



# Cyclists Pedestrians and Equestrians: East Region

Debrief prepared by 2CV Social  
Practice for Transport Focus

December 2022

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# Contents

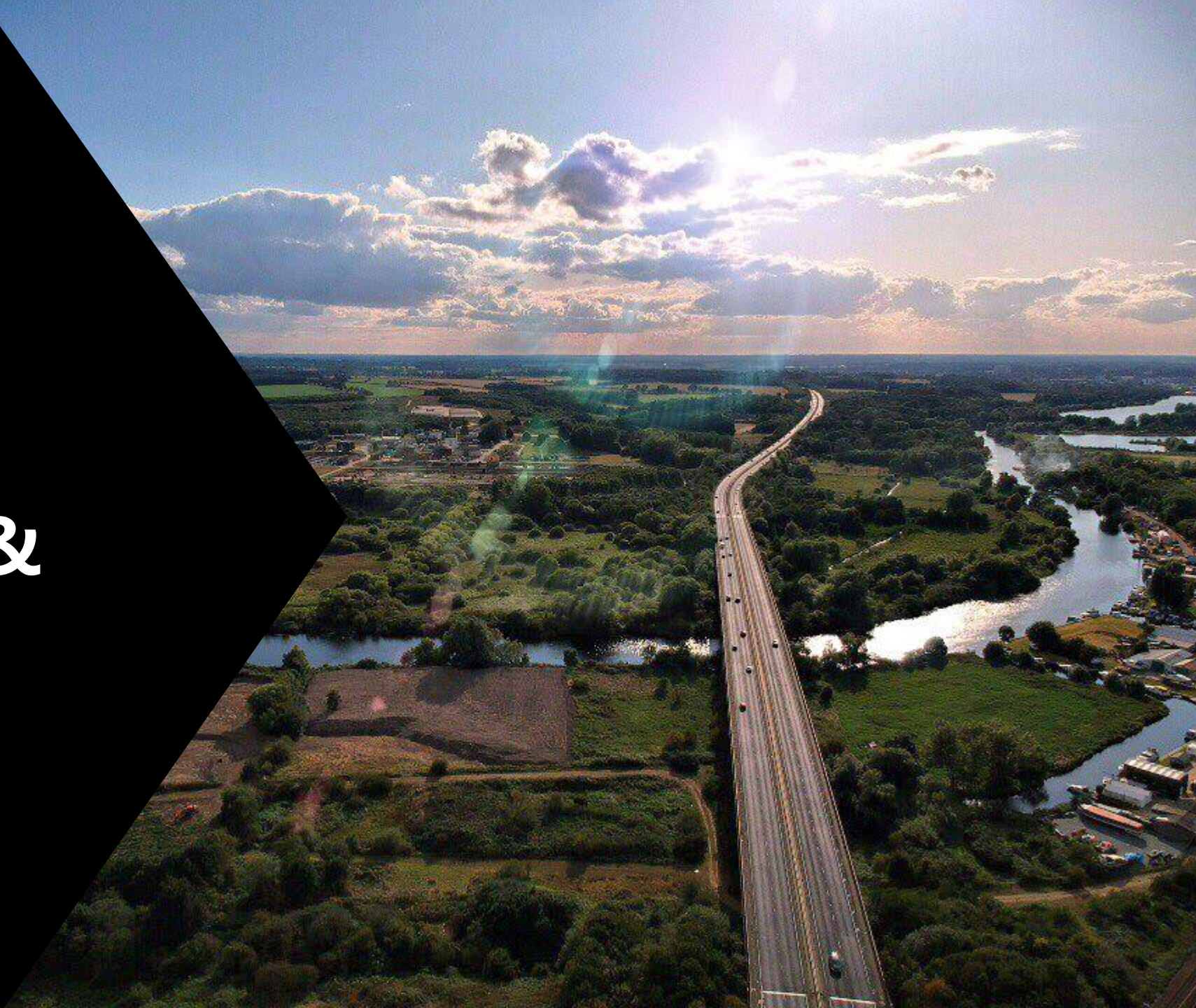
1. Research Background & Objectives
2. Methodology
3. Overview of Experiences
4. Site Studies
5. Moving Forward





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# Background & Objectives



# Research background

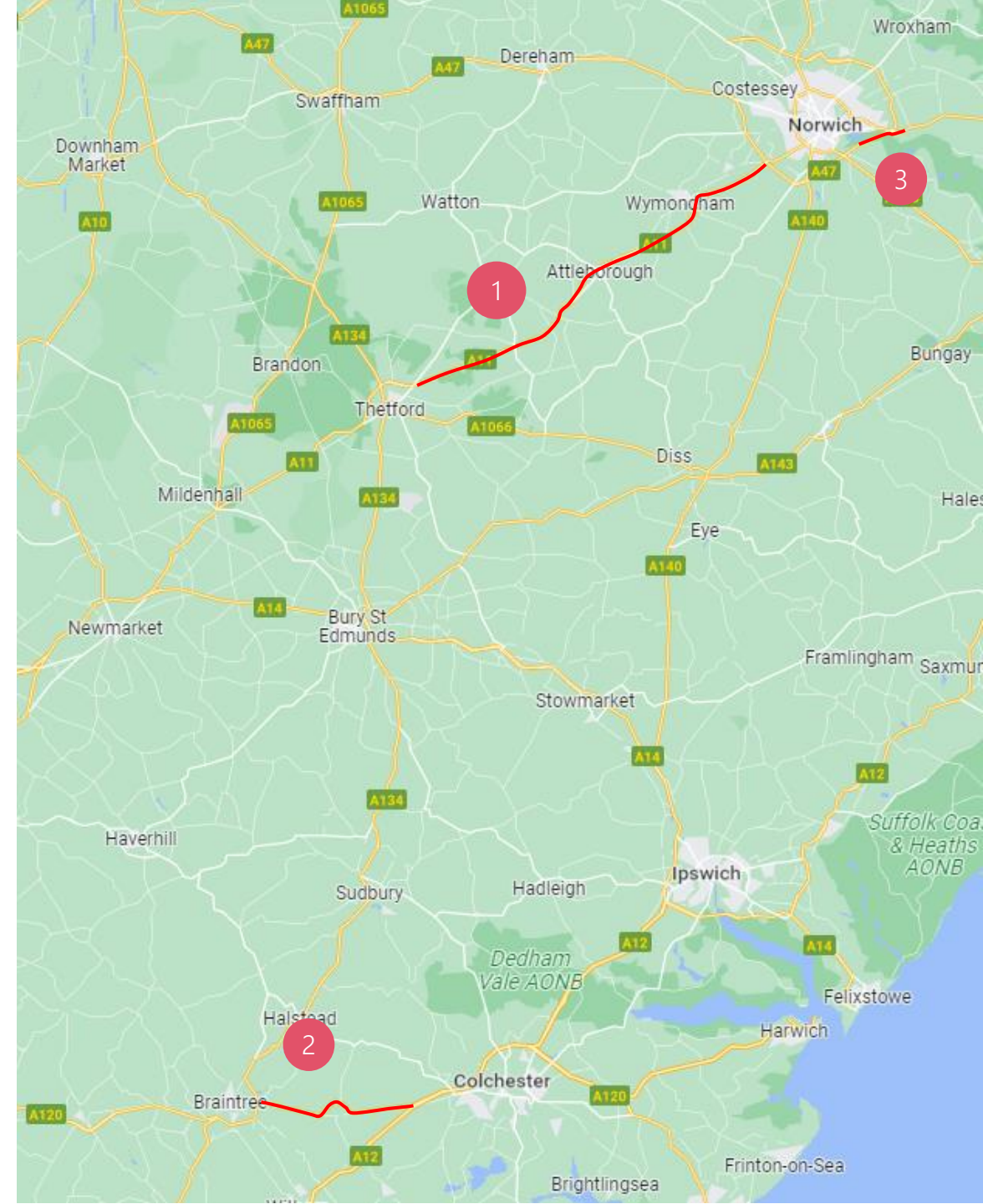
The motorways and major 'A' roads managed by National Highways (the Strategic Road Network or SRN) are predominantly used by motorised vehicles. Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians (CPEs) also use them, albeit in smaller numbers.

In its role as watchdog for transport users, Transport Focus ensures that the views and needs of these road users are understood and represented.

Transport Focus has already published reports looking at the experiences of CPEs using certain sites in different parts of England. A central focus of these studies has been to inform the generation of practical and realistic measures that local National Highways teams can take to improve the experiences of these groups.

This piece of work is a continuation of Transport Focus' work with National Highways and will be focused on specific locations in the East region.

- The three locations identified for the case studies were:
  1. A11 Thetford to Norwich
  2. A120 Braintree to Marks Tey
  3. A47 Yare Viaduct



# Why these sites were chosen by Transport Focus

1

## A11 Thetford to Norwich



A priority site following discussions between Transport Focus and National Highways.

Research needed to explore the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians making journeys near to the A11, and how their experience is impacted by the existence of the road.

2

## A120 Braintree to Marks Tey



A priority site following discussions between Transport Focus and National Highways.

Research needed to understand experiences and what provision cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians feel needs to be in place to suit their needs.

3

## A11 Thetford to Norwich



Of interest in that The Norwich Cycle Campaign suggest that the route over the River Yare to the south-east of Norwich is the worst cycle lane in the country.

Research to uncover experiences and identify what improvements can be made along this part of the route to increase feelings of safety when travelling over the viaduct.

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# Objectives

The central aim of this project was to develop localised case-study examples of the issues that cyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians face in making journeys that interact with National Highways' network

The key project objectives were to...

1. Identify prevailing issues at agreed local sites through discussions with key stakeholders
2. Explore the experiences and perspectives of three distinct audiences
3. Develop distinct case studies for individual locations informed by the experiences of the key audiences and views of stakeholders - importantly, these case studies will inform practical and realistic measures to improve CPE experiences



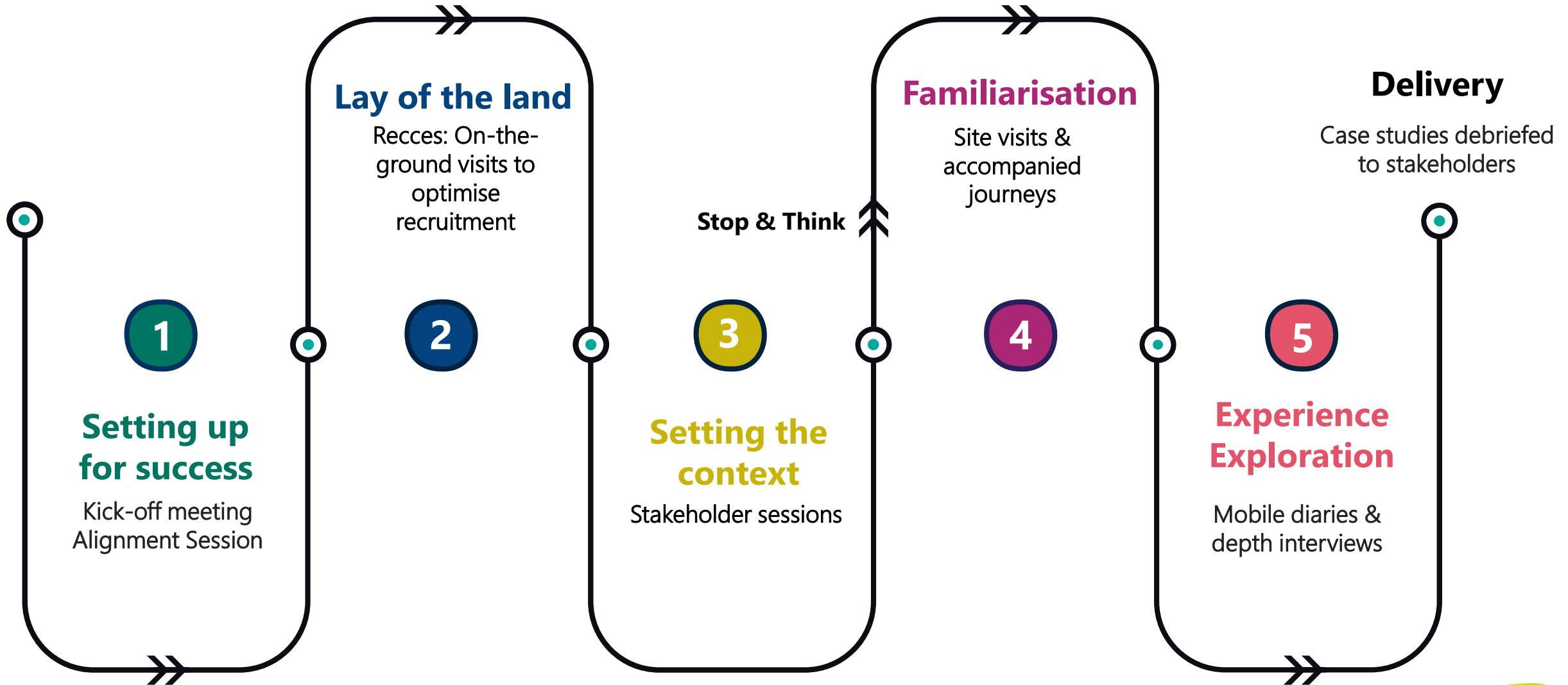


# Methodology



# A snapshot of our approach

A staged approach that incorporated a recruitment 'recce' stage to gauge sample feasibility in each location





# Sample summary

A mix of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians familiar with the site and organisations representing them



## Stakeholders from across all 3 sites

### A11 Thetford to Norwich:

- British Horse Society, Sustrans and National Highways

### A120 Braintree to Marks Tey:

- Sustrans, National Highways, Colchester Cycling Campaign, Footpath Secretary & Walking environment Officer for The Ramblers Colchester, Footpath Secretary for Ramblers Braintree

### A47 Yare Viaduct:

- Sustrans, National Highways



## A mix of CPEs on site visits

### A11 Thetford to Norwich:

- 2x Equestrian, 1x Pedestrian

### A120 Braintree to Marks Tey:

- 1x Pedestrian, 2x Cyclists(/Pedestrians)

### A47 Yare Viaduct:

- 1x Cyclist



## A mix of CPEs for digital diaries & follow up depths

### A11 Thetford to Norwich:

- 2x Pedestrian, 2x Cyclist, 1x Equestrian

### A120 Braintree to Marks Tey:

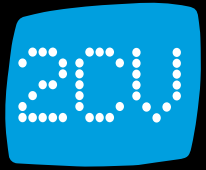
- 5x Cyclist, 4x Pedestrian, 1x Equestrian

### A47 Yare Viaduct:

- 7x Cyclist, 3x Pedestrian, 1x Cyclist/Pedestrian

### A good mix achieved in terms of:

- Age and life stage (young family – empty nester)
- Leisure vs utility
- Activity done with others (incl. children) vs alone
- Level of experience and interest (hobbyist vs casual)



# Overview of Experiences



# Overall themes



## Sites all have areas of natural beauty nearby. Stark contrast in journey sections between these areas and difficult road stretches alongside heavy vehicular traffic

- The areas directly surrounding the A11, A120 and A49 are all praised for their tranquillity and natural beauty.
- Accessing these landscapes involves using loud, traffic-heavy A roads.
- CPE can feel these roads are too dangerous.
- This means people have to either resort to taking longer, less direct routes that are out of their ways and/or opt to travel by car instead in order to be safer.

## The strong presence of HGVs impacts overall CPE experiences

- Across sites, CPE are in very close proximity to vehicular traffic. The A11 and A120 especially are used by a large number of HGVs; this adds to traffic noise and increases safety concerns for CPEs using the routes given.
- Detritus left behind by HGVs or construction work can be dangerous; cyclists report instances where they have to avoid hitting obstacles (rubber from tyres, cones falling over in the wind).
- It is also fairly common for construction signage to be left behind – this is not only perceived to be an eyesore but also limits the ability of CPEs to see oncoming traffic as they cross.

## An increase in the number of residential areas being built is a concern

- CPEs have already noticed the increase in traffic owing to the construction of new residential areas in the A11 and A120 areas and worry that car usage is only set to increase as new planning permission has been given.
- CPEs are concerned that this will make crossing the A11 and A120 even more challenging as more locals make journeys by car.

# A lack of connectivity along routes is a key frustration for CPEs

This limits their ability to comfortably make journeys from village to village and can make them feel like deprioritised road users when their needs are not being catered for

- Consistent with what has been found in CPE research in other parts of England, there is a perception that **different organisations are responsible for different parts of CPE routes**; this means that there does not appear to be much logic to the way that routes have been built in the minds of CPEs, and leads to frustrations concerning the **lack of connectivity** between villages and places of interest.
  - In some places, footpaths and cycleways **seem to suddenly end** and CPEs are left to continue their journeys in ways which **often feel less safe** e.g. resort to crossing roads at points without a dedicated crossing point when footpath runs out; or walk on grass verges next to heavy traffic (pedestrians).
- There is also a **perceived lack of consistency in the quality of CPE paths across sites**.
  - Related to the lack of connectivity, CPEs have to navigate highly varying types of routes with changing provision, surfaces, width and sense of safety.
  - While a degree of variation is of course expected, it feels that **routes in their entirety have not been thought through completely from start to finish**.
  - This is also attributed in part to the fact that different stretches or roads **fall under the responsibility of different organisations** and that there is insufficient joined-up thinking and collaboration.

"When you cycle [from Wymondham to Norwich] you feel that [route planning] hasn't happened.

There is a really good route you could do to the hospital **where half of it has a cycle path because the housing development has had to put one in...and then the hospital has had to put one at the other end as part of their license but then between that there is nothing**. So, you set out thinking this would be great but **no, because it's not part of their remit, they're not going to put the path the whole route.**" - Cyclist

"Often you can be walking quite easily on a route or on one side of the road, and then **out of nowhere for some reason this path would just stop**. It is **not often guaranteed that it continues on the other side** of the road either. As well as it stopping, when there is a continuation on the other side **there may not even be a designated crossing for it!** So, you have to cross without any protection." - Pedestrian

# CPEs feel strongly there is room for improvement when it comes to the maintenance of paths

This encompasses maintenance of routes with regards to vegetation, infrastructure, obstructions and debris

- Issues with lack of maintenance are widespread and include:
  - Overgrown vegetation, muddy surfaces and natural debris such as leaves and rocks
    - There is an acceptance of this in more rural settings, but when the obstacles are blocking CPE transit it is problematic
    - Some also voice concerns that sections that feel very remote and dark can be conducive to antisocial behaviour
  - Infrastructure on paths in poor state – for example, stairs and wooden railings have become rotten and fallen over, surfaces have eroded
  - Road traffic signs that are placed on pathways can obstruct and narrow what are already narrow paths
  - Fallen signs also restrict paths, are hard to see and can cause accidents
  - Debris that detach from HGVs and cars end up on CPE paths
  - Litter can amass over or long periods of time, especially in the approach to crossing and interactions.

“Overgrown bushes blocking the way at eye level so pedestrians often walk in the road.” – Pedestrian, A11

“Once on the path alongside the bridge, it is narrow and there is poor surface in sections.”  
Cyclist, A47

“Quite often the grass is very overgrown which covers most of the path! At this time of year, there’s an awful lot of leaves which can be slippery. Also, a lot of youths break the little wooden fence. It could do with a bit more maintenance.” – Pedestrian, A11

# Equestrians have distinct needs that differ to those of cyclists and pedestrians

## Consideration needs to be given to the specific infrastructure required by equestrians to make safe journeys

- Equestrians are often left feeling second best when it comes to route provisions. They feel that more focus and consideration is given to cyclists and pedestrians when creating and amending routes.
  - Equestrians desire circular route loops, as they often need to start and finish at the same point (home, car park etc.).
  - Currently difficult to hack for long distances on circular routes that could involve crossing major roads.
- Equestrians need more space and greater infrastructure provision when interacting with major roads.
  - The risk of accident is greater for equestrians given that they are riding a large, easily spooked, animal.
  - Bridge crossings are a key area of concern. Often the nearest bridge with appropriate infrastructure (high railings, wide path) are out of hacking distance and can only be reached by car. This also means parking is required somewhere along the route.
  - Ideal bridge infrastructure involves a slow ramp up to a bridge that has high railings, a wide path, and if possible, some way of reducing the sound of traffic below (to prevent horses becoming distressed and flapping buckles etc.).
  - Further efforts to make fellow users aware and considerate towards equestrians is essential.



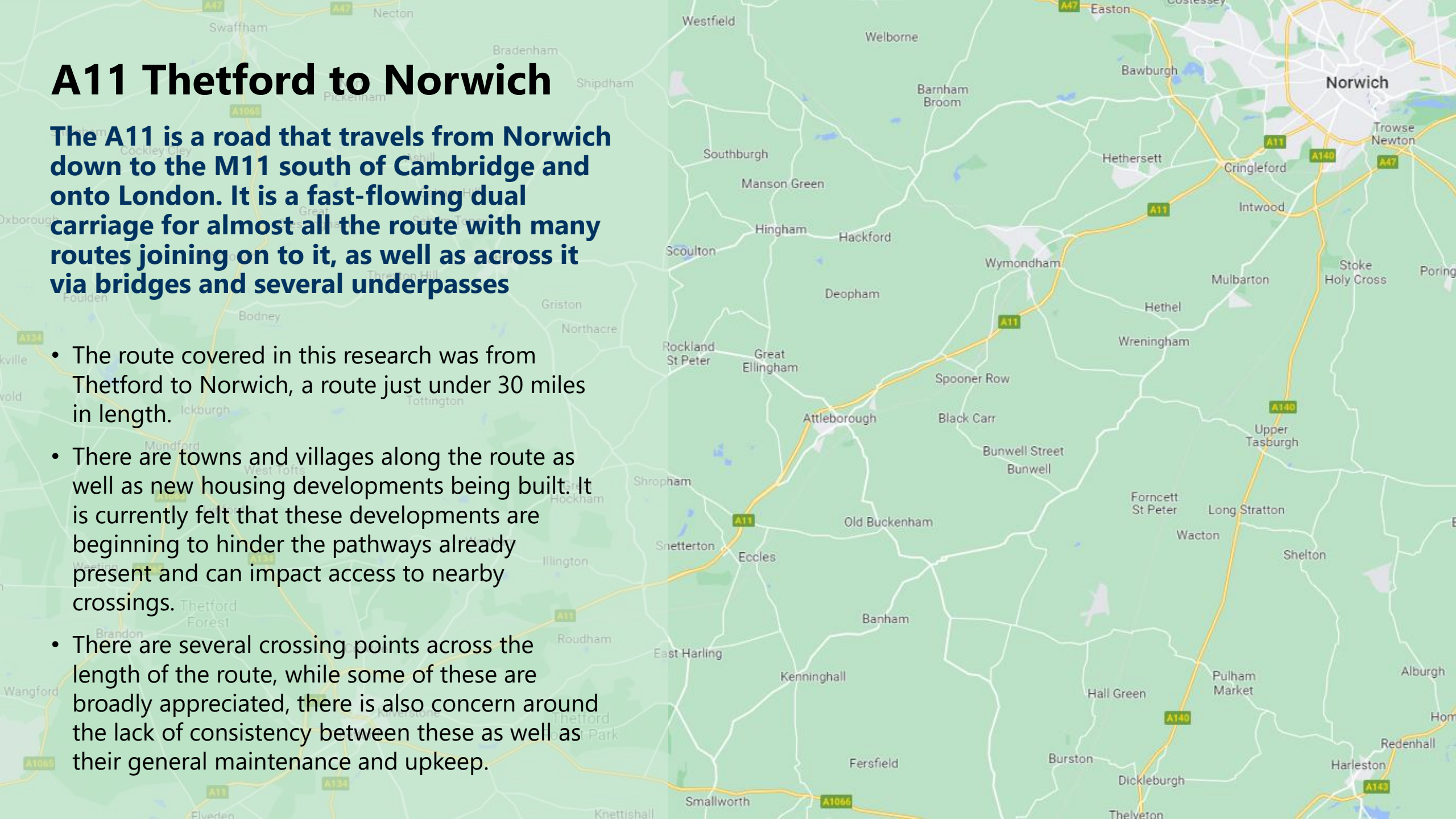
# Site Study: A11 Thetford to Norwich



# A11 Thetford to Norwich

**The A11 is a road that travels from Norwich down to the M11 south of Cambridge and onto London. It is a fast-flowing dual carriage for almost all the route with many routes joining on to it, as well as across it via bridges and several underpasses**

- The route covered in this research was from Thetford to Norwich, a route just under 30 miles in length.
- There are towns and villages along the route as well as new housing developments being built. It is currently felt that these developments are beginning to hinder the pathways already present and can impact access to nearby crossings.
- There are several crossing points across the length of the route, while some of these are broadly appreciated, there is also concern around the lack of consistency between these as well as their general maintenance and upkeep.





# Points of interest and contention



New housing developments are thought to be resulting in a reduction in available paths and are making access to crossing points more difficult

4

An ideal crossing point for equestrians due to its large size, but gaining access is difficult

3

Unprotected Peddars Way crossing means needing to cross 4 lanes of fast moving traffic

1

2

Two crossing choices by Angel Inn, a small underpass or another 4 lane road crossing point

- Area of concern at crossing points (esp. Peddars Way)
- Thetford Forest is an ideal area for hacking and walking
- Wymondham new housing developments are raising concerns both in terms of aesthetics (affecting scenery) and increased noise levels; increased pollution and traffic are also a worry.
- Old A11 running parallel to the A11 is quieter and often used as a route between towns and villages

- 1. Unsafe Peddars way crossing**
- 2. Underpass and road crossing at Angel Inn**
- 3. Underpass from Roudham to Thetford Forest by Combat Paintball**
- 4. (Wymondham) New housing development**

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# An overview of the A11 Thetford to Norwich

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences.



Click link to play   
<https://vimeo.com/782896253/d333870fcd>

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# Issues for the area

Although there are crossing provisions for CPEs along the route, the inconsistency in quality, both in the ability of CPEs to cross safely and the level of maintenance at these crossings, are areas of concern

## 1. Peddars Way Crossing is extremely unsafe for CPE usage

- The crossing forms part of a popular and well-known CPE route, but users and potential users feel uncertain about using it owing to the perceived dangers posed by fast-flowing traffic.
- Users face limited visibility of oncoming traffic, which leads to leaning closer into the road than is desired.
- There is no protection or space for equestrians to wait in the middle whilst crossing – equestrians wouldn't even consider using this crossing point.
- Participants feel it is only usable for confident cyclists or pedestrians in small groups and not suitable for families, especially those with young children.
- Evidence of users having to take longer, less convenient detours in order to avoid the crossing, or resigning themselves to patiently waiting for traffic to ease.

## 2. Lack of maintenance of route leading up to A11 crossings

- Path surface is often of poor quality, cracked and covered with debris which can be hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians.

## 3. Introduction of new housing developments along the A11

- CPEs are frustrated by the noise and disturbance caused by the building of new housing developments.
- It is felt that the impact of these new developments, and the people it will bring into the area, have not been taken into account in relation to existing cycle routes, bridleways and footpaths i.e. some are concerned that current routes are already limited in number and / or are being altered to better accommodate these developments.

# A11- Frustrations



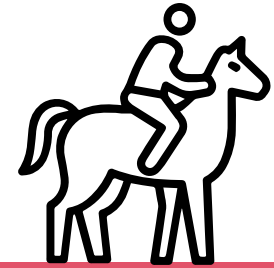
Cyclists

- Cycling provision in the lead up to crossing the A11 often minimal and perceived as forgotten.
- Cycle paths can start and end at different sides of the road with no designated crossing point, forcing cyclists to cross multiple lanes of fast moving traffic.
- Lack of dropped kerbs forcing cyclists to stay on the road with traffic for longer than is desired.



Pedestrians

- Pathways and routes alongside the road appear to end suddenly, often forcing users to cross sides of the road.
- Pathway maintenance is often sporadic and lack of maintenance esp. in the winter period can be dangerous (slippery leaves, fallen branches etc).



Equestrians

- Peddars Way crossing, by Anna's Pitstop Bar, is not fit for use by equestrians due to danger of fast-flowing traffic and limited visibility of it.
- Few equestrian 'friendly' bridge crossings, leading riders to avoid the other side of the A11 or use bridges not suitable for equestrians.

# A11 - Frustrations

"No actual crossing. There is a blind bend on one side and a large mound on the other which blocks the view of upcoming traffic. Pedestrians rely on listening for cars before crossing quickly. Cars are often going very fast, don't indicate then slam their breaks on. It's hard to listen for traffic over the noise of the A11." - Pedestrian



"Large mound limiting visibility when crossing at the crossing place. Cars often don't indicate (change of road layout) and whiz around this corner." – Pedestrian



"Footpath stops, forcing pedestrians to cross where there is no crossing, also no lighting here so would not want to walk here when dark." – Pedestrian

# A11 - Frustrations

"Just after heading away from the A11 bridge I reach the junction with the B1172 (old A11). There is a cycle path opposite it but it is almost impossible to get across three lanes of traffic safely so the best option is to turn left onto the main road then wait behind the island until I can get onto the cycle path. This is the first dropped curb other than the one just past the junction. Lot of cyclists use the same route as me because they don't want to use the A11 itself or the B1172." - Cyclist

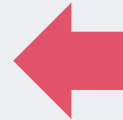


"This cycle path runs along the B1172, commonly known as the old A11, parallel to the A11. The design of this crossing and numerous others on this route is dangerous. No visibility of cars approaching from the right until you are almost at the junction. The 'Give Way' markings are misleading and downright dangerous since the highway changed to allow cyclists and pedestrians priority at this kind of junction. It needs a raised table crossing to slow cars down and make it clear those crossing have priority." – Cyclist

# A11- Frustrations



“Another view of the Peddars Way crossing, shocking really for a national off road route. I wouldn’t take a horse across there, nor a child on a bike or on foot, you’d have to have pretty steely nerves to cross there as an adult on foot in rush hour!” – Equestrian



“Another concern regarding these housing development is that once built it will have an entrance/exit onto this lane for vehicles. I really hope this does not happen because that will change the feeling of safety I have when cycling on this lane, as inevitably once lots of cars use it, drivers will think that they 'own' the lane and drive without consideration for cyclists and pedestrians.” – Pedestrian



# A11 - Delighters



## Cyclists

- Several bridge crossings with large and high railings, providing feelings of safety whilst crossing over the A11.



## Pedestrians

- Crossings for pedestrians are available via underpass, road or bridge along the A11.



## Equestrians

- Several underpasses are fit for hacking horses through – Combat paintball, Angel Inn, B1111/Watton Road.



“Without the bridge I wouldn’t be able to walk my boys to school safely and go to work.” - Pedestrian



“This is a photo of the crossing over the A11 at Rightup Lane in Wymondham. I am pleased this crossing is here and can be used by me when I cycle or walk. It means I do not have to cross the very busy road!” - Cyclist



# A11 – Delighters



“This is the path leading to the underpass at the Elveden War Memorial on the A11, it’s a good path, well fenced and safe.” - Equestrian



“This underpass near the memorial is an absolute gem, a complete success in every way. It’s tall and bright and inviting, it doesn’t really echo when you ride under it and traffic noise going over you is minimal. The team that designed this really excelled themselves and deserve recognition for a job blooming well done!” - Equestrian

“Three of the four slip roads from the A11 are currently closed for roadworks. This makes me feel a lot safer as I have had some scary near misses here in the past, mostly due to cars overtaking me then cutting in front to turn left onto the sliproad. Just a shame they will reopen again when the roadworks are finished.” - Cyclist

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# Suggested improvements

**Better pathway maintenance and more consistent, considered routing of pathways would be appreciated. For equestrians, there are calls for greater thought around development and implementation of existing and potential new bridleway routes and crossings.**



## Cyclists

- Regular maintenance of paths to ensure a consistent surface quality - overhanging branches, slippery and degraded paths can force cyclists onto roads which can be hazardous for all users.
- More dropped kerbs for easier access on to and off main roads.
- More dedicated cycle lanes and paths (not shared paths due to potentially vastly differing speeds at which cyclists and pedestrians may travel).



## Pedestrians

- Improved lighting along pathways and over bridges can make pedestrians feel safer and encourage use at different times.
- Paths need to not end suddenly on one side of the road without a crossing to continue travel.

# Suggested improvements



## Equestrians

- Improvements to Peddars Way crossing to enable users to safely use the section of the route, instead of starting and stopping short of the whole route:
  - This could be completed by redirecting the Peddars Way to use the large underpass near to Combat Paintball and would involve altering the level crossing on the South side of the A11 here (Roudham), which is currently difficult to use whilst solo riding.
- Raising railings on bridge crossings to make them safer for equestrian use.
- Greater bridleway route connection, enabling equestrians to complete loop routes as they need to start and end at the same location.
- When travelling close to the A11 horses need wider paths, fencing, and ways to reduce the volume (sound not quantity) of traffic.

"I promise you no rider ever said they want to ride on a road and risk dying, we just want to be able to ride our horses safely and with so much land being private property we have limited options. To be able to ride more routes without the fear of dying (I am not exaggerating, it is a huge fear - you don't have to be hit by a vehicle to be killed by one - half ton horse running in a blind panic because it has been scared by a vehicle can be equally as deadly). To be able to really make use of and link the fabulous national routes like Peddars Way, the Icknield way and the beautiful tracks of Thetford Forest would be incredible." - Equestrian



# Site Study: A120 Braintree to Marks Tey



# A120 Braintree to Marks Tey

The A120 is a road with a single carriageway in a fairly rural area; the road goes through a few villages and countryside. There are many bypasses and paths which meet the A120 on either side; a particular bypass of interest is around Coggeshall

- Research explored whether it was preferable for CPEs to go along the A120 or whether they would prefer to make journeys around it.
- The Old Coggeshall road between Bradwell and Coggeshall can be used, but there was uncertainty around how safe people felt doing so.



# Points of interest and contention

Grass verges provide pedestrians with some level of safety and separation from traffic but more dedicated footpaths along the route would be preferable.

Equestrians avoid the A120 completely and stay in fields

Stakeholders perceive that this would be a significant cycling improvement and would likely increase leisure cycling and provide a local commuter route to/from Earls Colne.

Dangerous junctions make it very difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to use the A120

Heavy presence of HGVs along the entire route

1. **Connections/Access west of Bradwell – various businesses here and a popular SPAR shop**
2. **Underpass on the A120 North of Coggeshall**
3. **Marks Tey train station; access to the skatepark, businesses, church and housing**
4. **Bus stop locations along the route – exploring how difficult it is to access bus stops and whether traversing across the road is necessary to reach bus stops**
5. **Marks Hall Estate has been awarded planning permission for a dedicated permissive cycle path between Coggeshall and Earls Colne as well as a circular route around Marks Hall Estate itself - currently in funding application stages**

- Concerns over multiple crossing points/junctions along the A120 that are extremely dangerous to CPE use owing to constant flow of heavy traffic
- There are concerns that an increase in newly-built residential areas will lead to even more traffic in an already heavily congested area
- Lack of connectivity for CPEs between villages is a key frustration—current dedicated bridleways, cycle paths and footpaths are minimal
- People do walk on the grass verges next to the A120 but greater separation between pedestrians and the road would be appreciated

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# An overview of the A120 Braintree to Marks Tey

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences.



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# Issues for the area

**Overall provision for CPEs is felt to be lacking; crossing points on the A120 are perceived to be highly dangerous and there is strong demand for more dedicated bridleways and cycle paths to make journeys safer and more enjoyable**

## **1. Proximity to fast-moving vehicles (including many HGVs) and dangerous crossing points/junctions**

- CPEs are quick to point out how unsafe they often feel when travelling along, or trying to cross, the A120 owing to the constant flow of fast-moving vehicles of which a large proportion are HGVs.
- Some crossing points/junctions are perceived to be particularly dangerous including Colne Road junction, the pedestrianised part of Tey Road joining the A120, Doghouse Road junction and the access point from Robinsbridge Road.
- This means that CPEs resign themselves to waiting long periods of time to safely cross the A120 or use alternative routes that guarantee a safe journey, even if this route takes more time.

## **2. Lack of dedicated bridleways, cycle paths and footpaths which decreases connectivity between villages**

- Although some parts of the A120 have grass verges running alongside the road (separating pedestrians from busy road), CPEs would like to see the creation of long stretches of well-connected, dedicated footpaths and cycle paths to increase overall connectivity from village to village. **Equestrians** feel most overlooked and stick to riding in surrounding fields.
- Some CPEs are concerned that this lack of provision means that local people are making short car journeys that could be easily made by foot or bike (e.g. to supermarket, garden centre) and are therefore adding to the already large volume of existing traffic in the area.

## **3. Debris (left behind by HGVs and construction work) that causes obstruction along the A120 route are frequent**

- Cyclists often have to avoid hitting obstructions that are left behind by HGVs e.g. rubber from tyres, construction cones, metal
- Pedestrians complain about the recurrence of signage left behind after construction work is finished – perceived to ruin local scenery and can block sight lines for pedestrians as they cross the A120.



# A120 - Frustrations



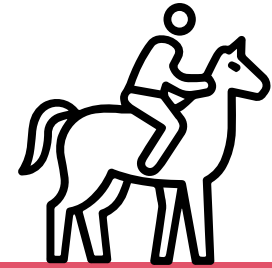
Cyclists

- Dangerous junctions/crossing points with no perceived provision for cyclists.
- Very few dedicated cycleways – some resort to riding on footpath as perceived to be the only safe place to cycle.
- Fast-moving vehicles that tend to accelerate very quickly when moving out of 50mph zone – some would like the 50mph zone to be extended to increase feelings of safety, or a reduction to 40mph in this area.



Pedestrians

- Dangerous junctions/crossing points with no perceived provision for pedestrians.
- Lack of dedicated footpaths or separation from fast-moving traffic.
- Lack of signage to show drivers that pedestrians may be crossing the road.
- Difficult access to bus stops for some on the A120 route – limits those who might like to use bus route for local journeys.
- Stark difference in pavement quality and availability of footpaths on north vs south area of Holfield Grange area.



Equestrians

- Overall, there is perceived to be **no provision for equestrians** in the A120 area with equestrians opting to solely ride in surrounding fields rather than attempting to cross the A120 on horseback.
- The means there is a lack of connectivity between the paths equestrians might take in fields separated by the A120.

# A120 - Frustrations



← "A120/Doghouse Road junction – this is the direction I'd like to walk to get to Coggeshall (nearest village) and the nearest social venue (Stock Street barn) but there is no footpath either side of the A120 at this point. As you can see the verge is very narrow, uneven and frequently carved up by tractors/vans. It's much worse further along." - Pedestrian



↑ "This is the only safe way of riding along the A120 on the footpath!" - Cyclist

# A120 - Frustrations



“This video shows the A120 at the crossing with Tey Rd coming from the north side. I cross here to the pedestrianised part of Tey Rd to get home. As you can see the traffic is fast and there are lots of large lorries on route to/from Felixstowe.” - Cyclist



Video. Click ▶ to play



“Walking along the A120 at any time of day is a horrendous experience. As you can see from the video, there is a constant stream of cars and huge lorries travelling through Bradwell Village. It feels as though they are going way too fast in a built up area, there is a constant smell of fumes and noise. It is dangerous and unpleasant.” - Pedestrian



Video. Click ▶ to play

# A120 - Frustrations



"This is a frequent and recurring problem. Random bits of metal left on the verge (usually after roadworks). They often end up dislodged and in the road. No-one collects them. Eventually one of us (the residents) will collect and dispose of it but we really shouldn't have to." A120 - Junction Doghouse Road. - Pedestrian



"This sign (anti-littering) had been here for weeks and completely blocks the view of any pedestrian wanting to see incoming traffic." Doghouse Road, Pattiswick and A120 junction. - Pedestrian

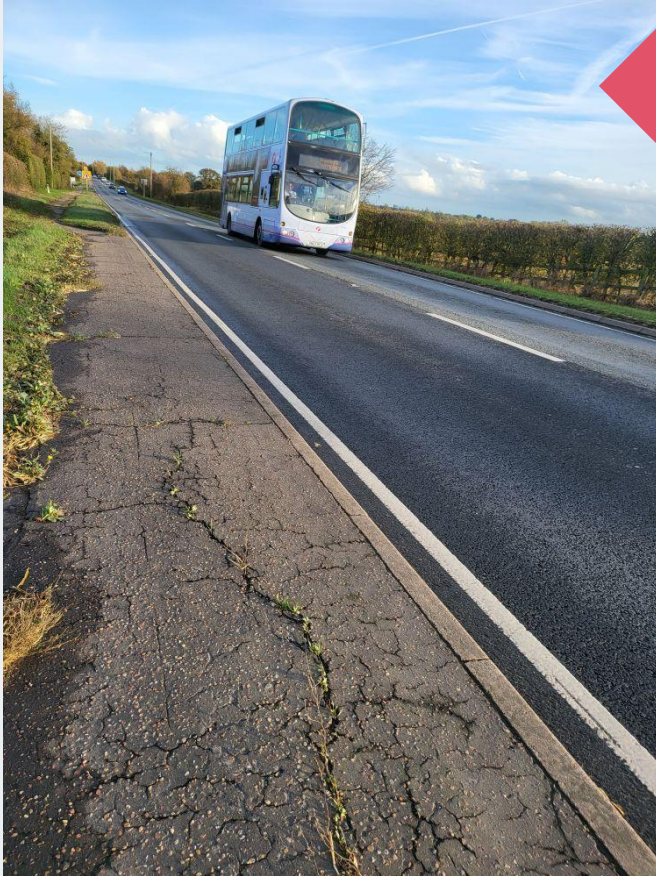


"No warning signs or paths for walking – access to the A120 is limited." - Pedestrian

"A120 at Stock Street - after approx. 20m of nice footpath with a grass verge segregating walkers from traffic, the verge disappears which spooks the dogs and is uncomfortable for pedestrians with traffic coming from behind (including buses and HGVs)." - Pedestrian



# A120 - Frustrations



"We are on the bus route - but the nearest bus stops are 1 mile (1.4km) to the East in West Street, Coggeshall) and 1.2miles (1.9km) to the West at Mill View Bradwell - so not close enough to use ourselves or more importantly by guests coming to our business, Stock Street Farm Barn." - Pedestrian



"After crossing the A120 - there is a lovely wide verge with well trodden path but NO footpath for approx. 150m until the Bridleway. It would be great if this was made into a real foot/cycle path and signage warning motorists of crossing activity." - Pedestrian

## A120 - Frustrations



"Crossing the A120 at Holfield Grange. The North has over 500m of pavement and some with a wide grass verge separating pedestrians from traffic. The South is well worn rough path for approx. 150m to the bridleway and proper footpath." - Pedestrian



"Access for Tey Road across the A120. There is no cycle provision at the end of Tey Road and only a public footpath." - Cyclist



"This is the Colne Road junction. No provision for cyclists or pedestrians and heavily used by large lorries turning across onto the A120." - Cyclist

# A120 - Frustrations



"The West Street access into Coggeshall from the A120. No provision for cyclists or pedestrians at this point." - Cyclist



"This is the junction of the pedestrianised part of Tey Rd as it joins the A120. This is a regular run for many cyclists and once crossed you are into quite countryside. However it can be very busy and cars travel easily at 50mph and there are many lorries. Frustrations relate to the time waiting to cross and the danger if you mistime. My wife was knocked off her bike at this junction and broke her foot." - Pedestrian



"Access across the A120 from Robinsbridge Road. No provision for crossing on this fast stretch of road." - Cyclist

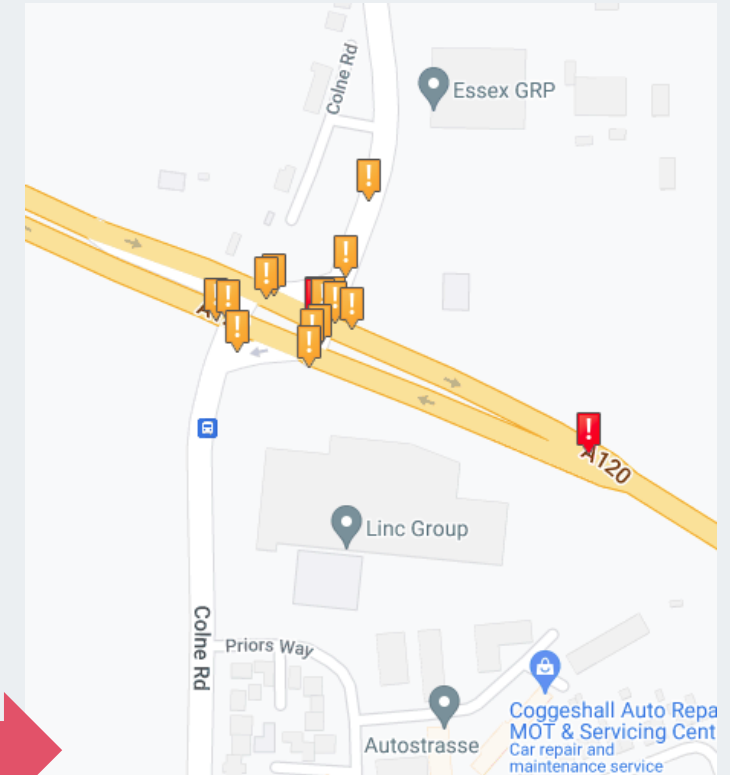
# A120 – Frustrations

*"An accident hotspot"*



"Reduce the speed limit to 50. This would reduce the number and severity of incidents on this stretch of the A120, making the journey time more predictable. Crash map data for the stretch from Bradwell Village to the West of Coggeshall contains nearly 100 incidents between 2017 and 2021. Most are already minor (but can result in delays) - around 10% result in serious injury and there have been at least 2 fatalities on this stretch too." - Pedestrian

"The Colne Road junction is an accident blackspot. There is an underpass to the West just under 900m from this junction at Tilkey Road and is cited for inclusion in the Earls Colne to Kelvedon cycle path. An additional underpass at AMBRIDGE ROAD (1.5 km from the Colne Road junction and safely open up the North of the A120 to more walkers and offer cyclists and horse riders and offer more variety." - Pedestrian



N.B. Both traffic maps were uploaded by a research participant



## A120 - Frustrations



"Bradwell footpath just awful and so spoils a walk in the countryside. Braintree District Council do try and help but when on private land it becomes the owners responsibility another law not fit for purpose." Footpath Bradwell Essex. - Pedestrian



"Countryside rides near A120 can be dangerous as there are so many accidents. Traffic gets diverted down all the country lanes and the only safe place for a rider is the footpaths." Footpath Pattiswick. - Pedestrian

# A120 - Delighters



## Cyclists

- Opportunity to **enjoy miles of country quiet roads** after crossing busy A120.



## Pedestrians

- Some **dedicated bridleways and footpaths** – separating pedestrians from busy road and allowing dog walkers to enjoy walking without worrying about fast-moving vehicles (can let dogs off lead etc.).
- **Triangle pedestrian warning signs** in some places along A120 e.g. 200m bridleway between West Street and A12.
- Bradwell traffic lights slow down traffic.



## Equestrians

- A lack of positives for equestrians in relation to the A120 – they do, however, **enjoy having some dedicated surrounding fields to ride in.**



“Once across the A120, you can **access quiet country roads like this one.** There are no redeeming features of the A120 I can show here as a journey delighter as they don't exist!” - Cyclist



“A120 to West Street Coggeshall using the **bridleway** – a short cut away from the traffic and with a proper footpath.” - Pedestrian



“**Nice footpath** with wide grass verge separating walkers and dogs from traffic.” - Pedestrian

# A120 – Delighters



“Under 2 mins from the start of the bridleway – we can safely let dogs off the lead towards the River Blackwater.” - Pedestrian



Check it Out!  
NEW BRIDLEWAY from West Street to A120—so now its even easier and safer to walk to us at *Stock Street Farm Barn!*  
From the new signpost its just 160m on the wide well worn track to the pavement at Holfield Grange and you'll take a short-cut too.  
At just 200m it may be the *shortest Bridleway* in the UK!

“200m bridleway between West Street and A120. Leaves 160m of well worn track alongside the road before you can cross the A120 and join the pavement to reach Stock Street Farm Barn. The sightlines at the Holfield Grange junction are very good for crossing the road - other paths across the A120 [Essex Way at E Coggeshall, Ambridge Road mid Coggeshall etc.] across the A120 have triangle pedestrian warning signs.” - Pedestrian



“We are lucky to have a field where we can ride around. This is a picture of the place we ride with our horses on our own land. We feel its unsafe on our roads to ride a horse.” - Equestrian



“This is a footpath off Robinsbridge Road that leads up to the A120 with fields on either side. Would suit a combined cycleway and footpath?” - Cyclist

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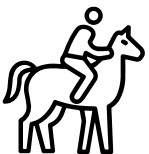
# Suggested improvements

Providing dedicated cycleways to increase connectivity and safety, and encouraging slower driving is the priority for cyclists



## Cyclists

- **Increase provision of dedicated cycleways and prioritise joined-up routes to enable people to travel from A to B**
  - Ideally, cycleways would be separated from the road surface; using old railway lines or road verges could also be a potential solution.
- **Extend 50mph route** beyond Tey Road or consider reducing to 40mph; **introducing speed cameras** along the route, especially in Tey Road area, would also be welcomed as drivers tend to accelerate around the bend.
  - **Introducing traffic lights** with dedicated pedestrian/cyclist request buttons and a sensor set-up to detect traffic on Tey Road is another suggested alternative to help reduce the flow of fast-moving vehicles.
- It would require significant investment, but some cyclists would like a **subway or bridge to be built in the Tey Road area:**
  - There is a pedestrianised section of Tey Road on the south side and it is felt that the entrance to the tunnel could be relatively easily accommodated.



Using the A120 is not a viable option for equestrians at present; the only suggestion was to provide access to more fields as the number of farmer fields in the area limits riding opportunities.

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# Suggested improvements

Like cyclists, pedestrians would like to have more dedicated footpaths and an increase in speed restrictions. The ever-increasing presence of HGVs is also a concern



## Pedestrians

- **Increase provision of dedicated footpaths** – linking Braintree, Coggeshall and Marks Tey
  - Parents express frustration that they have to drive their children to school vs walking.
  - Building a footbridge over the dual carriageway would make leisure routes more enjoyable.
- **Increase speed restrictions and traffic calming measures**
  - Pedestrians suggest reducing speed limit to 50mph– would make it easier for pedestrians to cross safely and dog walkers see the additional benefit of their dogs being less fearful near to road.
  - Some perceive that reducing speed limit would also lead to less animals being killed e.g. deer, badgers
- **Increase bus stop provision** – especially near to local businesses, like Stock Street Farm.
  - Enabling more people to do local journeys by foot vs cars.
- **Push HGVs towards using the A12 (currently being widened) and leave A120 for local traffic only:**
  - The perception is that this would allow for the development of a cycle lane and pedestrian footpath that would help pedestrians and cyclists to travel more safely e.g. ability to walk to Coggeshall.
- **Remove HGV filling facilities at SHELL (Marks Tey) and BP (Bradwell) to reduce attractiveness of route for HGVs**
- **Careful road planning in light of the construction of a new incinerator in Rivenhall**
  - This will increase the number of HGVs; there would be interest in joining a new alternative road to the A120 to the dual carriageway in Braintree and dueling the entire route.



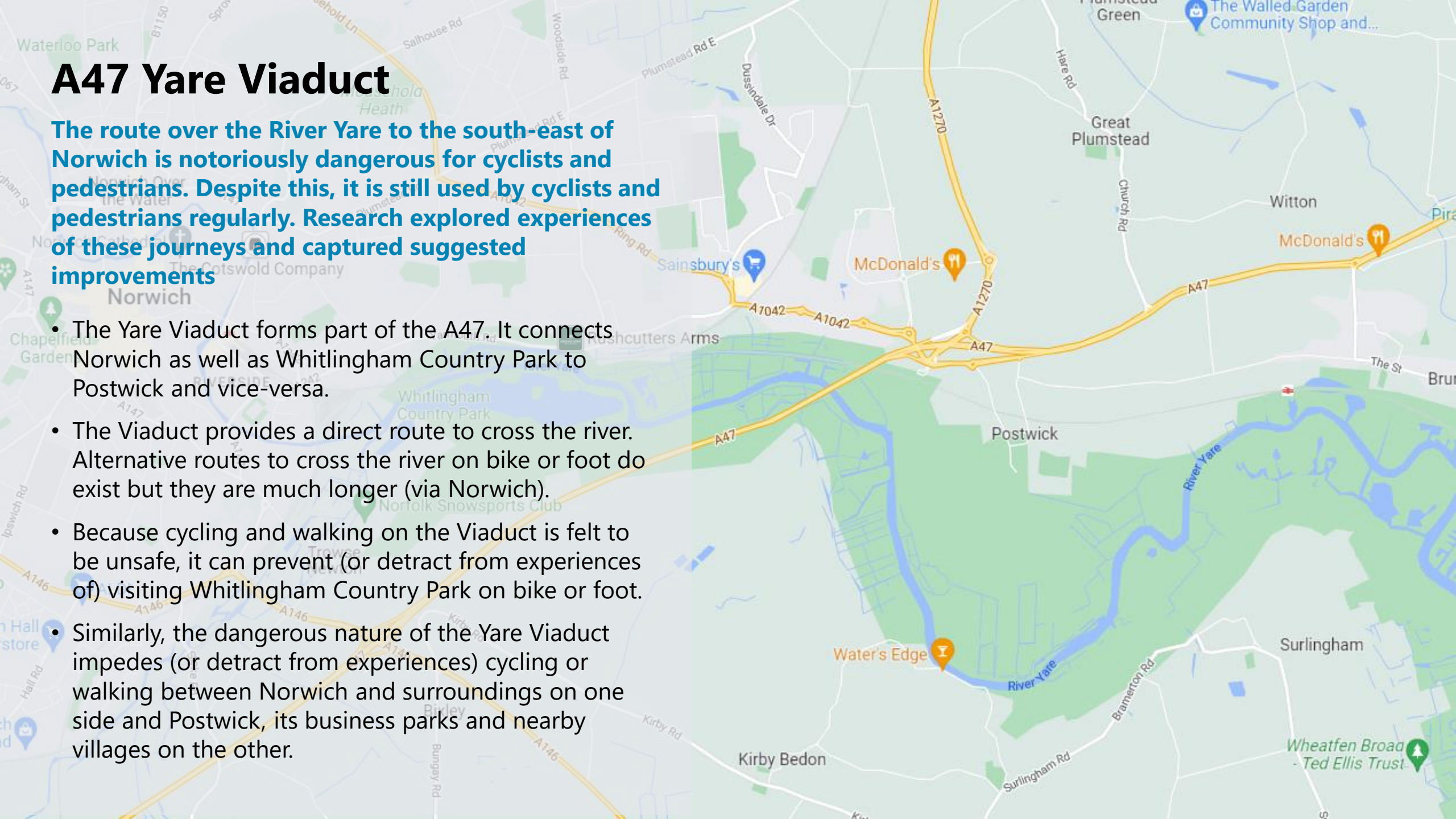
# Site Study: A47 Yare Viaduct



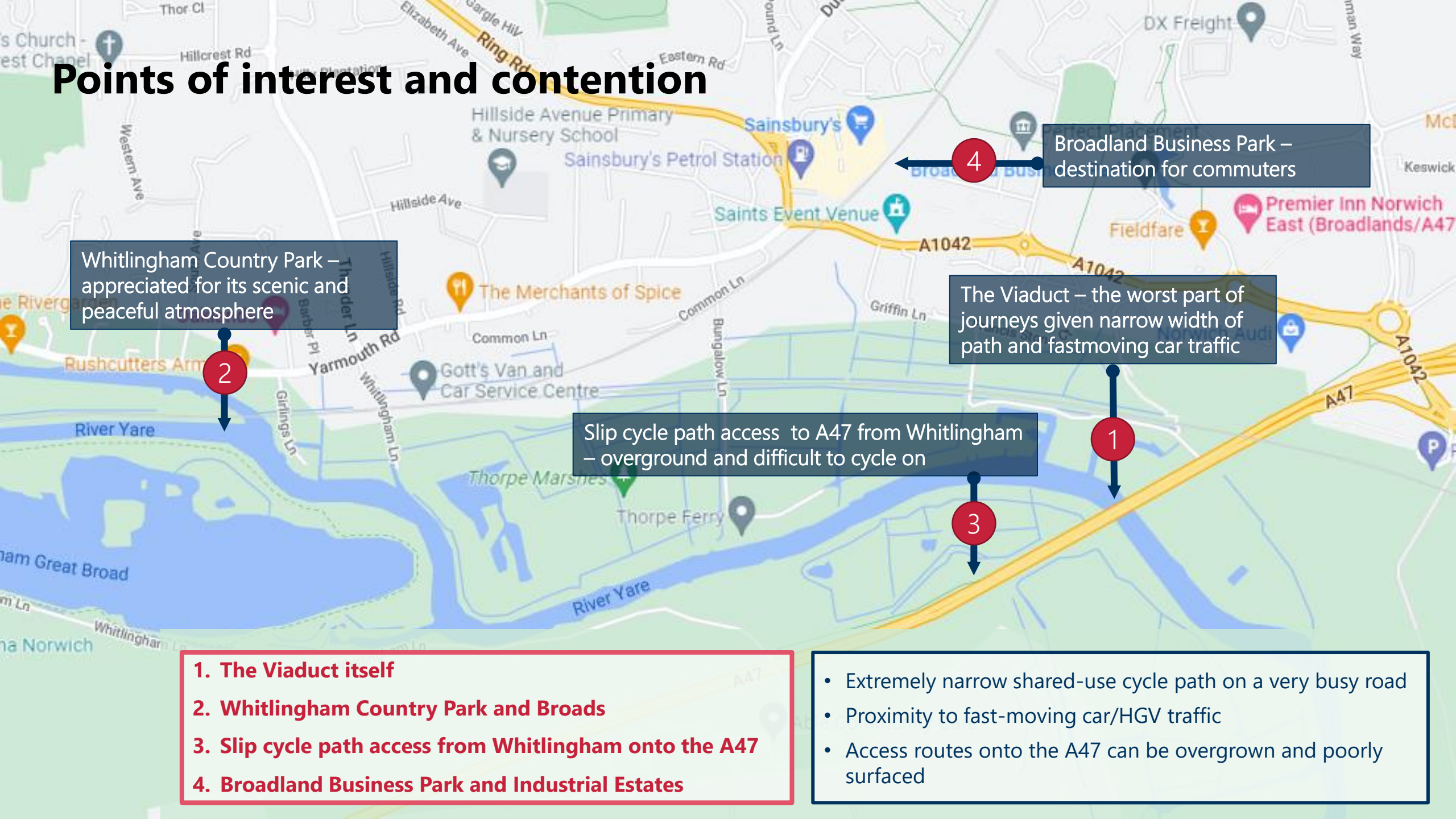
# A47 Yare Viaduct

The route over the River Yare to the south-east of Norwich is notoriously dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. Despite this, it is still used by cyclists and pedestrians regularly. Research explored experiences of these journeys and captured suggested improvements

- The Yare Viaduct forms part of the A47. It connects Norwich as well as Whitlingham Country Park to Postwick and vice-versa.
- The Viaduct provides a direct route to cross the river. Alternative routes to cross the river on bike or foot do exist but they are much longer (via Norwich).
- Because cycling and walking on the Viaduct is felt to be unsafe, it can prevent (or detract from experiences of) visiting Whitlingham Country Park on bike or foot.
- Similarly, the dangerous nature of the Yare Viaduct impedes (or detract from experiences) cycling or walking between Norwich and surroundings on one side and Postwick, its business parks and nearby villages on the other.



# Points of interest and contention



Whitlingham Country Park – appreciated for its scenic and peaceful atmosphere

2

Slip cycle path access to A47 from Whitlingham – overgrown and difficult to cycle on

3

The Viaduct – the worst part of journeys given narrow width of path and fastmoving car traffic

1

4

Broadland Business Park – destination for commuters

- 1. The Viaduct itself
- 2. Whitlingham Country Park and Broads
- 3. Slip cycle path access from Whitlingham onto the A47
- 4. Broadland Business Park and Industrial Estates

- Extremely narrow shared-use cycle path on a very busy road
- Proximity to fast-moving car/HGV traffic
- Access routes onto the A47 can be overgrown and poorly surfaced



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# An overview of the A47 Yare Viaduct

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences.



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# Issues for the area

**Lack of protection and safety deters people from cycling on the Viaduct, though there is evidence of cyclists “braving it”**

## 1. Very dangerous cycle path

- Narrow and insufficiently separated from fast-moving car and HGV traffic on the A47.
- No barrier between the path and the A47 road traffic.
- Minimum width and measures for safety are not in place, especially considering the path is for both cyclists and pedestrians and for foot and bike traffic coming from both directions.

## 2. Viaduct cycle path impedes cycle/foot leisure and functional journeys

- Cycle path can act as a barrier for cyclists wishing to access the Broads and Whitlingham Country Park– areas of natural beauty. It is also a barrier to cycling on the National Cycle Network – indeed, the irony is that signage suggests the viaduct is part of this Network.
- Precarious and off-putting for commuters travelling to Broadlands Business Parks and housing nearby (there are plans underway for further employment/ housing infrastructure which, arguably, could increase cycling demand on viaduct).
- The Viaduct also severs foot/cycle journey from Norwich into the villages/ towns of Postwick, Brundall, Blofield.

## 3. An alternative way to cross the river exists (via Norwich Town) but it is far less direct

- Crossing the river via the Green Pedalway from Norwich is hillier and longer – more viable as an alternative for leisure rather than functional/ commuter journeys. Commuters feel this alternative is out of their way but are drawn to take it especially after dark in order to feel safer.

## 4. Paths leading up to the viaduct are of mixed quality, with the ones of the Whitlingham side being very overgrown and poorly surfaced

# A47 - Frustrations



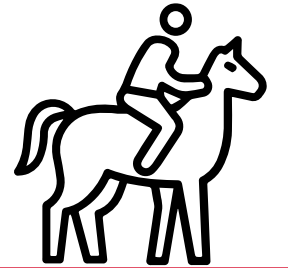
Cyclists

- Fundamental issue is the **lack of safety coming to and traversing the viaduct.**
- Frustration that **nothing substantial** has been done to improve safety since the 1990s despite submissions to authorities.
- **Obstructions** (e.g. fallen signage, road work signs) on the path which are a hazard on an already dangerous path.
- Experiences cycling either side of the A47 are better, but there are still frustrations:
  - Access route from Whitlingham is not lit, as well as muddy, overgrown, unevenly surfaced – **can make for punctures and falls.** Better suited terrain for mountain bikes, less so for road or hybrid bikes.
  - Bollards at the Postwick end offer some protection but they are placed on the path itself, making it even narrower



Pedestrians

- Share the narrow cycle path with pedestrians and there is **no room for segregation by user type.**
- Encountering and navigating oncoming cyclists from two directions with fast moving cars in very close proximity is **difficult and dangerous.**
- **Narrow, overgrown and often muddy** tracks leading up to and away from the viaduct can be slippery as well as feel unsafe (e.g. towards Whitlingham and Griffin lane on the other side).
- Steps on Griffin Lane and poorly maintained with banister eroded and fallen.
- Roundabouts near Postwick have continuous traffic and few crossing points.



Equestrians

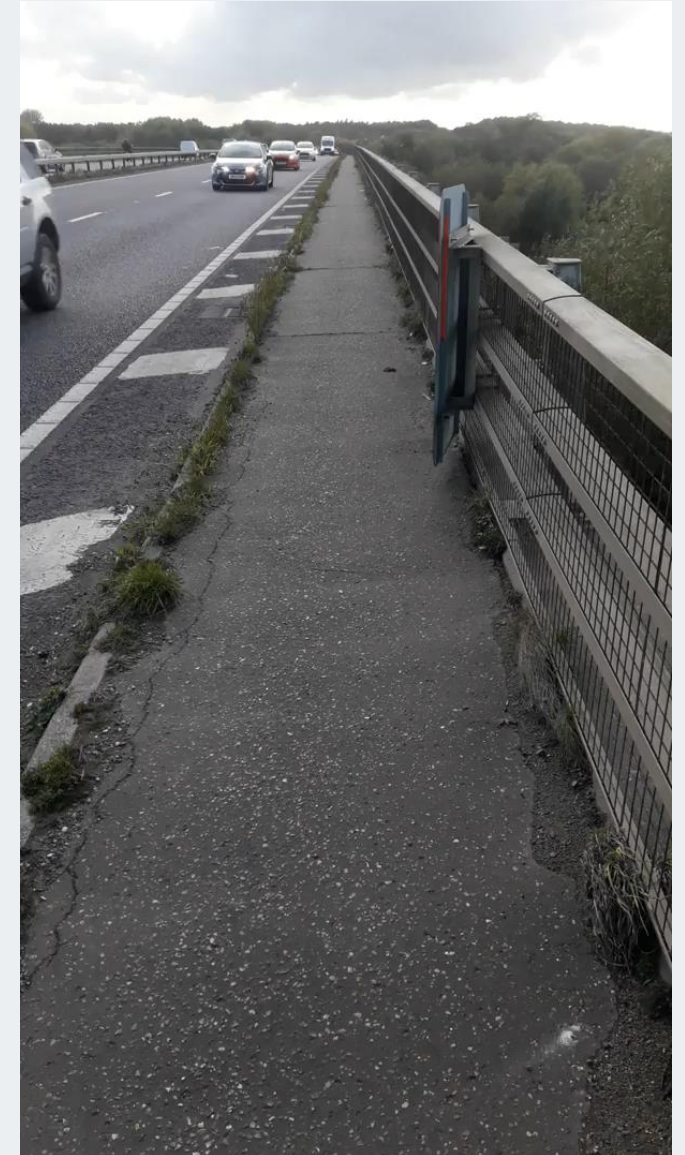
- No equestrians on or near to the A47 – **site unsuitable for this audience.**

# A47 – Frustrations (Cyclists)

“Another day, another ride. This time avoiding the A47 viaduct by cycling through our fine city. I’m not sure what’s worse, the lack of cycle paths in Norwich or a cycle path with 80 MPH traffic whizzing past.” –Cyclist



Video. Click to play



“Often when roadworks are carried out nearby, the signage is actually placed in the path blocking or narrowing it. On occasion I have had to get round signage by stepping off the path into the carriageway. This particular sign has been left here for weeks.” – Cyclist



## A47 – Frustrations (Cyclists)



“Luckily we chose to take our mountain bikes as the path between the end of Whitlingham lane and the A47 path is **not suitable for road bikes**. I imagine in the winter the surface would be much worse. **It would be good if this stretch was improved.**” –Cyclist

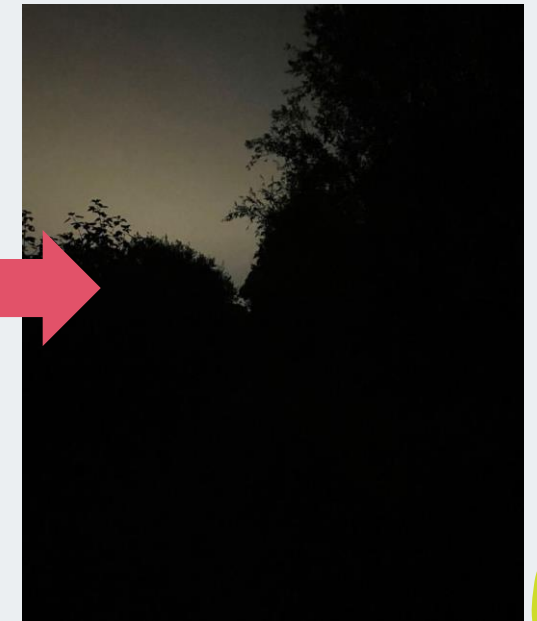


“We are now at the edge of the end of the cycle route where to **add insult to injury** there are these **pointless barriers**, and as you can tell everyone just cycles around them. **I don't really know what good they do.**” – Cyclist



“On this day I also got a **puncture on the gravel section near Whitlingham Lane!**” - Cyclist

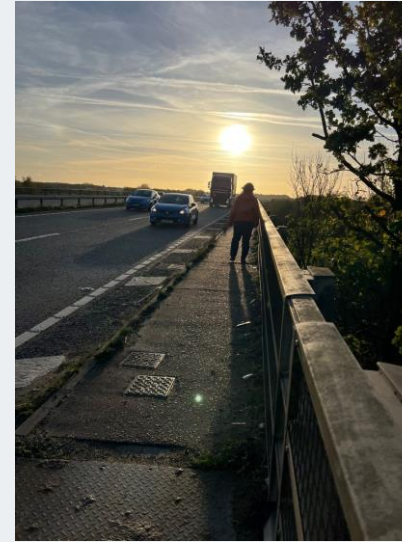
“This shows just **how dark it is down here at night** if camera night mode and bike light turned off! This is on the gravel track between Whitlingham lane and the ramp up to the bridge.” - Cyclist



# A47 – Frustrations (Pedestrians)



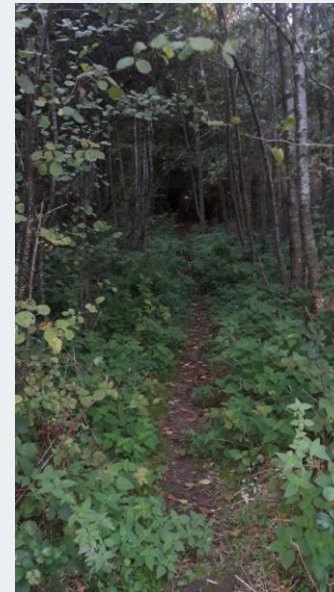
“Not much room for pedestrians when you encounter cyclists the other way.” – Pedestrian



“Very busy road with **no protection**. Usually windy which is fine unless it is a **crosswind** and then it can be **scary**.” – Pedestrian



“Steps from Griffin Lane up to the east end of the a47 viaduct. **Broken rails and an odd zigzag, alternate side step arrangement**. Just feels neglected and an area that attracts antisocial behaviour.” – Pedestrian



“This is the pedestrian access towards the east end of the a47 viaduct from Griffin Lane. It is **thick with nettles, is dark and dingy and a bit unwelcoming and dark**.” –Pedestrian



Video.  
Click to play

# A47- Delighters



## Cyclists

- Direct access to Whitlingham Park coming from Postwick end of Yare Viaduct– viaduct is a “painful” stretch to arrive to an area of natural beauty.
- **View** from the viaduct is impressive (but too dangerous to stop and admire it).
- Relative quiet and separation from cars in paths leading up to A47 is appreciated.
- **Whitlingham Lane underpass** below A47 feels spacious and safe with few cars (safer in daytime as not lit).



## Pedestrians

- Impressive **view** from viaduct over river.
- Wide and well-surface route leading away from the viaduct toward Postwick Interchanges.



“This is the only bit of this pathway that protects pedestrians from the traffic. This also has a **higher bit of wall along the bridge** to protect you from falling onto the railway.” - Pedestrian



“You cant beat that **view** - great for headspace and wellbeing.” – Pedestrian

# Suggested improvements

There are two types of solution. Some are considered “ideal” but recognised by users as major and costly. For this reason, cyclists and pedestrians also offer smaller-scale improvements that would make a difference



## Cyclists

- The ideal solution is a **cantilevered bridge for non-motorised users that is separate from the A47 Viaduct for cars** – a suggestion is for this to come out of Bungalow Lane to cross the river.
- Smaller scale improvements include creating a **barrier** between the existing A47 cycle path and the road – important that this barrier does not eat into the already narrow cycle path.
- **Reducing the car speed limit** on this portion of the A47 would also increase sense of cyclist/ pedestrian safety, or making this section of the A47 **one car lane instead of two** so as to be able to widen the cycle path.
- **Regularly removing obstructions** from A47 cycle path (e.g. fallen signs, road work signage, parts of HGVs that detach from vehicles).
- **Maintenance of overgrown and poorly surfaced paths** leading up to/ away from A47 (e.g., slip road on Whitlingham side could be replaced by a shared use facility for cyclists and pedestrians).
- On nearby roads close to Country Park and Roads - Interestingly, while these paths are not lit there is a level of acceptance of this - these areas are close to wilder, natural spots and light could obstruct the natural habitat. Automatic motion-based light that turns only when users and in the area is an option put on the table.



## Pedestrians

- Pedestrians’ suggestions mirror those from cyclists. Improvements to **demarcate space for cyclists and pedestrians on shared use paths**.
- Revisit prior proposal of a **bridge linking Thorpe to Norwich**.



## Stakeholders

- Further quantitative research to obtain more granular data on potential demand by studying users’ origin and destination data.





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# Moving Forward



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# A summary of improvements

## These improvements are aimed at increasing ability for CPEs to carry out activities as well as improving safety and enjoyment

- **Raise awareness of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:** CPEs feel that there is insufficient warning to alert drivers to the possibility that cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians will be sharing the road with them or may be in the vicinity of sites. An increase in signage alerting drivers, and even lowering speed limits in parts, could raise awareness and prompt more care.
- **More multi-agency working:** Collaborative/integrated working to better provide solutions/resolve issues for CPEs could be key for improving experiences. Currently this type of collegiate problem solving is not apparent and can make this audience feel that issues are siloed, and responsibilities abrogated. Moreover, CPEs understand that change takes time and is not always easy to implement however they want to see organisational engagement and feel heard and properly acknowledged.
- **Work towards improving connectivity and consistency of provision across entire routes.** CPEs want to be able to connect to places of interest while enjoying a degree of consistency between stretches of the journey. Ideally, their routes are not interrupted by CPE provision suddenly ending partway through their journey, or coming off a quiet road and coming onto extremely dangerous A roads. This also points to the need for joined-up collaboration between agencies.
- **Safety from vehicular traffic:** One of the most significant grievances is feeling unsafe due to the degree of proximity to fast-moving car traffic. Separation, barriers, signage, width of CPE provision are all paramount.
- **Improved and regular maintenance of pathways:** Many CPEs feel that paths are neglected and not properly maintained, making them hazardous. This can result in them avoiding certain routes. CPEs want to see more pathways that are designated for them and their mode of travel. Infrastructure on routes (e.g. railings, steps, ramps) to also be considered.
- **Better delineation of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians on shared infrastructure:** The hope for wider, dedicated pathways is that it will allow CPEs to share spaces safely/efficiently with each other. Currently, many CPEs report on how rare it is to find suitable shared pathways, often having to give way on paths or even being aware that certain paths just aren't suited to them and their mode of travel.



**Let's talk.**



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