.

Close coordination with the plans of Nottingham City Council is also important, e.g. in improving links to and from the major new housing area south of Clifton, and in improving links to and from the proposed new foot-cycle bridge across the Trent between The Hook and Trent Lane.

The relatively narrow width of most roads within West Bridgford makes it more difficult to incorporate good standard segregated cycle paths but there is considerable scope for shared paths and cycle lanes, provided that careful attention is paid to the detailed design and construction of these, particularly at junctions and on the approaches to junctions. Off-road facilities are of particular importance to less confident and experienced cyclists.

Careful attention to detail needs to include:-

- Adequate width for cycle lanes (minimum of 1.5m)
- Ensuring as far as possible priority for cyclists at minor road crossings, with entry treatment (including raising the level of the carriageway to that of the footway-cycleway), markings and signing to encourage drivers to slow down and give way to cyclists, taking full account of local constraints on achieving good inter-visibility including avoiding collisions of cyclists with motor vehicles entering and leaving private drives.
- Clear arrangements for continuity of the cycle routes through junctions, to minimise the risk of cyclists attracted by the new facilities on links being put-off by poor conditions at junctions
- Good signing and marking to help make clear the continuity of any facilities, whether off-road or on-road. Signing should make clear where paths are for shared use, to help both pedestrians and cyclists. For example, this is currently not the case on the tramside path between Wilford Lane and the Ruddington Lane tramstop, and some of its approaches, e.g. from Ascott Gardens. Where there are particularly local concerns about conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, e.g. on the path connecting Bridgford Road with Edward Road, a useful link between the town centre and residential area to the north-east including Edward Road / Ella Road and Lady Bay, supplementary signs asking cyclists to give way to pedestrians, or 'pedestrian priority' should be used, but not 'Cyclists' Dismount' signs. Such signs are an indication of poor cycling provision!
- Effective measures to prevent new facilities, both off-road and on-road, being obstructed by parked motor vehicles, particularly during the main peak periods for school traffic. The value of cycle lanes without adequate enforcement is greatly reduced.
- Detailed layouts that ensure a safe and smooth transition between the cycle path or shared path and the carriageway.
- It is essential if routes are to be attractive that barriers, such as those now found on the tramside path between Coronation Avenue and Wilford Lane (part of the City Council's Southern Cycling Corridor, now being developed) are avoided, especially as these are particularly irritating for people on tandems and in wheelchairs. Where access controls are needed they should take the form of bollards, or staggered bollards, as recommended for example in the recently revised Sustrans guidance.

Other comments;

Melton Road and Musters Road both have their advantages and disadvantages as routes for cyclists, with the former suffering from heavier traffic and the latter from a steeper gradient. On balance it is probably best to encourage use of Melton Road (depending on the exact origins and destinations of cyclists), while recognising that it may be very difficult to make a substantial improvement on some parts of this, e.g. by the Melton Road shops and on the approaches to the junction of Melton Road and Musters Road, especially since these lack Advance Stop Lines with good feeder lane approaches.

Because of the steep gradients on Boundary Road it is probably not realistic to encourage use of this as a major cycle route (and also because of its high volumes of traffic, at least in peak periods)

though that should not exclude the potential for improving provision on the section of Boundary Road near the Melton Road junction, east of Rushcliffe School, particularly in view of the strong interest of that school in promoting cycling by staff and students. Also important will be to ensure the safety of cyclists crossing Musters Road at the top of the hill between Musters Road and the new bus and cycle link into the new Sharp Hill housing development.

On hillier roads it is important that maintenance includes prompt de-icing in winter, as well as the use of anti-slip surfaces. Ring-fenced funding for maintenance generally is essential.

For cycle trips to and from the new Sharp Hill and Edwalton (Melton Road) housing areas some cyclists may prefer to take a rather more indirect but flatter route, including the existing beckside / canal towpath route between Gamston and the east side of West Bridgford. This needs improved connections to and from Edwalton, and Tollerton, east of the A52, as well as between Beckside and Wellin Lane near Edwalton Primary School.

The Suspension Bridge is very well-used cycle facility for trips between West Bridgford and Nottingham but badly needs improved links on its eastern (Loughborough Road) side, especially between Welbeck Road and Melton Road, which is now very intimidating for less confident cyclists. As a result there is a high level of pavement cycling in the vicinity of the Loughborough Road / Melton Road / Wilford Lane junction, making the need for proper safety improvements in this junction area all the more important.

Improved links are also needed to and from the Embankment Health Centre on Wilford Lane, including a direct link to and from the riverside path and improved connections to and from the housing area south of Wilford Lane including the Rugby Road area.

There are several useful east-west links, some of which need improvement and wider promotion. These include the path connecting the east end of Burleigh Road with Nearsby Drive (near Edmund Campion and Abbey Road primary schools and the allotments to the south), and also the connections to and from the north-south beckside / towpath route from Buckfast Way, the east end of Stamford Road, and the east end of Leahurst Road, all useful local feeder links.

There is scope for a much improved and more coherent east-west route connecting the tramside path near the Compton Acres tram stop with the town centre via the Arena, Collington Way and Northwold Avenue, etc. which would for many cyclists be a more attractive route than Rugby Road and Eton Road, etc., particularly if negotiating the junction of Melton Road and Musters Road can be made safer for less confident cyclists in particular. They particularly benefitted from the Rectory Road-bound cycle lane which was very regrettably removed in 2011.

In terms of leisure routes the riverside path between Trent Bridge and Holme Pierrepont is particularly important, and this also has significant commuter value. However, it has been very poorly maintained, especially the stretch between Lady Bay Bridge and The Hook and needs resurfacing and widening, particularly in view of the fact that it forms part of Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 15, connecting across West Bridgford between Holme Pierrepont and Coronation Avenue, Wilford, etc, with links to the improved provision for cyclists as part of the A453 (M1 to Clifton) widening scheme completed in the summer of 2015.

Another route of great importance for leisure use is Regatta Way, to help reduce the volumes of motor traffic generated by major events at the NWSC, and there is a need for more coherent and better standard provision from the intersection with Radcliffe Road to the beginning of the shared path without the need for cyclists to cross Regatta Way via an island as now. This needs to be combined with a more coherent and attractive route for cyclists between Regatta Way and routes to the south of Radcliffe Road since these movements are now very slow, convoluted and tortuous. Such poor layouts discourage most cyclists.

Signing of many existing routes is poor, including the various cut-through paths in the Compton Acres and Gamston areas. The cycle lane markings in the Tudor Square area could usefully be extended, e.g. on Rectory Road and Bridgford Road.

We welcome the possible use of newly authorised facilities such as low-level cycle signals and pre-green signals for cyclists but their introduction must be accompanied by measures to ensure that cyclists can approach them easily and safely.

Our ongoing work on the feasibility study for the proposed foot-cycle bridge between The Hook and Trent Lane is including some further work on improved connections on both sides of the Trent. This will need to include some short-term improvements, e.g. in the Lady Bay area, as well as others in the longer term, such as a more direct route between the south side of the bridge and the major new housing in the area between Gamston and Tollerton, etc.

It would also be very useful for these longer term improvements to include a much safer and more convenient crossing (for pedestrians as well as cyclists) on the Grantham Canal towpath where it crosses Radcliffe Road, south-east of Lady Bay. The present path, including steps, under Radcliffe Road, is very awkward to use even for pedestrians and virtually impossible for cyclists but, upgraded could provide a much safer and more pleasant connection to the section of towpath on the south side of Lady Bay, and also towards the south bank riverside path and the proposed bridge.

HMcC for Pedals, 30.5.16,
updated and expanded, 5.8.16

Further comments added in July-August 2016 following the public consultation

Further general comments:

- *Especially welcome is the fact that the detailed proposals recognise the need for improvements at several particular locations where Pedals has for many years been calling for upgrades, including, for example:-*
 - *The cut-through between Ascott Gardens and Compton Acres*
 - *The access to the shared path to and from Rugby Road south of Wilford Lane and Bede Ling*
 - *The awkward barriers at the Grantham Canal towpath end of the path connecting to Buckfast Way / Eltham Road*
 - *The route between the Ambleside toucan crossing and the Grantham Canal towpath west of Swindale Close and east of Buckfast Way / Bisham Drive*
 - *The Cyril Road access to the toucan crossing on Radcliffe Road south of Lady Bay (connecting to the south end of Gertrude Road). This will also have the advantage of improving access to and from the proposed foot-cycle bridge between The Hook and Trent Lane, now being discussed in detail with the County and City Councils and Sustrans.*
 - *Improvements to the north-south route connecting the access to the Grantham Canal towpath from Buckfast Way / Eltham Road with Beckside and Wellin Lane, Edwalton*
- *Various routes entail cyclists having to cross over from a shared path on one side of the road to the other, e.g. on Musters Road. This is likely to discourage usage, especially on busier roads and in peak periods. This is already the case on Regatta Way, just north of its junction with Radcliffe Road, where for example northbound cyclists have to start on a shared path on the east side of the road and then cross over, via a rather awkward central refuge, to the rest of the shared path on the west side, through to Adbolton Lane and the Water Sports Centre, etc. More direct and less convoluted arrangements are distinctly preferable, especially to more experienced and confident cyclists.*

- *While in general less confident cyclists can benefit from the provision of off-road cycle paths and shared paths, there is a danger with restricted space and frequent drives / access roads that they may in some locations be put more at risk of conflicts with motor vehicles turning in and out (where going forward or reversing), especially where visibility is restricted by high walls or tall vegetation and all the more so where cyclists have picked up speed, e.g. when riding downhill. This is one reason why our general preference is for on-road cycle lanes where such facilities of a high standard can be installed and enforced satisfactorily, as well as well-maintained. Just what is appropriate and safe in any given situation depends greatly on the location-specific details.*
- *While the removal of kerbside car parking is essential if cycle lanes are to be installed, and their abuse by drivers then prevented, the presence of parked cars, especially if continuous, can sometimes have some traffic-calming effect by encouraging passing drivers to go more slowly and be more alert; without kerbside parking they may be more inclined to speed, putting cyclists more at risk. The possibly on balance beneficial effect of kerbside car parking in this way can be seen on Devonshire Road, particularly east of the old railway (Green Line) bridge, where it combines with a similar effect of the narrower carriageway under the bridge. In such situations it might be best simply to introduce a 20mph limit, given the particular constraints (with several mature trees) on achieving good shared path, and especially if these are accompanied by the introduction of measures such as speed tables (e.g. at both ends of the road) to encourage drivers to slow down and watch out for cyclists and pedestrians. Cycling would indeed benefit from the introduction of more 20mph limits (adequately enforced!) on many narrower residential streets, including for example North Road, South Road and Chaworth Road, all much used for rat-running by motor traffic.*
- *On the other hand the presence of parked cars, especially on narrower roads, can sometimes deter cyclists, especially less confident ones, because of their fears of colliding with opening doors. This fear is also relevant to the provision of shared paths where kerbside parking is to be retained and there are constraints on achieving a good standard path width. Much depends on the local path and carriageway dimensions, including pinchpoints, traffic flows, numbers of pedestrians, the types and density of adjoining properties, proximity to shops, local schools or old peoples' homes, presence or absence of trees and other vegetation, and street furniture, whether adjoining premises have high or low walls, etc, and gradients, etc.*
- *The diagram showing proposed cycle lanes (Proposed Arrangement Detail Example C) indicates a buffer zone of 0.3m on 40mph roads. Surely a buffer zone of anything less than 0.5m is substandard, e.g. as set out in the revised (2015) Sustrans Design Guidance, or the Welsh Active Travel Design Guidance (2004), which has been authorised by the DfT for use in England. In any case no roads within the built up area should have any speed limits higher than 30mph, as now proposed for most of Melton Road towards the new access near the new Supermarket site north of the Lings Bar roundabout. There should be a similar lowering of the 40mph speed limit on Radcliffe Road past Lady Bay and on Lady Bay Bridge, and extending to the Regatta Way and junction*
- *It is vital that the surface of footways being upgraded for shared use should be of no worse standard than the carriageway nearby and preferably better, to encourage cycling and the surface should also give good grip in slipper conditions (ice, leave mould and algae). This means also high standards of maintenance to avoid common problems arising from the growth of tree roots, etc, as well as poor reinstatements which are all too common. We understand the need to keep many of the trees, especially mature ones, as important elements of the streetscape but that does then mean an increased risk of the path becoming uneven, with the growth of tree routes. Where the shared use of pavements is likely to be a particularly sensitive issue, in terms of perceptions of increased user conflict, the inclusion of 'Cyclists give way to pedestrians' signs (as now to be found on the riverside path west of the Suspension Bridge, for example) should be considered.*

- Frequently asked question 2 in the accompanying documentation states that “We are trying to create a network of routes that will link residential areas to schools, places of work, shops and other local facilities like doctors’ surgeries... “*

In view of this statement we are surprised to see that the proposals do not contain any proposals to provide safe connections to and from the major surgery on Wilford Lane. Access to this is difficult, because of the heavy traffic volumes on Wilford Lane and what many cyclists regard as very intimidating conditions at the junction of Wilford Lane with Loughborough Road and Melton Road. The lack of proposals for safe access to and from this major facility is a major omission of the current consultation, especially given that health agencies should surely be in the forefront of promoting healthier and sustainable transport, as Pedals emphasised in commenting on the planning application for the surgery in 2010, and quoting one of the recommendations of the report ‘Cycling – Towards Safety and Health’, produced by the British Medical Association in 1992.!

Safer cycling provision at this junction would also, more generally, address the longstanding complaint of many cyclists about the poor connections between the Suspension Bridge and Loughborough Road (A60) / Melton Road (A606) at the east end of Welbeck Road, one result of which is the evident relatively high levels of pavement cycling in the vicinity. Indeed this junction is commonly regarded as one of the most intimidating areas for cyclists in the West Bridgford area, along with Trent Bridge and its approaches, Lady Bay Bridge and its approaches, Tudor Square, and the Nottingham Knight (A52/A60) and Lings Bar (A52 / A606) junctions.

Even the one relatively safe (though very circuitous) cycle route to and from the surgery that does now in part) exists (via the shared path from Rugby Road to Wilford Lane, the Wilford Lane / Bede Ling toucan crossing, and the shared path between this crossing and Gresham Park Road (to the north of Wilford Lane) has very poor signing and there is no direct link between (the north side of) the surgery and the riverside path (part of Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 15) as Pedals had suggested, in view of the surgery’s extensive catchment area.
- The anticipated increase levels of cycling in the West Bridgford area arising from the implementation of these proposals will increase demand for cycle parking, at workplaces and various kinds of public facility, including local shops. In many cases, such as the Melton Road local shops (Clumber Road end), current provision is inadequate and must therefore be improved.*

Detailed comments

Route 1: Davies Road / Radcliffe Road

Proposals generally welcome, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc.

Not only existing signing at the junction of Radcliffe Road with Regatta Way needs to be rationalised but the general layout of the cycling provision to provide faster, more coherent and convenient routes through the junction, particularly from the cycle path on the south side of Radcliffe Road to and from Regatta Way. This could perhaps be looked at in conjunction with the proposal to tie in the existing bus lane from the off-carriageway routes (westbound users only).

It would also help to remove the need on Regatta Way to move from a shared path on one side to the other, i.e. to have a continuous shared path on the west side of this road.

We welcome the proposal to rationalise the existing facility on approach to the A52 (A6011) to give more priority to cyclists.

Also welcome is the proposal to widen and resurface the existing shared use facility at the north end of Cyril Road on the approach to the toucan crossing on Radcliffe Road, south of the link to Gertrude

Road which will also have the advantage of improving access to and from the proposed foot-cycle bridge between The Hook and Trent Lane, now being discussed in detail with the County and City Councils and Sustrans. The comfort and safety of cyclists using this new shared path, as well as more generally, would be greatly helped by lowering the speed limit on Radcliffe Road (west of the Davies Road junction), and extending to the Regatta Way junction, from 40mph to 30mph, we would like to emphasise.

Also welcome is the provision of a crossing at the east end of Davies Road, just west of the junction with Radcliffe Road (A6011) but this will need careful detailing, in view of the volumes of general traffic at this point and including the large number entering and leaving Davies Road.

The proposed shared use facilities on Radcliffe Road to the north of the Davies Road junction are welcome as a short-term measure though the fact that these entail crossing from one side to the other will be off-putting to some users, we expect.

Another useful improvement on this stretch of Radcliffe Road would be to the toucan crossing just south of the junction with Mabel Grove and Rutland Road, and opposite Radcliffe Road Cycles. These improvements should include shortening the green time from 30 seconds which seems now much longer than for example the timing on the pelican crossing at Fox Road.

However, for leisure cyclists in particular, a more attractive route might be to upgrade the canalside path on the eastern side of Radcliffe Road (with sensitivity to the wildlife implications), particularly by removing the barriers and by the provision of a much safer and more attractive connection at its eastern end, across Radcliffe Road (A6011) to connect with the rest of the Grantham Canal, as well as to the shared path on the west side of Gamston through to Beckside and Wellin Lane, Edwalton etc. (Route 2a). A much safer and more attractive connection at this point is needed to replace the very awkward and dangerous crossing which both cyclists and pedestrians now face, on a narrow path by the canal under the southern carriageway and then at grade across the northern one.

Also very important in the context of this route is the introduction of a 30mph speed limit on Radcliffe Road all the way out to Regatta Way, to help make use of this route safer for confident cyclists, as well as making it safer for pedestrians and cyclist to cross.

If the proposed shared use facility on Davies Road is to end just prior to the zebra crossing near Tudor Square careful thought will have to be given to just how cyclists can safely access and leave it, whichever direction they are riding. One solution might be to install a cycling zebra, as recently authorised by the DfT after trials in various areas including parts of London, we understand, as well as now to be included by Nottingham City Council in their plans for the Eastern Cycling Corridor connecting the City Centre with Colwick Park etc, via Manvers Street and Daleside Road, etc. In considering the detailed layout for this location regard should also be add to the fact that many cyclists, especially less confident ones, perceive the Tudor Square junction as being very intimidating. This perception discourages the use of bikes for trips to and from West Bridgford town centre.

Route 2a: Grantham Canal towpath, and connecting shared path to and from Beckside / Wellin Lane

Proposals generally welcome, including more consistent good quality surfaces and better signing, though subject to the other details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, access / egress etc.

More consistent path and junction width, and better surfaces, and signing are especially to be welcomed, as is the commitment to make barriers more cycle-friendly. We would strongly prefer that no barriers are used. If access controls are really needed at specific locations they should take the form of bollards, or staggered bollards, as recommended for example in the recently revised Sustrans Design Guidance, which also forms the basis of Nottingham City Council's revised Cycling Design Standards.

We particularly welcome the proposal to remove existing metal barrier at the east end of the path connecting the canal towpath with Buckfast Way / Eltham Road as well as those at two locations on the canal towpath near Morrisons Gamston store. However, these should be replaced by bollards, or staggered bollards, rather than any form of barriers, if indeed access controls are really needed at all.

Much of the Grantham Canal towpath, and connecting route from Beckside, has a relatively good surface and we consider that this is a very important, relatively flat, route on the east side of West Bridgford, with good potential for extending as part of a longer and more coherent route, connecting at the south end to the major new housing developments in the Edwalton area and, at its north end towards Lady Bay and the proposed foot-cycle bridge between The Hook and Trent Lane, Nottingham. This will need a series of improvements in the shorter and longer term, including as now proposed, a better link to and from the toucan crossing of the A52 east of Gamston and, in the longer term, a much safer and more attractive connection between this section of canal towpath and the section north of Radcliffe Road (A6011) south of Lady Bay.

We welcome the proposal to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order to remove the cycling prohibition on one of the 3 useful connecting bridges west of the path connecting the towpath with Beckside, Lutterell Way.

Improving the surface and width of the path between Beckside and Wellin Lane (near Edwalton Primary School), as well as replacing the central refuge on Beckside Road by a raised plateau, is very welcome, in view of the key importance of this route, mentioned above, as are the improvements to access and visibility at the south end of this path, and the proposal to remove the sharp bend further east, with the agreement of the landowners.

Route 2b: Ambleside / Beckside / Melton Gardens

Proposals generally welcome, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc.

Detailed proposals at the north end of Radcliffe Road should have regard to the wider context mentioned above of the need to improve the coherence of the layout of the cycling provision at the junction of Radcliffe Road and Regatta Way as well as Ambleside and Radcliffe Road.

The wording of the 'Existing Situation' section of the box on the left of the plan does not include the existing Advance Stop Line at the junction of Melton Gardens with Melton Road.

Route 3: A606 Melton Road (Devonshire Road – Boundary Road - Village Street - Lings Bar roundabout)

Very important for improved provision to connect directly with the promotion of the route via Village Street, Edwalton, Wellin Lane and Beckside etc., a relatively flat route around the east side of West Bridgford, as well as through the new housing development west of Melton Road to and from the subway under the A52 south of Sharp Hill which Highways England are considering upgrading as part of a strategic route between Ruddington and the east side of West Bridgford, connecting to a spine cycleway-footway through the new housing development, and with a possible connection to the Green Line former railway route between Boundary Road and Melton Road. All these would also greatly improve cycle access to and from Rushcliffe School which is particularly important given their strong wish to encourage cycling by staff and students.

Proposals generally welcome, including raised plateaus cycle priority crossings, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc. The need to cross over Melton Road just south of the junction with Village Street, to reach the shared path on the east side to the north, may well reduce the appeal of this path however.

Raised plateau cycle priority crossings also very welcome

Route 4: Boundary Road

We consider that the main value of the improved provision will be on the flatter section between Rushcliffe School and Melton Road. With this qualification, the proposals are generally welcome, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc. Although we can understand that there is a reluctance to remove mature trees, forming important elements of the streetscape, to improve paths for shared use, we do think there are some trees which could be removed as with the spindly tree on Boundary Road towards the Melton Road junction. At this junction there is also a need to review the value of the older (off-road) cycling provision dating from before the installation of the Advance Stop Lines in 2005.

There is a particular need to think how best to safeguard the safety of cyclists crossing the often very busy Boundary Road at the top of the hill between the adjoining sections of Musters Road, including the future connecting bus and cycle only link from the new housing development in the Sharp Hill area.

Very important to think also of a possible greatly improved connection to the Green Line former railway route between Boundary Road and Melton Road, particularly as general traffic levels on Melton Road increase as the major new housing development gets underway. The value of such a link would be all the greater if in due course it is possible to reopen the stretch under Boundary Road where the former railway bridge was underfilled in the early 1980s.

Route 5: Musters Road

We are not clear how the proposed additional cycle phase to be added to the signals at the junction of Musters Road and Melton Road will work in practice, if cyclists have problems getting to the head of the queue. However, this junction certainly needs some changes to make movements through it less intimidating for less confident cyclists, or many of the safety benefits from improved provision elsewhere will be undermined.

There is perhaps increased risk of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on the downhill section of the proposed shared path and on the adjoining flatter section after cyclists have gained extra speed and there might be a case on this stretch for keeping such cyclists on the road, which is relatively wide, and with relatively good visibility, particularly if motor vehicle speeds can be effectively lowered.

The need for cyclists to cross over Musters Road to and from the sections of shared path on the east side between Chaworth Road and Eton Road may well reduce its appeal, as would the fact that motor vehicles on this road are often parked half on the carriageway and half on the pavement, i.e. reducing the effective width of any shared path.

North section of Musters Road: Cycle lanes should be at least 1.5m wide and with a 500mm (not 300mm) buffer strip.

For those cyclists who do still fear riding on the carriageway on Musters Road there is the traffic-free Green Line which runs roughly parallel and Pedals has often stressed the potential of this as a useful safe connecting route, avoiding both Melton Road and Musters Road, and connecting not only to Boundary Road but also right through to the major new housing area to the south (Sharp Hill area), particularly if it is possible in the longer term to reopen the path under Boundary Road.

Route 6: Loughborough Road (A60)

Proposals generally welcome, including the upgrading of the pelican crossing near the Fire Station to a toucan crossing, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc.

The speed limit on all of Loughborough Road north of the Nottingham Knight junction should be 30mph not 40mph.

The value of cycling provision on Loughborough Road would be much greater if it could be extended to include safe cycle crossing arrangements across the Nottingham Knight junction to the south (A60/A52), a junction which even very experienced cyclists now find very intimidating!

Route 7a: Rugby Road

Proposals generally welcome, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc, particularly at the Loughborough Road end... However, in general we think this is a less attractive route to promote for most cyclists than Route 7b (Compton Acres to Collingham Way), although some cyclists will still want to use it, if only because it provides some continuity to the rest of the cross West Bridgford route via Eton Road-Devonshire Road, etc, as already signed for cyclists as part of the signing scheme introduced many years ago by Neil Hodgson of the County Council in cooperation with Mike Harbron, formerly of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The improvements to the short section of segregated path between Ascot Gardens and Compton Acres are particularly welcome since this is very sub-standard and awkward to use, and the connecting improvements to the crossing of Compton Acres will also be beneficial.

Signs on the rest of this path, to and from the Compton Acres tram stop, should be amended to make clear that it is a shared path, as should those on the whole of the tramside path between Wilford Lane and the Ruddington Lane tram stop. This forms part of the City Council's Southern Cycle Corridor route connecting the City Centre with Clifton via the south side of Silverdale etc.

The appeal of the shared path on Rugby Road may be restricted by the need to cross over from one side of the road to the other near the junction with Purbeck Drive.

Route 7b: Compton Acres to Collingham Way

Proposals generally very welcome, particularly in view of the increased importance of this route with the impending completion of the Rushcliffe Arena, and its value as a through route between West Bridgford town centre, the David Lloyd Gym, and the tramside path from Wilford Lane to Clifton (part of the City Council's proposed Southern corridor route) though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc.

Constructing a direct link along the northside of the new Arena car park is an essential part of this route, which would also improve access to the path between Rugby Road and Wilford Lane and its wider connections.

Also essential is the construction of the proposed toucan crossing on Loughborough Road to provide a much safer connection between Northwold Avenue and Chaworth Road, and to and from the town centre, etc. Chaworth Road (along with neighbouring roads like South Road and North Road), all much used as general traffic rat-runs, would benefit from being designated 20mph speed limit areas.

Route 8: Devonshire Road

As mentioned above, under 'Further general comments', the need for some of the proposed measures on this road is perhaps questionable, given that it is a relatively short road and one where the constraint of the road under the bridge combines with extensive kerbside car parking, particularly east of the bridge, to keep speeds relatively low.

It might be best simply to introduce a 20mph limit, given the particular constraints on achieving a good shared path, and especially if these are accompanied by the introduction of measures such as speed tables at both ends of the road to encourage drivers to slow down and watch out for cyclists and pedestrians. Formalising give and take arrangements through the bridge arch should also be beneficial.

If a shared path is introduced particular care will need to be taken with the details of how path users at the Musters Road end enter and leave it, avoiding conflict with the considerable number of motor vehicles turning into and out of this important cross-Bridgford link, as well as pedestrians going to and from the nearby post box.

Route 9: Repton Road

Proposals generally welcome, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc.

We particularly welcome any improvements in the cycling links to and from West Bridgford and Rushcliffe Schools, including the path between Repton Road and Loughborough Road.

Route 10: Path between Wilford Lane, Rushcliffe Arena and Rugby Road

This is another very important north-south route, with many existing and potential wider links in the Gresham Park, Wilford and Compton Acres area, particularly with a new path alongside the north side of the Arena connecting to Collington Way and Northwold Avenue, etc. It should also be promoted as part of an improved route to and from Becket School, and the Wilford Lane Surgery.

The improvements at the Wilford Lane access are particularly welcome, as the present access is very awkward, unsightly and generally unsatisfactory.

Also important however are the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc. On this path the gradients are rather steep near the path junction just west of the Arena and just north of the Recycling Centre and any measures to alleviate this as part of the general path improvement would also be very welcome.

It should be remembered that part of the value of this route, as well as providing a safer alternative to the busy Loughborough Road (A60) is that it connects to a whole series of routes south of Rugby Road, including short sections of segregated path joining the many culs-de-sac, all the way from Europa Way near the Nottingham Knight. However, parts of this network are very substandard, such as the sharp bends near Greythorn Primary School, and signing is also very poor, so upgrading of the routes in this area is also needed to complement the proposals north of Rugby Road.

Route 11: Route via Main Street, Gamston, etc, connecting Buckfast Way, the Grantham Canal towpath and the A52 toucan crossing linking to Bassingfield and Cotgrave Country Park, etc.

This route badly is now fragmented and incoherent, with several substandard features, so the proposals are generally very welcome, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc. The upgrading of the pelican crossing on Ambleside to a toucan crossing is particularly welcome, as well as the proposed widening of adjoining paths and improved signing. This is now very poor.

We see this as becoming an increasingly important route, connecting to the rest of the canal towpath and the route from Village Street and Wellin Lane, Edwalton, and Beckside etc, connecting to and from the major new housing sites to be developed in the Gamston-Tollerton area and also to the proposed foot-cycle bridge between The Hook and Trent Lane. It also provides a potentially useful commuter connection to and from the expanded village of Cotgrave, especially the new housing site

on the former colliery site north of the canal, particular if the Canal and Rivers Trust would agree to the removal, or at least the modification, of the current series of barriers on the towpath.

This route also has considerable further leisure potential, in view of its connections to the rest of the Grantham Canal towpath further east, and Cotgrave Country Park, adding further to its appeal as a major leisure route to and from destinations in the Vale of Belvoir, augmented in recent years by the completion of a series of safer links for cyclists across the widened A46 as part of the Highways England A46 Newark to Widmerpool dualling scheme, completed in 2012.

It is understood that Highways England are now considering the provision of a shared path on the Gamston-Lings Bar Road (A52) between the toucan crossing and the A606 junction, and this would also be very useful, especially if a further safe crossing point of the A52 is provided, further south closer to the Tollerton end of the road, and with good connections on both sides of the Trunk Road.

This strategic importance will increase the case for a better link across the canal in the Swindale Close area east of the canal since the present footbridge is really too narrow for safe shared use.

Also important in the longer run is the provision of a much safer connecting link across the A6011 (Radcliffe Road) to the north, connecting this section of canal towpath with that to the south of the Lady Bay area. The present crossing is very awkward and unsafe, for both cyclists and pedestrians, and especially where they have to cross the road at grade, on the north side carriageway of Radcliffe Road.

Route 12: Valley Road – Trevor Road – Stamford Road – Rodney Road – Abbey Road

Proposals generally welcome, especially in view of its links to two primary schools, though subject to the details at each location being satisfactory, with regard to safety, visibility, priority, comfort, access / egress etc.

The value of this route would be further increased by the promotion and upgrading of the existing straight and flat path connecting the east end of Burleigh Road (between the Abbey Road and Edmund Campion Primary Schools) with Nearsby Drive, which in turn connects to and from the Gamston area via the path past the allotments and the Studio Theatre at the east end of Stamford Road. This upgrading should include improved path access in the vicinity of the garages near the west end of Nearsby Drive, where visibility is very poor, with the potential for increased user conflict without improvements.