

Suggested Cycling Improvements

Cycle Ipswich
31st May 2020

Introduction

We held a meeting on 26th May to discuss the development of our proposed plan for opening the streets of Ipswich for cycling and walking in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and its expected aftermath as lock-down restrictions are lifted. Carl Ashton of Suffolk County Council attended the meeting and gave us a summary of current work SCC are doing in this area, in so far as this could be made public. He requested that we provide a “top ten” list of high-priority changes from our perspective.

Work to date has enabled us to identify over sixty issues and suggested solutions, ranging from small changes to signage to more major cycle route schemes. It is likely that the analytical approach we have started to work with (the “Beelines” methodology¹ used in Manchester), together with wider consultation, will continue to unearth issues and potential solutions and the plan will evolve.

However, the work being done by SCC in response to the crisis is both urgent, as the restrictions are beginning to lift, and important as a rare and perhaps one-off opportunity to make a real change towards enabling active travel and all the benefits that may be expected to bring. It was the view of the meeting, therefore, that we should try to meet Carl’s request as quickly as possible.

Since that meeting, we have become aware of the Department for Transport’s announcements with respect to the Emergency Travel Fund, as notified to Local Authorities by Robert Furness on 27th May. We have therefore tried to add to and tailor our suggestions to assist as far as possible in meeting this rather demanding timescale.

Approach

Rather than voting on a “beauty parade” of the changes most desired by those at the meeting, it was decided to take a systematic approach and to put forward changes that might best support the key elements of a network-wide plan.

The main elements of the emerging plan are:

- A series of cycling-friendly *radial routes* into and out of the town centre from the suburbs and outlying areas
- Inner and outer *orbital routes*

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For a summary please see
<https://twitter.com/CatrionaSwanson/status/1067830979988021250?s=20>

- *Quiet neighbourhoods* – measures to reduce or remove through traffic and rat runs from residential neighbourhoods
- *School streets* – filtering traffic to limit or exclude cars from the immediate vicinity of school gates to enable pupils/parents to walk or cycle to school and to socially distance
- *Permeability* – measures to remove the barriers imposed by busy roads or other obstacles for people on foot or on bicycles.
- *Town centre* – there is scope to exclude motor traffic from a larger proportion of the area inside the inner ring. This would also require a significant expansion of secure and convenient cycle parking facilities.

Although we have made some progress with all of these through gathering issues and suggestions, we are further ahead with the first three items – key radial and orbital routes and quiet neighbourhoods.

Key radial and orbital routes

The key routes are generally within the corridor of main traffic arteries, which a) tend to be wider or multi-lane, allowing space for cycle infrastructure without re-routing traffic and b) are likely to align with where large numbers of cyclists will wish to go². About two thirds of the suggestions we have gathered so far relate to these main routes. The current configuration of routes is shown on our interactive map³.

We will therefore present a set of suggested changes that focus on these routes, with a commitment to follow up with further suggestions based on the other elements of the plan as we progress with our analysis. The inclusion of suggestions on this list does not imply that we are opposed to, or would not value action on any of the other suggestions we have discussed, but is intended to provide SCC with suggested actions that will be implementable quickly and relatively cheaply, but with substantial positive impact.

Quiet neighbourhoods

Although we believe that the proposals relating to key routes could be implemented quite quickly, the letter from DfT makes it clear that they are expecting in initial emphasis on establishing quiet neighbourhoods for cycling and walking through, by applying point closures, which could be (and have been) started within the initial four-week period and completed within eight weeks, as required.

Accordingly, we have proposed fourteen candidate quiet areas with varying numbers of point closures as a starting point. The areas we have chosen cover a majority of the schools and main residential areas, but could be added to in subsequent phases. For clarity, we believe that additional actions will be required to make the quiet areas work fully, for example adding safe

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<https://github.com/cyipt/popupCycleways/blob/master/code/mcr-safe-streets-analysis.md>

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The interactive map can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/2To7Tld>

and convenient crossing points to enable people to move from one area to the next. However, this will need to be considered for a later phase.

Priority suggestions

Key routes

	Route	Suggestion
1.	Ring road (Grafton Way, Commercial Rd, West End Rd, Yarmouth Rd, Valley Rd, Colchester Rd, Heath Rd, Bixley Rd, Felixtowe Rd, Bishop's Hill, Fore Hamlet, Salthouse St, Key St, College St, Bridge St)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install protected cycle tracks in both directions (preferably using bolt-down reflective wands) • Gain space for this by reducing 40mph sections to 30mph, reducing two-lane sections to one lane for motor traffic • Where there are left filter lanes (e.g. Jcn Commercial Rd/Princes St, jcn Felixtowe Rd/Kings Way) remove them by converting to cycle tracks and make it clear, e.g. with dashed lines, that motor traffic must give way to cycle traffic to the left).
2.	Inner ring (Franciscan Way, Civic Drive, Crown Street, Northgate Street, Old Foundry Rd, Upper Orwell St, Fore St, Lower Orwell St, Star La, Greyfriars Rd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On wider sections (Greyfriars Rd clockwise to Northgate St and Star La) as for item 1. above. • On narrower sections suspend on-street parking (Old Foundry Rd, Upper Orwell St., Fore St, Lower Orwell St) • Allow cycling both ways on Old Foundry Rd. • Install a traffic light-controlled crossing to enable cyclists to cross Star La from Lower Orwell St safely and to access the link to Key St next to the Premier Inn. • Install route signs to increase awareness.

	Route	Suggestion
3.	<p>Ipswich Hospital to town centre (Woodbridge Rd and Spring Rd)</p> <p>Although a reasonable quiet route exists along NCN1 via Freehold Rd, Marlborough Rd, etc. there is a high route demand along this route, as borne out by the Propensity to Cycle (PTS) data, as used by SCC. They also have a high incidence of road traffic casualties, including to cyclists, according to Crashmap⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Woodbridge Rd on this section one way eastbound for motor traffic • Make Spring Road one-way westbound for motor traffic • Suspend on-street parking on both roads where it obstructs the main road (i.e. other than in laybys, etc.) • Install a contraflow bus lane on each route. • Install protected one-way cycle tracks on both Woodbridge Rd and Spring Rd • On the section of Woodbridge Rd between the Spring Rd roundabout and the Hospital, install protected cycle tracks on either side of the road to replace the current advisory cycle lanes and remove the painted central reservation.
4.	<p>London Rd, Handford Rd</p> <p>Existing cycle lanes and shared cycle/pedestrian sections are not fit for purpose. Again, this shows as a high potential demand route on PTS. The section over the bridge and around West End Road, Yarmouth Road and Hadleigh Road has perhaps the largest concentration of accidents in Ipswich according to Crashmap.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install protected cycle tracks in both directions (preferably using bolt-down reflective wands) • Gain space for this by reducing 40mph sections to 30mph, reducing two-lane sections to one lane for motor traffic • Reduce speed limit to 20mph on Handford Road to allow narrower lanes for motor traffic, with protected cycle tracks and wider pavements where needed.
5.	<p>Norwich Rd</p> <p>Although quieter routes (e.g. NCN51) exist in this corridor, this is another high-demand route with a bad accident record. Existing cycle lanes are narrow and intermittent and (eastbound) shared with buses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install protected cycle lanes, preferably using permeable barriers such as bolt-down reflective wands. In narrower sections (St Matthew's roundabout to Bramford Rd jcn) reduce speed limit to 20mph if needed to narrow traffic lanes safely. • Longer-term, install a pedestrian and cycle priority scheme between at least the St Matthew's roundabout and the junction with Bramford Rd with a 20mph speed limit and extended pavements. Ideally (this should be implemented using paving, planters, implied zebras, etc.)

	Route	Suggestion
6.	<p>Suffolk One to the town centre, via the station</p> <p>This route passes directly, or near to, several primary and secondary schools and so offers the opportunity to integrate with school streets initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the section of Ancaster Rd that runs under the railway buses and cycles only. • Install protected cycle tracks all along Birkfield Drive to replace the narrow and inadequate advisory cycle lanes currently there and Hawthorn Drive. Remove the unnecessary painted central reservation on Hawthorn Drive to make space. • Install protected cycle tracks along Mallard Way • Close Stone Lodge Lane West to through motor traffic, other than buses.
7.	<p>Westerfield Road is already a commuter route but is likely to become significantly more important as such once the Ipswich Northern Fringe development of around 3,500 new homes is built.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the main north-south path through Christchurch Park to cycles. • Improve the road surface and lighting on Bridle Way. • Install traffic lights or other controls at the dangerous junction of Henley Rd and Park Rd and incorporate a cycle track from Bridle Way to enable cycles to pass safely from there to Park Rd. • Install protected cycle tracks along Westerfield Rd. On the wide section S of the roundabout, the cycle tracks should avoid parked cars, preferably running to the inside of them southbound. Remove the painted islands and refuges by and replace with a signal-controlled crossing by Kettlebaston Way. • Either close Park Road to through motor traffic, or restrict on-street parking at all times to one side (most, if not all houses there have off-street parking) and install a protected cycle track. • Reduce the 40mph limit section to 30mph. • As the new housing for the Ipswich Northern Fringe development is built, upgrade the footpath (Fonnereau Way) N of the ring road to a restricted byway for walking and cycling and install a safe crossing over Valley Road. • Close Westerfield Lane (Moss Lane) to through motor traffic – this could be done as a point closure with a planter, or similar, s of Redgates Farm.

	Route	Suggestion
8.	From Whitton and Castle Hill via Dale Hall Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Dale Hall Lane access only for motor traffic by using filtering, such as planters at suitable points. Reduce the speed limit all along it to 20mph. • Close the railway bridge to motor traffic.
9.	NCN1 from the East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the route east-west across Rushmere Heath (Common?) to cycling and surface it suitably. • Install protected cycle tracks on Bell Lane • Reduce the number of bollards on the Brendon Drive cut-through. • Repair the cycle track surface on Gwendoline Close and on the track that passes the hospital. • Improve the safety of the Freehold Rd/Marlborough Rd/Cauldwell Hall Rd junction, perhaps by using road markings to indicate the through cycle route, or upgrading the signal-controlled crossing to a 5-way traffic light-controlled junction. • Close the narrow bridge on Marlborough Rd to motor traffic. • Close Milner Street to through motor traffic between the junctions with Oxford Rd and Rope Walk.
10	<p>Felxtowe Rd from the old Felxtowe Rd to St Augustine's roundabout</p> <p>Much of Felxtowe rd is covered as part of other routes, but this section offers a more direct route to Felxtowe via the old Felxtowe Rd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install a protected cycle track on the section from St Augustine's roundabout to Sainsbury's roundabout where the separated tracks currently end. If necessary, remove the current lane separation at the St Augustine's end for motor traffic. • Install a signal-controlled crossing on Ransome's Way next to the Sainsbury's roundabout. • Install separation for the cycle lanes E of Sainsbury's.

Quiet neighbourhoods and point closures

- 1 **Clifford Rd area**
Marlborough Rd Bridge
Woodville Rd
Fuchsia La bridge
- 2 **Alexandra Park area**
Milner st
Cavendish St
Alan Rd
York Rd
- 3 **Hospital area**
Britannia Rd
Crabbe Street
- 4 **Racecourse area**
Kings Way
Queen's Way
Murray Rd
Levington Rd
King Edward Rd
- 5 **Cemetery Rd area**
Christchurch Street
Cemetery Rd
Belvedere Rd
- 6 **Sidegate La area**
Sidegate La
- 7 **Hillside Area**
Rectory Rd
- 8 **Oaks and Sprites area**
Goldcrest Rd
Bus Gate Ancaster Rd
Lupin Rd
- 9 **Chantry area**
Bus gate Stone lodge La
- 10 **Hanford Hall area**
Portman Road

Burlington Rd

- 11 Anglesea Rd area
Anglesea Rd

- 12 Castle Hill and Whitton
Dale Hall Lane 1
Dale Hall Lane
Cedarwood Rd
Chesterfield Drive
Dryden Road
Dales Rd

- 13 Whitehouse and Westbourne
Marlow Rd
Ulster Avenue (northern carriageway)
Kitchener Road
Bramford Lane - Thompson Rd
Bramford Lane - All Saints Rd
High View Rd

- 14 Northgate and Rushmere
Sidegate Lane W
Lanark Rd

Other (not in specific quiet area)
Westerfield La/Moss La
Park Rd
Arundel Way (bus gate)

Next steps

An important element of the process for establishing quiet neighbourhoods that will be very difficult to incorporate properly in the initial phase is public consultation and community engagement. Doing so will require innovative approaches, including installing temporary infrastructure and eliciting comments once it is in place. We have suggested using the Commonplace⁵ online community engagement platform, as many other leading Local Authorities in this field, for example Waltham Forest and Greater Manchester, have done. We would be happy to assist you in setting this up and operating it.

Further analysis is needed to identify issues and suggestions for the remaining elements of the plan, to include at least proposals for school streets and links across current barriers. We will bring these forward over the coming days and weeks.