



Leicester
City Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 23rd SEPTEMBER 2010

Report of the Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Task Group Review on cycling access to New Walk

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Task Group inquiry into cycling access on New Walk.
- 1.2 To ask the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to agree the recommendations set out in Section Two below.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the pedestrian-only status of New Walk be retained
- 2.2 That pavement-based signs be considered to reinforce the existing no cycling signs
- 2.3 That consideration be given to moving existing no cycling signs to make them more visible
- 2.4 Where just one no cycling sign is present at an entrance to New Walk a second sign should be added to make sure there is no doubt about the no cycling status of New Walk
- 2.5 That the concerns about cycling safety on alternative routes to New Walk into and out of the city be highlighted to the Cabinet Lead for Regeneration and Transportation.

3 The Review

- 3.1 The Review was requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board following representations to the Council about the need to enforce the no cycling regulations on New Walk.
- 3.2 It followed representations to the Council from Mark Burbidge, of New Walk, who opposed the use of New Walk by cyclists.
- 3.3 The Review started with an inspection of New Walk. Members, Mr Burbidge, police community support officers and Council staff went on the inspection (which featured several incidents in which cyclists were stopped and warned for using their bikes on New Walk).

- 3.4 The inspection was followed by a meeting at the Town Hall. The minutes of this meeting are in Appendix 3.
- 3.5 Consultations took place with cycle user groups and other interested parties. Responses are set out in the appendices. Appendix 1 is made up of representations made before the meeting.
- 3.6 Appendix 2 is comprised of subsequent representations which were too late to present to the hearing.
- 3.7 In summary four main views came from those making representations, namely:
 - 3.7.1 New Walk should stay pedestrianised
 - 3.7.2 New Walk should allow free rein to cyclists and pedestrians;
 - 3.7.3 A cycle lane should be created on New Walk
 - 3.7.4 A cycle lane should be created as an alternative to New Walk and providing a safer route to and from the south of the city than London Road/Regent Road.
- 3.8 Comments supporting the use of cycling on New Walk were often accompanied by observations about how dangerous alternative cycling routes were for cyclists.
- 3.9 Comments against cycling on New Walk refer to the danger caused by the comparative speeds of bikers, particularly going downhill, and pedestrians.
- 3.10 The difficulties of creating a safe cycle route not including New Walk were also well recognised in comments to the Review.
- 3.11 Enforcement of the no cycling regulations was felt to be best remaining in the hands of the police but that it be reinforced with education and awareness campaigns.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 While the recommendations are clear, members appreciated the range, complexity and in several cases the elegance of the arguments set out in appendices 1 and 2.
- 4.2 It was not felt that funding of staff to provide a rigid enforcement of the no cycling ban through a regime of fines would have a long term future as it was thought that cyclists would learn to avoid New Walk under these circumstances.

Cllr Paul Newcombe: chair of the Task Group: 1st September 2010

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Submissions to meeting of 3rd August 2010

From Cllr Lynn Senior: Castle Ward Councillor

I am speaking as a Ward Councillor, someone who walks up and down New Walk most days, and someone who has had near misses with cyclists on several occasions on New Walk.

The main problem with a cycle lane on New Walk for me is that the steepness of the slope downhill means that a fair number, although certainly not all, cyclists go down New Walk at a very fast pace.

Putting aside for the moment most of the arguments both for and against having a cycle lane on New Walk I have worries about the steepness of the slope and how a number of cyclists going this fast could be contained within a narrow cycle lane down New Walk.

Cllr Patrick Kitterick endorsed these comments

From City Council Cycling Officer Andy Salkeld

Legal cycling on New Walk is logical, technically possible and a proactive step to take. However;

1. There will be public opposition
2. There are political risks if the move is promoted by the City Council
3. There are more important priorities for limited resources - like reducing road danger on adjacent roads (London Road & Regent Road)
4. Any change should be actively managed as city-wide 'Safer Cycling' initiative

There are examples of similar routes here in Leicester signed and used quite effectively - Bede Park, Great Central Way, Belgrave Way and the very successful City Centre Pedestrian Zone.

From Sally Slade, Leicester City Council

I am responding in my role of ex-pedestrian officer.

This is a very tricky subject. Whilst I appreciate that New Walk is an ideal route for cyclists travelling from the SE to the city centre, I have reservations about converting it to a cycle route.

The problems that would need to be investigated are:

- There is a considerable amount of cross-movement along New Walk. Introducing a segregated cycle lane would encourage conflict between the cyclists travelling along New Walk and pedestrians or cyclists crossing it.
- Creating a segregated route is likely to increase the speed of cyclists and therefore the seriousness of any conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.
- Segregating a cycle lane does not prohibit pedestrians from walking in it.
- New Walk is popular with families, where the children are free to walk without the fear of conflict with vehicles, which is one of the unique and very desirable aspects of New Walk.

There is a cycle route along Lancaster Road, Newton Street, Upper King Street and King Street get to the city centre.

The ideal solution would be to use Princess Road East and West and to provide a pedestrian/cyclist bridge over Waterloo Way to connect the two. This should be considered under the next Local Transport Plan, however, the reduction in Government spending on transport is likely to make it difficult to fund in the near future.

From Anne Provan: Team Leader, Conservation and Nature Team, Leicester City Council.

Please find attached a memo concerning cycling on New Walk. I think the Conservation starting point is that cycling should not be allowed at all.

However, is a recognition that a safe cycle route is required and there is a possible option that would involve some encroachment on to New Walk that could be discussed.

From Jenny Timothy

Senior Building Conservation Officer: Leicester City Council

1). New Walk is a 1.1km linear public walk extending from Welford Place to Victoria Park. It is a conservation area and a registered park and garden (grade

II). Under the definition contained in PPS5 it is a designated heritage asset.

New Walk was proposed in 1785 by the Corporation as a public walk and originally stretched into open fields with wide and pleasing views along its length.

In 1824 the Corporation gave permission for residential development of a type which would preserve the pedestrian character of New Walk with covenants

stating that buildings had to be set back 10 yards from the Walk itself and the gardens to be fronted by iron palisading to prevent vehicular access.

Historically the aspiration has always been for a pedestrian walk without the intrusion of vehicular traffic. Given that motor vehicles were not invented when the walk was originally conceived and laid out, the definition of vehicles can be applied in its widest sense to include bicycles and other forms of non motorised transport. Therefore part of the historic value and character of the designated heritage asset is as a purely pedestrian route.

This pedestrian character is one of the main contributors to the quiet and tranquil atmosphere of the New Walk allowing it to be an oasis within the city centre.

It is also felt to be a safe place for families and others who not only use it as a connection from the City to Victoria Park and beyond but also as a park in its own right with space to run and sit without having to be vigilant for traffic.

New Walk rises quite steeply from Welford Place along its length. Cyclists coming from Victoria Park to could reach relatively high speeds along the length of the Walk.

This would introduce an amount of risk currently not present. This in itself would harm the ambulant character of the space as well as presenting a danger for pedestrians and deterring users who appreciate the space for its safe, calm and tranquil character.

There is an argument for a safe cycle route from Welford Place to Victoria Park and Leicester University beyond given that both London Road and Regent Road are busy roads in and out of the city centre. It may be possible to use part of New Walk to form this route to enable cyclists to cross the railway line and inner ring road without needing to use these main roads.

This would involve using Princess Road West cutting along beside New Walk Museum into New Walk over the bridge then exiting New Walk at De Montfort Square to carry on along Princess Road East.

This needs to be very carefully considered and laid out to prevent cyclists being encouraged to carry on along New Walk. This could be done through the use of barriers along New Walk, although additional street furniture would introduce a cluttered environment contrary to the current open character.

There would also be the option of greatly improving cyclist access along Princess Road East and West with dedicated cycling lanes and priority for cyclists. Consideration also needs to be given to access along or through Salisbury Road to prevent cyclists being fed back onto Regent Road or encouraging them back onto New Walk.

In general terms the introduction of cyclists onto New Walk would not be supported in terms of its detrimental affect on the historic and environmental

character of the conservation area and registered park and garden. However there may be an opportunity for discussions to create a safe cycle route which connects the city centre to Victoria Park.

From Fiona Bromley

I am a regular cyclist and am in full support of a designated cycle lane along the length of New Walk. Alternatives such as Regent Road and London Road are very dangerous for cyclists. In fact, my husband has been knocked off his bike twice on London Road by car drivers pulling out of side streets without looking.

Currently my route to avoid cycling on New Walk takes me down Regent Road and turning right onto Waterloo Way, up the path and straight across New Walk onto Wellington street. This is not ideal as I have to cross New Walk and ride on the pavement for a short while but there simply is no alternative available.

I have been stopped twice by CSO's who generally sympathise. It would be wonderful to have a safe alternative to London Road and Regent Road. New Walk seems to be ideal.

I don't know why residents/businesses are so precious about it. Shared cycle and pedestrian routes work very well elsewhere and you only have to look at the number of cyclists using New Walk to know that it is sorely needed for both cyclists and pedestrians.

As far as Traffic Wardens handing out fines; well instead of that the city Council should be looking at why so many cyclists use New Walk - as above - there is no other safe alternative, without going a very long way around up and down the very steep Lancaster Road

From Andrew Dunn: University of Leicester

I feel very strongly that cycling should be allowed on New Walk. It is the safest, most direct and least steep route to get into and out of town. At the moment New Walk is unsafe because cyclists cycle on it despite the ban. As there is no cycle lane, they weave around pedestrians putting both themselves and the pedestrians at risk.

Allowing cycling and designating a side of the Walk for cyclists (i.e. putting cycle lane on New Walk) would provide a safe way for both cyclists and pedestrians to get into town and give cyclists an alternative route to busy, crowded and pot-holed roads.

From Tony Abbey: University of Leicester Bike User Group

I would welcome a cycle lane down New Walk - I have never understood its pedestrians-only status - there are plenty of pavements on local roads which are (supposed to be) cycle free, but the council's specific cycle lanes are appallingly haphazard.

While on the subject of cycle lanes, I note that in the last few years, pedestrians have assumed a blatant disregard for cycle-only lanes, and children and mothers with prams and mobile phones have become a real safety hazard.

My next door neighbour recently was hospitalised after a woman with pram crossed in front of him without looking and he went over his handlebars. Is the council trying to do any form of policing or education on these matters?

On the other side of the coin, I cycle to work partly along the A47 from Kirby Muxloe and offer you many thanks for the nice wide cycle paths, but I cannot understand why the majority of (younger) cyclists and/or families still use the pavements - education again I guess.

From Steve Lowman

There are other issues on this topic that need discussion. As well as the issue of maintaining the rare tranquility that usually pervades New Walk, I think there are substantial practical safety problems with the idea of putting a cycle lane there. It is surely not wide enough to safely accommodate both 2-way pedestrian traffic and 2-way bicycle traffic.

I think the Victoria Park cycle lane is very unsafe in this regard, but it just about gets away with this because the levels of both pedestrian and cycle traffic there are generally low, there are very few actual crossing points or entrances or exits there, and the visibility there is generally excellent.

On New Walk, the pedestrian traffic level is much higher, there are more crossing points and numerous entrances and exits, visibility is variable, and there is a slope that enables fast cycling.

I think it would be just about wide enough to safely accommodate a two-way cycle lane if there were no pedestrians and the use of entrances and exits was in some way restricted, which is clearly a ridiculous idea.

This is a non-starter, and if it is pursued, this will only be further evidence of the lack of touch with reality that seems to pervade much of the planning and implementation cycle routes in Leicester and just about everywhere else in this crazy country.

New Walk is not broke, so please don't fix it. Most of the Leicester cycling network is very broke indeed, so please fix that instead.

From Dave Pegg

I feel a cycling/skateboard lane in New walk would be ideal I have just returned from Spain, they have them in urban areas and they do not cause a nuisance.

I have noted this over a two week holiday in Fuengirola Costa Del Sol. People know they are there if they are out for a walk and obviously, they get on well in civilised society,

Ps I have used Great Central Way in Leicester over a number of years as a cycling route into Leicester City Centre.

From Michael Holmes

1. I think the “no cycling” signs on New Walk are a bad idea. New Walk is the perfect route for cyclists to the south of the city. It is a much better option than the alternatives (London Road & Regent Road), which have much more traffic. I understand that pedestrians may be affected by dangerous/inconsiderate cyclists, but see my points below.
2. If there was a cycle lane, I think it would be a good idea for city wardens to be able to intervene in the case of dangerous/inconsiderate cycling (and dangerous/inconsiderate pedestrians). If there was not a cycle lane, I do not think it would be a good idea.
3. I think this would be a good idea. It would make the route easier to use for both cyclists and pedestrians. I have my doubts about how effectively this could be policed, but I think it would be a good start. Hopefully it would be the start of a move to make all road/pavement users more considerate towards each other.

From Matt Hassall: Cycle training co-ordinator

As a cycle instructor I'm all for cycling on roads but feel the best way from town to Victoria Park is New Walk. If there is scope there should be a cycle lane.

I often see many people cycling down New Walk and more often than not do it myself with no trouble at all, I feel if there was a cycle lane or even a mixed lane (like the one through the centre of town) people would be more aware of the cyclists.

It's been cycle free for over 200 years so I think its time to bring the footpath up to modern standards and encourage people to cycle.

As for the city wardens I don't feel they warrant the powers to stop and fine cyclists, I feel a large proportion of the people challenged would simply ride away without stopping.

From Linda Faulkner

I'd very much welcome a look at allowing cyclists a path along the New Walk. It is an obvious safe route for cyclists who want to travel from the city centre to Clarendon Park area, Victoria Park, De Montfort Hall or the Leicester University campus.

I lived in Gothenburg for a few years and there was a lovely cycle, pedestrian tree-lined path from the city centre to the cultural quarter and it always had a nice ambience with cyclists and pedestrians respecting each other.

They just marked part of the path off for cyclists. You might find that more families feel that it is safe to cycle from the Clarendon Park area to the city centre or from the city centre to the park which would definitely be a plus!

From Dr Tom Matheson

I'm a very experienced cyclist who commutes from Oadby to the University on London Road and/or Queens Road every day, and who cycles both on- and off-road for pleasure. I have ridden almost every working day of my life for around 30 years in different cities.

For experienced cyclists like me, the provision of high quality cycle lanes on University Road and London Road would most likely be the best solution, because that gives the cyclist priority at intersections as per the road rules, and is thus the quickest route into town.

A cycle lane along New Walk would require stopping at each crossing, and would almost certainly require cycling at a lower speed to cope with nearby pedestrians/children/dogs/drunks etc.

I have not tried Lancaster Road as a route into town so I can't comment on the cycle lane provision there, but it seems from the comments of others (e.g. Steve Lowman) that this is poor.

University Road is certainly hopeless, which is a nonsense if we (as a City and University) are to provide encouragement for staff and students to cycle to work, and to use their bikes for lunchtime trips in to town.

There is essentially NO provision for cyclists. The road surface is dangerously rutted (even for skilled cyclists like me) particularly on the approach to London Road. The traffic lanes are very narrow along the length of University Road, particularly at the intersection with Regent Road, where there is simply no room for cyclists to approach the lights past stationary cars.

Conversely, when the traffic is moving, cars do not have room to safely overtake cyclists, all of which makes this very frustrating for all - and dangerous for cyclists.

Even exiting the University onto University Road is difficult, as vision is obscured by on-road car parking, and there are no cycle-controlled lights to interrupt the traffic flow.

Removing the on-road parking and using the space to provide a cycle lane from the University Entrances to the Lancaster Road intersection would be a good start to solve this.

London Road in the direction of the city centre is also poorly provided with cycle lanes. The surface of the bus lane is very poor in places (near the Landsdowne Pub springs to mind), and only confident cyclists would feel able to tackle the intersection with the inner ring road near the railway station because there is no real alternative to merging with the traffic.

From Granby St onwards things are OK, but the return journey (centre to University via London Road) is very unpleasant, involving a detour on Charles Street to get onto St Georges Way, then a daunting battle with traffic on the ring road up past the railway station, with no provision for cyclists on either Charles Street or St Georges Way. I doubt my own sanity every time I do this.

For less experienced cyclists (and to encourage more people to cycle), I can see the initial attraction of a cycle lane along New Walk, but overall I am not in favour of this.

As a pedestrian, I value the relatively wide and quiet route that it provides for walking in to town, and I think a cycle path would completely ruin that - at least it would do so if the cycle path was wide enough to be usable by cyclists in both directions.

A narrow cycle path is simply not worth contemplating. Moreover, since pedestrians (and possibly cyclists) merge onto New Walk (or cross it) at many points along its length, there would be a continual problem of people having to walk across the cycle lane. I can't envisage how it would work particularly well for either cyclists or pedestrians.

Other points:

The No Cycling signage is probably OK. It should fit with the character of New Walk.

I would have thought that the odd police foot patrol and instant fines for cycling on New Walk would be appropriate.

In summary I would urge you to improve significantly the provision of wide unidirectional cycle paths between the University and the city centre along existing roads (London Road and/or Regent Road/Kings St and/or Lancaster Road), with appropriate cycle marking and priority at all the key intersections. Very poor road surfacing - particularly in the 1m extent from the kerb - is clearly a significant danger at present on these roads that have high traffic loads.

From Andy Morley

1. An assessment of the current 'no cycling' signage in and around New Walk.

I think it would perhaps be helpful to supplement the existing signage with a NO CYCLING message on the surface of New Walk itself, at the entry points.

The major problem is, of course, that people simply ignore the signs. For this reason, I agree with your correspondent when he suggests it could be a lucrative exercise if the Council had power to issue on-the-spot fines for cycling on New Walk.

2. Whether city council staff such as city wardens can be empowered to intervene in certain circumstances

I don't know how complicated a legal process this would be but, in principle, I would support it.

3. An assessment of the viability and desirability of putting in place a cycle lane down the length of New Walk.

I would oppose this unreservedly. The green signs on New Walk say it all. It was created as a quiet walkway a couple of centuries ago, and it is an important and unique part of our heritage as a result.

Anyone taking a quiet walk knows how irritating (and on occasions unsettling) it can be to have a bike whizzing by at great speed. If a lane were to be introduced, would there also be a speed restriction? If so, who would police that?

Please note that I write these comments as a committed urban cyclist. I deplore the state and design of many of our city's cycle lanes, but putting a cycle lane down New Walk (arguably the greatest jewel in the City's crown) is not an answer.

From Martin Bromley

I would like to respond to your survey about cycling on New Walk.

- 1 Signage

Whilst the green signs are in keeping I suspect the message they convey is not enforceable. 'Proper' no cycling signs are needed at entry points.

- 2 Enforcement by council staff

If they had the power to levy fines then they could be very effective. I am aware that a police Community Support Officer occasionally takes an interest but because they have limited powers they are of limited use.

- 3 Cycle lane down the length of New Walk.

As you know I am a daily urban cyclist. I want to encourage bike use and providing a cycle lane on New Walk would achieve this, as it would be a very attractive route.

The alternatives – London Road and Regent Road are very unpleasant to cycle along and no doubt they put off a lot of would-be cycle commuters. The signed alternative using Lancaster Road is better but much more out of the way and the hill is a killer when leaving town.

However despite this I think that encouraging cycling on New Walk is not a good idea. This is because of the large number of pedestrians that use it and the fact that cycle speeds down hill would be considerable.

Based on my own infrequent observations the mixed use of the city's pedestrian areas seems to work. However there appear to be relatively few cyclists trying to get through and speeds are low because of the volume of pedestrians.

I fear that New Walk would not be treated the same, mainly because of the hill and the fact that it would be used by commuters who want to get somewhere in a hurry.

The best alternative would be to reopen Princess Road to cycle traffic by installing a bridge over Waterloo Way. If that cannot be done because of costs then I think there is an argument for allowing cyclists to use New Walk just for crossing Waterloo Way. Such cyclists might come from DeMontfort Square and then go into town along Wellington Street.

PS Peter Veasey sent me his comments. Not sure if he has sent them to you. He said, "At least if there is a defined lane (down the middle would be my suggestion) it would be safer than the current situation with bikes arriving from all angles (unlawfully)."

Leicester Mercury News report: Cycle wardens 'could collect £1,500 a week'

Residents and businesses have called for cycle wardens in New Walk, Mark Burbidge, of New Walk, suggested the idea at a city council meeting.

He believes £1,500 in fines could be collected every week by two cycle wardens employed for about £15,000 a year. The 45-year-old said: "This is a way of generating money for the council in difficult times."

The Friends of New Walk, which represent locals and businesses in the area, backs the idea. Council officers point out they have no power to fine people and that the responsibility lies with the police.

Superintendent [Phil Whiteley](#) said: "It would be difficult to justify a scheme which is self-funded through fines as the objective needs to be one of education and the reduction in the number of cyclists."

The scrutiny board has asked for a letter to be sent to police and for a short review of the number of 'no-cycling' signs to take place.

Appendix 2

Further representations and submissions received but not available in time for the Task Group meeting

From Patrick Davis, Sustrans Area Manager

Subject to adherence to sound conservation design principles, Sustrans would support the creation of a segregated cycle lane on New Walk, not least in an attempt to manage the chronic conflict between rogue riders and righteous pedestrians.

As a corollary, the presently slightly smug signage might be re-cast to ask cyclists to ride with caution/consideration. We'd also welcome community policing in hopes of subduing a long-running skirmish.

Recognising that the issue is still likely to generate strong opposition even in these changing times, I'd like to offer a fall-back position. To many, the short section of New Walk between the eastern end of Wellington Street, southern end of Regent Street / Nelson St and the north-west corner of De Montfort Square would offer a valuable connection between legitimate cycling streets. If a full-length scheme is resisted, I'd urge that this short section be progressed regardless.

From Martyn Smith

I wholeheartedly agree with Patrick (Davis') suggestion to provide for cycling along the section of New Walk between Wellington St/Regent St and De Montford Square

This would even encourage those who cycle the entire length of New Walk to switch to the very quiet back-route alternatives such as Wellington St/Princess Roads E&W. I think it is a good compromise and would be in line with the city travel plan.

The main problem at present for University staff/students is how to get between the train station and campus by bicycle. The use of a short section of New Walk would meet this need.

The University BUG also had a range of views on the prospect of cycling along New Walk, however the majority were not in favour and preferred the idea of improving alternative routes.

I would agree with this view, and mainly use the Lancaster Rd/Newtown/Kings St route. However, sections are in need of improving such as speed restrictions, wider shared path under the railway bridge, reduced delays at the lights etc.

I campaigned to improve the Lancaster Rd/University Road lights for cyclists and it emerged these were under SCOOT control which was completely inappropriate for a cycle route.

This has now been revised and works well. The lights at Lancaster Rd/Waterloo Way and also Regents St/Kings St could also benefit from a cycle-friendly review.

It took substantial numbers of emails to signals division and an on-site meeting to overcome the problems. I felt I was battling against a huge mountain and it would be great to pull together a focused group that achieved these clear and obvious improvements without such effort.

I have often wondered whether a group of people could get together and cycle the routes in dedicated problem-solving sessions....similar to your street hearing

Tony Abbey from the Uni who attended your street hearing fed back that you were thinking about the Princess Rds route as an alternative: how would you connect to Victoria Park and would you be able to afford a bridge over Waterloo Way?

Back to the topic of cycling over a short section of New Walk: shared cycle/pedestrian routes work successfully around the country. The problematic cycling on such paths falls under the umbrella of anti-social behaviour, not normal cycling. Signs over short sections of New Walk used as connecting routes (eg Wellington to DeMontford Square) could encourage responsible cycling.

In support of this proposal, I felt it worthwhile pasting from a site http://www.bikeforall.net/content/cycling_and_the_law.php

"On 1st August 1999, new legislation came into force to allow a fixed penalty notice to be served on anyone who is guilty of cycling on a footway. However the Home Office issued guidance on how the new legislation should be applied, indicating that they should only be used where a cyclist is riding in a manner that may endanger others. At the time Home Office Minister Paul Boateng issued a letter stating that:

"The introduction of the fixed penalty is not aimed at responsible cyclists who sometimes feel obliged to use the pavement out of fear of traffic and who show consideration to other pavement users when doing so.

"Chief police officers, who are responsible for enforcement, acknowledge that many cyclists, particularly children and young people, are afraid to cycle on the road, sensitivity and careful use of police discretion is required."

Overall, this supports the view that the 100 year cycle ban on New Walk needs revisiting. It also suggests the £30 fines are not in line with Home Office views.

The police largely ignore the endemic practice of motor vehicles parked on footpaths/ cycleways, which I would like targeted before cyclists who briefly use useful connecting sections of path because they are not confident along a busy road.

From John Tompkins

Technical and Information Officer: Institute of Lifelong Learning - University of Leicester

I would like to think that this information could be passed on to the appropriate Council Office as well as the Police.

- Cyclists are directed up Wellington Street from Belvoir Street by way of a green marking within a dedicated cycle lane.
- There are no signs between Belvoir Street and the footpath at the top of Wellington Street indicating that cyclists should leave this route.
- The footpath across the small park on De Montfort Square is painted green indicating that it is for cycles.
- I was cycling along the small section of New Walk, approximately 100 yards, which joins Wellington Street to De Montfort Square which would seem a feasible and reasonable thing to do.

I am fully aware that New Walk has been cycle free for the past two hundred years but I think everyone would agree that it is now a completely different place.

I think that everyone would also agree that London Road and probably the whole of the City of Leicester has changed considerably. I have no idea what the increase in traffic volume is but from when I cycled to school in the 50s and 60s to now, well there is just no comparison.

I have added to this letter a small piece about New Walk which I found on the Council Website. I would just draw your attention to the reference to Victoria Park. Victoria Park along with all of the City parks now has extensive, very safe and useful, cycle lanes. Surely cycle lanes on New Walk should now have some serious consideration.

Cycle lanes across the whole of the City and County make cycling not only a pleasure for the people of Leicester but also a safer, greener healthier way to travel.

I have particularly taken advantage of the facilities, after suffering a serious health scare some ten years ago I lost nine stone in weight and became a whole lot fitter and healthier through cycling. Indeed my wife and I own a tandem which we use constantly.

It must be great for people to walk out of the Council Offices into New Walk on a lovely sunny day, which are few and far between, but London Road is a horrendous place to cycle along on a cold dark winter's day, especially during the 5:00 pm madness.

I would respectfully suggest that this small section of New Walk could be easily marked and signed for cyclists thus completing a very useable, safe cycle route from the City Centre to the University, Victoria Park and beyond, indeed to the whole of the South of Leicester.

After recently speaking to colleagues at the University, I understand that since cyclists on New Walk have been targeted there has been a considerable increase in the number of cyclists using the pavements along London Road posing an even greater danger to pedestrians.

I would add one final point regarding cycling on High Street/Gallowtree Gate. The very discreetly placed blue and white cycle signs do not make pedestrians aware that cyclists are allowed.

Travelling to work early in a morning is fine but cycling home at 5:00 in the evening is pretty daunting. Cyclists are not particularly well liked by pedestrians at the best of times but a couple of cyclists on a busy Saturday cycling through High Street/Gallowtree Gate can do more to confirm this "hatred" than a month's worth of cycling along this small section of New Walk.

I feel grieved to waste tax-payers money in this way, having to have someone read and deal with this matter, but felt that I needed to do something to place on record the inherent dangers on London Road, High Street and Gallowtree Gate to pedestrians and cyclists alike, especially after recently witnessing some very near misses on London Road.

Even yesterday during the busy lunchtime when the additional market was occupying most of the walk way on Gallowtree Gate there was no attempt to either warn or prevent cyclists from cycling along there. Wake up somebody!

APPENDIX 3

Minutes of the Meeting of the CYCLING ON NEW WALK theme of the REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT TASK GROUP

TUESDAY, 3 AUGUST 2010 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Newcombe – Task Group Leader

**Councillor Clayton
Councillor Joshi**

Councillor Mayat

Others Present ;

Tony Abbey

- University of Leicester Cycle Groups

PCSO. Ahmed	- Police
Mark Burbidge	- Resident
Jerry Connolly	- Members Support Officer
Mike Keen	- Democratic Services Officer
PC. McKagan	- Police
Anne Provan	- Conservation Officer

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SITE VISIT

Immediately prior to the meeting a Site Visit was held on New Walk to help identify the issues around the use of the thoroughfare by pedestrians and cyclists.

The views of those present were sought as to whether New Walk should remain cycle free or be made shared use, the comments made are summarised as follows: -

Anne Provan – Conservation Officer

Anne stated that New Walk had been in place since 1824 as a pedestrian walk, and as a historic feature of Leicester it was felt that it should remain as a pedestrian only route.

Options were however available to provide a dedicated cycle route, avoiding New Walk. To provide the integration of cycling on New Walk would necessitate the provision of markings on the surface of the footway, together with some form of segregation.

PCSO Ahmed

PCSO Ahmed stated that he had met a number of people from within the local community. Frustrations existed amongst elderly persons who lived on, or near New Walk, regarding the use of the route by cyclists. A proportion of the cyclists using New Walk use it knowing full well that cycling is prohibited. Police regularly patrolled New Walk and actually issued fines to offenders.

Mr Burbidge – Resident

Mr. Burbidge stated that the police were not present on New Walk all day and he felt that education and advice would not make a major difference. Mr Burbidge stated that his view was that all cyclists riding bikes on New Walk should be fined.

PC Mc Kagan

PC Mc Kagan stated that he was always happy to advise cyclists against riding their bikes on New Walk. The general view was that the public were generally aware that cycling was not allowed on New Walk. A hardcore of cyclists would continue to ride on New Walk whatever happened. PC Clayton stated that in his view that to allow cycling on New Walk would jeopardise the safety of pedestrians.

Councillor Newcombe

Councillor Newcombe stated that he was aware that signage was an issue and currently was not always in the right location. He felt that signage on the actual surface of New Walk, and at the various junctions along the entire length of New Walk. To introduce separate cycle lanes would not necessarily work due to the restricted width of New Walk in places and also the gradient.

Councillor Newcombe stated that he welcomed the suggestions of alternative Cycle Routes utilising King Street and Princess Road East, thus avoiding New walk, and suggested that costings be looked at.

Councillor Clayton

Councillor Clayton agreed that New Walk was historically a traffic free zone and to change this would not be a good thing. Councillor Clayton stated that the width of New Walk was an issue regarding potential shared use involving a dedicated cycle lane, and would lead to increased pedestrian accidents, particularly in the vicinity of existing businesses that open directly onto New Walk.

Councillor Clayton supported the view that Cycling within Leicester should be encouraged but not on New Walk.

Councillor Joshi

Councillor Joshi stated that, following the Site Visit, he was of the opinion that the width of New Walk was not sufficient for a dedicated cycle lane to be installed

Councillor Joshi supported the view that markings be placed on the surface of New Walk and at junctions as cyclists tended to be either looking ahead or down at the surface as they rode.

Councillor Mayat

Councillor mayat supported the views of Councillor Joshi, particularly following the Site Visit and stated that any problems would be magnified when the students were back at the local Universities. He said he was completely in favour of not allowing cycling on New Walk.

Councillor Joshi

Councillor Joshi suggested that, particularly as Leicester encouraged a large number of students, that Universities include information within student welcome packs highlighting the 'No Cycling' status of New Walk. Secondary school pupils within the City could also be educated in a similar way.

Councillor Mayat

Councillor Mayat further suggested that City Wardens be encouraged to patrol New Walk, in addition to the Police, to help enforce the total ban on cycling.

Jerry Connolly, Members Support stated that he had spoken with the Team Manager (City Wardens) on this issue and they were adamant that enforcement of the cycling ban was a Police issue.

PC. Mc Kagan

PC. Mc Kagan stated that the Police had already agreed to undertake a 'once per month' operation on New Walk to educate cyclists, or to enforce if need be by the issue of penalty notices. To date in 2010 some 70 penalty notices at £30 each had been issued on New Walk.

Tony Abbey, University of Leicester Cycle Group

Tony Abbey stated that he would only stop cycling on New Walk if he knew he was to be fined, or that a viable alternative route existed.

Education was a priority, as it was clear that a proportion of cyclists were not confident of riding on roads, judging by the number of cyclists that rode on pavements across the City. The fine imposed by the penalty notices was felt to be too high.

Anne Provan

Anne stated that there was a need to look at the longer term aims, to provide more attractive routes for cyclists both into and out of the City. To fund a segregated cycle lane on New Walk would take funding from the provision of other cycle routes.

Jerry Connolly

Jerry stated that, resulting from the City Centre Cycling Review carried out a couple of years previously the issue of cycling on New Walk had been very much an issue then as it was now. Observations received on the current Task Group investigation from various individuals/organisations had been circulated to Task Group members. Jerry questioned whether there was any encouragement by the Universities towards students to use bicycles.

Tony Abbey

Tony stated that a policy document was due to be released shortly on parking and other issues at the University. Jerry questioned whether the University of Leicester might be interested in part-funding an alternative cycle route. Tony stated that this could be looked at.

Anne Provan

Anne suggested that the Cycling Officer be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss work around the work being done to create cycle routes to link principal sites e.g. University to the Science Park.

The Task Group agreed the following: -

RESOLVED THAT

- 1) New Walk remains a pedestrian-only thoroughfare
- 2) Signage be place in the surface at main entrances to New Walk to reinforce the existing no cycling signs
- 3) that this by supported by a continued programme of education and enforcement by police and city wardens
- 4) theTask Group recognises the legitimate concerns of cyclists who want to use New Walk because of safety concerns on alternative routes such as London Road.
- 5) ways of establishing an alternative cycle route involving King Street and Princess Road West.
- 6) the Council seeks joint funding and co-operation with Leicester University to establish a safer cycle route as suggested in recommendation 5.