

20/01816/PAN: Inglis Green Road ('Booker' site)  
Comments from Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the Inglis Green Rd site, 20/01816/PAN. Spokes wishes to recommend construction of a footbridge over the Water of Leith as part of the development.

*General*

We welcome this proposal in general, since it includes (mostly) much-needed housing on a brownfield site which is well served by public transport, and also has reasonable connections to local cycling routes. We also like the high-density of the housing (to derive maximum benefit from the site), and the location of green area within the site, viz. the strip alongside the river, with a footpath between the housing and the river. This makes good use of the riverside location, the river being a great asset to a site otherwise devoid of anything green or 'blue'.

We feel however that the developers are 'missing a trick' by not including a footbridge across the river at this location (the bridge could be sited at the east side of the site, between it and Sainsbury's). We list the potential benefits of a footbridge as follows:

*1 Benefits to future residents and staff of the Inglis Green Road site itself:*

- a) quick and easy access to Asda supermarket;
- b) easy access to the Water of Leith Path - excellent for recreation, for residents especially;
- c) WoL Path also connects to walking/cycle routes to the City and beyond;
- d) easy access to New Mart Leisure Complex, including the Corn Exchange;
- e) beyond the Leisure Complex, Edinburgh West Retail Park offers a variety of shops;
- f) access to a river bank, for fishing etc (the bank on the side of the development is steep, making the river itself hard to access)

Residents of the Inglis Green Road development would therefore gain easy access to shops, a supermarket and a leisure complex, and routes beyond, without needing a car - making this site an excellent choice for a healthy and environment-friendly lifestyle.

*2) Benefits to the developers:*

The site currently has no green area whatsoever. The plans show a green strip along the river, and a green area at the west side of the site. We believe it might be possible for the land across the river to count as part of your green space, if a bridge were built. That way, you would have more land to build houses on (eg the land on the west side of the site), and your residents would gain access to substantial green-space, as in 1) above. The cost of the bridge would be off-set by the extra building land available.

If the Planning Cttee demur about accepting this 'quid pro quo', Spokes would support you, as we believe the whole community would benefit from the bridge.

*3) Benefits to current Longstone residents:*

All of 1) above

*4) Benefits to residents from the other side (the New Mart side):*

Residents of Chesser, New Mart and other local areas would gain direct foot/cycle access to the Sainsbury's supermarket and to whatever new outlets/employment opportunities are built on the Inglis Green Road site; they could also access the canal towpath via Redhall Park.

A bridge could also mean that children from the New Mart side could attend Longstone School, directly and via quiet roads.

*5) Pedestrian/cycle alternative to Canal Aqueduct:*

The canal aqueduct has a narrow, very uneven and tricky towpath as it crosses the Water of Leith, and alternatives to this busy route have long been sought. A footbridge at 'Inglis Green Road' could provide a solution. The crossing of Inglis Green Rd at Sainsbury's leads to Redhall Park, and from there to the canal, west-bound, and to the NCN75 old rail-path to Colinton, Juniper Green and Balerno.

*6) Nearby crossings of Water of Leith - and possible circular walks:*

There is currently *no* crossing of the river between Slateford and Gorgie Rd, a distance of about a mile (1.6km, 20 mins walk). An intermediate crossing at 'Inglis Green Road' is therefore highly desirable.

Since the river has a path on the Longstone side - from the Longstone Inn, past the Prison, to Stenhouse - as well as its own WoL Path on the east (Chesser) side, circular walks (or bike rides) would become possible with a footbridge at that point. Circular walks are very popular.

In sum, a footbridge at the 'Inglis Green Road' site would have a number of benefits, especially locally but also in a wider context. A footbridge would help make the new residences a desirable place to live, for those seeking a healthier, less car-dependent lifestyle and one with a smaller ecological footprint. The developers might be able to gain more land for building on their site, in return for a substantial contribution towards the cost of a bridge.

Peter Hawkins (member of Spokes Planning Group)  
August 2020

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[Later] At the online consultation a Spokes member asked this question:

I am concerned about the increase in traffic and pollution locally on already very busy roads as a result of extra households moving into the area. This is not the only development progressing locally. While the addition of some private parking is welcome I believe the development is missing a trick by not connecting to the other side of the Water of Leith via a new bridge crossing, for a which a feasibility study was previously carried out prior to Sainsbury's being constructed. This would really improve connectivity locally, joining quiet road cycle routes running from Gorgie all the way to the Union Canal via Redhall Park. There are many short distance car journeys between Longstone and Hutchison/Chesser which could be eliminated by a new crossing. It would also provide viable active travel alternatives for any new residents moving into such a development and aid reduction in car ownership, unnessecary journeys and air pollution. Such a crossing would be welcomed locally. Has any thought been put into this and if not, why not?

**Answer given by the developer**

We are aware of the proposed active travel route in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and potential bridge and we will consider this further in our design.

Also as part of the detailed planning application a transport assessment will be undertaken to consider this further.