

---

**CYCLING THROUGH THE TOWN CENTRE**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide monitoring results from the extended trial period of cycling through the town centre (Pedestrian Heart) and report on the additional work carried out on the instructions of Cabinet so that future options for cycling through the Town Centre can be considered.

**Summary**

2. Cycling has continued to be allowed in the vehicle restricted areas of the Pedestrian Heart, enabling cyclists to either travel through the town centre on their journey to a destination outside of the town centre, or to the town centre, parking their bikes and accessing shops and services as required.
3. Monitoring has continued and this has shown that cycling levels have continued to increase with an additional 300 cycle counts in July 2008 compared to the same 12 hour period in 2007, although these are still small numbers compared to the number of pedestrians (1,331 cyclists compared over 33,000 pedestrians in the July count). There were no personal injury accidents between cyclists and pedestrians in the town centre but four personal injury accidents between cyclists and other vehicles on the Inner Ring Road. The level of support for allowing cycling to continue has increased from 53.9% (212 respondents) to 62.1% (269 respondents) in a survey of people in the town centre.
4. Guidance published by the Department for Transport entitled 'Manual for Streets' proposes that when streets are closed off to general traffic they should remain open for pedestrians and cyclists. Other towns are planning or are implementing similar schemes including Cardiff and Ashford in Kent.
5. The proposals to allow cycling has polarised opinion but there has been well-evidenced, rational debate, particularly amongst those who travel by cycle and disabled people. This debate has been facilitated by a structured approach to community engagement including a Talking Together event, on-line forum, Type 2 Disability Impact Assessment and an intergenerational project managed by Groundwork and involving GOLD, Age Concern, Young Caretakers Project and Darlington Youth Services.

6. For those that cycle, the alternative is to cycle around the Inner Ring Road, which is less safe (perception and in reality) or to walk with their bikes (which dissuades people from cycling as their journey is no longer continuous, quick and convenient).
7. For disabled people, people riding cycles create problems causing upset, stress and long-term impacts with self-confidence. The Disability Impact Assessment highlighted that cycling adds to other issues that some disabled people have with the Pedestrian Heart in general (mainly those with a visual impairment, but not exclusively). Considerate and careful cyclists are not seen as a problem.
8. Ongoing enforcement by the Police is seen as an issue. It is widely acknowledged that whatever the decision on cycling through the town centre, anti social behaviour will still occur. The Police and Antisocial Behaviour Team have agreed to work together to share information on cyclists who are acting in an anti social manner and enforce appropriately. However the preferred approach is education and raising awareness of how behaviour impacts on other people.
9. The report to Cabinet in February 2008 concluded, “The balance of evidence and the assessment against objectives support a continuation of the current Town Centre Traffic Regulation Orders for a further extended trial period whilst more experience is gained and more evidence gathered.” The evidence gathered from the extended trial period does not change the conclusion to support a continuation of the current Traffic Regulation Orders in relation to cycling through the Town Centre.
10. To take into account issues raised during the consultations, the following actions would need to be implemented with immediate effect:
  - (a) Publish the Code of Conduct and promote it widely, including the issues raised by the Disability Impact Assessment;
  - (b) Implement a shared database, as already agreed, so that Police and Antisocial Behaviour Team can share information on cyclists behaving inappropriately (both in the town centre and in other parts of the Borough) and enforce as appropriate;
  - (c) Implement an education programme for ‘safe cycling’ with the assistance of the Antisocial Behaviour Team, Police and Local Motion Travel Advisors, including the provision of lights, bells and reflective clothing to give away to those cycling through the town centre;
  - (d) Promote the ways in which incidents involving cyclists can be recorded.

## **Recommendation**

11. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Cycling be allowed at all times in those parts of the town centre defined by the Traffic Regulation Orders;
  - (b) A Code of Conduct on Cycling in the Town Centre, incorporating the issues raised by the Disability Impact Assessment, be produced and widely publicised;

- (c) A shared database be implemented, so that the Police and Antisocial Behaviour Team can share information on cyclists behaving inappropriately and enforce as appropriate;
- (d) An education programme for 'safe cycling';
- (e) Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee be requested to monitor incidents and behaviour involving cyclists and levels of cycling through the town centre.

## **Reasons**

12. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) Evidence including road safety data, public opinion survey and evidence from other towns supports a continuation of the Traffic Regulation Orders;
- (b) The Police and Antisocial Behaviour Team believe that the minority of people who are involved in anti social behaviour in the town centre will continue to do so whatever the decision on allowing cycling; and that this needs to be tackled through education and enforcement;
- (c) The Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee listened to all the evidence and agreed to support in principle the shared use of the Pedestrian Heart between cyclists and pedestrians.
- (d) To take into account issues raised in the Disability Impact Assessment through the Code of Conduct, education, enforcement as appropriate, and through regular monitoring.

**Richard Alty**  
**Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

## **Background Papers**

Cabinet Report : Cycling in the Town Centre; 12 February 2008

Sue Dobson: ext: 2277

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.
Sustainability	The report supports sustainability, 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	No change to council policy.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision. This issue was considered by Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 7 November, and their conclusions are in paragraph 96.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Supports the delivery of Greener Darlington, and contributes to Healthier Darlington.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### Background Information

13. 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 6 month trial period.

14. 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”.

**(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) Anyone using a cycle 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.

- (ii) 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.
- (iii) The design of the scheme was approved by the Department for Transport via the authorisation of non-standard signs.

15. It was minuted at the meeting that:

‘the issue of cycling within the Town Centre would be reviewed after six months of the scheme being implemented.

16. Following the six-month trial of allowing cycling through Darlington Town Centre 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.

17. For the purposes of this report the ‘town centre’ refers to the vehicle restricted areas as detailed in the Traffic Regulation Orders for the Pedestrian Heart project. This covers the area between Northgate, Bondgate, Skinnergate, Blackwellgate, West Row, Tubwell Row, East Street and Crown Street.

18. New information has been collected and new work undertaken since November 2007 to understand the impacts of cycling through the town centre and to mitigate issues of concern. This is summarised as follows:

- (a) The number of cyclists cycling through the Town Centre has continued to increase, up to 1300 in a twelve-hour period in July 2007.
- (b) Three incidents, of which two were ‘near misses’, involving a pedestrian and a cyclist have been reported in the Town Centre.
- (c) There have been no reported personal injury accidents involving a pedestrian and a cyclist.
- (d) There have been four reported personal injury accidents involving cyclists and vehicles around the ring road, and none within the Town Centre.
- (e) A survey of people in the town centre in October 2008 found 62.1% in favour of cycling in the town centre continuing as it is now, with 36.3% wanting some change (compared with 53.9% and 36.3% respectively in the same survey in 2007).
- (f) Following the publication of the Department for Transport’s Manual for Streets in 2007, new schemes involving cycling through pedestrianised areas in town or city centres have been implemented elsewhere such as Cardiff and are being closely monitored in the same way. Ashford in Kent has gone further and created a ‘shared space’ 20mph area allowing pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to share the same space.

- (g) Views from stakeholders have been checked again at the end of the current extended trial period and their views have not changed. Cycling England have clarified that their continued funding of Darlington's Cycling Demonstration Town Project is not subject to the decision taken by Cabinet on whether to continue to allow cycling through the town centre.
  - (h) A Disability Impact Assessment has been undertaken, resulting in proposed actions on enforcement and on a code of conduct.
  - (i) Intergenerational work has been carried out by Groundwork on behalf of the council involving both young and older people. This raised awareness amongst the group as to just how many people do cycle through the town centre, though most go unnoticed.
  - (j) A code of conduct has been drafted and various groups have been consulted on it. The Code of Conduct will be scrutinised by the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee.
19. The new information strengthens the original options appraisal previously reported to Cabinet in February 2008 and therefore on balance supports the continuation of allowing cycling through the town centre.

### **Policy Context**

20. 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:
- “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”.
21. In local policy the Second Local Transport Plan includes a Cycling Strategy for Darlington which states:
- “All cycle trips should be as convenient, or more so, than by car. This means routes must be direct, continuous, high quality and safe.”
22. In 2005 Darlington became a Cycling Demonstration Town as part of a three year Department for Transport funded project and as part of the programme of works committed to providing routes to the town centre. The initial three year programme was completed at the end of October 2008 and Department for Transport have committed to allocating further funding up until end of March 2011. The focus of the next three years will be to complete any other missing links in the urban cycle network and also provide routes to the rural locations in the Borough connected to the town centre routes.
23. In September 2004 Socialdata undertook travel behaviour research in Darlington as part of the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town project. This showed that 14% of all trips start or finish in the town centre and 7% of all trips are for shopping in the town centre. Only 1% of all trips, trips to the town centre and trips to the town centre for shopping were by bike.

24. However, the Socialdata research shows that in Darlington cycling is the mode, which has most potential to tackle congestion. 34% of car trips within the urban area of Darlington have a realistic potential to be made by bike, meaning that there is potential for up to 14% of trips to be made by bike. If Darlington could achieve cycling levels achieved in other UK and European towns of around 10% of all trips, then this would noticeably reduce congestion. Providing safe, convenient and direct cycle routes throughout the town is a key factor in increasing cycling.
25. Follow up research in September/October 2006 has demonstrated that cycling levels have increased to 2% of all trips, a 79% increase on the 2004 levels. This is supported by other data collected from schools and automatic cycle counters.
26. In terms of setting a policy precedent, a decision on cycling may have implications for other users of the town centre, such as motorised mobility scooters, since similar concerns have been expressed.

### **Evidence and Analysis**

27. Since February 2008 monitoring has continued to be collected to add to the evidence that had already been collated prior to this time. A number of monitoring methods have been used during the trial period of cycling through the town centre.
28. Before the pedestrian heart scheme, pedestrians had 5,115m<sup>2</sup> of pavement within what is now the Pedestrian Heart. Pedestrians and cyclists now share 10,933m<sup>2</sup>, ie double the space. Although the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists have increased since the Pedestrian Heart was completed the increases are not on this scale. Between 2005 and 2008 pedestrian numbers have increased by approximately 7.5% in the summer, an additional 2200 people per day and an additional 600 cyclists per day<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore easier for pedestrians and cyclists to move around the town centre.
29. A count of pedestrians and cyclists crossing the ring road has been conducted every three months.
30. Records of accidents including both pedestrians and cyclists within the town centre and also on the ring road have been gathered. Any instances of reported incidents have also been recorded within a log of reports by members of the public.
31. An on street survey has been carried out by NWA, a social and market research company to discover the views of members of the public within the town centre. This was a repeat of the survey that was carried out in November 2007 and similar cross sections of people were questioned.
32. Other towns that have either implemented, banned or are trialling cycling through pedestrianised areas have been contacted to discuss their experiences and provide information on the issues that they have faced and how they have dealt with them.

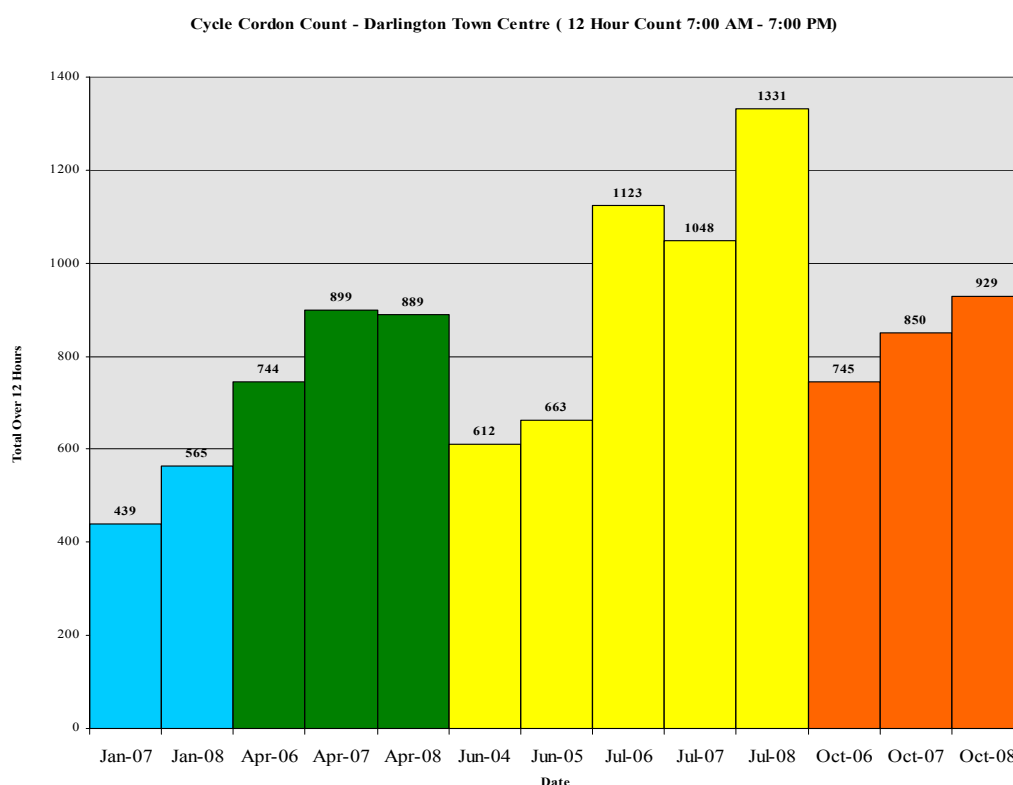
---

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the cordon count data will include double counting as people are counted entering and leaving the cordon, therefore the numbers quoted will not be absolute numbers of additional people. However they provide reliable trend and scale data.



## Cordon Count

33. An annual cordon count of pedestrians and cyclists crossing the ring road has been carried out on a regular basis since June 2004 and since 2006 these counts have been carried out a quarterly basis. The manual count covers a 12 hour period (07:00 – 19:00) and records pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from the town centre.
34. Data collected as part of the cordon counts have shown that cycling levels continue to rise with over 1300 cyclists entering the town centre during a twelve hour period in the July 2008 count.



35. In July 2008 figures collected as part of the cordon count showed that there were 33,025 pedestrians entering the town centre on foot and 1,331 cyclists entering the town centre during the same twelve-hour period.
36. This increase in cycling and walking figures supports other data that shows that vehicle trips on the Inner Ring Road are decreasing.

## Safety - Reported Incidents

37. In the period between February and November 2007 14 incidents were reported to the Transport Policy team.

<b>Incidents reported up to November 2007</b>	
<b>Areas where cycling is permitted</b>	<b>Areas where cycling is NOT permitted</b>
Young man riding 'dangerously, with no hands'	Lady knocked down on pavement by youth on a bike (suffered cuts and bruises) *
Cyclists 'fly through the centre'	Cyclist knocked lady down riding on the pavement (no injury)
Cyclist 'nearly knocked lady over'	
Child cyclists knocked over an adult and child (no injury) *	
Antisocial behaviour by youths, jumping on the ramps and steps	
Young man 'pulled a wheelie and scared her'	
2 cyclists 'pushed their way through'	
Adult cyclists 'cycling inappropriately'	
'Nearly run down by two inconsiderate young cyclists'	
Cyclist cycling one-handed and knocked a pedestrian with their handle bar (no injury)	

\* Two of the incidents involving cyclists were checked with the CCTV centre, as there was sufficient detail about time and location of the incidents. The CCTV centre was not able to provide any evidence.

38. There were two further reports of cycles being secured to handrails within the town centre, this was before the formal cycle parking was installed and this problem has not been reported since.
39. Durham Constabulary has recorded 20 incidents during the period of the trial covering rowdy/nuisance behaviour of persons on cycles. However there are no reports of any actual accidents. But they also state:
- 'It could be questioned that if the people committing the rowdy nuisance in the centre were not allowed to cycle in the area that they would choose to go elsewhere. I am aware that a number of commercial premises feel a very strong link between allowing cycling in the town and the rowdy/nuisance behaviour they suffer from local youths'. Durham Constabulary believes that there is significant under reporting of incidents.
40. During the initial trial period 7 tickets were issued – 2 for cycling with no lights and 5 for cycling on the footway. The town centre Police team are keen to advise that issuing of tickets is secondary to the importance of education, which they do on a daily basis.

41. During the period November 2007 to November 2008 there have been 3 reported incidents. The incidents were reported to the Transport Policy team and all involve pedestrians and cyclists. One further incident was reported following the Talking Together event, which had occurred in 2007. The lady involved was knocked over by a cyclist and she sustained an injured wrist and grazed knee.

<b>Incidents reported since December 2007 until November 2008</b>	
<b>Areas where cycling is permitted</b>	<b>Areas where cycling is NOT permitted</b>
'narrow miss' when cyclist came too close	
Ladies hand was caught by a youths handlebar as he cycled past.	
Lady 'narrowly escaped being hit'	
Lady knocked over by cyclist, cyclist also knocked off bike. – Occurred in 2007	

### **Accident Statistics**

42. An analysis of accidents that have occurred since 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 involving pedestrians and/or cyclists has also taken place. Accidents both within the town centre and on the ring road have been taken into account as the alternative route for cyclists if the town centre was not available as a route would be the ring road. The source of this information is STATS 19, road accident statistics where personal injuries occur which is provided by the Police.
43. Pedestrian and cyclist accidents on the Inner Ring Road and within the Inner Ring Road have been collated to cover the period 1 November 2002 to 31 October 2007.
44. During this period there have been 40 reported accidents involving pedestrian casualties. Of those forty accidents 27 involved a pedestrian and a car, 9 involved a pedestrian and a bus, 3 involved a pedestrian and a taxi and 1 involved a pedestrian and a police vehicle. No incidents on the database involved a pedestrian and a cyclist.

<b>Accidents 1<sup>st</sup> November 2002 – 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2007</b>	
<b>Pedestrian accident with:</b>	<b>Number of accidents (total 40)</b>
Car	27
Bus	9
Taxi	3
Police Vehicle	1
Cycle	0

45. Of the forty pedestrian accidents ten were on the Inner Ring Road and 30 were within the Inner Ring Road, including on Houndgate, Grange Road, Tubwell Row, Bondgate, Prebend Row, East Street and Skinnergate.
46. There have been seventeen cyclist casualties arising from accidents on or within the Inner Ring Road during the same period. Of those seventeen 13 were between cyclists and cars, 2 between cyclists and taxis, 1 between a bus and cyclist and 1 between a HGV and a cyclist.

<b>Accidents 1<sup>st</sup> November 2002 – 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2007</b>	
<b>Cyclist accident with:</b>	<b>Number of accidents (total 17)</b>
Car	13
Bus	1
Taxi	2
HGV	1
Pedestrian	0

47. Fourteen of the recorded cycle accidents took place on the Inner Ring Road. Of the three within the Ring Road one took place on Beaumont Street, one on Tubwell Row and one on Prebend Row.
48. Cyclists are more at risk of being involved in accidents whilst using the Inner Ring Road than using the town centre.
49. During the same five year period (1 November 2002 to 31 October 2007) there have been a total of 256 Pedestrian Casualties in the urban area (2 fatal, 47 serious, 207 slight) and 147 Cyclist Casualties (0 fatal, 15 serious, 132 slight).
50. During the period from November 2007 until November 2008 there have been 4 accidents involving cyclists and 8 accidents involving pedestrians. Of the 8 accidents involving pedestrians 7 of those involved a car also. The remaining pedestrian accident was with a taxi. No incidents on the database involved a pedestrian and a cyclist.

<b>Accidents from November 2007 to November 2008</b>	
<b>Pedestrian accident with:</b>	<b>Number of accidents (total 8)</b>
Car	7
Bus	0
Taxi	1
Police Vehicle	0
Goods Vehicle	0
Cycle	0

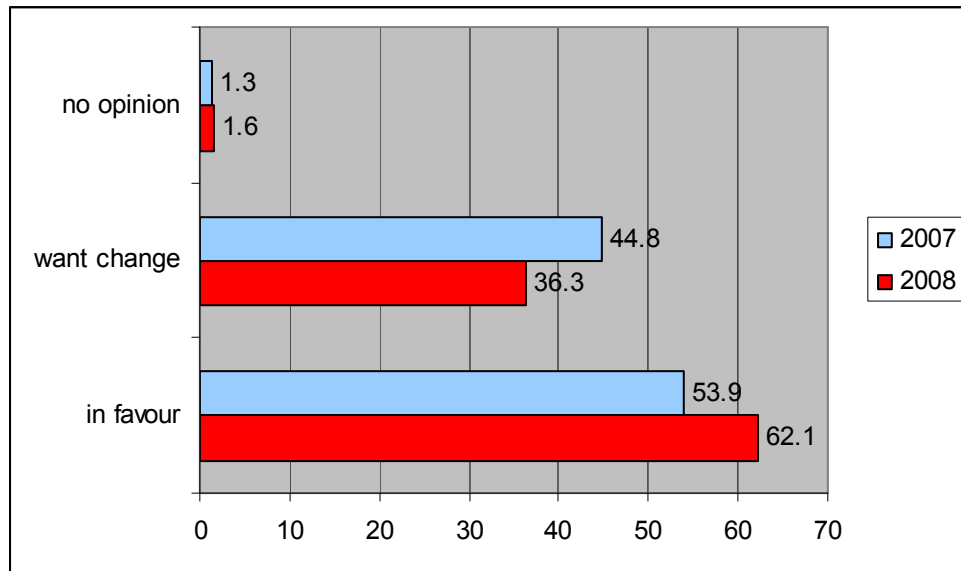
51. Of the 8 pedestrian accidents all occurred on the ring road with no accidents being recorded within the town centre. In 2007 the number of pedestrian accidents within the town centre had fallen to 1 from an average of 6 per year between 2003 and 2006. This figure has now fallen to no recorded pedestrian accidents within the town centre in 2008 so far, suggesting that the town centre is now a safer place for pedestrians and cycling has not increased the number of pedestrian / cycle accidents.
52. Of the 4 cyclists accidents all 4 occurred on road. 2 of the accidents were on the ring road and the other 2 happened on Bondgate at the junction with Skinnergate. This would suggest that cyclists are more at risk of injury whilst using the ring road than they are within the town centre.

<b>Accidents from November 2007 to November 2008</b>	
<b>Cyclist accident with:</b>	<b>Number of accidents (total 4)</b>
Car	2
Bus	1
Taxi	0
Police Vehicle	0
Goods Vehicle	1
Cycle	0

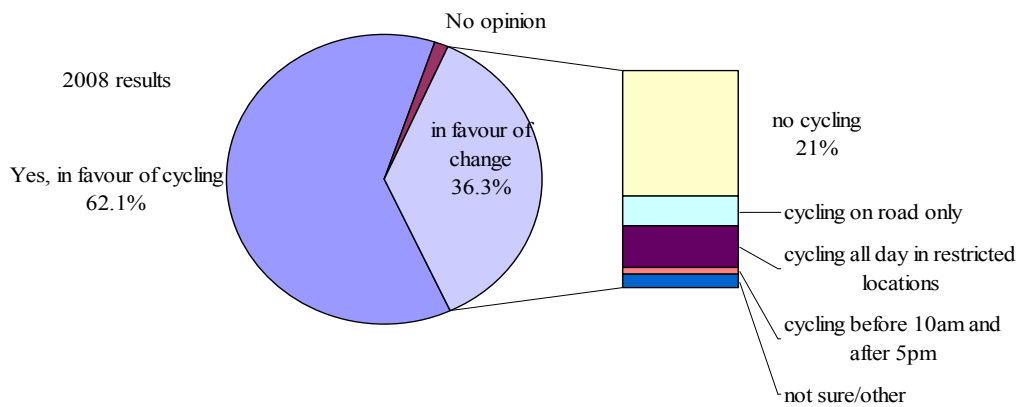
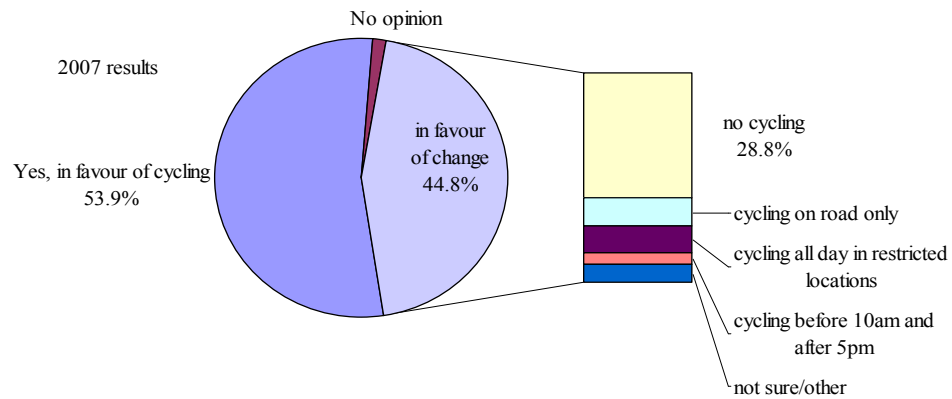
### **Attitudes to Cycling Through the Town Centre**

53. 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<sup>th</sup> October 2008 with an extra session on 25<sup>th</sup> 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 2007 and 2008 report are included in **Appendix 1**). 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).
54. 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.
55. 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.
56. 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.
57. 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.

Are you in favour of cycling in the Town Centre?  
(Q10: % response – all respondents)



58. The principle reasons given by those respondents who were in favour of cycling in the town centre continuing as it is now were that they had ‘no problems with the current arrangements’ (45.5% of those who offered comments), that cycling was ‘environmentally friendly’, (14.5%) or that it ‘reduces congestion’, (9.5%).
59. Of those who wished to see a change the majority, (58% / 50 people) would prefer there to be no cycling in the town centre at all. This is a slight reduction on the 2007 findings when 64.2% or 113 people would prefer there to be no cycling at all, (21% of the total sample as compared with 28.8% of the total sample in 2007).



### Experience in Other Towns

60. In 33 towns and cities in England, cycling has been permitted 24/7 in pedestrian zones. In the North East there are schemes, in Newcastle, Sunderland and Gateshead. A further 24 schemes allow cycling in pedestrian areas during ‘commuter hours’. New schemes are being implemented each year. A major scheme for Cardiff city centre was agreed in April 2007, which will start with a trial for 12 months of cycling before 10:00am and after 4:00pm. This will be followed by a further 12-month period to extend the trial either by area or time.

61. Cycling in pedestrianised areas in towns and cities in the rest of Europe is commonplace. In places such as Paris and Barcelona where it has taken place for some time people appear to have come to accept it as normal.

### **Lessons Learnt from Places Where Cycling is Allowed in Pedestrianised Areas**

62. Cycling is allowed in pedestrian areas that are wide, with few obstructions (street furniture) and that still look and feel like roads (and potentially are used by service vehicles). (Middlesbrough's Corporation Road; Deangate – the road past the Minster – York.)
63. Cycling through pedestrianised areas when there are safety concerns for cyclists on the alternative route. (Deangate York)
64. In Brighton they have created a shared space that still allows traffic. The result has been an increase in cycling levels (22% or 100 more per day) and a decrease in vehicular traffic (a reduction of 93% or 12,000 per day).
65. The Transport Research Laboratory has recently published detailed evidence of the experience of other towns in a report<sup>2</sup>. The report examines the sharing of space by pedestrians and cyclists, from both a physical and attitudinal perspective. Detailed research was undertaken for Vehicle Restricted Areas in Cambridge, Hull and Salisbury, involving video monitoring, speed surveys and interviews with pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, the Transport Research Laboratory investigated schemes in nine other towns, holding discussions with local authorities and other interested parties.
66. Findings from the report show that the majority of cyclists tend to slow down or dismount and push their bikes when pedestrian flows are high. Interviews showed that the majority of pedestrians were 'not bothered' by cyclists, though the majority at two of the sites would like cyclists excluded for at least part of the day.
67. Cyclists alter their behaviour according to the flow of pedestrians and regardless of whether cycling is allowed or not. During the period that cycling bans were in place in Cambridge and Hull, 39% and 46% respectively chose to push their cycles, while the majority continues to cycle illegally. In Salisbury, where there was no ban on cycling, 40% of cyclists still chose to dismount and 60% cycled legally.
68. The TRL report also states that during the period when cycling was prohibited ... "a minority still cycled relatively fast in high pedestrian flows. These cyclists tended to be young males."

### **Lessons from Places that do not Allow Cyclists in Pedestrianised Town Centres**

69. In Middlesbrough Cycling is banned in the pedestrianised area of Linthorpe Road, following a number of requests from interested parties. Cycling still continues due to a lack of enforcement, but there have been no accidents. Cycling continues, as it is a direct route. (There is an alternative on road route but it is less direct and therefore less popular).
70. Difficulties in enforcing cycling restrictions create bad feeling towards cyclists, as well as a feeling that the Authorities are doing nothing. These sentiments are regularly expressed in

---

<sup>2</sup> TRL Report – Cycling in Pedestrian Areas, TRL 583; 2003



the local press. (Bournemouth)

## **Other Areas of Work**

### **Disability Impact Assessment**

71. A type 2 Disability Impact Assessment (DIA) was undertaken to assess the impacts of the proposed policy to allow cycling through the town centre. Meetings were held with MIND, Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD), Charitable Organisations for the Blind (COB), Access Interest Group and the Deaf Forum.
72. In summary one positive impact was identified and 8 negative impacts. A copy of the DIA record sheet is in **Appendix 3**.
73. The DIA highlighted two key areas that need to be addressed whatever decision is taken by Cabinet:
  - (a) Highly visible enforcement – irresponsible cycling needs to be deterred. Whilst this is currently enforced by Police. Discussions are underway between the Police and Darlington Borough Council's Transport Policy and the Anti Social Behaviour Teams to assess how a joint approach can be implemented to tackle this issue.
  - (b) A Code of Conduct will be developed and used by the enforcement teams to inform people of the issues associated with cycling (either in the Town Centre or on pavements in other parts of the Borough). Following this Disability Impact Assessment there will be more information on how irresponsible cycling can have a negative impact on disabled people. There will be information on how positive actions by cyclists can improve the walking environment and experience for all pedestrians. This Code of Conduct will also be made available in schools and libraries, and publicised widely.

### **Intergenerational Work**

74. In order to facilitate intergenerational working it was decided that a photography scheme would be organised to include both young and old people of Darlington. The principle of this scheme was based on the successful 'Intergen Project' run by Age Concern in which younger people assisted older people to learn to use the internet. It was envisaged that younger people would work with older members of the community on a digital photography project that would be focussed on photographing members of the public cycling through the town centre. Groundwork were used to facilitate this project and made links with Youth Services and the Re-View project.
75. Workshops were set up during September and October with the purpose of carrying out the photography sessions. On these occasions, however, older members of the group who were due to take part did not turn up and so the sessions continued with only younger people represented. Officers will look for future opportunities to carry out inter-generational work. A report by Groundwork on the project is in **Appendix 4**.

### **Code of Conduct**

76. As part of the recommendations made by Cabinet in February 2008 and as an outcome of the Disability Impact Assessment a Code of Conduct has been developed and consultation

has taken place with both the Anti Social Behaviour team and the Town Centre Police Beat team on the appropriateness of the guidance within it. It is proposed that after further consultation with the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee this Code of Conduct and will be made available throughout the town centre and be displayed at entrances to the pedestrianised area. As a result of the Disability Impact Assessment and comments made at the Talking Together event the Code of Conduct will highlight the issues that disabled people raised about how cyclists should behave. The Code of Conduct will be distributed as part of the Bikeability cycle training courses that take part in primary and secondary schools throughout the Borough and publicised in the Town Crier and local press.

### **Anti Social Behaviour**

77. One of the main concerns is the inconsiderate behaviour of a minority of cyclists, in particular cycling too fast or cycling in inappropriate places such as on the steps.
78. Evidence from other towns, and the belief of Durham Constabulary, is that this type of behaviour will continue whatever the rules and regulations are for cycling in the town centre. Limiting cycling will only disadvantage those considerate cyclists who behave in an appropriate way, slowing, changing direction or even dismounting when pedestrian flows are considerable. Instead education and information is required for both cyclists and pedestrians so there is a clearly understanding of what is acceptable behaviour, and enforcement is required for dangerous cycling. An educational programme will be developed with Durham Constabulary and other partners. Discussions have been held with the Police and Anti Social Behaviour team who are both keen to promote positive cycling behaviour.

### **Options Appraisal**

79. In the cabinet report discussed on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 four options were presented with an evaluation of each, these four options are still relevant and are as follows:

80. **Option 1 : Allow cycling in the town centre**

- (a) **Proposed action and timescale**

- (i) Permit cycling in the town centre, in accordance with the existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).
    - (ii) No variations would be required to the TROs and traffic signs.
    - (iii) Durham Constabulary have offered to work with the Council in campaigns/initiatives to increase cyclists' awareness of relevant legislation and pedestrian safety through considerate cycling, including a code of conduct.

- (b) **Evaluation**

- (i) By allowing cyclists to access the town centre a safe, continuous, direct route would be provided into the town centre and enable cyclists to access the cycle parking that is provided throughout the town centre at locations convenient to shops, businesses and leisure facilities.

- (ii) Cycling in the town centre provides a number of key links in the cycle network in Darlington and provides a through route north to south and east to west. Radial routes are being constructed which link the suburbs to the town centre, including links to Haughton, Morton Park, Blackwell, Mowden, Hummersknott, West Park and Harrowgate Hill. Toucan crossings have already been provided on the Inner Ring Road at Russell Street, Priestgate, Leadyard Bridge and Feethams. Department for Transport guidance; Local Transport Note 2/04 section 8.2.1 states that:

*'Pedestrianised areas are typically located in the core area of a town or city, and as such, can form a barrier to direct through-routes for cyclists. Cyclists often need access to pedestrianised areas to reach their workplace, shops or other destinations.'*

- (iii) The traffic free area in the town centre provides a safer environment for cyclists. The alternative would be for cyclists to use the Inner Ring Road. Records show that there are more accidents involving cyclists on the Inner Ring Road than within the town centre. There have been no recorded accidents in the town centre involving cyclists and pedestrians during the last 5 years.

The Department for Transport guidance; Local Transport Note 2/04 section 8.2.1 states that:

*'Studies (by Transport Research Laboratory) have shown that there are no real factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrianised areas - accidents between pedestrians and cyclists in these circumstances are very rare. At low flows they mingle readily. When pedestrian density increases cyclists behave accordingly by slowing down, dismounting, or taking avoiding action as required.'*

- (iv) Durham Constabulary already enforces the Traffic Regulation Orders and have issued tickets using current legislation. The town beat team, who themselves use bikes to patrol the beat area, already educate and inform inconsiderate cyclists of appropriate behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour would still need to be enforced by the Police in order to deter people from riding their cycle in a dangerous manner in the vehicle-restricted areas. If cycling is allowed on a permanent basis Durham Constabulary would like to see some additional signage, greater education and publicity.
- (v) Cycling England strongly supports Darlington's plans for radial routes into the town centre and are pleased with the progress made to date. Two completed routes should be signed by the end of the financial year and they want to see the signing taken to the heart of the town centre, rather than to the Inner Ring Road. Future funding will be based on the successful implementation of the initial programme.
- (vi) This option was supported by 53.9% or 212 of the people questioned in the on street survey in November 2007. (This figure rises to over 68.8% amongst people aged less than 40 years). The principle reasons given were that they had 'no problems with the current arrangements'; 'cycling was an easy and/or cheap means of travel'; 'healthy/good exercise'; 'reduces congestion'; and

‘environmentally friendly’. In the on street survey carried out in October 2008 62.1% or 269 respondents were in favour of cycling continuing as it is now. In the 2007 Community Survey 31.2% or 317 people agreed that cycling should be allowed in the town centre. The reasons given were that it isn’t a problem if cyclists behave responsibly and environmental and health benefits of less traffic and more cycling.

- (vii) Darlington Cycling Campaign, Durham Constabulary and Cycling England supported this option.
- (viii) Darlington Association on Disability, having listened to the views of its members, in particular those with a visual impairment, does not support this option. In the Community Survey 59.5% did not support this option. The main reason given was that it was too dangerous/accidents, although as the safety record shows that there have been no accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians, this is a perception of danger rather than actual danger. This is more prevalent amongst older people. In the same survey 20% didn’t feel that the town centre was a safe and pleasant environment but the reasons were to do with road safety (principally buses), access issues (such as handrails) and the loss of character.

## **Option 2 : Cycling on the roads only**

### **(c) Proposed action and timescale**

- (i) Allow cycling on all the roads in the town centre, i.e. Northgate (inner Ring Road to Crown Street), Crown Street, Priestgate, Prebend Row and Tubwell Row.
- (ii) No cycling in the pedestrianised areas (Northgate {Crown Street to Bondgate}, Bondgate {Northgate to Abbots Yard}, High Row, Blackwellgate, Skinnergate {Duke Street to Blackwellgate} and West Row).
- (iii) A map of Option 2 is in **Appendix 5**.
- (iv) Variations would be required to the Traffic Regulation Orders and traffic signs. This would take approximately 6 months.

### **(d) Evaluation**

- (i) Pedestrians who currently perceive that cyclists cause a danger in the town centre will be reassured.
- (ii) By allowing cyclists to use the bus route through the town centre cyclists will be able to access Northgate (2 way), Crown Street (Northgate to East Street - 1 way), Crown Street (East Street to Tubwell Row – 2 way), Priestgate (1 way), Prebend Row (1 way), Tubwell Row (Prebend Row to East Row -1 way), and Tubwell Row (East Row to Crown Street – 2 way) but access to most areas of the town centre would be prohibited. Cyclists will not be able to access the town centre from Bondgate and Blackwellgate, which are the most used entrances and

exits to the town centre according to Cordon Count data.

- (iii) There would be no continuous, safe, direct cycle route from one side of the town centre to the other, travelling from east to west, west to east or south to north. There would be a continuous north south cycle route utilising Northgate, Crown Street, Tubwell Row, Church Row and Feethams.
- (iv) Cyclists would be forced to mix with buses (and other vehicles at certain times of the day) and this does not provide an ideal environment for children or inexperienced cyclists. It would not encourage more cycling and could potentially increase accidents involving cyclists and buses.
- (v) Evidence from other towns indicates that antisocial behaviour involving people on bikes would still continue, despite a legal restriction. Durham Constabulary support the view that education, publicity and signs plus enforcement are the best solution.
- (vi) This option would require variations to the Traffic Regulation Orders; alterations to signs; the physical removal of the cycle by pass lanes on Bondgate and Blackwellgate; and continued enforcement by the Police. This would have a cost implication. (Costs are difficult to estimate without significant design work but the erection or removal of each sign would cost approximately £100, plus new signs cost an average of £50 each and the TRO adverts would cost about £1200). It would potentially have a negative impact on the street scene with a proliferation of signs.
- (vii) The Police, Cycling England or Darlington Cycling Campaign does not support this option. Creating a no cycling or limited cycling area in the town centre causes the Police concern with regard to its enforcement. Public perception of such a regulation would be that it would be heavily enforced and no one would ever be seen in the town centre riding a cycle. Durham Constabulary go on to say:  
  
*'Unfortunately we do not have sufficient resources to deploy to this specific task on a daily basis'*
- (viii) This option was only supported by 6.6% or 26 of the people questioned in the on street survey in 2007. In 2008 this had changed to 5% or 22 people.
- (ix) Unlike motor vehicle access, it is not possible to physically prevent cycles entering pedestrianised areas.

#### **81. Option 3 : Cycling before 10am and after 5pm in the vehicle restricted areas and cycling on the roads at all times**

##### **(a) Proposed action and timescale**

Motor vehicles are prohibited from the town centre for most of the day (with exceptions such as bullion vehicles etc). However before 10:00am and after 5:00pm there is access for delivery vehicles in Blackwellgate, Bondgate, High Row, Northgate, and Prospect Place. Therefore during this period pedestrians and other road users have

to 'share' the pedestrianised area.

- (i) This proposal seeks to limit access by cycle to the town centre in the same way, allowing cyclists to use the town centre until 10:00am and then again after 5:00pm every day.
- (ii) Cyclists could also use the roads as detailed in option 2 at all times.
- (iii) This is a combination of Option 1 and Option 2 and plans for both of these options are in **Appendix 5**.
- (iv) Variations would be required to the Traffic Regulation Orders and traffic signs. This would take approximately 6 months.

## (b) Evaluation

- (i) Cyclists would have access at peak commuting times to and through the town centre and limited access at other times. The Department for Transport guidance; Local Transport Note 2/04 section 8.2.5 states that:

*If it is decided that cyclists cannot be given full access, it may be appropriate to limit it to particular times of the day. This may be feasible in shopping areas where most activity is likely to take place between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Permitting cyclist's access outside these hours would allow them to use the route for commuting.*

- (ii) Pedestrians would expect to see vehicles, including cyclists during the periods 5:00pm until 10:00am, in the pedestrianised areas, and would alter their behaviour accordingly.
- (iii) Data collected in July 2007 highlights that between 07:00 and 10:00 151 people cycled into/out of the town centre; between 10:00 and 17:00 721 cyclists were counted; and between 17:00 and 19:00 176 cyclists used the town centre. The busiest hour was between 13:00 and 14:00. Limiting access by time would therefore disadvantage the majority (69%) of people cycling in the town centre, and would exclude children making the return journey home from school.
- (iv) Darlington Cycling Campaign, Cycling England or the Police do not support this option. Durham Constabulary have stated that:

*'The option of limiting cycling by location or time could potentially cause great confusion'.*
- (v) This option was only supported by 2.5% or 10 of the people questioned in the on street survey. In 2008 this had changed to 2% or 8 people.
- (vi) This option would require variations to the Traffic Regulation Orders and alterations to signs. This would have a cost implication. Some motorists struggle to understand the signs limiting access but they are physically prevented from entering the area with rising bollards. Unlike vehicle access, it is not possible to physically prevent cycles entering the pedestrianised areas and signs

may not be enough.

- (vii) The TRL report (see footnote 1) noted that part time bans were difficult to enforce and it was hard to prosecute erring cyclists.

**82. Option 4 : Cycling all day except on High Row, West Row and the pedestrianised part of Prebend Row**

**(a) Proposed action and timescale**

- (i) By removing cyclists from High Row, West Row and the pedestrianised area of Prebend Row but still allowing cyclists to use the rest of the town centre cyclists would still be able to access most areas of the town but they would be removed from the area that includes steps and ramps, where the most likely place of conflict would be.
- (ii) A map of Option 4 is in **Appendix 5**.
- (iii) Variations would be required to the TROs and traffic signs. This would take approximately 6 months. Further consultation may be required to assess the most appropriate area in which to limit cycling and assess, in consultation with local stakeholders and the Department for Transport, how this could be signed effectively.

**(b) Evaluation**

- (i) This option was supported by 6.1% or 24 of the people questioned in the on street survey. In 2008 this had changed to 7.6% or 33 people.
- (ii) This option would require variations to the Traffic Regulation Orders and alterations to signs. This would have a cost implication.
- (iii) Unlike vehicle access, it is not possible to physically prevent cycles entering the proposed no cycling area. Defining the enforcement area would be difficult and have a negative impact on the street scene. This will cause great confusion for cyclists and pedestrians and will be difficult for the Police to enforce.
- (iv) This option is not supported by Darlington Cycling Campaign, Cycling England or the Police. Durham Constabulary have stated that:

*'The option of limiting cycling by location or time could potentially cause great confusion.'*

83. These four options would still be available; however, the evaluations made of them in February are still relevant. The following table from the February report summarises the options appraisal:

***Option Analysis***

	Ease of enforcement (Police view)	Cost	Cycling England Funding	Public opinion	DAD view	Safety for pedestrians	Safety for cyclists
Option 1	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	0	xx	✓	✓✓
Option 2	✓	x	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	xx
Option 3	x	xx	x	x	xx	✓✓	x
Option 4	xx	x	x	x	xx	✓	x

### Key

✓✓ Very positive impact	✓ Positive impact	
x Negative impact	xx Very negative impact	0 Neither or 50:50

84. The February 2008 report concluded, “The balance of evidence and the assessment against objectives support a continuation of the current Town Centre Traffic Regulation Orders for a further extended trial period whilst more experience is gained and more evidence gathered.” The evidence gathered from the extended trial period does not change the conclusion to support a continuation of the current Traffic Regulation Orders in relation to cycling through the Town Centre.

### Outcome of Consultation

85. Towards the end of the first six month trial period views from key stakeholders were sought. A letter was sent to three key partners with a view on cycling in the town centre asking to give feedback on their views. Letters were sent to Durham Constabulary, Darlington Association on Disability and the Darlington Cycling Campaign. Stakeholders have been contacted again to check whether their views have changed following the extended trial period. All stakeholders still have the same opinion as they did last year.
86. Cycling England were also consulted as they have provided £1.5m of matched funding over 3 years for the delivery of a programme of physical works to increase levels of cycling from 1% to 3%, including radial cycle routes into the town centre.
87. Full versions of the responses sent back can be found in **Appendix 2**.
88. Darlington Association on Disability are opposed to allowing cycling in the town centre as detailed below:

“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.”

89. Darlington Cycling Campaign support allowing cyclists to use the town centre at all times arguing that the alternatives for cyclists i.e. the Inner Ring Road are more dangerous for cyclists:

“Darlington Cycling Campaign strongly urges the council to continue to allow cycling in the Pedestrian Heart for the following reasons:

...Prior to pedestrianisation, cyclists could travel through the town centre like any other vehicle. Banning cyclists now, even for part of the day, would make the situation **worse** for cyclists now than it was before pedestrianisation. ...The ‘perception of danger’, most vocally expressed by our colleagues from Darlington Association on Disability is, as DAD themselves admit, perception rather than reality. ...As other users of the Heart experience safe, responsible cycling more regularly, including police constables on bikes, we believe this perception is already starting to change and, given time (and more people cycling), will be replaced by a much more rational understanding.

Pedestrian perceptions of danger, as we stated in our 2007 submission, will become more in line with reality as cycling culture becomes part of everyday life. Cycling Campaign members regularly report to us the reactions of pedestrians to cyclists in the Pedestrian Heart. After 18 months of “trials”, the most common description is still “unanticipated”. The continuing temporary status of cycling in the town centre is now actively inhibiting this important process of change. We therefore strongly urge the council to make cyclist access through the town centre permanent.’

90. Having consulted a number of departments within Durham Constabulary including Traffic Management, the Neighbourhood Policing team believe that there is no evidence of a need to limit cycling in the town centre. They have considered many issues including the level of incident reporting, antisocial behaviour and public expectation of enforcement. In summary:

”Having listened carefully to my colleagues including Michael Straugheir (Traffic Management), I do not believe that the Police can evidence the need to limit cycling in the town centre. I would however take this opportunity to offer the services of the town beat team to assist in any campaigns / initiatives that can be developed to increase cyclists' awareness of both the relevant legislation and pedestrian safety through considerate cycling”.

91. Cycling England, which incorporates a number of professionals from the sustainable transport industry, has also supported allowing cycling within the town centre. Philip Darnton, Chief Executive of Cycling England writes:

“On behalf of the Board of Cycling England I would formally like to register our total support for the continuation of this scheme. The Cabinet will be aware that Cycling England has been funding Darlington as a Cycling Demonstration Town for £500,000 p.a. matched by your own funding. This has allowed you to implement a significant programme of infrastructure building to allow for cycle usage across the town and into the centre. You have also taken significant initiatives – and put substantial investment – into crossings of the main roads in order to ensure that the road safety is permeable to cyclists wishing to go to the centre of the town. The quality of the work which you have also been undertaking in

the town centre itself does mean that the heart of Darlington is now both much more attractive and readily accessible by cycle and on foot. Cycling England has agreed funding for all six Cycling Demonstration Towns for a further three year period and continues to see the permeability of the town centre as a key part of Darlington's overall cycling strategy. We are aware of the extremely thorough and continuing research which has been carried out to evaluate the risks of cycling into the town centre and are supportive of the recommendation that this should become a permanent feature of the towns' infrastructure."

### **Talking Together Event and On Line Forum**

92. A Talking Together event was held on 6th November to discuss the issue of Cycling Through the Town Centre. Following a presentation on the background of the trial and the resulting facts and figures, members of the public were able to pose their questions or make their views known to a panel comprising representatives from the Police, Cycling England, and the Council's Anti Social Behaviour and Transport Policy Teams.
93. The Connecting with Communities Team summarised the key points as follows:
  - (a) How people behave and should behave in the large public spaces of the pedestrian heart is a very important question.
  - (b) Disabled people, particularly those with hearing impairments, visual impairments and impaired mobility have clear reasons for opposing cycling in the pedestrian heart. Disabled people being "buzzed" or shocked by cyclists was a common experience that caused anxiety in most and disorientation and very serious worries in some. These negative impacts are elucidated in the disability equality impact assessment.
  - (c) It appears that there may have been more collisions between cyclists and pedestrians in the pedestrian heart than have been reported to the Police.
  - (d) The Police themselves ride cycles in the pedestrian heart – the police representative's personal view was that the trial period had been successful.
  - (e) Few have a problem with responsible cyclists but many are concerned by the anti-social behaviour of those riding cycles dangerously.
  - (f) Some cyclists felt that the only responsible option was to dismount in the Pedestrian Heart; other cyclists felt that the health benefits and convenience of allowing cycling were strong arguments for continuing to permit it.
  - (g) Solutions were suggested. Some felt that continuing to allow cycling may be less dangerous if cyclists had clearly marked routes through the town centre. Others felt that banning cyclists at particular times of day (before 9am and after 5pm) may work. There was considerable support for the need for better education for cyclists and talk of a need for a well-publicised code of conduct. These "middle ways" were not welcomed by those who felt either that policing them would be too difficult or that allowing cycling in pedestrian areas was either too dangerous or just wrong in principle.
  - (h) Cycling *per se* is not a form of anti-social behaviour.
  - (i) Many felt that dangerous cycling was perpetuated by an irresponsible few who would be unlikely to take notice of codes of practice, restrictions or bans. There was an acknowledgement that this is not an argument for doing nothing.
  - (j) In some ways this issue sets a precedent about the way Darlington views sustainable transport and may have repercussions long into the future.
  - (k) Other places are awaiting with interest to see what a cycling demonstration town like Darlington decides to do.

94. In addition the Connecting with Communities Team received 25 phone calls from members of the public, the majority of whom were older or disabled people who were unable to attend the event. Five of these callers supported the continuation of cycling and 20 were against, mainly based on personal experience of either actual collisions between cyclists and pedestrians (not necessarily in the Pedestrian Heart) or near misses.
95. An online forum was set up in advance of the Talking Together event and promoted as an alternative way for people to make their comments and add their views. A follow up article in the December Town Crier further increased the number of posts and replies. By 22 December there were 65 messages (this excludes messages from the Moderator and Councillor Jenny Chapman) and 1754 views of the site. Of these 65 messages, 18 messages (28%) posted by 6 people, did not support cycling through the town centre. 47 messages (72%) posted by 21 people, did support cycling through the town centre.

### **Scrutiny**

96. Members of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee attended the Talking Together Event and then formally met on 7th November to discuss the issue. The Committee resolved that the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet:-
  - (a) That this Scrutiny Committee supports in principle the shared use of the Pedestrian Heart between cyclists and pedestrians;
  - (b) That there be increased capacity to the supervision of cycling in the Town Centre by the Police and Antisocial Behaviour Team;
  - (c) That a Code of Conduct be produced on Cycling within the Town Centre and that this Committee be consulted on it at the draft stage;
  - (d) That an adequate system to report incidents and concerns be implemented and widely publicised;
  - (e) That this Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to monitor the arrangements in the Pedestrian heart on a quarterly basis with particular emphasis on incidents/accidents, issuing of fixed penalty notices and confiscations of cycles.

### **Actions Arising from Consultations**

97. To take into account issues raised during consultations, the following actions would need to be implemented with immediate effect:
  - (a) Publish the Code of Conduct and promote it widely, including the issues raised by the Disability Impact Assessment;
  - (b) Implement a shared database, as already agreed, so that Police and Antisocial Behaviour Team can share information on cyclists behaving inappropriately (both in the town centre and in other parts of the Borough) and enforce as appropriate;
  - (c) Implement an education programme for 'safe cycling' with the assistance of the Antisocial Behaviour Team, Police and Local Motion Travel Advisors, including the provision of lights, bells and reflective clothing to give away to those cycling through the town centre;
  - (d) Promote the ways in which incidents involving cyclists can be recorded.