

Darlington Pedestrian Heart

Consultation Analysis

Revision C

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Darlington Pedestrian Heart Consultation Analysis

This report summarizes the responses from the public exhibition questionnaires, key interest groups, statutory consultees, officers and Councilors of Darlington Borough Council and letters received from the general public. The analysis is presented in a table format providing information on who has made a comment, how many people made a comment and the action/response required in terms of progressing the project forward in light of the comments. The actions required are categorized into four statements as follows:

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment - will explore at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Summary

Points that have arisen, and have already been dealt with and incorporated into the scheme are as follows [Action 1]:

- Concerns by DAD group regarding insufficient blue badge Parking on Crown Street and access to Library;- Additional provision has been made for dedicated Blue Badge parking on Crown Street (south) and East Street to add to the existing proposals for Blue Badge parking on the Crown Street Car Park, Priestgate (east) and Quebec Street.
- Concerns by DAD group of disabled parking on Horsemarket;- Resurfacing of access zones on Horsemarket with a more suitable material that ties together the Market Place and the proposed Pedestrian Heart and provides a better surface for disabled parking is proposed.
- Concerns by DAD that Crown Street will become dangerous to cross due to bus movements;- Build outs and formal crossing points proposed along Crown Street.
- Concerns by DAD group over removal of the top set of steps on High Row and therefore pedestrians and vehicles sharing the high row spaces along High Row;- the introduction of a slight kerb to denote a 'pedestrian only area' outside the core hours, when service vehicles use High Row
- Resolution of Tubwell Row. Proposals to retain The Well and rationalize the existing levels.
- Community Services have concerns that there are not enough planting areas to fulfill Britain in Bloom objectives;- Additional planters to be incorporated within the steps in front of the seating areas on High Row.
- Concerns over extension to core hours- Relatively few retail outlets unhappy with extended times, many of these are located on Skinnergate or the Wynds;- After careful consideration the proposals for Skinnergate have been amended to retain the existing service access regime but change the times of restriction to coincide with core hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Points that have arisen that will be explored at the detailed design stage are as follows [Action 2]:

- Detail design of street furniture such as seating, railings to reflect of heritage of town.
- More seating needs to be provided.
- Concerns over choice of materials, needs to be considered in more detail.
- Careful balance between removing clutter and adding a layer of detail to enrich the town.
- Water Feature- concerns over vandalism, maintenance, and safety.
- Organization of the market and how it is accessed in terms of servicing, integration of the outdoor market with the indoor market requirements.
- Concerns that the character and heritage of Darlington is not reflected, ballustrading and railings area strong historic precedent and should be incorporated into the scheme.
- The Council's archaeologist has pointed out that there may be archaeological deposits beneath Pedestrian Heart site which will need a watching brief by archaeological contractor when below ground deposits are likely to be disturbed.
- Need to consider skateboarders and blades within design.

The following points have arisen that are not considered to be valid within the context of the scheme [Action 3]:

- Buses routed around Priestgate and Crown Street – there will be increased noise and pollution and the streets are too narrow to accommodate buses.
- Concerns over lack of parking in the town centre and forthcoming charges.

The following points have arisen that have not been resolved at this stage and / or are for consideration by DBC [Action 4]:

- DAD group object to scheme regarding lack of disabled parking provision on High Row.
- Opposition, and support for a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre.
- Location of market stalls.
- Fundamental principle of removing ballustrading and railings to create the proposed high quality space.
- Management agreement and maintenance of scheme after completion needs considering and allocation of revenue funding to ensure the high quality scheme is maintained.
- Provision of toilets in the Town Centre.

Choice of Materials

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Paving not safe for visually impaired/elderly disabled	10	Disagree
Questionnaire	Detrimental to character of town/destroy fabric of town/Darlington already attractive	8	2
Questionnaire	Need to make sure that paving is easy to walk on- not like Post House Wynd / Market place	3	2
English Heritage	<p>The change in levels is clear once on site and I can understand the desire to rationalise the levels. The proposed improvements are welcomed by English Heritage - it is clear that works desperately need carrying out in places in order to improve the image of Darlington as an important historic town. However, we do have some concerns over the proposed use of granite across all pedestrian areas. Granite setts would work well for the vehicular areas as granite was traditionally used for the more robust areas of the street. However, the tradition in Darlington was for stone slabs with granite steps and kerbs. Was this considered? We feel that the uniform use of granite setts may not provide a locally distinctive scheme for Darlington.</p> <p>On the whole the plans appear to be well detailed, and the aspiration is for a high quality scheme. We would welcome the opportunity to be involved in the design detail stage to discuss materials.</p>		2
CABE	<p>Welcome the intention to improve the quality of the public realm in the heart of Darlington and make this a better place for pedestrians. We hope that clutter is kept to a minimum throughout these proposals.</p> <p>The success of the final project will depend on the quality and durability of the materials used and the subsequent management and maintenance regime. We hope these factors have been given adequate consideration and influenced the design choices. The long-term success of the project will depend on the allocation of sufficient funds for the project and the client commitment to maintaining the area.</p>		2

<p>One North East</p>	<p>High Row will become a large open space – vertical elements (e.g. lamp columns and trees) and floorscape treatment (colours, textures etc.) will be important in breaking up the expanse. Careful consideration needs to be given into how the area will be policed – particularly at night. Design needs to allow for access of emergency vehicles at all times.</p> <p>The needs of disabled/wheelchair users (access/raised platforms etc.) to be considered at all times.</p> <p>A holistic approach needs to be taken when considering the surrounding environment (e.g. shop fronts etc.) to make the scheme ‘flow’ from the shops into the public areas (and vice versa).</p> <p>Health and Safety legislation (including CDM Regs) needs to be borne in mind during design (i.e. water features, lighting, ramps ‘cut aways’ etc.).</p> <p>It is assumed that all areas are currently adopted and future maintenance will be carried out by DBC (or their agents).</p> <p>Will a maintenance schedule/agreement be developed by Gillespies/DBC ? This may be important particularly with respect to any ‘features’ but also routine maintenance such as litter collection, landscape maintenance, weeding etc. so that the capital investment is preserved.</p> <p>It may be important to retain enough spare material(s) for future maintenance/‘patching up’.</p> <p>There is a current trend to source materials from cheaper economies (e.g. China), but will ‘spares’ be available if required for future maintenance ? If extra materials are required, will they be able to be sourced ? This may be more down to choice by the successful Contractor (cost savings) but we need to decide whether consideration needs to be given in the design/specification to control this.</p> <p>Life cycle costs of materials/equipment (e.g. lighting, water features) need to be considered and optimum solutions used (i.e. cheaper materials may end up costing more in maintenance/servicing in the long run).</p> <p>We need to promote the use of local and sustainable (e.g. recycled, water conservation etc.) materials/equipment where appropriate/possible.</p> <p>The proposal to draw the weekly market into High Row as a means of securing its future is welcomed and should highlighted in the funding application. The added value of a high quality treatment i.e. in terms of usage and image would also need to be set out.</p> <p>Some businesses (e.g. café’s, restaurants, pubs etc.) may be encouraged to extend into pedestrian areas, but once the initial businesses have been given approval, what will the policy be for any new businesses wanting to extend ?</p> <p>Is the use of Corten Steel appropriate for a public realm environment ? (probably down to personal choice/taste).</p> <p>Has ‘way-finding’ signage been considered ?</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to the attractiveness of the area for skateboarders – similar areas of investment have become damaged within a relatively short space of time after completion, due to the ‘right’ conditions being accidentally created.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>
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Steps and Ramps

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	More pedestrian ramps needed in areas such as High Row	10	3
Questionnaire	Concerns over railings – should be more substantial to define step feature Retain existing railings	5	2 2 / 4
Letter(s)	Re use steps and street furniture within the scheme		2

Water Feature

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Will be vandalized / unsafe / waste of money	7	2
Police ALO	Issues: kids, litter, visually sighted- proposal of light wield mesh or railing system		2
Letter(s)	Water Features will not be maintained		2

Street Furniture and Features

[1] valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme; [2] good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Unattractive planters	7	2
Questionnaire	Retention of existing features is important- Pease Monument, Retention of steps and balustrading on High Row/ incorporate Houndgate Fountain	8	1 4
Questionnaire	Incorporate more greenery and trees / retain existing	4	2
Questionnaire	More seating in town centre	3	2
Questionnaire	More public toilets / existing toilets inadequate	6	4
Questionnaire	Bus stops prone to vandalism / waste of money	2	2
Questionnaire	Red Planters not attractive / inappropriate colour		2
Police ALO	CCTV and cameras- ensure trees on High Row do not block path of CCTV monitoring		2
	Lighting –Use of metal halide offers more natural colour – people feel safer		2
	Litter Bins, seating and bus shelters- graffiti resistant, vandal proof, fire retardant. Litter bins bomb proof		2
	Provision of public toilets would reduce urinating in the streets		4
DBC's Archaeologist (Durham County Archaeologist)	Possible archaeological deposits beneath Pedestrian Heart site, will need a watching brief by archaeological contractor when below ground deposits are likely to be disturbed		2
Britain in Bloom	Concern over there not been enough planting areas to win the Britain in Bloom		1
Letter	Life Pulse, glowing bus stops and chronological lighting are all a waste of time- change for change sake		2
Chief Executive, Darlington Partnership	Design out skateboarders and bladders Consult with youngsters on what their needs are		2 2
Civic Trust (inc. letters)	Balustrading is an important part of Darlington's character and heritage Historic elements should be incorporated into the scheme Fear that the steps will lead to a sea of bollards, railings and tactile paving Scheme does not reflect the sense of place, Contemporary design is not appropriate for Darlington	17	2 1 2 2
Letter(s)	Removal of the balustrading makes the scheme look bland and is part of the town's history. Look to re-use historic elements within new scheme. Money should be spent to relocate these if they can't be incorporated into the scheme. Leave the setting as is and restore / improve		2 / 4 2 / 4

Disabled Access

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Disabled people / pushchairs will be excluded from shops	12	Disagree
Questionnaire	Ensure good enforcement for disable parking/ensure availability Increase provision in areas such as High Row	9	1 3
DAD	Lack of disabled parking on Crown Street next to Library- will not be able to park immediately next to entrance where lift is Volume of traffic on Crown Street makes crossing of road to Library difficult Lack of Blue Badge parking on High Row Blue Badge parking in general major issue High Row – service vehicles parking on pedestrian area causing problems for visually impaired. Mix of service vehicles and pedestrians outside of core hours (and dragging on after 10am) will cause problems Cycling is dangerous & should be restricted / not allowed in the town centre Issues crossing the road on Crown Street due the bus volumes Access from cars would be difficult on Horsemarket (nr shops as opposed to indoor market)		2 / 3 2 4 4 2 4 2 2
Letter(s)	Removal of Blue badge parking on Crown Street adjacent to Library and Post office; Blue badge parking on High Row, Blackwellgate and Skinnergate is vital for people with walking difficulties. Suggestion- to provide small motorized buggies that can do a circuit around the town to provide access for these groups of people		2 4

Bus Loop

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Buses too far away from shops/ will have to carry shopping further. Bus route change will cause problems for public and businesses	31	Disagree
Questionnaire	Would like a bus station/improvements to existing bus station	20	3
Questionnaire	Number of roads to narrow for buses/deliveries	8	3
Questionnaire	Work needed on other roads/improvements e.g. zebra crossings etc	6	2
Questionnaire	Problem with noise and fumes from buses	7	3
Questionnaire	Problem with buses on Priestgate (fumes and noise)	4	3
Questionnaire	Prebend Row should be vehicle free	2	3
Questionnaire	Crown Street to narrow for buses/will increase congestion	4	3
Letter (Durham Constabulary)	Concerns over operation of bus gate at Stonebridge roundabout. May cause traffic queues along St Cuthbert's Way.		2 / 4
Letter(s)	Bus routing will lead to people having to walk up steep hill from Crown Street to High Row which is not satisfactory Crown Street, especially by library will be noisy and busy – difficult to cross the road and will effect the library building itself		Disagree 2
Letter(s)	Bus loop is not necessary, there should be a bus free solution. Buses could pick up and drop off behind Queens St Centre	1	3

Car parking

[1] Valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] Good comment will look into it at the detail design stage; [3] Comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Would like more car parking/ parking inadequate or too far away. Park and ride Scheme	20	3
Questionnaire	Provide cheaper parking/ do not start charging for car parks	2	4
Letter (Hodgson's and Mortimer)	Unhappy with proposals for charging on Duke Street- will result in more people shopping elsewhere where it is free parking Unhappy with large scale pedestrianisation		4
Letter(s)	More car parking required		3
Letter	Full support for scheme- getting people out of their cars is a good thing	1	2

Cycling

[1] valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] good comment will look into it during the detail design stage; [3] comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Include cycle and motorcycle parking with locking Improve cycle routes	11	2 2
Questionnaire	Stop people cycling on paths and steps	5	2 / 4
DAD	Cyclist riding in pedestrian zones i.e. on pavement section is major concern		2 / 4
Councillor Charles Johnson	Mixed cycling and pedestrians goes against pedestrianisation concept.		2 / 4
Letter (Durham Constabulary)	Concern over mixed pedestrian and cycle use in town centre.		2 / 4
Letter(s)	Restricting cyclists from using the town centre will defeat the whole object of creating more sustainable transport modes	11	4
Letter(s)	Support proposals for cycling access into the pedestrian space- use of cycling should be encouraged. Statistics and experience elsewhere show that pedestrians and cyclist can mix safely. Good for sustainable transport	18	4

Servicing and Access

[1] valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] good comment will look into it during the detail design stage; [3] comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Questionnaire	Concerns over access for buses, emergency vehicles and taxi	6	2
Questionnaire	Concerns over inadequate transport system effecting deliveries/ threat to viability of businesses	3	2
Friends Meeting House	Concern regarding new servicing hours on Skinnergate - inconvenient for members who are used to arriving for 10.30. They need access on Sundays and other days when meeting house is been used		4
Catkins Coffee Shop	Unhappy with changes to servicing hours		4
McMahon's (Prebend Row)	Need a service bay opposite their shop to load and unload heavy furniture		2
Eastbourne Electrical (Skinnergate)	Unhappy with pedestrianisation/change in service hours		4
Letter	New servicing hours will restrict disable parking further		4
Letter – (the Health Warehouse)	Parking at the top of Skinnergate blocks Post House Wynd, problems for service access and emergency services- needs a way of enforcing no parking here. Increasing pedestrian hours to 10-5pm will create problems for servicing, and for disabled/elderly picking up their shopping up at the end of the day.		4 2
Letter	Removing traffic from town centre will further congest the main arterial routes into town. Residents are shopping elsewhere because there is better transport infrastructure, and more parking	1	4

Market stall and Market Place

[1] valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] good comment will look into it during the detail design stage; [3] comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Seymour's	Redundancy of the existing market place		2
	Concerns / confusion of what the market place will be used for in the future		2
	Loading bays and cycle racks outside of their front door- screening their shop from shoppers		2

Presentation of Scheme

[1] valuable comment- will incorporate into the overall scheme design; [2] good comment will look into it during the detail design stage; [3] comment noted but not valid; [4] Comments to be referred to DBC for decision

Reference	Comments	No. of comments	Action
Letter	Need a model and / or better display drawings of the scheme		2 / 4
Letter	Lack of large scale drawings at Town Centre Forum to show details of the change in levels Discrepancy between plan and artists impression re the steps		2 Disagree