



Wheels in Motion

Seven Strategic Cycle Routes to the Heart of Newcastle

Proposal

The Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bid, *An Active Future for Tyne and Wear*, identifies the main challenges faces our area.

‘Wheels in Motion’ seeks to address one of the key findings which show that cycling levels in Tyne and Wear are amongst the lowest in the country. It outlines how improved cycling links can help promote active travel and increase the number of cycling journeys.

It will also help to deliver the two key LSTF requirements:

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Support the local economy and facilitate economic growth

and

help contribute towards Tyne & Wear’s three initial LSTF criteria:

- Manage congestion on key corridors
- Improving sustainable access to key employment and growth sites
- Promoting active travel and healthy travel, with a particular focus on cycling

In addition, Tyne and Wear LTP objectives seek to “*encourage a cycling revolution and mode shift to walking and public transport*”. LSTF funding for ‘Wheels in Motion’ can help sustain local employers, businesses, shops and schools by making them easier, safer and more pleasant to get to.

Better provision for cycling is essential for our local centres to remain economically viable and sustainable. Providing real alternatives to the need to travel by car will reduce congestion, reduce carbon emissions, improve safety, lower noise levels, enhance social inclusion and make people healthier.

‘Wheels in Motion’ envisages the creation of seven strategic cycling routes linking residential areas of Newcastle with the city centre via key corridors. These cycle routes would be comprehensively signed and would incorporate safety measures for cyclists. Newcastle already has an above average number of 20mph zones and Priority Lanes which would help make this more possible.

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Making cycling a mainstream activity will lead to healthier lifestyles. The seven strategic routes will help target under-represented groups, particularly those from deprived areas and from areas of high unemployment, and will encourage more women and people from our BME communities to cycle.

We believe that encouraging, supporting and training schoolchildren to cycle is essential to help develop a cycling culture. The seven strategic routes pass close to a number of schools that are already seeing increased levels of cycling by pupils. This bid complements work already underway in schools as part of our key components funding.

The routes will pass by, and provide safe cycling facilities for Newcastle University (20,000 students), Northumbria University (30,000 students), Newcastle College (30,000 students) and the proposed University Technical College (900 students). Comprehensive signage will enable the 30,000 new students who come to Newcastle each year from outside the area, to find their way around the city quickly, easily and safely.

Improving cycling provision in Newcastle already has widespread political and community support. In October, 2011 Newcastle City Councillors unanimously agreed a notice of motion which dealt with 'Cycling Provision in Newcastle'. This included the statement that the *"City Council believes in creating a cycle-friendly city with an embedded cycling culture"*. One of the key measures outlined was the creation of a Strategic Cycle Network.

'Wheels in Motion' will build upon the new cycling strategy which has been developed to increase the number of people cycling in Newcastle. Part of this cycling strategy already envisages the creation of seven strategic cycle routes linking residential areas to the city centre.

LSTF funding will make it possible for a methodology for the seven strategic cycle routes to be drawn up. This will allow:

- Destinations to be confirmed
- Target journey times to be set
- Consultation on possible routes
- Detailed design and modelling for each route
- Consultations to take place on design and signage

In addition, we propose that three of these routes be taken through to completion stage by providing additional funding for:

- Construction
- Testing of provision
- Remediation and sign off
- Publicity for cycling promotion
- Monitoring of the new routes and signage

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Two of the new routes will serve new residential areas being created in Walker in the east of the city and Scotswood in the west of the city. These new communities are being built in areas which have the highest levels of unemployment, economic deprivation, poor health and lack of transport. Including good quality cycling provision from the start will increase the attractiveness of cycling.

The cycle routes will enable people from high unemployment areas to access jobs in a sustainable manner – not only in the city centre, but also in Walker Riverside, Newburn Haugh, Regent Centre, the Great Park, and Science City.

The third route, to the Great Park in the North of the city, has been chosen as this has the greatest potential to increase the number of cycling trips, and is an area which has the highest levels of congestion on the corridor to the city centre.

These three demonstration routes will go through key district shopping centres such as Welbeck Road, Shields Road, Gosforth High Street, Adelaide Terrace and Elswick Road helping to protect and enhance their vitality.

The experience gained by providing the demonstration routes will be valuable when it comes to constructing the rest of the strategic routes. In turn, this experience will be of great benefit when the Council is able to move to the next stage and provide secondary routes in residential areas.

The seven strategic routes will provide the backbone for improved cycle routes throughout Newcastle. This will dramatically increase cycle provision and increase the numbers of people cycling for work, shopping, education and leisure purposes. This increase in sustainable transport will help reduce congestion and will be a great asset when Newcastle formalises its bid to become the European Green Capital in 2014.

We would envisage that LSTF funding during the first year would be mainly revenue, and during years 2, 3, and 4 it would be mainly capital. We would wish to meet with the LSTF bid team to discuss this proposal in more detail.

In conclusion, getting more people on bikes will help promote active travel, improve health, reduce congestion on key corridors, sustain existing retail centres, increase economic growth, target under-represented groups, reduce carbon emissions and help to make Newcastle a more pleasant place in which to live.

Bill Dodds
On behalf of Newcastle Cycling Campaign

Newcastle Cycling Campaign



Fig.1 Seven Strategic Cycle Routes

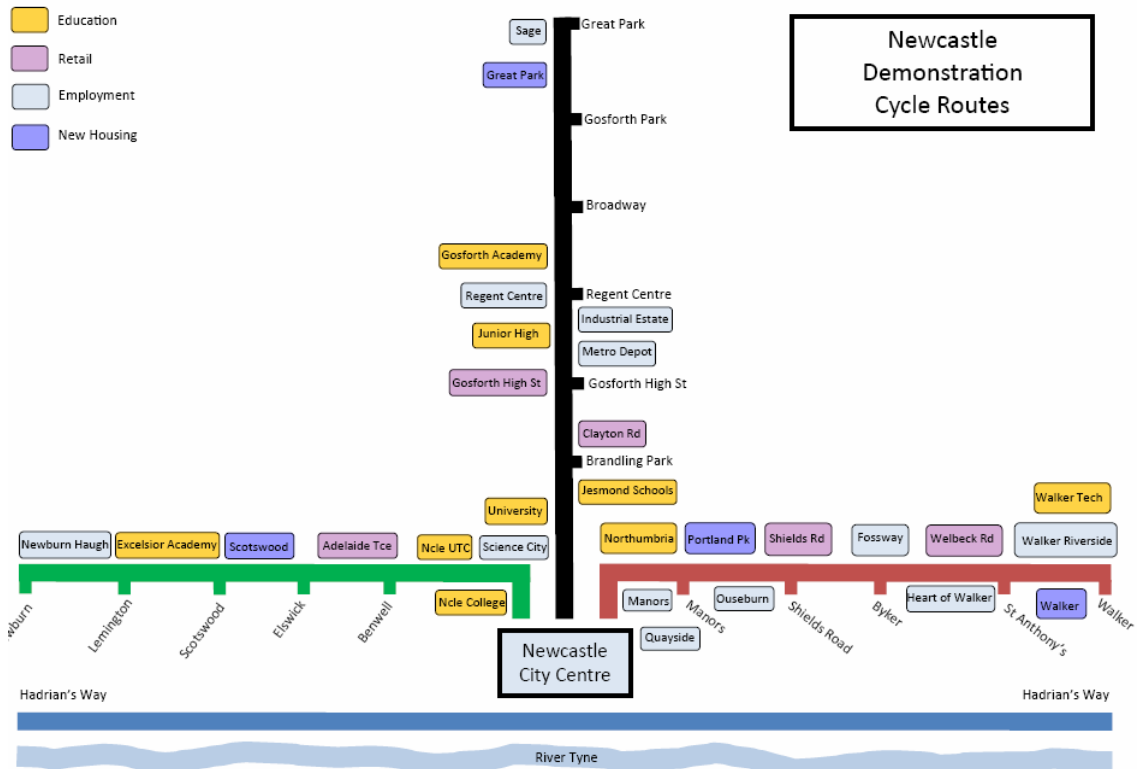


Fig.2 Three Demonstration Cycle Routes