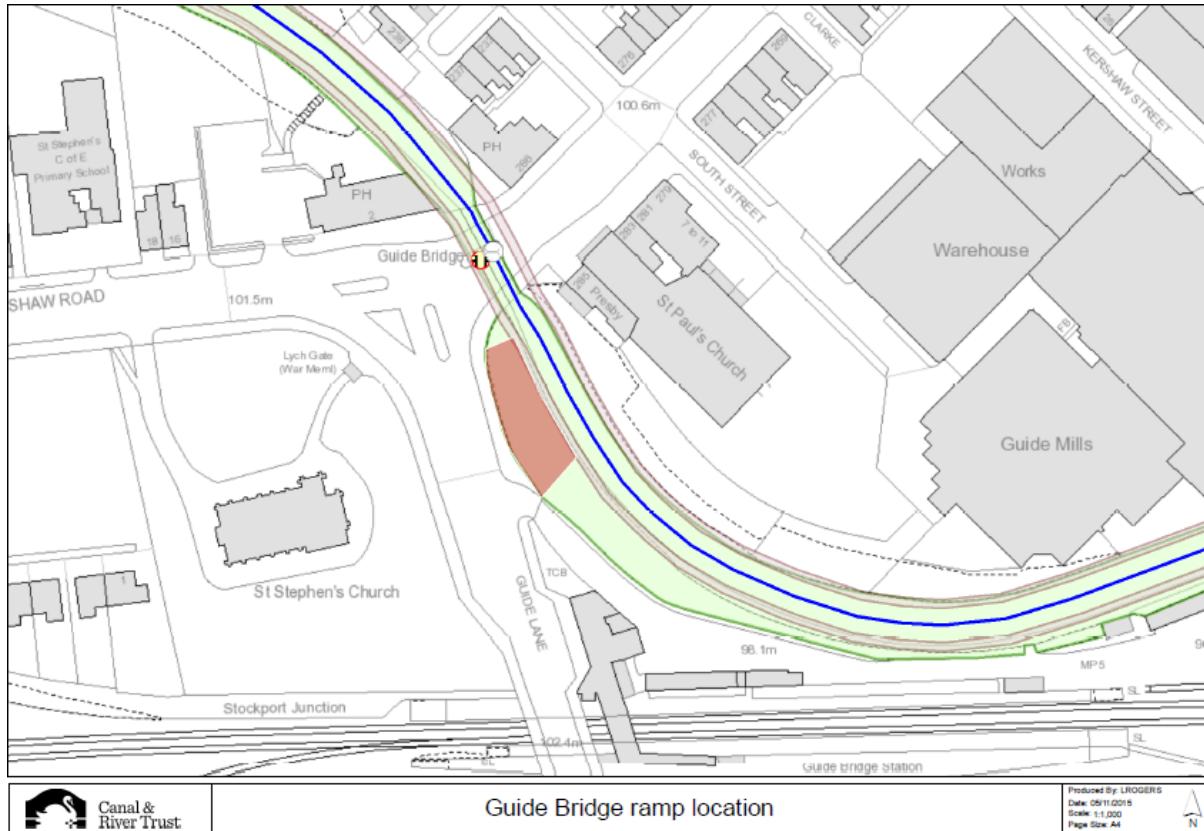




The Ashton Canal has undergone over £1 million of investment to improve access and towpath surfacing to create an open, safe and accessible route from Ashton under Lyne to Manchester City Centre. The Ashton Canal cycleway has been funded through the Department for Transport's Cycle City Ambition grant.

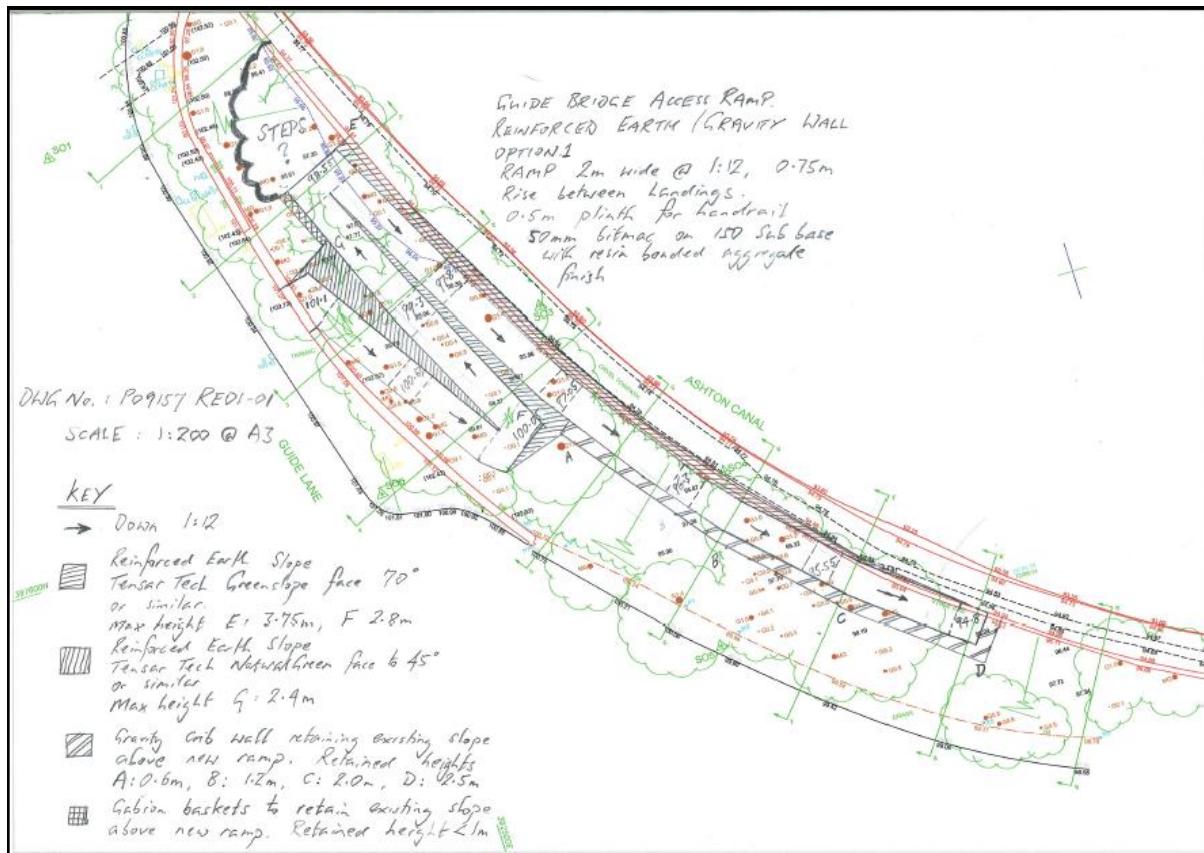
A new access ramp adjacent to Guide Bridge railway station formed part of the new cycleway plans. There is currently limited access at the station but it provides good links to the rail network and a number of communities around Guide Bridge.



Improving access at Guide Bridge is a challenge due to the height difference between the road and canal level at the location. A number of options have been explored and the current proposal is for a reinforced earth ramp with gravity retaining walls. The current cost estimate for the ramp is circa £570,000.

The key features of the ramp are:

- Design is in accordance with Canal & River Trust design standard for towpath access for an urban environment;
- 100 metre long and 2 metre wide ramp with handrail;
- Bitumen macadam surfacing and surface dressing;
- Eight intermediate landings 2m in length with two 180 degree bends; and
- Maximum gradient of 1:12 with a height between landings of 750 mm.



As a consequence of the height difference between the road and canal, and limited access around the station the current proposals do not fully adhere to Government guidance for inclusive mobility, which recommends that ramps of 1:12 gradient should be a maximum 2 metres long between landings, giving a rise of 167mm on each flight and that longer ramps should be limited to a gradient of 1:20 with a height between landings of 500mm.

Options to be considered

1. Construct ramp at the Guide Bridge location to the current design;
2. Construct ramp at the Guide Bridge location to fully adhere to current guidance for inclusive mobility. Additional budget would be required. It is anticipated that a ramp with a 1:20 gradient would be about 180 metres long and would require an additional £500,000; or
3. Site a ramp with a 1:20 gradient at an alternative location. Location scoping would have to be completed to determine whether the location provides the desired links to communities and the railway station. Costs for a ramp at an alternative location are unknown.

We would like to gather your feedback on the current ramp proposal and alternative options. Comments can be emailed to guidebridgeramp@canalrivertrust.org.uk

The consultation period will be open until **18th December 2015**.

Following the outcome of this consultation the Canal & River Trust will work with Transport for Greater Manchester to finalise proposals for the ramp access to the canal.