



North Norfolk Cycling Safety Strategy

Produced by North Norfolk Wheelers Cycling Club June 2020





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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

North Norfolk Wheelers Cycling Club has existed in one form or another for over 80 years. The club has over 80 members with numerous guest riders racing our time trials or attending our club runs.

The club would like to pro-actively promote cycling safety on the roads, particularly in North Norfolk to protect both its members, other cyclists and other road users (including motor vehicles). With an increasing number of people cycling on the roads there is a higher risk of interactions with motor vehicles that may result in injury or death to cyclists and other road users.

Many towns and villages such as Cromer, Wells and Sheringham are local examples of towns that suffer from too much traffic flowing through their respective town centres and changes are needed to make the streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

Eight cyclists have died on Norfolk roads in the last 5 years (see Appendix 1). There have been numerous other Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) resulting in minor and major life changing injuries, including club members and former members (at least three known incidents in the last two years).

Outside of Norwich there is very limited provision for cycle safety on the roads. This coupled with the National speed limit of 60 mph in place on narrow rural countryside roads and increasing traffic makes the roads of North Norfolk increasingly dangerous for cycling. There are virtually no cycle lanes in small towns and villages or specific cycling warning signage.

We see this document as providing information to help bring this topic to the forefront of discussion with Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council and Local Town Councils to deliver urgently needed measures to improve the local road network for cycling and other road users.

1.2 Benefits of cycling

The benefits of cycling and walking are now well known, and include the following:

- Tackling congestion, air pollution and carbon reduction;
- walking and cycling for just 10 minutes a day can contribute towards the 150 minutes of physical activity for adults per week, as recommended by the UK Chief Medical Officers;
- physical activity helps to prevent and manage more than 20 chronic health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, dementia, obesity and a variety of cancers. It is also linked to overall health benefits, such as reduced injury risk, improved quality of life, increased productivity and reduced absenteeism at work; and
- employers benefit from a healthier workforce and thriving high streets supporting local employment, whilst at the same time creating more opportunities by delivering streets which are accessible for people with reduced mobility or visual impairments.

1.3 Government Strategy

The government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy published in 2017 provides the aims and objectives and funding for our recommendations. This states the following:

“Our ambition for England: We want to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey”

To help achieve this the government has since 2017 made over £1 billion of Government funding available to local bodies that may be invested in cycling and walking. This strategy is due to be updated this summer with the announcement on the 19th May 2020 of a £2 billion fund (as part of a £5 billion package for cycling and buses) to provide the largest ever boost for cyclists and pedestrians that includes emergency cycle lanes and streets to help support the transport network.

We need to get some of this investment into North Norfolk to promote and improve cycling safety to meet the short and long-term aims of the strategy.

Short-term aims of the strategy by 2025 includes the following:

- To double cycling activity from 2013 to 2025;
- reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England’s roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled; and
- increase walking activity, including increasing the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school.

Long-term aims are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Ambition is to deliver the following by 2040

<p>BETTER SAFETY 'A safe and reliable way to travel for short journeys'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • streets where cyclists and walkers feel they belong, and are safe • better connected communities • safer traffic speeds, with lower speed limits where appropriate to the local area • cycle training opportunities for all children
<p>BETTER MOBILITY 'More people cycling and walking - easy, normal and enjoyable'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more high quality cycling facilities • more urban areas that are considered walkable • rural roads which provide improved safety for walking and cycling • more networks of routes around public transport hubs and town centres, with safe paths along busy roads • better links to schools and workplaces • technological innovations that can promote more and safer walking and cycling • behaviour change opportunities to support increased walking and cycling • better integrated routes for those with disabilities or health conditions
<p>BETTER STREETS 'Places that have cycling and walking at their heart'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • places designed for people of all abilities and ages so they can choose to walk or cycle with ease • improved public realm • better planning for walking and cycling • more community-based activities, such as led rides and play streets where local places want them • a wider green network of paths, routes and open spaces

2 CYCLING SAFETY STRATEGY

2.1 Introduction

Our proposed strategy is split into three basic categories, abbreviated as “**APE!**”:

A = Awareness P = Protection E = Enforcement

2.2 Awareness

This would include promoting the expectations of all road users to walk, cycle and drive safely through various methods. It includes a reminder of the road user hierarchy as shown below.

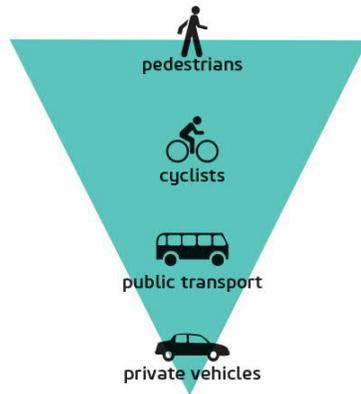


Figure 1. Road user hierarchy. In order of greatest importance to least; pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and private vehicles.

It would include a reminder of the safe passing distances should be given to cyclists as stated in the Highway Code (see Figure 2):

“A guideline minimum distance of 1.5 metres at speeds under 30 mph; A guideline minimum distance of 2.0 metres at speeds over 30 mph; All drivers to take extra care and consider giving more space when overtaking cyclists in bad weather.”

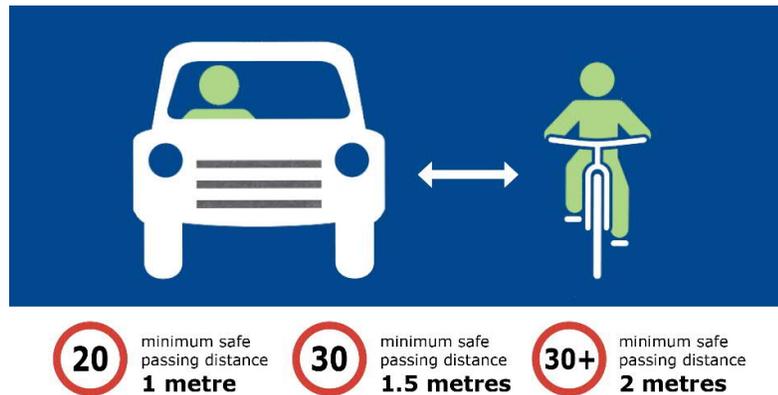


Figure 2. Cyclist Safe Passing Distances (source <https://www.northants.police.uk/>)

This awareness could be delivered through the council’s website, social media, leaflets in tourist information and/or local radio. Police or council officials may be able to undertake random vehicle stops and reminders to motor vehicle users on the highway code.

Most of our members witness unsafe motor vehicle passes regularly on our roads. A 2m distance is almost impossible on rural lanes and in such cases, vehicles should be encouraged to completely stop where safe to do so and let the cyclist pass safely.

2.3 Protection

Speed limits

One of the main methods to improve cycling safety is by reducing speed limits.

The speed limits on rural lanes and the A149 coast road are too high to provide adequate safety for drivers and cyclists based on the road conditions and the terrain and surface conditions (e.g. undulating, bends, worn surface dressing, potholes). RoSPA state that most collisions involve loss of control of the vehicle, usually on a bend. Other reasons included vehicles travelling around blind bends or following other vehicles too closely. Collisions are more likely on unclassified rural roads, with excess speed being more likely on 30 mph roads, and inappropriate speed on 60 mph rural roads (RoSPA, 2018).

It is recommended there is a reduction in rural lane speed limits where they are current 60mph to 40mph. RoSPA reports that on 30 mph roads in built-up areas, 53% of car drivers exceed 30 mph and 19% exceed 35 mph. There should also be a reduction in town and village speed limits from 30 or 40mph to 20mph. There are some particularly dangerous points where the speed limits are 30 or 40mph where there are multiple junctions, parked cars within a residential area and lack of pedestrian crossing points (e.g. from Beeston Regis to Sheringham), see Photo 1.

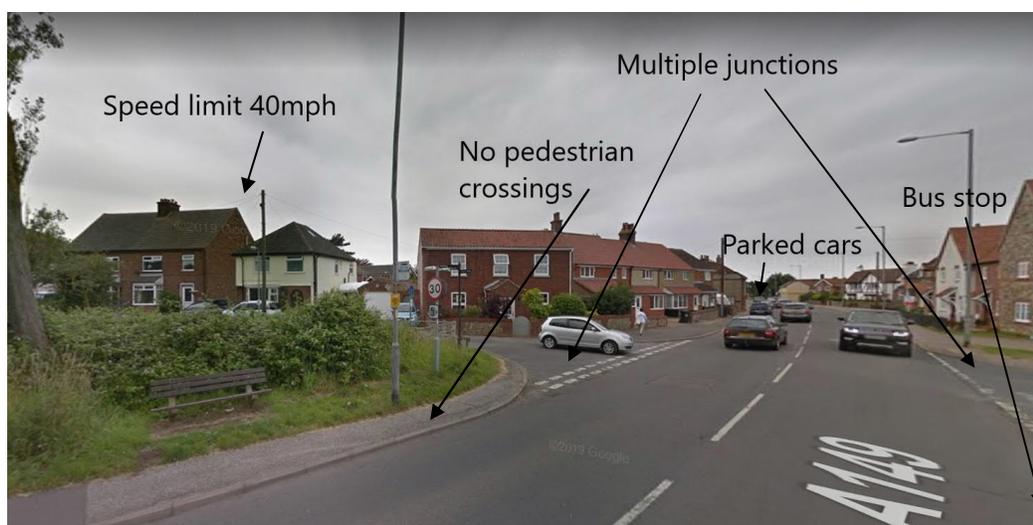


Photo 1. Example of where speed limits should be reduced to 20mph and/or traffic calming measures provided.

Area-wide traffic calming schemes and 20 mph zones are most effective in reducing vehicle speeds and thereby reducing road death and injury. RoSPA strongly supports the use of 20 mph zones, as they are an effective means of reducing road crashes and casualties. They are very effective at protecting our most vulnerable road users, including children, pedestrians and cyclists, and significantly decrease the risk of being injured in a collision.

RoSPA encourages their greater use, especially in residential areas. 20mph zones with traffic calming are the most effective and could be put in place in coastal towns and villages along the coast. Even just reducing the speed limit to 20mph is effective. They also provide additional benefits, such as encouraging more physical activity, such as walking and cycling. They can also greatly improve the character of a residential area and quality of life of the residents.

The coast road should be a maximum of 40mph along its entire length with areas of 20mph through villages. Currently there are people travelling well in excess of 60mph around blind bends such as between Sheringham and Weybourne and Morston and Stiffkey. There are approximately 30 changes in speed limits on the A149 from Kings Lynn to Cromer. This can be confusing to motorists and encourages frequent changes in speed, erratic driving and increase in fuel consumption. East of Cromer the speed limits continue to be quite random where is changes from 30mph in Overstrand to 40mph and then 60 mph into narrow rural lanes past

other housing around narrow bendy roads. See example in Photo 2 where the road speed limit changes from 40mph to 60mph into a narrow rural road. This is repeated along much of the coast road and off other A or B main roads where the speed limits frequently stays at 60mph or increases to 60mph into narrow single track roads.



Photo 2. Junction from Cromer Road into Top Road, east of Sidestrand

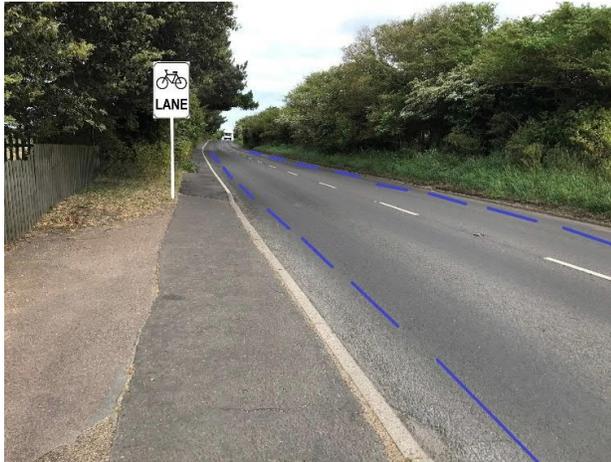
Green lanes and cycle lanes

Green lanes provide important safer routes for cyclists, but these should be extended to allow cyclists to move between villages and towns and potentially into Norwich to commute safely.

Unfortunately, without major investment most of the road network is unlikely to be able to provide segregated cycle lanes due to the width of the roads. Short sections within large towns may be possible and should be investigated.

Blue cycling priority lanes have been seen in some European Countries to provide a priority lane and some visible protection for cyclists and direction for cyclist along well used routes. It is proposed that a trial of this is undertaken from Cromer to Sheringham. This would benefit residents as well as the many visitors to the holiday parks in this area who regularly cycle along this section of coast ride. They cycle priority lanes comprise a dashed blue line approximately 1m from the edge of the road that gives priority to cyclists. (see example on Photos 3 and 4). Signage is also provided to clarify they are for cyclists. When no cyclists are present drivers can drive in them.





Photos 3 and 4. Example of cycle priority lanes

Better connections of off-road, traffic free cycle routes would be welcomed, in particular the creation of routes that links the coastal villages and towns to villages and communities further inland. With stakeholder agreement this could include use of old railway lines, council owned land, permissive paths, National Trust and other privately owned land. The benefits of this includes less trespassing, safer routes and benefits to local businesses and tourism. The Weavers Way is one good example of this working, but a larger, potentially circular network is needed more is needed particularly in North Norfolk.

Traffic limited town centres

There are proposals for trials of limiting traffic/pedestrianisation in town centres such as Cromer and Sheringham. This would link in well with the cycling safety strategy. Historically retailers have associated revenue with traffic and society has prioritised the needs of the car user over all others. The face of retailing is changing rapidly and the old car adage to load up right outside a shop seems outdated. Recently, during Covid-19 people have been able to enjoy what it feels like to have a lot less traffic clogging up their towns. Could they be persuaded to consider more radical change in the future and rebalance the priority between the car and the pedestrian/cyclist?

In addition, online shopping has been increasing yearly from approximately 6% in 2010 to 30% during the recent Covid-19 pandemic (Office for National Statistics www.ons.co.uk). It's all about the shopping 'experience' now. The town centre retailer and their environment will have to change to survive. No more traffic clogged streets but a more European pedestrian / cycle culture is required, particularly with the requirement for social distancing that requires more space for pedestrians.

2.4 Enforcement

Inevitably there will be people that ignore safety information and road signage and therefore policing and potential additional safety cameras are likely to be required.

Policing

Although this strategy relies mainly on promoting awareness and providing protection and provisions for safer cycling, road policing is a fundamental activity, which plays a key role in saving lives and minimising injury on the road. In order to do this effectively, road policing must be given its rightful priority by the government and the Police Service and be adequately resourced. The Police have many priorities, including tackling many forms of violent crime, all

of which are extremely important. They must, therefore, allocate and prioritise their limited resources to the best possible effect. The level of death and injury caused by poor, and often illegal, behaviour on the road far exceeds the number of people killed through any other form of crime. Accordingly, roads policing must be one of the top priorities.

Safety Cameras

Cameras are an effective way of persuading drivers not to speed, and thereby reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured. An independent review of more than 4,000 safety cameras over a four-year period showed that cameras significantly reduced speeding and collisions and cut deaths and serious injuries at camera sites by 42%.

2.5 Summary

We hope this document can be used by NNDC, our local MP Duncan Baker and councillors to develop a strategy to improve the safety of cyclists on our roads and prevent further deaths and injury and enable cyclists and other road users to travel for recreation and work.

As stated, there is central funding available for this from a £1 billion fund announced in the cycling and walking investment strategy in 2017 (due to be updated this summer). On the 19th May 2020 the government announced a £2 billion fund to provide the largest ever boost for cyclists and pedestrians that includes emergency cycle lanes and streets to help support the transport network.

During the Covid-19 pandemic cycling has increased by 200% at weekends and 100% during the week so now is an important time to act to keep people cycling safely on our roads. We welcome input to any future discussions on this.

3 APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1 – Fatalities in Norfolk in the last 5 years (source <https://www.edp24.co.uk/motoring/fatal-crashes-map>)

2020

A male cyclist in his 60s died following a collision with an HGV on the eastbound A47 between the Saddlebow Interchange and Hardwick Roundabout, on the outskirts of King's Lynn. Full story: <https://www.edp24.co.uk/1.6481426>

2019

A male cyclist in his 40s died following a collision with a white Vauxhall Combo van on the B1077 Shelfanger Road in Shelfanger, near Diss. Full story: <https://www.edp24.co.uk/1.6269798>

A 76-year-old cyclist has died following a crash with a blue lorry at the junction with Kenninghall Road and East Harling Road on the B114 near Garboldisham. Full story: <https://www.edp24.co.uk/1.6430210>

2018

A male cyclist aged in his 30s died following a collision with a black Audi Q7 on Aylsham Road in Norwich. Full story: <http://www.edp24.co.uk/1.5465890>

A male cyclist died following a collision with a grey Nissan Nevara on the Reepham Road in Swannington. Full story: <http://www.edp24.co.uk/1.5552840>

2017

A man in his 50s died after his bicycle collided with the kerb on Norwich Road in Horsted. Full story: <http://www.edp24.co.uk/1.5326142>

2016

A cyclist died following a collision with a van on the B1145 Gayton Road in Bawsey, near King's Lynn. Full story: <http://www.edp24.co.uk/1.4732096>

2015

A male cyclist, 43, of Jenny Road, Spixworth, died at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge two days after colliding with a John Deere tractor and trailer on the B1150 North Walsham Road, around 500 metres south of Crostwick Lane, in Beeston St Andrew. Full story: <http://www.edp24.co.uk/1.4123918>