



CYCLING ACTION PROGRESS MEETING

9TH APRIL 2014

Present: Cllr Nick Davies (CCS – Cycle Forum Designate)
Ben George (CCS – Transport Strategy)
Lindsey Curtis (Sustrans)
Helen Davies (Sustrans)
Colin Fielder (Wheelrights)
Nick Guy (Wheelrights)
David Naylor (Wheelrights)
Mike Cherry (Bikeability)

Apologies: Rob Wachowski (CCS – Walking & Cycling)
Cllr Sybil Crouch (Cabinet Member – Sustainability)

<p>1. Matters Arising</p> <p>1.1 A number of the actions relate to items on the meeting agenda and are therefore dealt with in the relevant sections.</p> <p>1.2 BG was happy to report that the Sailbridge bollards issue had finally been resolved.</p> <p>1.3 DN queried whether any progress has been made to deliver a shared use path across Clyne Common. BG reported that the delivery of the path is subject to spend to save considerations being undertaken by the Education department. It is likely that there will be more information in September 2014.</p> <p>1.4 NG spoke to register concern of Wheelrights members that the North Gower Trail project was no longer being actively pursued by the City & County of Swansea. It was reported that many local residents and interest groups were disappointed that the scheme would not now be realised and wanted the Council to pursue a compulsory purchase order. BG had prepared a briefing note to set out the Council's reasoning, which was primarily based upon the lack of progress being made with the landowners, increasing cost of the scheme and limited Council resources in order to pursue the scheme. NG asked whether it was possible that part of the route could be enhanced, but BG advised that the landowners were unwilling to allow that.</p> <p>1.5 It was agreed that BG would consider whether an intermediate option could be delivered.</p>	<p>BG</p>
<p>2. Commuter Routes</p> <p>2.1 BG circulated the latest draft of the map. The changes requested at the last meeting had been incorporated to the map as far as was practicable.</p> <p>2.2 LC had reviewed the plans sent to her, although BG acknowledged that he had not yet sent the remainder of the signs to Sustrans for comment. It was agreed this would be done following the meeting.</p>	<p>BG</p>

2.3 2.4	The website to support the scheme was now operating in draft form. BG distributed the address: cycleswanseabay.org.uk The scheme would also be promoted by advertisements on local radio during the month of May 2014.	
3. 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5	<p>3. City Centre Cycle Network</p> <p>BG explained that outline design for Phase 1 of the city centre cycle network had completed. BG explained what was envisaged and that the route would run from the junction of Boulevard and Princess Way to High Street Station utilising Orchard Street. Political consents were being sought to undertake these works in 2014/15. BG agreed to share the design with Sustrans.</p> <p>BG also reported that a number of schemes had been completed in 2013/14. These were the NCN 43 improvements between Liberty Stadium and Ynystawe, Boulevard, the link from NCN43 to the northern Tawe Bridge and Somerset Place works had also begun.</p> <p>NG queried whether the bridge parapet on the northern Tawe Bridge could be raised to allow cycling across it. LC agreed to send examples of where this had been done elsewhere.</p> <p>NG queried whether Wheelrights could have greater involvement in the development of the Northern Quarter regeneration project. BG agreed to make enquiries.</p> <p>BG also noted that NCN43 was due to reopen on 11th April 2014 on conclusion of the flood management scheme in Swansea Vale.</p>	<p>BG</p> <p>LC</p> <p>BG</p>
4. 4.1 4.2	<p>4. Kingsbridge Cycle Link</p> <p>BG reported that the Council's Legal Department had been instructed to begin exploring the common land issues and to determine whether the necessary legal permissions could be secured to allow the delivery of the scheme. BG warned that this was expected to be a long but necessary process.</p> <p>NG voiced Wheelrights' support for the scheme and noted that it is the only missing link of the popular "Gower Way"</p>	
5. 5.1 5.2	<p>5. Fabian Way</p> <p>BG reported that the scheme was unable to proceed until further funding had been secured for its development. An application had therefore been made to the Welsh Government for Local Transport Funding in 2014/15. Discussions with Network Rail to potentially provide a route through Burrows Yard had unfortunately been unsuccessful and it was therefore likely that the short term option would be to widen the existing footways to a shared use standard.</p> <p>The route is needed for the opening of the Bay Campus in September 2015.</p>	
6. 6.1. 6.2.	<p>6. Signing</p> <p>NG requested that the Council give thought to better promoting the cycle route from Eaton Road to the City Centre. This is a good route, particularly for commuting into the City Centre.</p> <p>BG reported that this formed part of the 'Purple Route' in the commuter routes scheme and would therefore be subject to improved signage in the future.</p>	

<p>7. Sustrans Board Visit</p> <p>7.1. LC reported that Sustrans' UK Board would be visiting Swansea on 11th April 2014 as part of a rolling programme of visits. It has been a long time since the Board last visited and was therefore a good opportunity to showcase the good work completed in Swansea over the past few years, and to highlight the areas needing improvement.</p>	
<p>8. Train Station Options</p> <p>8.1 DN presented a paper which outlined a number of options to improve connectivity for cyclists travelling to and passed High Street Station. The paper (attached) will be shared with Council Officers for consideration as part of the Northern Quarter works. BG thanked DN for his work and noted that the suggestions were very helpful.</p> <p>8.2 It was agreed that destination and directional signage was also required outside of High Street Station.</p>	BG
<p>9. AOB</p> <p>9.1 NG reported that the members of Wheelrights were very disappointed to hear that the Council's Walking & Cycling Officer was being made redundant and signalled their intent to write to the Chief Executive to ask whether this decision could be reconsidered.</p> <p>9.2 NG asked whether consideration could be given to holding another seminar, following the successful event in March 2013. It was recommended that Gordon Gibson could be invited to speak on an issue. BG agreed to consider this.</p> <p>9.3 MC reported that it was Bikeability's 10th birthday on 12th April 2014 and a series of events would be held at Dunvant Rugby Club. All were warmly invited to attend to celebrate this anniversary.</p>	BG
<p>10. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>10.1 The next Cycle Action Progress Meeting will be held on 10th July 2014.</p>	

Swansea Railway Station – cycle access

1. Introduction

Provision for cyclists requiring access to or from the station is inadequate. There is no information about nearby cycle routes nor signs directing cyclists to them. Cllr Nick Davies, being aware of these shortcomings, invited the writer to come up with possible solutions.

Three options are considered. The first involves minimal change consisting of little more than replacement of two pedestrian crossings by toucans. The second provides for a new cycle lane linking the station to Alexandra Road together with a change to the traffic lights. The third simply converts the junction by the station to a shared space by removing all the traffic lights.

All three options will require upgrading of the footway on the south side of Alexandra Road from High Street to the toucan crossing near the north end of Orchard Street to shared use. A new cycle direction board outside the station entrance where it would be more easily seen than the existing bus direction board would be required in all cases.

2. Option 1: Minimal change.

This is illustrated in Figure 1 which shows a continuous cycle route from the station to and along the south side of Alexandra Road. The only change from the existing situation is the upgrading to shared use, changing the crossings to toucans and the provision of a cycle direction board. The location suggested for this is shown on Figure 2. It is on the large lamp post opposite the station entrance.

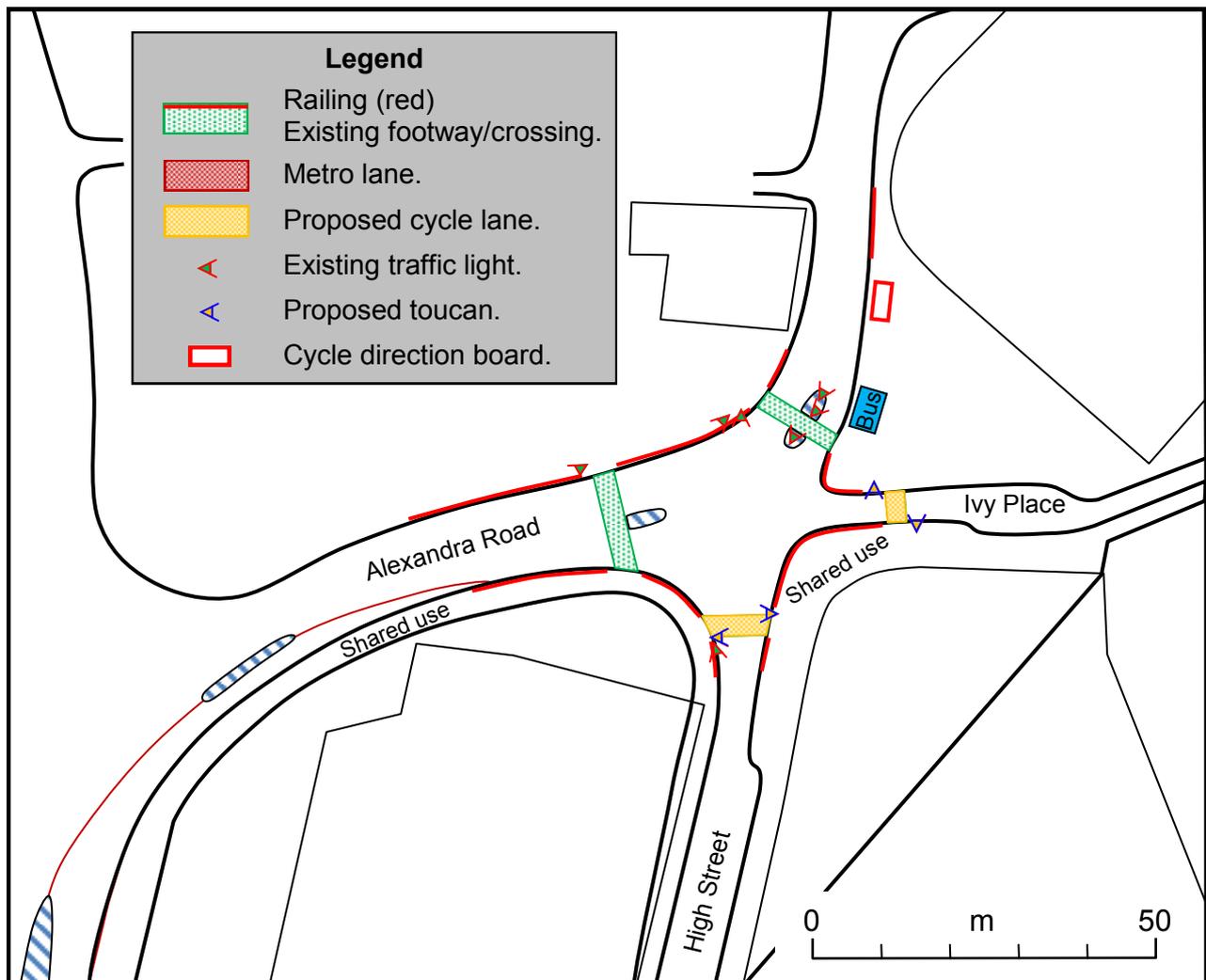
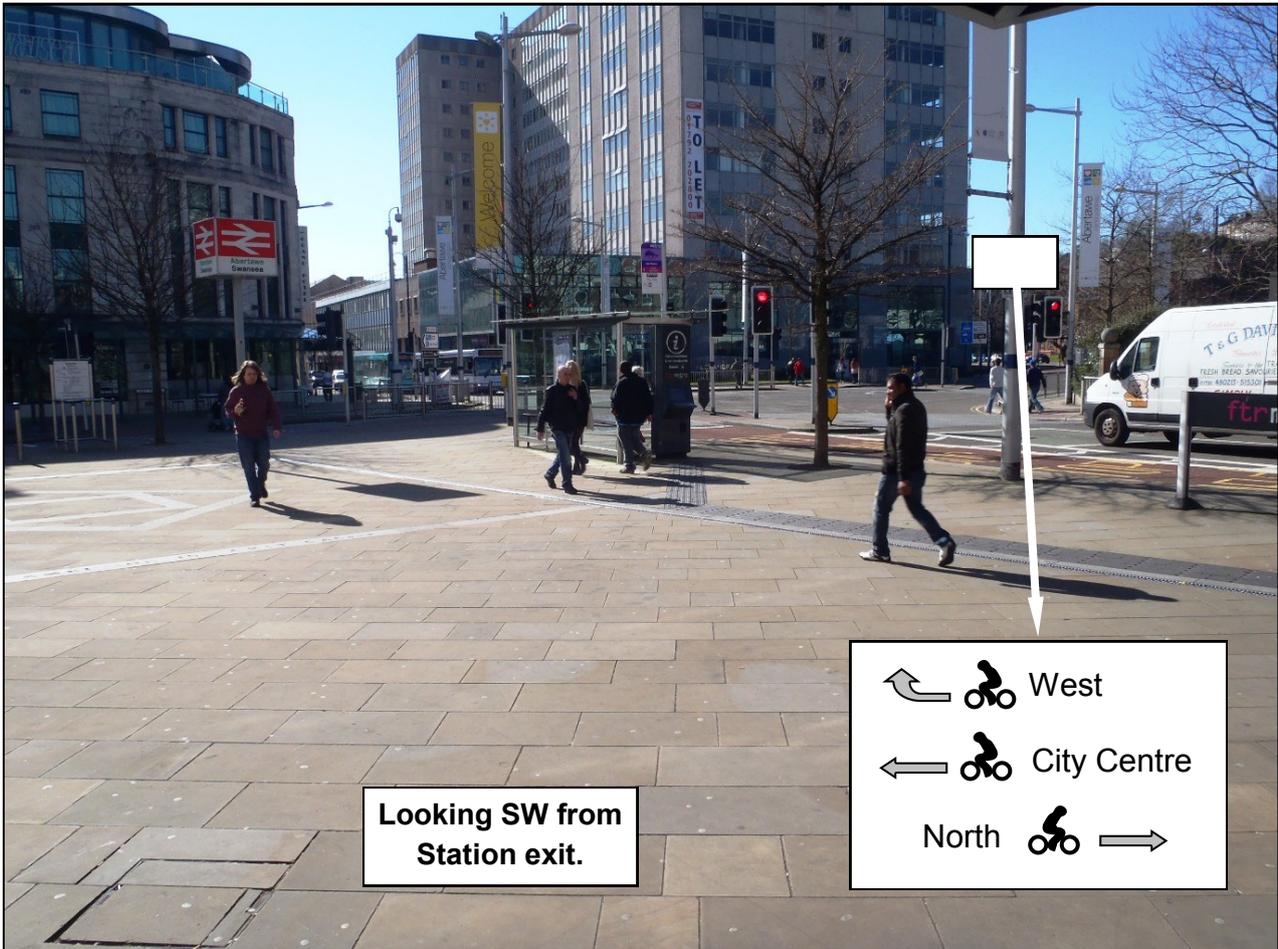


Figure 1. Option 1 Layout



Looking SW from
Station exit.

  West
  City Centre
 North  

Figure 2. Cycle direction board

3. Option 2: New cycle lane.

This is shown on Figure 3. Its essential feature is a new cycle lane following the curve as High Street (North) bends west into Alexandra Road. It would be delineated on its south side by the gold broken line. The area between this lane and High Street (South) is shown gold to indicate that it should have the same surfacing as the cycle lane as it would be used by cyclists going to or from the station.

This lane would require the removal of sections of railing at its ends. It would be controlled by lights which would be phased to be the same as those for the bus lane adjacent to the station. The reason for this is that traffic – mainly buses – using this lane rarely (if at all) turns left. Cyclists would therefore be protected from other traffic coming south past the station which can only turn left on to High Street (South) when the bus lights are red. The phasing of these lights would need to be controlled by cyclists as well as buses. (The present lights appear to only change to green when a bus approaches.)

In addition to this new lane providing direct access from the station to Alexandra Street the area shaded gold can be used to allow cyclists to leave High Street (South) either to enter the station or to turn left onto Alexandra Road. This would be achieved by providing left-right arrows for cyclists on the traffic lights at the north end of High Street (South). These would be phased to allow cyclists to turn left or right when the lights are red for straight-through traffic. During this phase the bus and cycle lane lights would be green for east-west buses and bikes.

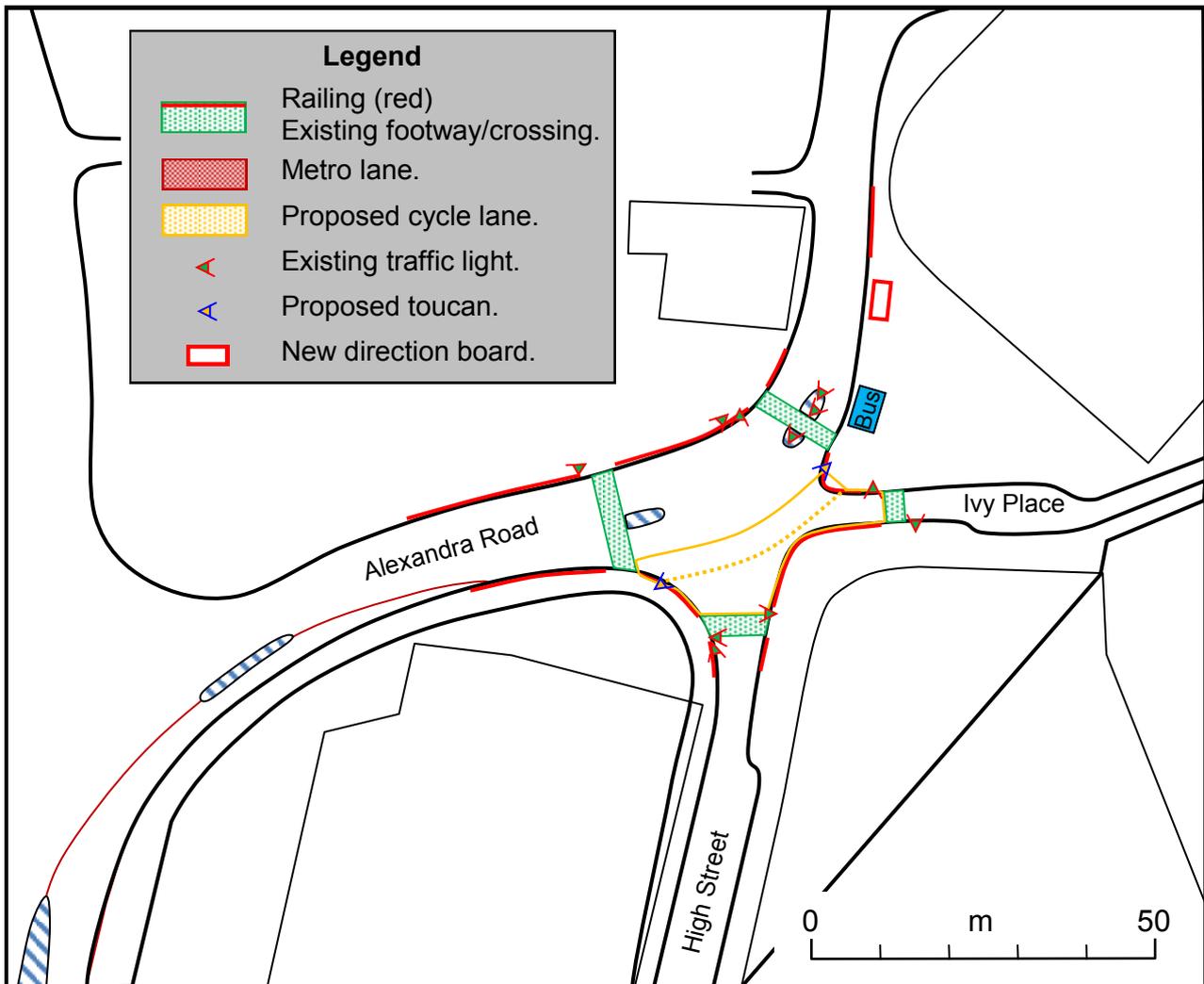


Figure 3. Option 2 Layout

4. Option 3: Shared space junction.

The Alexandra Road - High Street - Ivy Place junction contains a large number of traffic lights and for much of the time no traffic is moving at all. Conversion of this junction to shared space by removing all the lights can be expected to improve the flow of traffic as it would be more continuous, albeit moving at a slower speed.

In addition to the removal of the lights, the junction would be given a distinctive surfacing. (Figure 4.) Also signs, guard rails and other clutter would be removed, except that clear signs to indicate that a shared space zone is about to be entered would be needed, together with a 20mph speed limit.

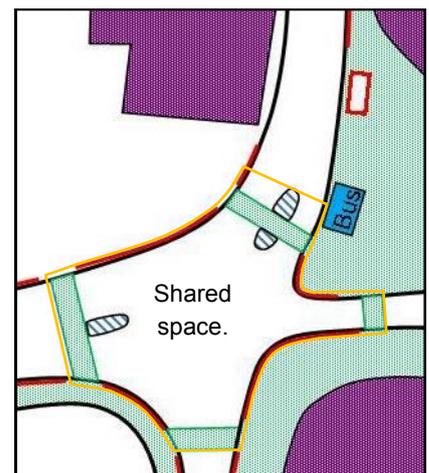


Figure 4. Option 3

The design of shared space has been pioneered by the Dutchman Hans Monderman and the Englishman Ben Hamilton-Bailley. Information on its implementation can be found in, eg, Section 7 of *Manual for Streets*. There are precedents in the UK: Euston Square, Exhibition Road and High Street Kensington in London. The reconstruction in 2011 of a busy junction in the village of Poynton in Cheshire provides an example of the benefits of removing traffic lights. The experience from precedents such as these indicates that, in addition to an improvement in the throughput of traffic, a reduction in incidents can be expected thereby improving safety.

5. Comments.

Irrespective of which, if any, of the three options is adopted a clear priority is to have a cycle direction board which is easily seen by cyclists leaving the station. The location indicated in Figure 2 is considered preferable to that of the bus information sign. This is up and to the right as one leaves the station and can easily be missed.

More information than that shown in Figure 2 could be included on the board, but at the risk of clutter. The bus information could be added, again at the risk of clutter. (Especially if wording has to be in English and Welsh. For this reason should the board only show signs?)

The first option is clearly the most straight forward although it only partly addresses the issue.

The second would be a major improvement, addressing the needs of cyclists travelling between the station, High Street (South) and Alexandra Road. It does not however address the needs of cyclists accessing the station from the north side of Alexandra Road. They would have to use the pedestrian crossing of High Street (North) as at present, although consideration could be given to altering this to a toucan.

The third option would appear to be a “win-win” solution, offering freer movement to all modes of traffic at minimal cost. The main difficulty will be to sell it. New ideas are not readily accepted. At Poynton the main objectors were the blind and partially disabled lobby. Feedback however indicates that their fears were largely unfounded.

David Naylor
March 2014