

A.07 Vehicle Restricted Areas

Key Principle

Allowing cycling through restricted areas should be the rule rather than the exception. Where this is not appropriate, consideration should be given to allowing access to cyclists outside of the busiest pedestrian hours.

Design Guidance

Background

Cycle Infrastructure Design:

4.3.1 Many towns and cities have central areas largely free of motor vehicles. These areas often form hubs for radial routes to shops, services and employment. Restricting vehicular access in these areas can sever routes for cyclists unless they are exempted from the restrictions.

Where there are proposals to introduce vehicle restricted areas or pedestrianised areas the default position should be that cyclists are allowed to continue to use the streets concerned in all directions at all times. In terms of public opinion, lifting existing restrictions on cycling can be much more difficult to achieve than imposing them at a later date. Where there are concerns about continued cycle use, the preferred approach is to allow cycling from the outset on the basis of an experimental traffic regulation order and only restrict access when and if the need for such action has been proved. If restrictions on cycling are shown to be necessary, they may only be required at certain times of day. The restriction periods can always be extended later if the need arises.

Advice on this issue is set out in TAL 9/93 *Cycling in Pedestrian Areas*. This emphasises that, on the basis of research, there are no real factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrianised areas and that cycling could be much more widely permitted than is current without detriment to pedestrians. This was confirmed by TRL research "Cycling in Vehicle Restricted Areas" published in 2003 that established that cyclists alter their behaviour according to the density of pedestrian traffic by modifying their speed or dismounting. Furthermore, the evidence of the case studies contained within the report shows that very few collisions actually occur between cyclists and pedestrians. It also showed that as pedestrian flows rise, the incidence of cyclists choosing to push their cycle also rises and those cyclists who continue to ride tend to do so at a lower speed.

Manual for Streets:

4.2.8 To create a permeable network, it is generally recommended that streets with one-way operation are avoided. They require additional signing and result in longer vehicular journeys.

If cyclists want to use cycle-restricted streets, they are likely to use them despite the existence of a ban. Where cyclists are currently using a shopping street and pedestrianisation is proposed, it is generally preferable to accommodate them with good design than attempt to deter them with bans and enforcement.

Scheme Development

When preparing a pedestrianisation scheme it is important that the authority makes a detailed assessment of how the street operates to achieve the best design solution for all users including cyclists. Relevant factors to consider include pedestrian flows, cyclist flows, street widths and alternative routes for cyclists. The reasons why pedestrians and cyclists use the street should also be considered. At certain times, most might be present because they are visiting it, at others, they may want to use the area as part of their route to and from work.

In some cases, certain classes of motorised vehicles such as buses or service traffic may be allowed into the area, but restricted to one-way operation. As with other one-way streets, cyclists should be allowed to use the streets in both directions unless there are good reasons for not doing so. In these cases cyclists should normally follow the vehicular route as pedestrians will already expect to encounter vehicles there. Where this approach is adopted the retention of raised kerbs may better serve the needs of the blind and partially sighted who are likely to welcome segregation by level in a form that does not create a trip hazard.



Rising bollards used to admit public transport whilst restricting other vehicular access, Cambridge (note cycle slip being used by pedestrian).

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Design features

The TRL research referred to earlier found that within pedestrianised areas a large majority of both cyclists and pedestrians favour a marked cycle route within these areas. It is likely that any local consultation would give similar results. However, such a solution should be approached with caution as it can lead to higher cycle speeds and possibly more serious conflicts. Cyclists are also more likely to be obstructed by straying pedestrians if constrained to a defined route and will need to use the rest of the area (illegally) to pass them.

The final design should be established by appropriate consultation and the questions employed in any questionnaires should be constructed so that consultees can make an informed decision before answering. The consultation will need to take account of the needs of the blind and partially sighted who may be expected to prefer a defined route for cyclists with a difference in level to create the required definition and help with orientation.

One way of identifying the path cyclists may be expected to follow is to use cycle symbols (Diagram 1057). They have the advantage of reinforcing the fact that cyclists are permitted, but also allow cyclists to use of the full width of the area. These symbols may easily be combined with streetscape enhancement and

created, where appropriate, within the pattern of paving or from historic surfacing materials.



Cycle symbol within
paviour, Bristol

Picture ©Alex Sully
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When locating street furniture and other features, special attention should be given to intervisibility between different users, especially where people may emerge unexpectedly from doorways into the path of cyclists. Where cyclists are to share the space with pedestrians without segregation, the use of surfacing materials and the design and siting other features, such as seating areas, should create an environment in which cycle speeds are low and pedestrians have priority.



Surface texture and level
difference used to denote
cycle and pedestrian
areas, Manchester

Picture ©Alex Sully
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The use and the spacing of street furniture should also reflect the natural path for cyclists. Different coloured surfacing or materials can help to reinforce this. In cases where other vehicles are allowed and where the surface is level, bollards or trees can be used to mark out pedestrian only areas.

Consideration should be given to the provision of guidance paving, or similar, to ensure that there is a legible route for blind and partially sighted people in such areas.

Cycle parking

Where cyclists' access to a pedestrianised area is restricted, convenient cycle parking should be provided at each entry point to encourage cyclists to leave their cycles there. Sheffield stands or similar are preferred (see [C04 Cycle parking](#)).



Cycle parking at entry to pedestrianised High Street, Taunton

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Publications

[LTN 2/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design](#) DfT 2008

[TAL 9/93 Cycling in pedestrian areas](#) DfT 1993

[Cycling in Pedestrian Areas](#) TRL report PR15

[Manual for Streets](#) DfT, Communities & Local Government 2007

[Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions](#) DfT 2002

[Cycling in vehicle restricted areas](#) TRL 583 2003

[Alternative routes for cyclists around pedestrian areas](#) TRL 371 1999

[TAL 4/97 Rising Bollards](#) DfT 1997

[Shared Surface Street Design Research Project](#) Guide Dogs 2006

[Designing for Disabled People in Home Zones](#) JMU Access partnership 2007

[Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres](#) DCLG 2005

[Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools](#) DCLG 2005

[Cycling England Gallery](#) pictorial examples

[London Cycling Design Standards – A guide to the design of a better cycling environment](#) (Sections 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6) TfL 2005

Lancashire - The Cyclists' County ([part 1](#), [part 2](#)) – creating pleasant road conditions Lancashire County Council, 2005 – Section 3

[CTC Benchmarking](#) – Best practice case studies

[National Cycle Network – Guidelines and Practical details, Issue 2](#) Sustrans 1997

Other references

[Cycle Friendly Infrastructure - Guidelines for Planning and Design](#) Bicycle Association et al 1996