



Northern and Eastern Gateway Walking and Cycling Consultation: Manchester and Salford Ramblers Comments

Introduction

We recognise that the Covid-19 pandemic is the overwhelming current priority and that the longer-term impact is unknown. But we believe we need to look to the future, it is important that Manchester continues to create traffic free and quiet routes to encourage walking and cycling, as a key part of the City's strategy on the climate crisis and to address economic and health inequalities.

The Ramblers

The Ramblers are the national charity that helps people enjoy walking and protect the places we all love to walk. Our roots are in groups of walkers who wanted access for the public to the countryside, but we are increasingly concerned about the places where we live. We want neighbourhoods that put people walking first and allow everyone easy access to quality green spaces. The Manchester and Salford Ramblers are the local group and we specialise in short city walks around our urban areas. For example, in partnership with the City Council, we have developed the Manchester Green Trail which coincides with part of the proposed Northern and Eastern Gateway route, more details can be found [via this link](#).

Northern and Eastern Gateway Walking and Cycling Route

The starting point for the proposed route is along the northern border of the current Green Quarter. There are some pleasant, if short sections of traffic free routes through the existing Green Quarter development that link in to this route and consideration should be given to connections to the Piccadilly – Victoria Walking and Cycle route proposals.

The route uses the historic Union Bridge, over the River Irk between Roger Street and Danzig Street. It is a grade II listed structure and despite its current run-down appearance, it would be very desirable to make this a feature. The proposed route crosses the Manchester Green Trail Stage 5, and this should be incorporated in signage and wayfinding.

The area around Union Bridge, will provide the key link to the River Irk, the proposed City River Park and the whole Northern Gateway Development. This will be an important route junction and the infrastructure and wayfinding should reflect this.

The proposed route skirts Angel Meadows and we could suggest that more is made of this feature and the of a further link to the Manchester Green Trail, particularly in the form of signage/information. Any of the possible routes to Rochdale Road are streets hemmed in by tall flats, so some greening would be welcomed and the alternative following the route of the Green trail should be signed.

We strongly support better arrangements for Rochdale Road and Oldham Road crossings

There is reasonable walking infrastructure already in the part of Ancoats that the route encompasses, and it again, follows the Green Trail. This section also provides access to the Rochdale and Ashton Canals. These connections provide additional links to the city centre and also open

important routes to the North and East. Along the Rochdale Canal leading to Victoria Mill Park, there has been previous public realm investment and it will be important to promote the link with the Northern and Easter Gateway. The Ashton Canal provides significant routes to Clayton Vale, the Etihad stadium, Debdale and the Grow Green pilot in West Gorton.

The proposed route ends at New Islington tram stop, but it would have more value if it linked with the Green Trail round to the Medlock Valley and then to extend to the important new Mayfield Park developments.

Concluding Comments

We will look forward to engaging in the further consultation on the detailed development of these proposals and to make more substantive comments on the design and quality of the walking infrastructure. In this short submission we have focused on what we believe would enhance the value of the proposed route and enable more people use the route by ensuring that it is connected with the exiting and developing network of traffic free and quiet routes and public rights of way.