



## Background information for Ryder Architects

### About Us

Cycling4Everyone (North East) limited, is a social enterprise operating as a cycle training provider and active travel advocate aiming to promote and support the increase of safe cycling through Bikeability cycle training (the new *cycling proficiency* test), bike repairs and teaching cyclists to fix their bikes - keeping cyclists' bikes safe and bikes in good order.

Registering for Companies House in 2019, C4E became a going concern through the Hirst Park Project in 2022.

We boast our unique selling point as being that we offer an all-round bike and cycling service on a non-commercial basis.

#### **C4E's human resources comprise:**

- 4 directors, all self employed with different specialisms in the cycling world, including a bike mechanic, Bikeability instructor, ride leaders and ebike / eargo bike specialists
- Freelance mechanics, ride leaders and instructors when required

#### **C4E's other resources:**

For our flagship project, the Ashington Cycle Hub, we are in partnership with the Full Circle Food Project whose workshop we use as the base for our Ashington activities.

Our income streams are as follows:

- Full cost recovery for events and cycle training
- Small amounts of grant aid from Cycling Uk and Awards 4 All
- Bike and parts sales

These are described in more detail in the paragraph below.

### **Background to the Ashington Cycle Hub**

During 2020/21 'Cycle With Jan' (Jan Chisholm - C4E director and founder) ran a number of cycle training courses for local residents (particularly for asylum seekers and job seekers). This activity was initially funded by Northumberland County Council and Northumberland County of Sanctuary. Both funders recognised the need and potential for a cycle maintenance service, cycling training and development in Ashington - particularly the Hirst Park area. These activities facilitated dialogue with Full Circle Food Project and the outcome achieved: C4E was offered the FREE use of some workshop space for our Hub to operate on a Tuesday 10am - 3pm. C4E further tested the demand with a one-off Dr Bike session (funded by another project) offering free bike repair. The large numbers attending in January 2022, not typically a busy time of year in the cycling world, provided us with strong evidence of the demand from the Hirst Park area for a more permanent cycle repair workshop. Following an offer from the Full Circle, the free use of their workshop on a Tuesday, a mechanic was secured by C4E, (paid for by the Full Circle) to open a bike repair workshop. The mechanic and C4E director Jan (volunteering) attended every week to develop the project further, starting C4E's journey for putting a new Cycle Hub

in Ashington utilising the Full Circle Food workshop and Hirst Park's free outdoor spaces, which offer an excellent safe cycle training area.

### **Funding to date**

In March 2022 the Full Circle secured a one off capital funding grant of £10,000 to purchase a small container for the storage of bikes and kit out the workshop with cycle tools and renewable bike parts including tyres and inner tubes.

In June 2022, an Awards4All £10,000 grant was secured by C4E allowing us to officially launch the Ashington Cycle hub. The funding, now concluded, has paid for:

A development worker (Jan), approximately 10 hours a week to:

- set up policies where necessary and procedures for managing Full Circle workshop systems, including risk assessments, ordering parts, recruiting volunteers, data protection, receiving payments and record keeping
- recruit suitable mechanics, instructors and volunteers to run the workshop and activities
- to develop and seek funding for one-off events for the community. This has mainly been through either Cycling UK or Full Circle Food. When funding is secured, projects then require management and coordination of staff, activities and participants
- schedule a paid mechanic to manage the workshop, volunteers and keep bikes mechanically sound
- manage the admin for all Ashington Cycle Hub activities.

Along with Jan, a mechanic is paid 5 hours to jointly manage the workshop, volunteers and the repair and refurbishment of bikes.

Behind the scenes at the workshop we also have other volunteers who support the business development, marketing and promotion of the hub

The funding has enabled C4E to operate the Ashington cycle hub on one day a week and be the focal point for cycling activity, and a place where:

- local people can drop in and get their bike fixed
- donated bikes can be received and upgraded for referral or sale
- cycle confidence, road safety training, guided bike rides can start and finish and learn to fix sessions can be conducted, all when funding allows.
- a place from where to operate a bike referral system offering at low cost affordable refurbished bike for local residents economically disadvantaged largely self referred, including asylum seekers and job seekers.

(See annex for quantitative and qualitative data 'Achievements of the Ashington Cycle Hub June 2022 to date')

Funding has enabled progress in the last year, meeting the needs of a wide range of beneficiaries and establishing an increasing presence in Ashington, and we face the future with optimism, however without doubt we are limited by lack of core funding for key personnel and the ability to promote more widely because of our limited capacity. It is also important to recognise that working in this area of high deprivation the project is never going to be a commercial or self sustaining project and without funding

for key appropriately qualified and experienced personnel and therefore development of the project is limited and unlikely to realise its full potential.

### **Future plans ?**

The demand for the Ashington Cycle hub continues to grow through word of mouth and a facebook presence, however, not everyone in Ashington knows we exist and our current limited financial resources prevent us from further advertising as we do not want to raise local expectations. Demand continues as:

- The majority of our customers are economically disadvantaged, without cars and a bike is essential to them for personal transport, allowing them to access essential services, access to the countryside, the coast, local jobs and jobs in neighbouring towns
- There is no Halfords or anywhere in Ashington which offers cheap local servicing or to buy bike parts
- C4E is a social enterprise and non profit making, it keep prices affordable for local people who simply don't have financial resource to pay higher prices
- We recycle donated bikes and sell at affordable prices to local people
- We operate a 'community bike' scheme whereby members of the community can buy a reconditioned bike and receive cycle confidence and road safety training. Reconditioned bike prices start at £15 and the cycle training is offered free subsidised from a variety of sources (currently Sustrans) - the demand for bikes and training continues to increase as word spreads.
- Cycling continues to be seen and promoted nationally as an important means of addressing environmental, transport and health challenges

### **C4E's aspirations and opportunities for the Ashington Cycle Hub**

**In the short term.** we aspire to be able to run the workshop more frequently, i.e. 3 days a week including a Saturday to be able to :

- to continue to offer a local repair station
- engage with people who regularly visit the hub and newcomers, to stimulate their cycling interest
- put on regular cycling and bike activities which the local community can access. (learn to fix, learn to ride, led rides)
- hold a small quantity of bike parts eg. cables, pads, tubes, lights, helmets, locks, tyres etc and open a small bike shop to sell consumable parts to provide an income stream which can be reinvested in the project
- offer local cycling training rides and reintroduce bikeability for schoolchildren and adults

For these things to be achieved, more funding would be needed, in order to:

- provide dedicated staff to the Ashington Cycle Hub on 3 days a week, including a Project manager and coordinator of activities; workshop manager and mechanic; an IT Marketing and promotions specialist and a dedicated admin resource.
- to purchase 2 secure shipping containers for bikes
- secure dedicated workshop space within the Full Circle building where tools and bike parts can be stored without interruption from other users
- provide a budget for IT (phones / computers) marketing and promotions

Continued dedicated funding of the Cycle Hub would bring positive benefits and change to this community, including:

- continuation of the Ashington Cycle Hub will create a space that is welcoming, inclusive and breaks down community barriers
- encourage community cohesion and integration by creating opportunities for the asylum seeker community to meet and cycle with members of the local community.
- breaking down perceived barriers to cycling
- supporting the community to engage with safe active travel
- gives people opportunity to gain the life skill of cycling whilst promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of cycling
- by partnering the Full Circle Food Project more collaborative work between the organisations would be of benefit both organisations and the wider community i.e. maximising the growing zone, cooking and cycling as healthy living opportunities
- offer more opportunity to our target audiences which include low confidence groups, womens only, asylum seekers, families, and low income households.
- champions safe cycling as well as a cheap/free form of personal transport
- providing regular support and opportunities to cycle
- provides opportunities to engage with the local community to research what cycling activities they would like, i.e. learn to ride, led rides, women's groups etc.
- encourage volunteers to become accredited ride leaders and mechanics
- capture national, regional and local funding and resource for cycling to HP i.e. ATE NCC, Cycling Uk and Sustrans and others...

**In the medium term,** we could apply our ebike and ecargo bike skills to become a Northumberland, Tyne and Wear centre of excellence offering specialist training which we have already devised and are waiting to put to use. We have the resources already for this.

We also aspire to become a Recognised Delivery Centre (RDC) for Bikeability instruction. The North East is sadly lacking in this resource (the government's national standard for delivering cycle road safety training) the nearest Bikeability RDC's are Leeds and Lancashire, not helpful to increase safe cycling in the North East. Additional funding for this would merely be the training qualification for an existing instructor - up to £5000. These aspirations focus on keeping cyclists safe in the North East, very important given the desire for net zero and behaviour change to embrace more active travel and have potential to put Ashington on the North East stage as a Bikeability Training Centre.

### **How can we make these aspirations happen?**

At C4E we believe we have the necessary components to make this a success which are:

**The business model and the right human resources** - as a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable aims, or social enterprise, C4E can apply for grant aid and reinvest any financial surplus back into the company for future development work. This business model also allows us to use our skills base as directors, which include instructors, mechanics, ride leaders, along with ebike and ecargo bike

specialists and we can be paid for any work we do for the company (with checks and balances obviously)... in other words much of our work won't have to be contracted out to others .

**The space for developing cycling activity** - use of good local resources within and surrounding Hirst Park. By cordoning off one of the car parks we have the perfect cycle training area away from traffic and by using nearby local streets we can conduct road safety cycle training and have a start point from where to conduct led rides. Adding to that we are less than 500 metres from local Sustrans routes which can give opportunity for riding further afield, up and down the coast but also offers a good route to nearby Morpeth for a change of scene for local residents.

**The right location which can be easily accessed.** The Ashington Cycle Hub can be easily accessed by residents around Hirst park, Ashington and the south east of Northumberland. The majority of beneficiaries for cycle training and mechanical support for bikes maybe local to Ashington or neighbouring towns in South East Northumberland: Cramlington, Morpeth, Bedlington, Stakeford, Cambois and Blyth, but lets not forget that given the opening of the Northumberland line (Autumn 2024) it is not inconceivable to think we could offer wider afield eg. we could accommodate wannabe Bikeability trainers from County Durham and Tyneside. This would be important if the project were to go down the Bikeability 'train the trainer' line.

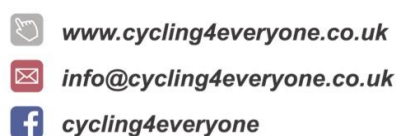
**Existing local demand** for the workshop already generated from what we have been doing in the last year. Should we achieve our medium term goals, we believe there is an increasing demand for an ebike and ecargo bike specialist within the North East there is undoubtedly a shortage of Bikeability instructors.

**The Opportunity with the involvement of Ryder architects / Levelling up funds and either independently or partnering the Full Circle Food to develop the project further**

The funding would not only allow us to extend our operation, but enable more income generation opportunities, which in turn would make our delivery more long term and sustainable. This sustainability would have a greater impact on the Ashington community and enable us to work more efficiently with other organisations based around the Hirst Park area.

C4E welcomes further dialogue with Council and community partners to advance its ambitions in the Hirst park area.

Jan Chisholm  
Development Worker and Director,  
Cycling 4 Everyone (north east) limited  
June 2023



### **Annex - Evidence of achievements of the Ashington Cycle Hub, June 2022 to date**

Since the launch of the workshop, promotions and one off externally funded events have led to a gradual build up of activity. Regards the recording of data, C4E has lacked consistent resource to evidence all of its accomplishments, however can state the following as facts from our records that the Ashington Cycle Hub has:

- opened its doors and offered a repair service since and without much promotion has had at least one visitor requiring a bike repair every week and averaging 3 per week.
- stopped over 100 bikes from going into landfill
- recruited 4 regular suitably qualified volunteers as mechanics and ride leaders
- began accepting, selling and distributing bikes through C4E bike referral scheme to enable the local asylum community to attend college, job interviews, work and explore their local area. Since September 2022 redistributed 74 bikes to the local Ashington community through the referral scheme which include cycle confidence and road safety (Bikeability) training
- conducted a number of one off cycling events including:
  - 20 Cycling UK Big Bike Revival funded events -
    - 1 Dr Bike ; 8 Learn to fix ; 5 led rides; 5 learn to ride events

And for the Full Circle:

2 Childrens Easter Holiday club and 4 Summer cycling activities

2 cycling activity events for Off the Grid CIC

To boost our evidence base, below is some qualitative information supporting the background of some of our regular visitors to the Ashington Cycle Hub. Many of our beneficiaries have similar circumstances with the common thread being not owning or having access to a car, or other means of personal mobility and most are not in employment.

#### **Single Mum in her late 40's**

This lady does not drive, she uses a bike for most of her transport. She is in low paid employment delivering papers and leaflets for which she uses the bike daily and often needs help with minor repairs.

Originally bought her reconditioned bike from WATbike who used to operate in the town, but has had no support since. She states that in the last few years without access to bike parts since the departure of WATbike, she has struggled with bike maintenance.

Has attended a one off learn to fix session which she found really helpful and would like to know more.

Has a daughter who is 13 for whom she recently bought a bicycle on a referral day during the holidays and learned to ride safely on the roads.

They can now:

- cycle together for recreation, including visiting the coast
- visit neighbouring Morpeth without incurring bus fares
- her daughter can independently travel locally visiting her friends or go shopping

#### **Asylum Seeker**

Has lived in HP for 18 months and is continuing to seek asylum. We provided him with a bike, cycle confidence and road safety training over a year ago. He uses his bike for shopping and all local travel as has no other means of personal transport and often goes on short rides using the local Sustrans

Routes. Has found other asylum seekers who are cycling comrades and often go exploring the local cycle paths.

Visits the workshop for bike fixing and we know that 'just a chat' helps his mental health and wellbeing and helps him on his way.

### **60 year old grandmother and carer for her 11 year old granddaughter**

Likes her granddaughter to participate in the cycle holiday clubs C4E provides in partnership with the Full Circle and would like to see more cycling opportunities for school children.

Knows very well the local scene for young people, having worked with young people and youth clubs she feels very strongly that there is 'nothing to do' for them and sadly results in the increasing drug problem in the area. Local schools don't always take up the government funded Bikeability programme for school children because the local schools are relying on many newly qualified teachers who do not stay long enough to embed the practice in their school. Even if the schools did Bikeability she feels there would be a usable bike problem for many children.

### **Job Seeker**

In his late 40's and is long term unemployed. He has an allotment, grows veg and keeps chickens. He has visited the workshop several times since it opened with his mountain bike which he acquired second hand several years ago. Recently he visited the workshop with his bike which required major repairs and new parts for which we charged £75. To secure payment for the work done on his bike, he asked if he could pay two weeks hence as he didn't have the money available. We trusted him, appreciating his limited resources and he duly paid on time, appreciating the credit.

Earlier this year, he secured employment in Morpeth and cycles to work using the cycle path which connects the two towns. The bike is essential to him and will save the cost of his bus fare.

### **User comments and Testimonials**

"The hub is good for both Hirst Park and Ashington communities" - no one has ever said otherwise!

"The hub will improve community integration"

" and help people with mental health issues. It would be a great place where people could be referred to to support their mental health and perhaps give them opportunities to volunteer"

"Great for health"

" great for children as there is nothing for them around here"

"Would keep children and adults fit"

"would love my 10 year old to learn to fix their bike"

"Children around here need to know how to be safe on the roads"

"If the hub could offer work experience it would help people to get jobs"

" bike fixing for children and women would be great"

" more people in Ashington need to know about this"