

Midlothian Active Travel Strategy consultation

Spokes' response (18/9/18)

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory_record/22518445/midlothian_active_travel_strategy_draft_2018-2021/category/182/current_consultations

Midlothian 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, which go a long way towards creating such a network. Below, we have listed ways in which we believe the proposals could be further improved, and hope that these can be incorporated. We start with some general points, and then discuss the proposals in the geographical areas set out in the Active Travel Strategy.

1 General points

- We believe projects which make it easier to make journeys by active travel which would otherwise would have been done using a car should be given the highest priority. The projects that best achieve this are those which provide safe routes for risk-averse cyclists between the various towns of northern Midlothian, and those which provide safe routes across the Edinburgh bypass. Naturally, some of these are large-scale projects, and are understandably listed as being “medium” or “long-term” in the Active Travel Strategy; we hope that this doesn't mean that design work on these projects will be delayed.
- The proposed network includes safe routes for risk-averse cyclists between almost all towns in Midlothian, and we hope that the few remaining missing links can also be filled in. The most prominent of these are between Eskbank and Lasswade and between Eskbank and Dalkeith. We strongly urge that consideration is given to providing high quality cycling infrastructure along these routes. We have listed some suggestions below, but believe that a larger review of transport routes between Dalkeith/Woodburn and Bonnyrigg/Lasswade is necessary.
- The guidance should explicitly say that the Council will strive to provide safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists 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 adequate 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.
- Pedestrian guard rail should be removed unless there is a specific and demonstrable need for it. Other road safety measures, such as lowering speed limits, should be used instead.

- Filtered permeability is important in all new developments, and should be considered in existing towns as well. Footpaths and cyclepaths must be built connecting each new development with neighbouring streets, whilst minimising the number of entry points for motorised traffic. 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.
- There are a small number of typos:
 - The second point on p31 refers to the B7003. This should be the B7006. The map actually seems to be wrong as well.
 - On p25, “Phillip Place” should be “Philip Place”.
 - On p24 (point 4) and p25 (point 2), we think the references to the Cuiken Burn should be to the Loan Burn.
- Default speed limits should be 20mph (urban) and 40mph (rural).
- In addition to the targets to increase active travel modal share, there should be an explicit target to reduce the modal share of private motor vehicles.
- It should be an explicit objective to submit a project every year for Community Links Plus funding, perhaps in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities/SESTran.
- The proportion of the total transport budget allocated to active travel should be increased by at least 1% every year from the current level until it is at least 10%, similar to the approach taken in recent years by Edinburgh Council.
- A pot of money should be specifically available for carrying out relatively minor improvements such as adding dropped kerbs and converting steps to ramps.
- All new and upgraded MUPs should have priority over any side roads that they cross, with raised tables and road markings to make this clear. Failure to do so makes the road a safer option than the path for many cyclists, and seriously limits the benefit of the path.
- We welcome the proposals to designate paths alongside some A roads as core paths, but careful thought needs to be given to the signage used here. The current paths will not be suitable for all cyclists, and so some will need to continue to use the road, and conflict could occur between cyclists and drivers who believe that all cyclists should be using the path. A suitable wording may be “Cyclists allowed to use footway”.
- The council should experiment with using e-assist cargo bikes for council local deliveries, and explore ways to support local businesses who would also like to do so, as Edinburgh Council is currently planning to do.
- Midlothian should develop an "e-mobility" strategy (not just an electric vehicle strategy), so that individuals and businesses will be encouraged to consider modal shift at same time as fuel shift.

- The council should promote travel by a combination of cycling and use of the Borders Railway, including lobbying to increase bike capacity on trains.

2 Penicuik

- An upgrade of the footway beside the A702 between Mauricewood Road and Flotterstone (or even to Bush Loan Road) should be considered, although this may be 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.
- The usefulness of the connection between Eastfield Industrial Estate and Edinburgh Road would be improved considerably if an SUP was added, extending along Edinburgh Rd to, at least, Beeslack High School and Mauricewood Primary School.
- An MUP across the Glencorse Burn would avoid the need to cycle on Edinburgh Road to get between Penicuik and the Bush, and should be considered.
- The proposed Roslin-Peebles path should include a connection to Penicuik and NCN 196.
- A connection between Brockwood Avenue and Cuiken Terrace is shown on the map, but is not listed in the text.

3 Loanhead and Bilston

- We oppose the proposed “relief road” as it will increase the number of car journeys being made between Midlothian and Edinburgh and is highly unlikely to reduce congestion. It is well documented that building more and larger roads does not normally alleviate congestion or reduce journey times. In particular, the proposed road would increase the number of vehicles being driven through Straiton junction, which is already a notorious and dangerous junction for cyclists. The money which would be spent on the relief road would be better spent on improving public transport and active travel infrastructure in Midlothian, and doing so would do far more to reduce congestion.
- If the “relief road” is built, it must have high quality cycling infrastructure alongside it.
- 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.
- If the A701 is to become a sustainable transport corridor, traffic levels on it must be reduced, and this will not happen simply because the relief road is built. 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.

- The text says that the proposed MUP on the A701 would only go as far south as Seafield Moor Road, but the map shows it going all the way to Gowkley Moss. We believe it should go as far as Penicuik.
- The cycle path beside Straiton pond, between Straiton Retail Park and the Roslin-Gilmerton path, should be upgraded, and step-free access from this path to the Edgefield Link road should be provided. Dropped kerbs should be reinstated on the traffic island on Loanhead Road at the west end of the path, so that wheelchair users do not need to go round three arms of the roundabout to cross the road.
- The Roslin-Shawfair path is frequently in a poor condition in winter. Dead leaves and mud should be cleared more often.
- There is a small, yet irritating, gap in the cyclepath at the Dick Vet on Bush Farm Road.
- 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 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 possibility of an additional bypass crossing between the A702 and A701 should be explored, possibly by utilising the Lothian Burn culvert. Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park have secured funding to carry out a feasibility study for a route along the length of the Burdiehouse Burn (and its predecessors and successors, such as Lothian Burn). This would run from the Pentlands to Joppa, and would link well to the proposed path between Hillend and Straiton.
- The possibility of providing a flatter route across the South Esk between Loanhead and Polton should be explored, although we realise this may be prohibitively expensive.

4 Roslin and Rosewell

- The second proposal on p31 (B7003 to Penicuik Road) is now complete – although ideally the gate at the western end would also be removed, or replaced with a bollard.
- If at all possible, the proposed Roslin-Peebles path should extend further north-east, along the old railway route, and then connect (off-road) to NCN 196.
- The possibility of providing a flatter route across the South Esk between Roslin and Rosewell should be explored, although we realise this may be prohibitively expensive.
- Several short links in Rosewell, as well as off NCN 196, are shown on the map but are not listed in the text.
- A path is shown on the map between Manse Road and the road alongside the Kill Burn, but is not listed in the text.

- A path is shown heading north west from Roslin to the A701, but does not appear to be listed in the text.
- An MUP is shown alongside Penicuik Road between Roslin and Gowkley Moss, but does not appear to be mentioned in the text.

5 Bonnyrigg and Lasswade

- We particularly welcome the first proposal on p34 (Gilmerton Station Road to Melville Dykes Road), but careful thought will be needed in the design of the Elm Row section in order to maximise the route's potential. We are delighted to see that this relatively large project has been designated as a "short-term" project, as we believe it should be one of the council's highest priorities.
- We welcome the proposal to reopen the Lasswade viaduct, and hope that consideration can also be given to reopening the Broomieknowe/Lasswade tunnel.
- There is potential for either the third or fourth proposals on p34 to become the NCN 1 route, taking it away from the main road, and this should be discussed with Sustrans.
- The A7 urbanisation project is very welcome, and we look forward to seeing plans for it when they are published. We strongly urge the designers to look at international best practice, such as including "floating" bus stops and giving pedestrians and cyclists priority at the roundabouts.
- Two connections between Polton Road West and Rosewell Road are shown on the map, but only one is mentioned in the text. Connections between these two paths, along Rosewell Road and Polton Road West, should be provided as well.
- Path improvements are shown on the map west of Polton (along The Cast and between Polton Road and the Bilston Glen Viaduct), but are not referred to in the text.

6 Danderhall and Shawfair

- An MUP is shown extending along the A7 all the way to, and then along, The Wisp. The text only mentions this path going as far north as the Gilmerton-Shawfair path. We believe that it is important that this path is built as shown on the map, and that this is done as part of the Sheriffhall roundabout improvements which are being carried out by Transport Scotland.
- 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 speed limit on Millerhill Road north of Newton Village should be reduced to 40mph. Toucan crossing should be installed where the proposed MUPs cross Millerhill Road, as well as at the Millerhill Road/Shawfair Avenue roundabout.
- A bypass crossing between the A7 and A68 should be added, if possible. This would presumably require cooperation from Dalkeith Country Park but would reduce the travelling distance between Shawfair and Dalkeith town centre significantly.
- A link from the Gilmerton-Shawfair path to Kaimes View is shown on the map, but is not listed in the text.

7 Dalkeith

- 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 is deficient in a number of ways (see next point).
- The route of NCN 1 from Bonnyrigg to Dalkeith High School should be reviewed. Current route is indirect, narrow or bumpy in many places, is often covered with glass or slippery leaves and has a barrier that is impossible for many people to pass. For a lot of cyclists. Consideration should be given to converting the old railway route which runs parallel to and north of Ancrum Road and Abbey Road into an MUP.
- Consideration should be given to closing off some of the roads at Eskbank Toll roundabout, in order to make this junction safer. 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.
- 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.
- An MUP along the B6392 from Dobbie's to Eskbank would be a useful connection.
- Signalisation of the Melville Gate Road/Old Dalkeith Road junction should be considered, as it is currently very difficult to cross when heading west due to the poor sightlines and high traffic speeds.
- 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 wider bike lanes should be added at the pinch point. East Lothian Council has done this in a number of places, including Linkfield Road in Musselburgh.

- A path improvement is shown on Musselburgh Road in Dalkeith, but is not listed in the text. We believe this should be a high priority improvement as it would be the only traffic free route between Woodburn and Dalkeith.
- The puffin crossing where NCN 1 crosses Lauder Road should be converted to a toucan crossing.
- The cycleway past the Dalkeith Schools campus should have priority over traffic entering and leaving the side streets.
- A toucan crossing should also be considered at the A6106/Cowden Road roundabout, so that cyclists can get between the proposed and existing cycleways safely. The barriers on the paths along and between Cowden Road and Jean Armour Drive should be removed.
- Toucan crossings to allow people to safely cross the roads coming off the roundabouts on the A7 near Eskbank should be added as part of the A7 urbanisation.
- The existing cycleway shown on the map parallel to and west of the South Esk through Dalkeith should be tarmaced, if it this has not already been done.
- Paths in the Thornybank development are also shown on the map without being listed in the text.

8 Cousland and Pathhead

- An MUP should be built along the A68, although we understand that this would be the responsibility of Transport Scotland.
- A ramp should be built to provide a link between the A68 and NCN1 where they cross.
- A path is shown for improvement on the map at Easter Cowden, but is not mentioned in the text.

9 Newtongrange and Mayfield

- The small gap on Lingerwood Road between the paths in the first and second proposals on p45 (Stobhill Road to Bogwood Road; Suttieslea Road to Murderdean Road) should be filled in if at all possible.
- The first proposal on p46 (Path through Butlerfield Industrial Estate) is a good example of where the cycleway needs to have priority over side roads. Forcing cyclists to stop at four side roads in the space of 400m makes using the path rather than the road slower and more dangerous, so that many cyclists simply won't use it.
- For the second proposal on p46 (Butlerfield to Cockpen), serious consideration should be given to continuing the path further north into Bonnyrigg.
- The first proposal on p47 (Main Street to Hardengreen roundabout) should extend further south, all the way to Main Street. The steps on the footpath between Dalhousie Road and

Station Road should be replaced with a ramp. The footbridge between Station Road and Redwood Walk should also be step-free, although we understand that this would be the responsibility of Network Rail. Sightlines are likely to be poor for cyclists leaving this path at the Sun Inn junction, to head towards Cockpen, and hopefully some measures can be taken to address this.

- The second proposal on p47 (Oak Place to B6482) should ensure that it is easy and safe to access the existing cycleways on the south west side of the roundabout, for example by including toucan crossings.
- The footpath along the north side of the South Esk, between Newbattle and the A7 joins the A7 via a very narrow gap in the wall and the A7 footway lacks a dropped kerb.
- Two paths are shown on the map without being listed in the text – a small one at Lingerwood Walk and a longer one to the west of Big Brigs Way.

10 Gorebridge

- Consideration should be given to extending the proposed core path along the A7 further north, to Newtongrange and beyond.
- Adding step-free access points across the railway line at Gorebridge should be considered, so that Gore Glen Country Park can be accessed more easily. The second proposal on p49 (Nancy Teuch's path) provides one opportunity to do this, although it may be the responsibility of Network Rail.
- To maximise the benefits of the fourth proposal on p49 (Main St to Bonnybank Rd) and the first proposal on p50 (Stobhill Primary to Barleyknowe Crescent), a short link between them should be added on Bonnybank Road. Similarly, the second path should be extended so that it reaches St Andrew's Primary as well.
- Is the second proposal on p50 shown correctly on the map? Would it be better to make use of one of the existing bridges on Povert Road and Redheugh Farm Road?
- The pedestrian desire line from Station Rd at the Edinburgh end of the station, formerly a pedestrian route, was fenced off when the new car park was built, making for a much longer walk round; the shorter route should be reinstated.
- A path near St Andrews Primary School is marked for improvement on the map, but is not listed in the text.
- A path through Gore Glen Country Park is marked for improvement but does not appear to be mentioned in the text.