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**CYCLING IN DARLINGTON PEDESTRIAN HEART**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide background information and monitoring of cycling in Darlington town centre and in particular cycling in the pedestrianised area of the town centre.

**Summary**

2. In 2004 when proposals to pedestrianise an area of Darlington town centre were taken to Cabinet it was agreed to allow cycling for a six month trial period on completion of the physical works in the town centre.
3. The six month trial period began in June 2007 and ran until December 2007. During this period evidence was collected including cordon counts, accident statistics and an attitude survey.
4. Following the end of the trial period all of the information was compiled and presented to Cabinet in February 2008. It was decided at this meeting to extend the trial period until November 2008 and to carry out further monitoring of the situation and also produce a code of conduct for cyclists, carry out a Disability Impact Assessment and carry out some intergenerational work.
5. A report was presented to Cabinet committee in February 2009 regarding the extended trial period and approval was given to continue with cycling through the pedestrianised area indefinitely.
6. Initially the Police did not support cycling in the pedestrianised area but having allowed cycling on a trial basis the police offered their support as they felt that banning cycling would be unenforceable.

**Headline Figures**

7. STATS19 records show that the number of pedestrian casualties in the Town Centre has halved since the Pedestrian Heart was constructed. They also indicate that there has been only one reported injury accident between a pedestrian and a cyclist and that occurred on the road.
8. Reported incidents mainly refer to near misses or bad behaviour within the town centre.

9. An average of 1075 cyclists pass through the town centre each weekday and 32,845 pedestrians.
10. Access to the town centre and the pedestrianised area is important to cyclists to avoid using the ring road.

### Recommendation

11. It is recommended that :-

- (a) This report is noted as background information.

**Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth**

### Background Papers

No background papers.

Andy Casey : Extension 6701

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report supports the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities.
Health and Well Being	The report supports improving health and wellbeing, addressing road safety concerns and promoting active lifestyles.
Carbon Impact	The report promotes lowering carbon impact, through the provision and promotion of sustainable travel choices.
Diversity	The report supports the promotion of diversity.
Wards Affected	Central
Groups Affected	All current and potential users of the town centre.
Budget and Policy Framework	
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Supports the delivery of Greener Darlington and contributes to Healthier Darlington.
Efficiency	

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

12. Cycling is allowed on all roads within the town centre and is also allowed within the pedestrianised areas marked in yellow in the map below. Vehicles can also access this pedestrianised area before 10.00am and after 5.00pm to allow for deliveries. Post House Wynd is also accessible to motor vehicles before 10.00am and after 5.00pm but is a one way street. Post House Wynd has always been shown as no cycling on all literature as it is felt that is too narrow and too busy for cyclists and pedestrians to safely mix, however legally cyclists could use this street at the same time as vehicles.
13. The pedestrianised area is sometimes known as the Pedestrian Heart. This includes Blackwellgate, Skinnergate, West Row, High Row, Bondgate and parts of Northgate. The town centre referred to is the area within the inner ring road.



14. On 16 November 2004 a report was considered by Cabinet regarding Darlington town centre 'Pedestrian Heart'. In a section on 'Comments referred to Darlington Borough Council for consideration', Paragraph 34 (c) summarises the issue of

cycling in the town centre and refers to a more detailed Annex (9), entitled 'Cycling in the Vehicle Restricted Areas'. It was agreed to trial cycling through the pedestrianised areas of the town centre for a six month trial period.

15. The reasons that cycling through the town centre at all times was proposed were as follows:

(a) Conforming to national guidance:

- (i) Current national guidance from the Department for Transport – Local Transport Note 2/04 section 8.2.2 states that:  
“For any new pedestrianisation scheme, there should be a presumption that cycling will be allowed unless an assessment of the overall risks dictates otherwise. In conducting this assessment, the risk to cyclists using alternative on-road routes should be taken into account. This is particularly important if the alternative routes are not safe or direct and cannot be made so (LTN 1/87, Getting the Right Balance - Guidance on Vehicle Restriction in Pedestrian Zones). It is worthwhile conducting similar assessments on existing pedestrianised areas from which cyclists are currently excluded”.
- (ii) The design of the scheme was approved by the Department for Transport via the authorisation of non-standard signs.

(b) Connecting radial routes to provide a continuous safe cycle route network:

- (i) The Council must balance the potential risk to pedestrians from cyclists with its sustainable transport objectives to encourage cycling and with the risk posed to cyclists by forcing them to use other routes, for example the Inner Ring Road.
- (ii) Evidence from towns that allowed cycling in pedestrianised areas concluded that:  
‘the possible risks to pedestrians need to be weighed against those faced by cyclists if they are forced onto unsuitable routes, as well as the importance of the route to cyclists’.
- (iii) The routes through the town centre provide continuity for cross-town cycle journeys utilising the cycle network.

(c) Providing access to facilities in the town centre, including employment, retail and leisure

- (i) Cyclists not only pass through the town centre and pedestrianised area to reach other parts of the town but they also access shops and facilities in the town centre.
- (ii) Research has shown that although cyclists may spend less than car-borne shoppers per trip, their total expenditure is on average greater because they tend to visit the shops more often.

16. Anyone cycling in an anti-social way is likely to cause problems in the town centre even if cycling were not allowed. This would penalise legitimate use, as a result of the actions of a few.
17. It is not a proposal to allow cyclists on conventional pavements. Cyclists would be cycling within very wide shared use areas that have been created for use by vehicles for part of the day (i.e. from 5.00pm until 10.00am). Cycling on pavements adjacent to conventional carriageways would still be an offence enforceable by the Police.
18. It was minuted at the meeting that:
  - (a) 'the issue of cycling within the town centre would be reviewed after six months of the scheme being implemented.
19. Following the six-month trial of allowing cycling through the pedestrianised area from June 2007 to December 2007 a report was presented to Cabinet in February 2008. This comprehensively reviewed all the issues involved in cycling through the town centre and considered a range of options. Following the meeting it was resolved that:
  - (a) The trial period for cycling within the town centre, be extended to November 2008.
  - (b) A Disability Impact Assessment on cycling in the town centre be carried out.
  - (c) An educational programme on responsible cycling be carried out.
  - (d) Inter-generational work with older people be carried out on concerns about cycling.
20. A further report was presented to cabinet in February 2009 and at this time it was decided to allow cycling in the pedestrianised area permanently. Follow up reports were taken to Economy and Environment Scrutiny committee reporting the most recent statistics. These reports did not show any reported incidents which caused any injury whilst they also showed that numbers of cyclists entering the town centre were increasing.
21. Since the initial decision was made in 2004 to allow cycling through Darlington town centre there have been some significant developments both in national policy and in local policy. Nationally, the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets was published in 2007 and is a guidance document relating to street and public space design. Section 6.4.2 states that:
  - (a) "Cycle access should always be considered on links between street networks which are not available to motor traffic. If an existing street is closed off, it should generally remain open to pedestrians and cyclists".

## **Monitoring**

### **STATS 19 Accident Data**

22. STATS 19 accident data is provided by Durham Police and is a record of all road traffic collisions within the Borough that have been reported to the Police.

23. The impact of permitting cycling in the town centre should be considered in the context the wider benefits of the Pedestrian Heart scheme in terms of reduced pedestrian casualties. The STATS19 data indicates that the number of pedestrian casualties arising from road traffic accidents has more than halved since the introduction of the Pedestrian Heart scheme, with 35 casualties occurring in the town centre between the full calendar years 2009 to 2013 compared to 75 casualties between 2000 and 2004. These 35 casualties were as a result of 31 individual accidents.
24. A more detailed analysis of accidents that have occurred since 1 January 2009 up until October 2014 involving pedestrians and/or cyclists has taken place. Accidents within the inner ring road have been analysed. This includes areas that are classed as on-road as well as the pedestrianised areas where cyclists are allowed and any footpaths outside of this area.

<b>Pedestrian accident with:</b>	<b>Number of accidents (total)</b>
Car	17
Bus	8
Taxi	5
Police Vehicle	0
Goods Vehicle	1
Cycle	1*
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Cyclist accident with:</b>	<b>Number of accidents (total)</b>
Car	4
Bus	0
Taxi	0
Police Vehicle	0
Goods Vehicle	0
Cycle	0
Pedestrian	1*
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

\*same incident

25. The one incident between a cyclist and pedestrian is described as follows:
- (a) 'V1 (cyclist) travelling N on Northgate has collided with a pedestrian that has stepped into carriageway. V1 has then left scene'. The pedestrian was an 11 year old female and suffered slight injury. This part of Northgate is a one way road for buses and cycles to access the town centre, with a contraflow cycle lane.

### **Reported Incidents**

26. Since the beginning of the first trial of cycling in the pedestrianised area a phone number and email address has been made available for members of the public to report incidents to the Council. Below is a table of the incidents that have been reported:

<b>Date of incident</b>	<b>Nature of incident</b>
21 February 2009 (Email)	Both incidents reported in the email regarded cyclists travelling on pavements and then cycling in the wrong direction on one way sections of road (Tubwell Row and Crown Street). On both reported occasions there was no contact between cyclists and a pedestrian.
5 June 2009 (Phone call)	The incident had occurred in Northgate Subway when a cyclist, carrying a stick, almost hit someone. Nobody was hurt in the incident and the caller did not leave contact details or a time and date for the incident.
22 July 2009 (Email)	A report from a member of the public regarding youths sitting on bikes blocking the pavement on Tubwell Row near the Nags Head pub.
22 July 2009 (Email)	The email contained a number of issues about cycling. One of the comments was regarding young people doing 'wheelies' on High Row, no specific times or dates were mentioned.
6 September 2009 (Phone call)	The incident occurred on Blackwellgate outside Boyes. It was reported that a large group of cyclists almost knocked a lady and her young daughter over. After further investigation it is believed that the group of cyclists had just finished riding in the Hell of the North cycle ride. At future Council run cycle events it will be highlighted to riders that they must be considerate to other pedestrians and road users.
18 November 2009 (Letter)	The incident took place near to Pease's Monument and involved two young cyclists and an elderly couple. The pedestrians reported that the cyclists were so close that a pedal touched one of them on their trouser leg.
27 January 2010	A cyclist reported that two young cyclists overtook him at close proximity on Tubwell Row and then appeared to nearly collide with two pedestrians before performing a dangerous overtaking manoeuvre on a car.
11 April 2011	Cyclist travelling from Bondgate into Joseph Pease Place. Gentleman turned away from the stall he was stood at and was almost in a collision with the cyclist. No contact was made.

## **Cordon Count**

27. The cycle and pedestrian cordon count takes place quarterly and covers 12 manual count sites at key entrance points to the town centre. The data has been collected since June 2004 and has been collected quarterly since April 2006. In summary the survey results show:

- (a) An average of 1,075 cyclists passed through Darlington town centre each week day in 2014. This is a 9.4% increase on 2013 when the week day average was just 983 cyclists per day.
- (b) The number of people cycling through Darlington town centre is 32.9% higher in 2014 than in 2007 when we began collecting the cordon count data and just 809 people a day cycled through the town (figure 1).

- (c) Summer 2014 saw the highest ever levels of cycling through the town with over 1,600 people every week day. This was a 24.2% increase on the previous year.
- (d) The number of pedestrians walking into Darlington Town Centre is 11.3% higher in 2014 than the previous year (figure 2). An average of 32,845 pedestrians passed through the town each day in 2014 compared to 29,510 in 2013. These figures are higher than the baseline year (2007) when 32,170 pedestrians passed through the town centre, although it is still lower than the 2009 peak when figures reach 34,015 pedestrians per week day.
- (e) The 2014 winter pedestrian count recorded the highest number of pedestrians passing through the town centre since the start of data collection in 2007.

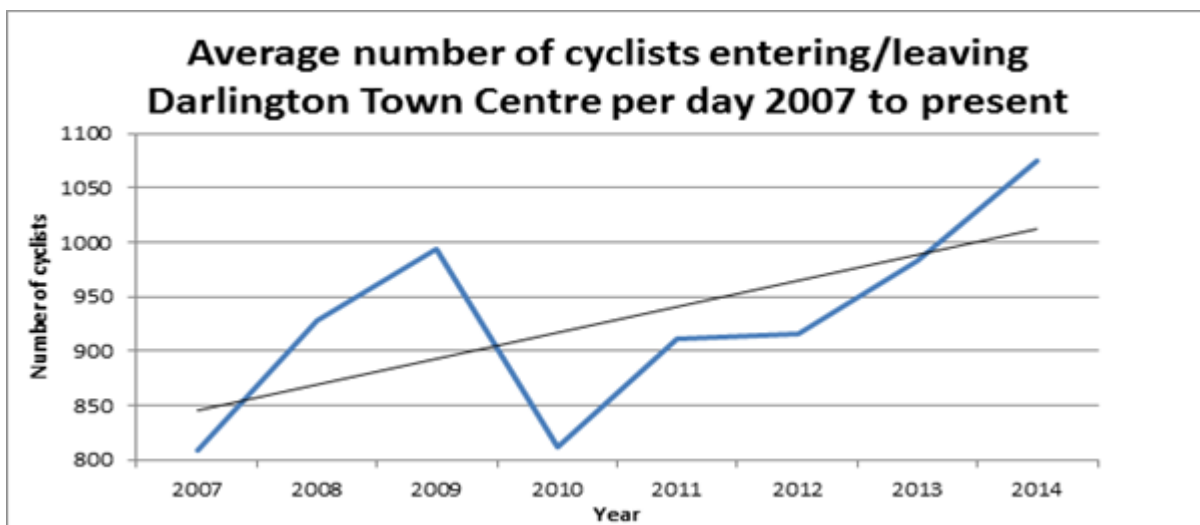


Figure 1



Figure 2



28. From analysis of both the January (figure 3) and July 2014 (figure 4) cordon counts it is clear that there are peak periods for cyclists to be entering the town centre. These are before 9.00am, between 12.00pm and 2.00pm and between 4.00pm and 6.00pm.

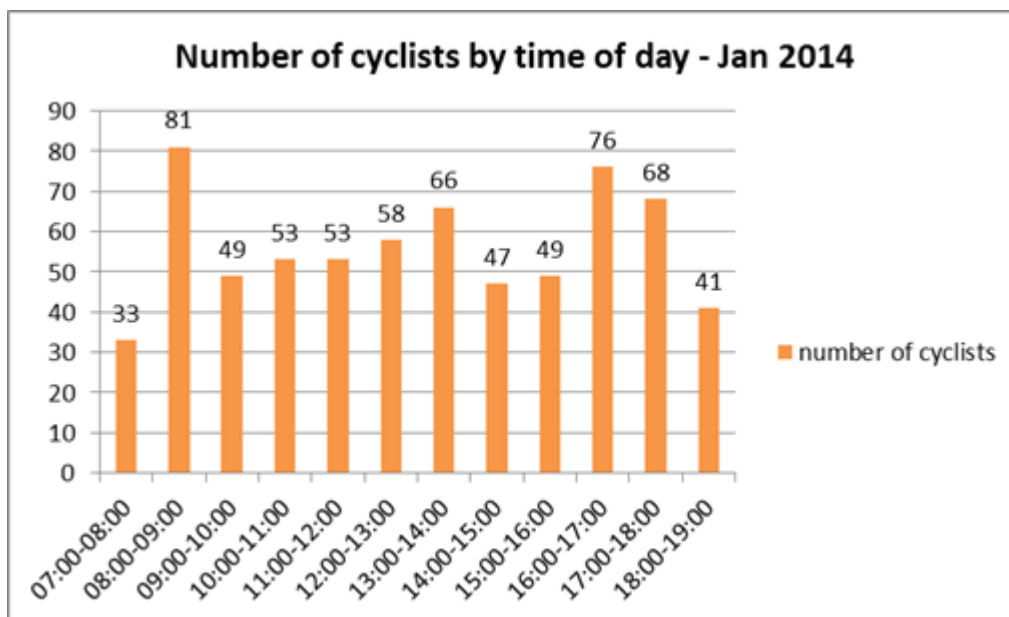


Figure 3

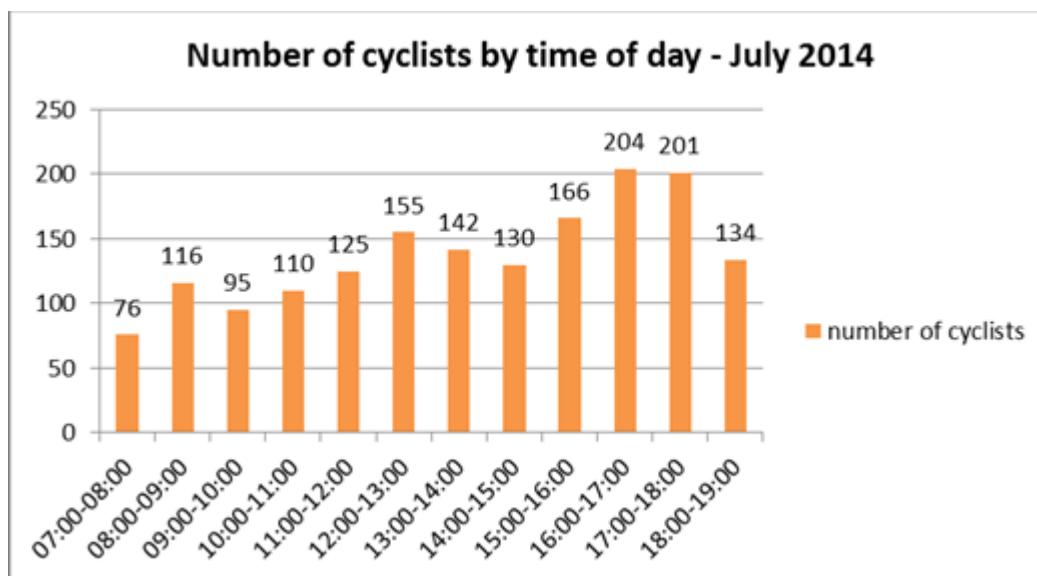


Figure 4.

### Attitudes to Cycling Through the Town Centre

29. A survey was carried out to understand and gather the views of the general public on cycling in the town centre. The interviewers were aware of the need to get the views from a wide cross section of people and so questioned pedestrians and cyclists of different age groups and gender on various days and times. Interviewing was carried out over a two week period (6-18 October 2008 with an extra session on 25 October 2008) by NWA, a specialist market research company. The survey

was a repeat of a survey that was carried out in November 2007. Every effort was made to replicate the times and days and the cross section of interviewees that were used in the previous survey. The 2008 survey sample was slightly larger (393 in 2007 and 433 in 2008) and more people aged 60 plus were involved (90 in 2007 and 119 in 2008).

30. The majority (53.6% or 232 people) of respondents were aware that cyclists are allowed to cycle in the town centre with 48.3% or 209 people being aware this is allowed at any time. This is an increase on the results of 2007 when only 39.4% or 155 people claimed to be aware and only 35.6% or 140 people were aware that cyclists were allowed to cycle in the town centre at any time.
31. There was also an increase in the percentage of respondents who had seen someone cycling in the town centre from 61.8% or 243 people in 2007 to 77.8% or 337 people in 2008.
32. Amongst the respondents who had seen someone cycling in the town centre, 30.0% (101 people) (26.7% (165 people) 'yes' in 2007) said that they had experienced problems because of people being allowed to cycle there.
33. Nearly two thirds of all respondents, (62.1% / 269 people), were in favour of cycling in the town centre continuing as it is now. This is a statistically significant increase on the response in 2007 when 53.9% or 212 people were in favour of it continuing. There was a consequent reduction in the percentage of respondents who wanted change from current cycling permissions from 44.8% or 176 people in 2007 to 36.3% or 157 people in 2008.

## **Conclusion**

34. The Pedestrian Heart has helped to more than half the number of pedestrian casualties in the town centre comparing a similar time period before and after construction. The pedestrianised area has had very few reported collisions and none that involved a cycle striking a pedestrian. The one reported accident involving a collision between a cyclist and a pedestrian resulted from the pedestrian stepping out into the carriageway and into the path of the cyclist.
35. The reported accident data does not include collisions that do not result in injury or "near misses". We have had reports of eight such incidents with the last one being reported in 2011. These may be subject to under reporting.
36. All five of the cyclist casualties that occurred between 2009 and 2014 involved a cyclist travelling along the carriageway with one resulting in serious injury.
37. Further actions may be required by the Council and others to reduce the occurrence of none injury collisions and near misses. These would be considered through the normal road safety themes of Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Engagement.