

Blyth Sustainable Travel Audit

Developing a programme of works for active travel in Blyth Town Centre

January 2015



1 Town Centre Audit

Introduction

Facilities for pedestrian and cycling were recorded within the town centre boundary in order to inform future improvements to the area. This section outlines the key issues and recommendations for the primary retail and town centre streets.

The location and condition of key infrastructure was recorded, including: drop kerbs, ramps, hand rails, stairs, foot/cycle bridges, underpasses, sub-standard lengths of footway, pedestrian refuges, zebra crossings, Puffin crossings, Toucan crossing, shared paths, cycle routes (off and on road), advisory cycle lanes, cycle parking, pedestrian/cycling signage, obstructive street furniture, pedestrian areas/zones. Full details of the audit and photo index are included at the end of this report (see Annex 1, p.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

An interactive map showing locations and features of the audit, as well as recommendations that follow in this report is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/BlythTravelAudit> ¹

1.1 B1328 Waterloo Road

This connects 2 arterial routes while serving as a primary retail street across the town centre. Waterloo road serves as a major public transport route for buses because of the location of the bus station at the east end. Sections of rumble strips provide some traffic calming on the street, but these are considered to be uncomfortable to cycling over and are damaged in numerous places.

The current crossing facilities require some improvement to enable better access for pedestrians, with some waiting times recorded at over 80 seconds. Although there is currently no cycling provision, traffic speed and volume is relatively low enough to serve as a comfortable environment for more experienced cyclists.



Figure 1: Waterloo Rd and adjoining Market Place

A long term benefit to Waterloo Rd would be to extend the high quality public realm improvements on either side of the road. The existing traffic cushions are not particularly suited to bikes and one of which has been already been severely damaged by the impact of vehicle traffic. Hence, it would be ideal to replace these with raised table zebra crossings, approximately 140m apart.

The North side of the Street is somewhat cluttered with 15 large planters that serve to prevent vehicles parking on the footway but do little to enhance the public space and restrict visibility for users crossing the street. High quality street furniture has been supplemented with excessive planters and other items since the redevelopment of the Market Place and consideration should be given to de-clutter and reorganise the pedestrian area of the street.

De-cluttering of street items at the west end of the street, such as phone boxes could improve the space of the footways particularly around bus stops. Cycling provision could also be improved here using either mandatory or advisory cycle lanes, as the carriageway width is suitably wide

¹ Up to date web browser required

enough and parking is restricted for much of its length. These should be accompanied by advanced stop lines at the junction with Thornton Street.

1.2 Bridge Street

Waterloo road continues as Bridge Street after Market Place. Footway widths are reasonable along the length of the street and are wider in front of local shops on the South side. For cyclists on the road, however, the change in nature of the street from Waterloo Road into a typical urban carriageway environment and lack of any traffic calming measures create a perceived rise in relative traffic speeds that is uncomfortable to cyclists.

As a consistent measure to the West end of Waterloo Road, mandatory cycle lanes would preferably be used on Bridge Street. A considerable redesign of the roundabout with Quay road would be beneficial to both pedestrians and cyclists as vehicles speeds on the roundabout are currently too high to be considered comfortable for cycling and given the close proximity to an established bike route. Ideally, a larger roundabout with radius between 6.5 and 12.5m radius (currently 4.5m), reinforced with tighter entry and exit radius would serve to slow motor vehicle traffic without restricting flow detrimentally. Informal pedestrian crossing facilities should also be included in a redesign, as crossing is currently difficult at this end of the street.



Figure 2: Bridge St at the junction with Union St

1.3 Union Street

Union Street connects residential areas to the South to the town centre and hosts a mix of leisure and retail amenities. Although vehicle traffic is low, there is a lack of crossing points and poor quality footways. The main bus depot and travel centre is positioned at the north of Union Street and is a particularly uncomfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists although volumes of both are low and limited to employee access. However, the crossing point at the travel centre is a key example of incomplete infrastructure- high quality public realm at the travel centre terminates at the street where there is no crossing facility for pedestrians where there is an obvious conflict with bus traffic.

It is highly recommended to improve the latter crossing point with either a raised zebra or puffin crossing. This would depend on the results of a more detailed study of foot traffic as a zebra crossing facility may impede bus traffic along the street. Advisory cycle lanes would also be well placed on the South part of the street from Bridge St junction as well as an advanced stop box as the majority of cycle and motor vehicle traffic are either turning left or right (rather than continuing straight). Traffic volumes on the South section of this street are comparatively low and the route serves as a practical and comfortable desire line to the South of the town avoiding the busier B1329.

1.4 High Street/ Market Place

The majority of High Street is pedestrianised and an important retail space for Blyth. Wide footways and high quality public realm characterise this area that is lined with market stalls. There is some room for improvement at the area at the end of Church Street, where there is a confusing array of street furniture designed to prevent or restrict vehicle access. Some of these are unnecessary and pose on-going maintenance costs that unnecessarily 'herd' pedestrians and cyclists.



Figure 3: High Street shopping area that adjoins Market Place with vehicle gates that restrict pedestrian movement.

1.5 Bowes Street

Bowes Street is characterised by its small, independent retail shops on a shared space style street paved in brick setts. It is a one way street (West to East) that has intermittent vehicle parking, traffic calming and planters that alternate along the side of the road. Although Bowes Street is restricted to vehicle traffic, many vehicle drivers are ignoring the (damaged) signage and using Bowes St (West- shared space) as short cut though to Regent St. The except for access' restriction does not seem to discourage drivers from using the road to access Regent Street and beyond.

With this in mind, it is recommended to make some improvements to the features at the start of the shared space section of the street, to serve as a visual reminder of the environment, discourage misuse and guide drivers away from the shopping area to avoid unnecessary conflict with pedestrians. Such a gateway could be continued round the corner to the North to the small space in front of Wilkinson's that contains some overbearing street furniture on Wanley Street. Physical measures should be installed to prevent parking or loading within 5 metres of the junction.

Long term improvements to the street should consider upgrade to the landscaping and planters that have become dilapidated over time. This may involve some considerable alterations as the established tree root systems may inhibit alteration but are already jeopardising the brick structures containing them. Market style installations with integrated display, seating and planters should be explored, adjacent to shops that will benefit from additional retail area while keeping the footway clear.

More significant changes to Bowes Street beyond the town centre boundary have been suggested in the following sections that highlight this street as a key route to the town centre for cyclists.

2 Network and Street Development

Introduction

This chapter outlines nine key infrastructure improvements or routes that are suitable for developing a cycling or walking network around Blyth. These have been considered for linking residential areas into the town centre as well as links to schools and stations that will encourage more residents in Blyth to choose walking or cycling for more of their daily journeys.

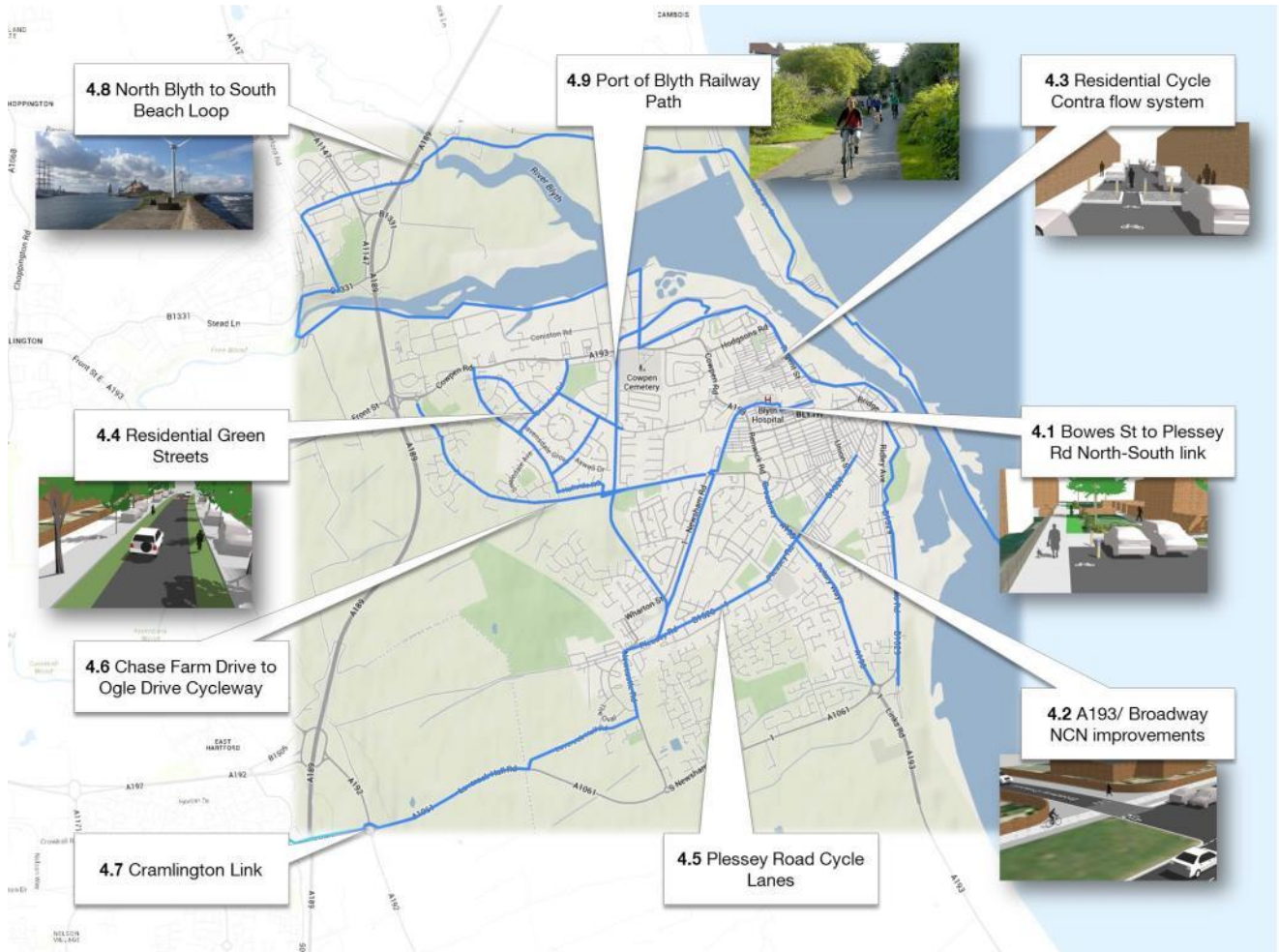


Figure 4: Network development map and summary

Speed Reduction

Establishing an area-wide 20mph speed limit in Blyth Town Centre and some of the surrounding areas would be highly recommended for making safer streets in addition to the physical measures outlined in this report. This speed limit should encompass the residential areas that surround and lead into the town centre. In areas where shared space measures are to be implemented, the street design itself should encourage drivers to travel at walking speeds.

The safety benefits of 20mph are well established: recent Department for Transport road casualty data show significantly lower casualty rates on 20mph roads and a 2009 study of London speed limits found that the introduction of 20mph zones was associated with a 42% reduction in road casualties. The benefits of 20mph reach beyond road safety, increasing social interaction, physical activity and improved air quality and noise levels.

2.1 Bowes St to Plessey Rd North-South link

An existing route along this popular desire line makes use of off road paths and various pedestrian crossings. Unfortunately, the route is very incohesive and meanders around existing buildings, existing road closures and cumbersome, dilapidated landscaped areas. An upgraded footpath along this route would create a high quality, continuous path from Cowpen Road to Newsham Road, via Blyth Sports Centre and following an existing footpath. A route into town could branch at Cowpen Rd, one route serving the hospital and another along the existing route to Bowes Street, which could be upgraded.

At the South, the route leads to Newsham and access to Cramlington beyond. A number of local amenities as well as nine schools lie within 500m of this proposed route and seemingly could all benefit from a high quality route with suitable links. Parts of this route are currently mapped and signposted, but these fall short of suitable standards for a wide range of cyclists.

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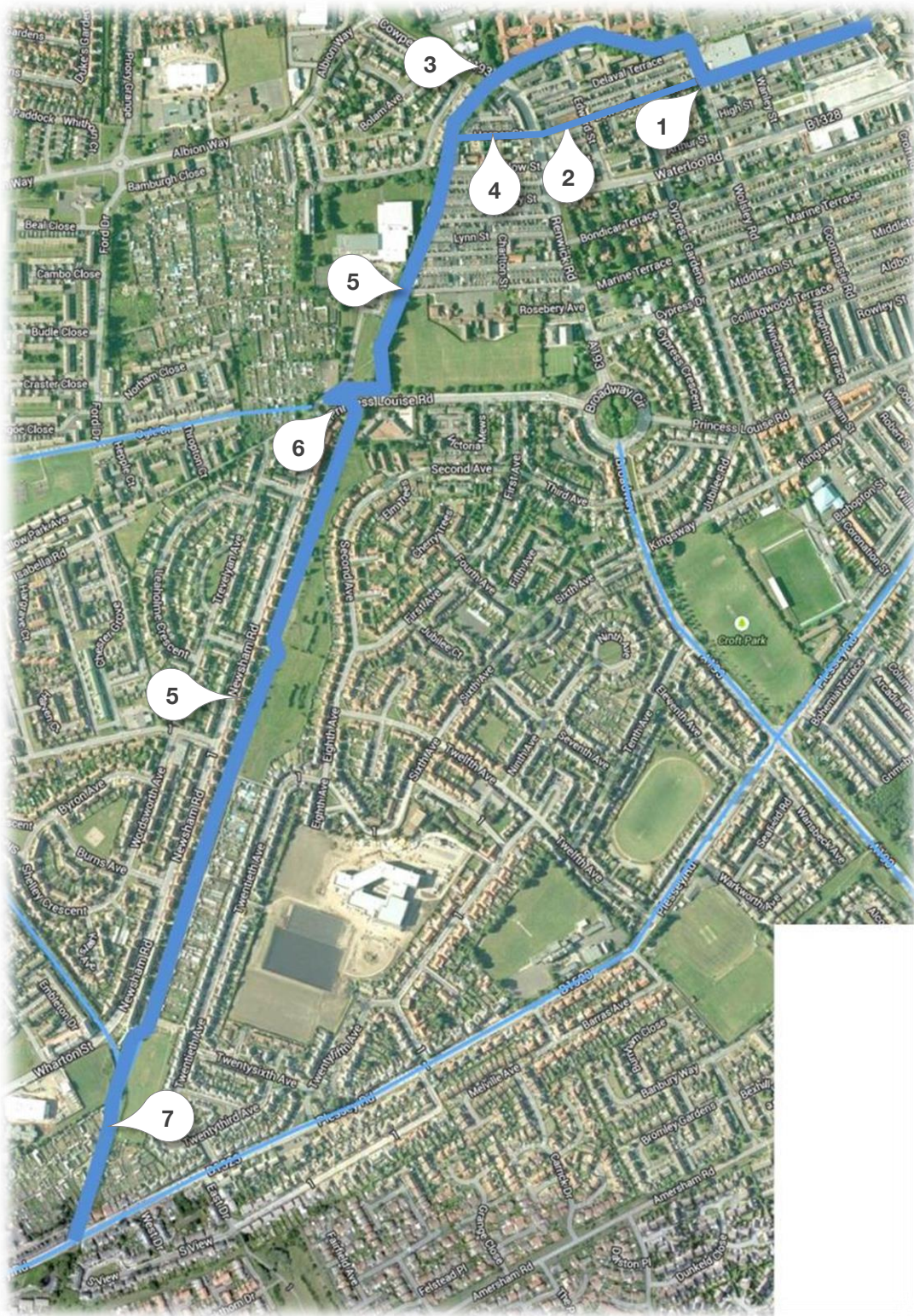


Figure 5: Route improvements to complete a cohesive link from Bowes St to Plessey Rd.

The following key improvements will be required to complete a cohesive route:

1. **Bowes Street cycle contra-flow:** the route would begin at the East end of this retail street which would benefit from better access for cyclists in both directions. Carriageway width should be reviewed to determine how to accommodate contra-flow cycle traffic, such as a separate lane or cycle road markings.



Figure 6: Boves Street West permeability concept showing before (below) and after (above)

2. **Boves Street West permeability:** previous improvements to restrict vehicle access have been successful in this regard but are a barrier to cyclists that prefer a traffic free route. The installation of cycle tracks adjacent to existing footways, kerb improvements and modifying some hard landscaping would create a direct route along Boves Street across Thornton Street to Boves Court and towards Renwick Road. Not only would this make the town centre more accessible for a range of users, but would give the impression of a more open and continuous street environment. (Similarly, Delaval Terrace one street to the North would benefit from similar improvements). The west end of Boves Street, before it meets Renwick Rd, links to a park and a quiet access road that does not allow through traffic. In order to create a more direct and cohesive link to the crossing on Renwick Rd, a large landscaped area would require some improvement and a new path, possibly with the removal of three immature trees.

3. **Hospital Path branch:** this alternative branch would provide a continuous off road section via Blyth Hospital. An existing toucan crossing would guide users across Cowpen Rd safely. A wooded area follows the boundary of the Hospital and could accommodate a shared route from Cowpen Rd.
4. **Harper Street branch:** suitable road markings along the street would reinforce the route and raise driver awareness. At Cowpen Rd, there is an existing toucan crossing 65m to the South, moving the crossing would be justified to improve the directness of the new route and reinforce traffic calming on either side of the new cycle route
5. **Footway upgrade and resurfacing:** an existing path of mixed quality would be widened and upgraded with a bitmac surface to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, linking Cowpen Road at the north to Plessey Road approximately 1.8 km to the south. (With the possibility to extend to South Newsham Road 1.1km further pending a review of the state and ownership of the existing but disused railway line). A section at the south end near to Plessey road will need further consideration as the footpath terminates at a recreation area. However, a disused railway path that lies directly to the west could complete this link and provide a new shared path outlined later in this report.
6. **Princess Louise Road crossing:** a toucan crossing with embedded cycle loop detectors set back from the crossing would enable cyclists to make a safe and convenient transition across. The shared use footway would require a curving track or an entrenchment/landscaping to enable a suitable gradient, as Princess Louise Road lies in a slight depression at this section.



Figure 7: Raised table pedestrian and cycle priority crossing over Princess Louise Rd.

7. **Railway path construction:** the southernmost section that links to Plessey Road currently constitutes part of the Blyth and Tyne Railway network. Although this is no longer in use, there have been recent attempts to reinstate sections of this line to serve passengers in the town of Blyth. Failing that, the line could be reused at this small section as a multi user traffic free path. Nevertheless, collaboration with the developing body of the railway line could save significant costs if an adjacent cycle path was created.

2.2 A193/ Broadway NCN improvements

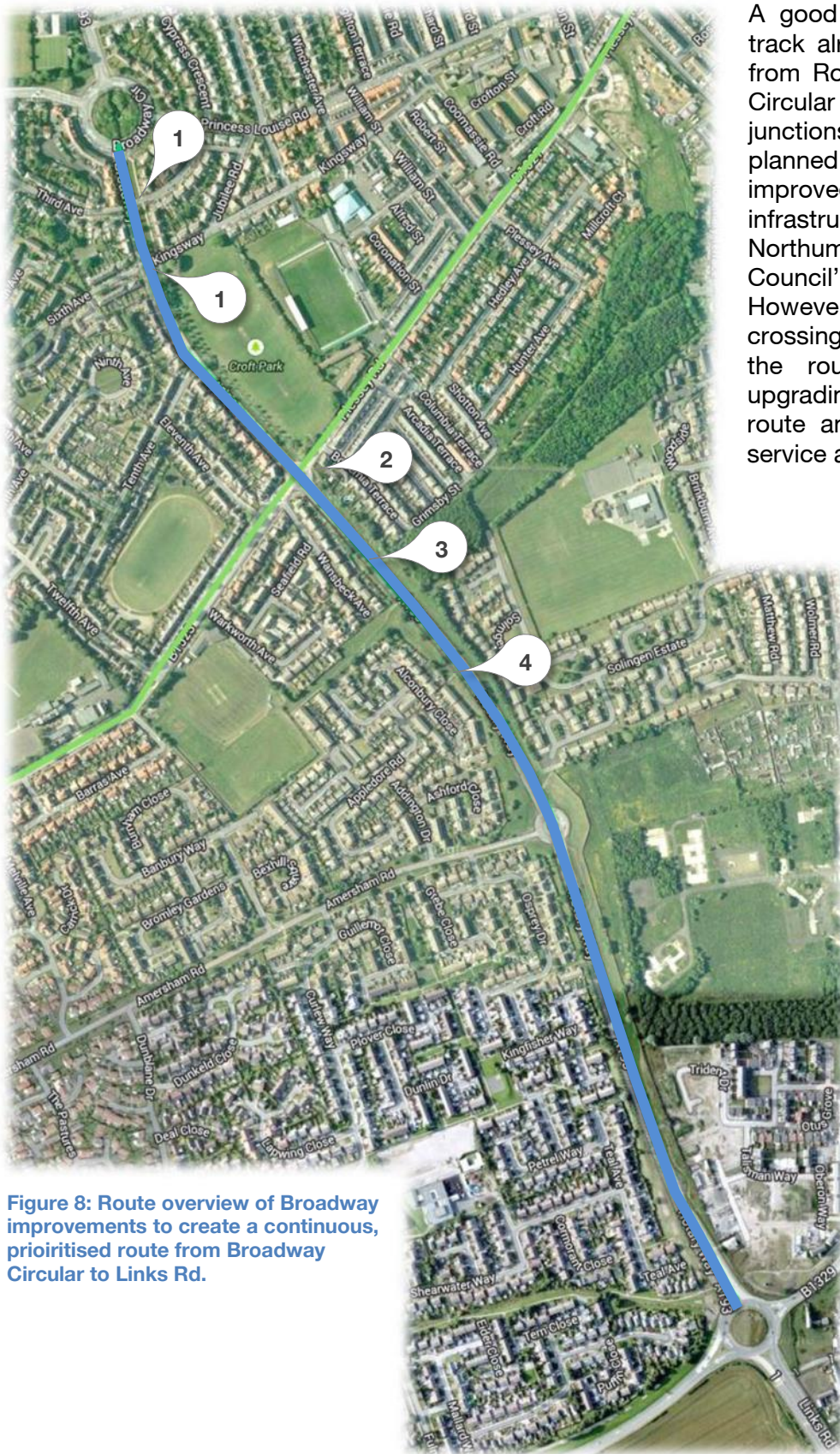


Figure 8: Route overview of Broadway improvements to create a continuous, prioritised route from Broadway Circular to Links Rd.

A good quality off road cycle track already follows the A193 from Rotary Way to Broadway Circular and both of these junctions are awaiting the planned completion of improved crossings and infrastructure as part of Northumberland County Council's Cycle Safety Scheme. However, there are a number of crossings and junctions along the route that also require upgrading to enable a cohesive route and safe transition over service and access roads.

1. Raised table, cycle priority crossings at Broadway Crescent and Kingsway.



Figure 10: Raised table cycle and pedestrian priority crossing at Broadway Crescent.

2. Roundabout crossing at junction with Plessey Road (B1327), preferably also a crossing on the South arm to enable journey routes to the West. Ideally, the roundabout would be redesigned to allow for a larger island (between 6.5 and 15m radius) and smaller entry and exit radii (12m and 15m respectively).



Figure 9: Existing cycle track crossing

3. Bus stop bypass improvements at Southbound stop immediately after Rotary Way/ Plessey Road: similar to cycle tracks at South end of this road, the existing track should be redirected to allow more space for the bus stop, as it lies within a hazardous distance to bus stop that has restricted visibility due to opaque sides. Alternatively, a replacement of the bus shelter with a more suitable design may be more cost effective.
4. Route widening: in order to further upgrade this high quality route, the track could be widened to a minimum of 3m to allow for 2 way cycle traffic.

2.3 Waterloo Rd Shared Space

Improvements to the town centre and market area in Blyth have proved to be a popular and attractive retail area in the town centre that has helped revitalise the Town Centre to some degree. Hence, it would be prudent to build on improvements to the town centre and extend the boundaries of the market space and square. Judging by the appearance and amount of void units on the south side of Waterloo Rd, retailers on this side of the street have not benefited from the improvements to the same extent as those that line the pedestrianised area on the north of Waterloo Rd.



Figure 11: Shared space in New Rd, Brighton. The removal of kerbs and the lowering of speeds to below 20mph enables safe, freedom of movement for all users.

Given the low traffic volume but relatively high footfall across Waterloo Rd and the Market place, it would be highly recommended to upgrade this road into a shared space environment that will effectively complete improvements to create a holistic town centre market place. The final design should further reduce vehicle speeds, ideally to around 10mph; the excessive street furniture currently on the street should be reduced and rationalised to create an effective and restricted carriageway width on Waterloo Rd.



Figure 12: No entry except cycles encourages cyclists, improves access and is considered a clearer notice by users.

2.4 Residential Streets: Permeability Improvements

Upgrades and improvements in residential areas at the North and South of the town centre boundary and upgrade the existing one way system would create a significant grid system of cycle infrastructure to allow residents to freely roam a large area of Blyth by bike. Streets that require small improvements (bollard removal and build-out modification) include Bondicar Terrace, Marine Terrace and Middleton Street, all of which benefit from street widths of approximately 7m with very low speed and volumes of traffic.

Cowpen Quay Home Zone is located to the North of the town centre and has been a positive addition to the

area. Some modification is needed to small sections of kerbs on residential streets to allow cycle traffic to continue along the street on Gladstone St, Beaumont St, Salisbury St, Hambledon St and Disraeli St (drop kerb on to green space). This would require the removal of a 1m section of the build out at either side of the footway to allow bikes to pass through. Route signage and road marking should also indicate that cyclists will be likely to use the facility to prevent cars blocking the facility.



Figure 13: Build out improvements on Gladstone St.

2.5 Residential Cycle Streets

The physical appearance of “Cycle Streets” differs based on the context and environment- the term describes streets where the pedestrian and the cyclist are welcomed and given a degree of priority and that the invasive presence of motor vehicles is to be diminished. The balance is to be adjusted in favour of active travel, fitness and health, convivial public places and a sustainable environment. There is a great deal of existing infrastructure in the West end of Blyth town that have the elements for this type of streets, but needs some modification to become a Cycle Street.



Figure 14: Briardale Rd 'Cycle Street' concept.



Figure 15: Briardale Rd existing streetscape

Tynedale Drive and Briardale Rd are two examples of streets that offer wide, uncluttered pavement with off street parking and speed cushions. In order to upgrade these roads to Cycle Streets, it would be recommended to install trees and planters to formalise the parking and visually narrow the road. Central road marking should be removed and advisory cycle lanes of minimum width 1.5m should line the road

sides. 20mph speed restrictions should accompany these

improvements, although this would be recommended for a more extensive coverage across Blyth.

Streets that would suit this treatment include: Briardale Rd, Tynedale Dr, Brierley Rd, Dene View Dr and Weardale Ave.

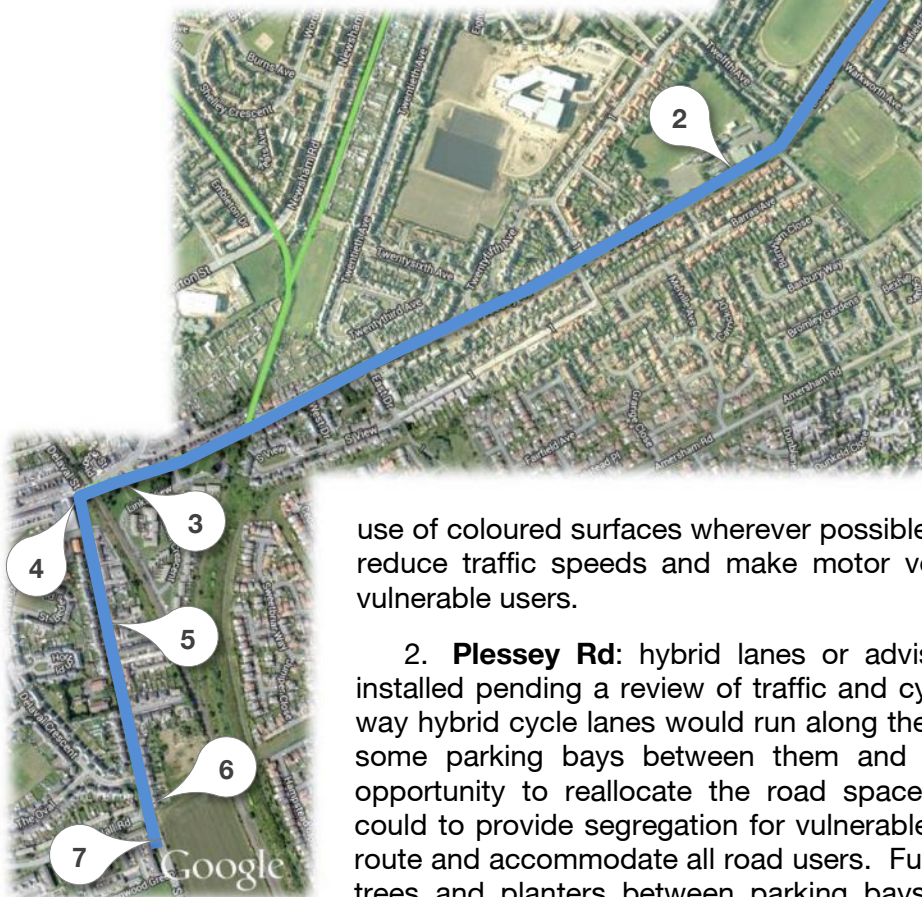
2.6 Plessey Road Cycle Lanes

On road cycle provision along Plessey Road would cater for more confident cyclists and commuters to use this route from the South west of the town into Blyth's shopping and business centres. Road widths along Plessey Road are suitable for continuous cycle lanes to be included with very little alteration needed to existing infrastructure. The proposed route would begin at Newcastle Rd in Newsham with the following features to designate the route:

1. **Plessey Rd (East):** service road would be converted to a cycle street environment. The premise of a cycle street is that cars are viewed as guests on the road, through the



Figure 16: Overview of Plessey Rd improvements.



use of coloured surfaces wherever possible and cycle road markings to reduce traffic speeds and make motor vehicle users aware of more vulnerable users.

2. **Plessey Rd:** hybrid lanes or advisory cycle lanes should be installed pending a review of traffic and cycle volumes. Ideally, a two way hybrid cycle lanes would run along the South side of the road with some parking bays between them and the footway. There is an opportunity to reallocate the road space and car parking provision could to provide segregation for vulnerable road users along this busy route and accommodate all road users. Further improvements, such as trees and planters between parking bays would visually narrow the street and create an appealing boulevard style road along this key corridor into the heart of Blyth.

3. **Plessey Rd/ Carr St roundabout:** improvements should be made to reduce traffic speeds on this junction which is difficult to navigate whether by foot or bike. Given that there are 2 bus stops that lie on the junction this would be a justifiable improvement. Converting splitter islands to pedestrian refuges and increasing their size should begin to improve the roundabout and redirect vehicles from their desire lines. Clear and redesigned road markings to indicate lanes should also be included.

4. **Plessey Rd/ Newcastle Rd junction at Newsham:** improve turning pocket for cycle traffic by installing a traffic island to protect from oncoming vehicles. This will help users who are turning off from the main on-road route heading West towards off road cycle paths.
5. **Newcastle Rd:** removal of central road marking with new advisory cycle lanes.
6. **Newcastle Rd/ S Newsham Rd/ Laverock Hall Rd roundabout:** upgrade roundabout to permanent feature with upstand and increase size to between 6.5- 15m depending on available space. This would suitably calm traffic, narrow the lane widths and create a safer junction for cyclists.
7. **South Newsham Rd:** removal of central road marking with new advisory cycle lanes up to Laverock Hall Rd. This would complete the route and link to the existing shared route on South Newsham Rd.

2.7 The Academies Cycleway



Figure 17: Overview of the 'Academies Cycleway' route from Ogle Dr to existing facilities on Chase Farm Dr

Chase Farm Drive is a main route that serves new housing and links The Blyth Academy to Cowpen Rd. An existing route made up of existing carriageway and unpaved footpath would be established as a dedicated cycle route to serve students, parents and staff at both Blyth² and Bede Academy. The proposed route would follow Chase Farm Drive, over two roundabouts and continue over open public space onto Ogle Drive and new/ existing routes in the vicinity. Not only would this serve a large residential area within the town but would create a vehicle free, direct route to a large school and supermarket for use exclusively by users on foot or bike. In contrast, vehicle users must use a much longer route via Cowpen Rd to access similar amenities. This would encourage a great deal of users to adopt more active modes of transport, as well as providing a safer, better quality route for existing users. The following improvements or features would enable this route:

1. **Chase Farm Drive footway:** the existing path that follows the road on the East side should ideally be widened to at least 3.5m to enable two way cycle and pedestrian traffic. The shared footway is currently indicated as a cycle route but has a number of pinch points that should be avoided. The path could then be upgraded with a separating line to segregate cyclists and pedestrians.

² The Blyth Academy boasts 1500 students and 160 teaching staff; Bede Academy has 1765 students.

2. **Thorntree Way and Highfield Roundabout crossings:** raised table cycle and pedestrian priority crossings should enable users to cross safely and continuously at these points.
3. **Public footpath upgrade:** an existing public footpath would be upgraded to a 3.5m bitmac surface to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. Currently the footpath is rough ground/ bare earth and unsuitable for many users. Half-way along this track an existing cycle track traverses the proposed route. The route would continue to Ogle Drive to the East, with access points to residential streets at Monkdale and Stardale Avenues. Multiple desire lines can be seen in the ground to prove that this is a popular route, which is overlooked for the most part to provide a sense of security.

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2.8 Cramlington Link

An improved, continuous route to Cramlington was cited by local residents and stakeholders as a piece of infrastructure which would build on the success of the Connect2 scheme. Currently, there are a number of alternative, cycle friendly routes to Cramlington each with a varying degree of completeness, quality and coherence.

From Plessey Road at Newsham a cycle lane takes users through a residential area. A high quality bitmac shared use path then follows the boundary with Blyth Golf Club for approximately 1.3km to a crossroads. At this point the path ceases as the route continues north and along a convoluted path that eventually leads to Cramlington. Although this route is almost completely traffic free, it is one of the least direct routes

Alternatively and arguably the most commonly used cycle route follows sections of route 1 of the NCN onto the A1061 where a shared use footway follows the main road. Laverock Hall Road presents another alternative, as it is restricted to Buses only and features significant traffic calming along the route that is beneficial to cyclists.

In order to boost safety and levels of use along the route, an upgraded surface on the shared footway alongside the A1061 is recommended. These would coincide with improvements to the cycle and pedestrian priority crossing facilities at A1061 Laverock Hall Rd and A192 roundabout.

Cramlington has some excellent cycle and pedestrian friendly and dedicated infrastructure that navigates through the town and allows users to avoid main roads using subways and bridges. However, the network of shared footways and hybrid cycle tracks can be confusing to users who are not familiar with the area, such as visitors heading to and from Blyth. It would be highly recommended to upgrade the signage with more practical way-finding and distances.

2.9 North Blyth to South Beach Loop

The development of a continuous leisure route that follows the coastline would create a unique visitor attraction. A route could follow existing NCN Route #1 on the banks of the River Blyth but new infrastructure would be required to link the route to the causeway/ tidal walls on the North banks of the River Blyth. In conjunction with bike hire at the South Beach area (see below), a tour

of the Blyth coast could be encouraged through mapping or bike tour challenges, such as Bike orienteering, geocaching, etc. Ideally, this would be led by local businesses and but could be actively initiated by NCC or Northumberland Tourism.



Figure 18: Coastal views from Blyth Pier

The South Beach area is a popular destination with excellent links to the surrounding area.

However, visitors are greeted by a large, extensive car park that infers a high priority to vehicle users. It would be recommended to significantly increase the amount of cycle parking at the Northern end of this area and highlight the shared space environment with more benches and outdoor seating. There is also an opportunity to encourage or support a bike hire scheme.



Figure 20: Overview of 'Port of Blyth Railway Path' from Plessey Rd to Cowpen Rd

2.10 Port of Blyth Railway Path

A section of the Blyth and Tyne Railway network runs from Plessey Road to beyond Cowpen Road at the north end of town. Currently, a poor quality ad hoc footpath makes up this route, but it suffers from localised flooding, fly-tipping, overgrown landscaping and general neglect. (The southernmost section still retains railway tracks up to Southend Avenue.)

A multi user cycle track with linked green spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) would create an attractive venue as well as route through the town. This would provide a continuous route to areas to the South and West and adjoining routes beyond on Plessey Road.

Disused railway lines have been successfully transformed in numerous locations around the North East and the UK and offer quiet, traffic free routes that usually are consequently direct and efficient due to the nature of the original lines.



Figure 19: Part of the Bath- Bristol railway path (National Route #4)

2.11 Cycle Parking

One of the barriers to residents and visitors accessing local towns by bike are a lack of convenient and safe cycle parking. Small and frequent bike stands in visible locations can encourage people to cycle that would normally use other modes of transport.

Cyclists generally want to park as close to their destination as possible, not only for convenience but for security concerns of leaving a locked bike unattended. Fortunately, cycle parking is very space efficient and requires little or no maintenance costs when compared to typical vehicle parking. In order to reinforce the transport hierarchy, cycle parking should be sited as close as possible to the final destination or main access of buildings. Experience suggests that where this is not the case cyclists are likely to 'fly park' in locations that are convenient to them.

Blyth has some cycle parking, with 'Sheffield' type stands at numerous locations around the town centre. Market Place in particular boasts cycle parking at west and east ends as users approach the area. Figure 25, below, illustrates new locations for an extensive network of convenient cycle parking around the town. Locations have been assigned as 'primary' (red) for multiple bikes or 'secondary' (green) for single bikes (see Annex 4 for examples of cycle parking solutions). Cycle parking at Market Place (west) and Keel Row require improvements to the existing facilities. Other locations have been chosen for prominent and convenient locations around the town centre, including a number of single bike parking on Bowes St in response to existing fly-parking on the street.



Figure 21: Indicative cycle parking locations

2.12 General Improvements and Upgrades

An urban cycle network should be developed based on a grid width of 250m using a combination and variety of cycling provision. Blyth is made up of relatively coherent zones that require slightly different treatments depending on factors such as use, street and building layout, relative vehicle speeds and volumes. Hence, the reallocation of road space and junction redesign are measures that shall be considered alongside entirely new infrastructure.

Installing artwork along cycle routes are an effective way of highlighting routes and attracting visitors. Benches also help to create a distinctive sense of place to an area, as well as providing a resting place for users on foot. There is an opportunity to develop an arts project in collaboration with bait³ and Blyth Town Team. Potential projects include an arts trail along a new or existing walking and cycling route or enhancing signage and wayfinding around Blyth.

Green Streets are small areas of soft landscaping and plants that are integrated into typical roads or footways. Rather than introducing large areas of concrete or paved surfaces, natural 'parklets are grown to encourage biodiversity and reduce rainwater un-off, hence they are often used in areas that are prone to localised flooding or ponding.

Cypress Gardens (North) junction with Princess Louise road has a large entry radius entry (approximately 15m) that is hazardous for crossing pedestrians and cyclists as motor vehicles can maintain a high speed on this corner. In theory, large entry/ exit radii corners (over 5m) into residential streets or service roads should be reduced to 5m to calm traffic. In practice, this is not always feasible due to cost constraints so improvements are usually made to serve a developed cycle route, for instance. At Cypress Gardens, a large build out to reduce the sweeping kerb would reduce this effect, ideally with wild, robust and low maintenance planting to reduce rain water run-off and reduce flooding. A raised table crossing would complete the crossing to highlight the route for pedestrians.

This feature could be replicated in similar areas to reallocate the road space and create more attractive places and form a barrier between busy roads and residential areas. Street corners are important social places for impromptu meetings and activity- creating places and promoting interaction can enhance towns and residential areas, as well as encouraging lower motor vehicle speeds.



Figure 22: Artwork on the NCN in Worcester by Liminal, focussing on the relationship between sound, listening and the environment.

³ bait (Northumberland) is one of 21 Creative People and Places projects across England, funded by Arts Council England.

2.13 Network Development Summary

Table 2-1 Major developments

	Ref		Description
Priority ⇄	4.1	Bowes St to Plessey Rd	Footpath widening and resurface of 1km section between Princess Louise Rd and Plessey Rd Raised table crossing facility at Princess Louise Rd New path to Plessey Rd 220m Signage and sundries
	4.2	Broadway improvements	Raised table priority crossing at Kingsway and Broadway Crescent
	4.6	Academies Cycleway	1km of 3m cycle track from Ogle Dr to Chase Farm Dr Raised table crossings Thorntree Way and Highfield
	4.10	Waterloo Road	Shared space redesign
	4.7	Cramlington Link	Resurfacing of existing shared path Cycle/ ped crossing (Toucan) at A1061/ A192 roundabout and footway widening on approaches Signage, dropped kerbs and sundries
	4.5	Plessey Rd cycle lanes	2.73km advisory cycle lanes (no civils) or hybrid tracks
	4.9	Port of Blyth Railway Path	Cycle path creation on disused railway line between Newsham Rd and Crawford St
	4.1; 4.14	Bowes St	Gateway features Planters and street clutter Cycle contra-flow with entry island

Table 2-2 Further Improvements

	Ref	Description
Priority ⇒ ⇐	4.14	Bridge St Roundabout Junction redesign narrowing entry/ exit radii and increasing roundabout island with overrun strip
	4.14	Union Street Pedestrian crossing at travel centre inc surfacing works, signing and lining
	4.4	Residential permeability improvements Modifications to road closures on Gladstone St, Beaumont St, Salisbury St, Hambleton St and Disraeli St.
	4.5	Residential cycle streets Cycle street treatment on Tynedale Drive, Briardale Rd, Brierley Rd, Dene View Rd, Weardale Ave (Total 4.58km)
	4.9	North Blyth to South Beach loop Path improvements Signage and promotion (interpretation panels)
	4.11	Cycle parking
	4.14	Bondicar Tce Footway improvements and junction redesign Resurface section of footway

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