



Gateshead Cycling Strategy: Consultation response from the Newcastle Cycling Campaign

As the new Gateshead Cycling Strategy currently stands, we cannot accept that the strategy is suitable for its intended purpose, and therefore we must **OBJECT** and give our reasons in more detail in the following:

Lacking a Vision

Gateshead remains without vision and without a coherent cycle network. We urge Gateshead to be much clearer on what type of cycling it wants to see and nurture it. The council should assess its barriers to cycling with much more honesty and clarity than is currently the case. That can then be followed by apportioning true and meaningful targets such as cycling modal share. This may also involve internal discussions, we suggest, with Members and Directors on wider agendas such as budget resilience and health.

Not Using National Guidelines

The strategy does not make any reference to DfT Local Transport Note 2/08: Cycle Infrastructure Design (<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/local-transport-notes/ltn-2-08.pdf>). This document is currently the main source of guidance for Local Authorities on designing infrastructure for cycling. We feel that Gateshead should be using these guidelines as the basis for the technical design within the new strategy and Gateshead should be striving to meet the guidelines as a minimum standard across the borough, rather than creating separate standards that do not even meet the national guidelines, such as those in Appendix B of the strategy. We strongly advise Gateshead to think this through more carefully in legal and ethical terms.

Minimal Target Growth

We feel that the aim of increasing the number of cycle journeys by 2% per year, is too low as the number of people cycling is already low, and this amount will make little difference. Gateshead has previously had a target to make cycling the mode of transport for 6% of journeys by 2010, which the council did not meet, we feel as though Gateshead council should be looking at why this target was not met, and aim to rectify this. We would prefer to see a target that is set in relation to the modal share of journeys, and a timeframe in which Gateshead hopes to achieve this. Newcastle City Council have done this with their Cycle Plan, and it would be good to see Gateshead aiming for something similarly appropriate and ambitious. It would also be good to see Gateshead align its strategy to Newcastle's.

Information and Data Transparency

We would also like to see the strategy set out a target of publishing all cycle count information (including the raw data). So that the data can be independently read and used for statistical purposes. Sections 7.7 to 7.13 of the new strategy cover the recording and reporting of cycling casualties. The strategy states that the recording of casualties will change to use the national indicators NI147 and NI48. While these would provide figures as set out nationally, we would like to see Gateshead make the raw data available, for the same reasons as the cycle count data. Gateshead is operating a data website on behalf of ITA Tyne & Wear and could take the lead in publishing and visually presenting data there.

Maintenance of Cycle Infrastructure

Though the strategy has a section for Construction and Maintenance, there is currently no clear explanation of the maintenance that the council expect to provide for its cycle infrastructure. We would like to see a more defined maintenance plan, including how the council will deal with Snow and Ice on cycle routes.

Until these very major concerns have been addressed we feel we must object to the strategy.

Submitted by Newcastle Cycling Campaign on 21 February 2013

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