



“Working for a cycle-friendly Reading”

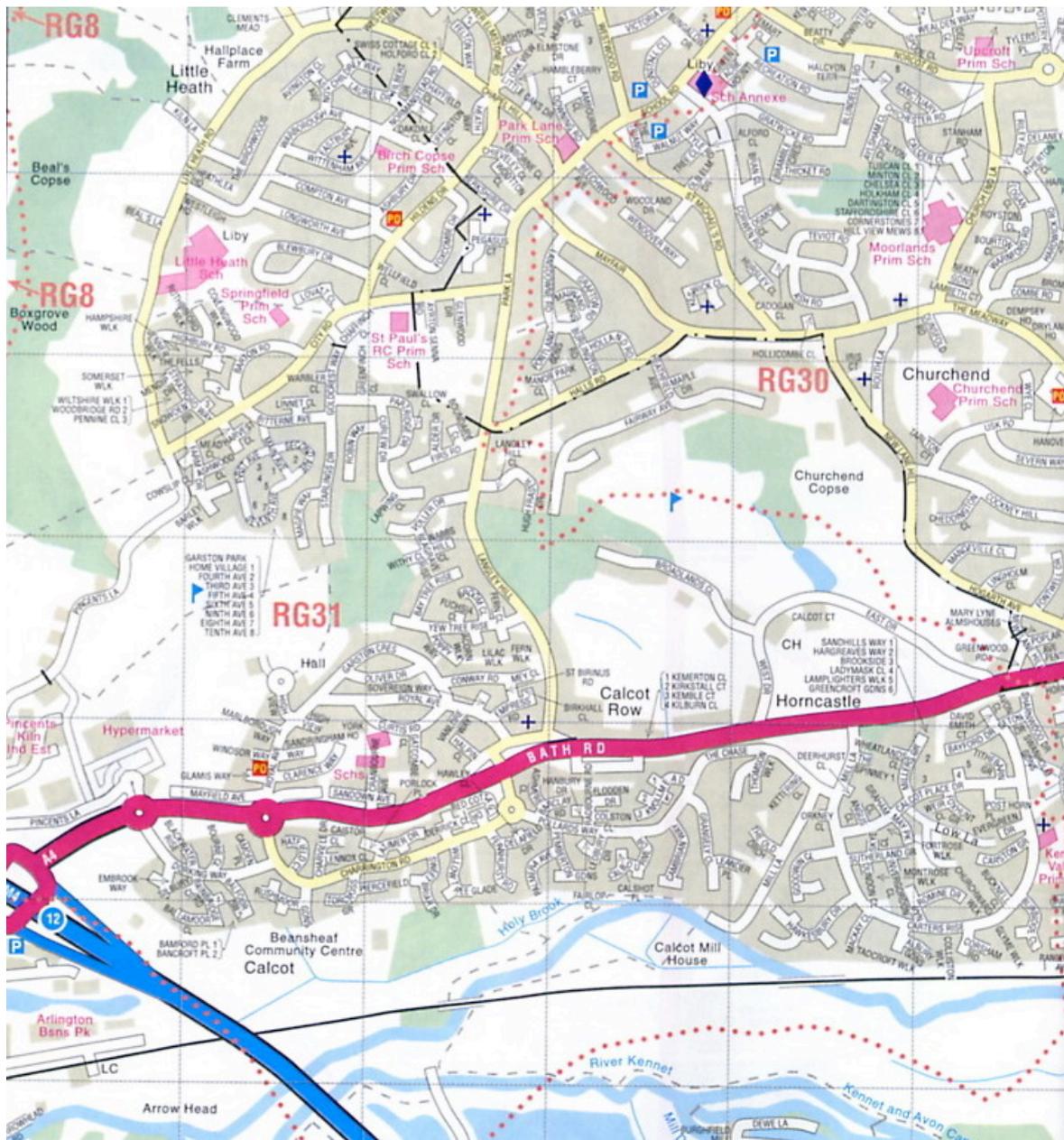
www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Calcot and south Tilehurst - Cycle Route Audit

Purpose

The Reading Cycle Campaign (RCC) has undertaken this cycle audit of Calcot and south Tilehurst at the request of West Berkshire District Council (WBDC). A group of RCC members has studied the area for routes that are likely to be of particular benefit to cyclists. They then cycled the various sections noting the existing infrastructure, any specific problems, and then listing a range of improvement measures, both short and long term.

Leisure routes have not been considered as much as utility routes, but some comments are included. This report includes the specific recommendations as well as general ones.



Areas considered and key cycling attractions

Calcot is a mainly suburban area spread for about 1.5 miles along the A4 Bath Road corridor to the west of Reading. There are few main attractors to cyclists in the area, these being: the hypermarket, Next, and the new IKEA etc at the west of the area; the local shops off the A4 in the centre of the area; and the

Kennet Valley Community Centre and Primary School at the eastern boundary. Other attractors are likely to be Reading town centre about three miles to the east, Theale School one mile to the west, Little Heath School to the north of the A4, and Prospect School half a mile to the east of the Calcot area.

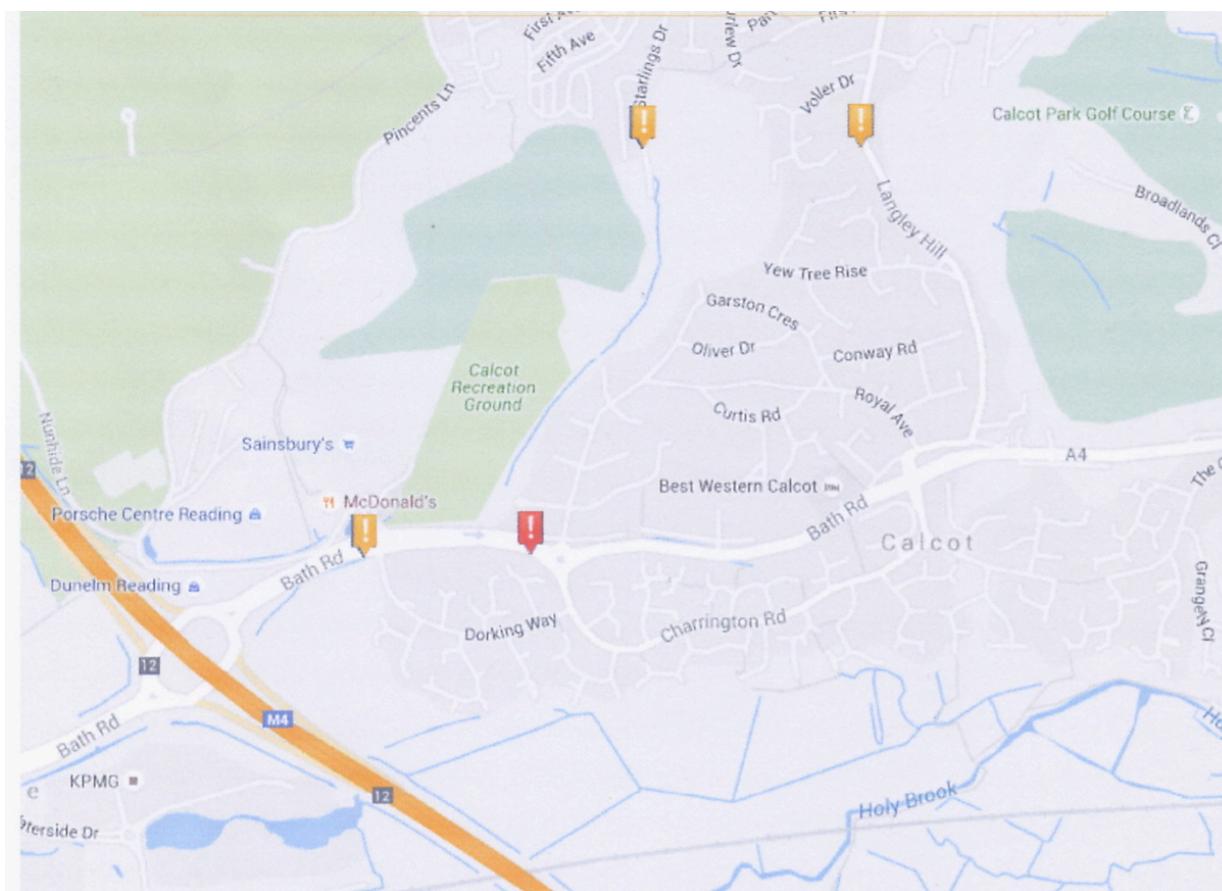
Cycling into Reading may be a quite feasible commute. Taking an average cycling speed of 10mph, this gives a time to cycle into central Reading of about 20-30 minutes, which is competitive to travel by car and bus journeys at peak times. Cycling to The Royal Berks Hospital, Reading University and Green Park (south Reading) are all feasible cycling journeys with a time of 25-40 minutes.

General

The main Calcot area is flat which is conducive to cycling, although the area to the north of the A4 slopes steeply uphill with the main link roads of Langley Hill (central) and New Lane Hill (eastern boundary) being steep and narrow up to the Tilehurst plateau, so is a major deterrent to many northbound cyclists. A moderate number of cyclists were observed (and questioned), particularly towards the west of the A4 in the superstores area.

Cycle Collisions

Cycle collisions are relatively low in the Calcot area, probably partly due to relatively low levels of cycling, but also helped by the off-carriageway cycle tracks along much of the A4. Two cyclists were involved in collisions on the A4 in the last four years to the east of the area but the details of these are not known. It may be that recent road improvements with crossings and the shared paths have removed the main dangers. There has also been a collision at the north (top) of Langley Hill, an area of particular danger to cyclists.



Reference www.crashmap.co.uk.

Yellow - slight, red - serious, black – fatal

Suggested routes

The following routes are suggested:

- A. A4 off carriageway route
- B. A4 parallel route to the south through Calcot
- C. Pincents Lane northbound at west
- D. Langley Hill or alternative northbound central

Route problems and possible solutions

For simplicity the various routes or works are grouped as:

1. A4
2. A4 parallel route through Calcot
3. Pincents Lane
4. Langley Hill or alternative northbound central
5. General accessibility and permeability for cyclists
6. Leisure routes
7. Cycle parking

Various problems and proposals are listed in the table below:

Route	location	problem	Suggested measures
1 – A4	Ramps to M4 bridge by IKEA	The present ramps taking the path over the M4 are narrow with low barriers	The path could be widened with higher barrier on the north side
	Superstores entry road	Narrow and difficult to follow despite Toucan crossings	There is unclear signing, the widths of the path should be increased in some places and a raised crossing provided on the access road to IKEA for cyclists and pedestrians.
	Superstores cycle parking	Where is parking	Direction signs to cycle parking areas is needed
	general	Narrow width track	There is scope to widen many sections of the shared and segregated paths particularly in the east where continuity is lacking.
	general	Lack of direction signing	Review all direction signing along and off the route. Add cycle symbols where route crosses from path to carriageway and along carriageway sections
	general	Route End signing	There are at least four unnecessary Route End signs along the length. One to east of Royal Ave (west), one east of Langley Hill, one at Calcot Golf Club West Drive and another at East Drive. The route continues in all places!
	Tactile paving	Wrong type used	On much of the central and eastern section of the route the wrong ribbed tactile paving is used, with corduroy as opposed to tramline, which can destabilise cyclist in wet conditions.
2 - A4 parallel	Opposite superstore entry	Unclear cycle link	An enlarged section of shared path leading to the on-carriageway cycle lanes is required
	Dorking Way	Confusing road island at west end	The cycle route crossing should be revised to make it clearer to use.
		Confusing shared path at east end	The shared path could be useful if it linked to the A4 and the signalled crossing there.. Currently it needs to no-where and encourages unsafe movements. Similarly the solid cycle lane marking into Dorking Way at the east is potentially dangerous if cyclists wish to continue to the A4.
	Dorking Way	Narrow cycle lanes	The cycle lanes are very narrow but still give the user a greater feeling of confidence and warn and slow motorists. Slight widening would be advantageous when remarked.
	Charrington Road	Feels traffic dominated and some speeding motor vehicles	Refreshing cycle lane markings and providing more cycle symbols would help. Cycle symbols should be provided adjacent to all 967 rectangular cycle route/lane signs to avoid confusion re footway cycling.
		Narrow cycle gaps	The width of the useful cycle gaps should be increased to 1m to facilitate tricycles and trailers. Raising the surface by 50-75mm may deter use by motorcycles.

Route	location	problem	Suggested measures
2 cont A4 parallel	Charrington Rd roundabout at Pollards Way	Large roundabout unsuited for cycling and almost useless cycle bypass	Reduce the carriageway with and increase the size of the splitter islands to slow traffic and accommodate cyclists. Redesign and improve the cycle bypass.
	Pollards Way and The Chase	Feels traffic dominated and some speeding motor vehicles despite the central bus and cycle 'gate'	Additional cycle symbols and a cycle lanes on the uphill section towards Mill Lane
	Tactile paving	Wrong tactile paving used	Corduroy instead of tramline tactile paving is used at the cycle bypass at the bus-gate.
	General	Traffic speed and driver behaviour can be a deterrent to cycling the route	A 20mph limit in the whole area of Calcot south of the A4 would help with safety and encourage cycling.
	Calcot Place Drive	Route not clear	Additional signing and cycle symbol marking along this section would help.
	general	Wayfinding	Additional signing and cycle symbols in the roads east of Dorking Way are needed as some are poorly sited or invisible from some directions of travel. Also additional destinations, the distances or times would be useful in some locations.
3	Pincent's Lane	Inadequate signing	Direction signing to and on this route is needed
4	Langley Hill	Visibility lines	Cutting back of foliage on both sides to improve visibility could help cyclists safety
		Cycling provision	Downhill cyclists are likely to be safe using the carriageway, while uphill cyclists tend to walk or cycle on the footway. Cycle symbols on the carriageway may be of some benefit in this difficult road.
	Alternative routes	Inadequate route signing	Improved alternative routes and signing would encourage safer options, although Langley Hill may be preferable when dark as alternatives may have security concerns. As well as Pincent's Lane, Garston Cres to Sarlings Drive should be signed.
5	General links	Inadequate links	A few footway links could be upgraded to shared or segregated use to provide route options, eg Garston Cres to Poppy Way
6	Leisure routes	Lack of routes	Providing marked leisure cycling routes would help encourage people to cycle. The Linear Park to the south of the area is not signed for cycling although only motor-cycles appear to be prohibited. It could be a very attractive route, particularly if the access ways were improved with gates made more accessible. Nunhide Lane and routes from Tilehurst and Theale to and across it could be useful. is one option.
-	NCN4	No links to NCN4	Provision of cycle route links (via the Linear Park) to the Kennet NCN4 would help open up leisure cycling
7	Cycle Parking	Lack of cycle parking	Provide cycle parking in various places close to the shops with direction signing if needed.

Conclusions and recommendations

There is considerable scope to greatly increase cycling levels in the area.

The main cycling route network needs to be agreed so that work and expenditure can be effectively targeted. The 'quick fix' measures need to be agreed and implemented to give early improvements for cyclists. Longer term improvements should be clearly identified, developed and progress made on them when possible.

In addition to designated routes measures should be taken to improve connectivity across the A4 and with side-roads such as linking Garston Crescent with Poppy Way (to the east of Langley Hill).

20mph limits in all of Calcot south of the A4 and to all of the residential roads to the north of the A4 would help improve road safety and encourage cycling and walking.

Opening up and signing of leisure routes including the Linear Park and the NCN4 Kennet towpath would be a good leisure resource and encourage more widespread cycling.

Cycle direction signing needs to be improved or added to show what routes are available for cyclists. Additional well-known destinations should be shown as 'Beansheaf' and 'Fords Farm' may be of little meaning to many users. Signs should include distances or journey times at key locations. More surface cycle symbols and small-size arrows would help at road junctions. 'END of Route' signs are wrongly used on the A4 route when 'Rejoin Carriageway' or Give-Way markings could be more appropriate.

A programme of works, timescales and costs should be produced so that future planning and funding can be directed towards the necessary improvements to the cycling conditions and infrastructure.

Further details on the points made can be given by John Lee at Reading Cycle Campaign.