



Northumberland County Council

**DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY IN
CONSULTATION WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**REMOVAL OF THE 'EXCEPT CYCLES' EXEMPTION FROM THE AMBLE
ONE-WAY SYSTEM AND RE-ROUTING OF NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK
ROUTE 1**

Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson

Purpose of Report

To consider the results of consultation with the North Northumberland Local Area Council, the local ward members and Amble Town Council regarding the 'except cycles' exemption currently in place in the Amble one-way system.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Given the results of the consultation it is recommended that:

- 1) The 'Except Cycles' exemption is removed from the one-way system.
- 2) National Cycle Network Route 1 (northbound) be redirected through Amble.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the *Places and Environment Aim* in the Corporate Plan:

"Our aim is to maintain and further improve the quality of our towns, villages and countryside and make it easier for residents to access services and high quality, affordable homes and to travel using different modes of transport. To achieve this, we will keep Northumberland clean, green and safe from detrimental impacts of climate change, build more houses to benefit those most in need and provide a convenient, integrated public transport network."

Key Issues

1. The North Northumberland Local Area Council received a petition of 272 signatures requesting that the National Cycle Route 1 (NCN1) be re-routed through Amble.
2. The current route of NCN1 follows Leazes Street and Coquet Street which have recently become one-way for vehicular traffic with an exemption for cyclists who can still travel in both directions.
3. The petition states: *"We, the undersigned, believe that having cyclists going the opposite way to vehicular traffic along the one way system is unsafe for everyone including pedestrians. We understood that the Sustrans route would be changing when the one way system became permanent. We are very concerned that this has not happened. We urge Sustrans to change the route to other streets so that cycles and vehicles are travelling in the same direction."*

Background

4. The route of NCN1, known as the "Coast and Castles" route, was established in the late 1990's. In Amble it passes the main attractions at the Harbour, Town square and Marina. The route is shown in red in Figure 1.

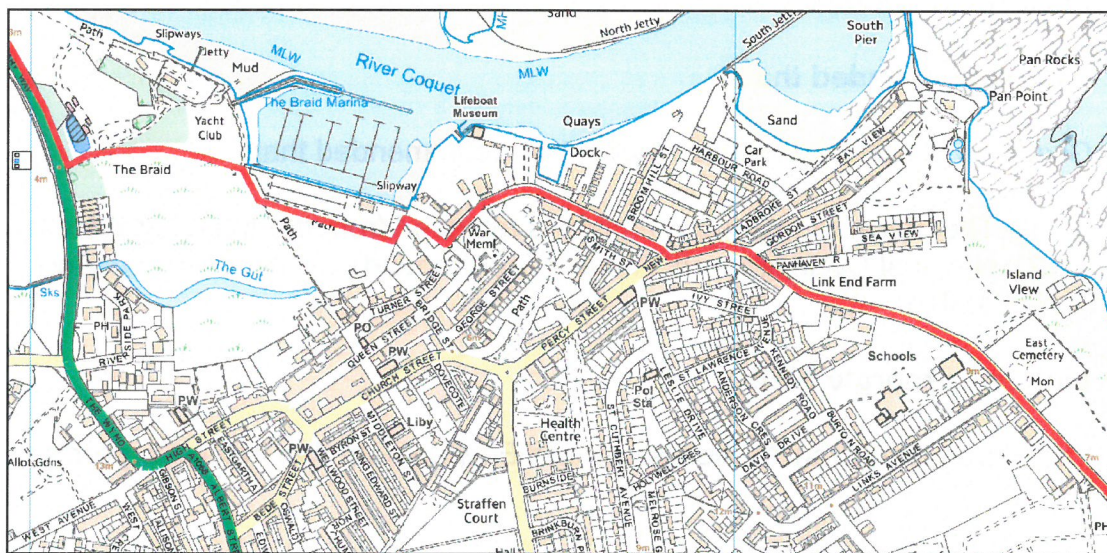


Fig.1. NCN1 route through Amble

5. In January 2015 a temporary one-way system was established on Queen Street, Coquet Street and Leazes Street as a way of improving traffic flow around that part of the town and providing additional on-street parking spaces. Following a successful trial, the one-way system has now been made permanent. The one-way system is shown

in blue in Figure 2. For ease of reference the route of NCN1 through the one-way system is shown in a dashed red line.

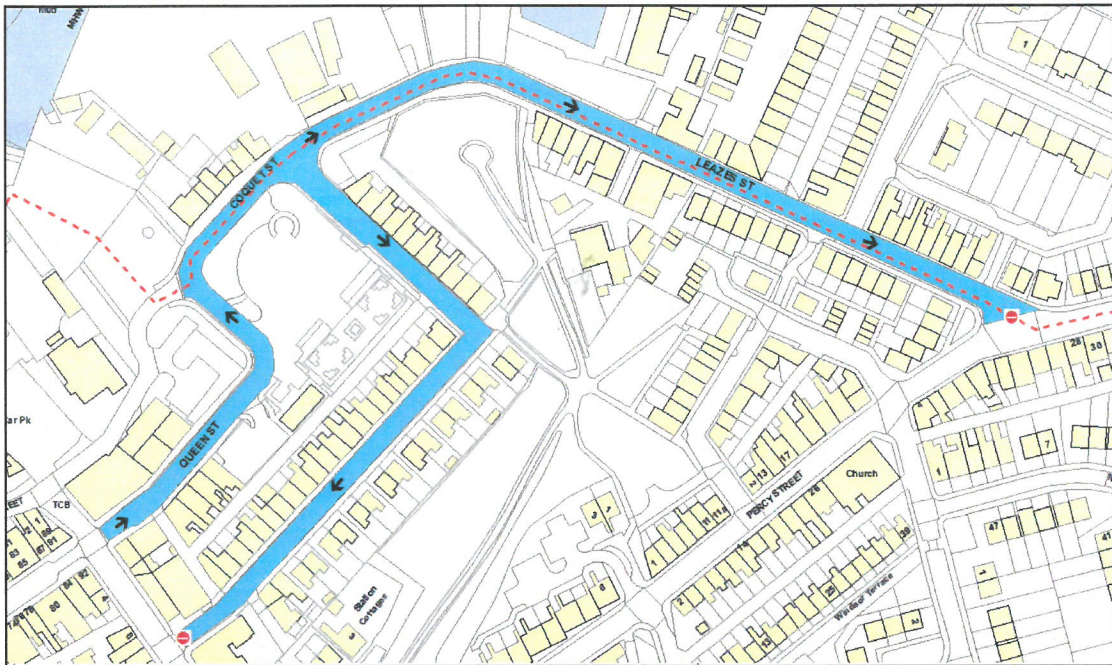


Fig.2. One-way system.

7. As the one way system affects the route of NCN1 consideration was given in the trial as to how the cycling route should be treated.
8. Cycle contra-flows are permitted by the Traffic Signs Regulations and are increasingly common in the UK. They allow cyclists to make their journeys without incurring the extra time involved in following a one way system.
9. In this case, it was decided to include a cycle contra-flow on the one way system. This means that, while vehicular traffic is subject to the one-way system, cyclists may still travel in both directions. Northbound cyclists are therefore travelling against the traffic flow. A sign plate stating "except cycles" is in place below the 'No Entry' signs and further signage is provided throughout the one-way section to remind road users that the contra flow is in place.
10. It should be noted that this was considered helpful in terms of use of local cyclists as well as for those undertaking a longer ride on the NCN1.
11. In the 2.5 years that the system has been in operation there have been no reported injury accidents involving cyclists. However, the presence of parked cars on both sides of the road reduces the space available for both cyclists and motorists. The busy nature of the area, with

numerous vehicle and pedestrian movements, has given rise to the safety concerns highlighted.

Alternative route

12. In response to the concerns raised an alternative route for NCN1 northbound through Amble which avoids the one-way system has been considered. This is shown in blue in Figure 3.

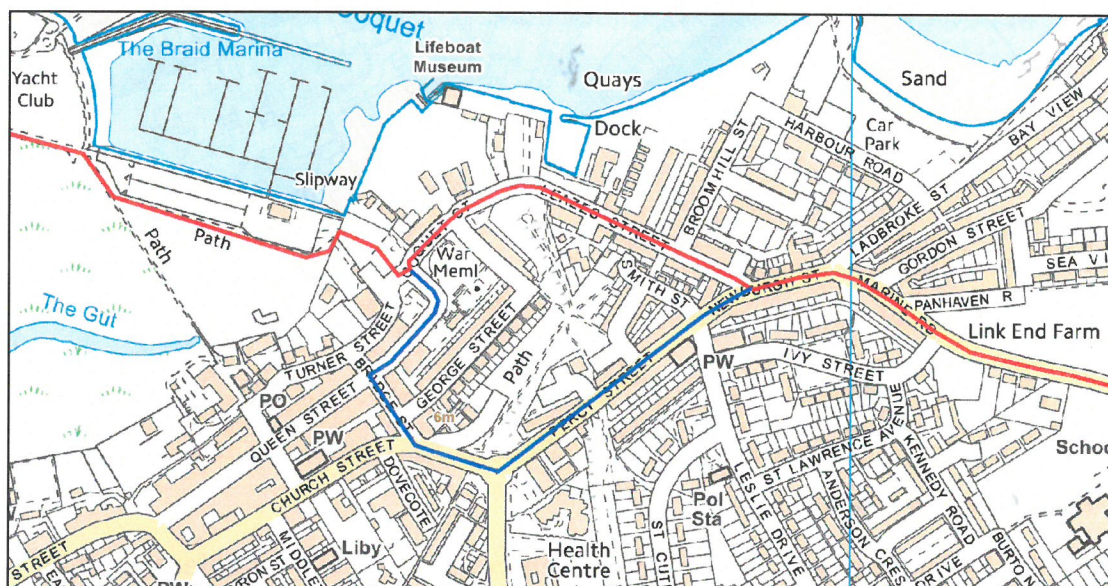


Fig.3. Possible Alternative route of NCN1

13. The pro's and con's of the existing route and the alternative route are listed in Table 1, below:

Table 1.

	Existing Route	Alternative route
Pro's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established route for both NCN users as well as local cyclists Makes use of quieter streets (lower speeds and traffic volumes) Cycle traffic passes shops and businesses at Harbour Village Short detour to Queen St shops. Very low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would require less signage and road markings Potential for future improvements. Cyclists directed close to town centre facilities at Queen Street and could make a short detour to the Harbour.
Con's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layout unfamiliar to some vehicle users (contra-flow with cycles exemption) More signage and road markings needed for improved communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher levels of traffic than existing route. More hazardous right turn at the roundabout. Improvements may be required to the existing roundabout to aid less confident cyclists (e.g. cycle

		bypass)
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14. The National Cycle Network was implemented by Sustrans who continue to promote, maintain and develop the network. Their view in this case is: *"although the perception is that contra-flow systems are dangerous, evidence shows that they are a safe and effective method of cycle provision. Essentially, the contra-flow system is safer than negotiating a roundabout and particularly a right turn (travelling northbound) . Leazes Street is also host to a great deal of local amenities and businesses that benefit from cycle tourism."*
15. Evidence from recent camera surveys demonstrates that the existing route is an established route for local cyclists making short trips to the shops, who will be unable to travel north west along Leazes Street if the contra flow provision is removed. It is likely that local cyclists may continue to undertake this journey, despite the restriction. If this is the case, Police enforcement of the one-way system may be required.

Consultation

16. The petition report was discussed at the November meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council. At the meeting it was resolved that:
 - (1) *The Local Area Council's preferred option is to reconsider the route;*
 - (2) *The issue be discussed further with the local ward member and Amble Town Council;*
 - (3) *The outcome of the above be reported to the Cabinet member for Environment and Local Services for decision.*
17. Both the local ward Members covering Amble, (Councillors Clark and Watson), are in favour of removing the 'except cycles' exemption and re-routing NCN1.
18. At their meeting on 14 December 2017, Amble Town Council decided that they would like the 'except cycles' exemption removed.
19. The Town Council also suggested that the alternative route go via Church Street and Cross Street to reach the Braid. This route would, however, result in visiting cyclists being directed away from the attractions and businesses at the Harbour. It would also force cyclists to use: a footbridge which is too narrow for dual use by cyclists and pedestrians; and a public footpath on which cycling is prohibited. For this stretch of the route cyclists would be expected to dismount.

Recommendation

20. Given the petition, and the views of the North Northumberland Local Area Council, the local ward Members and Amble Town Council, it is recommended that:

- 1) The 'Except Cycles' exemption is removed from the one-way system.
- 2) National Cycle Network Route 1 (northbound) be redirected through Amble via Percy Street and Bridge Street.

Implications Arising out of the Report


Policy	None
Finance and value for money	The proposal will be funded through the Local Transport Plan Programme.
Legal	Motorists and cyclists will be required to comply with the traffic regulation order.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Local County and Town Council Members have been consulted. Statutory consultees will be informed.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Amble

Background papers:

File ref: HE152316-14

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Author and Contact Details

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DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer(s) and Cabinet Member:

Director of Local Services & Housing Delivery
Cabinet Member for Environment & Local Services

Subject:

REMOVAL OF THE 'EXCEPT CYCLES' EXEMPTION FROM THE AMBLE ONE-WAY SYSTEM AND RE-ROUTING OF NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 1

Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with the North Northumberland Local Area Council, local County Councillors and Amble Town Council.

Decision Taken:

- 1) The 'Except Cycles' exemption is removed from the one-way system.
- 2) National Cycle Network Route 1 (northbound) be redirected through Amble via Percy Street and Bridge Street.

Signature of Director/
officer/Cabinet Member



Date

17/1/18