



"Working for a cycle-friendly Reading"

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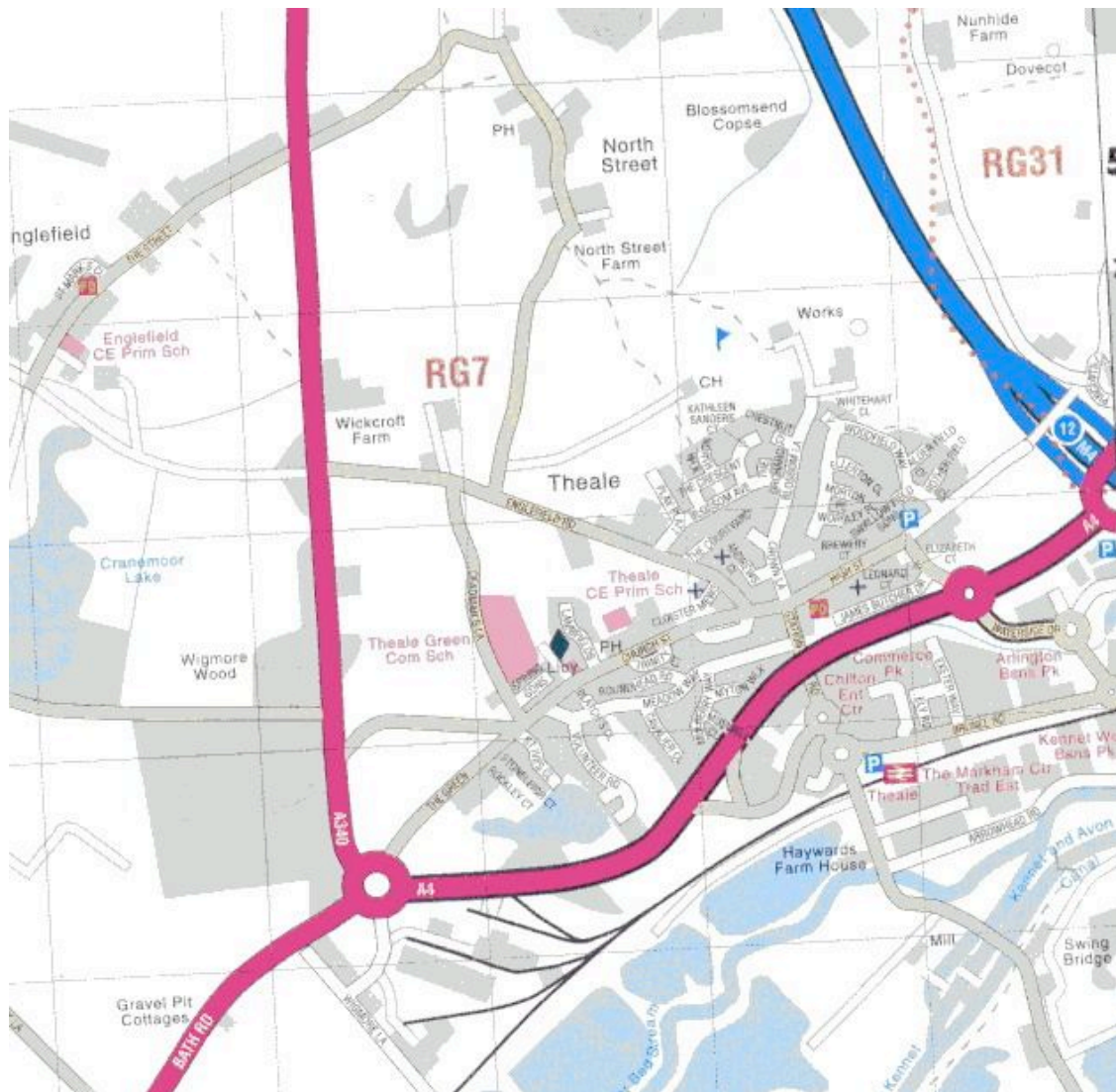
Theale - Cycle Route Audit

Purpose

The Reading Cycle Campaign (RCC) has undertaken this cycle audit of Theale at the request of West Berkshire District Council (WBDC). The Theale area to be considered is as agreed with WBDC.

Leisure routes have not been considered as much as utility routes, but some comments are included as there is potential leisure demand.

This report includes the specific recommendations as well as general ones.



Theale location plan

Areas considered and key cycling attractions

Theale is a village community with its central shopping area on High Street. A train station is located just south of the village. Theale is "land locked" by three main trunk road roads, M4 to the North East, A340 to Pangbourne to the West and the A4 Theale by-pass south of the Village. All with a speed limit of at least 50mph. Englefield and Calcot are the next nearest population areas close to Theale.

The village centre (Theale High Street) has a 20mph reinforced with raised zebra crossing which provides a generally satisfactory environment for cycling. There are three bike racks at each end of the main shopping precinct on Theale High Street

At Theale railway station there are five bike racks (providing 10 spaces) that are undercover and five bicycle lockers (chargable). During the winter the racks are rarely used though during summer most are used. On the day of the audit the racks were not being used.


Cycling into Reading is quite a feasible commute, distance of around 5.5 miles. Taking an average cycling speed of 10mph, this gives a time to cycle into central Reading of about 30 minutes, which may be slightly longer than car and bus journeys at peak times. The route involves crossing the M4 via the footbridge between Theale and Calcot and shared paths with pedestrians to the Reading boundary.

Cycling over the M4 'footbridge' to the Calcot hypermarket may also be attractive.

Suggested routes

The following routes are suggested:

1. The Village Centre and surrounding streets
2. Route to train station
3. Route to Theale Primary School and Theale Green School
4. Route linking Englefield to Theale
5. Route to Calcot (and onwards to Reading)

Route	location	problem	Suggested measures
1	Theale Village	Drivers often drive at high speeds through the village high street	Extend the 20mph limit area (not just the high street) to the whole village, boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - entry to Theale from Hoad Way - include the route to Theale Station - entry in the Theale from A340 end
			Possible more traffic calming measures
		Meadow Way very narrow only wide enough for a single car to drive down, speeding drivers	Extend the 20 mph limit area Create a cycle track (marked in red) behind Meadow way running parallel with the by-pass and the existing footpath to avoid Meadow way
			
2	Route to station	General traffic	Extend the 20mph zone to include the railway station
3	Route to schools	General traffic	Extend the 20mph zone to include the roads leading up to the schools.
		Difficult to turn right from the High Street end of Theale into school	Traffic calming measures to slow cars to give cyclists taking children to school a chance to turn right.
4	Route to/from Englefield	A340 traffic speed limit at 50mph, often exceeded.	Speed reduction to 30 or 40mph between Englefield Road and the Bath Road, with traffic signals, roundabout or large central islands at the crossroads from Bradfield and at Englefield Road. These will give cyclists a chance to cross the A340

		Crossing at The Street is difficult	Creation of an improved junction at The Street from North Street to Englefield, with either a roundabout or wide central island, would slow traffic on the A340 and facilitate crossing and turning of all modes.
5	Route to Calcot	Footbridge over M4 from Theale to Calcot is not bicycle permissible	Make bicycle riding permissible Remove barrier at the Theale end of the footbridge. AND/OR provide a route adjacent to the A4 which is suitable for cyclists and pedestrians using the traffic signals at the M4 junction.
6	Route to Newbury via A4	Crossing A340 roundabout	Provide suitable crossing points for pedestrians and off-carriageway cyclists. Provide a cycle track or lanes to side-roads to the west and Aldermaston.
7	Route to Pangbourne	Crossing between Nunhide Lane to Sulham Lane via Mill Lane. Cars going downhill at speed.	Most of the route via Nunhide Lane is either car free or very quiet. The crossing on Mill Lane needs safety measures to slow traffic down at this crossing. To enable cyclists safely get to Sulham Lane.

Conclusions and recommendations

Theale is small village, where most of the amenities are accessible by foot. Most people who cycle tend to cycle further i.e. out of the village to other surrounding areas

The main cycling routes at present and in the future need to be agreed so that work and expenditure can be effectively targeted. The 'quick fix' measures need to be agreed and implemented to give early improvements for cyclists. Longer term improvements should be clearly identified, developed and progress made on them when possible.

Reducing speed limits, including extending the 20mph limit would be extremely beneficial for cyclists and pedestrians.