



Northumberland County Council

**RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY CORPORATE DIRECTOR
ACTING DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES & HOUSING: PAUL JONES**

**PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR CYCLISTS, MELLING ROAD,
CRAMLINGTON**

Purpose of Report

To consider the results of the public consultation exercise, regarding the proposed improvements for cyclists at Melling Road, Cramlington.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1) Option 2a (on road cycling with some minor path improvements) should be implemented.

Key Issues

- 1) The County Council has recently undertaken walking and cycling audits of the County's main towns. These audits consider the existing walking and cycling network and propose improvements.
- 2) In Cramlington, a gap in the off-road cycling network was identified in the Melling Road area. A cycle track was therefore proposed to provide this missing link.
- 3) Residents of Melling Road objected to the proposal. As a result, a site meeting was held with concerned residents and Councillor Kathy Graham, at which Officers agreed to consult on alternative options.

Report Author

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Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the *Places and Environment Aim* in the Corporate Plan:

Our aim is to maintain and further improve the quality of our towns, villages and countryside and make it easier for residents to access services and high quality, affordable homes and to travel using different modes of transport. To achieve this, we will keep Northumberland clean, green and safe from detrimental impacts of climate change, build more houses to benefit those most in need and provide a convenient, integrated public transport network.

Background

1. The County Council has recently undertaken walking and cycling audits of the County's main towns.
2. These audits consider what improvements could be made to the walking and cycling network. A number of improvements are now being implemented via the LTP Programme.
3. The audits were presented to the relevant County Councillors and Town Councils.
4. In Cramlington, the audit identified a missing link in the off-road cycle network behind Melling Road. This link would connect the Railway Station to the north, with the wider off-road network around Cramlington and on to the new Hospital. Currently the most direct route in this area is on-road via Melling Road/Minting Place, (see Figure 1).

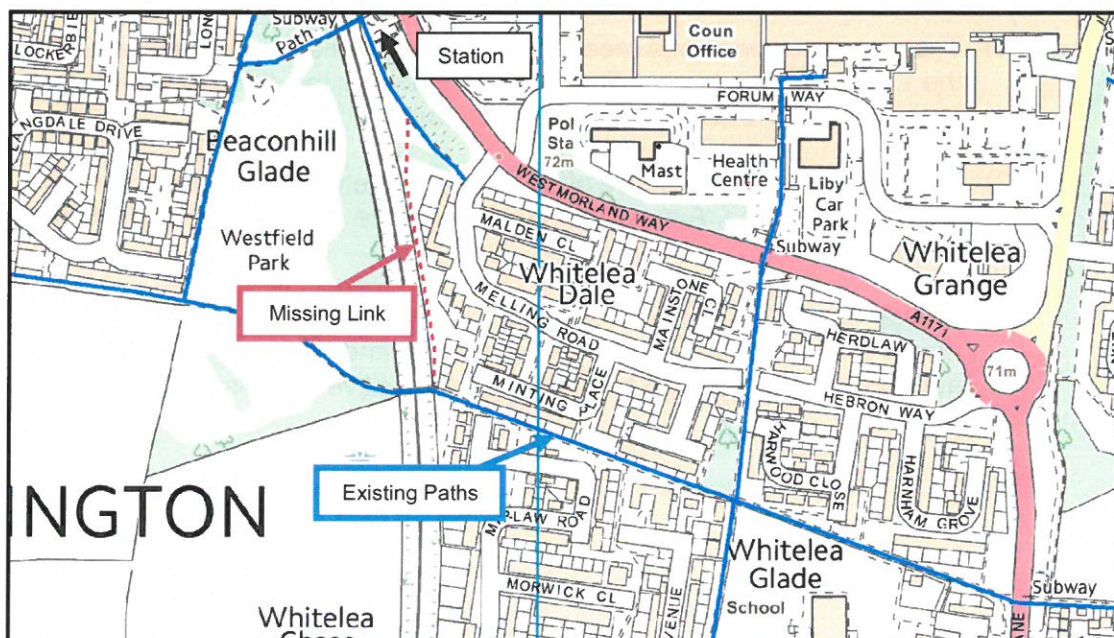


Figure 1: Existing & Proposed Off-road Routes.

5. The proposed link runs across public open space adjacent to the railway line, behind numbers 2 to 24 Melling Road and 29 to 35 Minting Place.

6. A scheme to provide a 3m wide foot/cycle track with street lighting was drawn up and adjacent properties were notified.
7. A number of concerns were then raised by residents. In response, Officers held a site meeting with the residents and the local ward member, Councillor Kathy Graham.
8. At the site meeting, the route of the proposed link was walked and residents stated their strong objections to the scheme.
9. The main objection to the proposal concerned anti-social behaviour. In the past, a number of incidents have occurred including theft from gardens, drug dealing and motorbike racing.
10. As a result of this anti-social behaviour, a fence was erected at the south end of the grass area, blocking direct access from the existing foot/cycle track adjacent to Minting Place. Since this fence was erected, incidents of anti-social behaviour have reduced significantly, (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Fence at south end of open space area.

11. Residents were understandably concerned that removing the fence and providing a new path would lead to a return of the anti-social behaviour they had previously experienced.
12. Other concerns raised included the potential effect on privacy and drainage.
13. At the site meeting, Officers agreed to consider alternative options and to consult more widely.

Consultation

14. 3 potential options were the subject of a consultation which concluded on 23rd March 2016. The 3 options were:
 - Option 1: The proposed off-road link behind Melling Road.
 - Option 2a: The existing on-road route through Melling Road/Minting Place with some minor path improvements at each end.
 - Option 2b: Remove the grass verge in front of the houses on Melling Road and replace with a cycle track (this was suggested by residents)

A copy of the consultation plan is attached as Appendix A. Residents were asked to select their preferred option.

15. The consultation exercise involved the delivery of a consultation letter together with a plan showing details of the scheme to residents of Melling Road and Minting Place, statutory consultees; County Councillor Graham, Cramlington Town Council; and other interested parties. The proposal was also available to view and comment via the Council's website.

16. 43 responses were returned. The breakdown of the responses is as follows:

- Option 1: 14 (33%)
- Option 2a: 22 (51%)
- Option 2b: 2 (5%)
- A further 5 responses were against all options (11%)

17. These results were discussed with the local Ward Member, Councillor Kathy Graham, who agreed that Option 2a should go ahead.

Conclusion

18. In view of the results of the consultation and the significant concerns raised by residents, it is recommended that Option 2a is implemented.

Background Papers

File Ref: HE141308

Implications Arising Out of the Report

Policy	None
Finance and value for money	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Considerations	None
Sustainability	None
Consultation	The relevant people and organisations were consulted
Wards	Cramlington Village

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Executive Member or Officer(s):

Paul Jones: Acting Director of Local Services & Housing

Subject:

**PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR CYCLISTS,
MELLING ROAD, CRAMLINGTON**

Consultation

43 Responses
14 for Option 1
22 for Option 2a
2 for Option 2b
5 against all options

Decision Taken:

1) Option 2a (on road cycling with some minor path improvements) should be implemented.

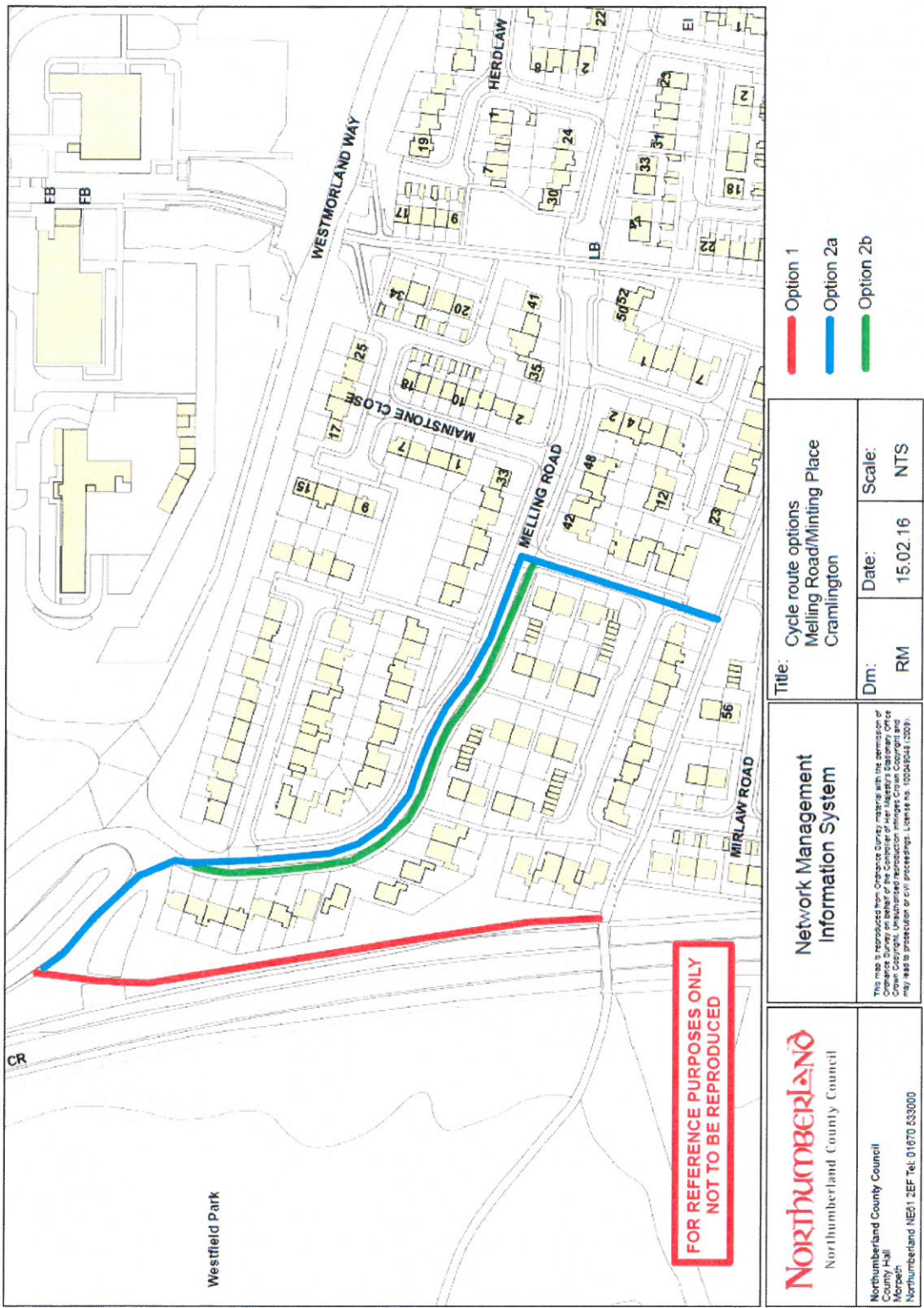
Signature of Director



Date

18/4/16

Appendix A – Consultation Plan



Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	NEITHER	Other Relevant Comments
	1			I support option 2a. I think we need to forget option 1. as in my opinion it would increase the risk of anti social behaviour, and make the rear of the properties a target for criminal offences. I also think we need to keep some green areas. option 2a may also assist with traffic calming measure, and would deter shoppers from Manor Walks parking in our streets causing obstruction.
1				It seems obvious to me that the most economical option would be the one that requires the least amount of work and disruption.
1				
			1	Any alone as it stops them cycling on the footpath between Melling Road and Minting Place. Option 1 might be the best, as might stop the horse back riders riding on the path and the horses body waste all over the path.
	1			I have picked option 2a because it looks to be the cheapest choice to do. I would like to think that the project is put out to tender to get the best price, and not automatically let the council workers do it.
	1			Concerning the track connecting Melling Rod to the railway station I think all the trees and vegetation should be cleared so that the track can be seen from Westmorland Way. The present track is unsafe for women, especially, walking alone as they cannot be seen from the road. Another option would be to create a path alongside the main road.
			1	Thank you for your letter dated 24th February 2016 in which you invite to offer our comments on the above proposal. I would inform you that as an Emergency Service we may be required to use the above road(s) for access and egress in the event of being activated to attend an emergency call, or to convey patients to hospital for out-patient appointments. I would thank you for your consultation on this matter and offer our support for the on-going safety programme.
	1			Option 1b a is used by dog walkers -option 2a would cause more congestion for traffic (Phoned in)
		1		I would support Option 2a if it was more cost effective. A 20mph speed limit should be imposed on the road if implementing 2a. Also, I am disabled and use a scooter. I do not like using the cycle track because at certain times of the day it is very isolated. As vulnerable person, I can feel at risk. I would rather go to the town centre through the house, via Melling Road and onto the track there. However, THERE IS ONLY ONE POINT WHERE THE PAVEMENT PROVIDES A SLOPING ACCESS; on the corner of Manningford Close. The sloping kerb stones in front of garages/drives are not suitable and caused me to have an accident in 2014. While we're on about this area; why provide signposts for a walkway to the new hospital when it is clear that if you are fit enough to walk there, you shouldn't be going there?
	1			I would strongly object to Option 1. As this option would have a huge impact on the privacy to the rear of our property. There are other concerns over the use of these cycle ways by motorcycle users as shortcuts.
	1			We have chosen 2a because it is the most practical and cheapest option! The other options would be much more expensive and most likely increase our council tax, which we would not be in favour of.
	1			
	1			While supporting our councils plans for improved cycle ways we do have concerns about the return of anti-social behaviour and crime which could quickly return to the rear of Melling Road. Incidents of theft from gardens, youths on motorbikes have happened in the past. One of our neighbours children returned home from school a few years ago to find two men breaking into their house from the back garden. We fear that a cycleway/path in a quiet area which looks down and into our property could encourage the return of such behaviour. We support option 2a via Melling Road using existing street lighting which could actually run the length of Melling Road and link into the cycle track at the post/bollards at the bottom of Melling Road, joining the cycle track which runs from the high school to the shops - this is an option would also remove the hazard of the 'blind corner' travelling east past Grenville Court towards Hareside School on the cycle track between Mirian Road and Minting Place for cyclists not familiar with Cramlington who may be en-route from the station. We would also encourage a 20mph speed restriction on the estate and a fence/metal railing barrier to slow cyclists down as they approach from the station to join Melling Road. A speed hump at the entrance to the estate would also slow cars down.
1				I favour option 1 as it is least intrusive for residents and safest for residents and cyclists alike. However in my view, cyclists are well enough catered for - and this money would be better spent on lights or a roundabout - between the respective entrances to Melling Road and Forum Way. I am almost certainly wasting my breath though - as you treated residents views with contempt in the recent fire services consultations.
1				I welcome the thoughts of improving the cycle track from the station to Melling road because as a frequent walker by this path to Westmorland shops and the station. However there needs a separation between cyclists and pedestrians.
1				Parking by residents - and also by people using shopping centre! - on Melling Road make it unsafe for cyclists to man over in and out of vehicles. Option 1 is by far the most logical and sensible route, especially for the use of children. It may even encourage more to cycle to school!!! If the grass verge are used to create cycle routes it will create an issue for residents as it will run across the end of their drives and across two blocks of garages that serve the flats. Inattentive cyclists/ drivers could end up colliding with each other.
1				

	1		Alternatively 2B. Subject to no cycle track on existing road layout for Melling Road. Currently Problems sometimes with passing cars in narrow stretched of road.
1			Melling Road not safe garages etc.
	1		2a is the least expensive option likely to cause the least disruption but why is it necessary? There is already a footpath linking Minting to an existing cycle track therefore cyclists should use this thereby eliminating the need for a new pathway and eliminating construction costs. Why waste money on something which would be rarely used rending it unnecessary?
	1		We are in favour of option 2A which is cyclists ride on the road on Melling Road / Minting Place with a cycle track link between no7. and no9. We have voted for option 2A because it is the least intrusive scheme, and feel that the council are unable to repair the existing pavements which are a disgrace. My husband cycles to work daily from Melling Road to Avery Dennison in Nelson Industrial Estate. There are NO problems cycling on Melling Road which is a fairly quiet no through road on the estate. However the track between Melling Road and the train station is in need of widening and repairs. The after leaving Nelson Village there are NO cycle tracks or indeed FOOTPATHS to the industrial estate, making this part of the journey extremely HAZARDOUS for either cyclists or persons on foot. Therefore we feel money would be better spent on and around the Industrial Estate and on pavement repairs.
	1		1. This is the route currently taken by most cyclists - as per tyre tracks on grass between 7 + 9 Minting. 2. Most cost effective. 3. Least affecting privacy. 4.1. If track is built between Melling Road and Railway this will cause additional drainage problems as ground already slopes towards houses. 4.2. Affected properties will have street lights both front and back of properties. 4.3. May encourage anti-social behaviour 5. Melling Road does not have excessive car usage as this is n access road and not a through road, therefore fairly safe for cyclists.
1			In my vew 'do nothing' s also option as I do not see this issue justifying the cost in the current financial climate. However, if this work must be done option 1 is the only option which will not spoil the existing lovely grass areas and verges in Minting Place and Melling Road. Also Option 1 provides a much more direct cycle route with less disruption to everyone and importantly will not affect the frontal views of houses and flats in Minting Place and Melling Road. I m sure the houses in Melling Road will object to a cycle path behind their houses (i.e. option 1) however this would be a the rear of their properties and overall is the best option for cyclists and the majority of others.
	1		Option 2b will create considerable danger for cyclists, as residents would have to cross the track to either and leave their drives. A moments distraction on the part of either a cyclist or motoring resident could so easily prove fatal. As there I relatively little traffic flow on Melling Road, it is safe for cyclists. There is no point in spending huge sums of money on creating an unnecessary cycle track, via either option 1 or 2b.
	1		
	1		I support option 2a
	1		
		1	
	1		Good option but could be dangerous in the autumn due to falling leaves.
1			20mph on Melling Road with speed bumps.
	1		after looking at the proposals re the above I feel that options 1 and 2 b would not be beneficial or solve any problem for the residents of Melling or Minting Place. I think the only logical solution would be option 2a. For cyclist to use the existing road (which they should be doing now) but to ensure that it is correctly signposted and highlighted for correct access and exits. I am of the strong opinion that Melling Road should become 20mph zone as a safety factor for children who use the footpath as a route to and from schools also the general public. I am sure option 2a would work out a lot cheaper than the other 2.
	1		We vote for option 2a because it is the least intrusive scheme, and feel that the council are unable to repair the existing pavements which are a disgrace. My husband cycle to work daily from Melling Road to Avery Dennison in Nelson Industrial estate. There are no problem cycling on Melling Road which is fairly quiet no through road on the estate. However the track between Melling Road and the station is in need of widening and repairs. Then after leaving Nelson Village there are no cycle tracks or indeed footpaths to the industrial estate. making this part of the journey extremely hazardous for either cyclists or persons on foot. Therefore we feel money would be better spent on and round the industrial estates and on pavement repairs. not everyone uses a car.
1			Option 1 - the most logical solution provided the cycle track is kept as far as possible from rear garden fencing. Option 2a - as a keen cyclist myself this route is already used by the majority. Melling Road is relatively quiet from other traffic. Remove track to road kerbs. Option 2b - We strongly object to this proposal as it alters the fabric of the estate and would encourage cyclist to use the path between 24 & 26 Melling Road etc. Install signage to stop cyclists using teh path between 24 & 26 Melling Road even if option 1 or option 2 are implemented. Cyclists are unsighted travelling north from property users. Accidents have already taken place.

1			<p>We have lived here since 1975. We have chosen option 1 because it is the safest and most logical route for the cycle track link. Between 24 and 26 Melling Road there is a very narrow and busy footpath. This footpath is very popular for school children, toddlers, disabled people and pensioners. Regrettably however it is also a route which is daily abused by cyclists linking between. This problem mainly occurs at the regular rush hour periods, but, cannot be ruled out at any time day or night. I walk my dog 3 times per day, consequently I observe such cycle abuse regularly. I have been verbally abused when remonstrating with the offenders and, in November 2014 my wife had her bag snatched by a cyclist, on this footpath, as she stepped off our drive. Many close accidents have been witnessed consequently, it is just a matter of time before some serious damage occurs or someone is killed. The kinetic energy created by a cyclist doing 10/15 mph, weighing 10/12 stones, plus cycle, is quite staggering within a collision with a child. Everyone then would, of course, express sincere regret (too late). We do therefore, consider option 1 as being the only safety first link route within your proposals. With my detailed experience of cyclist behaviour in this area, I do not think that they would utilise options 2/2b, these would create a longer journey. Option 1 to be used as being the most logical route and for prime health and safety purposes to take the cyclists away from pedestrians.</p>
	1		<p>This is the least expensive option and less likely to cause disruption but why is it necessary? There is already a footpath linking Minting to an existing cycle track therefore cyclists should use this thus eliminating the need for a new pathway and eliminating the expense! Why waste money on something which would be rarely used rendering it unnecessary? Totally opposed to all proposals!!</p>
1			<p>Option 1 - the only sensible route which we support. Extending cycle track and linking it up to an existing one is a safe and sensible proposal. Option 2a - this is a ridiculous idea as it directs cyclists on to a road with traffic which defeats the whole idea of planning cycle routes. Option 2b - the worst option as it affects tenants access to drives and garages and is a potential safety issue. The construction would be very costly and spoil the entrance to Whitelea Dale by taking away trees and grass, negotiating services and re-arranging crossings to houses. It also directs cyclists back on to the road in Minting Place which defeats the whole object of the proposal.</p>
1			<p>Safest and most cost effective route.</p>
	1		<p>Voted for 2a as it follows existing signs and street lights, has the least upheaval and inconvenience to everyone and assume the cheaper option. Installing a 20mph speed limit would eliminate any safety issues. 1) Potential increase in unsocial behaviour, as experienced prior to fence being erected and an open invitation to illegal motor cycles. 2) Area has serious drainage issues which result in regulate flooding as previously reported to Council. A sloped cycle track relying on soak away would create more flooding issues for adjacent properties. 3) As our living areas face onto this proposed track, and street lights will be erected, invasion of privacy and light pollution will be a problem. 4) Would like to think that expenditure could be best used on something everyone who lives on White Lea Dale would like and that is to have a safe route by car out of our estate!</p>
			<p>Referring to our Meeting on 15th February 2016 with Councillor Kathy Graham and Richard McKenzie at 'proposed' site of cycle way on greenland behind Melling Road which we strongly objected to. As residents stated there had been NO consultation or warning until a letter arrived on Friday 12th Feb. stating work to start on Tuesday 16th Feb. This was undemocratic and we voiced our upset at the impact this would cause on our daily lives. Until a railing was erected by the bridge a few years ago we had numerous incidents of unsocial and criminal behaviour as this gave direct access to the rear of our properties. All our living areas face on to this area where the track is to be constructed. One of the main properties in Minting Place is right next to the railing which will be removed for the track to be inserted. This area is extremely high and narrow where it meets with the bridge meaning this will necessitate a steep ramped area and will encourage off-road bikes (which we had problems with in the past) skateboards etc. Because this area narrows so much (and your plans show brickwork and soil embankments at either side) it means there will be insufficient space for both pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate, making it a hazardous area. There is also the issue of drainage (extremely important) as your plans show that the water will drain from footpath/cycle way following the fall of the direction of existing ground, which slopes towards our properties. This would allow water to drain towards our properties and not be absorbed into existing ground. There is already permanent flooding between properties 16 and 18 Melling and indeed the whole of this green is wet and boggy (which both Councillor Graham and Richard McKenzie witnessed. If these works go ahead and our properties became flooded, we would hold Northumberland County Council liable and not hesitate to take legal action for any damage caused. We do not consider these issues have been properly addressed when considering a cycle way in this vicinity.</p>
		1	<p>As this green area differs greatly in height, some of our residents will be particularly badly affected by both privacy and criminal issues such as theft from gardens/homes as people will be able to see directly into their gardens and homes. This is an estate road and NOT a through road and no particular danger to cyclists in the existing route, there is no actual BENEFIT to change this as the existing route is more than adequate. One of the options mentioned by Richard McKenzie on 15th Feb. at Meeting was that NO action be taken, to leave things as they are, but this has been omitted from your 'Options' in letter of 24th Feb. If this is now NOT an option, ours would have to be 2a as this is the cheapest. The BEST outcome for all parties involved would be to leave the route as it is as there is no point in building a structure for the sake of it. There would be no expenditure and no FUTURE expenditure for upkeep such as paying for lighting, and these monies could be used for more pressing issues i.e. a roundabout at the junction of Melling Road and Westmorland Way.</p>

				<p>No. I was disappointed that initially the proposed improvements were to be implemented with inadequate time to receive householder's views. I realise that following the prompt intervention of some of my neighbours a reasonable consultation has been put in place. As I have not seen any detailed plans my information has been obtained from discussions with neighbours. My objections to option 1 are; Light pollution: As an amateur astronomer I have enjoyed the night sky from my property for many years. If option 1 is approved will you consider shades to prevent direct light spill onto my property? Would you consider turning off lights in the early hours? Have you made any assessment of the impact on wildlife in the area? Drainage: I understand you are already aware of the drainage issues in the area. Any paving can only exacerbate the problem. Will you consider installing soak-aways as part of the project? My preference is for option 2a which agrees with the council's recent actions in erecting signage for pedestrians and cyclists directing them onto Melling Road and Minting Place.</p>
1				A dedicated track away from traffic is much better
			1	<p>2b is much the worst option! It would be extremely unsafe because motorists backing out of their garages would have to traverse a cycle track. Many cyclists do not have lights and at dusk or in darkness this would be very hazardous for both parties! Removing the grass verge when so many drives are concreted over throughout Cramlington is ridiculous, we need more grass not less due to flooding issues! I am a cyclist and at present cyclists coming from the railway station can cross the railway line via the footbridge to Beacon hill and cycle along existing cycle tracks bordering the green hills, turning left to cross the railway footbridge behind Minting Place to join the existing cycle track. where it is a footpath, add a cycle track alongside. Erect signs stating "Cyclists please dismount while crossing the railway bridge." Problem solved cheaply and good exercise for cyclists!</p>
	1			Or just leave things as they are we do not have a problem.
14	22	2	5	