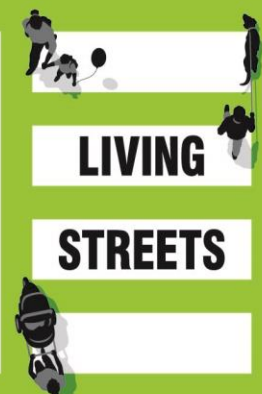


Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities 2019-20

Assessment of Walking and Cycling Conditions at Ladyburn Street, Greenock (River Clyde Homes)



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday, local journeys.



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Introduction

Living Streets has received funding from the Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities, administered by Cycling Scotland. As part of this work we have reviewed and assessed conditions for walking and cycling around 29 properties owned by Registered Social Landlords across Scotland. This report looks at conditions for walking and cycling around the River Clyde Homes property at **Ladyburn Street, Greenock**

Area context

[Some minor details have been deleted from this version of the report to safeguard the privacy of residents.]

The property sits in an area of residential properties, typically of 2 or 3 storeys. The area is bounded to the south and north by railway lines, both aligned roughly east-west. To the east is the meeting of these railways. The immediate residential area is relatively flat, in comparison to the typical landscape used for residential property in the area. It slopes gently, then more steeply upward to the south (the railway then defining the edge of the immediate built-up area). The area is part of a much larger area of primarily residential property stretching to the west. West of Sinclair Street this residential area also climbs steadily to much higher ground.

The area is physically mid-way between the centre of Port Glasgow and the (larger) centre of Greenock. To the north of the area (north of the railway) is a flatter low-lying area used for more industrial purposes, and which carries the east-west aligned A8 dual carriageway. To the south (south of the railway) is a less dense residential area.

Audit context

This report highlights key observations and themes, and general observations, which will we consider to be helpful to the Registered Social Landlord and to Cycling Scotland in connection with the funding award. It also adds to knowledge on opportunities and barriers around cycling and walking in the local area. The Methodology for the audits is included in the separate document, '*Walking and Cycling Audits for Registered Social Landlords 2019-20: Methodology*'.

It is also helpful to read this document in conjunction with the accompanying '*Walking and Cycling Audits for Registered Social Landlords 2019-20: What Does Good look Like?*' which describes, using a set of key principles, the characteristics of a good walking and cycling environment.

Responsibilities and development

Our urban environments are defined by interrelated features under the influence of many different bodies. This report is about current conditions, whatever their cause. Registered Social Landlords have control of some aspects of the environment, may only be able to influence other aspects, and may in some cases have no direct influence at all, however this report may be useful in approaching those who do.

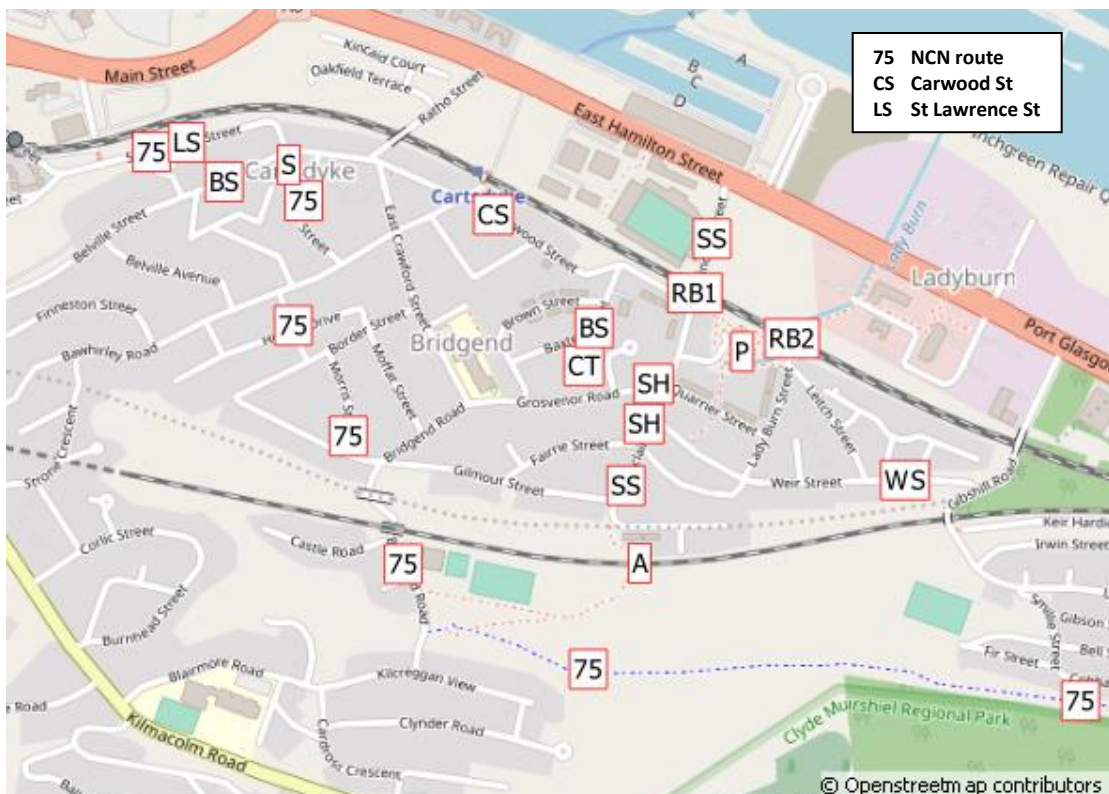
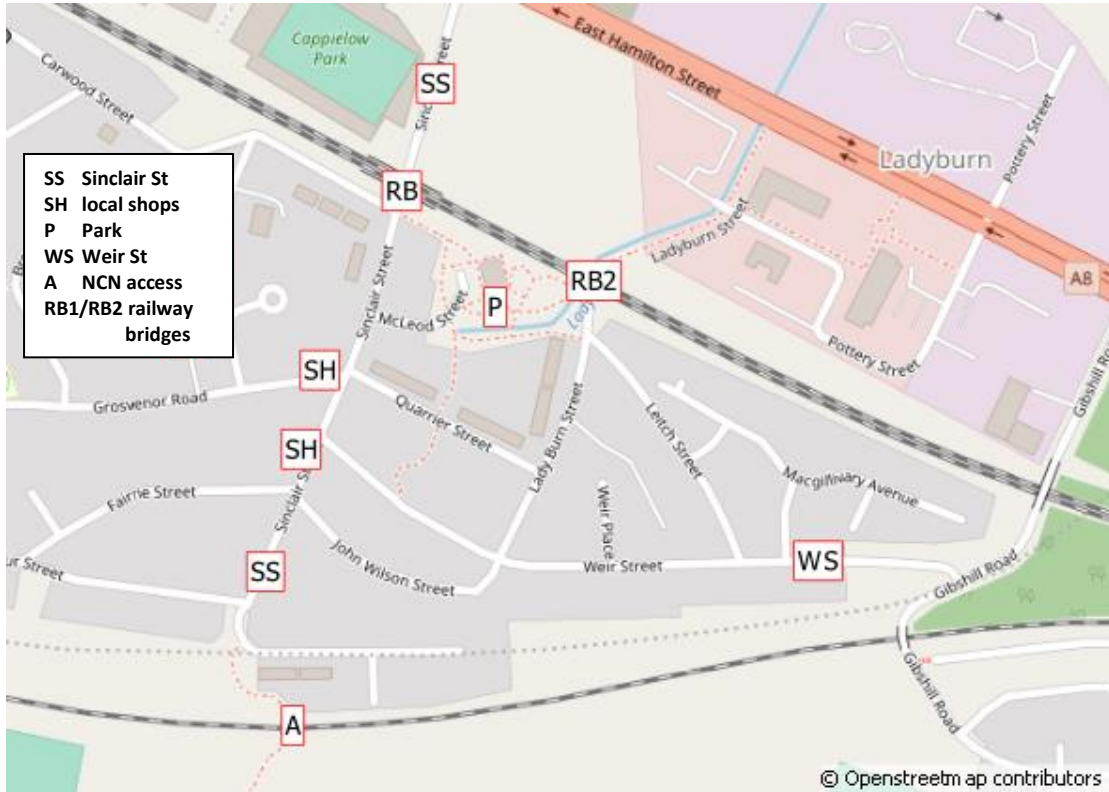
It is strongly recommended that the content of this report should be checked with local residents, who are the real experts on quality of experience in the areas where they live.

Funding for improvements to the urban environment might be available from a number of sources – and not only to a Registered Social Landlord or statutory authorities but also community led groups. Sources include:

- Places for Everyone - advice, support and funding for the creation of infrastructure that makes it easier for people to walk, cycle and wheel for everyday journeys
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/scotland/places-for-everyone/>
- Awards for All - funding from £300 to £10,000 to support what matters to people and communities.
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>
- The Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities – funding for social housing providers for new facilities that make it easier, more enjoyable and more accessible for people to walk or cycle:
<https://www.cycling.scot/what-we-do/cycling-friendly/social-housing-fund>

Map

Where helpful the text refers - like this [SS] - to the points marked on this map.



Observations

Project	Photos	Recommendations
At least 2 childrens bicycles and 8 childrens scooters were observed sitting in the gardens at the front of the property.	1	
The area to be used for bicycle parking clearly 'belongs' to the properties, and is fairly closely overlooked from the property, however it is also close to and immediately accessible from the street.	2	a
Immediate area		
Good quality dropped kerbs are rare (or absent) in the area. There are many locations where kerb heights are relatively low, or where private driveways drop the footway to the carriageway level.	3	b
At the entrance to some private driveways in the immediate local area the footway is designed with some a significant crossfall to facilitate vehicle access. This crossfall may be steep enough to make progress along these sections of footway difficult in a wheelchair using a mobility scooter, and to significantly increase the risks of slips (and falls) by pedestrians in winter weather.	4	b
It appears that very few of the streets in this area have any application of tactile paving (for any purpose). None was observed during our visit.		b
Many of the streets in the very immediate area are not obvious choices for through traffic. These streets may be relatively quiet in terms of vehicle movement, and therefore relatively welcoming for cycling.		

<p>The small area of parkland [P] close to the property may allow small children to play safely on bicycles. It may offer a cut-through for adults on bicycles, but any route utilising this quickly returns to the normal streets so it is of little significance in these terms. It may be useful in daylight hours for journeys on foot toward Sinclair Street.</p>		
<p>There is a neighbouring tunnel under the railway bridges [RB2] immediately north of the properties, however this only links to a business park, then onward to the A8 dual carriageway. There are bus stops providing journeys west and east along the A8. Access to the nearest signalised crossings of the A8, to allow access to a stop on the north footway, means walking an additional 250-350 metres (approximately) on top of the 250 metres (approximately) required to reach the A8.</p>		c,d
<p>This neighbouring tunnel is isolated and unwelcoming, poorly surfaced, with hidden areas, and it would seem likely that many people would avoid using it after dark.</p>	5	c,d
<p>There as a small selection of convenience-style shops [SH] on Sinclair Street opposite Weir Street and at the beginning of Grosvenor Road, 200-250 metres from the property.</p>	6	
<p>There appear to be no obvious large areas where employment is likely nearby, other than alongside the A8 (or in roles as would be expected in primarily residential areas). There are no obvious larger shops in the immediate area. Key shopping areas for residents would appear to be in the centre of Greenock, or at the retail park in Port Glasgow.</p>		c,d
<p>Wider area</p>		
<p>Some of the local streets which might be used by through traffic, and also to leave the area by bicycle (for example Weir Street [WS]), are observed to have traffic calming measures, suggesting that here traffic tends to problematic speeds. Others have a wide carriageway with significant hills. In terms of conditions for cycling there are sections of these streets where comparatively complex conditions exist, with the need to negotiate both parked and oncoming vehicles, or where traffic may be found to have much higher speed. Although these appear to an extent to be residential streets our guess would be that they tend toward (or are beyond) the limit of what many people (who don't currently cycle) would judge to be feel to be safe conditions. Sinclair Street [SS] is also an example of such a street.</p>	6	c,d

<p>The physical geography of the area is a significant defining feature in terms of walking and cycling here. Generally there is flat land to the north of the railway, with more industrial land usage and the Firth of Clyde as a northern boundary to this, however there are no obvious east-west routes along this flatter land, other than by using the footway of the A8.</p>		c,d
<p>The A8 is a dual carriageway, which appears to carry very significant amounts of traffic – being designed to try to facilitate the flow of four lanes of traffic. We judge that almost nobody would consider cycling on this road – although there may be a few people who are experienced in using a bicycle on local roads who do so. There are some signalised crossings in the area which are part of signalised junctions. While the A8 has associated footways this is not a friendly environment for walking. A local man described to us his walk to Port Glasgow to work. He said that there were places where it was possible to cut through the industrial estates to get away from the A8, which helped significantly, however that in wet conditions there was significant spray from the road, and when it snowed he would be showered with slush from passing vehicles. We note that routes cutting through industrial estates will be unwelcoming to many people after dark.</p>	7	c,d
<p>Sinclair Street is bridged by the railway [RB1], but the tunnel beneath this is very narrow and lacks footways. This is not a quiet street – vehicles were continually using it when we observed it in the middle of a working day. Between the railway and the A8 however, this street is very wide, and of an industrial nature, with no properties overlooking it, and is presumably therefore fairly unwelcoming after dark. There are bus stops on the A8, with this route as the main access.</p>	8,9	c,d
<p>Routes to the east or west by bicycle, keeping to the quieter residential and semi-residential streets to the south of the (northern) railway line, are hilly enough to make cycling very much less welcoming.</p>		c,d
<p>There is an east-west aligned signed cycle route in the area. This is route 75 of the National Cycle Network [75]. Access to this at its most local point, at the south end of Sinclair Street, requires climbing around 40 metres (in around 550 metres). This is definitely steep enough to put many people off trying to cycle (particularly on cheaper bicycles). To the west, the route follows an old railway line, generally staying above the urban area with little interaction with it (so that access to this requires descending the hill again from a specific access point). Once accessed, this route may provide a pleasant environment for leisure trips. It is unlikely to be attractive for journeys after dark, and it is noteworthy that even access to the route itself is through relatively isolated parkland. Journeys east on this route toward Greenock immediately join the ordinary streets,</p>	10	c,d







<p>descending to cross the A8 near the centre of Greenock. There seems nothing to recommend the use of this route in such a journey over a more direct equivalent using alternative residential streets.</p>		
<p>Eastward routes to the main central area of Greenock, avoiding the A8, would most obviously use the most northern, and lowest, available streets. The distance, which is of the order of 2 km, could in theory be covered very quickly and easily by bicycle. This route climbs significantly to the east, then descends steeply to Greenock. Parts of this route (including the National Cycle Network route at Carwood Street [CS]) appear to exhibit traffic levels and speeds which we would guess would be significant enough to put most people off considering using a bicycle. This suggests that the route might be more welcoming on foot, however there are some significant stretches which are very isolated, and which many people may find unwelcoming after dark. St Lawrence Street [LS] in particular, is both steep and isolated, being bounded by a green area with significant undergrowth.</p>	11	c,d

Recommendations

	Scheme
a	The association should monitor what uses the planned bicycle parking is put to, and whether this includes use for adult bicycles.
	Immediate area
b	The association, as a stakeholder in the area, should seek improvements in the conditions experienced by footway users, both in the short and long term, in the immediate area. These improvements could include re-surfacing and the provision of good quality dropped kerbs and associated tactile paving. It could also include the levelling of footways at private driveways - with a ramped access to a level footway, rather than with sloping footways being used as a ramp facilitating access between carriageway and private property.
c	The association could choose to make itself aware of the general barriers to walking and cycling that residents face in the wider area, on the basis that the association can add weight to their wishes or could choose to speak on their behalf in pursuing improved conditions.
d	The association should recognise that the significant challenges to residents in regard to access by bicycle or on foot to major areas of employment or to larger facilities (such as supermarkets) from may have consequences for the daily life of residents.

Supporting photos

<p>(Some minor details have been deleted from this version of the report to safeguard the privacy of residents.)</p>	<p>(Some minor details have been deleted from this version of the report to safeguard the privacy of residents.)</p>
<p>1: Children's bicycles/scooters on property</p>	<p>2: Area in front of properties</p>
	
<p>3: Lack of dropped kerbs</p>	<p>4: Significant crossfall on footway at driveways</p>
	
<p>5: Neighbouring tunnel beneath railway [RB2]</p>	<p>6: Sinclair Street (shops and conditions)</p>

	
<p>7: A8 at Sinclair Street junction</p>	<p>8: Railway bridge [RB1] over Sinclair Street</p>
	
<p>9: Sinclair Street immediately south of A8</p>	<p>10: Isolated access [A] to National Cycle Network</p>
	
<p>11: Carwood Street (looking east toward property)</p>	<p>12: St Lawrence Street (looking toward Greenock)</p>