
CYCLING IN DARLINGTON PEDESTRIAN HEART

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on matters associated with Cycling in the Pedestrian Heart that arose from recommendations of Place Scrutiny Committee 5 February 2015 and agreed by Cabinet on 3rd March 2015.

Summary

2. The history and background of Cycling in Darlington Pedestrian Heart has been covered in earlier reports to Place Scrutiny and Cabinet. It is not proposed to revisit the history but the background papers are highlighted below.
3. In February 2015 Place Scrutiny Committee undertook further work in relation to cycling in the pedestrianised area of the Town Centre.
4. A series of actions were recommended to Cabinet and subsequently agreed. This report provides an update on actions.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Members note the updates on the actions agreed by Cabinet.
 - (b) Members note the findings of the Road Safety Audit in relation to an alternative cycle route around the Town Centre and agree that this is not progressed.
 - (c) Members agree to progress the findings of the Road Safety Audit in relation to increased signing to delineate where cyclists can and cannot cycle within the town centre.

Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

- i. Cabinet Report and Minutes - 16 November 2004
- ii. Cabinet Report and Minutes – 12 February 2008
- iii. Cabinet Report and Minutes – 3 February 2009
- iv. Economy and Environment Scrutiny Report and Minutes - 18 June 2009
- v. Economy and Environment Scrutiny Report and Minutes - 7 January 2010

- vi. Economy and Environment Scrutiny Report and Minutes - 10 February 2011
- vii. Place Scrutiny Committee Report and Minutes - 5 February 2015
- viii. Cabinet Minutes 3 March 2015
- ix. Place Scrutiny Committee Report and Minutes - 6 April 2017

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	Cycling in the pedestrian heart was introduced in compliance with Local Transport Plan objectives and specifically as part of Darlington's Cycling Demonstration Town project
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	Not applicable

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. The history and background to Cycling in Darlington Pedestrian Heart is covered in earlier reports to Place Scrutiny and Cabinet and the specific reports are identified as background papers to this report.
7. A report was submitted to Place Scrutiny on 5 February 2015 which provided the Committee further opportunity to consider the impact of cycling within the pedestrianised area as the result of an incident that occurred.
8. The Place Scrutiny Committee accepted in its resolution 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. Place Scrutiny Committee also resolved it is united in its objection and condemnation of anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre.
9. A series of actions were developed as a result of the work undertaken by the Committee and subsequently reported to Cabinet on 3rd March 2015. The actions agreed by Cabinet are listed below with an update:

Action (a)	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
The Council have met with the Police and this is an ongoing action and built into core partnership work.	

Action (b)	that it be noted that the Cycle Training includes advice on how to ride responsibly in the Town Centre where a child's school journey involves this route;
This is included in all level 3 cycle training where school children travel through the town centre as part of their journey to secondary school.	

Action (c)	that the Police provide increased focus on anti-social behaviour particularly on bikes and skateboards
This matter was raised at the meetings with the Police and has been given greater priority. The Council continue to work with the Police to address matters of this nature as part of our partnership working.	

Action (d)	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
The code of conduct and cycling in the town centre information has been made more prominent on the Local Motion website. The DBC customer Services team has also been briefed on the agreed process.	

Action (e)	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
This was deferred pending the outcome of Action (h) until such time as the road safety audit was complete in order that any recommendations from the report could be included in any scheme.	

Action (f)	that a further Attitude Survey be undertaken in February 2016, to be reported to Place Scrutiny Committee, as part of a comprehensive monitoring exercise
<p>This has been completed and the findings were reported back to Place Scrutiny Committee in April 2017.</p> <p>The Attitude Survey continues to indicate that the majority of those offering an opinion are in favour of cycling in the Pedestrian Heart (2008-62.1%, 2016-49.8%). The percentage in favour has fallen and this is attributable to an increase in those not offering an opinion. (2008-1.6%, 2016-12.6%). Those wanting a change have remained fairly stable (2008-36.3%, 2016-37.7%).</p>	

Action (g)	that a Road Safety Audit be undertaken
<p>A Road Safety Audit was commissioned to look at the existing arrangement and also to consider Action (h) a possible route around the town centre. This was carried out by a ROSPA Qualified Road Safety Auditor employed at Stockton on Tees Borough Council. A copy of the Road Safety Assessment report is attached at Appendix 1. Analysis of the findings is provided later in the report.</p>	

Action (h)	that Officers be requested to investigate the provision of a dedicated cycle route around the Pedestrian Heart in conjunction with cycling groups
<p>This was addressed as part of the road safety audit. A route has been identified but there are a number of safety issues that would need to be addressed. Cycling Infrastructure is a key element of the Transport Strategy and the Council will continue develop schemes to improve cycle routes and use of cycling. Analysis of the findings is provided later in the report.</p>	

Action (i)	that best practice of other local authorities be investigated
<p>Darlington was one of a small number of Cycle Demonstration Towns and as such has helped develop best practice. The Department for Transport Guidance (DfT) on pedestrianisation has been reviewed and the guidance used to develop the original scheme is still current. This was considered as part of the original decision making process and has been the subject of previous reviews. Research has been undertaken as to whether there have been any developments in pedestrianisation and cycle scheme design that would add value to the issues and concerns but this has not identified anything additional that could be introduced.</p>	

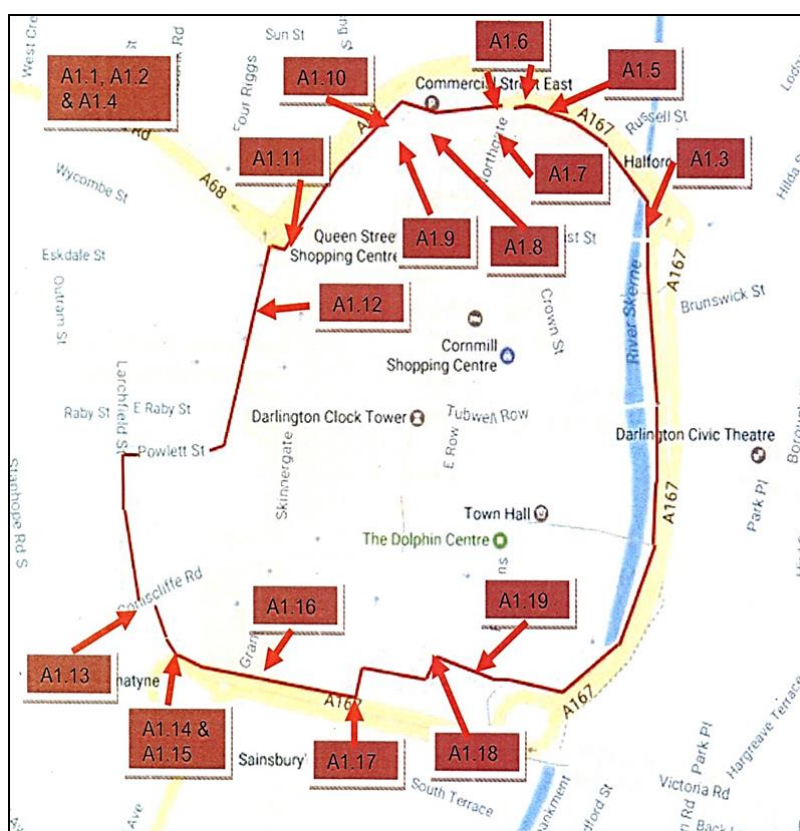
Road Safety Audit

10. Stockton Borough Council was commissioned to undertake a Safety Audit on behalf of DBC. The work was carried out by a ROSPA qualified Road Safety Auditor and the report (**Appendix 1**) details the results of a Road Safety Assessment of two options:-

- (a) Option 1 – Prohibiting cyclists in the pedestrian area of Darlington Town Centre and redirecting cyclists onto a safe route to navigate the town centre (Action (h));
- (b) Option 2 – Providing additional measures to retain pedal cyclists within the pedestrian area of Darlington Town Centre (Action (e)).

Option 1 – A route around the town centre

11. The audit identified a number of issues at specific locations along the alternative cycle route around the edge of the Town Centre. In total the road safety assessment identified 19 specific issues, of which 9 were identified as increasing the likelihood a conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. The majority of these potential conflicts were due to either the width of the current footway or alignment of the footway creating a situation where cyclists could come into contact with pedestrians due to their close proximity. Of the remaining issues, 6 were considered to increase the risk of cyclists being involved in collisions/falls. A plan showing the location of the identified risks is provided below.



Option 1 – Road Safety Assessment – Location of issues

12. More generally though the report suggests that if pedal cyclists are to be prohibited from using the town centre between 10am and 5pm then clear signage at all the various links around the town centre would be required. Lack of clear signage may increase the risk of collisions and/or nonconformity of the pedal cycle restrictions.
13. As a recommendation to deal with this issue the report suggests ensuring clear signage is located at all points around the town centre to clearly advise cyclists that they are not permitted to access the town centre between 10am and 5pm and clear directional signage to navigate the Town Centre on a safe route.
14. Previous work undertaken by Place Scrutiny debated whether the introduction of a prohibition would be adhered to or be practically enforceable. The views were that a prohibition might be adhered to by certain cyclists who generally cycle responsibly through the town centre, therefore inconveniencing them contrary to policy objectives, but might not have any credence with some cyclists whose behaviour the prohibition would be aimed at.
15. Option 1 includes details of locations where new crossings, dropped kerbs and stretches of off road cycle route would be appropriate. Existing street furniture and walls would need to be moved or altered to accommodate some of this work. This would involve significant cost particularly in locations where the footway is considered too narrow to accommodate cyclists. Even with these improvements there would still be potential conflict points with pedestrians.

Option 2 – the current route through the town centre

16. The audit identified two points:-
 - (a) It supported Action (e) and the potential benefits of additional signage to better delineate where cyclists are and are not permitted to cycle.
 - (b) Recommended that clearer signage be provided to make it clear that cycling is prohibited in Post House Wynd.

Analysis

17. The report provides Members with a comprehensive update against all of the actions. Most of these actions have been completed and Members are asked to note completion.
18. Road Safety Audits identify risks to be considered. There were significantly less issues identified with the current arrangements versus a route around the town centre. There is also the need to consider the practical implications that have been the subject of previous Place Scrutiny work regarding enforcement, penalising cyclists who use the town centre safely. It is recommended Members note the contents of the Road Safety Audit and agree to progress with the actions identified in Option 2 and not progress Option 1.