

Active Travel Guidance

A consultation on the February 2020 draft.

Introduction

This consultation has been prepared on behalf of *Wheelrights* and by the writer in his capacity as a *Cycling UK* local (Swansea) rep. He being a retired Civil Engineer and an active travelling cyclist has focussed on the parts relating to the design of cycling infrastructure. It comprises a review of the revised guide with some of the differences between it and its predecessor highlighted.

The document which consultees have been asked to complete is included as the appendix.

General

The document is an update of the 2013 *Design Guidance*. “Design” is advisedly omitted from the title of the update, thus reflecting the fact that the content covers more than just the design of active travel infrastructure. The title of the 2013 document is misleading in this respect.

The new guide is divided into two parts. Part 1 covers delivery and Part 2 design. The old guide was divided into four parts: A, B, C & D. The content of A is now covered in Part 1. The new guide with its 20 chapters is about 10% longer than the old which has 11 chapters. Part 2 is about six times as long as Part 1 and accounts for 86% of the total. This includes the appendices which are also separated into Parts 1 and 2.

While the division into two parts to separate delivery from design makes sense, the way this has been done makes the guide difficult to use. A problem is that material which is common to both is repeated in each part, for instance in the two introductions. This would be appropriate were the two parts separate volumes. It would be better if there were a single introduction at the start of the guide, ie before the division into parts. It could be provided with ‘Acknowledgements’, ‘Foreword’ and ‘How to Use ...’ sections as in the old guide. This could cover the explanations and reasons for Active Travel and the 2013 act and other material which get repeated in Parts 1 and 2. Introductions in these two parts could then be restricted to their respective content.

It proved difficult to find out what is new in the revised guide because of the way it is structured and because of the length. While incorporating most of the old, much has been reworded. This difficulty is compounded by the practice of not relating table and figure numbers to chapters as is normal practice and is done in the old. For example Table 1-1 is in Chapter 10, not 1 and Figure 3.8 is in Chapter 12, not 3.

The value of the document would be much enhanced if it were significantly shortened. There is a lot of material, eg about the benefits of Active Travel, which users don’t need to be told.

Removal of this would make it easier to get to the ‘meat’ and enable the content to be clarified.

Like its predecessor it lacks an index. This would make a valuable addition.

Content comparison.

Part 1: Delivery. (Chapters 1-9.)

These chapters incorporate material from the old guide: from chapters 2 and 3 in Part A and chapter 5 in Part B. The material has been reworked and expanded. Due to the length and the difficulty in making comparisons mentioned above it has been difficult to assess how much is new. One change noted is that chap. 5 in the new guide updates the mapping in the old chap. 5.

Part 2: Planning and Design. (Chapters 10-20.)

These chapters together with the DEs in Appendix G cover key design information.

Chap. 10 incorporates content from chapters 1, 2 & 5 in the old guide and 11 is a reworking of the old chap. 3; in both 3 and 11 new material has been added. Chap. 12 is a reworking of the old chap. 4. It covers much the same material but with some different pictures. eg the unnumbered table on p.74 is the old Table 4.1. As before the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are dealt with separately. The five chapters 13-17 are largely a reworking of chapters 5-9 in the old guide. They are in the same sequence. Chapters 18 and 19 contain material from the old 10, and chap. 20 corresponds to the old chap. 11 but with material about monitoring added.

In these 11 chapters there has been significant rewording, but at least as far as cycling is concerned little change in content. Note however the detail queried in the DE section below.

Many of the tables and figures/photos from the old guide have been reproduced in the new with a few additions and replacements.

The need to shorten the document has been mentioned above. How to achieve this is clearly up to the authors. A change in the style of writing is not suggested as it is perfectly readable the way it is. What is required is the careful removal of material not needed by intended readers. This should result in a document, perhaps half as long, which is easier to use and thereby serve its purpose better. The authors may get some ideas from John Parkin's recent book: "Designing for Cycle Traffic". This 225 page book covers similar ground to the much longer Part 2, but more succinctly.

There are references at the ends of most of the chapters. One important reference not included is Parkin's book. This may be because it had not come out when the guide was drafted. It could replace the reference to Parkin & Meyers (2009 or 2010) at the end of Chap. 12.

Appendices.

There are six (A-F) in Part 1 and seven (G-M) in Part 2. This compares with four in the old guide. Appx G (Design Elements) is compared with its predecessor (Appx A in the old guide.) below.

Design Elements (Appx G)

There are three additions: DE054, DE055 and DE058. The old DE054 and DE055 are replaced by DE056 and DE057 respectively. DE001-DE053 are unchanged except for minor alterations.

The alterations mainly comprise minor changes to the text and the drawings. However one change in content was noted: in DE023 and DE027 "150/hr" has been altered to "250/hr". It is questioned if this change was intended as in at least one other authority (Table 3.4 and Fig. 3.7 in Parkin: "Designing for Cycle Traffic".) the value is 150/hr.

A problem which applies to about half the DE's relates to the formatting of the drawings. In these the frame which should encompass the drawings is misplaced, mostly it is too small cutting through part of the drawing. There are also problems with surplus lines. This is either a problem with the software itself or with its implementation. Clearly it needs to be sorted.

Conclusion

The draft *Active Travel Guidance* has been compared with its predecessor, the 2013 *Design Guidance*, the focus being on the parts which deal with cycling infrastructure. Key differences have been noted.

The new title in that it omits the word "Design" is good because it reflects the fact that the guide covers more than design. The title of its predecessor is misleading in this respect.

The division of the text and the appendices into two parts is useful in that delivery and design are separated. However the way the guide is structured makes it difficult to use. There is unnecessary repetition, particularly in the introductions to the two parts. A single introduction at the start of the guide could avoid this repetition.

Apart from the above reorganisation there is little change to the content in Part 2, at least as far as cycling is concerned. Additional information about roundabouts has however been added.

The numbering of Tables and Figures would be better related to chapters, as is normal practice.

The formatting of Appendix G (Design Elements) needs sorting out.

The document is about 10% longer than its predecessor, and the most important conclusion is that it would be much improved if it were significantly shortened. This should be possible without loss of content. In its present form its value is greatly reduced because the reader has to sift through so much to find the 'gold'. An index would help.

David Naylor
On behalf of *Wheelrights*

APPENDIX

Active Travel guidance – Consultation document

(The questions are answered in blue.)

Organisation (if applicable): [Cycling UK and Wheelrights](#).

E-mail/telephone number: david@davidjnaylor.plus.com/01792 233755

Your address: [Copper Roof, 45 Pennard Road, Pennard, Swansea SA3 2AA](#)

Q1: The revised guidance seeks to eliminate unnecessary duplication and to reformat the guidance into a single manual in two parts rather than the previous two completely separate documents.

Does the document work better now as a cohesive set of guidelines with equal status between technical and delivery elements?

Please enter here:

[Yes, in that it is divided into two parts, but unnecessary duplication has not been eliminated!](#)

Q2: The revised guidance seeks to place greater emphasis on the duties of the Act specifically being about creating modal shift towards walking and cycling.

Has this been achieved and if not what would you like to see added to help enforce this overarching aim of the Act?

Please enter here:

[This aim would be better achieved if the guide were shortened.](#)

Q3: Do you agree with the intention to show both the Existing Routes Map and Integrated Network Map together as the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) in future mapping cycles? (1.1.4 and 5.5)

Please enter here:

[Yes, if practicable. This depends on what is involved.](#)

Q4 & 5: [No comment.](#)

Q6: The concept of mesh density for the active travel route network has been introduced with a view to a mesh of 250m needing to be achieved by the third time the maps are updated.

Does this clarify previous ambiguities about what constitutes an active travel network? (5.6.4)

Please enter here:

[The meaning of 'mesh density' in this context needs to be clarified.](#)

Q 7-9: [No comment.](#)

Q10: The width required for cycle tracks for different cycle flow bands has been adjusted, which may reduce the width requirement for parts of the network envisaging moderate use. (DE021, DE023)

Do you consider the right balance has been struck between enabling additional routes to be created and the comfort and safety of all users?

Please enter here:

[Yes, but note comment above about the change in flows from 150/hr to 250/hr.](#)

Q11: In relation to design elements, have any design features not been included which you consider would be essential in helping deliver high quality schemes?

Please enter here:

The original DE section was comprehensive, so it is good to see those DEs retained together with revisions to junctions in DE054-DE057 and the addition of DE058: 'Dutch Style Round-about'. Note the need to sort out the format highlighted above. See also Q14 answer below.

Q12: No comment.

Q13: Chapter 20 on Monitoring has been expanded to give more specific guidance and includes a template.

Does this provide sufficient clarity?

Please enter here:

The addition of the unnumbered table (after Table 11.2) is appropriate, but, as with the rest of the document, clarity would be improved if it were shortened.

Q14: Please highlight any other points you wish to make in relation to the revised Part 2: Planning and Design.

Please enter here:

A major criticism of the existing cycle network in the UK is its lack of continuity. Whereas continuity features in Chap. 14 and the DE's, it does not in Chap. 12, specifically in 12.9: "Cyclists' Needs". It should.

QA & B: No comment.

Question C: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Please enter here:

See report above.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: