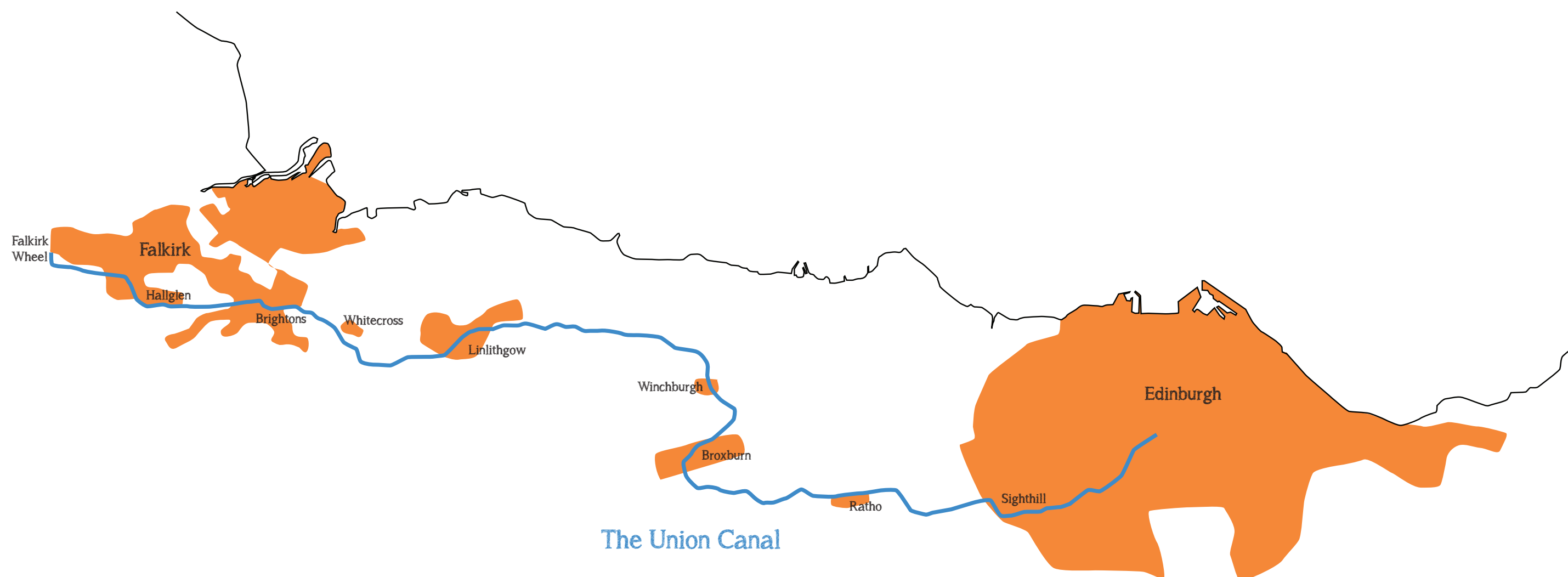


Union Canal Towpath - Edinburgh

Proposal for Improvements & Supplementary Cycle Routes

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1.0	I n t r o d u c t i o n
2.0	C o n t e x t
3.0	A c c e s s
4.0	S u r f a c e
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5.1	S u p p l e m e n t a r y c y c l i n g r o u t e A
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5.2.1	E x i s t i n g c o n d i t i o n - r o u t e B

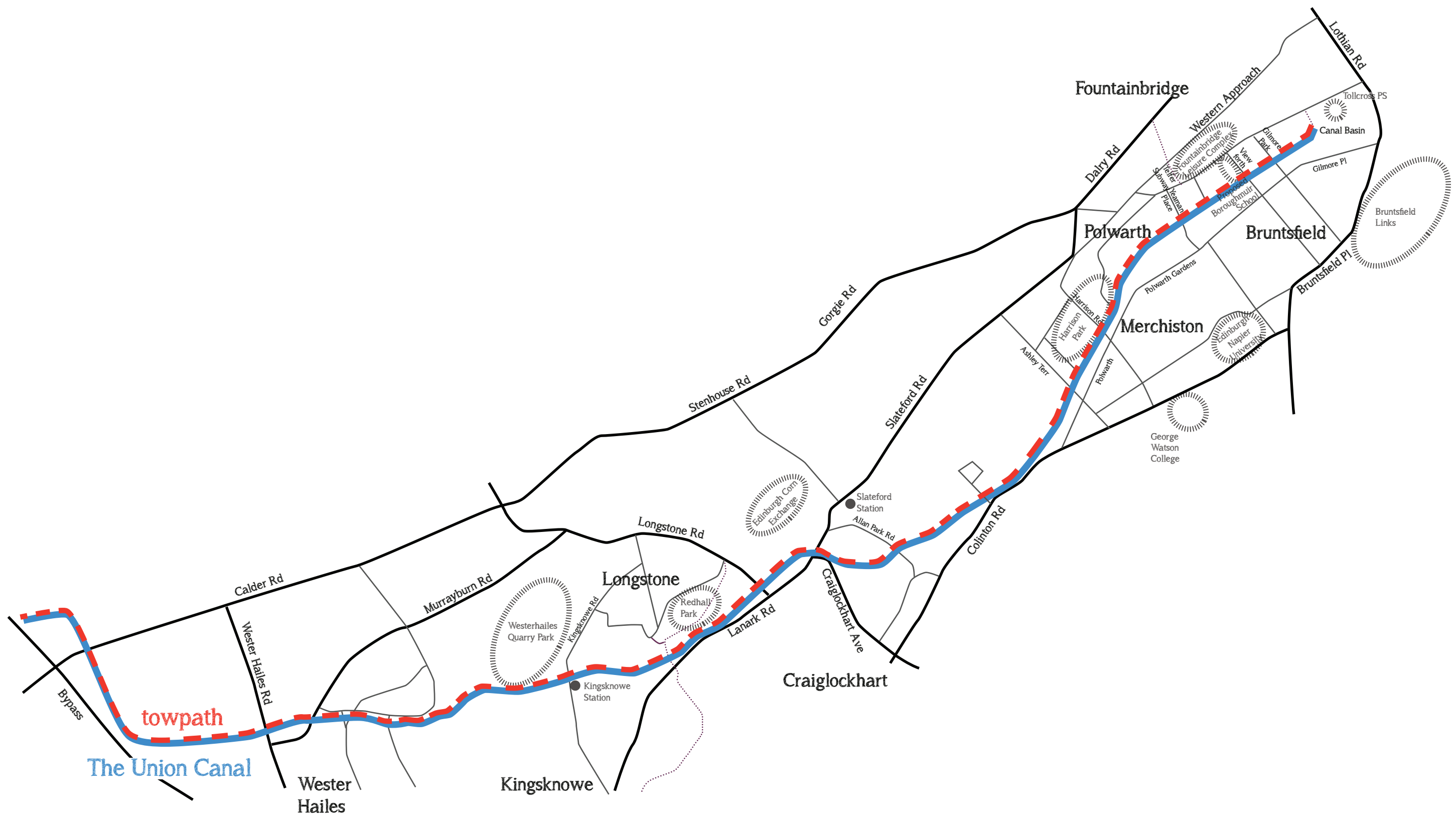
2.0 Context

In December 2011 City of Edinburgh Council published 'The Edinburgh Union Canal Strategy'. It outlines four opportunities 'access', 'waterway, development and environment', 'community, recreation and tourism' and 'infrastructure, drainage and climate change' as well as the creation of seven 'canal hubs'. The strategy is accompanied with a 'Delivery Plan' which sets out policies and proposals to make the Union Canal a successful and recognisable place.

Since then outlined projects have been delivered such as the surface upgrading of the Canal towpath, between the canal basin and Ratho, in 2011, solar lighting (between Canal basin and Longstone) and improvements of several access points. These improvements have been a huge success with pedestrians and cyclists. Especially along the Edinburgh section of the towpath the use has increased significantly as a commuter route as well as for leisure activities. However, at the same time these growing numbers of both groups (pedestrians and cyclists) have brought some conflicts at times.

Over the years Spokes has taken several initiatives to help foster thought and consideration by all path users. In October 2012 Spokes has produced a leaflet on the use of shared paths such as the canal towpath (downloadable at <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/documents/advice/considerate-cycling/>) and Spokes also participated in drawing up the Towpath Code of Conduct which was launched in July 2013.

This document focuses on the Union Canal towpath along the Edinburgh section of the canal outlining further improvements for access and surfacing. It further outlines supplementary/alternative cycle routes in order to minimise conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.



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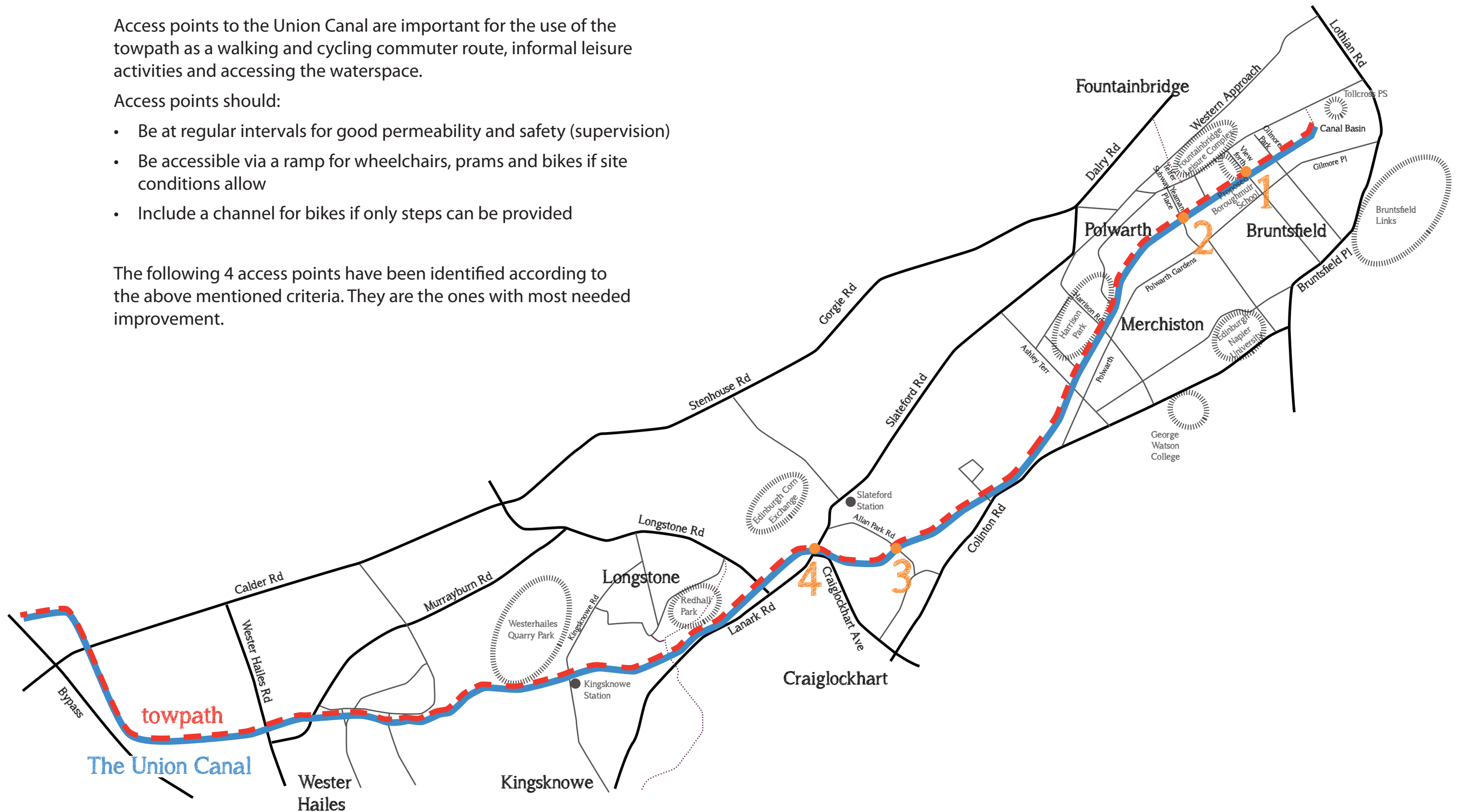
3.0 Access

Access points to the Union Canal are important for the use of the towpath as a walking and cycling commuter route, informal leisure activities and accessing the waterspace.

Access points should:

- Be at regular intervals for good permeability and safety (supervision)
- Be accessible via a ramp for wheelchairs, prams and bikes if site conditions allow
- Include a channel for bikes if only steps can be provided

The following 4 access points have been identified according to the above mentioned criteria. They are the ones with most needed improvement.



1 Viewforth



Existing Situation:

- Flight of stairs to eastern side of Viewforth leading down to canal towpath
- At the slope of the steps a desire line has been created by cyclists and pedestrians
- Flight of stairs to the western side of Viewforth have been fenced off (as part of development site) and are overgrown

Proposals:

- Ramps to both sides of Viewforth for accessible use of pedestrians and cyclists



2 Yeaman Place



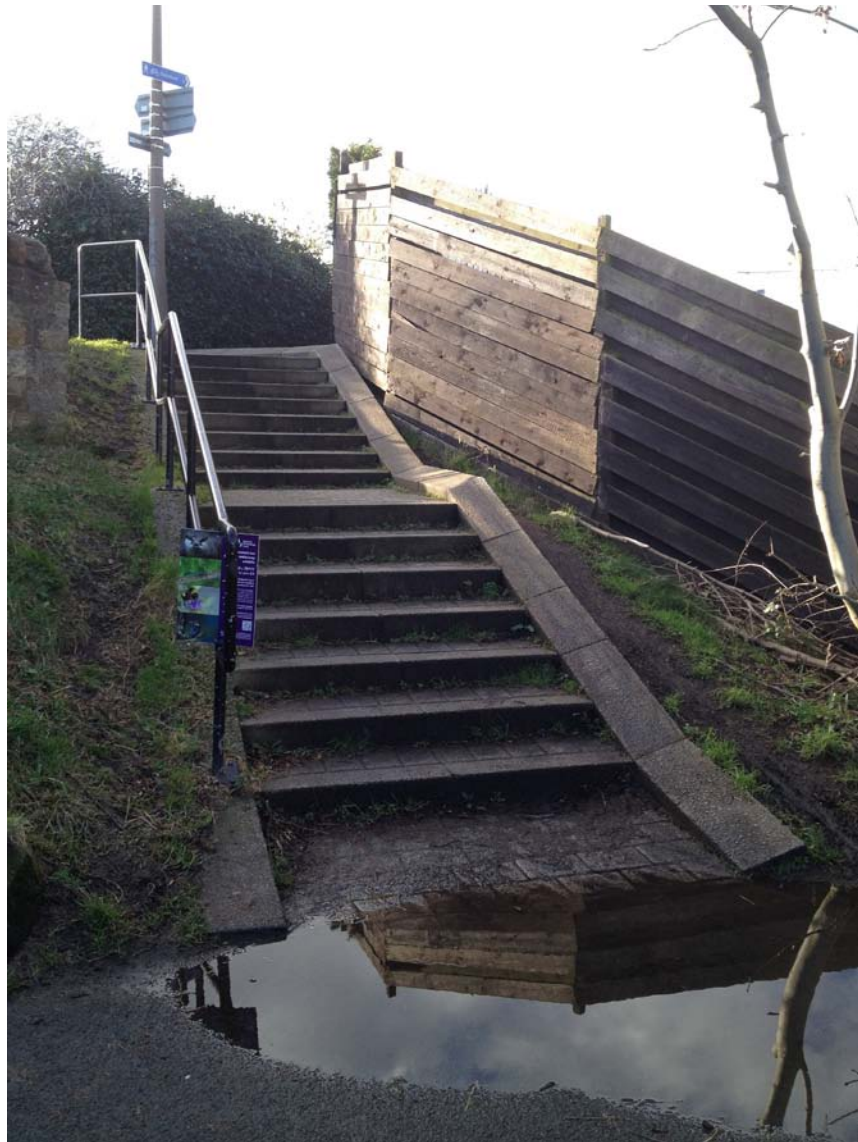
Existing Situation:

- Currently no access from Yeaman Place down to towpath which results in a long stretch without access to the towpath

Proposals:

- As space is restricted it should be investigated if a flight of steps can be installed at this location
- A channel for bikes should be installed alongside the steps to facilitate walking a bicycle up or down

3 Allan Park Road



Existing Situation:

- Flight of stairs to both side of pedestrian / cycle path down to towpath

Proposals:

- Flight of stairs on western side to be replaced with a ramp for accessible access

4 Slateford Road



Existing Situation:

- Existing stairs from towpath down to Slateford Road

Proposals:

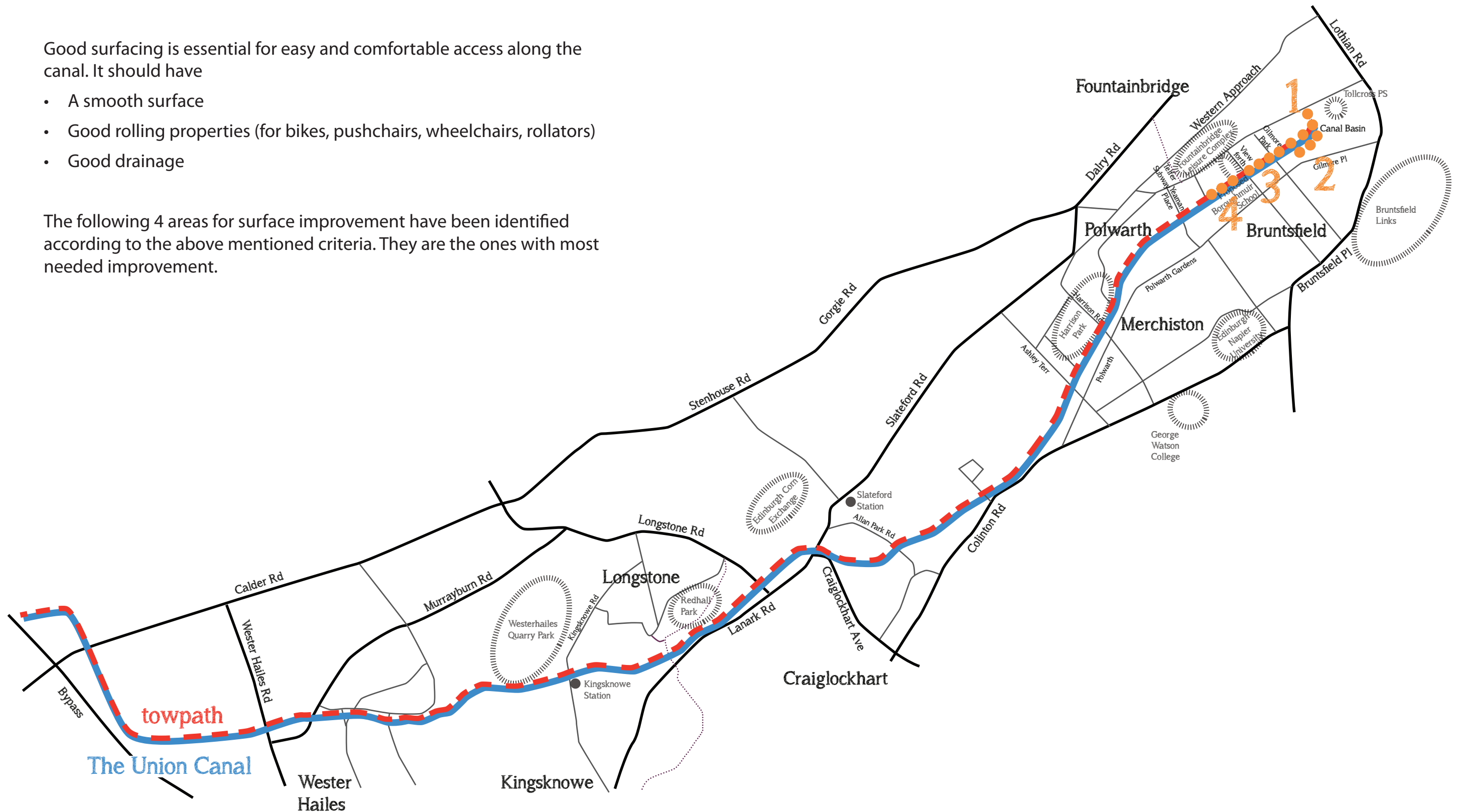
- A channel for bikes should be installed alongside the steps to facilitate walking a bicycle up or down

4.0 Surfacing

Good surfacing is essential for easy and comfortable access along the canal. It should have

- A smooth surface
- Good rolling properties (for bikes, pushchairs, wheelchairs, rollators)
- Good drainage

The following 4 areas for surface improvement have been identified according to the above mentioned criteria. They are the ones with most needed improvement.



1 Canal Basin to Lemington Bridge



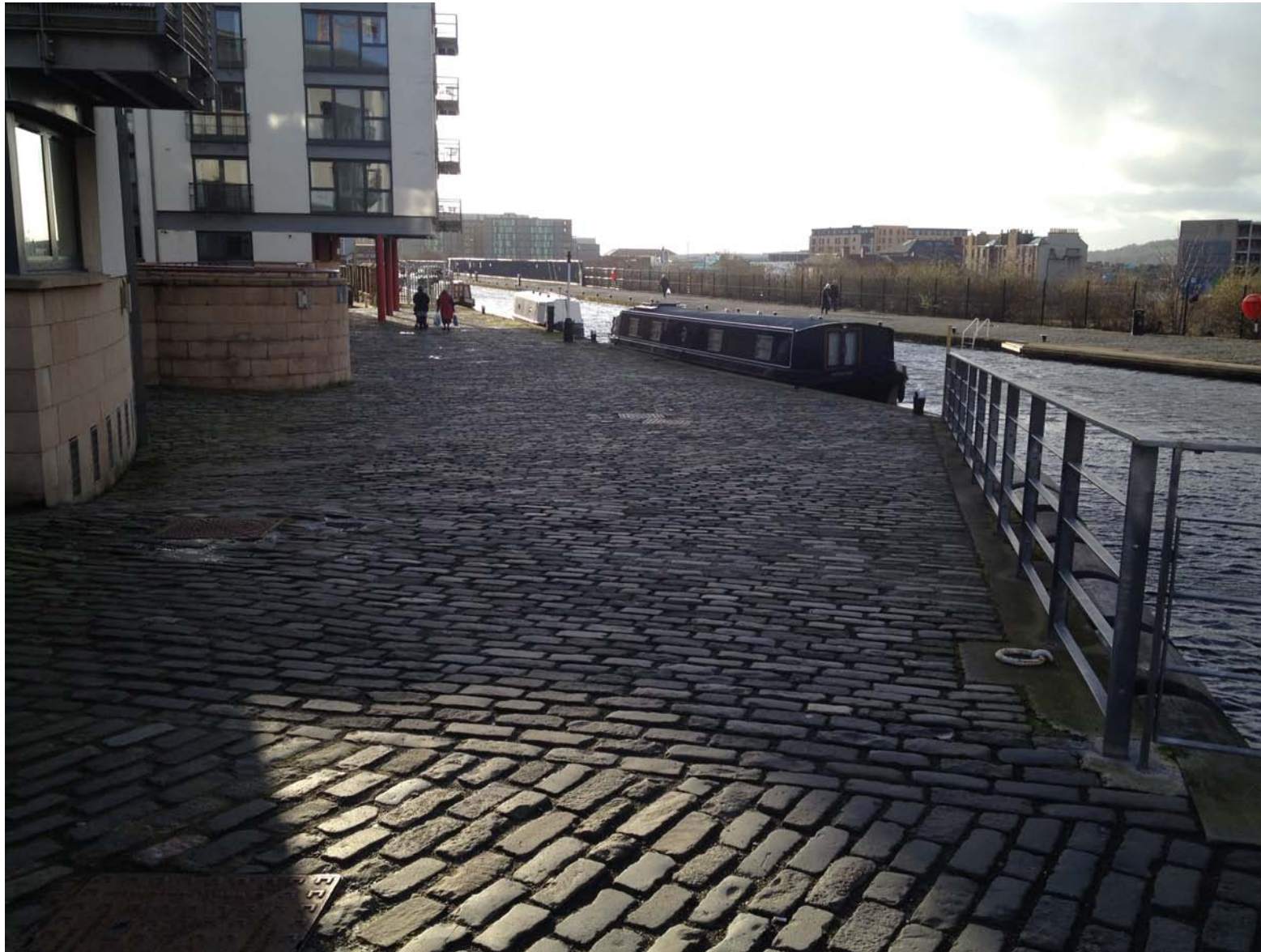
Existing Situation:

- Uneven cobbled surface which is uncomfortable to cycle and walk on and is a hazard when wet

Proposals:

- Either a smooth surfaced strip through the cobbles or a new path adjacent to the existing cobbled path in the development site

2 Canal Basin to Lower Gilmore Place



Existing Situation:

- This section will become part of a proposed significant cycle link between the canal basin and the Meadows
- Uneven cobbled surface which is uncomfortable to cycle and walk on and is a hazard when wet

Proposals:

- Smooth surfaced strip through the cobbles

3 Path section in front of new development



Existing Situation:

- This section is situated in front of a plot which is currently derelict but will be developed in the future with mixed uses
- Number of users (students/pupils/teacher/staff/parents) will increase enormously with new development as well as the new school further along

Proposals:

- A separate cycle path parallel to the towpath which would reduce pedestrian / cycle interaction conflicts

4 Viewforth Bridge to Gibson Terrace



Existing Situation:

- Towpath beside recently developed site, which opens up more space towards the new development
- Plot beside Viewforth will accommodate the new Boroughmuir High School (to be opened Sept 2016)
- Subsequently the number of users (students/pupils/teacher/staff/parents) will increase enormously

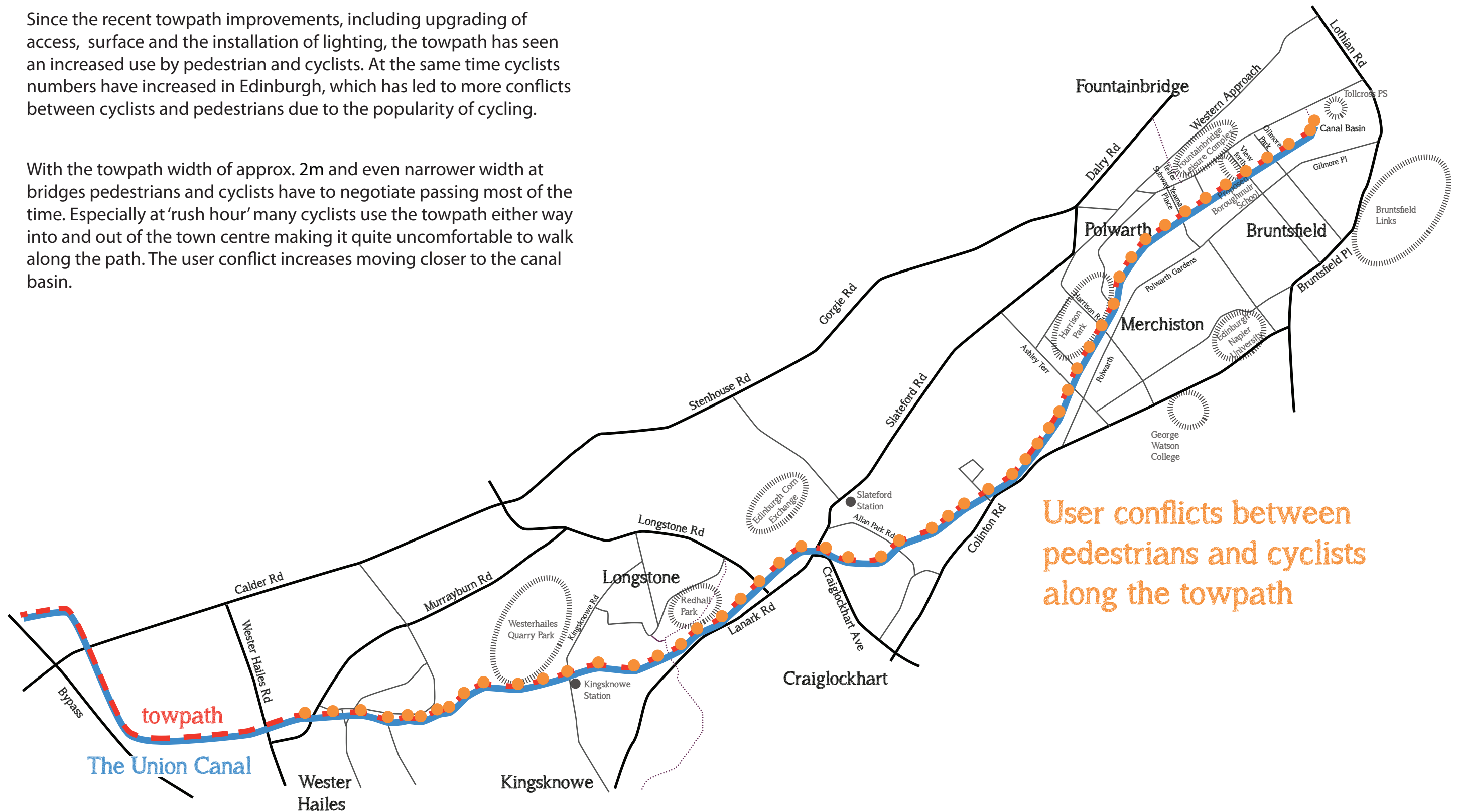
Proposals:

- Widening the towpath to allow a separate / segregated route

4.0 User conflicts

Since the recent towpath improvements, including upgrading of access, surface and the installation of lighting, the towpath has seen an increased use by pedestrian and cyclists. At the same time cyclists numbers have increased in Edinburgh, which has led to more conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians due to the popularity of cycling.

With the towpath width of approx. 2m and even narrower width at bridges pedestrians and cyclists have to negotiate passing most of the time. Especially at 'rush hour' many cyclists use the towpath either way into and out of the town centre making it quite uncomfortable to walk along the path. The user conflict increases moving closer to the canal basin.



5.1 Supplementary cycling route A

Supplementary route for cyclists to ease cycle use on towpath:

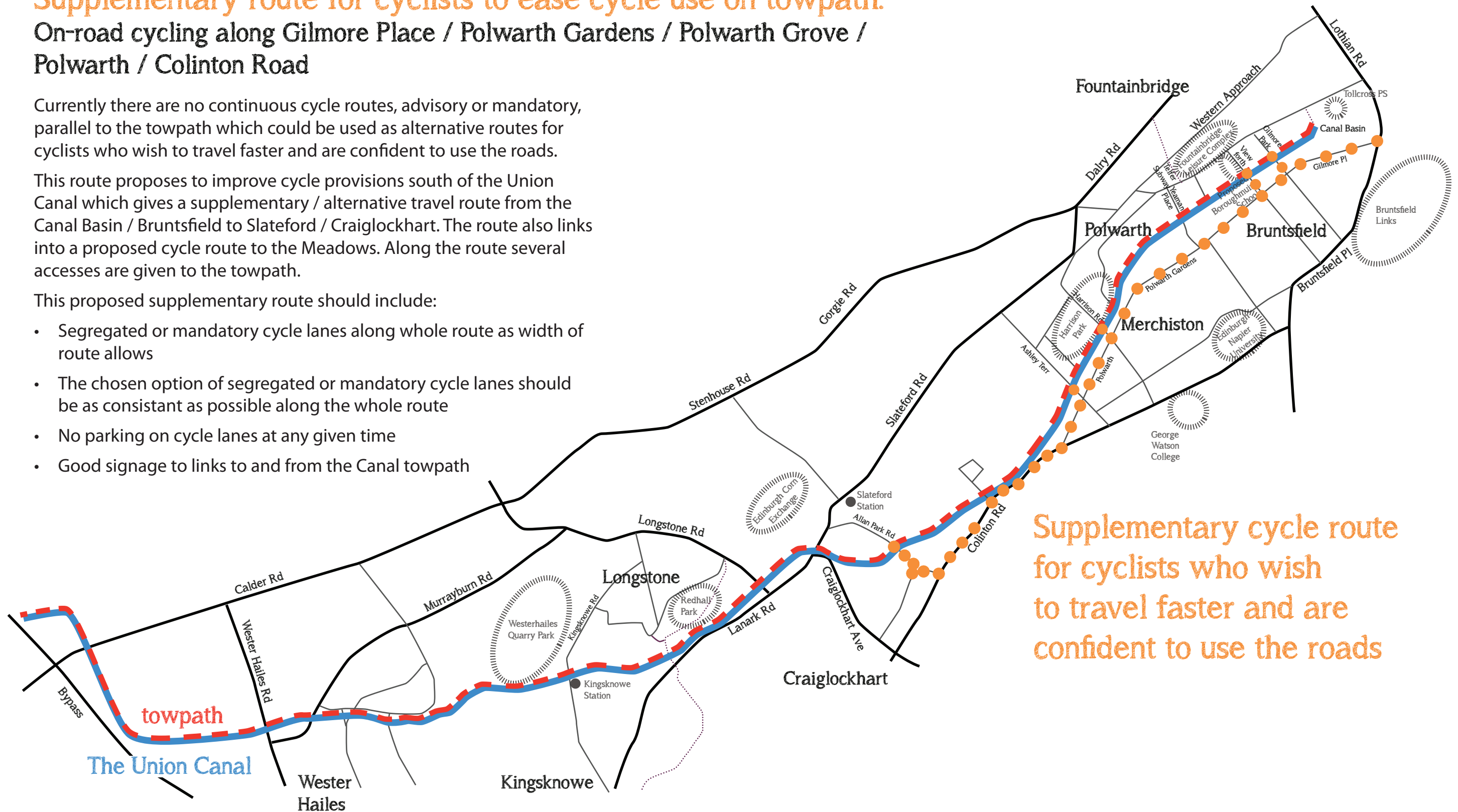
On-road cycling along Gilmore Place / Polwarth Gardens / Polwarth Grove / Polwarth / Colinton Road

Currently there are no continuous cycle routes, advisory or mandatory, parallel to the towpath which could be used as alternative routes for cyclists who wish to travel faster and are confident to use the roads.

This route proposes to improve cycle provisions south of the Union Canal which gives a supplementary / alternative travel route from the Canal Basin / Bruntsfield to Slateford / Craiglockhart. The route also links into a proposed cycle route to the Meadows. Along the route several accesses are given to the towpath.

This proposed supplementary route should include:

- Segregated or mandatory cycle lanes along whole route as width of route allows
- The chosen option of segregated or mandatory cycle lanes should be as consistent as possible along the whole route
- No parking on cycle lanes at any given time
- Good signage to links to and from the Canal towpath



Supplementary cycle route for cyclists who wish to travel faster and are confident to use the roads

5.11 Existing condition - route A

Gilmore Place

The following pages illustrate the existing condition of the proposed supplementary cycle route A, and also its potential to become safer and more desirable.



Existing Situation:

- Existing advisory cycle lanes on both side of road at beginning of Gilmore Place
- Existing advisory cycle lanes are worn and hardly readable
- Parking on cycle lanes makes it unattractive/difficult to cycle along road
- Medium traffic volume

Potentials:

- Advisory cycle lanes to be changed to mandatory or segregated cycle lanes
- Improvement of cycle lane surfacing required
- Enforcement of no parking on cycle lanes required



5.11 Existing condition - route A

Polwarth Gardens / Granville Terrace



Existing Situation:

- Wide road
- No cycle lanes
- Parking allowed on road



Potentials:

- Wide enough road to install segregated or mandatory cycle lanes

5.11 Existing condition - route A

Polwarth Grove / Polwarth



Existing Situation:

- Wide road
- No cycle lanes
- Parking allowed on road



Potentials:

- Wide enough road to install segregated or mandatory cycle lanes

5.11 Existing condition - route A

Colinton Road



Existing Situation:

- Wide road
- No cycle lanes
- Parking allowed on road
- High volume of traffic
- Partly poor surfacing on side of road

Potentials:

- Preferable option of segregated cycle lane
- Enforcement of no parking on cycle lanes required



5.11 Existing condition - route A

Access from Colinton Road to Towpath



Existing Situation:

- Traffic lights at Colinton Road
- No signage for turn off to towpath from Craiglockhart Road
- Path heavily used by pedestrians and too narrow for shared use and grass becomes very muddy in wet weather

Potentials:

- Upgrading traffic lights to Toucan crossing
- Enough space to widen path



5.2 Supplementary cycling route B

Supplementary route for cyclists to ease cycle use on towpath:

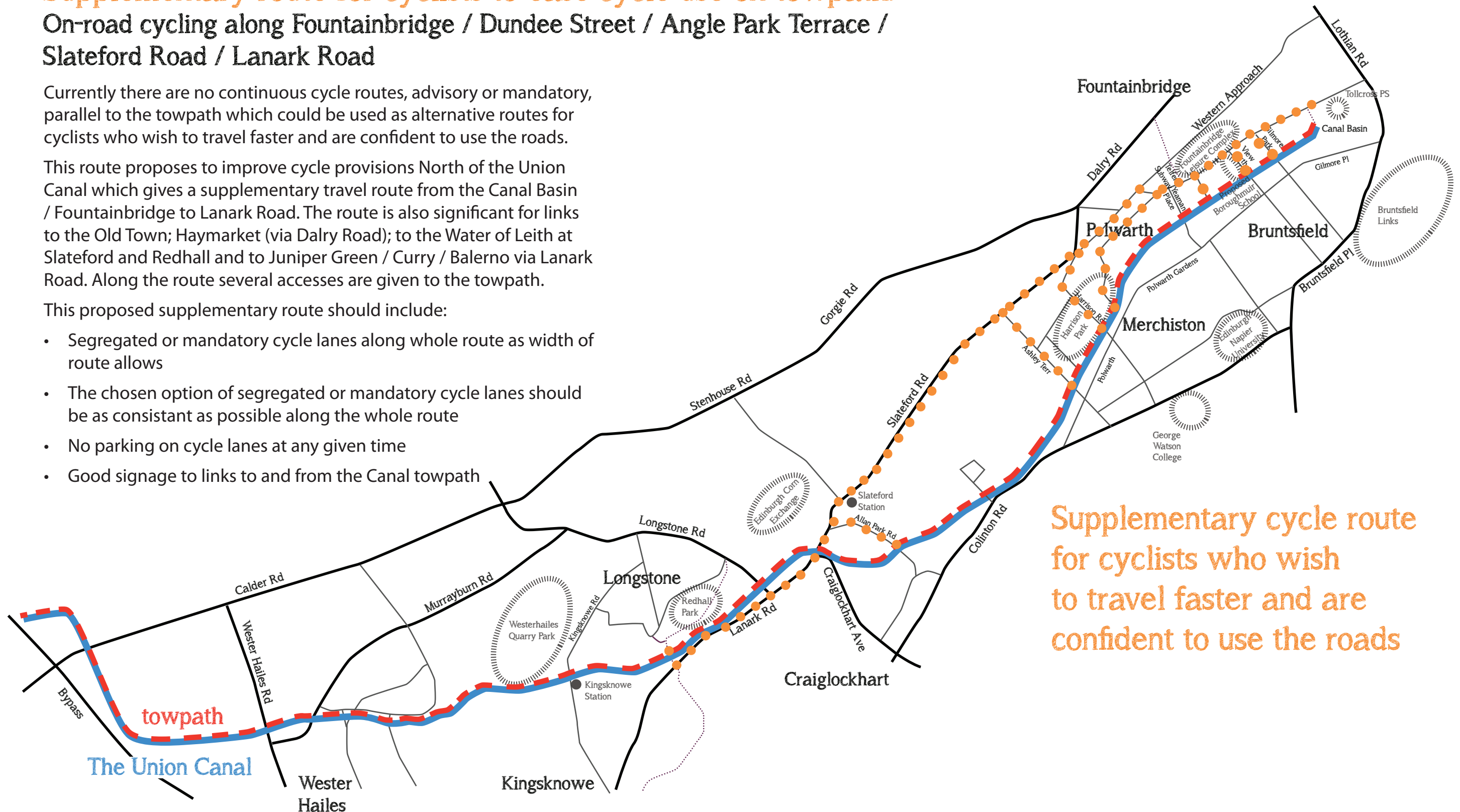
On-road cycling along Fountainbridge / Dundee Street / Angle Park Terrace / Slateford Road / Lanark Road

Currently there are no continuous cycle routes, advisory or mandatory, parallel to the towpath which could be used as alternative routes for cyclists who wish to travel faster and are confident to use the roads.

This route proposes to improve cycle provisions North of the Union Canal which gives a supplementary travel route from the Canal Basin / Fountainbridge to Lanark Road. The route is also significant for links to the Old Town; Haymarket (via Dalry Road); to the Water of Leith at Slateford and Redhall and to Juniper Green / Curry / Balerno via Lanark Road. Along the route several accesses are given to the towpath.

This proposed supplementary route should include:

- Segregated or mandatory cycle lanes along whole route as width of route allows
- The chosen option of segregated or mandatory cycle lanes should be as consistent as possible along the whole route
- No parking on cycle lanes at any given time
- Good signage to links to and from the Canal towpath



Supplementary cycle route
for cyclists who wish
to travel faster and are
confident to use the roads

5.21 Existing condition - route B

Fountainbridge

The following pages illustrate the existing condition of the proposed supplementary cycle route B, and also its potential to become safer and more desirable.



Beginning of Fountainbridge coming from Lothian Road



Existing Situation:

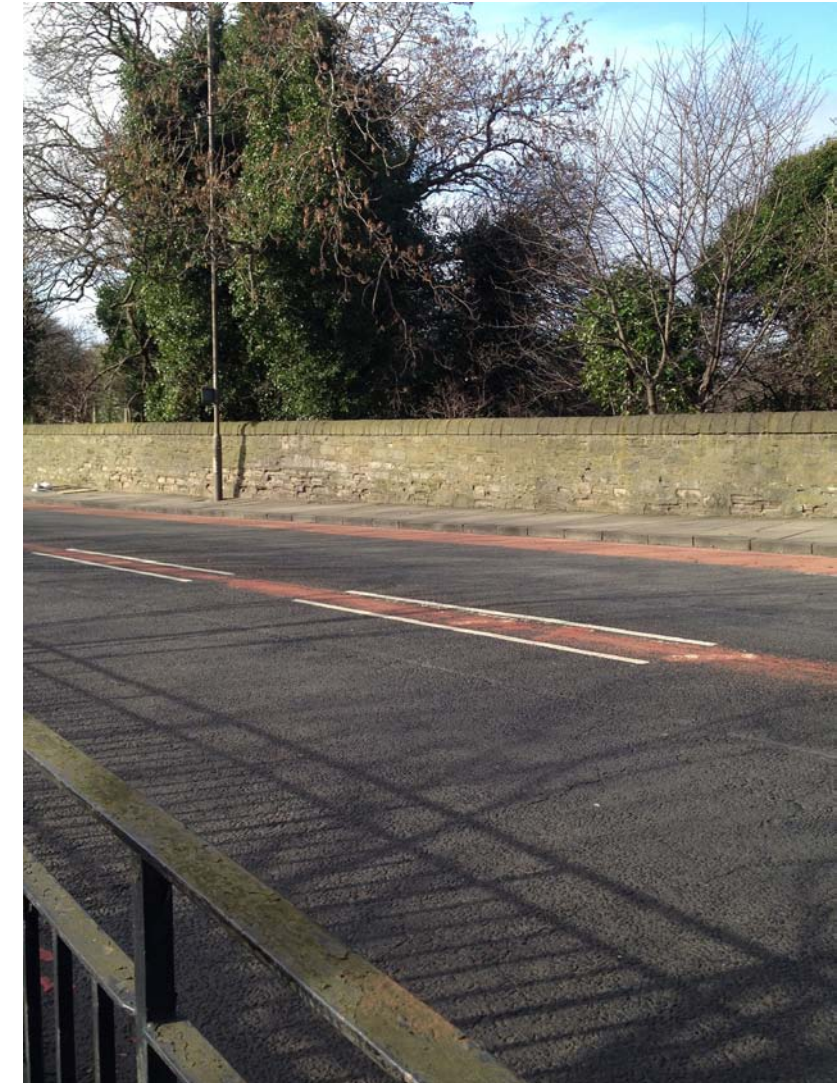
- Heavily used section which will be increasingly so with the new school, student flats and other development
- Part of this section avoids the most congested towpath section and also links to the Canal Basin
- Existing advisory cycle lanes only at a short section of Fountainbridge
- Poor road surfacing especially on edge of road
- Restricted parking on cycle lane permitted
- High traffic volume

Potentials:

- Preferable option of segregated cycle route
- Enforcement of no parking on cycle lanes required

5.21 Existing condition - route B

Dundee Street



Between Henderson Terrace and Western Approach Road

Existing Situation:

- Heavily used section which will be increasingly so with the new school, student flats and other development
- This section avoids the most congested towpath section
- Vital link from Telfer Subway to the canal and South of Edinburgh
- Link to canal via Dundee Terrace and East Harrison Park
- No existing cycle lanes except for short section between Henderson Terrace and Western Approach Road
- Danger from fast-moving vehicles entering West Approach Road when cycling slowly uphill
- Poor road surfacing especially on edge of road
- High traffic volume

Potentials:

- Preferable option of segregated cycle route

5.21 Existing condition - route B

Angle Park Terrace



Existing Situation:

- Existing cycle lane on one side when going into town
- Restricted parking on cycle lane permitted
- Cycle lane surface worn
- High traffic volume

Potentials:

- Installation of segregated or mandatory cycle lanes
- Enforcement of no parking on cycle lanes required

5.21 Existing condition - route B

Slateford Road



Between Harrison Road and Shandon Place



Between Robertson Avenue and Hutchison Crossway



Between Hutchison Crossway and Chesser Avenue

Existing Situation:

- Existing cycle lane at one side of road when heading out of town - between Harrison Road and Hutchison Crossway
- Bus / cycle lane on one side of road when heading into town - between Harrison Road and Hutchison Crossway
- Bus / cycle lane on both side of road when heading into town - Hutchison Crossway and Chesser Avenue
- Restricted parking on cycle lane permitted
- Surface of cycle lanes worn and patched up
- High volume traffic

Potentials:

- Most of the route has already advisory and or bus/cycle lanes installed
- Establishment of continuous cycle lanes through minor works possible
- Advisory lanes to be changed into mandatory cycle lanes
- Improvement of cycle lane surfacing required
- Enforcement of no parking on cycle lanes required



Poor surfacing

5.21 Existing condition - route B

Lanark Road



Beginning of Lanark Road



Existing Situation:

- Some sections of bus / cycle lanes on both side of road at beginning of Lanark Road
- Restricted parking on bus / cycle lane permitted
- Parking on road permitted
- Poor road surface
- High volume traffic
- 4 lane road with 40mph and on street parking
- High volume traffic

Potentials:

- Wide enough road to install segregated or mandatory cycle lanes
- Enforcement of no parking on cycle lanes required