

## Statement on Cycle Lane along Coast Road

(In response to North Tyneside Council's Experimental Order, of 19 June, 2020)

This statement concerns the temporary provision of one half of the carriageway of the road running from Marine Avenue junction with the A193 in Whitley Bay to Tynemouth for sole use as a **cycle lane** and that could be made permanent at the end of the 6 month period of consultation. The route is part of the National Cycle Route No. 1 also referred to as NCN 1.

### Cycling on Pavements

Some 10 years and more ago there were complaints about the provision of a shared **cycle track** on the pavement running alongside the coast road. These were printed in the News Guardian, the local newspaper. I referred to one in a [letter dated 3 October, 2010](#); these are extracts:-

"I have a lot of sympathy, as a pedestrian and an occasional cyclist, with your correspondent, Margaret Feely who complains of cyclists on pavements along the seafront from Tynemouth to Whitley Bay."

"The route she complains about is a designated as part of National Cycle Route, No. 1 on cycling maps. This route runs along the broad pavement, starting on the Promenade at the Whitley Bay end. The pavement route ends at Windsor Crescent, north of Cullercoats Bay. From there it runs along the road as far as Tynemouth Castle. There is no route along the pavement adjacent to Tynemouth sands."

"Confusion arises because the cycling route is not signposted, and/or otherwise indicated on the pavement. If cyclists are seen to use the pavement, others assume its okay. At the most recent Whitley Bay Area Forum I suggested that signposts and lines along the pavement at the Promenade end of the cycle route are provided, using part of the £50,000 environment fund that is available to each of the four Area Forums this year."

Subsequently I sought to raise the topic at a 'Police and Community Together' (PACT) meeting and was able to do so in a virtual (audio) meeting held in late March, 2011. In a following email response I received a document with the heading, '[Information Re Cycling on Pavements etc.](#)' from a police officer I had spoken to earlier that day. Some relevant extracts are given below:-

"On 1st August 1999, new legislation came into force to allow a fixed penalty notice to be served on anyone who is guilty of cycling on a footway. However the Home Office issued guidance on how the new legislation should be applied, indicating that they should only be used where a cyclist is riding in a manner that may endanger others."

"The introduction of the fixed penalty is not aimed at responsible cyclists who sometimes feel obliged to use the pavement out of fear of traffic and who show consideration to other pavement users when doing so. Chief police officers, who are responsible for enforcement, acknowledge that many cyclists, particularly children and young people, are afraid to cycle on the road, sensitivity and careful use of police discretion is required "

"I should stress that the issue is about inconsiderate cycling on the pavements. The new provisions are not aimed at responsible cyclists who sometimes feel obliged to use the pavement out of fear of the traffic, and who show consideration to other road users when doing so. Chief officers recognise that the fixed penalty needs to be used with a considerable degree of discretion and it cannot be issued to anyone under the age of 16. (Letter to Mr H. Peel from John Crozier of The Home Office, reference T5080/4, 23 February 2004) "

Since then (2011) I know of no instance of any enforcement of the law as clearly stated in these extracts from the current, online version of the [Highway Code](#) under [Rules for cyclists \(59 to 82\)](#):-

"64 You MUST NOT cycle on a pavement.  
Laws HA 1835 sect 72 & R(S)A 1984, sect 129"

“68 You MUST NOT

- carry a passenger unless your cycle has been built or adapted to carry one
  - hold onto a moving vehicle or trailer
  - ride in a dangerous, careless or inconsiderate manner
  - ride when under the influence of drink or drugs, including medicine.
- Law RTA 1988 sects 24, 26, 28, 29 & 30 as amended by RTA 1991”

“71 You MUST NOT cross the stop line when the traffic lights are red. Some junctions have an advanced stop line to enable you to wait and position yourself ahead of other traffic (see Rule 178).  
Laws RTA 1988 sect 36 & TSRGD regs 10 & 36(1)”

**National Cycle Route No. 1**

The current route of NCN 1 to the north (figures 1a & 1b) and next to the Promenade (figures 2a & 2b) is illustrated in the extracts below obtained via the [Sustrans](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) website. The route marked in blue indicates a roadway but it is not correct. At one time it seems that the route was intended to pass along the old road that ran in front of the dome building but this no longer exists.



Figure 1a



Figure 1b

The signage indicating a route from the links to the start of the road should be changed to show the route passes along the highway to the rear of the dome building. The route should then continue on a new, **segregated** track on the broad pavement to the south of the “plaza”. The other routes across the links merge to cross Watts Slope south of the war memorial. These routes (across the links) are currently **unsegregated** cycle tracks. There should be no cycle route passing directly in front of either the Spanish City dome building or the Premier Inn hotel where there is a direct clash with pedestrians. Cyclists should be instructed to dismount (and so become pedestrians) if their wish is to visit this higher level of the plaza. Other cyclists who choose the alternative paths should also be instructed to dismount after crossing Watts Slope to continue along the lower level of the plaza and join the same new, **segregated** track to the south.



Figure 2a

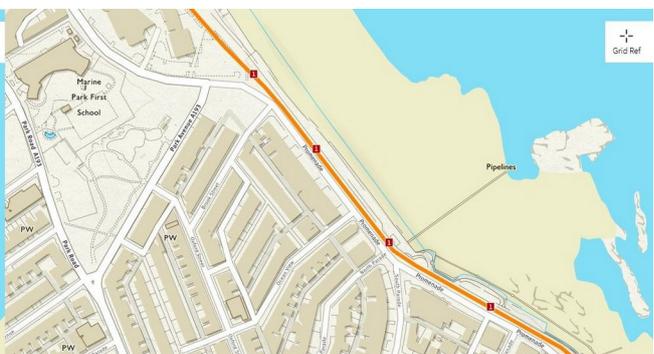


Figure 2b

## Segregated and Unsegregated Cycle Tracks

There can be little doubt from comments made on social media (and other sources) that both cyclists and pedestrians prefer to have segregated cycle tracks where possible, on broad pavements. Figures 3a and 3b allow a comparison between the very wide paved area adjacent to the Promenade which has shared (unsegregated) provision and that along the seafront at Exmouth in East Devon. Figure 3b has been taken from a webcam overlooking the seafront road in Exmouth that runs for 2.6km from west to east.



Fig 3a



Fig 3b

A broad pavement means one that is at least 4m in width. Provision of a separate (segregated) cycle track adjacent to the road (carriageway) need not be greater than 2m in width. That for pedestrians should be at least 2m in width on the seaward side of the pavement. The cycle track should be clearly shown with line boundaries and regular cycling symbols along its length. It is also preferable that the cycle track is depicted in a different colour to that for pedestrians. The very large width of the pavement next to the Promenade is ample to allow 2m for the cycle track to avoid the lamp posts. Other obstructions should be moved. The cycle track on Exmouth seafront is less than 2m in width but the spacing between lamp posts allows some extra width to allow cyclists to pass in both directions.

I quote from my [letter of 10 years ago](#):-

“This route (NCN 1) runs along the broad pavement, starting on the Promenade at the Whitley Bay end. The pavement route ends at Windsor Crescent, north of Cullercoats Bay. From there it runs along the road as far as Tynemouth Castle. There is no route along the pavement adjacent to Tynemouth sands”.

Unless the pavement from beyond Windsor Crescent broadens into one that is at least 4m width, the route for cyclists should be confined to the road in both directions. Even if parts of the pavement has been broadened to 2m plus since 2010 neither unsegregated nor segregated cycle tracks are desirable to avoid successive movements by cyclists to and from the pavement to the annoyance of pedestrians and road users. As illustrated in figure 4, the pavement is typically too narrow.



Figure 4

The paths across the links (indicated in fig. 1a) provide examples of acceptable, unsegregated cycle tracks. These are not next to carriageways and allow space on both sides of the paths for cyclists to pass walkers.

Cyclists who use the narrow pavements alongside the coast, and are encouraged to do so by current signage, always have the alternative of using the carriageway. Pedestrians don't have an alternative.

### **Objections to the Experimental Cycle Lane**

There is, understandably, enthusiastic support for the experimental coastal route from cyclists, encouraged by the Sustrans and Living Streets organisations. Its usage during fine weather does not justify the impact on all the roads listed in the Experimental Order wherein some 50 left and right turns are prohibited !

The coast road, although not an A road, joins with the A193 to the north at its junction with Marine Avenue. The closure of the route to the south results in the diversion of motor vehicles through Whitley Bay town centre, increasing the amount of slowly moving and stationary traffic, both in the town centre and along the coast road at the junctions with Marine Avenue and Park Avenue.

Two-way access by motor vehicles to the coastal route relieves the burden upon other north-south routes that have to cross railway lines, and provides a scenic alternative with relatively fresh air. In time the change to zero CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emission vehicles will decrease air pollution. The timescale could be reduced by central government raising the taxation on fossil fuel use in motor vehicles, but this seems unlikely due to the unpopularity from current motor car users.

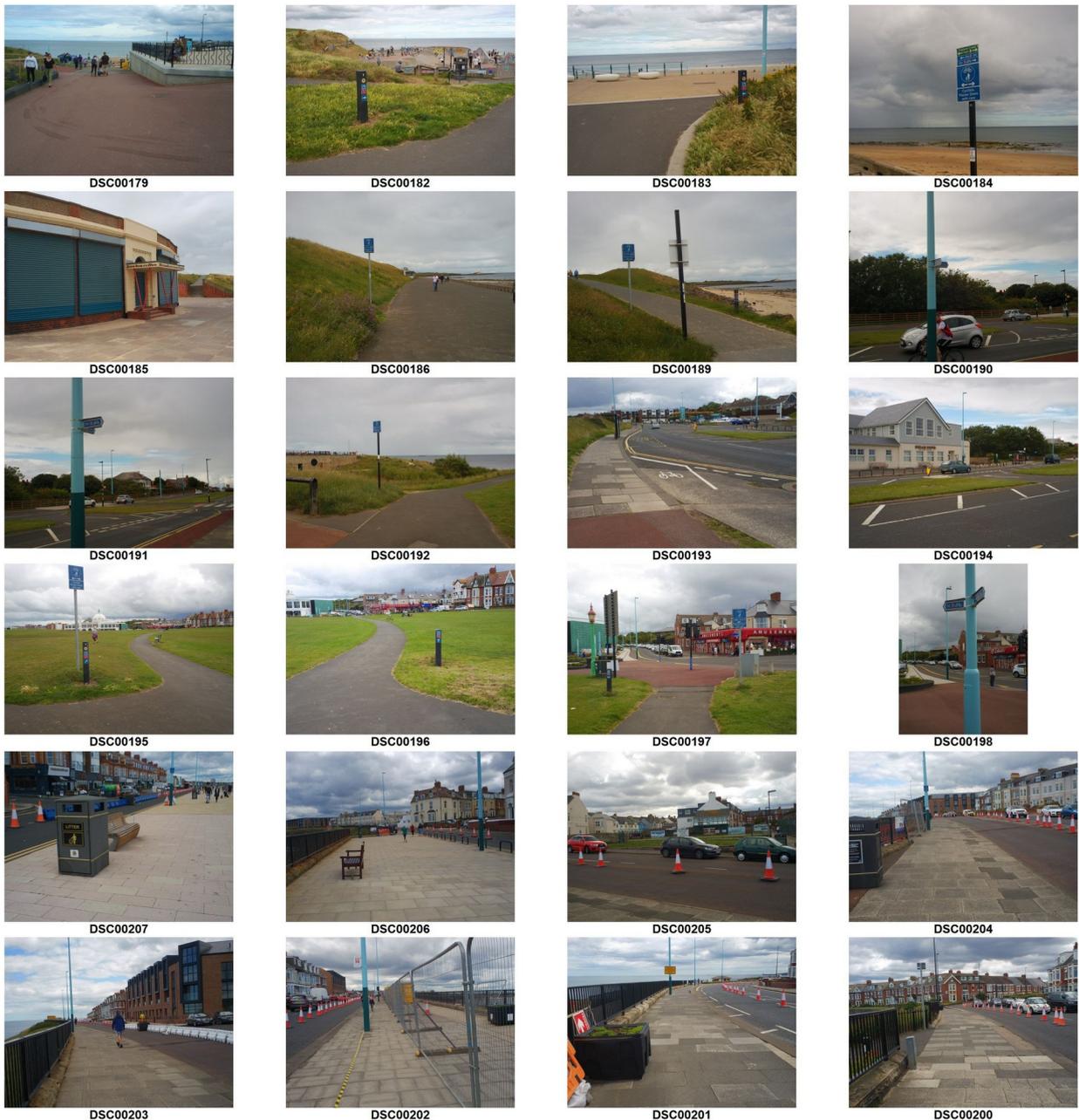
Immediately below I have added comments from one supporter of an online petition against the scheme. It reflects my view entirely.

*As a regular visitor to our wonderful coast I would venture this is totally unnecessary. It discriminates against non cyclists and would slow down emergency services. I'm all for safer cycling lanes but this is for the few and not the many. I use this road every day at different times as a walker, driver and cyclist and there are just not enough cyclists to justify the whole lane. Come winter, the amount of cyclists drops dramatically. So surely there is a smarter way to make things safer for all without restricting access to drivers? The knock on traffic and congestion is only going to get worse on sunny days when people head to the coast and will be a nightmare once the schools go back because the alternative road infrastructure is not set up for this volume of traffic. There are many places along the road that can be split for cyclists and pedestrians. Yes, that will cost money but given the council have spent in excess of £250k getting this in place already, am sure the money can be found to do this so drivers, walkers and cyclists alike can all use and enjoy this beautiful road safely. This is happening all across the UK and other councils have pulled these so called Covid measures after residents and local businesses complained. Really hope North Tyneside will see reason and follow soon.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/english-councils-backpedal-on-cycling-schemes-after-tory-backlash>*

Additional observations with photographs are provided in the following appendix. This also gives links to online higher resolution copies of the figures and photographs used above.

**Appendix**  
[\(link to high resolution version of photographs\)](#)

The first 16 photographs were taken along the shared route from the Spanish City plaza to the north as far as Briar Dene and the start of the dual carriageway with segregated cycle tracks to the north. The return south leads onto the road (DSC00193). Photographs 195 to 198 indicate the NCN 1 shared route across the

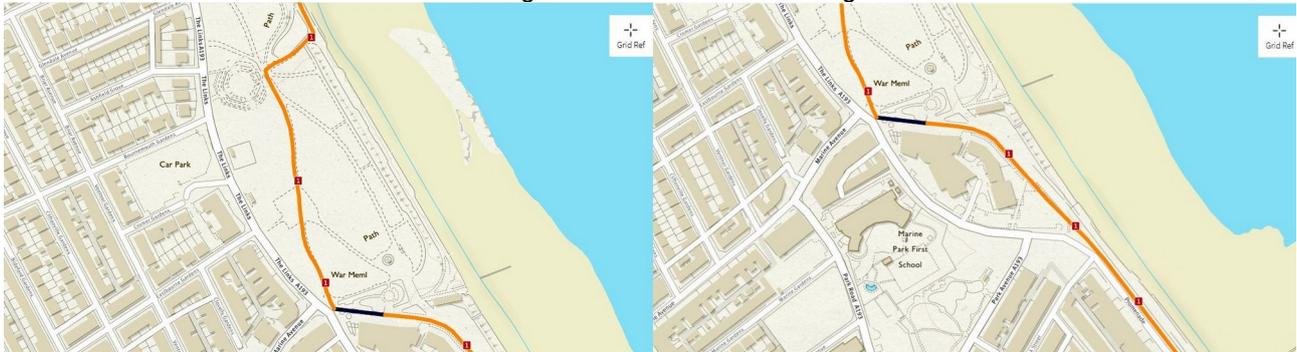


links to the corner of the Spanish City site but is very rarely used by cyclists from the north who prefer the roadway. The signs in photographs 197 and on the post in photograph 198 that indicate a route through the plaza should be changed to show that the NCN 1 route continues along the road to the rear of the Spanish City. The cycle route should then rejoin the current NCN 1 route, off-road, along a new, **segregated** track to be created on the broad paved area next to the Promenade. The other sign should simply point the route across the links shown in photographs 196 and 197.

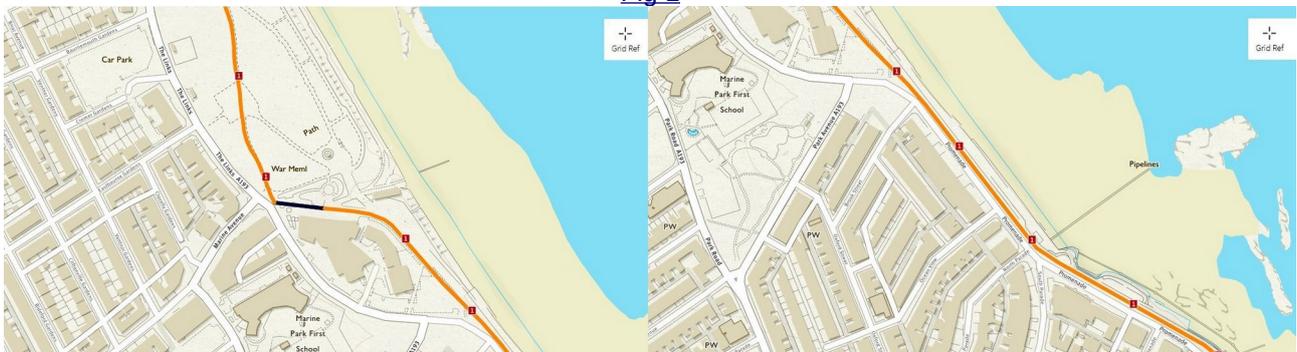
The remainder of the photographs, DSC00207 to 200 illustrate the coastal pavement to the south as far as Windsor Crescent. There appears to be about 500m of paved area of at least 4m width running from just

south of the plaza. Further south there could be some compromise on the 4m width to include continuation of a segregated cycle track where the pavement is less used by pedestrians but this should not include Front Street or Beverly Terrace because of the popularity of the Cullercoats Bay area with visitors.

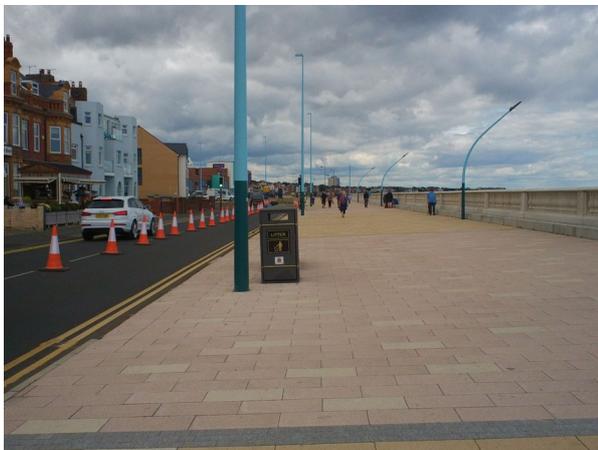
Links to larger versions of document figures



[Fig 1](#)



[Fig 2](#)



[Fig 3](#)



[Fig 4](#)