

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity.
2.	Date:	28 th May 2012
3.	Title:	Proposed Cycling Improvements in and towards Rotherham town centre.
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

To inform Cabinet Member of proposals to improve access to and across Rotherham town centre for cyclists.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended Cabinet Member resolve that:

- i) the Director of Planning and Regeneration uses their delegated powers to promote a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to permit cycling within the pedestrianised areas as shown on drawing number 126/18/TT576 and that as part of the promotion of the TRO businesses and street market traders within the pedestrianised zone are consulted on the proposal to allow vehicle access during the hours of 4pm to 10am.
- ii) the businesses and street market traders within the pedestrianised zone are consulted as to allow vehicle access during the hours of 4pm to 10am and that
- iii) preliminary design and consultation be undertaken on the introduction of a cycle link from Westgate to Clifton Park and this be subject to a future report to Cabinet Member.
- iv) that detail design and consultation is undertaken on the proposal to extend the existing shared use footways on Bawtry Road (between the Woorygoose and Rotherway roundabouts) towards Canklow as shown on drawing number 126/18/TT577 and, subject to no objections being received, be implemented
- v) Investigations be undertaken into permitting cycling on identified routes through Clifton Park

7. Proposals and Details

Over recent years there has been significant investment into improving routes and facilities for cyclists towards and into Rotherham town centre, to provide a safer and more attractive environment for cycling, for example along Doncaster Road, East Dene and Wellgate. This builds upon the existing cycle facilities along routes into the town centre from Masbrough (cycle lanes on College Road), Moorgate (cycle lanes on Moorgate Road) and Templebrough (cycle lanes and shared use footways on Sheffield Road). However despite the progress being made the facilities along some cycle routes are limited and much more investment is needed within Rotherham to provide more continuous, direct and attractive routes for cyclists who wish to access or cross the town centre.

Rotherham town centre pedestrianised zone

The pedestrianised streets within the town centre are a significant barrier to cyclists who may want to access facilities or services such as employment, retail and education within this area or to those cyclists who may wish to travel across the town centre. Whilst there are a number of roads that cyclists can use to travel around the town centre, many of these roads (particularly the dual carriageways such as the A630 Centenary Way) carry large volumes of traffic and HGV's, travelling at a high speed. These roads are also not direct for cyclists wishing to cross the town centre and many would find the road environment and large junctions uncomfortable and intimidating to use.

In view of this a review of the existing town centre pedestrianised zone has been undertaken to determine which areas could be safely used by cyclists without unduly affecting the safety of pedestrians. The areas of the pedestrianised zone in which it is considered appropriate to allow cycling are shown on the drawing number 126/18/TT576, a copy of which is attached as Appendix A.

These streets have been designed for vehicle access, to accommodate loading and unloading, and therefore both drivers and pedestrians have good visibility of each other, this principle would also apply to cyclists using these streets. Consideration has been given to allowing cyclists to access the pedestrian areas only during certain times of the day, although it is considered that there are benefits in allowing cyclists to access shops and services within the town centre throughout the day and that difficulty related to enforcement are likely to arise if cycling is only permitted for part of the day.

It is also recommended that as part of the process to amend the existing Traffic Regulation Order to allow cycling within the pedestrianised zone that town centre businesses be consulted on changing the restriction on vehicle access between 10am and 5pm to one that applies between 10am and 4pm as after this time pedestrian activity in the town centre is low and this would allow more flexible access for loading/unloading at premises and the street market.

Allowing cyclists into the pedestrianised zone would bring a large number of accessibility benefits for cyclists, and help to promote cycling as a positive, healthy and cheaper mode of travel compared to private vehicles and public transport. This is also essential to ensure the development of a continuous and direct cycle network

and to compliment the investment along routes into the town centre from surrounding suburbs. This revision would be accomplished by changing the current no vehicles restriction to a no motor vehicles restriction and other than a revised TRO the only works required would be new road signs at entry points to the pedestrianised zone. Allowing cyclists to use pedestrian streets in town centres is not a new concept and this has been adopted by a number of towns and cities throughout England. Many towns/ cities have allowed cycling on some pedestrian streets 24 hours a day including for example Sheffield, Newcastle and Nottingham. Others permit cycling on pedestrian streets during quieter times of the day such as at commuter times including for example York, Ipswich and Leeds (Cycling England: Examples of Cycling Permitted in Pedestrian Areas).

There can be a perception by some that cycling in pedestrian areas could be dangerous. However the findings of a study undertaken by the Transport Research Laboratory for the Department for Transport published in the Department for Transport's Traffic Advisory leaflet 'Cycling in Pedestrian Areas' states that "*Accidents between pedestrians and cyclists were very rarely generated in pedestrianised areas (only one pedestrian/cyclist accident in 15 site years) in the sites studied*" and that "*observation revealed no real factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrianised areas, suggesting that cycling could be more widely permitted without detriment to pedestrians*". It should also be noted that all of the schemes within this report will be subject to Road Safety Audit as the detail of the schemes is developed.

Routes into Rotherham town centre

Initial investigations are being undertaken into the possibility of introducing continuous cross town cycle routes. The first area identified for investigation is a link from Westgate and Main Street to Clifton Park via High Street and Doncaster Gate to provide a direct and continuous route for cyclists from the west side of the town centre to the east and vice versa. It is recommended that this route is developed into a preliminary design and that a report be made to a future Cabinet Member meeting with further details and proposals resulting from this investigation.

In addition to this it is proposed to extend an established shared use cycle route that currently runs from the Worrygoose roundabout to the Canklow side of the Rotherway roundabout into Canklow. This would involve converting two sections of existing footway into shared use footway and introducing contra-flow cycling on the service road which runs parallel to Bawtry Road at Canklow Meadows. Details of this proposal are shown on drawing number 126/18/TT577, a copy of which is attached as Appendix B. It is recommended that detail design and consultation is undertaken on the proposal and that, subject to no objections being received, this be implemented.

Together these two schemes would give a direct and continuous cycle route from the Worrygoose to Mushroom roundabouts via Canklow, the town centre and Doncaster Road. It would also link the Whiston area into cycle routes on Sheffield Road, Templebrough which head towards Magna and Meadowhall. Details on this route are shown on drawing number 127/17/TT199, a copy of which is attached as Appendix C.

Clifton Park

Cycling in Clifton Park is currently prohibited by a by-law. Permitting cyclists to use the park would improve access for cyclists towards and out of the town centre from the East Dene and Clifton areas. In conjunction with the Green Spaces team it is proposed to investigate permitting cycling in Clifton Park which would be complemented with the signing of identified routes within the Park.

8. Finance

To permit cyclists to use the pedestrianised zone and to review its hours of operation would require consultation and a revision to an existing Traffic Regulation Order and it is estimated that this would cost approximately £10,000.

No cost estimate has been undertaken for the cycle route from Westgate to Clifton Park although potential funding for this scheme is available from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid and the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Capital Programme for 2012/2013.

To extend the existing shared use scheme from the Rotherway roundabout towards Canklow would require consultation, a new Traffic Regulation Order with associated signing and it is estimated that this would cost approximately £10,000 and funding is available from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Capital Programme for 2012/2013.

A change to the bylaw that prohibits cycling in Clifton Park would cost approximately £5000.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

If cycling along pedestrian streets in the town centre is not permitted in appropriate areas, Rotherham town centre will continue to act as a barrier to accessing employment, retail, and education/ training for the growing number of cyclists in Rotherham. In addition the full benefits of investment into facilities for cyclists along routes into the town centre would not be realised if cyclists could not then continue along a direct, safe routes to access facilities and services within the town centre or on the other side of the pedestrian areas.

Objections to the proposal to permit cycling in the pedestrianised zone may be received from partially sighted people and representative groups. It is considered that the risks in relation to potential conflict, as mentioned within the main body of the report, are low and that similarly to vehicle peak times the highest movements are likely to occur during the times that vehicles access is permitted.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This scheme would improve sustainable access by bicycle to the large number of employment, retail, and education/ training opportunities located within the town centre and industrial estates nearby. This scheme will also help to create a more viable cycle network for those who may not be able to afford a private vehicle, rising fuel costs or public transport to access employment. This is inline with the primary goal in LTP3, and the main LSTF priority of supporting economic growth. Promoting cycling as a mode of transport in the town centre through an improved cycle network also enhances social inclusion and health, another priority in LTP3, by encouraging cycling as an active means of everyday travel. Cycling also helps to reduce vehicle emissions inline with the other LSTF main priority and LTP goal. Road safety for cyclists will also be improved by providing traffic free alternative routes to the major roads, and junctions/ roundabouts around the town centre.

By encouraging cycling this scheme will also help to meet the aims of the corporate plan under Improving the Environment which include reduced CO2 emissions and lower levels of air pollution, and more people are cycling, walking or using public transport.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Local Transport Plan 3.
- A Sustainable Journey to Work in South Yorkshire: Local Sustainable Transport Fund- Key Component.
- RMBC Corporate Plan 2012-2013
- DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/93: Cycling in Pedestrian Areas.
- Cycling England: Examples of Cycling Permitted in Pedestrian Areas.
- Cycling in vehicle restricted areas TRL 583 2003.
- Appendix A – drawing number 126/18/TT576 showing the areas of the pedestrianised zone in which it is considered appropriate to allow
- Appendix B – drawing number 126/18/TT577 showing details of the proposed extension an established shared use cycle route
- Appendix C – drawing number 126/17/TT199 showing details of the existing cycling provision between Worrygoose roundabout and Mushroom roundabout

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