

Newcastle City Council Cycling Forum Terms of Reference

The Newcastle Cycling Forum was set up by Newcastle City Council to bring together people with an interest in cycling so that they could influence the Council's policy on cycling and help shape how the cycling budget should be spent.

The Forum is not a decision making body but it is the means by which the cycling community can contribute to and influence the services that the Council provides for cyclists.

The overall cycling vision for Newcastle as outlined in the Newcastle Cycling Strategy, is to have more people of all ages cycling more often in a city that is easy and safe to get around by bike.

The Strategy sets out how this will be done. The Cycling Forum is a vital part of the Strategy. These Terms of Reference clarify the role of the Forum and the responsibilities of the Council and the Forum.

Mission statement

We will work with the City Council to increase the numbers of people cycling in Newcastle and make cycling in the city a safe, convenient and pleasant mode of transport.

We will take into the account the needs of all cyclists from the beginner to the regular cyclist and provide opportunities and encouragement for everyone to cycle.

We will respect the hierarchy of road users which gives highest priority to pedestrians, followed by cyclists, then public transport, service vehicles and finally car users.

Aim

The forum's aims are

1. educational: to share information and advice on cycling issues and support cycle training.
2. promotional: to work with Newcastle City Council to promote and encourage responsible cycling in and around Newcastle
3. consultative: to comment on and influence council policies, strategies and plans including spending decisions that impact upon cyclists and the existing cycle infrastructure as well as the future development of cycling facilities.
4. monitoring and review: To monitor and review
 - condition of cycle routes
 - new cycle schemes
 - progress on implementing the cycling strategy
 - how the cycle budget is being spent

Consultation

Where a traffic scheme has particular implications for cyclists, the plans will be presented to the Cycling Forum by the project officer and comments invited. For larger schemes a working group will be formed to examine the proposals in detail.

Where a new cycling scheme or major improvements to a cycling route are being considered, the Forum will be involved in the discussions at the beginning to comment on the line of the route, the importance of the route to cyclists etc. Officers will then draw up a draft scheme. A working group will be formed to examine the plan in detail. The final proposal will be presented to the Cycling Forum.

Cycling organisations and the Cycling Officer are consulted routinely on traffic schemes as part of the council's technical consultation process. Schemes which require changes to the highway are advertised in prominent places near to where the changes will take place (eg. lampposts) and residents in the area are told of the plans by post. The proposals are put on the Council's Traffic-Related Consultation webpage. Members of the Forum are free to comment through the webpage at <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/opentrafficrelatedconsultations>.

Composition / membership

The forum is made up of representatives of organisations concerned with cycling and interested cyclists. Meetings are open to the public to allow individuals to attend and contribute. The forum actively seeks the regular participation and contribution of

- ✓ CTC (Cyclists Touring Club)
- ✓ Sustrans
- ✓ cycling industry (cycle traders, bike shops, repair and training services)
- ✓ workplace Bike User Group (BUG) representatives
- ✓ cycling campaign representatives
- ✓ Northumbria Police,
- ✓ the health sector (hospitals, trusts),
- ✓ educational and academic institutions (universities, colleges, schools)
- ✓ large employers
- ✓ the BME community
- ✓ young people's groups
- ✓ women's groups
- ✓ Highways & Transportation section

This will be done through good publicity about the forum and its meetings as well as pro-active networking by the forum. The Cycling Officer will be responsible for inviting groups and organisations to attend.

Minutes and papers from the Forum will be placed on the Cycle Newcastle website and circulated to other relevant officers within the Council to allow wider participation.

Roles and responsibilities of members

The members of the forum are expected to

- Regularly attend forum meetings and contribute to the discussions and decision-making process

- Disseminate information within their organisation and relevant members/users/clients to represent their views when appropriate
- Champion the forum within their organisation and make “connections” between people, groups and projects so that opportunities for collaboration but also the visibility of the forum are maximized.
- Bring their local/expert knowledge to the table so that informed decision can be made
- Make recommendations for future work and priorities
- Ensure that the Forum embeds in its operations the principles of equality, social inclusion and sustainable development.
- Respect the needs of cyclists of all abilities and levels of participation
- Support safe and responsible cycling in Newcastle

Role and responsibilities of the council

The Council is expected to

- Take into account the views of the Forum when making decisions affecting cycle provision, ensuring that comments from the Forum are channelled to the decision makers
- Provide officers to attend meetings to discuss major proposals
- Inform the Forum of developments and issues affecting cycling in Newcastle and provide opportunities to comment on these
- Feedback to the Forum on issues raised
- Explain decisions on budget allocation
- Update the Cycling Newcastle website with Forum minutes and papers, plans of schemes and other information relevant to cycling in Newcastle

Objectives of the Forum

1. To identify the barriers to safe cycling in Newcastle and to recommend actions.
2. To make recommendations on budget allocation and prioritising proposed projects.
3. To comment on proposed developments in relation to cycling.
4. To assist the council in forging the necessary links with key stakeholders, including local government associations, cycling industry trade bodies, cycle users groups, professional driver training bodies and associations, the rail industry, law enforcement agencies, the healthcare sector and professional bodies which have an interest in similar purposes.
5. To participate in and feed into the integrated transport debate and other transport strategy development such as the revision of the Local Transport Plan.
6. To report problems on the cycling infrastructure for action or assessment
7. To support the work of the Cycling Officer

Organisation

1. The forum will meet at least 4 times a year on a weekday evening.
2. The forum will be based at the Newcastle Civic Centre but meetings may be held elsewhere.
3. The forum will be serviced by the Newcastle Cycling Officer employed by Newcastle City Council. S/he will act as the Forum administrator. Minutes will be taken by an appointed council officer or by a volunteer from the Forum.

4. A range of cycling topics will be discussed at each meeting, based on suggestions from members of the forum and council officers. The Chair and administrator will be responsible for organising the agenda.
5. Meeting dates will be set at the beginning of the financial year. Meetings will be advertised in advance on the council website.
6. The agenda and associated documents will be circulated in advance of each meeting. The minutes will be circulated no more than 4 weeks after the forum meeting. The agenda should be circulated 1 week in advance of the forum meeting.
7. Forum documentation such as agendas, minutes of the meeting, associated documents and links, will be posted on the website for inclusive access and transparency. If posting online is not permissible due to council policy, online reference will be made to the document and access made available by other means.
8. Where more detailed discussion is needed or the focus is on one geographical area only, subgroups of the forum (task and finish groups) can be set up by the Chair. These will have a limited timescale and should report back to the main forum upon completion or at a set frequency.
9. The forum will be chaired by a Member (elected representative) from Newcastle City Council. The Chair will ensure the smooth and inclusive running of the meetings and that all actions from meetings are followed up. Two vice-chairs will also be elected to support the Chair.
10. The administration of the forum is the responsibility of Newcastle City Council. The administrator will distribute the agenda and minutes, keep an up-to-date contact list of members, organise meeting rooms and refreshments and publicise the meetings.
11. The agendas and minutes of every meeting will be copied to the following council officers and elected representatives for their information, dissemination and comment:
 - ✓ Member for Environment portfolio
 - ✓ Member of Transport portfolio
 - ✓ Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration
 - ✓ Director of Strategic Housing Planning and Transportation

Code of Conduct

As members of the Newcastle Cycling Forum we will:

- treat each other and all the cycling community with courtesy and respect and will demonstrate honesty and discretion in matters relating to the Cycling Forum.
- accept that all members of the Forum have equal status and that our main concern is the welfare of all cyclists in Newcastle
- work as a team
- work to develop effective working relationships with officers, cyclists and non-cyclists and all relevant organisations
- involve ourselves actively in the work of the Forum and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees and working groups.
- regularly attend meetings of the Forum and working groups
- express our views openly within meeting
- accept and respect the council's responsibility to look after the needs of all road users