

Green Network draft supplementary guidance – Spokes’ response (30/3/18)

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/205/planning_policy/536/draft_green_network_supplementary_guidance

Midlothian, and in particular the area of north Midlothian on which this guidance focuses, would benefit greatly from having a thorough network of routes by which cyclists of all ages and abilities, including risk-averse cyclists, can travel. This network should connect all the main settlements and other key locations together. We very much welcome the proposals set out in the guidance, but also believe that it falls short of forming such a network. Below, we have listed ways in which we believe the guidance could be further improved, and hope that these can be incorporated.

General points

- The guidance should explicitly say that the Council will strive to provide routes across major barriers. Such barriers include, but are not limited to, main roads and rivers. The routes across these barriers should be suitable for all cyclists.
- A review of bicycle parking should be carried out, to ensure that there is provision at all key destinations, such as schools, town centres, train stations, country parks and sites such as Rosslyn Chapel.
- All barriers which don’t comply with *Cycling by Design* guidance should be removed from footpaths and cycle paths. “Cyclists dismount” signs should only be used when absolutely necessary, and existing ones should be removed where appropriate.
- Filtered permeability is important in all new developments. Footpaths and cyclepaths must be built connecting each new development with neighbouring streets, whilst minimising the number of entry points for motorised traffic, and new developments must leave space between some buildings so that future developments can connect to them in the same way. Consideration should be given to closing roads to motorised through traffic.
- Typos – The B7003 and B7006 are mixed up in a couple of places (pages 37, 39); Melville Link is Strategic Connection 10, not 11 (page 24). Possible typo in requirement vi on p40 - “Bush Farm Loan” instead of “Bush Farm Road”.

Shawfair and Danderhall

- An MUP along the A7 should be built, connecting: Sheriffhall (Connection Point 8), Shawfair P&R, the Roslin-Shawfair path, Danderhall, The Wisp MUP, Edinburgh.
- The MUP suggested along Millerhill Road should ideally run the whole length of Millerhill Road. The part where it is missing is enormously wide, with most of the road being a hatched central section, so road space could very easily be reallocated. At the very least, the MUP should extend as far north as Newton Village, to meet the other proposed MUP paths.
- Newton Church Road should have an MUP alongside between Danderhall and Newton Village. The need for this would be lessened if an MUP ran the whole length of long Millerhill Road (see above point).
- The gap in the wall on the path between Newton Church and Shawfair Avenue will need to be widened if this is to be a useful route.
- Access to Kaimes View in Danderhall should be possible from the Roslin-Shawfair path.
- The proposed MUPs along the A7 and A6106 are both particularly welcome.

- The required path through the Sheriffhall South site, parallel to Melville Gate Road, is very welcome, but the detail of how to access this path at the eastern end is important – sightlines at the Melville Gate Road junction are very poor for cyclists heading west. This is not likely to be as bad at the end of the proposed path, but a toucan crossing should still be considered.
- Add a bypass crossing between the A7 and A68, if possible. This would likely require cooperation from Dalkeith Country Park, but could be included as part of the Hs1 (Newton Farm) development and would reduce the distance to Dalkeith town centre significantly.
- The path from Millerhill Road to Connection Point 4 (orange line on the map) should be upgraded to an MUP.

Dalkeith, Eskbank and Newbattle

- Provision of an MUP on the A6106 through Dalkeith should be considered. Drivers frequently overtake at the pinch points caused by traffic islands on this road. If an MUP is not possible, then wide bike lanes should be added at the pinch points, in the same way as East Lothian Council has done on, amongst other places, Linkfield Road in Musselburgh.
- There is currently no good option for risk-averse cyclists to get between Eskbank and Dalkeith town centre, and one should be provided. Eskbank Road and Abbey Road are busy, with fast moving traffic; Park Road is bumpy and doesn't completely avoid Eskbank Road; the NCN route requires travelling along the busy Newmills Road.
- NCN196 through Eskbank should be more direct. The map shows it going along Ancrum Bank, but this is not correct. Sustrans' website, and the signage on the ground, show it going via Eskbank Toll roundabout. Ancrum Bank is where it *should* go, but some improvements to the footpaths on that route may be necessary.
- Consideration should be given to closing off some of the roads at Eskbank Toll roundabout. If, for example, Lasswade Road and Dalhousie Road were closed, then a conventional signalised crossroads junction could be built. Toucan crossings and careful use of shared space at the corners, akin to the Mayfield Road/West Mains Road junction in Edinburgh, would allow the closed roads to be permeable for cyclists and pedestrians, but motorised traffic would need to go via the A7.
- A quiet route through Woodburn, avoiding the A6106 by utilising residential streets and footpaths, should be signposted (coming out opposite the Edgehead Road).
- A safe crossing of the South Esk between Dalkeith and Woodburn should be provided. This is a major missing link in the planned network. This could be included as part of the Former Dalkeith High School development.
- Toucan crossings to allow people to safely cross the roads coming off the roundabouts on the A7 near Eskbank should be added.
- The Larkfield developments (Hs2 and Hs3) provide a good example of where filtered permeability must be applied. Motorised access should be from Lasswade Road only, but access to Elginhaugh Gardens, Eskfield Grove and Beech Grove Avenue should be possible using footpaths/MUPs as appropriate.
- The path in the southeast corner of Hs10 should connect to Connection Point 12.
- Although mentioned on p21 of the guidance, the proposed green network links from h46 (Cowden Cleugh) and Hs5 (Thornbank North) to h33 don't seem to be shown on the map.
- At least one of the paths between h70 (Whitehill House Grounds) and Rosewell should be upgraded. This could connect to Rosewell Park, so that the primary school could be accessed without going onto Carnethie Street.
- If practical, an additional path should connect the h37 (Cockpen Farm) site to the B704 closer to the bridge over the South Esk, to minimise the distance to Bonnyrigg.

- The Dalkeith, Eskbank, Newbattle map and the Easthouses, Mayfield, Newtongrange, Gorebridge map show different lengths of path upgrade along the A6106. This upgraded path should reach Connection Point 11, or even further towards Dalkeith.
- To allow cyclists to avoid the Eskbank Toll roundabout wherever possible, it should be possible to cut through nearby streets such as Eskbank Court and Avenue Road. Dropped kerbs should be added and barriers removed to facilitate this.
- A ramp should be built to provide a link between the A68 and NCN1 where they cross.
- An MUP should be built along the A68, although we understand that this would be the responsibility of Transport Scotland.

Bonnyrigg, Lasswade, Poltonhall and Rosewell

- Consideration should be given to reopening the Broomieknowe tunnel and Lasswade viaduct and upgrading the core path between the North Esk and Wadingburn Road. This would form an MUP from Bonnyrigg to Loanhead, filling in a vital link in the Midlothian active travel network. It would also provide a rare safe (and relatively flat) crossing point for cyclists over the North Esk. Alternatively, the route could go alongside Wadingburn Road.
- An MUP along the B6392 from Dobbie's to Eskbank would be a useful connection.
- The proposal to fill in the gaps in the MUPs between Connection Points 12, 16, 15 and 14 is very welcome.
- We particularly welcome the proposal to upgrade the path between Lasswade and Edinburgh – this is a crucial missing link and should be prioritised.
- A connection between NCN196/Rosewell and Roslin Glen should be provided.
- The AHs1 site at Rosslynlee is not shown on any of the maps, but the suggestions for this site sound good.

Easthouses, Mayfield, Newtongrange and Gorebridge

- A recommended (and signed) quiet route from Newtongrange Station to the path between Connection Point 12 and Connection Point 20 would be beneficial.
- The proposed upgrade of the path between Bogwood Road and Suttieslea Road in Mayfield is welcome, but would be made even more useful if the route continued along Suttieslea Road to Connection Point 20. We hope that the path upgrade will also remove the rather narrow bollards at either end. Upgrading the path through Bryanswood would also be useful, but may not be feasible.
- The path upgrade of the A7 at Gorebridge should extend further north, so that it connects to the required path at Redheugh. Ideally it would extend even further north, to Newtongrange and beyond. A toucan crossing on the A7 to get to the Redheugh path should be considered.
- It isn't clear to us that the route through Kippielaw Steading is better than continuing the existing path along Easthouses Road to Connection Point 11. The proposed route leads to a fairly busy roundabout, rather than a controlled junction, and so we think consideration should be given to continuing the path along Easthouses Road.
- Greenspace separation of Newtongrange and Gorebridge should be guaranteed.

Penicuik and Auchendinny

- The proposals to improve access from Penicuik and Straiton to the Pentlands are very welcome. We hope that further access points can be considered in the future as well.
- For Connection Point 24 (Flotterstone) to be truly useful, it must be possible to get to it without travelling along the A702 carriageway. This will require the footway beside the A702 to be upgraded, although this is presumably the responsibility of Transport Scotland since the A702 is a trunk road.
- The proposed MUP along the A701 should extend further south, so that it reaches Penicuik. The existing cycle lanes on the A701 in Penicuik are inadequate – they are too narrow in places (exacerbated by gully covers and guardrails on the pavements), and offer no real protection from fast, close passes by drivers.
- Segregated cycling infrastructure should be built on the A701 regardless of whether the “relief road” is built. In the meantime, the existing onroad cycle lanes need repainting.
- The development at AHs3 (Belwood Crescent) should be used to extend the existing MUP south from Milton Bridge.
- A connection between NCN196 and the proposed Roslin-Peebles path should be built – perhaps along the orange path near AHs4.
- Should the dashed red line at Hs20 (Auchendinny) be a dashed red/green line?

Loanhead, Straiton, Bilston, Roslin and Midlothian Science Zone

- The core path connecting Connection Point 31 to Roslin-Gilmerton path should be upgraded. The text states that the existing path through the Ec4 (Ashgrove North) site will be upgraded, but this is not shown on the map. Step-free access from these paths to the Edgefield Link road should be provided.
- The guidance asserts that the “relief road” will ease congestion. This is highly unlikely, and requires qualification.
- If the “relief road” is built, it must have an MUP alongside. The Ec3 (Straiton West) site should then also link to this path.
- If the A701 is to become a sustainable transport corridor, traffic levels on it must be reduced. An ANPR system would allow the road to be closed to through traffic whilst maintaining local access from each end. The reduction in traffic levels would allow road space to be re-allocated to build segregated cycling infrastructure.
- There is a small, yet irritating, gap in the cyclepath at the Dick Vet on Bush Farm Road.
- The h55 (Seafield Moor Road) development should include a path upgrade along Seafield Road, connecting Bilston and Connection Point 30 to the existing path on Bush Farm Road.
- At least one MUP should connect the Hs16/Hs17 (Seafield Road/Pentland Plants) sites with the proposed MUP along the A701.
- A connection to the Roslin-Shawfair path should be provided from the e33 (Ashgrove) site. This would also provide a safe, albeit indirect, route from the neighbouring h54 housing development.
- An MUP along the B7003 at Roslin should be considered, although we recognise that the recent path upgrades on the north side of Roslin mean that it is not a priority.
- Do the Strategic Connections which converge near Roslin Glen (2,12, 13, 14) actually connect to each other?
- Step-free access to the path connecting Connection Point 27 and Connection Point 28 should be possible from Main St.

- An MUP to connect Park Avenue to the north end of the Bilston Glen viaduct should be added. This could be done as part of the AHs2 (
- A connection from Bilston Industrial Estate, to the south side of the Bilston Glen viaduct should be added as existing connections are too muddy or too long.
- The Roslin-Shawfair path is frequently in a poor condition in winter. Dead leaves and mud should be cleared more often.
- The A703 footway should be upgraded – this is one of the main Midlothian-Edinburgh commuting routes, but cyclists frequently experience dangerous passes. This would also form a safe route to Hillend, providing access to the ski centre and the Pentlands.
- The speed limit on the A703 should also be reduced to 40 mph. An on-road cycle lane should be added southbound from Hillend to at least the top of the hill at Damhead.
- The proposed network of paths in the Bush estate will need to be well signposted.