

Agenda Item	11
Report No	CIA/40/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 18 November 2021

Report Title: Inverness City Active Travel Network: Riverside Way

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The paper updates Members on the Traffic Regulation Order for Ness Walk and Bught Road, as part of the Riverside Way, following approval at last City of Inverness Area Committee for officers to proceed.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the stakeholder and public consultation which took place during summer 2021 focusing on concept design proposals for the Riverside Way as part of the Inverness City Active Travel Network Programme.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
 - i. Note the TRO statutory process is underway and that any outstanding objections will be brought to City of Inverness Area Committee (CIAC) in February 2022; and
 - ii. Note that concept designs based on stakeholder feedback will be progressed to detailed and technical design, including further stakeholder engagement on the Riverside Way proposals, which will come back to a future CIAC for approval.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - The Inverness City Active Travel Network is fully funded through Transport Scotland funds, via Sustrans' Places for Everyone programme (£10,645,036).

- 3.2 **Legal** - The TRO process must be completed to enable the one-way system with cycle contraflow to remain in place. Approval was given by Members at September 2021 City of Inverness Area Committee for officers to proceed with the statutory process for the permanent TRO along Riverside Way between Bishops Road and Bught Drive, to enable the currently one-way system with cycle contraflow to remain in place permanently and while the long-term ICATN scheme is progressed. Further details are in Section 5 of this report.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – The Riverside Way, as part of the ICATN programme, has worked alongside the community to alleviate concerns resulting in the change from two-way traffic, to one-way with cycle contraflow along Ness Walk and Bught Road. This has resulted in the 20mph scheme within the Ballifeary and Riverside area signage to reduce large buses and HGV from entering the residential area, and installation of speed and traffic sensors within the community to help officers understand any changes.
- The ICATN team have regularly attended the local Community Council and have liaised with key stakeholders in the Ballifeary and Bught areas as part of the consultation.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - Active Travel infrastructure provides a safe alternative to car use, especially for everyday utility and recreational trips within the City. The Riverside Way link will provide a link between the Canal and West Link infrastructure along the riverside into the City Centre.
- 3.5 **Risk – The Riverside Way, along with several ICATN schemes, must be delivered by 31 March 2024.** Given the complexity of the works and the high levels of engagement required to ensure robust consultation, if there are additional delays there is a risk schemes cannot be fully delivered within the Sustrans timescales.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** - There is an ICATN design guide which takes into account Highland Council policy.

4. Background

- 4.1 Inverness City Active Travel Network (ICATN) is a programme of key active travel interventions throughout the city to encourage a modal shift towards walking and cycling focusing on:-

- Smithton Active Travel Bridge;
- Raigmore Active Travel Link;
- Raigmore Interchange;
- Millburn Corridor; and
- Riverside Way

In 2017/18 Highland Council were successful in receiving £6.4Mm towards this programme, matched in kind against the West Link Phase 1 active travel infrastructure costs. This budget has risen to £10,645,036, with infrastructure to be completed by March 2024. This increase in funds reflects a change in design criteria in line with Places for Everyone grant conditions and a change in Sustrans' funding intervention rates.

The Spaces for People Fund, which Members have received several updates, was focussed on enabling social distancing measures through the pandemic. In Inverness, several of the Spaces for People schemes to enable social distancing, including the temporary measures on Riverside Way, were based on concept designs developed as part of longer-term measures.

It is important to note that although funded through Transport Scotland and Sustrans, Places for Everyone is a separate funding pot, focussed on permanent active travel infrastructure through the Inverness City Active Travel Network (ICATN).

- 4.2 In February 2020 a paper was brought to CIAC to ask Members to approve an experimental Road Traffic Regulation Order (ERTRO) to trial a one-way with cycle contraflow. This was approved by members and work began to proceed with the ERTRO.
- 4.3 On 1 March 2020 the 20mph scheme, which was delivered as part of Riverside Way, went live within the Ballifeary and Riverside area. This included signage, a Speed Indicator Device on Ballifeary Road and speed cushions on Bught Road adjacent to Bught Pitches.
- 4.4 During March 2020 the UK went into lockdown with the Covid-19 Pandemic. Highland Council's focus was to enable social distancing on key routes within Inverness for people to walk and cycle safely and to enable people to safely reach healthcare and key amenities by foot and bike through the lockdown.

Spaces for People funding was successfully awarded for this and Riverside Way was one of a series of interventions which the Spaces for People team delivered. This involved a (Coronavirus) Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) to enable the one-way with cycle contraflow along Ness Walk and Bught Road.

Officers also installed a full-modal traffic counter at Ballifeary Lane/Ness Walk to understand transport movements within the Riverside and Ballifeary area. A further full traffic junction turning count for key locations along Riverside and Ballifeary was taken during March 2020.

- 4.5 AECOM were appointed in February 2021 to further develop the concept design work started through the feasibility and traffic management report created in 2018/19. The original concept designs required updating due to the changes in Sustrans' funding requirements as their grant changed from Community Links PLUS to Places for Everyone.
- 4.6 It is important to note the interdependencies within the Riverside area which have added to the complexity of design and stakeholder engagement within this location. These projects include:-
 - River Ness Hydro;
 - Gathering Place;
 - Highland Food Trail planning application;
 - West of the Ness feasibility study;
 - Ballifeary Road Permit Parking Scheme;
 - Fisherman's Hut Car Park Regulation; and
 - Temporary Road closure, Inverness Botanic Gardens (20.10.21-7.11.21)
 - Levelling Up Fund (Bught, Northern Meeting Park and Inverness Castle)

Officers will continue to liaise with project teams to ensure a joined-up approach within the local area, although these are individual projects with different funding streams and criteria.

5. Riverside Way Traffic Regulation Order Update (TRO)

- 5.1 Approval was given by Members at September 2021 City of Inverness Area Committee for officers to proceed with the statutory process for the permanent TRO along Riverside Way between Bishops Road and Bught Drive, to enable the currently one-way system with cycle contraflow to remain in place permanently and while the long-term ICATN scheme is progressed.

There was a requirement for a permanent TRO as the current (Coronavirus) Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) expires 26 December 2021.

The statutory process which must be followed before the permanent TRO can be made is currently underway and any objections to the proposed permanent TRO which cannot be resolved by officers will be brought to the February City of Inverness Area Committee.

- 5.2 Due to timescales and advice from legal colleagues, officers are at the same time asking for an extension of the (Coronavirus) TTRO, to ensure there is sufficient time to process any objections which arise through the Permanent TRO process. The extension may be granted by Scottish Ministers, who can extend a TTRO for up to 6 months at a time.

If granted, the extension will ensure that the one-way with cycle contraflow can remain in place between Dec 26th and the February City of Inverness Area Committee, where any outstanding objections to the proposed Permanent TRO will be brought to Members.

6 Riverside Way Concept Design and Stakeholder Engagement

- 6.1 AECOM were appointed in February 2021 to update the feasibility and design work carried out in 2018 to reflect changes in design standards through the change from Community Links PLUS to Places for Everyone criteria, as part of an overhaul of grant funding across Scotland.
- 6.2 This provided an opportunity to gain further analysis of traffic data, to allow officers to understand how the Spaces for People Covid intervention for social distancing was working through the introduction of the one-way system with cycle contraflow and to engage with stakeholders, including the Community Council on update concept plans for the Riverside Way.

Image 1: Timeline of Riverside Way work to date

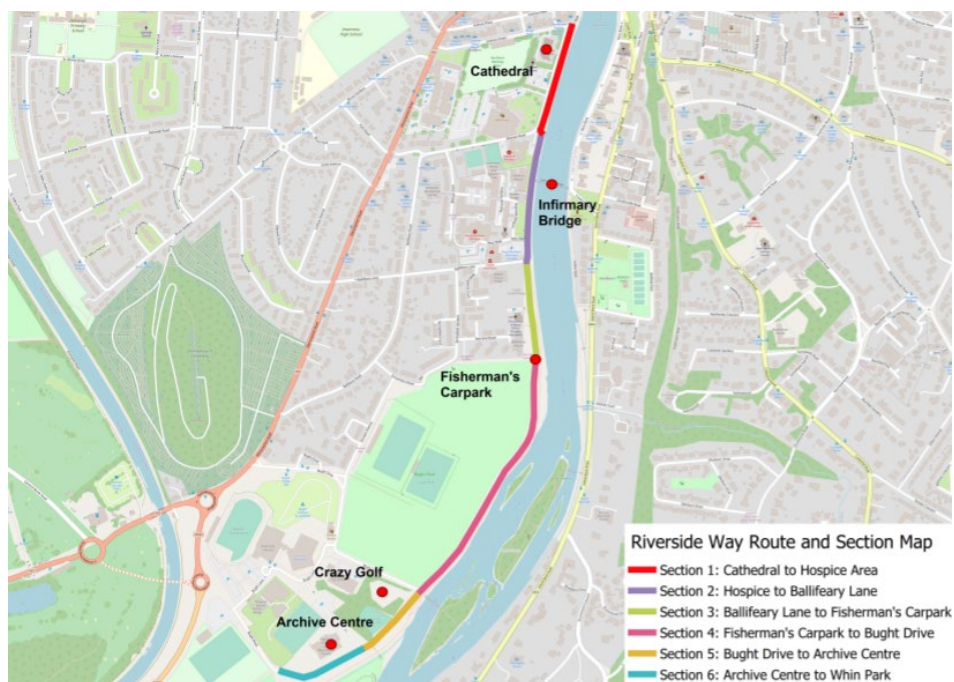


6.3 Due to the length of the Riverside Way scheme from its extents at the Cathedral to its end point at Whin Park, where the route adjoins the active travel paths towards the Canal and West Link, AECOM advised to split the route into 6 succinct sections for public and stakeholder engagement. This was to allow each area to be consulted upon in its own merit, as due to the road widths varying along the river the design is not a 'one size fits all' solution for improving the active travel infrastructure. Another factor for splitting the route into 6 areas was due to the stakeholder engagement being online and via MS teams due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The 6 sections of the route are defined as:-

1. Cathedral to Hospice;
2. Hospice to Ballifeary Lane;
3. Ballifeary Lane to Fisherman's Car Park;
4. Fisherman's Car Park to Bught Drive;
5. Bught Drive to Archive Centre; and
6. Archive Centre to Whin Park

Image 2: Riverside Way route extents, with each of the 6 sections colour coded



6.4 **Appendix 1** provides the concept designs for each section, which were consulted upon. Each of the sections which were consulted upon had more than one design option provided, as outlined in the table below:-

Table 1: Route options * detail of options at section 6.7

Map Colour	Section No.	Section Name	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	Section 1	Cathedral to Hospice Area			
	Section 2	Hospice to Ballifeary Lane			
	Section 3	Ballifeary Lane to Fisherman's Car Park			
	Section 4	Fisherman's Car Park to Bught Drive			
	Section 5	Bught Drive to Archive Centre			
	Section 6	Archive Centre to Whin Park			

It is important to note that before reaching the options which were consulted upon, other potential designs were considered, but were not progressed due to being undeliverable. An example of this regards Section 1, where the design team considered if a segregated cycle route could be designed adjacent to the carriageway on Bishops Road, while retaining sections of two-way traffic, in effect utilising some of the width where shrubs currently sit in planters between the road carriageway and Ness Walk. This would have resulted in a detrimental impact to the shrubs and trees within the Conversation Area and tree experts within the Council advised this would not be supported.

6.5 Consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders in the community and the wider general public through the following sessions:-

- **An Introduction Briefing session:** This outlined the project to date, the different options for each section of the route and the Commonplace website where stakeholders were able to answer a questionnaire and provide feedback on the options.
- **Commonplace Question:** The online platform allowed stakeholders and members of the general public to provide feedback on the proposals through an online questionnaire.
- **Online Public Drop In Event:** This event allowed members of the public to attend an Online Drop In Event where the project team provided information on the project and answer any questions/queries from members of the public.
- **Stakeholder Workshop:** The stakeholder workshops provided key stakeholders, situated along the route, with an opportunity to engage with the project team in small workshop groups to allow for a more in-depth discussion and engagement.

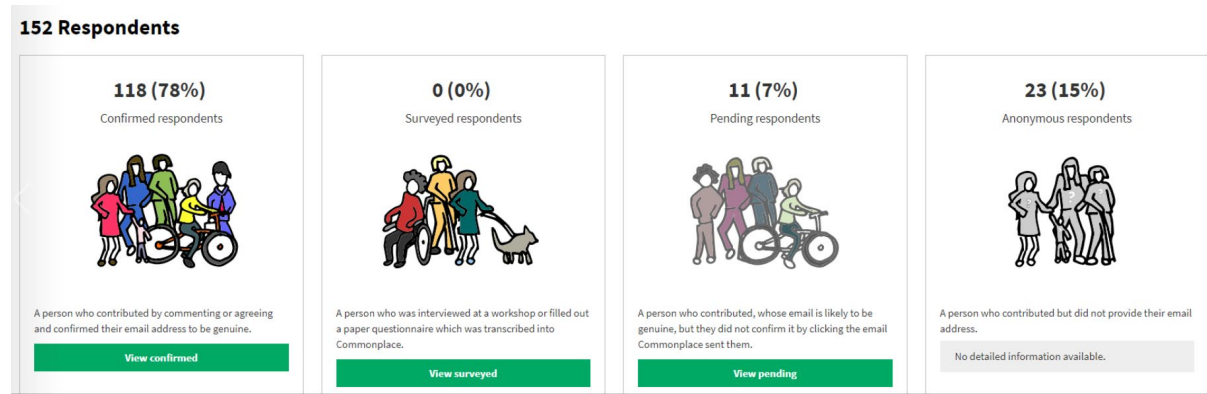
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all forms of consultation were conducted remotely due to the restrictions on travel and numbers allowed to meet in public.

6.6 Online engagement took place through the Commonplace Engagement Portal during July and August 2021. The link to the online consultation, which is closed for further comment can also be found at:

<https://riversidewayproposals.commonplace.is/proposals/concept-proposals-consultation>.

In total 2151 visitors accessed the Commonplace Consultation, 704 of whom read more than one page of the content. 152 chose to respond to the online consultation, but only 118 of those provided contact details. The analysis commonplace provided is focused on the 118 confirmed responses. Due to Covid-19 we asked everyone to consult via the online portal, rather than completing face to face surveys.

Image 3 Respondents within Commonplace



6.7

Table 2 - Summary of options considered

Section	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Section 1 - Cathedral to Hospice	Shared Use Path 39.6%	Riverside segregated Cycle Path 60.4%	
Section 2 - Hospice to Ballifeary Lane	Current Layout 32.6%	Moving footway to the riverside 67.4%	
Section 3 - Ballifeary Lane to Fisherman's Carpark	Current spaces for People 44.8%	Raised kerb cycle contraflow 55.2%	
Section 4 - Fisherman's Carpark to Bught Drive	Current spaces for People 19.3%	Bi-directional cycle lane (no parking) 28.4%	Bi-directional cycle route with parking 52.3%
Section 5 - Bught Drive to Archive Centre	Cycle lane and footpath next to skatepark 22.1%	Shared use path next to skatepark 25.8%	Segregated cycle lane opposite skatepark 52.3%
Section 6 - Archive Centre to Whin Park	Shared Use Path 32.6%	Cycle lane and footpath 67.4%	

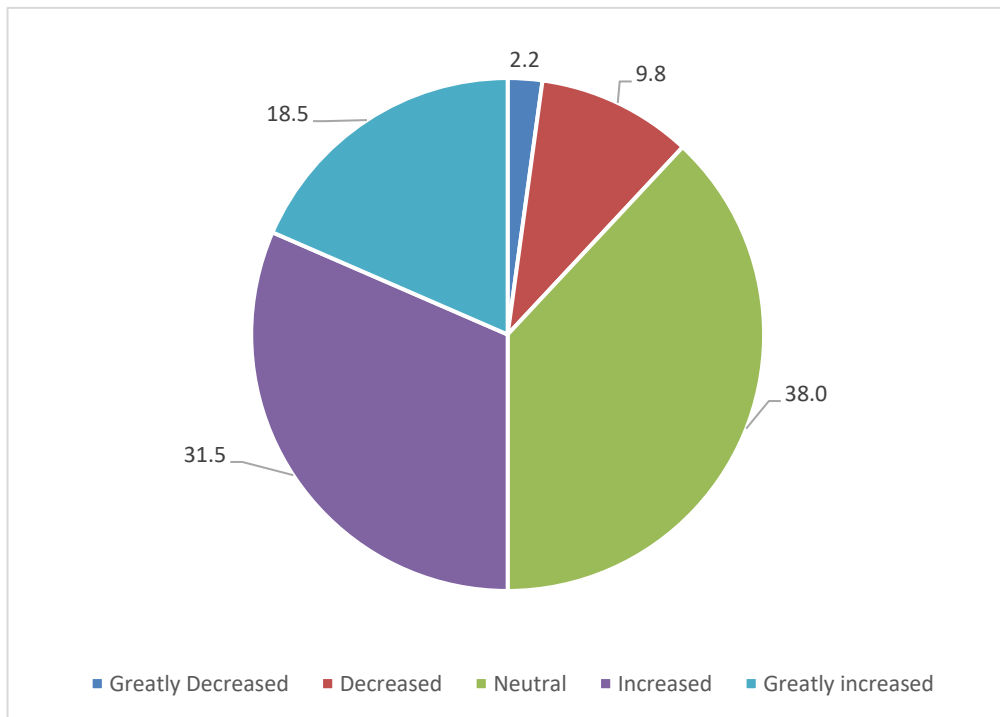
Appendix 2 provides further detail on these options and the reasons that stakeholders provided as to why the preferred options were selected.

7. Impact of Covid-19 and Riverside temporary intervention

7.1 The Commonplace survey asked some key questions to help officers understand the changes in behaviours brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the introduction of the one-way road with cycle contraflow along the Riverside.

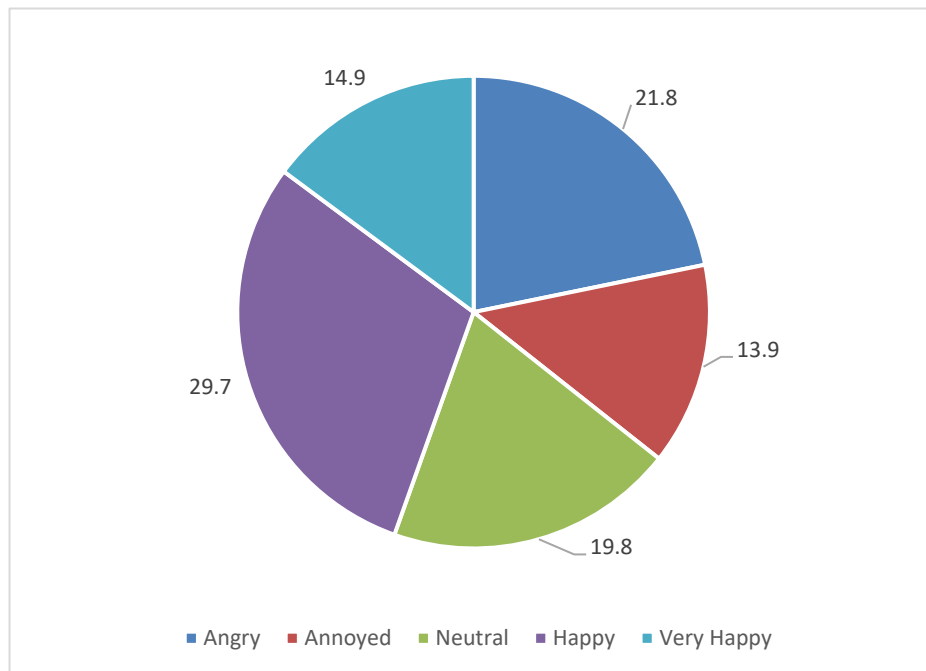
Covid-19 has impacted peoples' movement over the last 2 years and respondents noted the affect it has had on how much they actively travel. 50% of respondents stated that the Covid-19 pandemic had either increased or greatly increased influencing them to travel actively (e.g., cycling, walking or wheeling).

Image 4: Breakdown of respondents in relation to how much the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced them to travel actively



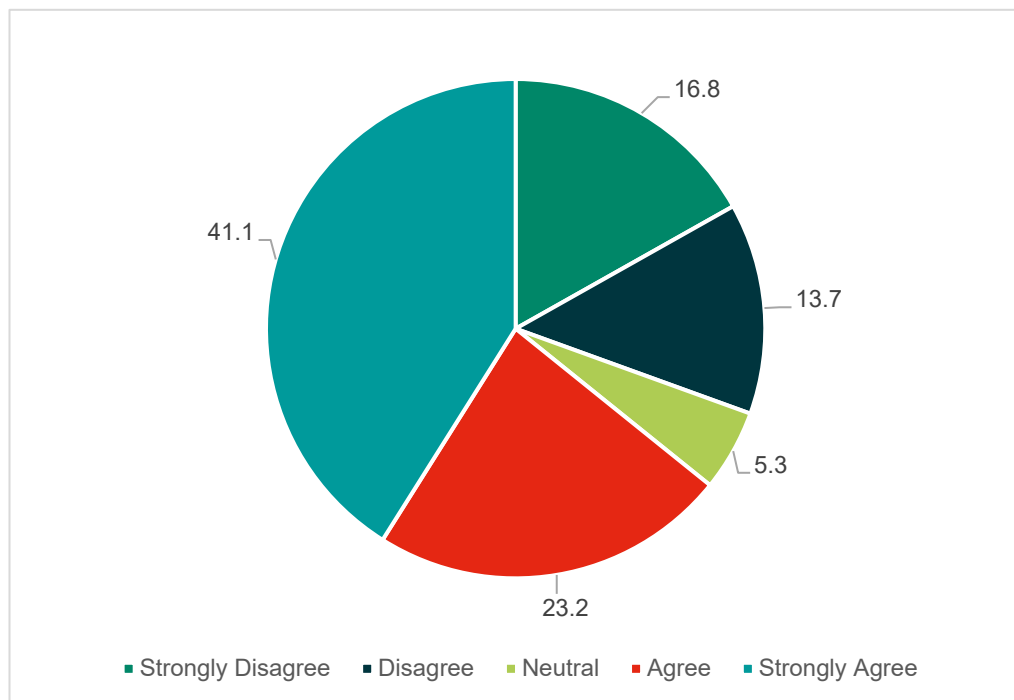
Respondents were also asked to state how they felt about the temporary interventions along the riverside, which included the deployment of a segregated contraflow cycle lane along with the instalment of the south bound one-way. Over 50% of respondents were either happy or very happy with the interventions.

Image 5: Percentage breakdown of respondents' feelings regarding the current temporary interventions along the Riverside.



However, although the majority of respondents were happy with the interventions, over 60% of respondents did acknowledge that the riverside does need improved facilities for active travel.

Image 6: percentage breakdown of respondents on the need for improved active travel facilities along the riverside.





8. Monitoring

- 8.1 A permanent speed indicator device is installed on Ballifeary Road to ensure the speed and volume of traffic through the Ballifeary community can be monitored.
- 8.2 A permanent vivacity sensor (all modes) is in place at the junction of Ness Walk and Ballifeary Lane to understand the movement of all those walking, wheeling, cycling and all vehicular movements.
- 8.3 Overall, the introduction of the one-way system with cycle contraflow has resulted in a reduction in vehicular traffic along the riverside and an increase in active modes. Further information on traffic analysis can be provided on request.

9 Next Steps

Officers will continue to work with Sustrans through the ICATN RIBA design stages as a requirement of the grant funding. Following concept design approval by our funders, work will continue on developing detailed and technical design, which will include further stakeholder engagement on the Riverside Way proposals, which will come back to a future CIAC for approval.

9.1 Image 7: RIBA design stages, condition of grant funding for ICATN Programme

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strategic definition	Preparation and Brief	Concept Design	Developed Design	Technical Design	Construction	Handover & Close Out	In Use
<p>Understand key aspirations of local communities and wider social and political aspirations for the area.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder map • Community engagement strategy • Evidence of relationships with local community groups, and other supporters • Identify budget and appropriate delivery partners 	<p>Deliver the community engagement plan to reach identified stakeholders.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events, workshops, meetings, online platforms • Community engagement reports • Progress reports for the community, highlighting their influence • Targeted engagement with seldom heard groups and those with protected characteristics in order to develop an EqIA <p>Where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Street Survey in local schools 	<p>Test ideas with the community through street trials.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress reports • Trial activities and events • Updated EqIA <p>Ongoing consultation on design with a wide representation of groups, through various events, workshops, meetings, online platforms.</p>		<p>Provide regular project updates to the community. Ongoing consultation on design details, including ongoing dialogue with groups representing people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated EqIA 		<p>Community given option of ownership of some aspects of the project.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <p>Agreement with community to maintain elements of the project where applicable.</p>	

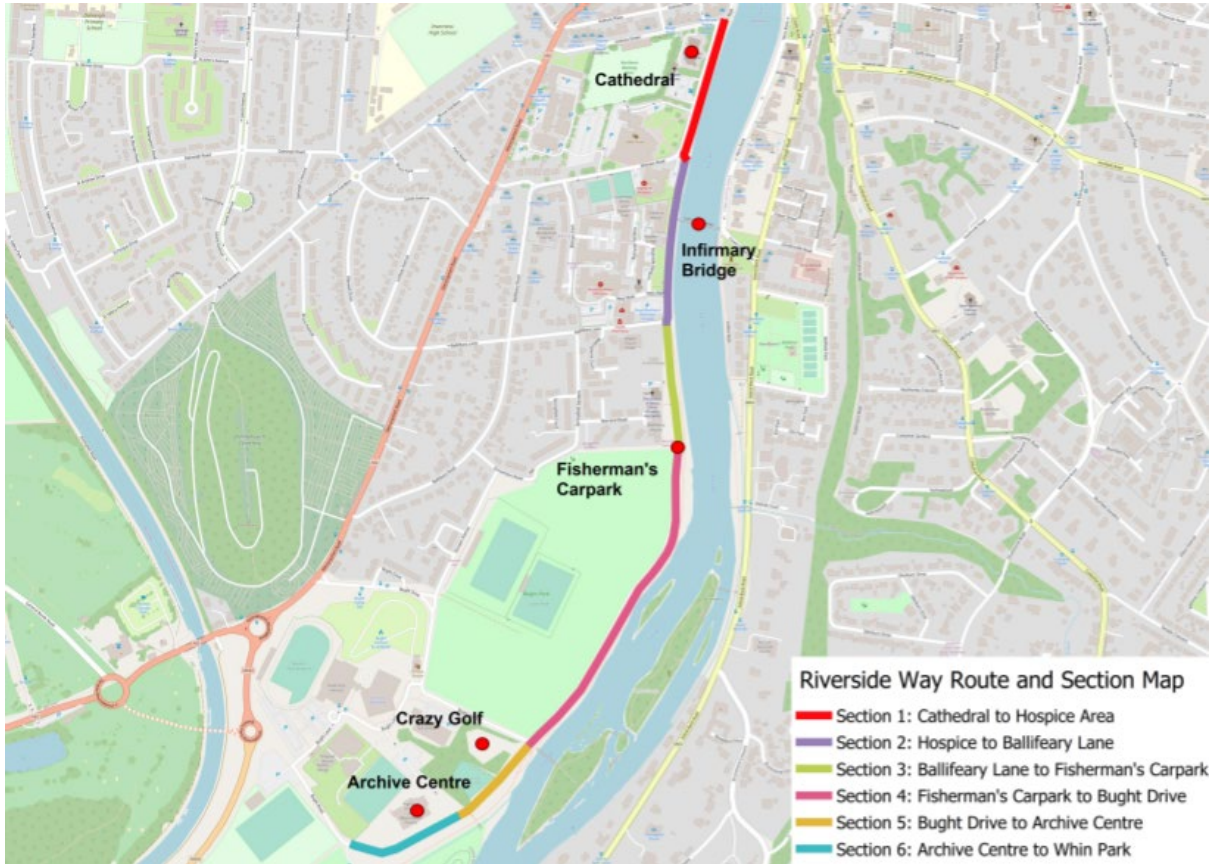
Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 3 November 2021

Author: Fiona McNally, Programme Manager
Nicole Wallace, Acting Head of Environment

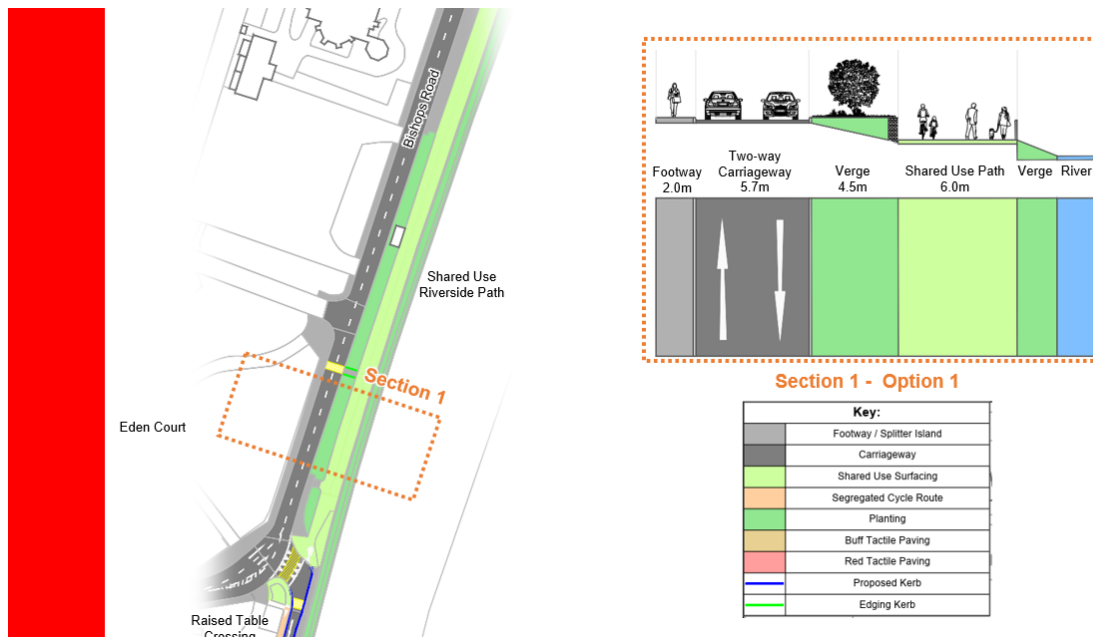
Appendix 1: Concept Design Proposals

The concept design options were shown on the Commonplace Portal, and this appendix provides further detail to section 6 of the report.

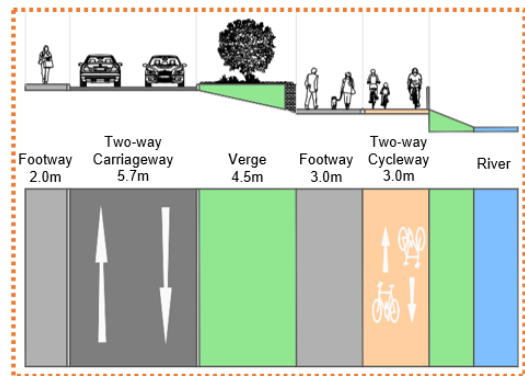
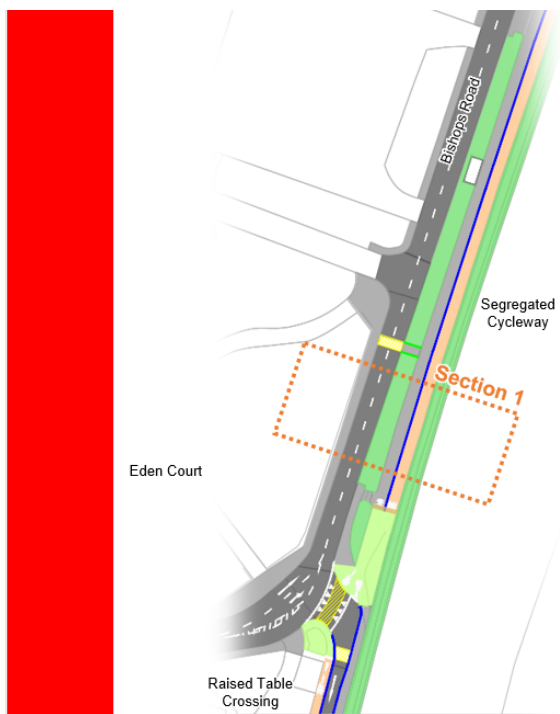


Section 1- Cathedral to Bishops Road

Option 1: Shared use path for walking and cycling, current layout



Option 2: Segregated cycle provision, Preferred choice (60.4%)

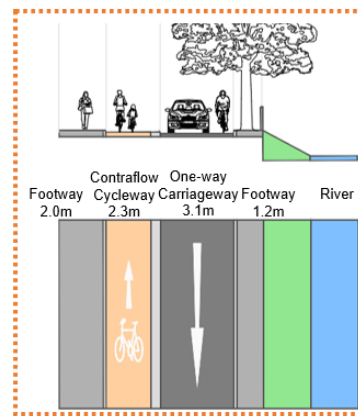
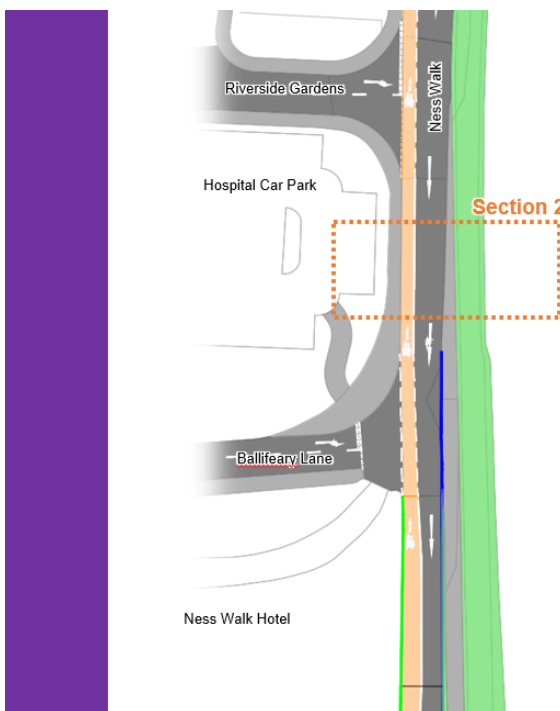


Section 1 – Option 2

Key:	
[Grey]	Footway / Splitter Island
[Dark Grey]	Carriageway
[Light Green]	Shared Use Surfacing
[Orange]	Segregated Cycle Route
[Green]	Planting
[Yellow]	Buff Tactile Paving
[Red]	Red Tactile Paving
[Blue]	Proposed Kerb
[Light Green]	Edging Kerb

Section 2: Bishops Road to Ballifeary Lane

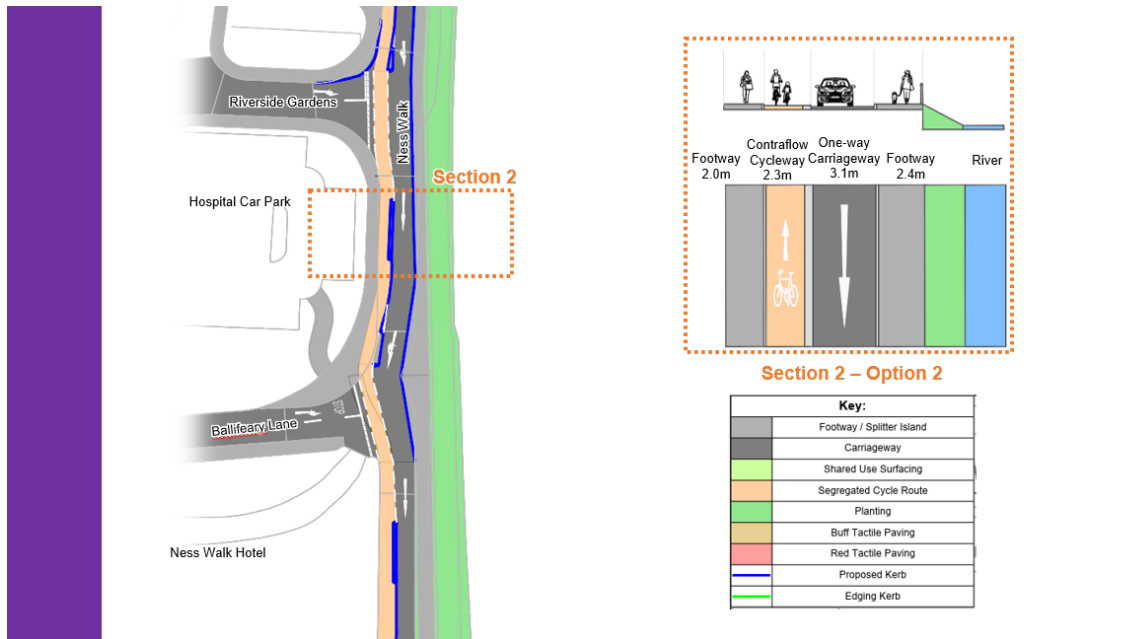
Option 1: Current footway layout, as per spaces for people. Changes to Ballifeary Lane junction.



Section 2 – Option 1

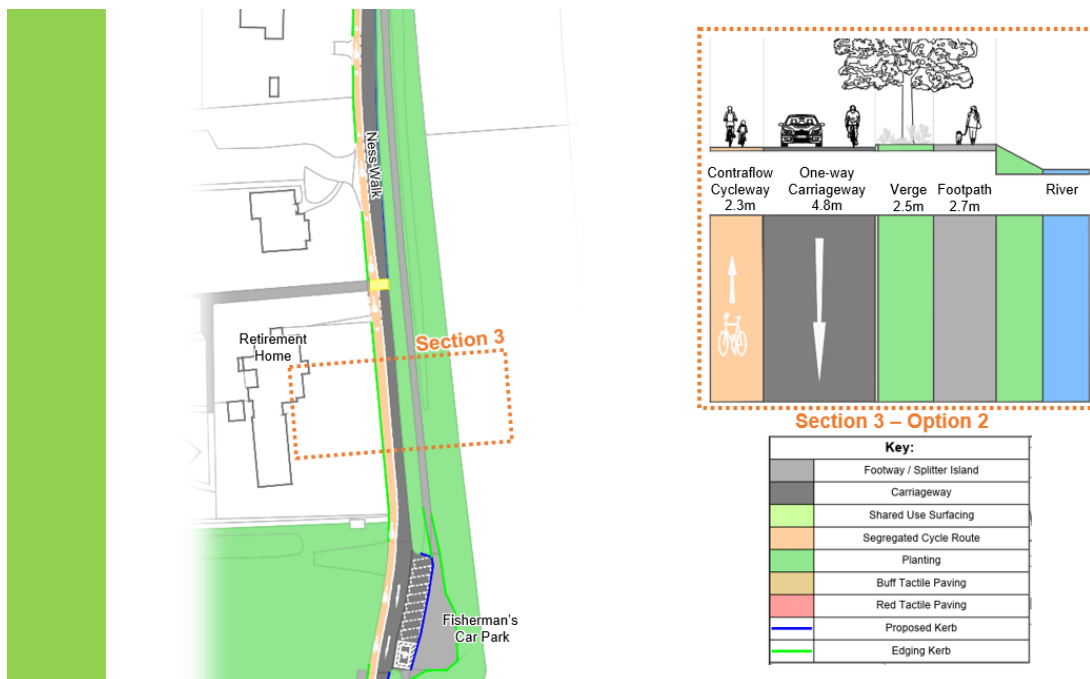
Key:	
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[Dark Grey]	Carriageway
[Light Green]	Shared Use Surfacing
[Orange]	Segregated Cycle Route
[Green]	Planting
[Yellow]	Buff Tactile Paving
[Red]	Red Tactile Paving
[Blue]	Proposed Kerb
[Light Green]	Edging Kerb

**Option 2: Move footway to Riverside and improve Ballifeary Lane junction.
Preferred choice (67.4%)**

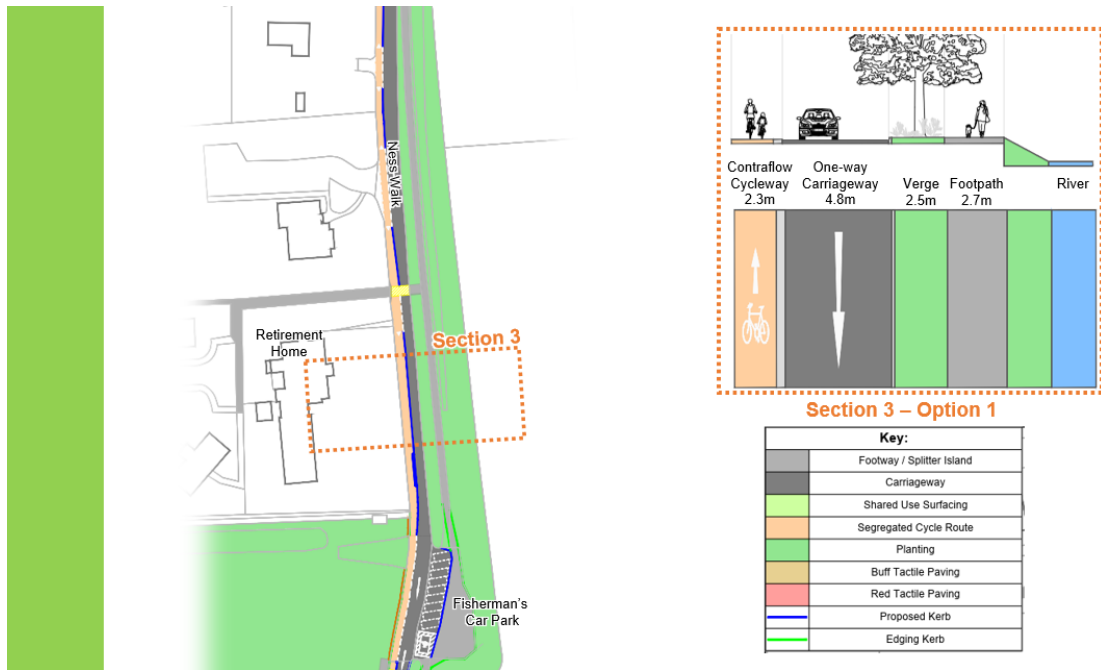


Section 3: Ballifeary Lane to Fisherman’s Car Park.

Option 1: Layout same as current ‘spaces for people intervention’ with improved access around car park.

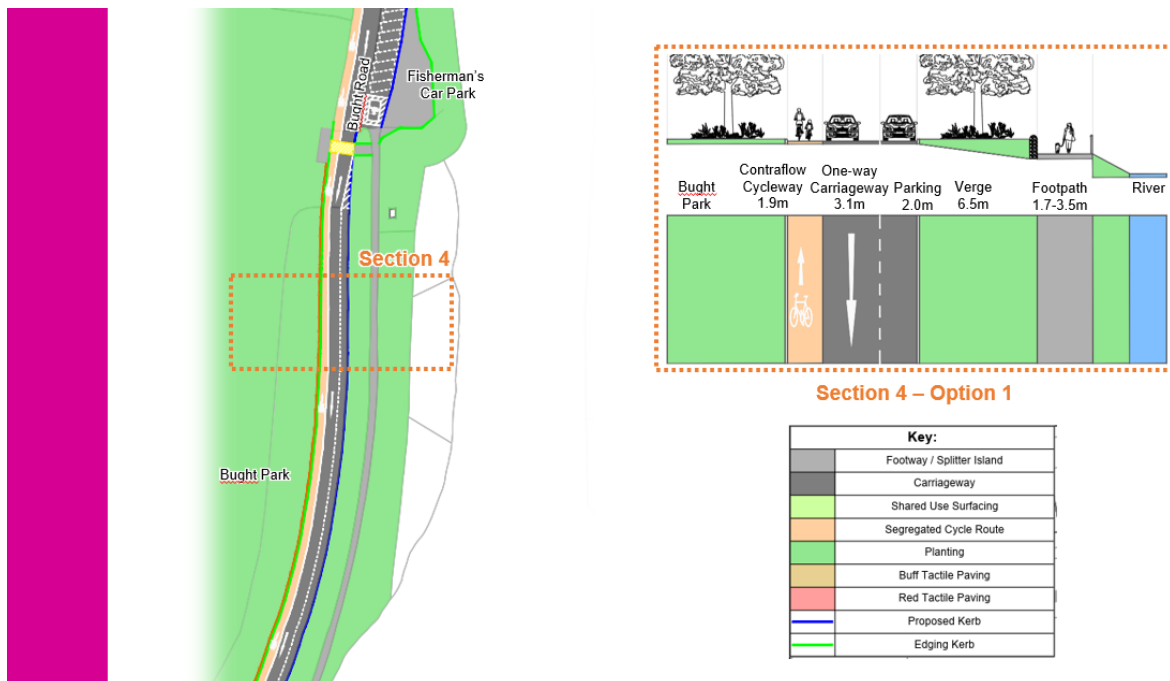


Option 2: Segregated cycle provision, with more defined kerb separation from carriageway. **Preferred Choice (55.2%)**

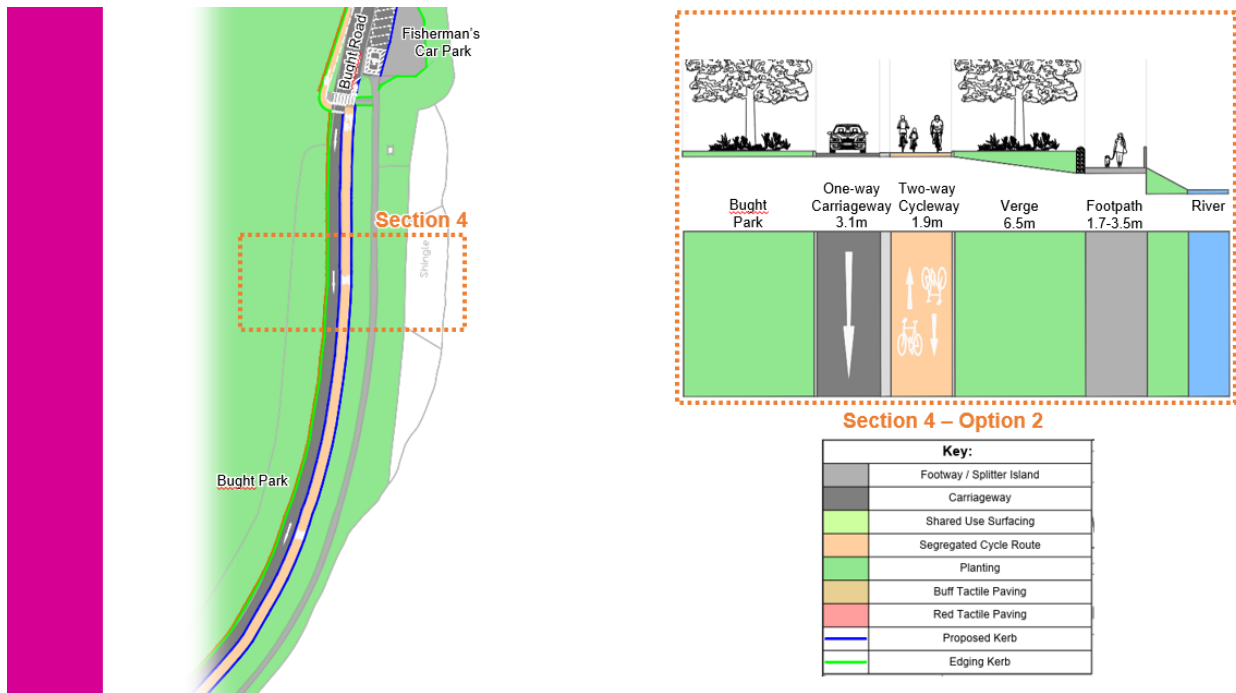


Section 4: Fisherman's Car Park to Bught Drive

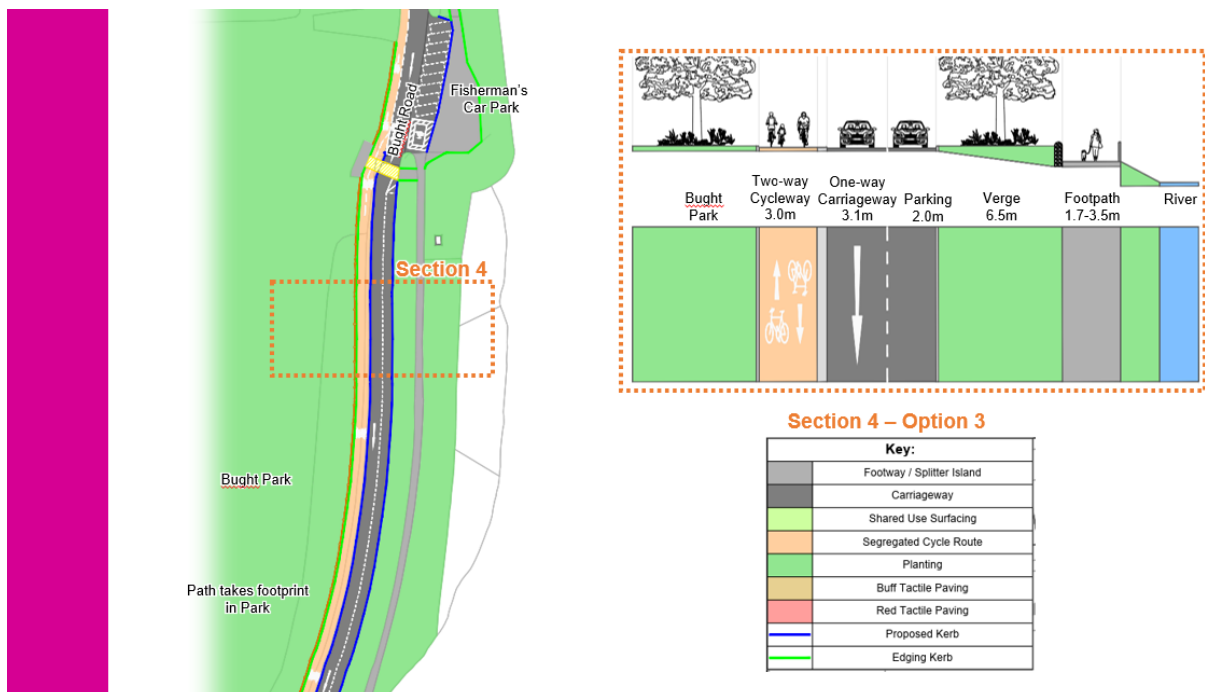
Option 1: One-way road, with cycle contraflow, retaining parking provision



Option 2: Creation of a bi-directional cycle route, where cars currently park along the Bught.

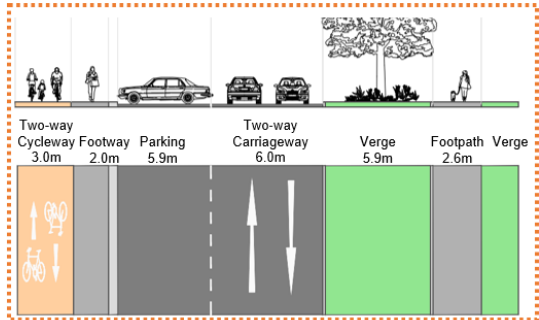
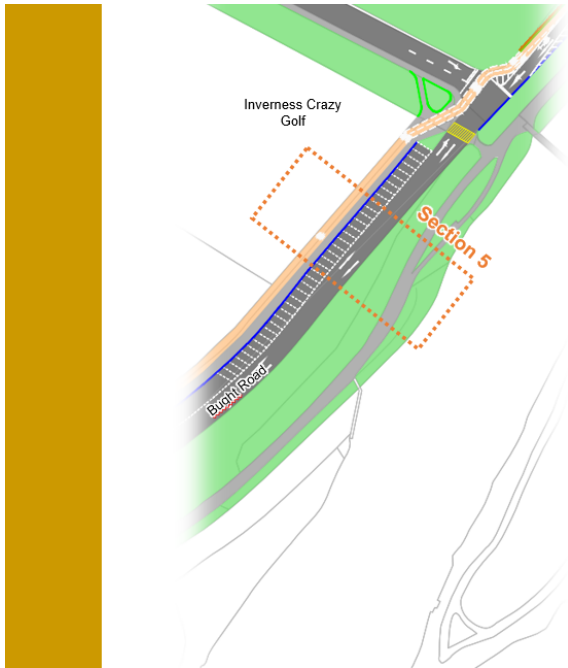


Option 3: Bi-directional cycle route, with one-way road and retain parking provision.
 *note that this would require width from verge of Bught Pitches
Preferred choice (52.3%)



Section 4: Bught Drive to Archive Centre

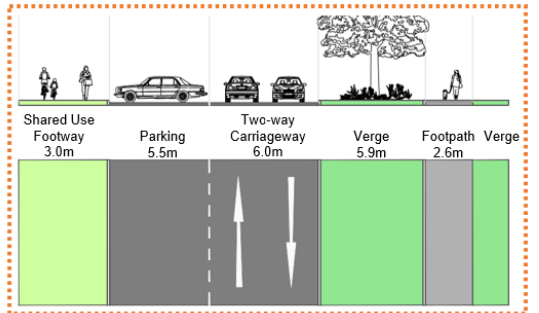
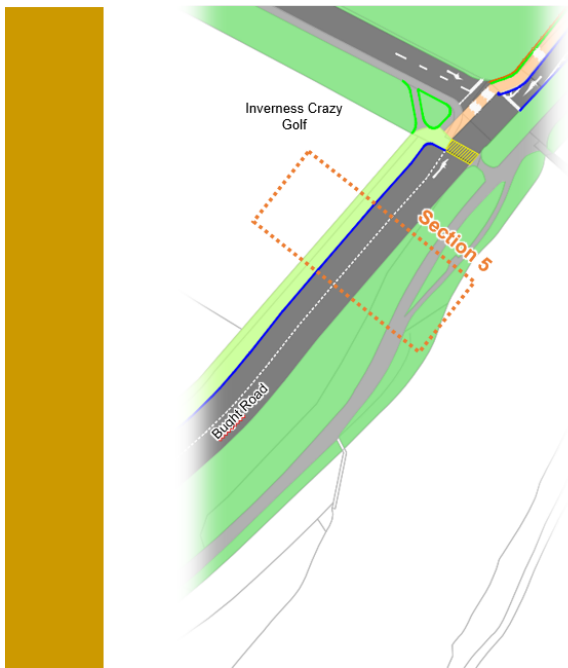
Option 1: Bi-directional cycle route adjacent to footway



Section 5 – Option 1

Key:	
[Grey Box]	Footway / Splitter Island
[Dark Grey Box]	Carriageway
[Light Green Box]	Shared Use Surfacing
[Orange Box]	Segregated Cycle Route
[Green Box]	Planting
[Brown Box]	Buff Tactile Paving
[Red Box]	Red Tactile Paving
[Blue Line]	Proposed Kerb
[Green Line]	Edging Kerb

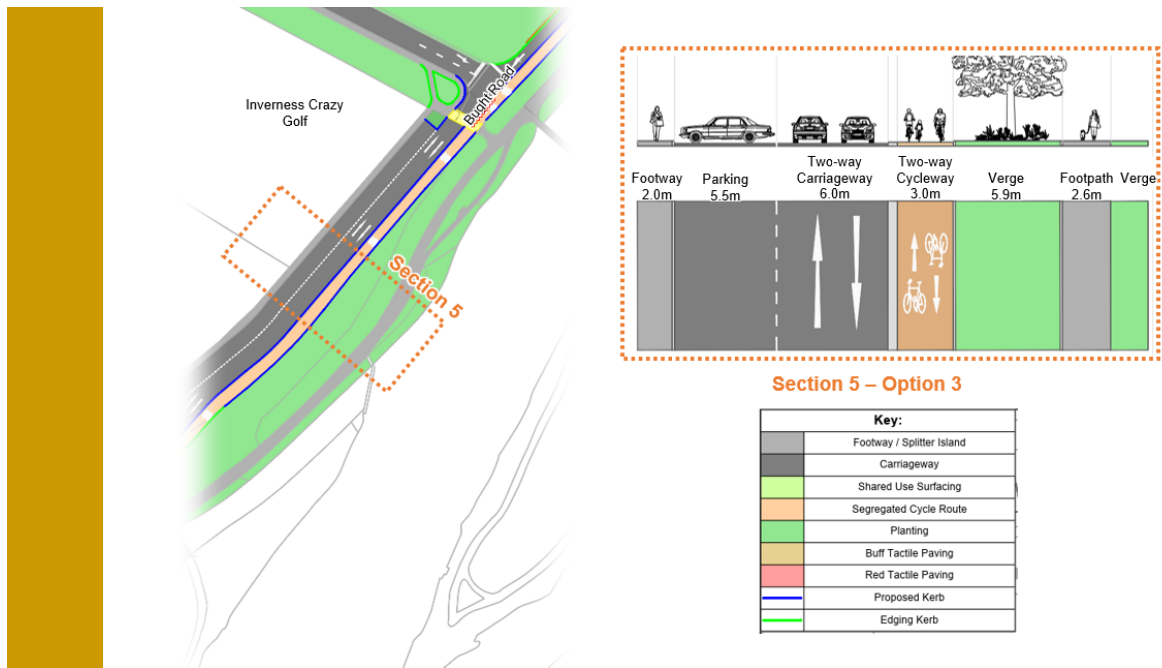
Option 2: shared use provision for walking and cycling



Section 5 – Option 2

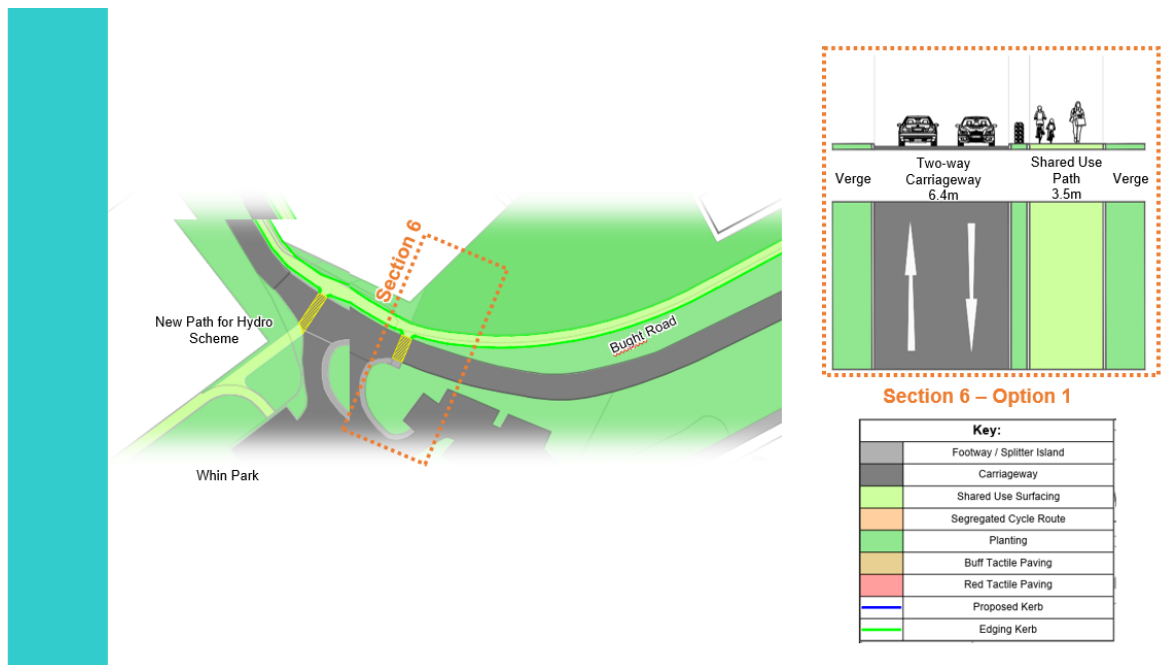
Key:	
[Grey Box]	Footway / Splitter Island
[Dark Grey Box]	Carriageway
[Light Green Box]	Shared Use Surfacing
[Orange Box]	Segregated Cycle Route
[Green Box]	Planting
[Brown Box]	Buff Tactile Paving
[Red Box]	Red Tactile Paving
[Blue Line]	Proposed Kerb
[Green Line]	Edging Kerb

**Option 3: Bi-directional cycle route on opposite side of carriageway.
Preferred choice (52.3%)**

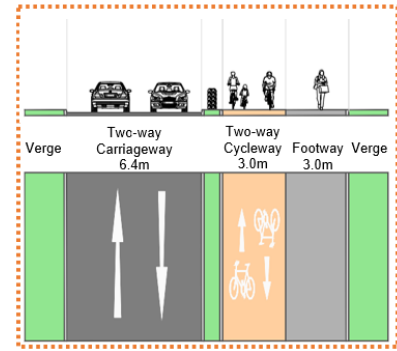
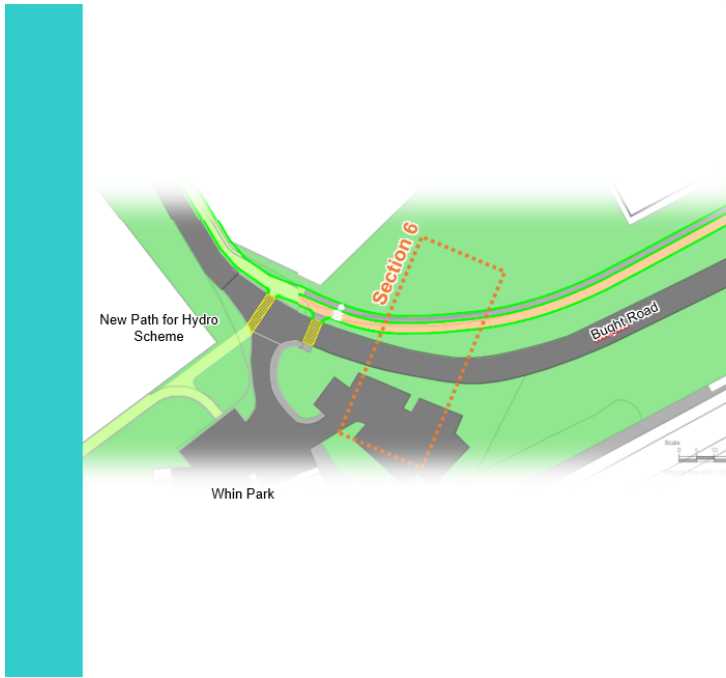


Section 6: Archive Centre to Whin Park

Option 1: shared use path provision



Option 2: Segregated cycle path adjacent to footway. Preferred choice (67.4%)



Section 6 – Option 2

Key:	
	Footway / Splitter Island
	Carriageway
	Shared Use Surfacing
	Segregated Cycle Route
	Planting
	Buff Tactile Paving
	Red Tactile Paving
	Proposed Kerb
	Edging Kerb

Appendix 2: Commonplace Stakeholder analysis

This section provides further detail to Section 6.7 of this report.

Section 1: Cathedral to Hospice

The first section of the route from the Cathedral to the Hospice had two potential alignment options. The response from the respondents was as follows:-

- Option A: Shared Use Path (39.6%)
- **Option B: Riverside segregated cycle path (60.4%)**

Option B was the desired alignment for this section of the route. The reasons given by respondents who chose this alignment were that it provided:-

- Delineation of cycle usage;
- Improved cycling facilities;
- Improved walking facilities;
- Increased cycling accessibility;
- Easing pressure on narrow pathways; and
- Better traffic flows

Section 2: Hospice to Ballifeary Lane

The second section of the route from the Hospice to Ballifeary Lane had two potential alignment options. The response from the respondents was as follows:-

- Option A: Current Layout (32.6%)
- **Option B: Moving footway to the riverside (67.4%)**

Option B was the desired alignment for this section of the route. The reasons given by respondents who choose this alignment were that it provided:-

- Improved road crossing;
- Improved walking facilities;
- Removing barriers to access;
- Easing pressure on narrow pathways;
- Increased cycling accessibility; and
- Access to bridges

Section 3: Ballifeary Lane to Fisherman's Car Park

The third section of the route from Ballifeary Lane to Fisherman's Car Park had two potential alignment options. The response from the respondents was as follows:-

- Option A: Current Spaces for People (44.8%);
- **Option B: Raised Kerb Cycle Contraflow (55.2%)**

Option B was the desired alignment for this section of the route. The reasons given by respondents who choose this alignment were that it provided:-

- Removing barriers for access;
- Improved road crossing;
- Improved cycling facilities;
- Easing pressure on narrow pathway;
- Increased cycling accessibility;
- Dropped Kerb; and
- Safer for Child Cyclists

Section 4: Fisherman's Car Park to Bught Drive

The fourth section of the route from Fisherman's car park to Bught Drive had three potential alignment options. The response from the respondents was as follows:-

- Option A: Current Spaces for People (19.3%)
- Option B: Bi-directional cycle lane (no parking) (28.4%)
- **Option C: Bi-directional Cycle Route with parking (52.3%)**

Option C was the desired alignment for this section of the route. The reasons given by respondents who choose this alignment were that it provided:-

- Increased cycling accessibility;
- Improved cycling facilities;
- Changes to parking ;
- Segregated cycle lane;
- Improved walking facilities;
- Better traffic flow; and
- Improved road crossing

Section 5: Bught Drive to Archive Centre

The fifth section of the route from Bught Drive to Archive Centre had three potential alignment options. The response from the respondents was as follows:-

- Option A: Cycle lane and footpath next to skatepark (22.1%)
- Option B: Shared use path next to skatepark (25.6%)
- **Option C: Segregated cycle lane opposite skatepark (52.3%)**

Option C was the desired alignment for this section of the route. The reasons given by respondents who choose this alignment were that it provided:-

- Improved cycling facilities;
- Improved walking facilities;
- Better traffic flow;
- Easing pressure on narrow pathway;
- Removed conflict between cyclists and pedestrians;
- Reduced impact on greenspace; and
- Increased cycling accessibility

Section 6: Archive Centre to Whin Park

The sixth section of the route from Bught Drive to Archive Centre had two potential alignment options. The response from the respondents was as follows:-

- Option A: Shared Use Path (32.6%)
- **Option B: Cycle lane and Footpath (67.4%)**

Option B was the desired alignment for this section of the route. The reasons given by respondents who choose this alignment were that it provided:-

- Improved cycling facilities;
- Improved walking facilities;
- Removing barriers for access;
- Easing pressure on narrow pathways; and
- Improved accessibility to Whin Park