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|  | Darlington Association on Disability Established since 1986 |
| | 20-22 Horsemarket Darlington DL1 5PT |
| Registered Charity No. 518265 | |

Sue Dobson
Principal Transport Officer
Units 8-11, The Beehive
Lingfield Point
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DL1 1YN



6 December 2007

Dear Sue,

In response to your letter, dated 28 November 2007, this letter switches between talking about cycling in the Town Centre and the Pedestrian Heart. It is our understanding a trail period was to be monitored for cycling within the Pedestrian Heart not the Town Centre. However, cycling in the town centre has now become a major problem as the number of cyclists on the pavements is rapidly increasing. This issue needs to be addressed separately but can't be divorced from this review of cycling within the Pedestrian Heart.

Regarding the trail period of cycling in the Pedestrian Heart, Darlington Association on Disability believes the options within your letter do not carry equal weight as Darlington Borough Council has a vested, financial interest as a result of the funding from Cycling England with this existing agreement that radial routes will meet in the Pedestrian Heart, as stated on the Cycling England website (copy enclosed).

Regarding the monitoring of the trail period of cycling in the Pedestrian Heart, Darlington Association on Disability was assured that we would be involved in how the monitoring would be planned and when it would start and we have not been involved in either and we do not recognise our consultation through this letter as being involved.

The action plan sent to me clearly shows that a leaflet would be produced in August 2007 giving information on where cycling would be permitted within the Pedestrian Heart and information on how to make contact with the council if an incident occurred. We are not aware of any such leaflet being produced

and therefore do not see how effective monitoring can be carried out. If any leaflet was produced then it would have been offered in alternative formats and surely our members would have been known about it. Also wrote in the Action Plan there said there would be results of the views of the Citizens Panel by October 2007. A Darlington Association on Disability member on the Citizens Panel knows of no such survey.

Our Visually Impaired members tell us that as well as actual danger there is a natural perception of danger which is preventing or limiting their access to the Pedestrian Heart. With this in mind and the views of our other members with numerous impairments, Darlington Association on Disability is totally against allowing cyclists within the Pedestrian Heart. We recognise and agree with the view of the cycling campaign group that the roads should be made safer for cyclists but do not agree the danger should be transferred to vulnerable pedestrians.

I would also like to draw Darlington Borough Council's attention to its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and before any decision is made regarding cycling then a disability impact assessment would need to be carried out regardless of the monitoring process.

To ensure that there is transparency in the decision making process which comes from the monitoring, Darlington Association on Disability would expect the public to see all the evidence coming from the monitoring and any sources of funding that could be deemed to influence the decision. Also, apart from the monitoring process we would like to see what evidence you have used to support cycling within the Pedestrian Heart as the majority of towns who have a pedestrianisation do not allow cycling and police it accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Gordon Pybus
Chair, Darlington Association on Disability

