

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Non-car transport planning in Pocklington

Introduction

Discussions in the Pocklington neighbourhood plan steering group have noted concerns about the difficulty of improving the integration of the processes that provide new housing developments with those that provide sustainable transport in the town. In summer 2019 members of the steering group met officers of ERYC to discuss possible developments of roads, cycleways and paths in the town but it proved essentially impossible to make proposals for an integrated system because of the way in which new housing developments had been constructed with an under provision of links between them. This note aims to record what is wanted, the current situation, and to make proposals about how planning for in-town multimode transport can better be approached.

Evidence

Local peoples' needs

There has been a wish within the Pocklington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to better integrate the planning and provision of sustainable transport with new housing developments in the town.

In the report from the consultants used to analyse the April 2019 Public Consultation Survey, over 90% of respondents "Strongly Agreed/Agreed" that the existing cycling and walking networks in the town should be protected and extended (94%) and that transport development should use an approach which is sustainable, integrated, convenient and safe. Almost all (97%) felt that transport should be developed to encourage sustainable and co-ordinated provision of routes for all modes of transport, covering public and private transport, cycling and walking, and to facilitate healthy lifestyles' was 'Very Important' (78%) or 'Important' (19%). The transport developments should also reduce the need for car use and provides improved walking and cycling links as part of a wider green infrastructure network for the town.

The provision of bus services, particularly the route to York was noted by survey respondents as a positive feature of Pocklington. However, a number of comments cited the need for this service to be improved, especially in the evening.

Expert knowledge and evidence

The Transport Knowledge Hubⁱⁱ exists to provide local decision-makers with resources for investing in transport schemes that deliver sustainable economic growth. Information on the website comes from leading industry experts. Their research shows that sustainable transport has an important role in unlocking the economic and social benefits of new housing. Their work has shown that siloed transport and planning decisions are barriers to integrating sustainable transport and housing development. A lack of sustainable transport within new housing sites risks creating isolated communities that are dependent on car use for transport. The

Transport Knowledge Hub has produced a research reportⁱⁱⁱ which identifies an eight-point plan to help overcome the creation of car dependent communities.

Transport for New Homes^{iv} is a project funded by the Foundation for Integrated Transport^v. It has produced an important report "Transport for New Homes^{vi}" (TNH) (2019) reporting on a project in which a wide range of new housing developments was visited, from large-scale greenfield housing on farmland, to open schemes on Brownfield sites, over 20 places in all. Three visits were also made to sites in the Netherlands. The project had six themes for assessment:

1. Car-based living.
2. Are new homes properly connected for pedestrians, cyclists or buses?
3. Are public transport opportunities missed?
4. The importance of mixed land use and integrated transport.
5. The advantages of the new urban quarter.
6. Insights from the Netherlands.

The report has many lessons for those planning housing developments. Many of the developments had created traffic by building in the wrong place and often the new developments had a minimalist public realm that was dominated by the needs of the car.

However, in this short note on the issue of properly connecting homes for pedestrians, cyclists and buses, attention will focus on the second of their themes: are new homes properly connected for pedestrians, cyclists or buses?

How well are homes connected for pedestrians, cyclists and buses?

The TNH report pointed out that developers have no control over land outside the boundaries of a development, the masterplan goes up to the boundary. Generally local authorities are not in a position to buy land to facilitate connecting developments with existing pedestrian and cycle routes. Developers are not expected to talk with bus service providers when new housing developments have their road systems designed. Commonly developers have to work on a site adjacent to existing housing developments that have no provision for a travel route crossing that boundary with the consequence that new developments have very poor interconnectivity with existing travel routes.

The report brings out a common confusion between everyday and recreational walking and cycling routes. The former exist to facilitate travel between where people live and where people need to go, such as a place of work, a town centre, shops, sports centres and playing fields. Recreational routes typically connect housing to countryside, nearby villages and places of interest. The safety aspects of both types of route are important: routes along busy roads, isolated runs or with poor illumination at night will never be popular.

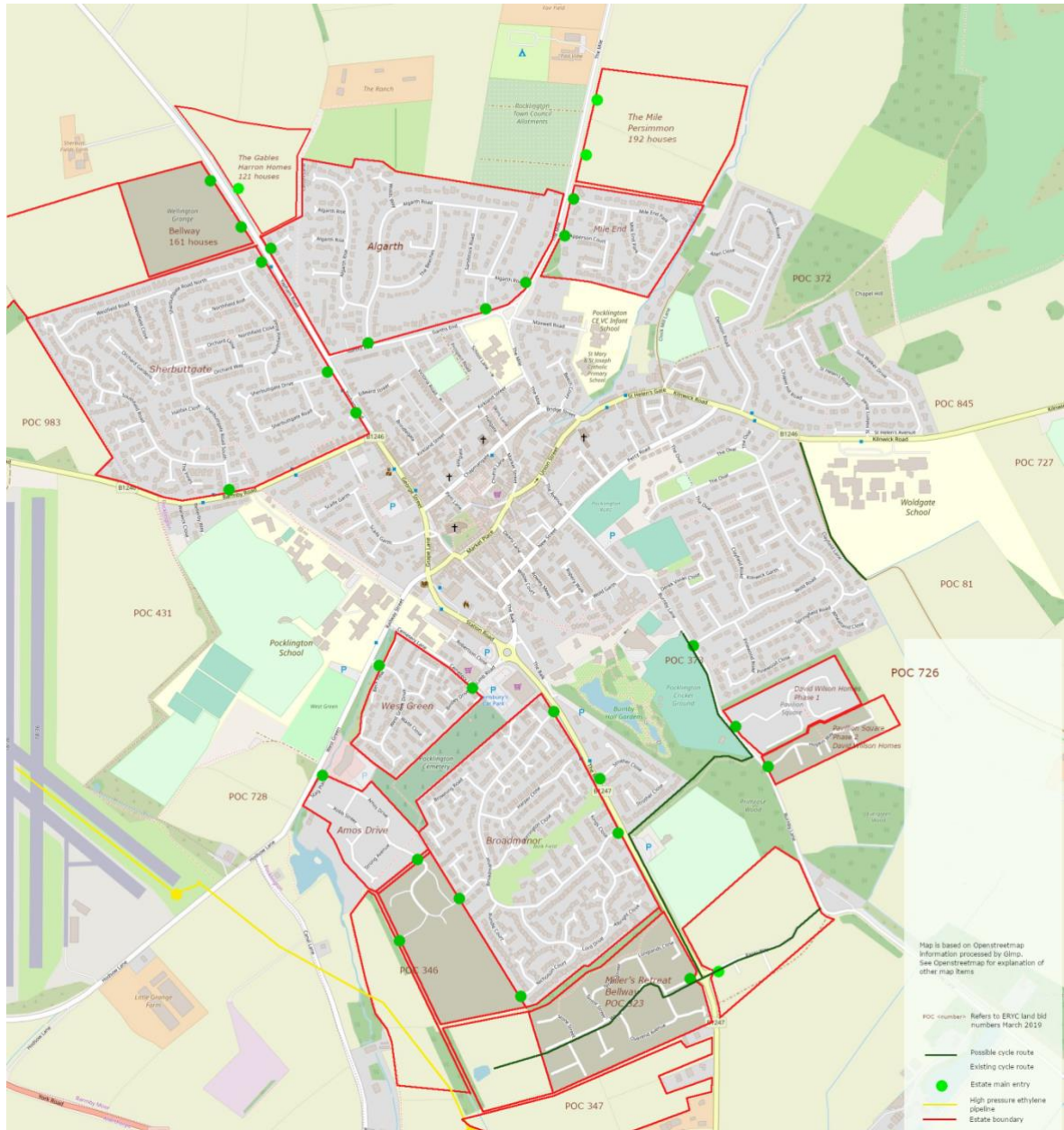
Connectivity of new housing developments in Pocklington

The map below shows Pocklington added housing developments as in early 2020. Housing developments are shown demarcated by red lines with their entry and egress points marked by green blobs.

It can be seen that almost no opportunities exist for interconnecting present and future housing developments with existing ones. The reason for this is that the existing estates have almost no roads or other travel routes that go right up to the boundary of a development, save those that the developer has planned as major

entry/egress routes to an existing main road. It is difficult to avoid concluding that each new housing development has been planned as an isolated entity with no thought given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

The consequence of this is that pedestrians and cyclists, if they are to travel from new housing to the centre of the town, are obliged to take the same route that a car would, i.e. move to the main entry/egress point of the development and then travel along a main road to the town centre.



Proposals

These are in accord with those of the TNH report^{vi}.

1. The way we select sites for housing development needs to change. Local authority planners should take much more initiative in selecting sites for new housing and should work with an openly available overall development plan for the town in mind. The type of plan proposed here is not a Neighbourhood

Development Plan, but is a higher level document owned by the local authority. Presently, county planners operate in an almost totally passive mode, awaiting approaches from landowners and land agents.

2. The views and expertise of local people should be an important influence in the plan. The plan should be the subject of continuing consultative work with the local town council and the provision of sustainable transport, with non-car provision a priority, should a component of this plan.
3. Local authorities need to be able to fund pedestrian and cycle links outside development areas. At the development planning stage, local authorities must also exert influence over housing developers to meet the overall needs of the town.
4. Bus service providers need to be brought in at the planning stage of new housing developments, being asked to advise on how public transport services to the development can be provided. Bus services should be provided to developments from their outset.

i POCKLINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN Public Consultation Survey June 2019 FINAL REPORT, Mike King, People and Places Insight Limited (mike.king@people-places.co.uk). Available electronically on the Pocklington Town Council website <https://www.pocklington.gov.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan/>

ii <https://transportknowledgehub.org.uk/>

iii The summary is available at <https://transportknowledgehub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Report-flyer-TKH.pdf>

The full report is available at https://transportknowledgehub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/20190213_KPMG-Sustainable-Transport-and-New-Housing-Report-for-TKH_FINAL....pdf

iv <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/>

v www.integratedtransport.co.uk Vision “A world where people can live decently without a car and enjoy good, affordable public transport; where transport causes little climate change; where public transport is integrated and complemented by safe and attractive routes for walking and cycling.”

vi <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/transport-for-new-homes-summary-web.pdf>