



Barnstaple

Case Study into how to make a town more cycling-friendly



Provided by
North Devon Cycling Forum

Summer 2014

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Compiled by Eric van der Horst

Contributors:

Toby Andrews, James Baldaro, Simon Bell, Dawn Connor, Mike Harrison, Simon Harvey, Mark Holbourn, Eric van der Horst, Ricky Knight, Pete Leaver, Mark Rice, Michelle Taborn, Rob Veale and Lee Wardle.

The North Devon Cycling Forum is a platform where North Devon Cyclists and Pedestrians intend to engage with their Local Authorities in a constructive and organised matter to achieve better conditions for cycling and walking to enable providing the public with a REAL choice regarding their means of transport.

The Forum is an associate of the Cycling Embassy of Great Britain, which acts as a conduit for best practice around the world and campaigns for the creation of cycle infrastructure in the United Kingdom of which all can be proud of and that people of all walks of life will use.

<http://northdevoncyclingforum.blogspot.co.uk>
<https://www.facebook.com/NorthDevonCyclingForum>
<http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/>

Eric van der Horst is a Barnstaple-based cycling infrastructure consultant, cycling guidebook author, Bikeability instructor and director of EOS Cycling Holidays (see <http://thecyclingdutchman.blogspot.com>). This document has been compiled in response to issues raised by various Barnstaple cyclists and pedestrians. It provides a no-nonsense problem-solving strategic approach to highway issues. It is in line with Devon County guidelines and keeps in mind “best practice” on a nation-wide level.

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Introduction

The only low-cost and sustainable way to **reduce traffic congestion** in Barnstaple is simply to offer the public a **choice** to make fewer journeys by car.

National and international research has shown that the **majority of car journeys** in build-up areas are about **three miles or less** [[1]].

If authorities were serious about proving **good, attractive cycle routes**, up to **35%** of all journeys in build-up areas could take place by bicycle [[2]].

Every person who chooses to **cycle** rather than to **drive** means **one car less on the road!** A cyclist is **not** a different species than a driver. We are **all** human beings and make choices in how we travel for every journey we make. So, a cyclist on the road may well be a driver on a different journey and vice versa. It is important to address this fact. So: **cycling helps** those who are **driving!**

Significant **more cycling** rather than driving results in a serious **reduction** of road **congestion** and harmful **carbon emissions**. It also results in **reduced fuel bills** for the public.

More cycling means an **improvement** of **air quality** in urban areas, improved **public environments** and improvement of **individual health** and **life styles**. There is also evidence that better access to town centres for sustainable means of transport is good for the **local economy** [[3]].

If the public had a **REAL choice** between driving and cycling, many people would choose to ride the bicycle rather than drive their car. Congestion as in Barnstaple Town Centre would **naturally ease**.



To be able to be successful, cycle routes need to be **comfortable, direct, link** the places where people live, work, go to school and shop and **feel safe** to use over its **full length**. If a cycle route still requires cyclists to cycle in heavy motorised traffic flows or fast moving traffic, even for short sections, it is still a route only suitable for the “fast and the brave” and most people won’t use it.

Recent UK research shows that many people would like to cycle, but that they just don’t want to cycle on the road [[4]]. The general public perception is “*that cycling is dangerous*”, but it is the **exposure to motorised traffic** which is the **real hazard**.

Everywhere (not only in classic cycling countries as The Netherlands and Denmark, but also in cycling embracing regions in Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Spain and Portugal), evidence shows that cycling participation will increase massively if safe cycle routes are provided; **build it and they will come** [[5]].

Barnstaple itself provides evidence of this too. The creation of the Tarka Trail and all connecting cycling infrastructure as a result of the Western Bypass project has increased **cycling participation** in Barnstaple **well above national average**.

The same is also true with **new infrastructure** for **motorised transport** though. A new dual carriageway or bypasses only provides a **short-term solution**, as congestion will be repeated long-term. The new driving infrastructure around Barnstaple opened in 2007, but is **already starting to fail** to cater for all motorised traffic. Congestion on the new Western Bypass and its feeding routes is likely to grow further, not the least because of the construction of various new super stores in the area (which encourages the driving culture even more!).



So why do many people in Barnstaple still fail to make consistent more journeys by bicycle? Simple; many areas in the Barnstaple area are still **NOT SERVED** with attractive, direct, actually linking and safe cycle routes. There is not a **REAL choice** for many people in areas like **Pilton, Gorwell, Forches, Whiddon Valley, Roundswell, Bickington** and **Fremington**; it is **driving or nothing**.

Even in the best served area, **Newport**, routes can be not direct or not attractive to use. Even dedicated cyclists in the North Devon Cycling Forum often choose to drive rather than to cycle, as cycle routes are either not existent or just a hassle to use.

Councillors, officers in government bodies on **all levels** and the **public** need to recognise that **improving cycling infrastructure** provides much **better value for money** than improving infrastructure needed for mass motorised transport. It is cheaper to **build**, to **maintain** and to **extend** than infrastructure needed for mass motorised transport.

For example, for the money now spent on the **Roundswell Roundabout extension** (costs: a staggering **£ 2 million**) [[6]], you could upgrade the Sticklepath/ Roundswell/ Fremington cycle network a very great deal, making journeys by bicycle in the area an option for all.

Construction of the proposed **Cross Town Cycle Route** between Newport/Bishop's Tawton and Roundswell/Fremington [[7]] means that the "short-distance public" on the Link Road between Lake and Roundswell roundabouts would finally get a choice between driving and cycling.

This proposed cycle route is still a **long term aspiration only**, while it should be **top of the list** or at least being an **integrated part** of the roundabout extension project. What we'll see happen now is that the greater capacity of the Roundswell Roundabout will **grow back** to the **same level of congestion** within five years after opening of the extension, only clogging up more roads with more traffic.



The proposed Cross Town Cycle Route, but why is it so bendy? It should be direct, just as the Link Road is...

Road network extension schemes only encourage **more driving** and **inactivity**. The **national health bill** as a result of **obesity** is expected to tally up to **20 billion pounds per year by 2020** [[8a]]. This fact must be taken into account when talking infrastructure. A serious investment in cycling is very inexpensive in the scheme of things and with much better outcomes. It is a matter of putting the priorities right!

So, is easy to **support cycling** (and politicians of all walks of life and parties say they do!), but now it is time to **ACT**.

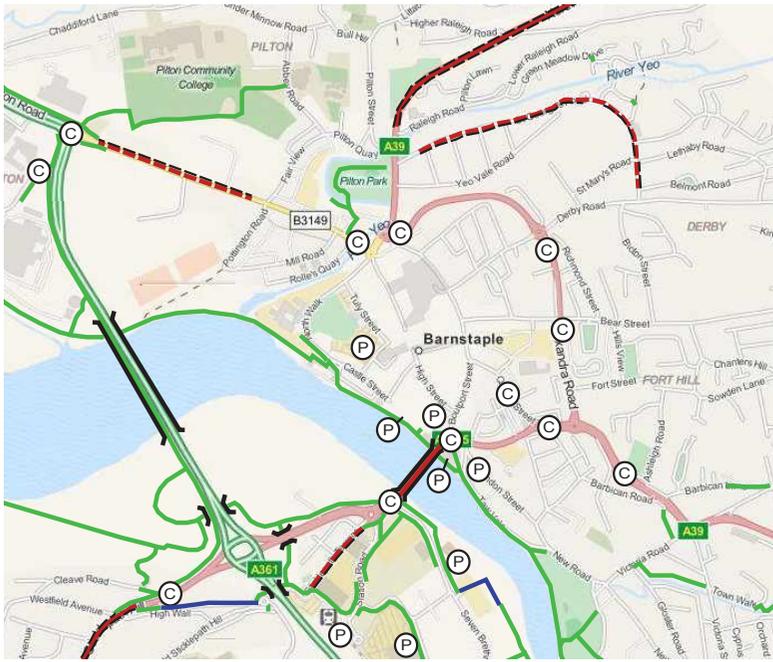
Cycling infrastructure improvements can easily funded **within current transport funding streams**, but it requires a **different way of thinking** and a **REAL WILL** to gradually transform a car-dominated road network into a road network that is friendly for **all users** and favours those who choose for a sustainable means of transport.

This is a **government responsibility** and it shouldn't be up to public initiative to make these things happen. Other Western European countries like Germany, Denmark, Sweden and The Netherlands have all made cycling infrastructure an integrated part of their transport policies a long time ago in all layers of government [[8b]]. Just some figures of children cycling to school (see table below) show how it makes a huge difference [[9]]. Barnstaple has the **potential** to be in the **top five** of this table, truly **transforming** the notorious school run...



The first campaigning success of our forum; the upgrade of a narrow, overgrown and neglected link from the Newport Cycle Path to Newport Primary School.

Town Centre Analysis



Looking at our map of the Town Centre, it is evident that **most cycling infrastructure** concentrates directly on the **banks of the River Yeo**.

In line with leading UK-cycle map design, all **traffic-free cycle paths** in this document are shown in **green** and signposted **on-road cycle routes** in **blue**. However, we've chosen to show on-road cycle routes in **red** if these roads are very busy and demand an **assertive advanced cycling style**.

Dotted black lines on red routes indicate the existence of an **on-road cycle lane**. If an on-road cycle lane puts cyclists actually in **danger** rather than helping them (for example if the lane is very narrow or provides a contra flow, encouraging to cycle against the flow), the road is also marked in **red**, even if the road is more quiet.

A circled **P** stands for public bike parking and a circled **C** for either a pelican or toucan crossing (traffic lights).

The closure of various railway lines in the 1960s and 1970s has provided most of the current Barnstaple cycling infrastructure, more by **luck** than by any strategic thinking. **Strategy** was clearly included in the construction of the Western Bypass though. Just this map shows how well cycle routes were included in its design. Both “projects” have created a **good initial potential** for cycling, but we currently also experience the **limitations** of this network.

Just looking at this map, **three main conclusions** can be made:

- 1.** There is an important **missing link** across the historic **Long Bridge**. Cyclists have to mix with busy motorised traffic here. They either do this or engage in illegal pavement cycling. The bridge with its current road layout is a significant barrier for cycling from/to Barnstaple Town Centre.
- 2.** The **cycle routes** in the town centre limit themselves to the **riverbank only**. Many destinations in the town centre (such as the High Street and Boutport Street shops) are well away from this route and cyclists are left on their own devices to reach these destinations. To cycle from one end of the town centre to the other, cyclists can only use the riverside route or Boutport Street (as most of the High Street is pedestrian domain and busy Alexandra Road is completely unsuitable for “cycling for all”).



Boutport Street has lots of potential for cross-town centre cycling, but has three significant barriers to cycling:

a) **Current signage** with various one way flows is confusing and not inviting. Signage only caters for buses and taxis. As a cyclist, you feel not welcome to cycle in both directions on this route (we have a feeling we are allowed, but the signage doesn't show!). A similar situation exists on The Strand; are cyclists allowed to cycle from Castle Street towards The Square; yes they are, but signage doesn't show this clearly!

b) Current motorised **traffic flow** on Boutport Street with loading bays, taxi ranks, pinch points, entries to multi-storey car parks and one way flows make the street **difficult to navigate** as a cyclist. As a cyclist you have to be on the lookout for hazards all the time. Also, the 30 mph **speed limit** is far **too generous** for this type of town centre road.

c) Another barrier to cycling to the town centre is **lack of bike parking** in the direct proximity of the High Street and the shops on Boutport Street. The stands on the Cattle Market and in front of Lillicose, closest to the High Street, are full most of the time.

3. There is a **total lack of cycle routes** from/to **nearby residential areas**. Pilton, Raleigh, Yeo Valley, Gorwell, Chanters Hill and Forches all suffer from domination by motorised traffic and its road layouts and speed limits need serious reconsideration to make them more cycle-friendly. It is no wonder residents from these areas drive to the town centre and speed on their own local roads!

The current infrastructure in nearby residential areas **only caters for driving** (or unpleasant walking on narrow pavements). This is crazy when you remember that the town centre is **less than one mile away** from most dwellings!

Of course, the **hilly nature** of especially Gorwell and Chanters Hill is a limiting factor when talking cycling, but **at least 70%** of these residential areas are perfectly accessible **without** too much **hill climbing**. Pilton, Raleigh, Yeo Valley, Gorwell, Chanters Hill and Forches together have a **huge potential** to raise levels of cycling.

Any investment in cycling for Barnstaple town centre should focus on the three main issues:

1. Finding a **solution** for the important **missing link** across the historic **Long Bridge**.
2. **Extension** of the **riverside cycle routes** into the town centre, with **new cycle routes** allowing cross-town-travel and **true access** to destinations.
3. Creation of **new cycle routes** which connect the town centre with its **nearby residential areas**.

It needs mentioning at this stage that improving cycling conditions in town centres is a **difficult task**. As space is limited, conflicts of interests are likely to be high. For every proposal made, we have asked ourselves the following questions:

1. Does the proposal provide a good balance between a **high potential of usage** and **cost**, so is it **best value for money**?
2. What are the **effects** of the proposal on **existing traffic flows** and other **activities**?
3. If there are measurable “negative” effects or issues, is there be a **different way** to **achieve** the same outcome?

If we haven't been able to find another way to achieve the outcome, this report wants to stress the **importance** of the proposal, even if it may cause a conflict of interest. Only the gradual implementation of **all proposals together** will create an environment in which **anyone** can cycle **without fear or harassment**.

Where difficult choices must be made, the **choice in favour of cycling should prevail** and overrule other interests. We need a **political climate** which serves the **benefits for the society as a whole**, rather than the interests of isolated individuals.

The **acknowledgement of cycling as a serious means of transport** means every individual truly gets the choice to walk, cycle, drive or use public transport, as relevant for the journey in question. The **availability** of this **REAL choice** will **ease congestion, improve health** and make our public spaces **more pleasant** to be in.

Solutions: implementation tools

Before this study goes into detail about its proposals for Barnstaple Town Centre and its surroundings, it is important to **summarise** and to **explain** some important **established methods** to improve or to create new cycle routes:

Twenty is Plenty!

Twenty is Plenty is a **nationwide campaign** to reduce speed limits in urban areas where people live, making these areas more inviting for walking and cycling.

More than half of all road deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with 30 mph limits, with Britain having the **highest percentage** of pedestrian road fatalities and one of the **lowest levels of children walking or cycling to school** in Europe [[10]].



“Twenty is Plenty” is also the starting point for a culture in which the road is **truly shared**. It **protects the young and vulnerable** and makes our neighbourhoods a more pleasant environment to be in.

Also, as it is impossible to provide cycle paths alongside every road or street in the country, 20 mph speed limits on residential roads and on-roads cycle routes are an **essential ingredient** to achieve the required level of safety. It is an important **low-cost** tool to create successful and continuous cycle networks [[11]].

Shared Space

Shared Space is a tool which can apply to **roads** or **car-free spaces**.

Shared Road Space

Shared Space applied to roads often **includes a 20 mph speed limit**, but can go well beyond that. Shared Space reduces the **impact** of motorised traffic on a street or road by a change to its **design**, taking away the **misconception** that the road or street is there to serve motorised traffic only.

Shared Road Space - Roads with low or medium volumes of traffic

Many **urban roads** with **low or medium traffic volume**, only serving a small geographical area (so no main through roads with A or B road number classification) would be much more inviting to cycle on if the **centre road lines** were **removed**.

On this type of roads, centre road lines just **encourage speeding** and make drivers comfortable that they can **proceed at will**, regardless other smaller or slower road users. Centre road lines **encourage hazardous close overtaking of cyclists** “in the same lane” (which is against The Highway Code [[12]]) and **visually confirm** the misconception that the road is just made for cars.

Without the centre road lines, drivers have to **work their senses** much more. They naturally **slow down** to speeds which do more justice to limited road widths and are **more likely to wait** behind a cyclist until it is really safe to overtake.

Removal of centre road lines can be implemented **easily** if a road section is due **resurfacing** and it even **saves money**, as the “white line brigade” doesn’t have to come out at all!

However, the established Highway Authorities culture puts centre road lines back in after resurfacing without any reconsideration, even at cycling-minded Devon County Council. The **consideration of not putting back in centre road lines** after resurfacing should become part of the **standard “checklist”** of the Highway Departments!



Just an example on how other countries “ditched” the centre road line. Many local through roads in The Netherlands were revolutionary redesigned way back in the 1980s [[13]]. See the picture on the right and how the visual experience is entirely different to Landkey Road in Barnstaple pictured on the left. The Dutch design is probably “way out” for the current UK driving culture. Simply not putting back in centre road lines after resurfacing on this type of roads would be a good start...

Shared Road Space - Roads with high volumes of traffic

Sometimes, as part of shared road space, **centre road lines** are also removed on short sections of **busy main roads**, especially where there is also a lot of **pedestrian** and **cycle traffic**. In this situation, the whole road could receive a **complete design overhaul**. Besides removal of centre road lines, we’ll see **removal of kerbs** (bringing the pavement on the same height as the road to simply remove the difference between the two) and using **surfaces other than tarmac**.



"Shared Space" puts both pedestrians and cyclists in a position to **interact** with motorists on an **equal level**. [[14]]. Since its recent introduction in the United Kingdom, some very brave schemes have been implemented in places where space is limited and/or traffic levels are high.

You see the famous **Poynton Roundabout** (a major intersection of two A-roads) in the picture on the left (see the video on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vzDDMzq7d0>).

Exhibition Road in **London** used to be a dual carriageway, but has an entirely different feel now, see picture on right (<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/exhibitionroad.aspx>).

Shared Path Space

Shared Space also applies to any **car-free spaces**, such as **The Square** in Barnstaple or any cycle path in Devon.

The forum feels that the Shared Space concept for **wide public areas** as The Square works very well. As it is a destination in itself, most cyclists slow down in its approach and are considerate to pedestrians. Also, most of the time, there is plenty of space to pass each other wide. When it is very busy, most cyclists naturally dismount.

Focusing on a small number of conflicts of interests or complaints (which without doubt will have been reported) would be a waste of resources. Erecting small signs "to respect other users" is an effective way of dealing with this small number of conflicts, just as education of a new generation of cyclists through DCC's Bikeability programme.



The Square in Barnstaple; a great example of traffic-free "shared space".

The forum is more critical where it concerns **shared paths** in **narrow spaces**.

The UK as a nation and Devon County Council alike still haven't come round to the fact that a cycle path where cyclists are continuously expected to **slow down** and **give way to pedestrians** is **not a REAL cycle path**, as it forces cyclists to go **walking speed** rather than cycling speed.

Cyclists truly **deserve their own space** and "shared paths" keep causing annoyance among both pedestrians and cyclists, with pedestrians complaining about cyclists and cyclists complaining about pedestrians. Just a white line in the middle of a path doesn't solve this issue and often leads to even more confusion.

The only way to truly solve this issue is by providing own space for both cyclists and pedestrians, separated by a **kerb** or vegetation **area**. When separated by a kerb, the **higher area** is for **walking** and the **lower area** for **cycling**. This design (with at least 2.5 meters width for a cycle path with traffic in both directions and at least 2 meters width for pedestrians in urban areas) is standard in The Netherlands. It appears only very occasionally in Devon, for example on short sections of the Roundswell Cycle Route in Barnstaple and the Exe Cycle Route in Exeter. On these sections, there are naturally NO conflicts of interest and we encourage DCC to build more paths to this standard.

As the forum intends to represent all cyclists in North Devon, we need to stress at this point that cycle paths can **never be made compulsory**, so long as these paths are not just as fast as cycling on the road. Three main factors which make Britain's cycle paths slow to ride are the **shared space concept**, the **choice of surface** (often "second hand tarmac" at best) and an array of **crazy barriers** blocking the paths in many places. So long as these issues are not truly dealt with, cyclists should have the **right to cycle on the road** as well.

At the same time, our forum is also **realistic** with its recognition that the "Dutch standard" (with a cycling infrastructure where cycling is just as fast as cycling on the road) is often well beyond the current council's means. **Without** Devon County Council's "shared paths", it is fair to say we wouldn't have any cycle paths in Devon!

This is why the forum **supports** more "shared space" paths in North Devon. It encourages **new cyclists** to take up cycling, gives people the **opportunity** to cycle without fear for or harassment by motorised traffic and **gets people out of cars**.

A **minimum path width** is essential though to **reduce annoyance and conflicts** between pedestrians and cyclists. This is why the forum is **weary** when it comes to upgrading the status of any **roadside pavements** to shared paths. "Consider other path users" signs can help, but if the infrastructure in itself is just not suitable for the job, we should **not** proceed!

Where cycle paths (either shared or segregated shared with pedestrian use) run parallel to a main carriageway another point of attention is **safety** at cycle path **crossings** at **side roads** and **driveways**.

Cycle paths on which cyclists have to slow down and have to **give way to turning traffic** on every driveway and side road make cyclists not only once again going walking speed rather than cycling speed, but also makes them **very vulnerable** for **collisions** with turning traffic.

With some “mouths” of side roads being very wide, it can leave cyclists exposed for long distances, especially as these wide junction “mouths” with comfortably wide bends allow traffic to whizz around corners at high speeds. Some of the most notorious crossings of this type can be found between Bickington and Fremington, see pictures.



To achieve safety at these crossings, traffic on cycle paths **should have priority** above turning traffic. This is standard in The Netherlands (see picture bottom left) and is also widely spread in Belgium, France, Germany and Scandinavia. The priority for cyclist and pedestrians can easily be assured by **clear markings** and **road signs**. Also, where comfortably wide bends at these crossings exist, the **kerbs** should be re-aligned, so motorised traffic is only able to **turn at low speeds**.

In the UK there are various initiatives by local authorities to introduce this approach within current DfT-guidelines [[15a]], such as pictured bottom right at Gordon Square in London. We invite DCC to make this standard the new default, especially now it is confirmed that the Department for Transport is allowing this design from 2015 [[15b]].



Consistent Destination Signage

For the concept of **consistent destination signage** we have to look across the North Sea once more. Consistent and clear signage is an important part of the success of the Dutch cycling concept. Cycling is for everyone, because for day to day journeys **knowledge** of the “National Cycle Network” **is not required**. People just hop on their bikes and follow the signs, with destination guidance that is **fully consistent** and will bring users all the way to their destination.



Such signage systems simply don't exist in the UK. Many current “back streets-” and “park” routes (which have been put in place to avoid busy main roads, where real infrastructure changes are generally regarded as too expensive) only exist on cycle maps or on-line routeplanners. These routes are often largely unknown to the public, only to be found if you are really on the lookout for them [[16]]. **Signage is the key** to make cycle routes **visible**.

The general **limited familiarity of the public** with their own local area regarding handy cut-throughs and back routes (as many people travel by car only) is another argument to give full priority to a proper signage system. Signage is needed to **introduce** the public to these routes (“Yes, there is another way than the main road!”) and to give users the **confidence** they'll reach their destination without “going wrong” and with the enforcement they won't end up cycling on busy main roads. “Greater Barnstaple” would really benefit from such a signage system. There are lots of suitable routes in the area which would attract more cyclists if the public knew these existed.

Ironically, some **excellent new signs** have been put in place last year in the station area (see picture). It's **design** truly breaths something new; it is **fresh and inviting**, but currently **lacks in continuity**. To roll this signage out across North Devon is reasonably inexpensive and has a great potential to increase cycling levels. The system would also be unique for the UK, further enforcing Devon as the nation's premium cycling county [[17]].



A non-solution: on-road cycle lanes

Generally, **on-road cycle lanes** in the UK cause more **trouble** to cyclists than it actually helps them. This is because the lanes get consistently drawn **far too narrow**. In some places, they don't exceed a width of 60 cm (or even the width of the bicycles' handlebars! The **combination** with reasonably **high speeds** of motorised traffic, passing cyclists within inches, makes this type of cycling infrastructure **very dangerous** to use. There is just **no space margin for slight errors** in steering and space judgment by both the driver and the cyclist. Large vehicles can also **"suck"** the cyclist towards them, another **extreme hazard**.

Narrow cycle lanes might comply with official Department for Transport-guidelines, but are completely **contradictory** with modern-day safety advice for cyclists.

Bikeability (also developed, approved and funded by DfT) recommends cyclists to cycle **at least one meter** from the road side. This encourages drivers from behind to overtake wide, rather than pushing through in the same lane. Bikeability also recommends to cycle **in the centre of the lane** (cycling in primary position) in some situations, thus to enforce Highway Code Rule 163, which states that **drivers should overtake vulnerable road users wide, as if they were overtaking a vehicle** [[12]].

Cycling close to the road side (and on-road cycle lanes exactly promote that!) leave cyclists also **extremely vulnerable for collisions with turning traffic** in and out of driveways and side-roads. Most drivers coming out of a side road or driveway simply overlook cyclists cycling close to the roadside. This is reason why **Bikeability** recommends cyclists to pass side roads in primary position, also holding traffic from behind, avoiding being overtaken on the junction in the same lane and avoiding potentially ending up in a lethal "car sandwich".

Cycle lanes of the extreme narrow type can be found in in **Braunton on Saunton Road** (left picture) and **Exeter Road**. In **Barnstaple** you'll find them on **Westacott Road, Braunton Road** and **St George's Road** (right picture). These cycle lanes expose cyclists to major risks of being knocked off, not to mention the **mental pressure** on cyclists from drivers to use the lanes. The North Devon Cycling Forum would like to see the **removal of all these lethal cycle lanes** as soon as possible!



Other on-road cycle lanes can also be found on Sticklepath Hill and on North Road.

On **Sticklepath Hill**, the width of the cycle lanes could be regarded as just about acceptable, but there is a high risk for collisions with turning side road traffic at the Wrey Avenue and Westfield Avenue junctions. Also, because of the “feeding routes” to the cycle lanes, we see regularly people cycling on the cycle lanes **against the traffic flow**, with is an **extreme safety hazard**. Short-term, the situation could be improved with consistent signage to channel the cycling traffic, but long-term a different solution should be implemented. We see a high level of usage of this cycle route already.

On **North Road**, the cycle lanes are pretty narrow, especially because of the 40 mph speed limit. This allows drivers to overtake cyclists **too close and too fast**. The forum would like to see a 30 mph speed limit on this road, as this would make usage of the up-hill cycle lanes just about acceptable. Coming downhill, cyclists can also easily achieve 30 mph to 40 mph speeds, making it much safer for them to be part of the main traffic flow. Long-term, a different solution should be implemented, especially to make cycling from/to North Devon District Hospital more attractive.

As a further general comment, the forum **prefers segregated cycle paths** away from the main carriageway. Again, cycling in motorised traffic is the **biggest emotional barrier** to take up cycling. The recent rate of fatal accidents on London’s Cycle Super Highway 2 (which mostly consist of inconsistent on-road cycle lanes on busy main roads) show that **people’s instinct is right**. These sad statistics [[18]] just show that cycling in busy traffic is not desirable. **No more on-road cycle lanes!**

Small schemes, BIG changes

Before creating new cycle routes with any of the discussed tools, it is also good to look at the **state of existing routes**. There are a lot of things out there which can be fixed easily and will make a huge difference to the experience cyclists have on these routes:

Barriers: Older cycle routes often come with barriers which sometimes make it **hardly possible to cycle** and are **impossible to pass** for tandems, trailers, recumbent bikes and mobility scooters.



Often, these barriers are intended to either stop motorised vehicles using the cycle path or to boldly make a statement to cyclists that a road is ahead. To **achieve both intentions**, one sturdy, simple **bollard** at the start and end of a path will frankly do the job. If required, at the top of the bollard, a small sign can be installed with the text “road ahead” on one side and a “cycle path” symbol on the other side.



Some barriers in place are in fact a **hazard** to cycling, rather than making cycling safer. Also, these older barriers often communicate a contra dictionary message: “yes, *this is a cycle path, but we actually don't want you to use it*”.

Many barriers can simply be removed, resulting in a much more inviting environment to cycle and without affecting safety in a negative way. All barriers shown on these pages are completely unnecessary.

Poor maintenance: Many older cycle routes are poorly maintained. Scrub bushes **overgrowing** the original's cycle path's width for over 50% are common. In some places, even 60% of the path's original width is overgrown. Also, moss growing on path's surfaces and litter provide a visual appearance of neglect. Just a clean-up and **regular** cut back of scrub can make a huge difference in places.



Forum member Rob Veale shows a nearly completely overgrown cycle path in Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple. This path is part of National Cycle Route 3 (left). On the Roundswell Cycle Route, conditions are very similar (right).

Lighting: Social safety on cycle routes is important. Many important cycle links are not inviting to use in the dark, simply because they are pitch-black. Instalment of low-level lighting can be environment-friendly and will make a huge difference, especially during the winter months, when most commutes take place in the dark.

Signage: Existing cycle route signage is far from great, so it would be great if the few signs we have actually point in the correct directions. Even on the National Cycle Network we find **neglected signs**, pointing in wrong directions.



Also, when talking one-way roads, **exemption signs** for cyclists are often far from clear. If buses and taxis are allowed to go both ways, this may very well be the case for cyclists too, but it doesn't show as such on the signs.

Poor job: Sometimes the job was not completely done when cycle paths were built. For example, sometimes we find cycle paths **running out** just 50 meters or so before the destination is reached. Also, sometimes, at the end of a path, it simply got forgotten to install a **dropped kerb** to provide a smooth transfer between road and path. Last but not least, some paths had **poor surface** or have been **too narrow** from the start.



So, in summary, to create cycle networks that work we need:

20 is plenty: 20 mph zones on roads where the cycle network is on-road and in residential areas leading to the cycle network

Shared road space: on busier roads where cycle paths can't be built due to lack of space (but which are also essential links for the cycle network) road lay outs could be adjusted to allow cyclists and pedestrians to communicate with drivers on an equal level. Simple removal of centre road lines and/or complete redesign are its tools.

Cycle paths away from the road: cycling in any serious motorised traffic is the largest barrier for uptake in cycling, so cycle paths should be in place on corridors where there are no alternatives to busy roads. New paths ideally have separate space for walking and cycling. If this is not achievable, shared paths are an acceptable compromise, so long as these are not too "cramped". Where a shared path is parallel to a road, path users should get priority above turning traffic.

Consistent Destination Signage: to attract more users, the cycle network needs to be visible in the streets. Barnstaple already has a lot to offer for cycling, but many routes hardly get used, just because the public is not aware the routes are there!

Small schemes, BIG changes: a review and upgrade of existing cycle routes

Town Centre Recommendations

1. The Long Bridge Corridor

The **Long Bridge** is the **obvious missing link** in the current Barnstaple cycle network. On the Seven Brethren side, four cycle paths all end at the bridge. On the Town Centre side, The Strand, The Square and the Tarka Trail all push cyclists towards the bridge. The **line of desire** requires a direct link across the river to the town centre at this point, but there are **serious constraints** to make this link a reality.

First, **the bridge** itself is simply **too narrow** to cater for two lanes of heavy motorised traffic, a cycle path and a pedestrian path. It has been suggested on several occasions to **upgrade** the **pavement** on the **downstream side** of the bridge to a cycle path. The argument for this upgrade is that the downstream pavement gets less used by pedestrians, but when forum members set out to measure the bridge width, we found many pedestrians using the downstream side pavement (see pictures).



On the **narrowest section** of the bridge, these are widths:

Pavement upstream side: 1.80 m

On-road lane to Seven Brethren: 3.80 m

On-road lane to Town Centre: 4.20 m

Pavement downstream side: 1.90 m

In the **approaches** on both sides, the downstream side pavement is 2.35 m wide. So, even if it was possible to take 0.40 m off the on-road lane to the Town Centre (which would become 3.80 m just as the on-road lane to Seven Brethren), to widen the downstream pavement with 0.40 m on the narrowest section, this would only generate a **maximum path width of 2.30 m**.

The forum feels this is **too narrow** (most paths have a minimum width of 2.50 m) and has therefore serious doubts about an upgrade to a shared path in this set up. **Conflicts** between users are very likely and there will be serious **safety hazards** for cyclists or pedestrians, falling from the pavement onto the main carriageway. This safety hazard is already present for the upstream side pavement, as this gets densely used by pedestrians.

The forum is also critical to suggestions to make the downstream pavement a **cycle path only**, with pedestrians forced by signs to use the upstream side pavement only. This will simply not work, as pedestrians will still use their “line of desire”, whatever the signs will say.

The **only end result** of using the downstream pavement as a cycle path will be that the **classic stigma** that “*cyclists are inconsiderate to pedestrians*” will be reconfirmed, while the real blame should be on poor infrastructure.

At the same time, cyclists still using the main carriageways (with this pavement cycle path in place) will feel an increased pressure from drivers to use the cycle path, where they currently get tolerated to some extent, as most drivers understand that there is no alternative for cyclists other than using the road on the bridge.

Besides the limited width, another issue is the **feeding system** on the Town Centre side of the bridge to get to/from the proposed downstream pavement upgrade. There are three problems here:

1. The current layout, with a one way lane from the Bridge onto the Strand for limited motorised traffic, will be a **barrier** to cyclists travelling from/to the bike stands in front of Lillicose.
2. Also, there is a **serious safety hazard** for any cyclist coming from the Strand wishing to use the upgraded downstream pavement, as they’ll have to **cross** from their left side of the road to the pavement on their right, **in a bend with poor visibility!**
3. Further, cyclists from Newport wishing to use the path will have to use either
(a) the subway under the bridge to turn around the Bridge Chambers building to access the path (including the safety hazard as described under no. 2)
(b) the lights of The Square and to cycle on the pavement in front of Lillicose to reach the path (with the barrier as described under no.1).

Both journeys take much longer than just joining the road directly from The Square!



The motorised turn onto The Strand (although for limited traffic) is a serious barrier for a downstream side cycle path.

In summary, the forum has **huge reservations** regarding plans to upgrade the downstream pavement into a cycle path, even if this was to be a temporarily solution (“temporarily” tends to be permanent anyway!). The current **pavement** width of 1.90 m is just **too narrow** and even if widened to 2.30 m, the width wouldn’t be sufficient. There is **no sound solution** for the **feeding issues** either.

So; what are the **alternatives**?

It has been mentioned in the media that the new super store development on the Seven Brethren side of the river would include **a new cycle bridge** further downstream, directly connecting this new development with The Strand at the Old Bus Station building. The approved planning application however doesn’t show this bridge.

The problem with such a bridge is that it would be **well away** from the **line of desire**. It would only serve cyclists travelling between the town centre and the Tarka Trail to Bideford. Cyclists travelling for example between the Leisure Centre or Railway Station and The Square (a very common journey) would still be tempted to use the Long Bridge, as this is just the shortest way.

For this reason, the forum feels that a new downstream bridge would’t bring the solution we are looking for. Given the **cost implications** and the **limited benefits**, the forum prefers to look at other options.

We all know that **widening** of the Long Bridge itself without affecting its historic character is **impossible**. This leaves us with the last “hat of tricks”; improving conditions on the bridge as it is with **Shared Road Space** concepts:

Stage one: a **20 mph speed limit** between the closest traffic lights on both river banks. Most of the time, traffic can’t go faster anyway. A 20 mph speed limit would be the first indication to drivers that the space on the bridge needs to be shared with other users. Note: this concept is already in place on Bideford Long Bridge!

Stage two: when the bridge is due resurfacing in the future, the **centre road line** should **NOT** be put back in (this concept is already in place on Bideford Long Bridge too!). Resurfacing activities would also be an opportunity to increase **filtering** opportunities for cyclists at the traffic lights on both sides of the river. This could be done boldly by large bicycles painted on the road at both sides of the bridge where cyclists filter into the main traffic flow. Resetting the **sequence of lights** on the Seven Brethren side (reducing waiting times for cyclists) would be a great win too.

Stage three would be long-term: the removal of all kerbs and tarmac off the bridge and replace it with historic materials, making it a **truly shared space**. We are aware this is a revolutionary concept for many and we appreciate it may take years before Barnstaple as a town is ready for this.

As the expected turmoil about these proposals would be high-profile, the forum recommends to keep the current situation as it is, with a **gradual introduction** of proposals. This can gradually transform the Long Bridge from a car-dominated road into a cycling-friendly area.

Rather than wasting resources, time and energy on the Long Bridge (without finding a truly satisfying solution) it is better to focus on other issues in the town centre which have a much greater potential to raise levels of cycling participation.

2. Town Centre Cycle Routes

20 mph zone for the Town Centre as whole:

The first step to make the Town Centre more cycling friendly is very obvious; making the whole area a **20 mph zone**! This is essential to make particularly Vicarage Street, Boutport Street, Bear Street, Queen Street and Tuly Street **more inviting** to cycle on. Taxis, cars and buses revving up to 30 mph just for 100 metres or so are highly **harassing** for cycling and there is just no time gain to it.

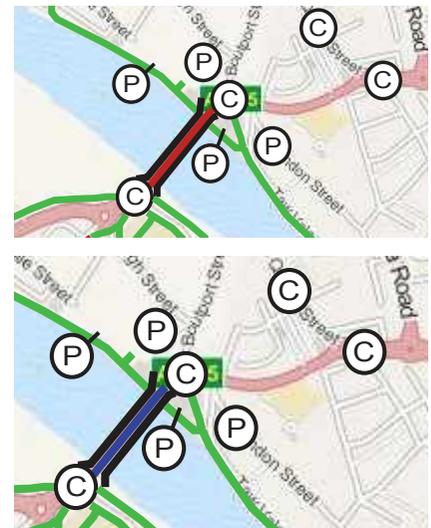
The forum recommends a 20 mph zone for the whole area enclosed by the River Taw, The Square (A3125), Alexandra Road and North Walk. On North Walk, the 20mph zone could start/end at the Civic Centre Car Park entrance.

Main town centre cycle corridors: The Strand:

The next step is to focus on the **main cycle corridors** to cycle from one end of the town centre to the other; the **Strand** and **Boutport Street**.

1. **The Strand** is a very easy signage fix. At **Cross Street junction**, the no entry-sign should feature a **sign** that cyclists are allowed to go both ways. Drivers entering the Strand from the Long Bridge should be served with a **warning sign** to make them aware of the cycling two-way flow.

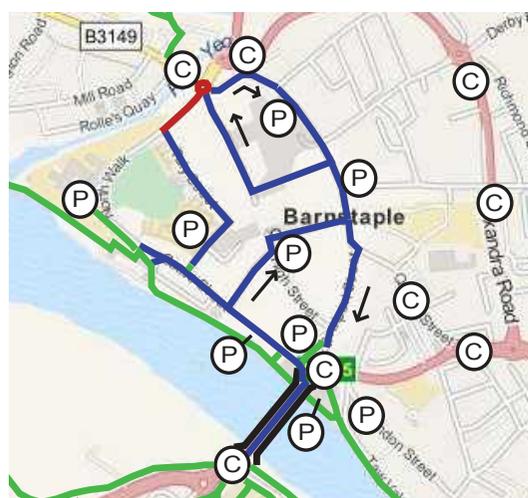
2. Another small fix in this area is improving **access to the Cattle Market** from The Strand by **lowering the kerb** of the **Holland Street** pavement at Castle Street (next to the Chinese restaurant). This caters for the bike parking facility at the Cattle Market at the start of Holland Walk. This parking facility can also be accessed from Rolle Quay Roundabout. It is for this reason that this route from The Strand to Rolle Quay roundabout is also marked as a cycle corridor (see overview map on next page).



3. Another issue on the Strand corridor is the **narrow subway** under the Long Bridge on the Town Centre side. This narrow section is highlighted by various forum-members as a hazardous area. Cyclist-pedestrian and cyclist-cyclist incidents are likely here.

The forum suggests installing some **fish-eye mirrors** to **improve visibility**. A **warning sign** for pedestrians coming down from the **steps** between the Long Bridge pavement and the North Devon Museum building to look/listen for cyclists is also welcome.

Further, the forum wonders whether it is technically possible to **widen the passage-way** in the tunnel by **removing** the strange, slightly **higher area** (“bench on the ramp”) on the riverside of the subway.



Creating Cycle Routes in the Town Centre: This map shows the proposed corridors via The Strand and Boutport Street and various connecting corridors via Cattle Market, Butchers Row and Joy Street.

New or extended bike parking facilities and consistent signage can make these routes visible.

Once we have established these town centre routes, we will head north, east and south to connect the surrounding areas to this network.

This results in ONE compatible and integrated vision for cycling from/to the Town Centre. Beyond the proposed 20 mph speed limits, this vision doesn't affect the current motorised traffic flow at all. One-way routes (as shown with arrows) are in line with current one-way flows.

Main town centre cycle corridors: Boutport Street:

The Boutport Street corridor is more complex than the Strand corridor, as it needs to be created from scratch and must take in current conditions.

1. On Boutport Street, **signage** needs to confirm the cyclist's **right to cycle both ways** between the section Post Office and the pelican lights on Alexandra Road (to Pilton). Current signage, only mentioning buses and taxis, is confusing (see pictures below). The signage should also warn drivers for this two-way flow for cyclists, taxis and buses. **Visual enforcement** of the proposed **20 mph speed limit** is also important!



All exception signs in the Boutport Street area should feature cycling besides buses and taxis!

The picture on the right shows the legal left turn for taxis on Butchers Row; what about cycling?



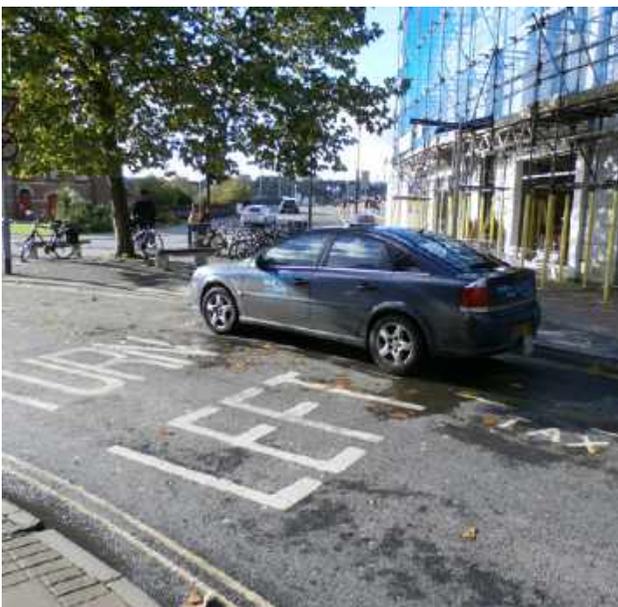
2. The short section of Boutport Street between Rolle Quay roundabout and the Pelican lights on Alexandra Road is a one-way route difficult to open up for cycling both ways, due to the limited road width and buses straddling the whole road (and pavements!) coming from Rolle Quay roundabout. Opening this section for cycling both ways is a serious safety hazard.

To accommodate for cyclists **from Boutport Street** wishing to cycle **to Rolle Quay roundabout**, an official route should be opened **via Joy Street** and the **High Street** section between Joy Street and Rolle Quay roundabout for cycling **in this direction only**. This is in line with the current motorised flow, all is needed is an **exception** for cyclists from the current **time restrictions**.



The High Street section between Joy Street and Rolle Quay roundabout generally doesn't get so crowded with pedestrians in comparison to other sections of the High Street. The forum feels that **responsible cycling** on this section should be possible without causing conflicts.

To cycle **from Rolle Quay** to the **Joy Street area**, signage should direct cyclists from the roundabout **into Boutport Street immediately**, just as the **bus route**, making this an official one way-cycle route.



3. At the other end of town, the one way section of Boutport Street between the Post Office and The Square has been mentioned by several forum members to open up for a two-way flow for cyclists, allowing to cycle from The Square to the Post Office.

Unfortunately, various parking bays and the taxi rank (see picture) make this section very narrow. This is a safety hazard and the only way to overcome this would be the removal of the parking bays and the taxi rank. The forum feels this is currently "a bridge too far".

Better is to signpost a one-way cycle route **from The Strand** via **Cross Street** and **Butchers Row** to the **Post Office area**. This route would serve as the best way to cycle from the riverside to Boutport Street. All is needed is an **exception** for cyclists from the current **time restrictions** for motorised traffic. Note how cyclists will only cross the High Street from Cross Street to Butchers Row.



Looking at the opposite flow (travelling **from the Post Office area to The Square** via Boutport Street), there are two issues:

a) The **illegal right turn** from Boutport Street onto Boutport Street (in front of the Post Office, see picture) needs to be **legalised**, across the refuge in the middle of the road (obvious for cyclists only). This can be done by signage.



b) A **provision** is needed to get cyclists **from the left side** of Boutport Street (at the taxi rank) **onto the pelican crossing** to The Square (so they can continue cycling towards Newport and across Long Bridge) and **onto The Strand**. The taxi rank is a safety hazard here, followed by the busy pavement in front of Lillicose. The forum recommends the creation of a **short shared path** on the pavement between Boutport Street and The Strand (many cyclists cycle here already, showing “this line of desire”).



It will never be perfect, but things can be massively improved by **moving the street furniture**. We'd like to see the **bike racks** moved in their circle shape **under the tree** and the **all disused benches** completely **relocated**, creating more space for walking and cycling in this area. In this way, the **dropped kerb** in front of the taxi rank can be utilised for cyclists coming from Boutport Street. Note this lowered kerb is right in front of the first taxi rank and we'd like to see the **taxi rank reduced** with **one space** (removing the first space only), to create some **safety margin** between this lowered kerb and the first taxi. An arrow painted on the road (on Boutport Street) could direct cyclists onto the pavement here, also warning drivers of this right turn for cyclists only.

Signage and improved bike parking for the Town Centre as whole:

To make the routes as described above visible for cyclists, the introduction of **consistent signage** is needed. Without it, cycling across town remains “messy”. Signage means that the **cycling flow** gets **streamed**.

Signage could be similar to the concept as shown on the right. It will also need to show destinations as Pilton, Raleigh, Yeo Valley, Gorwell, Chanters Hill, Forches, Newport and Sticklepath. All should be in line with a fully consistent signage plan for Greater Barnstaple.



More bike racks are welcome on the **Cattle Market** (current provision overused), in the **Church alleyway** next to the Co-Op on the High Street (current info signs get already regularly used to lock up bikes), on Boutport Street near the **Post Office/Butchers Row** and at the back entrance of the **Green Lanes Shopping Centre**, see pictures.

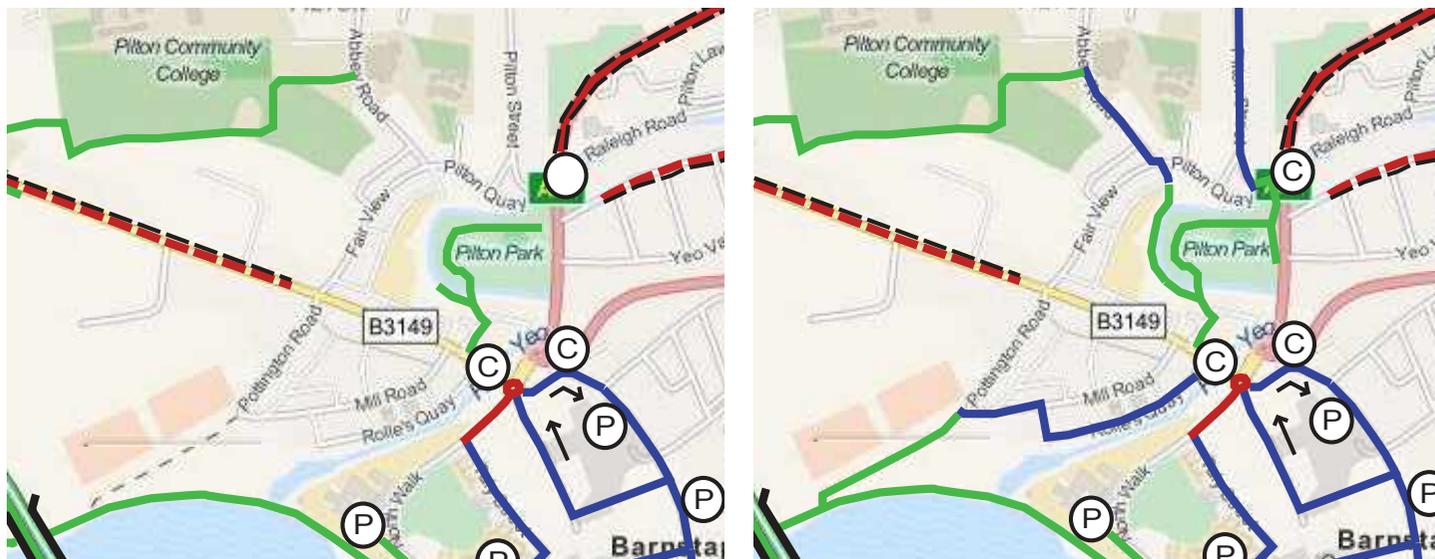


A statement should also be made at the **Civic Centre**. There is hardly any bike parking there. A large covered bike parking area with a visual presence at the main entrance will encourage users of this building to cycle more, whatever the future use of this building will be. Note how all proposed bike parking locations are on the proposed inner town centre cycle network. These parking destinations could be signposted as such, alongside with existing parking facilities, such as on The Square.

Cycle Routes to/from the Town Centre

Route 1: Rolle Quay Bridge – Pilton College

This route is already in development, but has got stuck. It just needs completion to become successful.



The current Pilton situation on the left (BUT showing the proposed routes IN the town centre). On the right the proposed Pilton routes which will link Pilton College and Pilton High Street with the Town Centre and the Tarka Trail! In this study we'll make our way from the northwest to the southeast and show how EVERYTHING could be linked up!

From Rolle Quay Bridge, the pavement has been upgraded to a shared path, turning right into the new development, leading to Pilton Park. Here, the cycle route splits into two branches.

On arrival at Pilton Park, the main branch turns towards left, with a shared path to the large car park on Fair View Road, where it suddenly stops. Cyclists get treated with a “no cycling” sign or have to take their bike down the steps onto the car park. The current footpath on the river bank simply needs to be upgraded into a shared path. There is a limited width here (due to the width of the river bank), but most of the time, this path is very quiet and can cater for both cyclists and pedestrians. A “consider other users sign” could be displayed.



Long-term, the path should be widened. A reasonable low-cost option would be to create a cycle path next to the car park, parallel to the river bank, with the path on top of the river bank for walking only. This solution would still need landscaping, as a cycle ramp near the current steps would be required.



The next obstacle is the crossing of Fair View Road onto Abbey Road. The recently introduced zebra crossing is a great asset here. On both sides of Fair View Road, the pavement should be upgraded to a shared path to provide access to it, especially for cyclists coming from the Town Centre. These cyclists could be encouraged to use the zebra by signage (by painted arrows on pavement), as the visibility coming out of the alleyway is very poor and a serious safety hazard.

A 20 mph zone for Fair View Road/Pilton Quay between Pilton Causeway and Abbey Road could be another way to achieve the required level of safety. Cyclists coming from Abbey Road towards the Town Centre have a reasonable visibility onto Fair View Road.

The on-road route via Abbey Road should continue to the start of the Pilton Cycle Way. To enforce the current 20 mph speed limit, speed bumps at the pinch points could be introduced. As part of the signage system, Pilton College should be signposted all the way from Rolle Quay Bridge, to improve usage levels of the great, but underused Pilton Cycle Way. Many people don't know it is there!



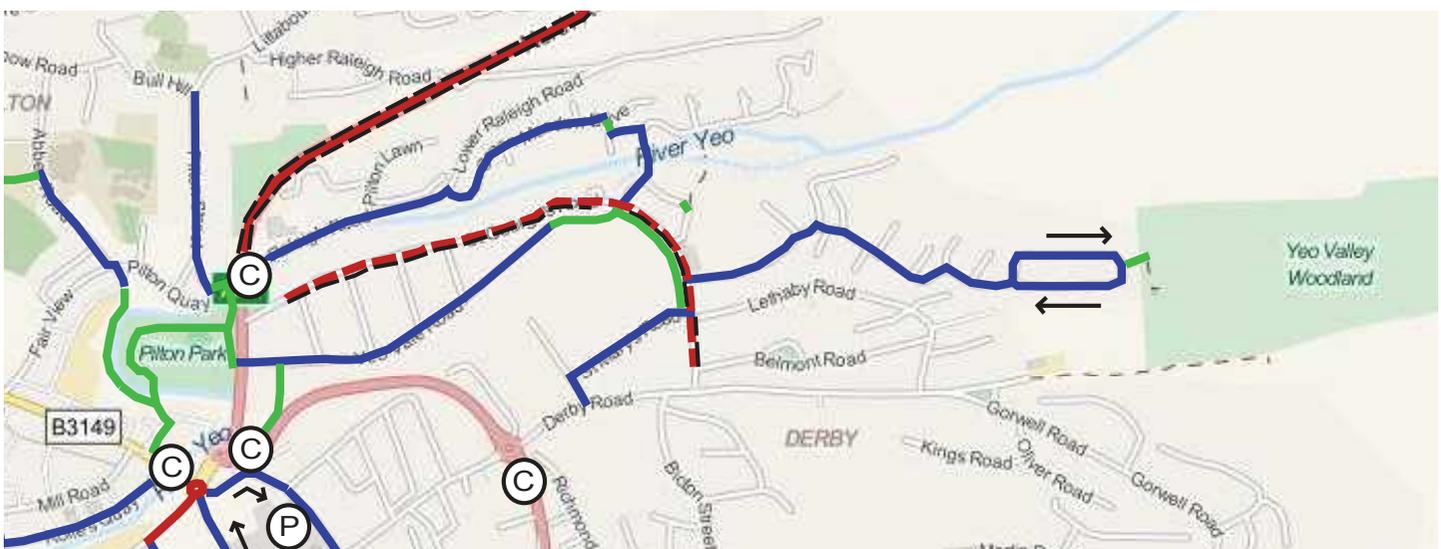
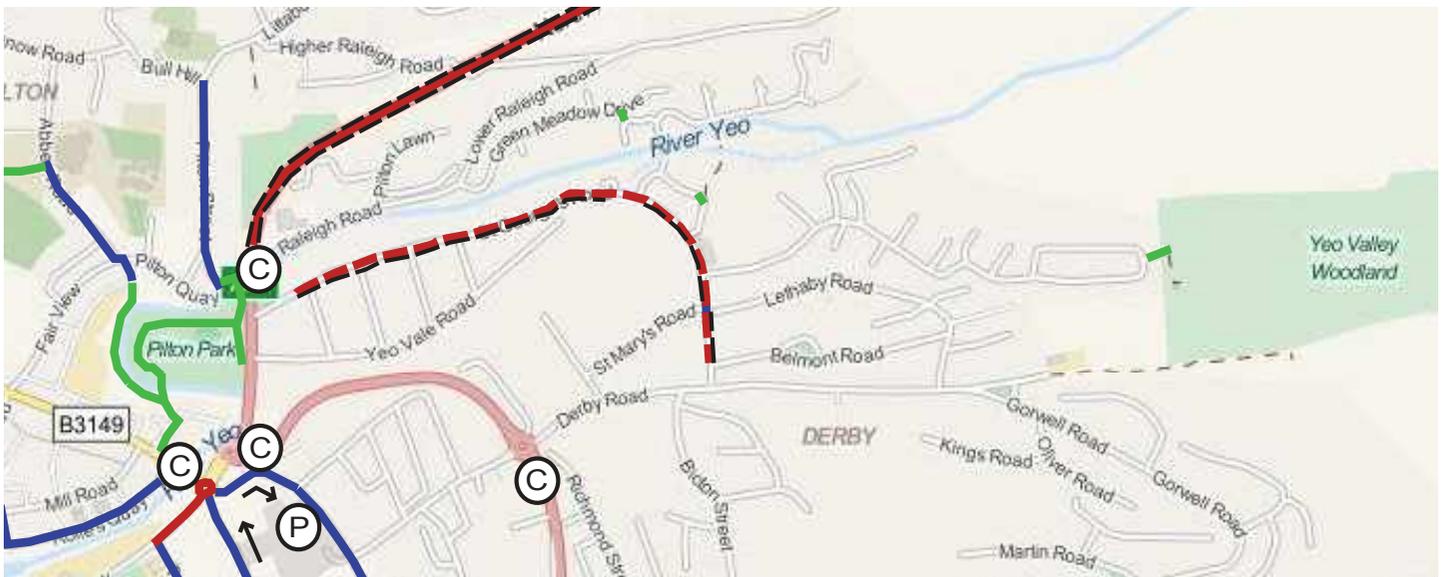
Note back in Pilton Park, we have a second branch of this cycling corridor from Rolle Quay Bridge. A new bridge has been built across to the river, allowing cycling into Pilton Park, with a current dead end at the Pilton Causeway (steps). To create a link to Pilton's High Street, a ramp needs to be created from the low park level up to the crossing in front of the Yeo Dale Hotel. At the same time, a similar ramp is needed out of the park to connect to Yeo Vale Road. This ramp will allow connectivity with our proposed Raleigh Route (Route 2). This Raleigh Route will also serve Pilton High Street, with a direct route from Boutport Street Corner, see route 2.



A third branch of cycling corridor from Rolle Quay Bridge worth developing is the on-road route via Rolle Quay, Mill Road and the Rugby Ground Alley Way to the Tarka Trail. Currently, some old inconsistent signage is in place on this route, which needs replacement to a new higher standard. Also, surface and lighting improvements on the privately owned Rugby Ground Alley Way/Car Park is in need of improvement. This might be possible through negotiations with the land owner.

Route 2: Boutport Street Corner – Raleigh & Yeo Valley

The Pilton Causeway Road is an enormous barrier to “cycling for all”, which is not easy to resolve due to limited space issues. As can be seen below, the link is vital though to link a very long-shaped and FLAT residential area with the town centre. If a safe Pilton Causeway Route from Boutport Street Corner to Raleigh and Yeo Valley can be established, potential for cycling increase is huge, especially if the proposed connections in the Town Centre and the Pilton area are also in place.



Our route from Rolle Quay Bridge through Pilton Park (see route 1), is simply too long to really attract new cyclists from/to Pilton High Street. Route 1 is mostly useful to provide a direct route between the Town Centre and the Abbey Road area. The Pilton Park “second branch” allows the Raleigh Route (Route 2) to link towards Pilton College!

For a good connection between Pilton High Street and Boutport Street a new direct route is needed though, somewhere in the “line of desire” of the Pilton Causeway. The forum proposes a completely new-built path, which will also serve the Raleigh and Yeo Valley areas.



Our proposed route starts on Boutport Street Corner at the pelican crossing on Alexandra Road. This crossing can easily be upgraded to a Toucan crossing. From here, a new path needs to build on the north side of Alexandra Road. At the start, it can use the current scrub area on the bridge next to the pelican lights. From there, it will “hug” the wall of the private car park. Some re-aligning of the main carriageway of Alexandra Road will be needed to get to the required width of at least 2.5 metres (3 meters would be better, as this will become a major cycle route into town!). The main carriageway of Alexandra Road has sufficient width to cater for this (see top pictures).



The other side of “the wall” in the pictures above, see clarifying text on next page...

Where Alexandra Road starts to bend off around the town centre, a gap in the wall is needed to take the cycle route across the far end of the private car park on the other side of the wall (see bottom picture left previous page), leading onto an existing alleyway to Yeo Vale Road (see bottom picture right previous page). This is where this cycle route can connect to Yeo Vale Road, allowing cyclists to turn left to Pilton or to turn right to Raleigh.

Cyclists to Pilton High Street would have to cross the Pilton Causeway at the end of Yeo Vale Road straight on via a new cycle ramp into Pilton Park (see route 1), which connects to a crossing (existing infrastructure) to the Yeo Dale Hotel, see pictures below.



Cyclists to Raleigh would follow Yeo Vale Road to the far end of its dead end, where another section of new infrastructure needs to be developed.

In this area, St George's Road is currently lethal for cycling, most and for all because of its very narrow cycle lanes, which in some places don't exceed a width of 60 cm (see picture right). The North Devon Cycling Forum would like to see the removal of this cycle lane as soon as possible!

To find a solution for the St George's Road area (where speeding is very common; a general 20 mph speed limit would do the area a lot of good!), it makes sense to utilise Yeo Vale Road (and its proposed cycle path facility to Boutport Street) to be able to connect Raleigh to the town centre as well. Most of the area is flat and very suitable for cycling, meaning this route has a high potential of usage.





The current footpath from the dead end of Yeo Vale Road (see pictures above) should be improved and upgraded to a path which allows cycling and meets the approval of residents on this path. At the end of the residential area, a new shared path should lead across the green field and “bend” onto the footpath alongside St George’s Road towards the Co-op, making this route a natural line of desire (see pictures below).

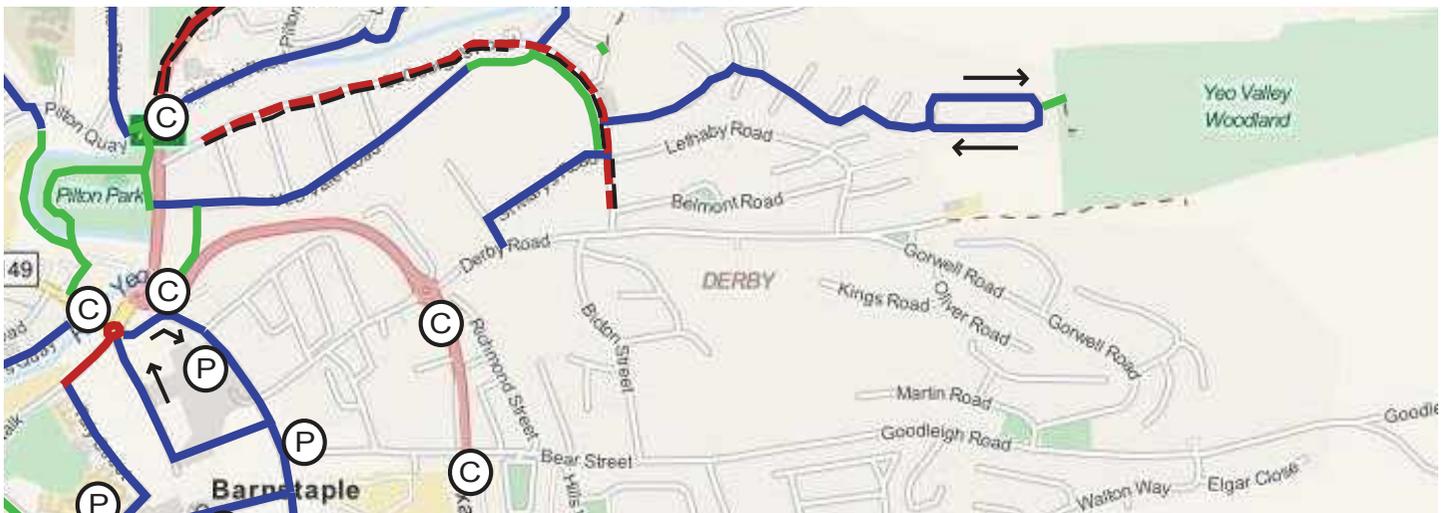


The pavement alongside St George’s Road between Raleigh Meadow and St Mary’s Road should then be widened and upgraded to a shared path. This will allow connectivity with our proposed Gorwell Route (Route 3), also allowing children from Raleigh to cycle to Yeo Valley School!

Cyclists from the Town Centre to Raleigh would cross St George’s Road at the point where the cycle path from Yeo Vale Road “hits” St George’s Road, allowing them to cycle on-road via Raleigh Meadow into Raleigh. Signage should continue into Raleigh and include the link from Claude Dix Close to Greenmeadow Drive, with a first sign directing to the town centre via this new route on the junction of Greenmeadow Drive and Raleigh Road. It could also be considered to extend signage all the way back to North Road, with North Devon Hospital as a final destination of this corridor route 2.

Route 3: Boutport Street - Gorwell

This route starts where Vicarage Street departs from Boutport Street (access point for the Green Lanes Car Park) and should create a direct link to the Gorwell area. This is a relatively short route, where much can be achieved simply by traffic-calming.



Above the situation with all proposed town centre routes and “Route 1” and “Route 2” in place, below the situation with the proposed addition in this chapter, “Route 3”.



Vicarage Street should be a strictly enforced 20 mph zone (a 20 mph zone for the town centre as proposed would make this happen). As suggested for Boutport Street, 20 mph speed limits could be painted on the road surface, just as pictorials of bicycles. Long term, the narrow yellow-boxed section halfway Vicarage Street could be used to increase this enforcement further. This section would be ideal for “shared space road” paved surface, which would truly give drivers the feeling that they are “guest” on this narrow residential street.

Further, something needs to be done to help cyclists across the Alexandra Road roundabout to Derby Road. We recommend upgrading some footpaths around this roundabout, utilising the current pelican crossing. The footpath from Vicarage Street to the pelican crossing should be widened to 2.50 meter for shared use, just as the footpath from the pelican crossing to Derby Road. This widening should include an improved link with Richmond Street, as this road will allow connectivity with our proposed Chanters Hill Route (Route 4). See pictures on the next page.



To be able to avoid the busy roundabout Alexdra Road/Derby Road as a cyclist, these paths should be widened. The pelican lights should be upgraded and widened for cycle use as toucan crossing (ONE press on the button please to stop traffic from both directions!). The gate to Richmond Street should be replaced by some simple bollards...

The route to Gorwell needs then to continue via Derby Road, in front of Yeo Valley School. Unfortunately, there is no space for a shared space path here, things are just too narrow. To make this section of Derby Road up to Park View Road a more pleasant environment, a 20 mph speed limit is again essential. The Yeo Valley School's main entrance is exactly on this section; another incentive to create this 20 mph zone. Again, 20 mph speed limits could be painted on the road surface on this short section, just as pictorials of bicycles.

Cyclists from the Town Centre to Gorwell are then recommended to use Park View Road and St Mary's Road to avoid the hill of Derby Road. This route connects with our Raleigh Route (Route 2) and also provides access to Heppenstall Road/Long Meadow Drive. The quiet on-road route can also be used to climb to the higher end of Gorwell (via Lethaby Road), although the last very steep section won't serve many cyclists. Cyclists heading down from Gorwell to the Town Centre could use Derby Road itself. Signage is important to make the public aware of all links described. This whole area can do with some extended traffic-calming. It makes sense to extend the proposed 20 mph zone in front of Yeo Valley School into Gorwell, possibly including St George's Road (see previous remarks).

Route 4: Boutport Street – Chanters Hill



On the left the situation with all proposed town centre routes and “Route 1”, “Route 2” and “Route 3” in place; now we add “Route 4”, with a large section of new traffic-free cyclepath, easily to be created on the sides of Queen Street Car Park!

To create a cycle route between the Town Centre and Chanters Hill it makes sense to utilise an enormous pitch of tarmac already available; the Queen Street car park. Via Queen Street Car Park, staying close to the Royal Mail sorting office, it is possible to create a traffic-free cycle path from Queen Street all the way to the junction of Bear Street with Alexandra Road, without affecting the capacity of the car park. It is a matter of some re-aligning of the car park (some paint and some new fences) and one cut through the bushes separating Alexandra Road from the Queen Street Car Park, see pictures below.



At the junction of Bear Street and Alexandra Road, the current pelican crossing can be utilised, gaining access to the existing wide pavement on the south side of Bear Street. This path can easily be upgraded to a shared path, linking to Hills View. All is needed is some signage and here and there a lick of paint, especially to counter-attack the hazards of traffic going in and out of Ebberley Lawn. In this situation, a white line in the middle of the path could be beneficial, keeping cyclists away from the wall, improving visibility into Ebberley Lawn. Pictures of this section at the top of the next page.



The footpath to be upgraded alongside Alexandra Road and the current pelican crossing. Some landscaping will be required to get the path to the crossing up to standards and there will also be some work required to upgrade the crossing to a toucan (again, ONE press on the button to cross both traffic flows please!). After that, the route can continue on Bear Street via the wide pavement already in place, all the way to quiet road Hills View...



From Hills View, the route would continue on-road via Sunset Heights and Sowden Lane-East, ending at the junction on the top of Chanters Hill and Constitution Hill. On the corner of the junction of Hills View and Bear Street, there would be connectivity with route 3 (via Richmond Street). On the corner of Sowden Lane-East, there would be connectivity with route 5 (Forches Route via Ashleigh Road).

For all the on-road areas of this route, a 20 mph speed limit is essential and the forum recommends making this the new default speed limit for the whole Chanters Hill area, especially because of the presence of two schools here, Our Lady's and Ashleigh Primaries. On the Bear Street route to Bratton Fleming, a 30 mph speed limit could remain in force, although you could argue that sections of this road should also have a 20 mph speed limit (in line with recommendations of the nationwide 20 is plenty campaign).



Route 5: Queen Street – Forches

This new route is utilising existing on-road infrastructure most of the way, but is in need of improved infrastructure on three very short sections. As with all other routes, clear signage is essential to make it a success!



Above the situation with all proposed town centre routes and "Routes 1-4" in place; below our vision of "Route 5"



The route starts from the Post Office area on Boutport Street, joining Queen Street (linking to Queen Street Car Park and its new cycle path as proposed under route 4).

The route is on-road on Queen Street (20 mph speed limit!) up to the corner of Hardaway Head (where the pelican crossing is). From here, the footpath on the east side of Queen Street needs to be upgraded to a shared path linking to Buller Road.



At this point there is a choice. The route could go to the pelican crossing on Belle Meadow Road either on-road via Buller Road and Bedford Street or via an extended upgraded footpath alongside Belle Meadow Roundabout. Of course, the upgraded footpath lies more on the line of desire, but if access to the Belle Meadow pelican crossing was re-aligned, you could also create a line of desire into Bedford Street.

If the footpath upgrade was chosen, some realignment of the kerb alongside the roundabout is needed to generate a suitable width for the new path (just upgrading the status of this path is not good enough!). In that situation, it is also recommended to create a priority for cyclists and pedestrians across the mouths of Buller Road and Hardaway Head. Pictures of the current footpath alongside Belle Meadow Roundabout above, a picture of the Bedford Street connection to the current pelican crossing on Belle Meadow below.





For both options, the pelican crossing to Summerland Street needs to be upgraded to a toucan crossing. On the Summerland Street side, the current triangle pavement on the junction would become a shared space area, allowing cyclists to travel on/ from Summerland Street. Summerland Street is already a 20 mph zone.

Via Barbican Terrace and Litchdon Street cyclists can already travel towards Rock Park and Newport (connectivity with the Newport corridor, see comments route 6), but due to one way limitations, this is currently not possible for the opposite way of travel. The forum recommends allowing a two-way flow for cyclists on this handy link.

The main route continues via Barbican Road and turns left onto Oakleigh Road. Here, the existing pelican crossing across Belle Meadow Road needs to be upgraded to a toucan crossing and the linking footpath from Oakleigh Road to be widened to a shared cycle path. On the other side, a safe two-way link needs to be created to Ashleigh Road. This is currently a one-way road, where fast moving traffic from Belle Meadow Road travels to Ashleigh Road. The narrow pavement and the existing parking bays on this short link road are serious obstacles for the creation of a safe two-way cycle link to Ashleigh Road. Realignment of this very short stretch is required.



To be able to create a wider shared path from the pelican lights to Ashleigh Road, the parking bays need to be moved to the other side of the road. There is ample space here; a wide pavement here gets truly never used by pedestrians. This current “waste of space” could be redesigned to allow parking on this side of the short link road. With the parking bays moved to the other side, there is now space to widen the existing footpath alongside the sports club wall, separated from the road by a continuous flower bed (current flowers and plants in place at both ends of the existing parking bays could be replanted there). The flower bed will serve to separate cyclists and pedestrians well away from the high speed traffic from Belle Meadow Road. The link road could also be used to announce the 20 mph speed limit, as recommended for the whole Chanters Hill area (see route 4).

On the corner of Ashleigh Road, the new cycle path would end. Via Ashleigh Road (steep climb) there will be connectivity to the Chanters Hill route (Sowden Lane East, see route 4).

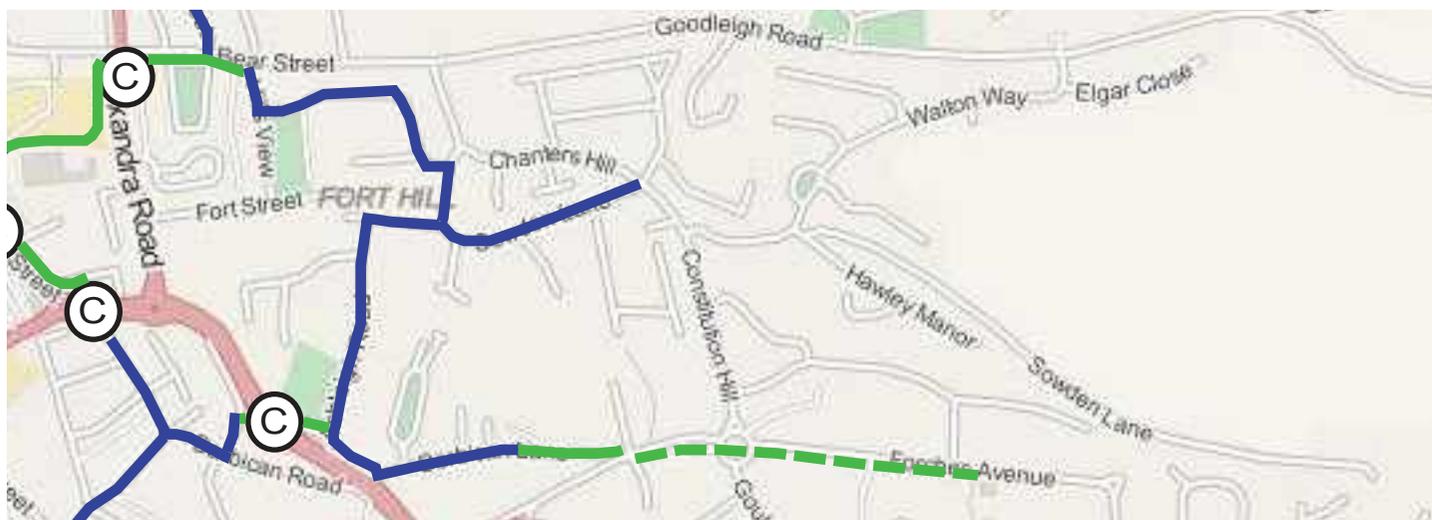
The main corridor route will turn right onto Ashleigh Road and immediately left onto Barbican Lane, following its wide alleyway all the way to the junction of Highfield Close with Victoria Road. The forum envisions that this route will initially end here, with signage pointing to Forches up Victoria Road.

There is a second phase though, which needs to be considered long-term. The route could continue into Forches and link to Whiddon Valley, but the Forches roundabout at the bottom of Constitution Hill is a major barrier. It is unbelievable how much public space motorised traffic claims here to “roam”. With the wide roundabout being on a steep slope as well, it is an extremely uninviting area for cyclists.

Long term, the forum recommends the development of a cycle path on the south side of Victoria Road and Forches Avenue, all the way from Highfield Close to Forches Primary School, alongside the Forches shops. There is plenty of space for such a shared path alongside the main carriageway. The path should connect/continue in a straight line across the existing roundabout area.

To make this route safe and to reduce the number of crossing points of the new path, the Forches roundabout layout should simply be abandoned. The “upper side” of the current roundabout (on Constitution Hill side) could become a two-way road connecting Victoria Road and Forches Avenue (the current roundabout “bend” would serve nicely as a traffic-calmer). Constitution Hill could join this road in a T-junction set up.

Gould Road could join via a T-junction in a similar way, on the Victoria Road side. The roundabout section from Forches Avenue to Gould Road could then be completely dissolved, making way for the new cycle path and an inviting new park area. It would be the perfect place for a new playground and could replace the facility that used to be in place of the current Forches housing development. The forum appreciates this is not something for the current era, but this concept is well worth to develop in the future.



Route 6: The Square – Newport



This cycling corridor is the only existing connecting cycle route between Barnstaple Town Centre and a residential area close to the town centre. From the shared space of The Square, the route follows the riverside cycle path to the corner of Rock Park, where it joins the road.

Via Taw Vale, New Road and Victoria Road cycling is on-road, linking to the popular Hollowtree Cycle Way and beyond. There is a growing number of cyclists to be seen on Newport Road as well, especially cycling commuters. The route is direct, which makes it well used, even without a signage system! Also, the Park & Ride facility at the end of Rock Park is popular. This all shows how the public is willing to change to more sustainable means of travel if a real transport choice is offered.

The North Devon Cycling Forum stresses the importance of the Newport route for the cycling culture of Barnstaple. It is one of the few good examples in North Devon of how a sustainable transport corridor works. It is a delicate balance though. Any **increase of motorised traffic** on especially New Road and Victoria Road will **negatively affect** the number of people now willing to cycling, pushing these people back in their cars and so just adding to the good old congestion.

It is for this reason that calls from the motoring lobby to reopen Taw Vale for through traffic must not be answered. The current arrangements offer solutions for all means of transport. The wide Belle Meadow Road clearly caters for heavy motorised traffic and Victoria, Road, New Road and Taw Vale cater for walking, cycling and public transport.

There are some minor adjustments which could make this corridor even better:

1. A 20 mph speed limit in the whole Newport area, enclosed by the river Taw, The Square, Belle Meadow Road, Inner Relief Road, Hollowtree Road, South Street and Park Lane.
2. Replacement of all yellow “No entry to the Square from 23rd May” signs by signs with just “No entry to the Square” (there is still one mentioning this date on Gloster Road!). The signs mentioning the 23rd May are well out of date and suggest the current arrangements are a temporarily experiment only.



3. Cycle route signage will further improve usage of the route and reduce confusion at some points:

a. On the approach to the Square, direction signs should explain to use the Square for usage of the Long Bridge or for parking in front of Lillicose only. All town centre traffic should get directed to the subway under the Long Bridge (see network plan).



b. "Consider other users"-signs in the approaches to The Square to make pedestrians and cyclists aware of each other to reduce low number of complaints by pedestrians further.



c. At the corner of Rock Park, at the end of the cycle path, cyclists to Newport should be directed more clearly onto the road and the New Road roundabout, rather than keeping cycling on the pavement. This can easily be done by adding a bike symbol, the text "Newport" and an arrow on the tarmac. The arrow should point towards the pinch point on Taw Vale, just before the New Road roundabout.



d. The start/end of the Hollowtree Cycle Way on Victoria Road is not obvious. It is amazing how many people still manage to find it. It is an important point to introduce direction signage (especially once other transport corridors to the town centre are available as well, enhancing and supporting the Barnstaple cycling experience as a whole).

e. Long-term: When Taw Vale, New Road, Victoria Road and/or Newport Road are due resurfacing in the future, the centre road lines should NOT be put back in on any stretch. This encourages 20 mph speeds rather than 30 mph speeds (see shared road tools).

Route 7: Long Bridge - Sticklepath



A minor issue which needs to be mentioned as part of the Long Bridge Corridor is the confusing two-way on-road cycle lane on Sticklepath Terrace, between the roundabout and the station/Sticklepath Hill. Traffic intensity is very low on this dead end road, but the way how cyclists from Sticklepath to the Town Centre get encouraged to cycle on the wrong side of the road is ridiculous!



The forum recommends removal of the pictorials of bicycles promoting the usage towards the Town Centre. The cycle lane on Sticklepath Terrace could continue to exist for cyclist travelling towards Sticklepath, but given the low traffic intensity, there is really no need for this facility. If this road was ever due to be resurfaced, the paint brigade could save themselves the trouble!

Further up on Sticklepath Hill, there are some safety issues as a result of poor design of the cycle path / cycle lane infrastructure alongside/on the A3125.

Clearly the on-road cycle lanes between Torrington Road and Westfield Avenue are supposed to be for one-way traffic (same flow as on the nearby lane of the main carriageway), but it happens regularly that cyclists coming from Torrington Road travel downhill using the cycle lane on the south side of the road, cycling against the traffic-flow on the road.



Cyclists do use the cycle lanes in the wrong direction because:

- a. They find the right turn from Torrington Road via the roundabout onto the Sticklepath Hill cycle lane downhill too challenging
- b. The majority of cyclists intend to travel to the town centre and not onto the Western Bypass River Bridge; if you choose to cycle on the correct left side of the road downhill, you get directed onto the Western Bypass River Bridge, rather than to the Town Centre
- c. The difference between cycle path and cycle lane is very confusing
- d. Staying on the south side of the A3125 is simply the shortest route to the Town Centre and avoids having to cross the main road twice.



A short-term solution for this problem is the development of a signage system:

- Cyclists from Torrington Road to Town Centre/Station/Seven Brethren/Tarka Trail to Bideford should be directed via PETROC and Old "Old" Sticklepath Hill to the station area (so NOT via the A3125 at all!)
- Cyclists from Torrington Road to the Western Bypass River Bridge heading for Tarka Trail to Braunton/Pottington/Pilton College should be directed via the Torrington Road roundabout onto the cycle lane on the north side of the A3125 and then onto the cycle path. Some additional widening of this path at the Toucan Crossing halfway down Sticklepath Hill is welcome, as waiting pedestrians/cyclists can block the path.
- Cyclists from the Long Bridge to Roundswell should be directed via Sticklepath Terrace/Western Bypass underpass and then via the existing route onto the one-way cycle path and cycle lane on the A3125 to Torrington Road roundabout. The signage points onto Torrington Road at the top of the hill. Note signage to Sticklepath should point to the toucan crossing halfway Sticklepath Hill and further onto the short cycle path link to Cleave Road.
- Cyclists from the Western Bypass River Bridge to Roundswell should be directed to Roundswell at the Toucan Crossing halfway Sticklepath Hill, pointing across the road. This is the best crossing point to get to the correct side of the road for usage of the on-road cycle lane up the hill. Signage to Sticklepath should point to the short cycle path link to Cleave Road at this point.

This signage will help cyclists into correct use of the current cycle lanes on Sticklepath Hill, but will NOT completely solve the issue. Long-term, it should be looked at to remove the on-road cycle lanes on Sticklepath Hill and to use the gained road space to create a wide off-road cycle path on the south side of the road, suitable for two-way travel.

Cost Estimation & Full Overview Map

This study shows how a good town centre cycle network can be created by using and upgrading existing infrastructure. If you compare the map of the existing infrastructure and our map after implementation of the recommendations on the next pages, there is a huge difference!

The table below shows in a glance how we achieved this:

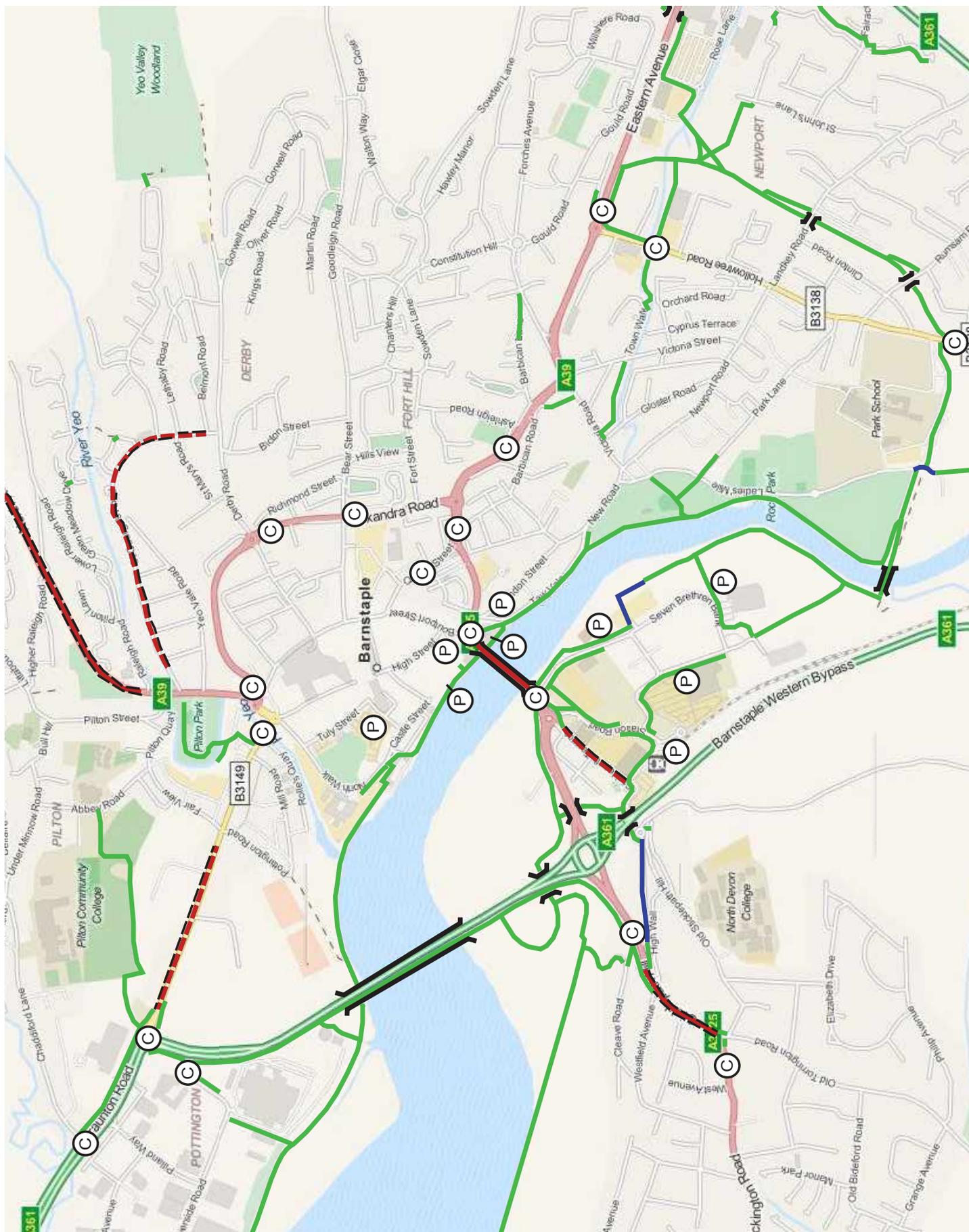
Action:	Total distance:	Estimated cost:
Status upgrade of footpath to shared cycle path <i>status upgrade only with some signage, see [[25A]]</i>	1180 m	£1000
Widening of footpath to shared cycle path <i>using current scrub or grass vegetation areas, see [[25B]]</i>	1050 m	£40.000 [[19]]
New cycle path construction from scratch, see [[25C]]	250 m	£312.500 [[20]]
Serious road reconstruction, see [[25D]]	300 m	£375.000 [[21]]
Introduction of 20 mph speed limit in recommended zones, see [[25E]]		£40.000 [[22]]
Small schemes, BIG changes <i>(minor adjustments of current network, including new bicycle parking areas, see [[25F]]</i>		£20.000 [[23]]
Consistent Signage system for Town Centre and surrounding areas ("Routes 1-7")		£18.000 [[24]]
TOTAL COST		£806.500

To put things in perspective, the Roundswell Roundabout Extensions (with only short-term relieve to congestion and without giving the public any choice between modes of transport) costed £ 2.000.000 [[6]]. All our town centre plans only cost 40% of the Roundswell roundabout budget!

If the total costs of £806.500 for this project were spread over five years, costs per year would be £ 161.300. On a population of 30.000 people, this works out to about £ 5 per citizen per year! The recommendation by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group is £ 10 per citizen per year spent on cycling [[26]], so this project would be half of the recommended expense! Where is the political will to make it happen?

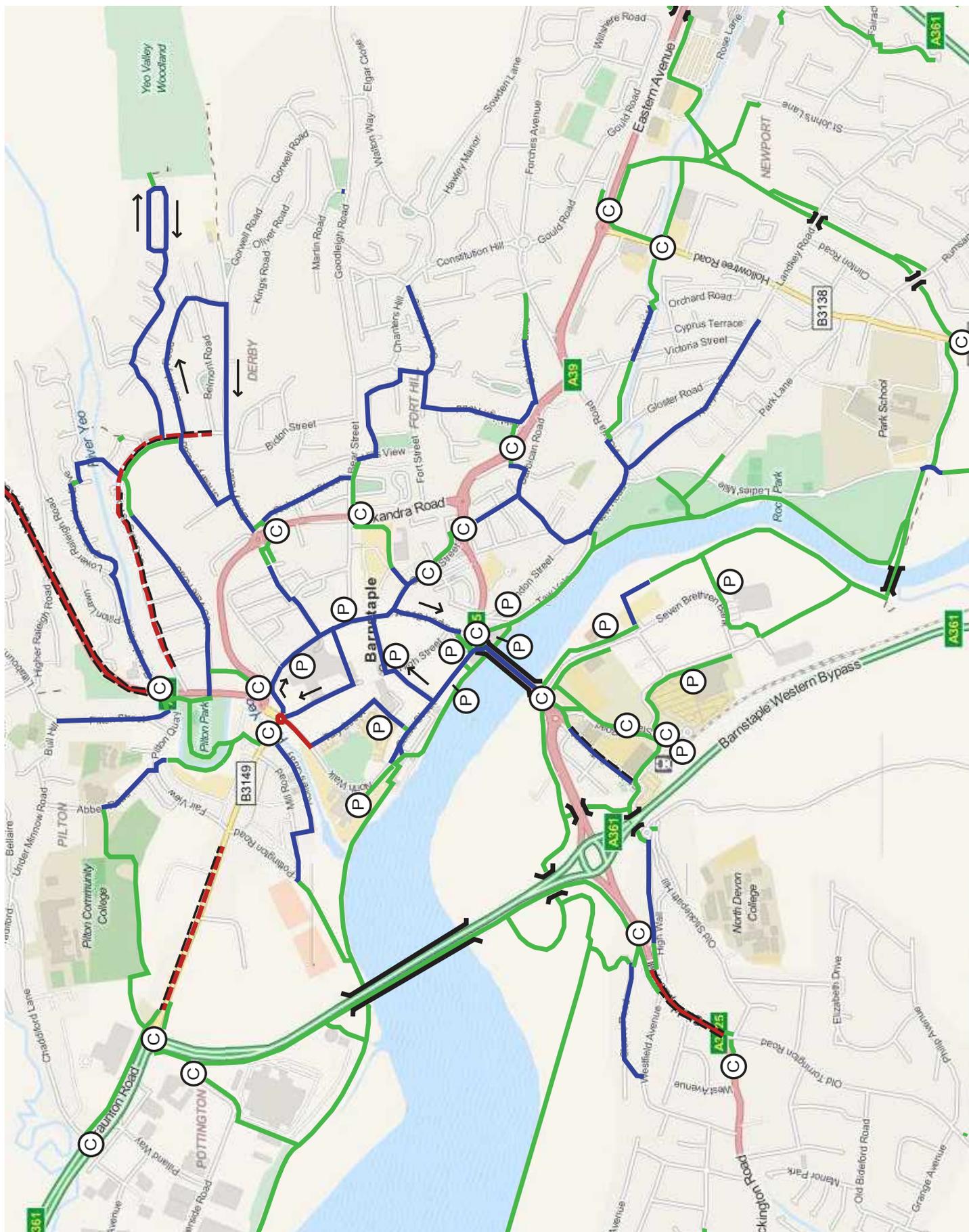
Cycle Routes in Barnstaple - Current situation.

Note this map is still showing a better picture than the actual situation in the field. As much of the network is poorly signposted, this means it doesn't really exist for many people. The most painful example of this is the Pilton Cycle Way!



Cycle Routes in Barnstaple - Proposed situation.

This map shows Barnstaple with all proposals fully put in place. A consistent signage system, present at all junctions of this network (with signage as displayed on the cover of this study) makes the network visible. Without this, the network still doesn't exist!



Issues further afield

Sticklepath - Roundswell - Bickington - Fremington Route

Congestion on the B3233/A3125 road between Fremington and Sticklepath via Bickington is a daily annoyance for many. And when the traffic is finally flowing, it moves fast, with still a high density of traffic; not exactly a road desirable for happy cycling for all. With the Tarka Trail NOT connecting to these areas, cycling on this route is only for the fast and the brave. Sad, especially if you realise that just 1 km of new cycle path is needed to finally provide an alternative means of transport for this area...

The current cycle route has all the elements many underused cycle routes suffer from:

1. It is poorly signposted, so many people don't know it exists.
2. The traffic-free sections (the cycle paths) are poorly maintained and seriously overgrown in places.
3. There are some important missing gaps. Also, at its ends, it doesn't reach entirely to its destinations. Cycling on busy sections of main road is required, so there are not many people who use the route.
4. Some elements of the cycle path (i.e. road crossings) are in fact very hazardous to use, as a result of poor design.



Proposals in the Draft North Devon and Torrigrde Local Plan for the “Cross Town Cycle Route” [[7]] only partly address these issues. It is not rocket science to understand that a lot of congestion in Barnstaple Town Centre, on the A3125/B3233, North Devon Link Road and “Barnhenge Roundabout” is a result of the large scale motorised commuting by the residents in the huge Sticklepath/Roundswell/Bickington/Fremington area. Any little trip to town? Well, it is by car; there is no way to get there by bike!

There are massive gains to be made here. A true “Cycling Super Highway” all the way from Sticklepath Hill to Fremington Beechfield Road Estate, linking to all important residential and trading zones in the area, is needed. The good news is that most of it is already there, it is just a matter of sorting the gaps and fixing some issues on the way!



Above the current situation, with some short sections of cycle path in green and various more quiet roads in blue, all to be utilised into a continuous cycle route. Note there is currently no signage system in the area whatsoever, apart from a sign at the bottom of Sticklepath Hill that cycle routes to Sticklepath and Roundswell “are somewhere up the hill”. So, the network above (fragmented as it is) doesn’t really exist in the public domain. Many people don’t know it is there! Note the **Fremington Quay access road** (connecting from the B3233 to the Tarka Trail) is increasingly unpleasant to cycle and walk, despite its 15 mph speed limit. The rising popularity of both the Cafe and the Quay has increased its traffic flow. Multiple forum members have reported speeding and inconsiderate driving. It is clearly not the “Cycling Super Highway” from the residential areas to the Tarka Trail. Given its diagonal northwest-southeast position, it will always be “a long way around” for people from Fremington and/or Bickington who would like to use the Tarka Trail to cycle to town. Below the situation if one kilometer of new cycle path was to be constructed (mostly by widening and upgrading current footpaths) and if issues on the way were properly dealt with. Again, continuation of a new consistent sigange system, as proposed for the town centre, is essential to make the route truly visible! Note the proposed “Cross Town Cycle Route” via the proposed Larkbear Development is also shown.



On the following pages, we take the route from Sticklepath Hill to Fremington from east to west and we explain all our proposals for this corridor.

To start, see pages 45 and 46 for our recommended long term solution for Sticklepath Hill; a cycle path away from the road on the south side of the A3125, for cycle traffic either way, resulting from giving up the current cycle lanes and re-aligning the road and its kerbs. Short term, the current on-road cycle lanes can be utilised by putting a signage system in place, guiding cyclists into the correct flow of traffic.

Signage is urgently required to guide cyclists from the roundabout at the top of Sticklepath Hill onto Old Torrington Road, as this is where the main cycle route through Sticklepath/Roundswell really starts. Old Torrington Road in its current state is rather unfriendly for cycling though. Its design (wide road, centre road lines, parked cars in bend, etc) encourages speeding. A 20 mph speed limit and traffic calming is very much needed all the way between Sticklepath Hill roundabout and Old Bideford Road junction to create a more pleasant environment for cycling. Alternatively, Broadclose Road can also be utilised, but this requires three turns at junctions rather than one (Old Torrington/Old Bideford Rds jct).

The road via Old Bideford Road between Old Torrington Road and Sainsbury's in Roundswell is pretty good as it is, the trouble starts as soon the cycle path starts, just northeast of Sainsbury's.



Apart from this cycle path having its fantastic lower side for cycling and higher side for walking (separated by a kerb), everything else went wrong here. Every 150 metres or so, cyclists get saddle soar and punctures on very uncomfortable speed bumps. There is also a great many barriers on the way, saying "ok, this is a cycle path, but actually we don't want you to cycle here". Add years of neglect, with bushes overgrowing the path up to 50%, and we get what it is; a very underused route, but with a great potential. For this section between Sainsbury's and Tews Lane some small schemes can bring BIG changes. Only then, it will be a truly "Cross Town Cycle Route".

Tews Lane is the next section of this route. Apart from the difficult barrier as shown on the previous page (top middle picture), this is a lovely route to cycle; a 20 mph zone much of the way and even a north-south route with a former country lane converted to cycle path! It can't get much better, except that it doesn't link up to the west where it should link up! This is where the route to Fremington really gets stuck, with the busy and narrow B3233 road as the only way to head west, through Bickington High Street.



All required to solve the Bickington bottleneck for cycling is creating a gap in the hedge at the east end of Shieling Road (see pictures above) and thus creating a back road route between Tews Lane and the start of the cyclepath alongside the B3233 at the west end of Bickington High Street, naturally with a good signage system to send cyclists and pedestrians in the correct direction. In its current state, it is just this hedge that stops parents and children to cycle to Fremington School to Roundswell (an important catchment area for this school).



Interestingly though, parallel to Shieling Road, on its south side, lots of preparation work has been done in the past to create this link between Tews Lane and Shieling Road. On the Tews Lane side, a grass bank, next to the stream, is fenced and gated, with a course suitable for cycle path construction. On the Shieling Road side there is even an overgrown bridge over the stream, stretching to the same area. So, if the "gap in the hedge" was not to be realised, the route could also follow this course!

Either way; this is how Tews Lane could be finally connected to the start of the cycle path to Fremington at the west end of Bickington!



What is important next is the connection between Shieling Road on the south side of the B3233 and the cycle path on the north side of the B3233. To create an acceptable crossing, suitable for school children cycling, the footpath on the south side needs to be widened from the corner of Shieling Road to the current dropped kerb of the crossing (see picture left). The forum doesn't feel the need for a toucan crossing at this point, but a refuge island in the centre of the road is required.



Further west, we encounter four side road crossings on which cyclists and pedestrians need to give way to turning drivers. This should really be the opposite. See page 15 for more pictures and explanation. The change of the layout and priority at these side road junction is also included in the "small schemes, BIG changes" overview in this study.

The next section which needs attention is the lay-by road between the Fremington Quay access road and the start of the 30 mph zone of Fremington. The forum is not opposed against car park use and use by eatery outlets, but the feeding points are lethal for cyclists (see bottom middle picture page 50). These junctions should be closed and made cycle paths entirely. If the lay-by space needs to stay open as car park and for eatery outlets, a new, proper, straight, T-junction to the main carriageway could be build on the east end of the lay-by.



Hurrah; the cycle route has arrived in Fremington! The problem is though that it doesn't take you into Fremington. It only connects to Taw View and Redlands Road, but NOT to the shops, school and Beechfield Estate. These destinations need to be connected to the route as well, especially because via the quiet roads on Beechfield Estate it is also possible to cycle to the east end of Yelland!

The cycle path simply has to continue west on the north side of the road. The main carriageway needs to be re-aligned slightly to obtain space west of Taw View junction (by narrowing the refuge island and giving up the lane for the right turn into Redlands Road). This only needs to be done for about 80 m or so, as the Green behind Han Court provides the next route section.



The current paths on the Green behind Han Court can easily be widened to shared paths. Widening of the path to Coppice Close is also recommended, as this will increase access to the Taw View area. At the bottom west end of the small park, the gravel road needs some improved surface and lighting for social safety. Opposite Old School Lane, the route returns close to the B3233. A shared path can continue up the hill on the north side of the road (widening of current footpath alongside the wall of Fremington Manor).



The last required infrastructure improvement is a refuge island near the Beechfield road junction. This would be possibly best on the east side of this junction. Space can be created by closing the left turn lane onto Beechfield Road (part of it could be utilised for car parking). A wider pavement is also needed on the corner, to create safe filtering from/onto Beechfield Road for cycling. Note the signage should still continue here, pointing to the primary school and to Yelland. At the other end of Beechfield Road, a short cycle path alongside the B3233 is already in existence, just about reaching Yelland. Of course, in the far future, the cycle route could be extended further west.

By putting all recommendations in place up to this point though, the residents of Fremington/Bickington/Roundswell/Sticklepath would finally have the continuous cycle route they so desperately need!

Roundswell Trading Estate

Also shown on the maps on page 51 is how access to the shops and businesses on Roundswell Trading Estate could be massively improved by utilising the current toucan crossing on the A3125 much more. On its west side, a gap in the fence should be made into the car park, with one parking bay serving as access route and one parking bay with bicycle racks. Currently, access to these “west side shops” is by steps only. Also, by upgrading all footpaths around the toucan crossing (by widening and upgrading their status), the crossing could be utilised for better cycling access to Fishleigh Road, Gratton Way and Old Bideford Road East. With proper signage in place linking from/to the main Roundswell cycle route, this would truly open up the area for cycling. Besides that, of course the Cross Town Cycle Route from Park School/Iron Bridge/Seven Brethren is also very much needed.

Sticklepath Woodville Estate

Also shown on page 51 is how Sticklepath’s Woodville Estate would really benefit of signage. There are various cycle route signs in place on Cleave Road, Beechwood and Chestwood Avenues, but these signs don’t give a clue on whereto the route leads. “Woodville” and “Primary School” should be listed on the signage. The footpath link between Chestwood Avenue and Woodville should be upgraded as well. Then, a route Sticklepath-Roundswell via Parklands and Maple Grove could be developed too!

New developments

New developments put the current infrastructure under stress massively. The Draft North Devon and Torridge Local Plan only propose bare minimum requirements for cycling infrastructure. The forum fears a massive growth of motorised traffic and more congestion under the current proposals. The developers should not only fit in cycling infrastructure in its own development area, but should also be responsible for cycling routes that fully connect these developments to places where people work and study.

Larkbear: If this huge development were to go ahead, it should support the Cross Town Cycle Route between Iron Bridge and Old Bideford Road. The proposed route, as shown on the map on page 6, goes nearly over the top of the back of Sticklepath Hill, not very attractive for quick cross-town cycling. Whatever the route, if Larkbear gets the go-ahead, the Cross Town Cycle Route should be part of it, full stop.

Fremington Camp: This development is clearly going to worsen the traffic situation on the B3233/A3125. The proposed direct link to the Tarka Trail from the housing estate is the bare minimum. If this development goes ahead, it should also facilitate ALL our proposed route improvements between Tews Lane and Beechfield Road (see pages 53-55) to compensate for its devastating affects on the B3233/A3125 corridor.

Tews Lane: More housing near Tews Lane? Well, as part of this development all shortcomings on the Roundswell Cycle Route (see page 52) should get sorted, just as the link all the way into Fremington (see pages 53-55).

Westacott: If this huge development were to go ahead, it should support the Cross Town Cycle Route, not only by creating its natural link to Landkey as proposed, but also by improving the cycle route into town. The current narrow cycle lanes on Westacott Road (see page 17) should be replaced by a wide cycle path on the south side of Westacott Road. Also, a connecting cycle path should be built from Barum Gate on the north side of Eastern Avenue, connecting to the toucan crossing next to the Hollowtree Roundabout. This will shorten the journey to the town centre, as the path via the Tesco subway and car park is far from straight forward. Also, further improvements are needed in Newport, as the narrow Hollowtree Cycle Way (next to Lidl) is already operating to maximum capacity...

Mount Sandford Green: From the bottom of this estate, a cycle bridge should link to Fairacre Avenue, with cycle path improvements to be made around Tesco (a fast link to the Eastern Avenue route, if Westacott got the go-ahead as well). At the top of the estate, a cycle path should be build alongside Landkey Road between the Link Road Viaduct and the Venn Road junction (near the John Beer Garage). Also, low-level lighting should be required on the lane between John Beer Garage and Church Meadow in Landkey. You could also argue that instead of lighting this country lane, the cycle path alongside Landkey Road should extend all the way to Blakes Hill Road in Landkey...

References

Below listings of references in this study to other studies and publications.

Also included is a justification for the cost estimation of our recommended actions for the central area of Barnstaple (town centre and routes 1-7).

Also included is a spreadsheet of our “Small Schemes, BIG changes” campaign, with lots of small things that will make cycling in Barnstaple easier.



[[1]]

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[[2]]

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[[3]]

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[[4]]

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[[5]]

“How the Dutch got their cycle paths”, NL Cycling, 2011
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[[6]]

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[[17]]

“Devon comes out top for cycles routes”, National Highways and Transport Network
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[[19]]

Pricing based on Newport Cycle Way widening February 2014: £ 8000 for 200 m of path.

[[20]]

Pricing based on general cost of construction Pilton Cycle Way: £ 2 million for 1600 m of path

[[21]]

The works don't require reconstruction of the whole road, but just the sides (drainage and kerb re-alignment and pavement works. To be on the safe side with our estimate, we've used the cost of the construction of the Pilton Cycle Way. The costs for this entirely new path (length 1600 m) were approximately £ 2 million. We expect the costs of the works we propose will be less than estimated.

[[22]]

Portsmouth changed to a 20 mph speed limit on 1200 roads for £ 475.000

(Twenty is plenty for us campaign, <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk>).

We used a calculation of 100 roads in Barnstaple to come to a cost of £ 40.000.

[[23]]

“Small schemes, BIG changes”

Below a full overview of recommendations as part of this scheme. Most recommendations are very easy to implement. Please note this spreadsheet was compiled before we compiled our full study. Some recommendations listed may be part of a bigger scheme as recommended in this study and should not be regarded as part of the “Small schemes, BIG changes” scheme.

Every case has a reference number matching a picture taken of the current situation. These pictures are available as a ZIP-file via email. If you wish to obtain these pictures, please email northdevoncyclingforum@gmail.com.

The “Small schemes, BIG changes” recommendations are also available on-line via <http://www.cyclescape.org/issues#map-pane>. Note to zoom out from the latest “issue” (anywhere in the country) to UK-wide and then to zoom into Barnstaple to be able to see. It takes a while to load the issues, but you can then simply click on a pinpoint on the interactive map to view a picture and to see the issue description again.

“Small schemes, BIG changes” continued on next page

[[23]]

“Small schemes, BIG changes”, continued

We used the following type coding:

- B Barrier
- S Confusing Signage
- C Crossing issue
- O Overgrown or narrow paths
- U Upgrade footpath to shared path
- K Lowered kerb
- 20 20 mph speed limit
- E Exempt for cyclists to use roads with limited use
- P More bike parking
- L Lighting improvements
- CL narrow cycle lanes issue

Area	Priority	Type	Issue and recommended action	Picture / Ref no	Cost:
Long Bridge Corridor	High	C	Sequence of lights Seven Brethren: current waiting time to cross town centre lane over 2 mins! Needs reducing!	P2070041	Low
Long Bridge Corridor	High	20	20 mph speed limit on Long Bridge section between The Square and Severn Brethren	PB040196	Low
Long Bridge to Sticklepath	Low	S	Removal of confusing bicycle pictorials on on-road cycle lane Sticklepath Terrace	PA004	Low
Long Bridge to Sticklepath	Medium	CL, S	Incorrect and hazardous use of cycle lanes on Sticklepath Hill can be short-term solved by Signage Plan for this area, long-term by replacing lanes by paths	still to do!	Low/ Medium
Long Bridge Subway	Medium	O	Fish eye mirrors to help visibility, warning sign for pedestrians using steps down to path, widening passageway by removing strange higher bit on riverside of path?	still to do!	Low/ Medium
Town Centre	High	S	The Strand jct cross street; new sign explaining cyclists are allowed to go both ways AND enforcement of no parking by any vehicles to give sufficient space	PB040197	Low
Town Centre	High	K	Lower kerb (some tarmac in gutter against kerb?) at end of Holland Street (jct strand)	PB040199	Low
Town Centre	High	U	Upgrade footpath Holland Street to shared path (with new sign)	PB040199	Low
Town Centre	High	S	Boutport Street: new signs to confirm cyclist's right to go both ways: Alexandra Rd-Post Office	PB040202	Low
Town Centre	High	E	Allow cyclists to use Joy Street/High Street at all times to cycle from Boutport Street to Rolle Quay Roundabout	PB040203	Low
Town Centre	High	E	Allow cyclists to use Cross Street/Butchers Row at all times to cycle from Strand to Boutport Street	PB040198	Low
Town Centre	High	S	Allow cyclists to turn left from Butchers Row onto Boutport Street (sign only allows taxis to do this!)	PB040200	Low
Town Centre	High	E	Allow cyclists to turn right from Boutport Street onto Boutport Street (in front of the Post Office) - arrow signage on tarmac?	PB040249	Low
Town Centre	High	U	Allow cyclists to cycle on pavement next to the Square from Boutport Street to The Strand	PB040181	Low
Town Centre	High	U	Re-allocate benches and bike-park on pavement next to the Square and removal of first taxi rank space; all required to create a logical off-road route connecting Boutport St with both The Strand and the crossing onto The Square	PB040181	Medium
Town Centre	High	P	More capacity bike parking Cattle Market (end of Holland Walk)	P2070044	Medium
Town Centre	High	P	New bike parking Church alley way (next to co-op on High Street); info signs at this location already informally used	P2070039	Medium
Town Centre	Medium	P	New bike parking Boutport Street near Post Office/Butchers Row (also to reduce illegal pavement parking!)	P2070034	Medium
Town Centre	Medium	P	New bike parking Boutport Street at Green Lanes shopping entrance	P2070033	Medium
Town Centre	Medium	P	New high-profile bike parking at main entrance Civic Centre	P2070046	Medium
Town Centre	High	S	This NCN sign on North Walk has been wrong aligned for several years! "Welcome to Barnstaple"; great impression for visitors!	PB270272	Low
Pilton	High	U	Upgrade footpath on river bank to shared path (with new shared path signs)	PA013	Low
Pilton	High	20	20 mph speed limit on Fair View Road/Pilton Quay between Abbey Road and Pilton Causeway (Yeo Dale Hotel)	P2070050	Low
Pottington	Medium	L	Surface and lighting improvements Rugby Ground Alley Way/Car Park	P2070048	Medium
Pottington	High	B	Removal of annoying gate on ramp Western Bypass-Tarka Trail; where is the cattle which needs to be held back by this gate?	PA011	Low
Pottington	High	B	Gate under Western Bypass was closed two years ago, only to annoy cyclists? Inconvenient and annoying; re-open gate please!	PA008	Low
Gorwell	Medium	B	Open or remove barrier to make use of Richmond Street as connecting route easier	PB040236	Low
Raleigh	High	CL	Removal of hazardous cycle lane on St Georges Road	PB040226	Medium
Newport	Medium	E	Two-way traffic for cyclists on Barbican Terrace-Litchdon Street, allowing to cycle from the Strand to Summerland Street	PB040290	Low
Newport	High	S	Replacement of last yellow "No entry to the Square from 23rd May" sign on Glouster Rd by signs with just "No entry to the Square". This makes clear that traffic calming of the Taw Vale route in favour of sustainable transport is PERMANENT and not temporarily!	P2070030	Low
Newport	Medium	S	Rock Park corner: arrow on cycle path to direct cyclists onto road before the New Road Roundabout	PB040179	Low
Newport	Medium	S	The Square: signage required to guide cyclists into subway (for Town Centre, Braunton and Tarka Trail) and onto square (for Sticklepath via Long Bridge and bike parking "The Square")	P2070031	Low
Newport	High	C	Button Toucan Crossing Hollowtree Road not working (Lidl side, button north side)		Low

“Small schemes, BIG changes” continued on next page

[[23]]

“Small schemes, BIG changes”, continued

Area	Priority	Type	Issue and recommended action	Picture / Ref no	Cost:
Newport	Medium	C	Hazardous side road crossing Coney Avenue on Hollowtree Road, priority change required; turning drivers should give way to cyclists!	PB010138	Medium
Newport	Medium	O	Severe cutting back of bushes on Hollowtree Cycle Path; this is an obstruction on this narrow passage which gets intensely used!	PB010140	Low
Newport	High	B	Removal of hazardous barrier bars and severe cutting back of bushes on Hollowtree Cycle path; this is an hazardous obstruction on this narrow passage which gets intensely used!	PB010143	Low
Newport	Medium	B	Removal of hazardous barrier bars on Hollowtree Cycle path at Victoria Rd End ; this is an obstruction on this narrow passage which gets intensely used!	PB010145	Low
Newport	Medium	B	Removal of hazardous barrier on cycle path ending on Rose Lane; making turns from road onto path very hazardous!	PB040154	Low
Newport	High	S	This sign in "Newport Life and Cycle" area has been wrong aligned for several months; encourages vandalism and feeling of neglect in area	P2060039	Low
Newport	Medium	C	Sequence of lights Eastern Avenue; one press on button should make ALL lights turn green to cross road in ONE go!	PB040173	Low
Newport	High	B	Removal of difficult barrier on cycle path ending on Eastern Avenue; not possible to pass for trikes/tandems/mobility vehicles	PB040174	Low
Newport	High	B	Removal of difficult barrier on cycle path NCN3 ending on Rose Lane; hardly possible to pass by bike, let alone trikes/tandems/mobility vehicles	PB040176	Low
Newport	High	B	Removal of difficult barrier on cycle path NCN3 ending on Rose Lane (from Tesco); hardly possible to pass by bike, let alone trikes/tandems/mobility vehicles	PB040176	Low
Newport	Medium	B	Removal of barrier bars on cycle path ending on Hollowtree Rd; barrier alongside kerb of road is doing the job already!	PB040178	Low
Newport	Medium	20	Introduction 20 mph speed limit on Landkey Road between Hollowtree Rd-St Johns Lane Mon-Fri 7.45 am-9.15 am and 3 pm-5.30 pm	PB290299	Low
Newport	High	S	This NCN sign in Rock Park (near Iron Bridge) has been wrong aligned for several years! "Welcome to Barnstaple"; great impression for visitors!	P2060032	Low
Newport	High	B	Two sets of bollards on narrow cycle path on steep slope at Park & Ride are lethal; various incidents known; remove asap!	P2060037	High
Whiddon Valley	Medium	C	Hazardous side road crossing Barum Gate Business Park on Whiddon Drive, priority change required; turning drivers should give way to cyclists!	PB040157	Medium
Whiddon Valley	High	O	Severe cutting back of bushes on cycle path Whiddon Drive; 40% of path overgrown! Note this is part of NCN3: "Welcome to Barnstaple!"	PB040162	Low
Whiddon Valley	High	B	Removal of difficult barrier on cycle path NCN3 ending on Whiddon Drive; hardly possible to pass by bike, let alone trikes/tandems/mobility vehicles	PB040163	Low
Whiddon Valley	Medium	U	Extension west side cycle path Whiddon Drive to jct Lower Moor via "line of desire" to provide better and safer connectivity	PB040165	Medium
Whiddon Valley	High	U	Creation of link between Forches and Whiddon Valley, either by upgrade path or opening new link road	PB040170	Low
Whiddon Valley	High	B	If upgrade of path Forches and Whiddon Valley was chosen, this barrier has to go!	PB040169	Low
Seven Brethren	High	K	Kerb to get from road onto cycle path; easily solved by putting some tarmac against kerb (on slope)	PA009	Low
Seven Brethren	High	L	Low Level lighting on cycle path Iron Bridge between Rock Park and Recycling Centre for improved social safety at night	PA009	Medium
Roundswell	High	B	Removal of crazy barriers on Roundswell Cycle Way (crossing Maple Grove); hazardous, not inviting and over the top!	PB130341	Low
Roundswell	High	K	Adjusting "roundabouts" on Roundswell Cycle Way; surface from tarmac to paved area needs to be smooth; not a "kerb jump" causing pictures; appears on various locations on this route	PB130344	Medium
Roundswell	High	B	Removal of difficult barrier on cycle path Tews Lane; hardly possible to pass by bike, let alone trikes/tandems/mobility vehicles	PB130345	Low
Roundswell	High	O	Roundswell cycle way overgrown by bushes, up to 60% in places; poor poor maintenance! This is supposed to be the "Cross Town Link", getting people out of cars on the North Devon Link Road (!!!) (...)	PB140348	Low
Fremington	High	C	Hazardous side road crossing Fremington Pill on B3233, priority change required; turning drivers should give way to cyclists!	PC100035	Medium
Fremington	High	C	Hazardous side road crossing country lane Penhill on B3233, priority change required; turning drivers should give way to cyclists!	PC100084	Medium
Fremington	High	C	Hazardous side road Mead Park on B3233, priority change required; turning drivers should give way to cyclists!	PC100088	Medium
Fremington	High	C	Closure of lay-by Mill Hill B3233 to improve safety on cycle route Barnstaple-Fremington. Current situation for cycling FROM Barnstaple TO Fremington is lethal; this is NOT a safe route! Alternatively, to keep the car park function of the lay-by, a new entrance to the lay-by is possible by creating a STRAIGHT T-junction onto the main road at the eastern end of the lay-by.	PC100037	Low
Fremington	High	O	Cycle path B3233 up to 50% overgrown by bushes between Fremington Pill and Penhill junctions	PC100082	Low
Tarka Trail	Medium	Sf	Surface of Tarka Trail Braunton-Barnstaple needs replacing long-term; wobbly sections developing;	PB270274	High
Tarka Trail	Medium	L	Low Level lighting on Tarka Trail Pottington - Braunton for improved social safety at night	PB270274	High

[[24]]

Approximately 60 three-way signs needed at a cost of £ 250 per three way sign. This figure is based on a quote of £ 50 per sign plate by Martin Caddy, Field Officer Access & Recreation, Devon County Council. This gives us a total figure of £ 15.000 on which we added £ 3000 as an additional cost for the development of a master plan for CONSISTENT signage in given area.

[[25A]]

Upgrade of current footpath to shared cycle path:

30 m (Holland Street)

150 m (Cycle route from Rolle Quay to Abbey Road, missing link)

300 m (Queen Street Car Park- creation of cycle route across car park)

100 m Alexandra Road (near Bear Street junction)

300 m (Bear Street)

300 m (Queen Street)

Total: 1180 m

[[25B]]

Widening of current footpath to cycle path:

200 m (Alexandra Road near Pilton Causeway)

100 m At end of Yeo Vale Road

400 m St George's Road between Raleigh Meadow and St Mary's Road

150 m Around Alexandra Road/Derby Road roundabout

50 m Alexandra Road (at Bear Street junction)

150 m Oakleigh Road – Ashleigh Road

Total: 1050 m.

[[25C]]

New Cycle path construction:

100 m In and out of Pilton Park to Yeo Dale Hotel and crossing to Yeo Vale Road, landscaping required

100 m St George's Road opposite Raleigh Meadow junction

50 m Back end of Private Car Park of Pilton Causeway

Total: 250 m.

[[25D]]

Serious change of current layouts (various situations):

200 m (Alexandra Road near Pilton Causeway)

100 m (Ashleigh Road)

Total: 300 m.

[[25E]]

20 mph speed limit zones:

Long Bridge

Town Centre area, particularly Vicarage Street, Boutport Street, Bear Street, Queen Street and Tuly Street

Fair View Road/Pilton Quay between Pilton Causeway and Abbey Road

St George's Road area

Derby Road area, particularly Derby Road in front of Yeo Valley School

Chanters Hill area, particularly Sunset Heights, Sowden Lane-East, Ashleigh Road and Chanters Hill (near the schools)

Newport area, particularly Victoria Road, New Road and Newport Road

[[26]] "Get Britain Cycling", All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group, 2013

(http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling_goodwin-report.pdf)



“A bicycle way that is not safe for an 8-year old is not a bicycle way”

Enrique Peñalosa, mayor of Bogotá, 1998-2001



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<https://www.facebook.com/NorthDevonCyclingForum>
<http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/>