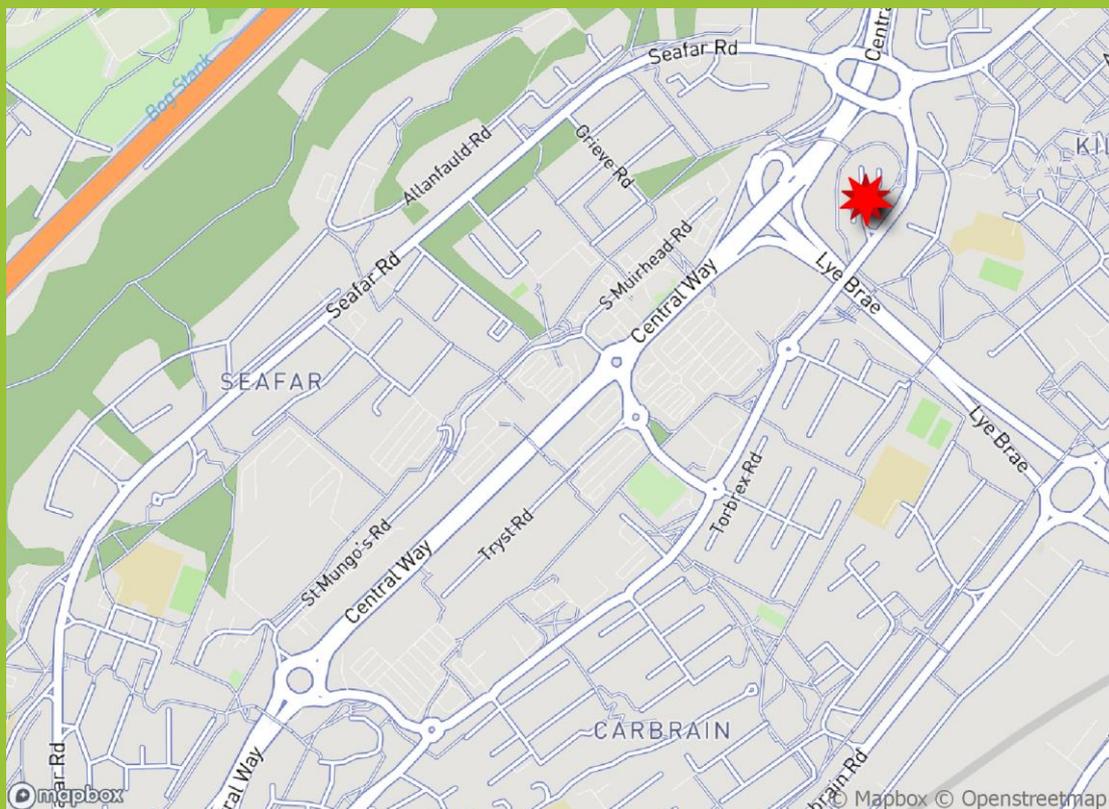
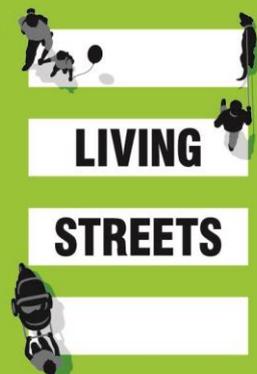


Pedestrian conditions assessment Burns Road Cumbernauld (Sanctuary Housing)

Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities 2020-21



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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Summary

Key points for Registered Social Landlord

Our assessment of the area around Burns Road, Cumbernauld, which should be checked with local people and other stakeholders, leads us to conclude that pedestrians are disadvantaged by these key issues:

- Almost all available routes for pedestrians, to all destinations, are on paths which for substantial distances lack 'passive surveillance' – with no alternatives possible. This system was planned, and the design was clearly based entirely around the idea that free flowing traffic should be sought throughout the town, putting this above other considerations. This has been successful enough to mean that use of the path network is probably not sufficient to make it seem safe and welcoming.
- The path network has been designed in such a way that it becomes extremely difficult to navigate. Where the biggest roads cut through the town on relatively direct routes the paths work around this, passing between bridges and underpasses. There is little or no path hierarchy, and little to suggest key routes to important destinations. Paths are not named and signage is minimal or absent.

As the Registered Social Landlord, it may only be possible for Sanctuary Housing Association to lead action in connection with a small number of the issues and ideas described in this report. The most significant of these might be around:

- ensuring that the local paths at and beside Burns Road are overlooked, to make them as welcoming as possible.

We report on wider issues because we consider that the better these are understood the greater the likelihood of change – whether locally and more generally.

Background note:

Our urban environments are defined by interrelated features under the influence of many different bodies, and this report is about current conditions whatever their cause. Registered Social Landlords do not generally have control over the main factors which affect pedestrians in the wider areas around the properties they manage. Likewise local authorities - with limited resources and budgets, and facing numerous other constraints - do not have immediate control over many of the factors which affect pedestrians.

However, in the longer term it is helpful if problems are understood, and potential solutions are explored. Registered Social Landlords may be able to have a positive influence, making more immediate changes where they have the power to do so, supporting others to understand the issues their residents face, and playing their part in working toward change.

This report is based on an assessment which used mapping and information available from sources such as Google Streetview. Prior to finalising this report we presented the content to Sanctuary Housing Association as an initial check of its accuracy. The intention is that the information in the report is used to support a longer informed discussion with local residents, as they are the real experts on the quality of the experience for pedestrians in the areas where they live.

Map images in this document are copyright © Mapbox, © Openstreetmap contributors.

Introduction

Living Streets has received funding from the Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities, administered by Cycling Scotland. We are assessing conditions for pedestrians around properties managed by Registered Social Landlords.

This report presents observations and suggestions for improving conditions, following an assessment of the area around the development area for Sanctuary Housing Association property at Burns Road, Cumbernauld.

Key factors we assess

Our assessment looked at issues such as the following:

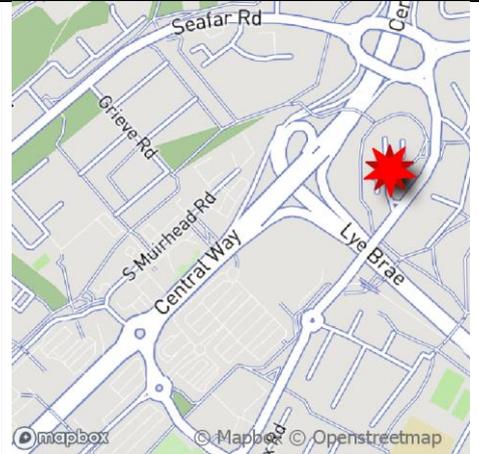
- **Footway (i.e. pavement)¹ and path provision:** the presence, surface quality, continuity, width, obstruction, and design of footways and paths.
- **Accessibility:** how far footways and paths, and their interaction with the carriageways of streets, have been designed to accommodate disabled people and others less able to deal with complicated or dangerous conditions.
- **General area design and character:** whether this is an area full of human activity and street life or one dominated by the movement of or parking of vehicles and the provision of roads designed primarily to facilitate these things.
- **Local area traffic-related safety:** looking at possibility of risk of injury from vehicles, and evaluating the likely effects of this risk on behaviour, not least in terms of how easily pedestrians cross streets or junctions, but also on how pleasant or otherwise a journey might be.
- **Whether streets and paths are welcoming to pedestrians:** both in and around an area, including focusing on how they will feel after dark or later at night – considering in particular what ‘passive surveillance’² exists, and to what level streets and paths are overlooked from buildings nearby.
- **Area permeability:** looking at whether paths and footways connect to provide convenient shorter routes for pedestrians, and longer routes for those driving – or whether routes for pedestrians are defined by following streets which have been designed around vehicle use, or by the necessity to negotiate these safely.
- **Entry and exit points and routes from an area:** looking at what boundaries around the area define these points/routes, and conditions for pedestrians here.
- **Likely destinations outside the local area and routes to/from these:** considering pedestrian journeys primarily for utility journeys – including for shopping, education, and work – and conditions for pedestrians along these, distances, and potential use of public transport.

¹ For clarity this report uses the word term ‘footway’ rather than the phrase ‘the pavement’ to describe the space for walking on beside a road. We do this because the word ‘pavement’ is also used in technical discussion to describe the actual material a road or path is constructed from.

² We use the term ‘passive surveillance’ to describe the way in which it feels safer to be on a street where there are other people nearby who may be able to see activity, including those who might look out from the windows of a building – even if nobody is currently actively doing so.

Location

Burns Road is the site of a new development close to the centre of Cumbernauld (Burns Road itself not currently existing).

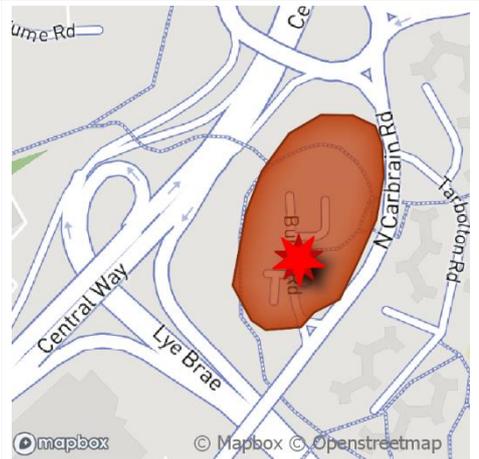


Location close to Central Way, Cumbernauld

The estate will have very clear local boundaries.

The area is surrounded by roads built for traffic speed and flow. These do not have footways (pavements) and it is impossible or extremely difficult to cross them in a conventional manner. Entry and exit to the area must be by passing over or under one of these roads on a bridge or in an underpass.

Many of these roads have a speed limit of 50mph. but at the same time with a design likely to encourage even higher speed. North Carbrain Road to the east is the exception, with a speed limit of 30mph - however again it seems very likely that much higher speeds will be seen here.



Obvious boundaries created by roads designed to prioritise traffic speed and flow.

In terms of geography this area is part of a much larger residential area surrounding the town centre. This larger area is powerfully divided into very small areas by the road network, the arrangement of the buildings, and by green space. It is possible to pass between each of the small residential areas using paths, bridges or underpasses, but it seems likely that any sense of neighbourhood is limited to very small areas (sometimes only consisting of a very few individual neighbouring properties on a path).

In many places buildings which are immediate neighbours feel very separate from one another.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Neighbours separated by building design and parking \(1\)](#)

[Neighbours separated by building design and parking \(2\)](#)

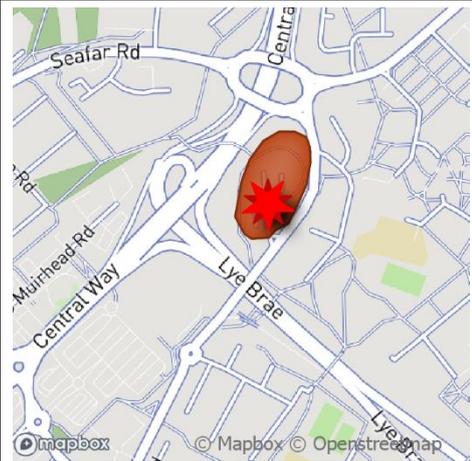
[North Carbrain Road, sitting between Burns Road and the next nearest housing](#)

Observations

Key observations

We think that these issues (and any positive points) most strongly influence the experience of pedestrians in the area. These issues may arise from many different factors. The Registered Social Landlord, and even the local authority, may have little or no direct control over some of them.

The character of the pedestrian experience for residents at Burns Road will be defined by the character of the path network here. The roads have been designed in such a way that it is very difficult or impossible to walk alongside them or to cross them in a conventional manner. Pedestrians (usually) have no option other than to stick to the separate path networks here (or of course to drive if they have access to a vehicle).



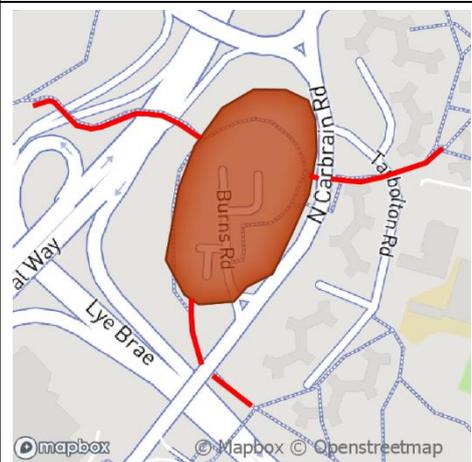
Path network shown as narrower blue/white lines.

There are only three entry/exit points from the (potential) estate for pedestrians.

There is a bridge over the Central Way dual carriageway. This arrives at the rear of another housing area, then also passing through woodland. It seems unlikely that this is a useful route for many purposes, other than to visit a small local retail park/area containing a few restaurant chain premises, fast food chain premises, and a Farmfoods store. However it is important to notice that there is a further underpass linking this retail park to the car park of the local Asda supermarket.

The northern of the two underpasses beneath North Carbrain Road is probably of most use to those walking to the local primary school.

The southern of the two underpasses beneath North Carbrain Road can form part of a journey southwest toward the supermarkets and shopping centre in the middle of the town.



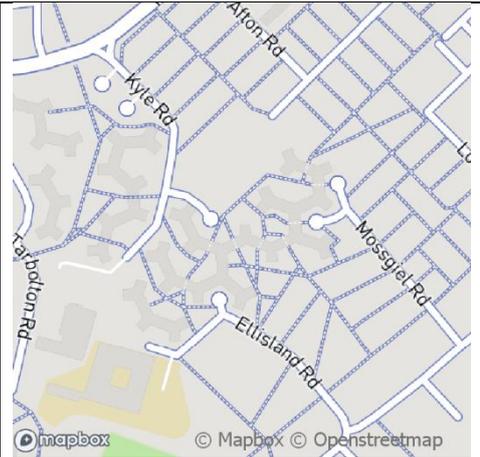
All possible entrance/exit paths from the area.

The path network locally is without any clear sense of direction, order or priority.

There are no direct routes. All pedestrian journeys involve convoluted routes, underpasses and bridges.

The map (right) is of the area of the path network immediately east of the Burns Road area. This illustrates this broader problem. Many of the paths pass under the buildings, with each building looking much like the others, and each passageway looking like the other passageways. There are no clear sight lines. There is nothing to distinguish any of these paths from one another. There is almost no signage on these paths, and none of them are named. None of them are aligned in any obvious direction.

Local people will certainly be able to learn specific routes through this network if they try (and with time might learn the wider network), but it is likely to feel to be an impenetrable maze to newcomers or to local people seeking a new route.



Path network southeast of Burns Road area

It seems unlikely that many people find the path network here to be welcoming at any time and, particularly after dark or later at night.

Many sections of path lack passive surveillance. Many paths pass around the rear of buildings, through wooded green space and beneath major roads using underpasses.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Bridge and underpass on route to local Asda supermarket](#)

[Open area on other side of the above underpass.](#)

[Second underpass on route to local Asda supermarket](#)

Pedestrian routes are (elsewhere) usually made more welcoming by the presence of other pedestrians. This area of Cumbernauld has been designed around the wish to make it easy for people to drive. A cumulative effect will occur because each person driving is one less person on the path network – making this less welcoming.

In theory pedestrian routes are made more welcoming, and more interesting, by the changing environment created by other people. Subjects of human interest can be as mundane as hanging washing. It is obvious that pedestrian bridges and underpasses remove people from this type of more human environment. Many of the buildings in this area have been designed with windows which are too small to show much of the human life inside the buildings, and these buildings are surrounded by communal areas of plain mown grass, areas of parking, and sometimes large car parks. There is little of more human interest to enrich a journey.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[A typical nearby path illustrating these points.](#)

Secondary observations

There is a large Asda supermarket which is only around 150m from Burns Road area. This will presumably be a key destination for pedestrians. The only reasonable pedestrian route is around 430m in length.

This distance is an easy walk for many adults.

The route is unobvious and indirect, although it is certain that local people will learn it. This route involves a wooded path under a major road, a bridge over a dual carriageway, steps (or a ramp) to an underpass beneath a slip road, a short section in front of some quite dilapidated residential buildings, another underpass back beneath the first road, and an approach past the rear of the supermarket, across its service lane, climbing steps (or a long ramp) to its major car park.



Route to supermarket

The familiar Google Maps service cannot provide a safe route from Burns Road to this local supermarket for pedestrians. It suggests that pedestrians walk along roads which are built for high traffic volumes, speed and flow, without footways (pavements).

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Conditions on the route suggested by Google Maps \(North Carbrain Road\).](#)

The shopping centre in the middle of the town will represent a key destination for pedestrians.

This is around 800m away. After reaching the supermarket (route as above) the remainder of the journey is relatively straightforward in comparison, although is far from attractive.

The closest primary school is only around a 250m walk. The design of the path and street network here means that this walk only crosses two relatively small roads.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Around 30m from this Streetview image vehicles driven from this major road meet an on-street crossing.](#)

The route is mostly quite well overlooked, although the initial underpass beneath North Carbrain Road may be unwelcoming after dark or later at night. Details of the design of any new buildings here may have a profound effect (for better or worse) on this.

It is difficult to judge what speeds will be common on these minor roads. There is a risk that vehicles will be driven quickly because they arrive directly from roads designed for use at high speeds.

It seems useful to notice that people driving on Carbrain Road North may have arrived immediately

from the Central Way dual carriageway. Carbrain Road North lacks footways (pavements), and is of a design which seems guaranteed to encourage very much faster speeds than the posted 30mph limit. The exit from this is into the first small road which is crossed on route to the school is designed to protect flow and allow speed on this main carriageway. There is a posted 'advisory' limit of 20mph on the small road (with a legal limit of 30mph), but the crossing encountered on route to the school is only around 30metres from this exit.

Cumbernauld Academy is only around 600m away, but pedestrian routes are longer than this. Few obvious routes exist, and a major road immediately beside the school can only be crossed using an underpass or a long bridge.

A very large area in front of the school is dedicated to car parking and vehicle access. Pedestrian routes are clearly secondary to this, and are a long way from the main road entrance.

The Google Maps routing service suggests that a car journey to the school from Burns Road will take 2 minutes. It cannot provide a route to walk to the school which can be followed in real life. Other routing services (OSRM / GraphHopper) suggest a route which can mostly be followed in real life (with one exception where the pedestrian route is particularly unobvious). They suggest that this walk would take many people around 12 minutes.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)
Front entrance to school
(no direct access to pedestrians)

Potential improvements

This section lists some ideas for change. These are intended to prompt discussion, and are not necessarily recommendations. We've separated the ideas into three rough categories. The first ideas are about changes which might more easily be led by the Registered Social Landlord. The Registered Social Landlord may be able to have a strong influence in connection with the second group of ideas. The third group of ideas are generally for the longer term, or of a nature which means that a much wider group of agencies would need to be involved.

Led by the Registered Social Landlord:

The Registered Social Landlord might consider trying to take a lead on the following issues, although the cooperation of other bodies might be required:

Ensuring local quality of access to the path network

Although it will make minimal difference to an overall pedestrian journey design details on the new estate may make a profound difference to how welcoming the most local parts of the path network feel.

To the extent possible, new houses should be designed so that the three pedestrian entry/exit points from the estate are well overlooked. It may be that even the position of houses might be fine-tuned in order that as much of the path network as possible is overlooked. Such efforts may also ensure that properties feel more secure – so that those entering and leaving the estate, even through the closest underpass, would expect to be observed.

Influenced by the Registered Social Landlord

These more complex changes might require a much deeper involvement from other bodies, but we guess that the Registered Social Landlord ought to be able to provide strong encouragement or strong influence:

Path maintenance

As similar issues exist throughout Cumbernauld it seems unlikely that any priority can be given to the specific routes used by residents at Burns Road – however basic path maintenance (across the network) may contribute substantially to how welcoming they are for pedestrians.

Longer term or more complex change

The potential improvements listed here are of a nature meaning that change is likely to take much longer, and that the Registered Social Landlord is likely to have much less influence:

Ensuring paths are obvious and overlooked

In the much longer term, as buildings in Cumbernauld are renovated or replaced, it will be important that designs are used which ensure that paths are properly overlooked. Where



possible it will also be important to ensure that the physical route taken by paths is much more direct than is usually the case at the moment. Unless a decision is taken to substantially change the nature of the roads within Cumbernauld then fixed points in the path network will remain, being defined by underpasses and bridges. Genuinely welcoming paths would connect these fixed points directly (and also any key destinations), with buildings and roads arranged around this requirement.

Further information

Example of overlooked path

This [Google Streetview image](#) illustrates how a path can be overlooked by buildings which are designed in a way which makes the path welcoming. The simple quality of the buildings here clearly helps to make the area more pleasing, but there are a number of other contributing factors. These including that the green space does not simply consist of grass, that the path continues in the direction taken by a street.

Potential funding

Funding for improvements to the urban environment might be available from a number of sources, including:

- Places for Everyone:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/scotland/places-for-everyone/>
- Awards for All:
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>
- The Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities:
<https://www.cycling.scot/what-we-do/cycling-friendly/social-housing-fund>