Cheltenham Borough Council

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18th July 2005

Shared use of pedestrian areas by cyclists

Report of Assistant Director Integrated Transport

1. Summary

1.1 The first section of this report outlines the council’s approved strategy for cycling and highlights its achievements in the last year and proposals for the current year.

1.2 The report then reviews the council’s decision not to exclude cyclists from the High Street and Cambray Place vehicle restricted area which opened in early 2004. A full account of the consultation process was taken to Committee in May 2004.

1.3 The last section considers the results of monitoring of cycling levels and road safety in the town centre. It makes recommendations aimed at providing a manageable and pragmatic solution which balances the needs of pedestrians and cyclists within the town centre.

1.4 The views of Members are sought on:

1.4.1 the council’s work to encourage cycling as part of Cheltenham’s contribution to the Local Transport Plan; and

1.4.2 draft proposals for a more consistent approach to cycling in the town centre which would allow shared use\(^1\) cycling on the High Street (between Pittville Street, Regent Street and Winchcombe Street) and on part of the Promenade between Crescent Terrace and Imperial Circus.

2. Introduction

2.1 Cheltenham is renowned for its architectural and cultural heritage, its parks and its gardens. It is a regional centre for tourism and it has the 34\(^{th}\) largest shopping centre in the country\(^2\). All these selling points attract people to visit, work and live here however this success also brings with it traffic congestion, pollution and road accidents. Through its highways agency agreement the council has sought to tackle these problems, investing over £1 million annually in recent years to improve the highway network so that more trips are made on foot, by bike or using public transport.

\(^1\) The term shared use describes a route over which there is no segregation between cyclists and pedestrians.

\(^2\) Experian survey 2004
2.2 Cycling is a healthy, convenient, quiet and energy efficient way of covering short distances, which constitute most of our trips. Cheltenham is a relatively flat and compact town and local cycling levels are amongst the highest in the country. Some 7% of journeys to work are by bike – three and a half times the national average. More people cycle to work than use buses and there is a supportive culture for cycling in the town. By investing in cycle-friendly infrastructure and policies we have helped to maintain local cycling levels over the past decade, against a decline nationally.

3. **Transport Strategy**

3.1 Under the umbrella of the National Cycling Strategy the *Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2000/1 – 2005/6* (LTP) aims to make cycling a real alternative for local trips. Using mainly LTP funds we are working to:

- Develop a strategic cycle network linking existing cycle networks;
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links between urban centres and adjacent residential and employment areas
- Extend cycle priority within Cheltenham town centre;
- Implement cycle access across barriers to movement;
- Implement a programme of cycling improvements to provide a seamless journey;
- Introduce more secure cycle parking in the town centre and local centres; and
- Maintain cycle tracks and facilities to a high standard.

3.2 Significant improvements to the cycle network have been made by introducing traffic management measures which make it more advantageous to cycle. With only minor physical works it is often possible to give cyclists access to streets where other traffic is prohibited, shortening their route and making it quicker than by car.

3.3 The provision of cycle routes alone is not enough to encourage cycling. This requires a broader level of support extending from cycle friendly policies to the provision of cycle parking, car park charging, consideration of cyclists in new development and a supportive culture.

4. **Highways Programme 2004/05 and 2005/06**

4.1 Last year the council delivered the following Integrated Transport schemes and projects to encourage cycling:

4.1.1 A paved and lit cycle and pedestrian route through Pittville Park to access the Honeybourne Line. Of the £180k total cost £100k was funded by GCHQ to encourage cycling to its Benhall site and £25k was funded by Sustrans’ Safe Routes to School project.

4.1.2 A pedestrian crossing on Fairview Road near Sherborne Place. This helps pedestrians, cyclists and parents with children at Holy Trinity school cross a busy road between the town centre and Fairview. Of the £34k total cost £15k was funded from local development.

4.1.3 A paved and lit cycle and pedestrian route between Warden Hill and The Park. This £64k scheme improves access to the town centre and to local schools (St James’ and Bournside). It was fully funded from developer contributions.

4.1.4 The Imperial Lane contraflow cycle lane and junction works on Rodney Road. This provides a quiet two-way alternative to Oriel Road and links to cycle routes to the south and east of the town (to the Park and Charlton Kings). The £19k cost was fully funded by developer contributions.
4.1.5 A cycle friendly route from the Honeybourne Line and station to Gloscat and GCHQ via Libertus Road and Tennyson Road. Further works are planned this year and the total scheme is expected to cost over £100k, including funding from GCHQ and Gloscat.

4.1.6 Various minor projects to improve the cycling network: the provision of continuous signing of cycle routes; cycle parking at in the town centre, Montpellier, at the station and at park and ride sites.

4.1.7 Over 8000 copies of the Cheltenham Cycle Map distributed to major businesses (including Kraft, GCHQ, Ladies College, the University, Gloscat, Hospital) and collected from the Municipal Offices and public libraries. Produced together with Cheltenham Cycle Campaign it has been cited by the Department for Transport as an example of best practice and other councils are now using this approach.

4.1.8 Providing an on-line cycle map and other useful links for cyclists on the Traffic and Transport pages of the council’s website. The interactive map developed in-house allows you to measure the length of your route and find secure cycle parking.

4.1.9 This year we are proposing the following schemes:

4.1.10 Completion of the missing link cycle route along the A40 Gloucester Road, to provide an off-road link along the A40 from Benhall roundabout to Lansdown bridge (£120k from GCHQ, also towards a new crossing on the A40).

4.1.11 Extension of the Honeybourne Line route under Queens Road into the station car park (est £90k).

4.1.12 Naunton Park to Sandford Park cycle route: A £45k project to enable two-way cycling along Keynsham Road and Naunton Lane, with a crossing of the A40 Thirlestaine Road. This will improve access between schools, residential areas, the hospital and the Charlton Kings cycle route.

4.1.13 Contra-flow cycling along Back Montpellier Terrace and Montpellier Street to provide cyclists with convenient two-way access along quiet streets (est £30k)

4.1.14 Further signing and secure cycle parking in locations to be confirmed (e.g. Salisbury Avenue shops)

5. Cycling in the town centre

Background

5.1 In early 2004 the council completed the pedestrianisation of a section of the High Street and Cambray Place near Beechwood Arcade. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the Built Environment & Transport sub-group of the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership the Deputy approved the recommendation to continue to allow cycling here and to allow cycling on the Strand.

5.2 As this represented a change in policy since the last pedestrianisation of the High Street in 1994 it was agreed that this should be a pilot for shared use between pedestrians and cyclists. If the pilot was judged to be successful then this approach could be extended to other pedestrian areas of the town centre.

5.3 Details of the consultation process and the points raised by stakeholders were reported to and discussed by Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in May 2004. Most Members who spoke supported the decision not to ban cycling as part of the Cambray Place scheme and acknowledged the lack of suitable alternative safe routes. There was agreement that thorough consultation would be required if the ban on cycling in other pedestrian areas of the town centre were to be reviewed. Minutes of the meeting are set out in Appendix A of this report.
5.4 Review of Policy

5.5 In continental Europe it is the norm for cyclists to share space with pedestrians in the centre of towns and cities. This approach has become increasingly more widespread in the UK with many towns and cities reviewing their policies on cycling as they embark upon urban renewal schemes and create large traffic-free centres.

5.6 Towns and cities which allow cyclists and pedestrians to mix include: Bristol, Birmingham, Cambridge, Canterbury, Hull, Ipswich, Kingston, Leicester, Lincoln, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Newport, Oxford, Southampton, Reading, Sutton and York. Cheltenham can, and has, learnt lessons from these towns.

5.7 Since 1988 the centre of Cheltenham has benefited from several new pedestrian priority areas. These now extend along the High Street from the Strand in the east, past Cambray Place and Regent Street to Pittville Street. To the south of Boots Corner is the paved area of the Promenade with its cafés. To the west is the new Brewery development and works on the High Street to make it better for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. Through this incremental approach a large area of the town centre has changed significantly over this period, both physically and also in terms of its accessibility by people travelling by car, bus, taxi, cycle and on foot. Eighteen months since the completion of the High Street / Cambray Place works it is time to consider whether the approach to cycling in the town centre is still appropriate in its current form.

5.8 As part a review of cycling in the town centre the Council is pleased that on 19th July speakers from Gloucestershire Constabulary, Living Streets and Cheltenham Cycle Campaign will be presenting their views to Members on this committee. For your information Living Streets is a national organisation which represents pedestrians. The Council has been working with local representatives since a Gloucestershire branch was established in 2004 and in May 2005 the Council hosted a national conference with Living Streets to promote the economic benefits of pedestrianisation.

5.9 The review of policy will take into account all evidence, government guidance and the results of further consultation with stakeholders. To assist in this review the Council has monitored levels of cycling and walking in the High Street and Promenade. It has monitored traffic levels on the inner ring road and along the High Street between Rodney Road and Winchcombe Street and it has analysed injury accident data in the town centre over the past five years.

5.10 A summary of this evidence is set out in Appendix C. Members may wish to consider the following points:

- high traffic flows on the inner ring road, of 10400 to 21500 vehicles per day.
- 45 injury accidents to cyclists and pedestrians on the inner ring road over a 5 year period, and none on the Promenade and High Street paved areas.
- High levels of cycling in the town centre. This is not just confined to commuting as 55% of cycling takes place outside main commuting hours.
- 78% of cyclists ride through sections of the High Street and Promenade where cycling is prohibited. Cyclists are most likely to dismount and walk in the High Street by Marks & Spencer (27%) and least likely to dismount on the Promenade (11%). More detailed assessment reveals that in all the places surveyed a higher proportion of cyclists dismount at times when there are the most pedestrians.

3 Including Appendix B – extract from Department for Transport guidance on shared use facilities.
• 162 motor vehicles using the High Street between Rodney Road and Winchcombe Street between 4pm and 5pm – one every 22 seconds.

5.11 Officers are aware of one injury accident in April 2005 when a young male cyclist collided with a toddler. According to witness accounts he had been cautioned by a member of the public and was cycling dangerously. A cycle ban is therefore unlikely to have prevented this collision however additional signage to make pedestrians more aware of cycling here may be worth considering.

5.12 In light of these findings draft proposals are being considered to allow two way cycling on the High Street and Regent Street (between Pittville Street, Regent Street and Winchcombe Street) and on part of the Promenade between Crescent Terrace and Imperial Circus (between the rows of bollards). Consideration is also being given to additional discretionary signs to advise pedestrians of the presence of cyclists as existing statutory signage, whilst technically correct, is not widely understood.

5.13 The aim of these proposals is to:

- support the approved transport strategy;
- balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable groups;
- improve consistency of rules within the town centre to reduce confusion;
- acknowledge practical issues of enforcement;
- reduce overall numbers of injury accidents to pedestrians and cyclists within the town centre ring road; and
- reflect best practice from other towns.

5.14 These proposals will be subject to substantial further consultation which is proposed over the coming months. Posters will be erected on-street, an on-line questionnaire will be set up on the Council’s web site and we will be seeking the views of people on the Council’s Viewpoint 1000 panel. The results of this process will then be considered by the Transport & Built Environment sub-group before any recommendation is made to the Deputy.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial Most schemes are funded by Gloucestershire County Council and section 106 receipts. Fees earned by implementing the highways programme offset a significant proportion of the costs of the highways agency partnership.

6.2 Legal None arising from the recommendations of the report though the implementation of schemes is likely to legal input in terms of Traffic Regulation Orders, other Statutory Notices and requirements.

6.3 Personnel The promotion of integrated, sustainable transport including cycling is part of the council’s agency agreement with the county council.

6.4 Equal opportunities, social justice and anti-poverty Cycling is an inexpensive and socially inclusive alternative form of transport particularly convenient for journeys less than 5 miles in length.
6.5 **Environmental** Cycling contributes towards sustainable development by reducing negative effects of car use.

**Background papers**
- Highways Programme 2005/06 - Cabinet March 2005
- Implementing a cycle strategy in Cheltenham – Environment O&S Committee 17\textsuperscript{th} May 2004

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**Accountability**
Cllr John Morris, Deputy (Built Environment & Democracy)

**Scrutiny Function**
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Appendix A

Minutes of Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee 17th May 2004

Item 8. Implementing a cycling strategy in Cheltenham

The Assistant Director presented a report that:

• set out the key elements of a cycling strategy for Cheltenham.
• reviewed recent projects to improving conditions for cycling
• highlighted projects scheduled within the 2004/2005 programme.

The report also considered practical issues from implementing policies to improve conditions for both pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre. The committee was informed that pedestrianisation of a section of High street between Rodney Road and Cambray Place and the north end of Cambray Place had taken place in 2003/2004. This route had provided a key, cross town route for cyclists.

In April 2003, the Transport Partnership had considered the past policy of banning cycling from pedestrianisation schemes. Given the importance of this particular route to the encouraging of cycling, and the inherent danger to cyclists using the alternative route on the inner ring road, it was considered that to ban cycling would make cycling in Cheltenham less convenient.

After debate it was agreed not to ban cycling as part of this pedestrianisation scheme. It was intended this should be a pilot for shared use of pedestrian areas by pedestrians and cyclists that could be extended to other pedestrian areas of the town if the pilot was judged to have been successful.

The proposal to allow cycling in this pedestrianisation scheme had been referred to in a public consultation letter sent to all members as well as the Police, transport groups, stakeholders, Disability Action Cheltenham, local businesses and residents in July 2003. The Police supported the proposals and no objections to the revised Traffic Order were received although the Chamber of Commerce was “extremely worried” about the mix of pedestrians and cycles and one member of the public had “reservations”.

The committee was informed that a number of towns and cities were revising how they dealt with cycling in their centres and it was clearly necessary to monitor the use of the area for all users including pedestrians and cyclists. The Assistant Director (Integrated Transport) in responding to points raised by members as follows:

• It had been difficult to find organisations representing pedestrians. The consultations with the Transportation Partnership had considered this issue but felt that they too were pedestrians and felt they were able to be representative. The concern with regard to dangerous cycling was acknowledged but it was indicated that the Police would be able to take action against anyone cycling in a dangerous manner.

• The issue of cycling in the Cambray area would be closely monitored, the alternative for cyclists was to use the ring road that was more dangerous for them and it was safer to allow use of the pedestrian area.

Councillor Mrs. Driver was of the view that there should be a segregated route for cyclists through pedestrian areas.

Councillor Mrs. Hibbert indicated that responsible cyclists would dismount to cross pedestrian areas. Cycling should continue to be banned from all pedestrian areas. There should be a thorough consultation with the general public.
Councillor Morris indicated he had no problem with the mix between cyclists and pedestrians but argued that any change to regulations should be done across the town and brought in in one phase.

The Deputy, Built Environment and Democracy, restated that a ban on cycling in the Cambray area had not been considered and that the success or otherwise should be considered and the principles applied, if appropriate, to other pedestrian areas.

Councillor Morris asked how long it would be before an overall scheme could be put in place and whether further provision for parking cycles in the town centre and outlying areas would be made.

It was explained that it would require an amendment to Traffic Regulation Orders. The Integrated Transport Section was fully resourced and it was estimated it could take approximately twelve months from any decision to amend the Traffic Orders.

The committee in generally discussing the issue of cycling referred to the following areas: -

• The benefit to the Hesters Way area of the off-road cycle routes
• Whether the Police approach to cycling on or off footways had changed as a national policy.
• The benefits of cycling were acknowledged – the level of cycle education needed to be enhanced to ensure the majority of cyclists acted responsibly.
• Reference was made to hedgerows adjoining footpaths which should be better maintained and also that some aspects of cycle facilities, in particular underpass on the A40 were not maintained to a condition that encouraged their use.

Councillor Chaplin made a plea that if more parking facilities for cycles were to be included these should not to intrude on to the character of the areas. The Deputy (Built Environment and Democracy) acknowledged this point and that the design of the street furniture in the Cambray area was important and would be treated sensitively given the nature of the area.
Appendix B

Extract from Local Transport Note ‘Adjacent and Shared Use Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists’ published by the Department for Transport’.

6.5.1

8.2 Pedestrianised areas

8.2.1 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. 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.

8.2.2 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.

8.2.3 Where cyclists use a pedestrianised area mainly as a through route and/or there are significant flows of cyclists, it may be desirable to restrict cycling to clearly defined corridors. Typically, the cycle track could be demarcated using cycle logos and coloured surfacing. A small level difference could also be considered.

8.2.4 The provision of cycle parking facilities at the entry points to pedestrianised areas can help reduce cycling activity within them, but cycle parking should also be provided close to destinations within these areas as many cyclists will not use short-term cycle parking facilities more than 50 metres from their final destination.

8.2.5 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 cyclists access outside these hours would allow them to use the route for commuting.

8.2.6 If cyclists are to be permitted to use all or part of a pedestrianised area they must be given legal authority to do so by amending an Order extinguishing the right to use vehicles on a highway under Section 249 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or Traffic Regulation Order under Section 1 or 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, whichever is appropriate. Further details are provided in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/93, Cycling in Pedestrian Areas, DoT 1993.
Appendix C – Survey and Accident Information

Cycle Surveys

Weekday survey 29th June 2005 (08.00 -18.00hrs) – weather dry and sunny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Cyclists</th>
<th>Cycling</th>
<th>Dismounted</th>
<th>10am to 4pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Street (M&amp;S)</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>330 (73%)</td>
<td>123 (27%)</td>
<td>257 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street (Cambray Place)</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>380 (80%)</td>
<td>97 (20%)</td>
<td>264 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade (Cavendish Ho.)</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>210 (89%)</td>
<td>25 (11%)</td>
<td>115 (49%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accident Data

The following pedestrian and cyclist injury accident data is available for the period 1/1/2000 to 31/3/2005:

- Inner Ring Road - 31 pedestrian (21 slight, 10 serious), 13 cyclist (11 slight, 2 serious), 1 pedestrian/cyclist collision (pedestrian slightly injured)
- Promenade (paved area o/s Cavendish House) - none involving pedestrians or cyclists;
- High Street (paved area o/s M&S) - none involving pedestrians or cyclists;
- High Street & Cambray Place paved area - only for period since scheme was opened 1/1/04 - none involving conflict between pedestrians and cyclists (see note)

Note: April 2005, toddler hit by a young cyclist. This is likely to be included in later records.

Pedestrian Surveys

Snapshot surveys carried out on 7th March 2003 between 11.30-15.30hrs (4 hr, weekday survey)

- High Street o/s Winchcombe Street & Regent Arcade: 2176 towards Boots Corner, 1845 towards the Strand; 897 up Winchcombe St; 2104 into Regent Arcade.
- Promenade, @ junction with Ormond Place: 3861 towards Boots Corner; 3797 towards Queens Hotel; 602 into Ormond Place; 713 out of Ormond Place.

Traffic Surveys

High Street (from Rodney Rd along High Street into Winchcombe St) 07.00-19.00 Tuesday 24th May 2005 : total 1556 vehicles (64 cycles, 7 motorcycles, 1334 cars & taxis, 176 light goods vehicles, 39 medium & heavy goods vehicles). Busiest hour 16.00-17.00 172 vehicles including 10 cycles.

Inner Ring Road (2001 average annual daily traffic, 24 hr traffic flows): Oriel Road/Town Hall 17900; Royal Well Road 15600; Albion Street 10400, High Street (nr Strand) 21500.