

A8 Consultation – submission from Henry Whaley, who is a joint convener of RBS Gogarburn BUG

18.12.15

Dear CEC Cycling Team,

I'd like to feed into the A8 cyclepath consultation.

As a regular cyclist on the A8 and active within RBS Gogarburn encouraging others to start cycle commuting, it has been clear that the current cyclepath is not great and it isn't surprising that many choose to take the 40/70mph dual carriageway instead.

The plans created quite some excitement amongst the cyclists of the 550 strong Gogarburn Bicycle User Group and we were very grateful that the council officer ran a consultation session at RBS Gogarburn – I know he received a lot of feedback at that session – speaking to around 50 cyclists over 2 hours. This response incorporates most of that feedback and has been enhanced by a (daylight) site visit this weekend and copious photographs which have been referenced below which I hope you find helpful.

If you need further clarity on anything given below please let me know,

Henry Whaley

1. Based on the budget available the plans make a good job of tackling a lot of the problem areas with the current route/ design and as such will improve the route. I have highlighted in section 4 the areas of the designs that I particularly welcome and the points where I think improvements can be made.
2. The plans do not tackle the major difficulties with the route which would require substantial investment / political willpower to solve, namely
 - a. the inefficiency of the route switching from the North to South side at Gogarburn and back again at the Airport
 - b. safely crossing the Gogar Roundabout
 - c. The narrowness of the sharedpath outside the houses in Ratho Station, which is particularly problematic on Bin day and with bus passengers waiting on the path.

The pathway on the RBS bridge <https://flic.kr/p/BbGovq> is not that wide and can already become very busy at peak times especially with disembarking passengers. With increases in occupancy in RBS Gogarburn this will become a pinchpoint on the route as well as an unnecessary detour. A continuous Northside or Southside route would help alleviate this pinchpoint.

I note that adjacent to the A8 there are currently 2 large planning applications (East of Milburn Tower & International Business Gateway) and 2 further ones at Ratho Station (15/04707/PAN & 15/05177/PAN) going through the planning process. These will bring significant additional traffic (pedestrians, cycles & vehicles) to the A8 corridor (especially the RBS Bridge & Ratho Station Bridge) and through developer contributions could fund solutions to these problems.

The IBG application includes plans for filling in the 'missing link' in the North side cycle path, which would be very welcome if suitable direct connections were included to rejoin the current Quiet Route9 at Gogarburn tram stop & the A8/Airport North West slip. The IBG plans also include changes to Gogar Roundabout but no mention of pedestrian / cycle improvements.

The East of Milburn application include reference to the bus stops on the A8 & Edinburgh Gateway tram/rail station but does not acknowledge the challenges for crossing the A8 / A720 at Gogar Roundabout to access them.

For the Ratho Station houses, the challenge is widening the shared path whilst maintaining the parking & road alignment or taking the path round the back of the houses. The current arrangement of sharing a narrow path with waiting bus passengers, a bus shelter, overgrown

hedges and a variety of poles/street furniture (including bins on Thursdays) is a particular problem area. <https://flic.kr/p/C7jYB2> <https://flic.kr/p/BxPjvh> If it is not possible to make significant improvements, then as a bare minimum there should be additional signage, the hedges cut right back and consideration of moving the bus stop (even if just to adjacent to edge of path).

3. I have particular concerns that the current plans for Gogarstone Rd & Lochend Rd Junctions do not go far enough to reduce the speed of vehicles or improve the sightlines for what are particularly dangerous junctions just now.
 - a. Gogarstone Rd <https://flic.kr/p/C7uurz> <https://flic.kr/p/BWTZod> <https://flic.kr/p/BEn3Rm>
 - i. The widening of the footway to the East of the junction is welcomed but the current layout does not improve the sightline especially when travelling East nor reduce the speeds. It should be noted that northbound traffic's attention will be looking right (East) for a gap in the A8 Westbound traffic and aren't considering peds/cycle appearing to their left.
 - ii. Sightline can become even more challenging with overgrown vegetation blocking the view if not cut back regularly.
 - iii. The radii of the turns should be reduced.
 - iv. Consideration should be given to installing a chicane or speedbump on Gogarstone Road to reduce speeds and position northbound vehicles further out from the verge and so more visible to Eastbound Peds/cycles
 - b. Lochend Rd <https://flic.kr/p/B9R44y> <https://flic.kr/p/B9Ri1b>
 - i. A refuge is needed here to aid safe crossing and consideration should be given for reducing the width of the road.
 - ii. The radii of the left turn into Lochend Road should be reduced
4. Other specific comments – some of which are maintenance issues rather than directly improvements and many in support of the current plans. I appreciate that this is a very comprehensive list, but wanted you to get the full detail of what is required to make the cyclepaths up to suitable standard.

South side – East to West

1. South Gyle Gardens:

I have reservations that the current route is the best way through SGG & Gyle Park – Going through SGG is windy and feels out of the way and then the path round the back of the Health club is not ideal for dark commutes. The path starting nearer to Tescos and going across the front of the health club is more suitable although it isn't tarmaced.

Based on the current route I have the following comments:

- 1.1. The additional signage is welcomed.
- 1.2. The entrance to Gyle Park at the West end should have no parking signs to protect access. <https://flic.kr/p/BaayeF>
- 1.3. The no cycling sign visible as you approach from the park is unhelpful <https://flic.kr/p/C5gzBy>
2. Gyle Park
 - 2.1. I have no strong views on the removal of the bike racks at the entrance to South Gyle Station <https://flic.kr/p/Ba4GPE> but would welcome more options for locking bikes at the main part of the Station where more throughput gives additional security.
 - 2.2. The path is currently flooded at the back of the Health Centre <https://flic.kr/p/Ba4BFU>
 - 2.3. The path is covered in heavy leaf mulch at the back of the Health Centre <https://flic.kr/p/BWYxW1>

- 2.4. The realignment of path in the South West corner of the park is welcomed
<https://flic.kr/p/Ba4pD7> <https://flic.kr/p/BWYhyh>
- 2.5. The resurfacing & widening of the path on the West edge of the park to 3m is welcomed
<https://flic.kr/p/C7ypjc>
3. South Side path – Dechmont Rd Toucan to Gogar Roundabout
 - 3.1. There is ponding by southern tactiles at Toucan Crossing <https://flic.kr/p/C7y44T>
 - 3.2. Pavement by white wall exit to park, always has a large puddle <https://flic.kr/p/By3zH4>
(This is next to the new pavement surface recently installed which looks like road surface rather than pavement)
 - 3.3. The path along the Southside between Dechmont Rd & Gogar Roundabout should be made shared use (along whole length) giving a more direct route than North Gyle Terrace.
<https://flic.kr/p/BZgkvH>
(North Gyle Terrace & Maybury crossing improvements is useful for cyclists coming from North of A8/ Glasgow Road)
 - 3.4. Currently there is ponding at both kerb entrances to Marriot Hotel <https://flic.kr/p/Bac3Zz>
 - 3.5. Drainage on path & roadway needs improving just west of Marriot path to eliminate large puddle on path <https://flic.kr/p/Ba3kkQ> & splash risk from roadway <https://flic.kr/p/BZfNzV>
 - 3.6. The dropped kerbs at the entrance to B&M aren't that dropped which become a challenge when negotiating a tight turn onto a narrow pavement <https://flic.kr/p/BWWUKQ>
 - 3.7. The path to the west of B&M entrance could be widened by clearing vegetation on path and cutting back bushes <https://flic.kr/p/Ba896e> & using full width of verge over railway bridge <https://flic.kr/p/BWWRxU>

4. Gogar Roundabout – South side

As mentioned above the crossing of the Gogar Roundabout is particularly dangerous. All entrances/exits have to be traversed on unsignalled crossing. The Edinburgh Gateway Station underpass may (& definitely should) allow for cyclists to cross the Eastern A8 leg without dismounting, but this still leaves the risks for crossing the remaining legs.

This may be out of scope for this project but that doesn't take away the risk I witness on a daily basis.
<https://flic.kr/p/C5e7TC> <https://flic.kr/p/C7wwqF> <https://flic.kr/p/Ba7uqz> <https://flic.kr/p/BEoPpY>
<https://flic.kr/p/BxZXHH> <https://flic.kr/p/C5d5cs>

5. Gogar Roundabout to Gogarstone Rd – South Side

- 5.1. Gogar Station Road entrance: Consideration should be given to the railings, which significantly reduce the usable width of the pavement round the corner and visibility. <https://flic.kr/p/BxZCCD> <https://flic.kr/p/BEo51o> There is 30-50cm of unusable width outside the pavement. The narrowness has been a contributory factor in collisions here and it prohibits CEC's path cleaning machine for accessing it leading to a build up of uncleared leaf mulch.
- 5.2. RBS Gogarburn to Gogarstone Road: For the majority of this section the path (once fully clear of undergrowth and leaf mulch) is 3m wide <https://flic.kr/p/BxZb7H>. It is used predominantly in the AM peak by city bound cyclists and pedestrians (going from Ingliston P&R to RBS Gogarburn) and vice versa for the PM peak. With both modes travelling in the same direction it can be hard for cyclists to safely and politely pass pedestrians (especially if they are wearing headphones and oblivious to bell ringing / asking nicely) if they are in the middle of the path. Where possible this section should be made a segregated path with a line painted down the middle to denote which side for which mode.

This approach is successfully used on the Northside path between the Gogarburn tram stop and the RBS bridge (where the path is 3.2m wide) and results in pedestrians predominantly continuing to keep to the right hand side of the bridge, where there are no lines marked.

6. Gogarstone Rd to Ratho Station

6.1. Gogarstone Rd Junction – see above

6.2. Airport SE Slip road <https://flic.kr/p/Ba4Xge> <https://flic.kr/p/Ba4HEX> –

6.2.1. Cutting back the vegetation on path and from neighbouring bushes is welcomed. The cutting back of the bushes and clearing leaf mulch needs to be done on a regular basis to ensure the problem doesn't return.

6.2.2. There is plenty of spare verge here to widen the path to 3m <https://flic.kr/p/BEkVsf> which should be considered.

6.2.3. A drainage ditch has been dug to drain the field to the south, with the run off cascading down the embankment and then onto the cyclepath, which the water then runs down before exiting the path at the bottom of the slope. This should not be allowed to happen. A proper drainage plan should be put into place so that it does not impact the path in this way. <https://flic.kr/p/Ba4wKv>

6.3. Airport SW Slip road - Another drainage ditch has been dug to drain the field to the south, this time with an large orange pipe to and similar issues with the water run off cascading pouring out onto the cyclepath, and again using the cyclepath down the slope. I'd be very interested to know what permissions were granted to allow the pipe to be installed. <https://flic.kr/p/B9XH7A> <https://flic.kr/p/By69jH> <https://flic.kr/p/Ba48wg>

6.4. Path to BP Garage could do with scraping to full width <https://flic.kr/p/Ba3tVe>

6.5. BP garage exit suffers from drivers looking East (for gap in traffic) and not looking at anyone arriving from the East. <https://flic.kr/p/B9WFB3>

6.6. West of the BP garage, again the path needs scraping back to full width <https://flic.kr/p/BWRycl>

6.7. The Ratho Station footbridge – the pushing ramp is welcomed as a 'cheap' fix. Obviously a solution that allowed cycle traffic without dismounting would be better to allow a full range of cycling, mobility and child transportation devices. <https://flic.kr/p/BEge3A>

6.8. Station Road exit: There was a large puddle on the exit of Station Road onto the A8 <https://flic.kr/p/BEg63N> <https://flic.kr/p/BZ6cia>

Northside – West to East

7. Newbridge to Ratho Station

7.1. West side of Newbridge footbridge. Here is a clear desire line away from the path down to the A89 & I assume across it. This should be made into an official path <https://flic.kr/p/BZ3Wv8>

7.2. Bollards at Newbridge Bridge. The plans are unclear if they are the existing ones or planned ones. Whatever is installed should adhere to the standard of having a minimum 1.5m gap between bollards and side of path and a minimum 3m gap between bollards, to allow a full range of cycle & mobility devices to pass through. <https://flic.kr/p/C538xf> <https://flic.kr/p/C53c29>

7.3. Eastern entrance to Newbridge Bridge: the realignment is welcomed although it would be great if the puddle to the East of the realigned corner was removed <https://flic.kr/p/BEdMXj> <https://flic.kr/p/BEdEku>

7.4. Entrance to Newbridge to Dalmeny Railway line. The current plans have a 'no cycling' sign on the entrance to the left of the Newbridge Bridge. I assume this is an error. <https://flic.kr/p/BEdEku> <https://flic.kr/p/C7kLnR>

7.5. Lochend Road Junction: see above

7.6. Bus shelter at Lochend Road. Moving the bus shelter is very welcomed as it badly impacts sightlines. <https://flic.kr/p/B9PY21>

- 7.7. Resurfacing and widening for this section will be most welcomed <https://flic.kr/p/BZ5eNx>
<https://flic.kr/p/BWMhVS>
- 7.8. Ratho Station 93-123 Glasgow Rd – see above
8. Ratho to Airport
- 8.1. Ratho to Hallyards Road. The changes to the entrance to prioritise path users is welcome.
<https://flic.kr/p/C7jTTz> <https://flic.kr/p/BWJwo9> <https://flic.kr/p/BWJwnN> Consideration should be given to deterring vehicles from parking/waiting on the cyclepath. It is a popular spot to wait for the arrivals at the Airport.
- 8.2. Hallyard's Road Jct. No details given on how this junction will be improved.
<https://flic.kr/p/BxNZKR> <https://flic.kr/p/BZ38P2> It suffered from poor sight lines but currently low traffic volumes. Consideration should be given prioritising path users at this point. At the very least signage warning Southbound traffic to expect cyclists
- 8.3. Royal Highland Showground.
- 8.3.1. The plans talk of realigning the path to guide users through poles. I assume this will also include widen and resurfacing the path as it is badly affected by tree roots. This is one most complained about part of the route. <https://flic.kr/p/BWJk2w> <https://flic.kr/p/BWJk7>
 How can the tree roots be stopped from disrupting the pavement again?
- 8.3.2. Bus Shelter: No detail of any plans to move the bus shelter which reduces the reduced usable width considerably. <https://flic.kr/p/C51UnE>
- 8.3.3. Signpost with challenging width: Can this be changed so that a useable width is created?
<https://flic.kr/p/BEc3Sy>
- 8.3.4. Minor Entrance to RHS: This is a very little used entrance with reasonable drop kerbs. The plans have it being converted to pathway priority is welcome but isn't a priority.
<https://flic.kr/p/BZ2vWa>
- 8.4. Ingliston Rd Junction. The plans to align a path across it and redo all the dropped kerbs is welcomed. The current route across is not direct and the kerbs aren't all dropped to the standard 6mm or less <https://flic.kr/p/C51GJQ> <https://flic.kr/p/BZ2x7X>
- 8.5. Airport Junction: SW Slip road. Improvements to the radii on the turns to cross the 2 slip roads will be welcome. <https://flic.kr/p/BEbzVh> This is a particularly slow part of the route with crossing the 2 slips individually, so anything that can be done to speed it up would be appreciated.
- 8.6. A8 Underpass. Widening the West path in the underpass to 3m is very welcome as the sight lines on approach are terrible. The undergrowth should be cut right back on the SW approach to improve it further.
9. RBS Gogarburn to Castle Gogar (Northside)
- 9.1. The improved signage onto the bridge from the southside would be welcomed
- 9.2. The RBS bridge isn't very wide <https://flic.kr/p/BbGovq> and already can be very busy at peak hours when a tram load of pedestrians have disembarked. With increases in occupancy at RBS Gogarburn and further increases in cycling this will become a pinchpoint on the route.
- 9.3. The path from the tram stop to the bottom of the RBS bridge steps is segregated which really helps avoid conflict between pedestrians and cyclists <https://flic.kr/p/BbGovq>
- 9.4. A desire line to Tram stop via the grass verge has developed – visible in top centre of this photo.
<https://flic.kr/p/BbGovq> I'm not sure how you can stop it, but have flagged it here for completeness.
- 9.5. The bush on the left just before the Cabinet works exit should be removed. It blocks the sightlines and makes the corner very difficult to see approaching cyclists or pedestrians.
<https://flic.kr/p/BG52DU> It has previously been cut back but it just grows back again and we have the same problems.

- 9.6. The prioritisation of path users at the Cabinet works exit is welcomed. <https://flic.kr/p/C6TMQU>
- 9.7. The bus shelter between Castle Gogar & Cabinet Works reduces the width of the path <https://flic.kr/p/BYBda7> . Whilst visibility is good, consideration should be given the moving the shelter – potentially as part of the bus shelter replacement scheme.
- 9.8. Castle Gogar entrance: The prioritisation of path users here is especially welcomed as the visibility is very poor. <https://flic.kr/p/C9c3QM> <https://flic.kr/p/C1U7zc> <https://flic.kr/p/BbLXS6>
10. Castle Gogar to Maybury
- 10.1. The Bus shelter / signpost adjacent to Gogar slip: The sign post should be moved to create more usable space. <https://flic.kr/p/C9bKD2>
- 10.2. Old entrance to Tram works: The old concrete entrance that was put in place during building the tram depot should be returned back to its original form. As a minimum, the significant bump on the East side should be flattened. <https://flic.kr/p/BG49tC>
- 10.3. Tram Depot entrance: I have previously written to CEC on this subject. The current layout with a wide hatched area on the inside of the exit means there is a wide gap to cross with no guarantee that vehicles will keep to the unhatched area. Recognising that large vehicles are currently required for building the new tram/train station, but once that is complete, bollards should be installed to reduce the gap needed to be traversed. <https://flic.kr/p/BG3Y9u>
- 10.4. Railway bridge: At the North West edge of the Railway bridge is a bush that overgrows onto the path and should be removed , rather than just cut back. It has previously been cut back but is growing back again. <https://flic.kr/p/C1Tso2>
- 10.5. Metal fencing outside SCA warehouse. Similarly has plants growing through the fence which need removing to prevent them overgrowing the path <https://flic.kr/p/BYA9kL>
- 10.6. Roughing up the path near to Turnhouse Road is welcomed <https://flic.kr/p/C6SDGG>
- 10.7. The offpath shortcut where the path meets Turnhouse Road should be tarmaced . <https://flic.kr/p/C9b4pV> as is very muddy. The current tarmaced route has a very tight corner on it. <https://flic.kr/p/C1T66c>
- 10.8. The crossing of Turnhouse Road needs to have a yellow box on it and extending to the South as it is often blocked in the morning by traffic queuing for Maybury junction. This is particularly a problem with lorries / van who even if they leave the crossing clear make visibility of vehicles travelling North nearly impossible to see. You have to peer round the outside of the them and hope that nothing is coming round the corner.
11. Maybury Junction
- 11.1. The improvements here are very welcome. The current toucan crossing requires a long wait so further options here will be helpful, as is improving the dropped kerbs.
- 11.2. Consideration should be given to making either or both of the East & West pavements on Maybury Rd into shared use (once the West pavement has been restored to full width). These are key routes for cyclists coming from North Edinburgh who don't feel safe/comfortable on the 40 mph Dual Carriageway - & who can blame them.
- 11.3. I don't understand the need for the pinch point on North Gyle Terrace and I can't see how it will benefit cyclists. Queuing traffic on NGT will prevent access to the left of the refuge and I foresee cyclists overtaking on the right to make progress to the new crossing.
12. North Gyle Terrace to Dechmont Toucan & Craigmount Steps
- 12.1. Improvements to signage at the NGT / Dechmont Rd junction is especially welcomed as it is very small at the moment. <https://flic.kr/p/BbKiSR> Spot the sign if you can...
- 12.2. It is good to see the Craigmount Step on the plans, although only as a potential. This is a key link to the path from the East Craigs Path Network and would make a big improvement to those who currently have to bump up the steps. <https://flic.kr/p/BYyVb1> <https://flic.kr/p/BYyPqJ>