
CYCLING IN DARLINGTON PEDESTRIAN HEART

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on actions arising from Place Scrutiny Committee 5 February 2015.

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 in February 2009 regarding the extended trial period and approval was given to continue with cycling through the pedestrianised area indefinitely.
6. In February 2015 Place Scrutiny Committee gave further consideration to issues surrounding cycling in the pedestrianised area of the Town Centre and resolved that :
 - (a) Place Scrutiny Committee accepts the use of the Pedestrian Heart by cyclists as a component of the cycle route network designed for the Borough and the contribution of this Policy to carbon reduction measures and road safety;
 - (b) Place Scrutiny Committee is united in its objection and condemnation of anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre; and
 - (c) A number of actions be carried out by Officers.

7. Two of these actions were to be reported back to Place Scrutiny Committee:

(a) That a further Attitude Survey be carried out in 2016.

(b) That a Road Safety Audit be undertaken.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that :-

(a) Members consider the findings of the Attitude Survey.

(b) Members note progress on the development of the Road Safety Audit.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

Place Scrutiny Committee Report 5 February 2015

Place Scrutiny Minutes 5 February 2015

AC : Extension 6701

LC

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

9. Cycling in the Pedestrian Heart was introduced in June 2007 for an initial six months trial period. Following the end of the trial period a report was taken to Cabinet in February 2008 where it was decided that the trial period would be extended until November 2008 in order to further assess the impact of cycling on pedestrians and to carry out a disability impact assessment, produce a code of conduct for cyclists and to carry out some intergenerational work. Cabinet ultimately gave approval to permit cycling through the pedestrianised area on a permanent basis at the meeting in February 2009.
10. Place Scrutiny was asked to give further consideration to the impact of cycling within the pedestrianised area as the result of an incident that occurred. A report was submitted to Place Scrutiny on 5 February 2015 and the following resolutions were made:
 - (a) That Place Scrutiny Committee accepts the use of the Pedestrian Heart by cyclists as a component of the cycle route network designed for the Borough and the contribution of this Policy to carbon reduction measures and road safety.
 - (b) That Place Scrutiny Committee is united in its objection and condemnation of anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre.
 - (c) That the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for approval:
 - (i) That the Council and the Police be encouraged to work together to inform cyclists of the concerns of pedestrians, particularly the elderly, through events and road safety marketing and publicity;
 - (ii) That Scrutiny Committee notes that the Cycle Training includes advice on how to ride responsibly in the Town Centre where a child's school journey involves this route;
 - (iii) That the Police provide increased focus on anti-social behaviour particularly on bikes and skateboards;
 - (iv) That the profile of the incident reporting mechanism and the Code of Conduct be highlighted using various media forms, including social media, to encourage cyclists to be considerate and aware of other users of the pedestrianised area;
 - (v) That improved signage be provided to delineate where cyclists can and cannot cycle in the pedestrianised area and that these be reported to Place Scrutiny Committee in six months;
 - (vi) That a further Attitude Survey be undertaken in February 2016, to be reported to Place Scrutiny Committee, as part of a comprehensive

monitoring exercise;

- (vii) That a Road Safety Audit be undertaken;
- (viii) That Officers be requested to investigate the provision of a dedicated cycle route around the Pedestrian Heart in conjunction with cycling groups; and
- (ix) That best practice of other Local Authorities be investigated.

11. The results of the Safety Audit and the Attitude Survey were required to be reported back to Place Scrutiny.

Road Safety Audit

12. Stockton Borough Council are undertaking a Safety Audit on behalf of DBC. This work is being carried out by a qualified Road Safety Auditor and they have been commissioned to investigate the following:

- (a) The potential road safety impact of banning cycling in the Town Centre.
- (b) An assessment of what additional signage could be provided to better inform cyclists of where they can and can't cycle.
- (c) Identification of an alternative cycle route around the edge of the Town Centre.

13. It is anticipated that this work will be complete in June 2017 and reported to a future Place Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Attitude Survey

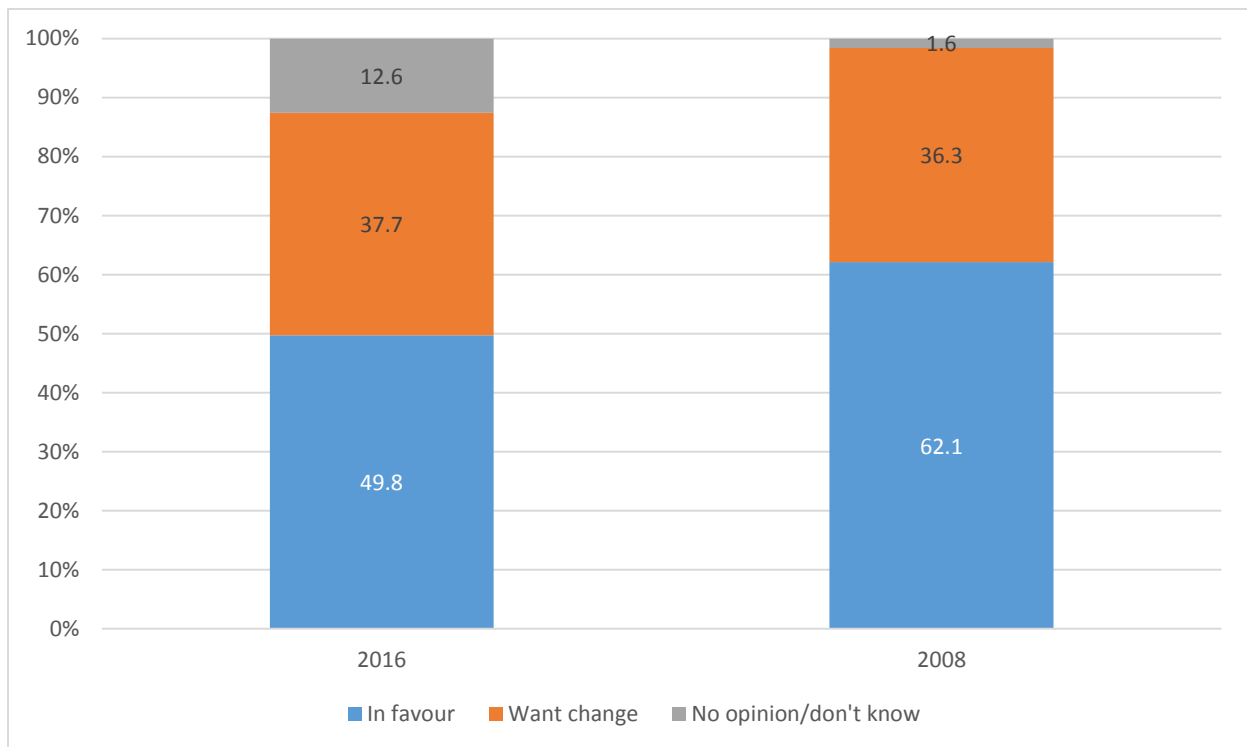
14. An Attitude Survey was completed in May 2016 by NWA Social Research, an independent market research company. A copy of this report is attached at **Appendix A**.

15. Half of all respondents (50% [62% in 2008]) indicated that they are in favour of cycling in the town centre continuing as it is now, rising to 85% of respondents who cycled to the town centre and 61% of those who have a bicycle. Likelihood of giving 'in favour' responses continually decreased with age from 63% of those aged 16 to 29 falling to 28% of those over the age of 70. 38% of the overall sample indicated that they would like to see a change in cycling in the town centre, rising to 68% of respondents over the age of 70. 13% of respondents had 'no opinion' at this point.

16. This represents a reduction in the number of people in favour of cycling, down from 62% in 2008. The percentage of respondents against cycling in the town centre rose from 36% to 38% in the same period. There was a significant increase in the number of people who had no opinion.

Q10: Are you in favour of cycling in the Town Centre continuing as it is now or would you like to see this change?

(Overall - % - 414 respondents)



17. Respondents who wanted to see restrictions placed on cycling in the Town Centre were then given a list of potential restrictions; of these options “no cycling in the Town Centre at all” was the highest response. This did however represent a reduction from 58% to 44% compared to the 2008 survey.
18. 54% of respondents were aware that cyclists are allowed in the Town Centre at any time, while a further 2% were either aware ‘but thought time restricted’ (0%) or ‘thought places allowed were restricted’ (1%). 44% were ‘not aware cyclists allowed in the town centre’.
19. 85% of respondents had seen someone cycling in the Town Centre.
20. Of respondents who had seen people cycling in the Town Centre (352 respondents), 37% indicated that they had personally experienced problems with cyclists.
21. 19% of the overall sample indicated that they had experienced problems because of people driving or parking cars, vans, lorries or mobility scooters in Darlington town centre; 81% had not.

Conclusion

- 22.** The Attitude Survey continues to indicate that the majority of those offering an opinion are in favour of cycling in the Pedestrian Heart, though the percentage in favour has fallen significantly.