

WEST YORKSHIRE CYCLING STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

1. The Strategy describes the potential for, and the means by which, cycling can contribute to meeting overall Local Transport Plan objectives and targets within West Yorkshire. It also has fundamental relationships with national, regional and local policies and strategies:

- A New Deal For Transport, the National Cycling Strategy that was launched in July 1996, and Planning Policy Guidance notes, particularly PPG13 on transport
- Regional Planning Guidance and Regional Transport Strategy
- The land use planning, transport, environmental and leisure policies contained in the Unitary Development Plans of the five district authorities.

2. The Strategy is intended to inform the public and cycling interest groups, and to guide planners and highway and traffic engineers in the development of integrated programmes of schemes and measures and the assessment of other development proposals. It deals with all aspects of catering for and encouraging both utility and leisure cycling, addressing safety, perceived danger, theft and other issues that discourage cycling.

3. The West Yorkshire Cycling Strategy draws on and guides the co-ordination of contributions from a range of organisations working together and sharing ideas, priorities and resources. In particular it will contribute to achieving the policies and objectives of the health authorities.

4. The Strategy is translated into detailed cycling action plans developed by the individual authorities. These include maps produced to a common base that show the priority routes for addressing problems and where we will be providing new facilities and measures within the five-year LTP period.

5. Included with this Strategy is a map showing the existing and future routes that will combine to form a strategic cycle network for West Yorkshire, including those that are or will be part of the National Cycle Network.

BACKGROUND

6. There is considerable potential for meeting a much greater proportion of travel demand by cycling. Over two million cycles are sold in Britain every year, more than the number of cars sold. Over 90% of men and 67% of women are able to ride a cycle. Almost three quarters of all personal journeys are less than five miles in length, which is a distance reasonably suited to cycling, and half of all journeys are less than two miles.

7. However at present cycling is an under used and under exploited form of transport. Nationally less than 2% of trips are made by cycle and within West Yorkshire it is less than 1%. These figures compare badly with some other European countries, for example, in Sweden 10% of journeys are made by cycle, in Germany 11%, in Switzerland 15% and in Denmark 18%. In Britain only 2% of secondary school children cycle to school compared with 60% in the Netherlands.

8. There is considerable survey evidence available for certain national routes to demonstrate that where good quality cycle tracks and other facilities have been

provided this has attracted high levels of cycle use. This suggests that there could be a major demand for cycling, which is currently suppressed by the prevailing conditions on the highway.

9. Encouraging more people to cycle will bring benefits to the whole community:
- improved health through increased fitness, reduced risk of heart attack, weight control and reduced stress;
 - reduced noise, air pollution, and congestion leading to enhancement of the local environment and quality of life;
 - reduced greenhouse gas emissions
 - less consumption of non-renewable energy resources;
 - economic gains through cycle tourism and leisure;
 - independence for people who cannot or do not wish to use a car;
 - in urban areas, cycling can be the quickest and most convenient form of transport, and requires less valuable land to be taken up for parking.

OBJECTIVES

10. The Local Transport Plan sets out the overall transport objectives for West Yorkshire. Primary objectives are grouped under economic, social (including safety) and environmental headings. Subsidiary objectives relate to reducing the rate of growth in road traffic, encouraging a greater proportion of journeys to be made by alternative modes to the private car and improving integration between transport modes. For cycling there are four more specific objectives listed below:

- to encourage more people to cycle more often for both utility and leisure journeys, and so help to reduce the dependency on private cars;
- to develop a safe, convenient, efficient and attractive transport infrastructure that encourages and facilitates cycling;
- to reduce the casualty rate of cyclists;
- to ensure that policies to increase cycling and meet the needs of cyclists are integrated into all appropriate Policies, Plans, Strategies and resources bids.

11. Working towards these will contribute to meeting the primary and subsidiary objectives.

STRATEGY

12. The West Yorkshire Transport Strategy is based on four inter-related themes and again cycling is an integral part:

- improving the quality and availability of alternative modes to the car;
- managing the use and condition of the highway;
- demand management (including influencing attitudes, Travel Plans for companies and organisations, and safer routes to school initiatives);
- measures to promote social inclusion.

TARGETS

13. The National Cycling Strategy, launched in July 1996, set headline targets to double cycle use by the year 2002 and then double again by 2012. Responsibilities were identified for local authorities to contribute by setting local targets and producing strategies that will develop a cycling culture.

14. Targets need to relate to the objectives, be measurable, and be achievable. The following targets have been adopted:

- to double the overall number of trips by cycle by 2002 and double again by 2012 from a base of 1996 levels (National Target);
- 5% of journeys to work in the major urban centres to be by cycle by 2012;
- 10% of the trips by pupils of 11 years and older in schools that have implemented school travel initiatives to be by cycle by 2012;
- to provide cycle safety training for 20% of all 10 to 12 year olds by 2002, and 50% by 2012;
- to reduce overall cyclist fatalities and serious casualties by 40%, and 50% for children, and a 10% reduction in slight casualties, by the year 2010 compared with the 1994 -1998 average (National Target)

MECHANISMS

15. The mechanisms to achieve the objectives and targets will be undertaken through programmes of work that have been grouped for convenience under the headings of engineering and planning, encouragement, education and enforcement.

16. Because of the diversity of the county, implementation will need to take account of local conditions and problems; it will not be possible for all the mechanisms to be implemented in every area. Resource constraints and the implications of local priorities will affect the speed of implementation.

Engineering and Planning

The primary aims of engineering and planning measures are to provide a cycle friendly infrastructure comprising the road network, modified where necessary, and supplemented by cycle tracks to enable cyclists to reach all destinations safely and conveniently. The networks will be based on rolling programmes of reviews and assessments of the existing cycle routes and road network.

• Develop a high quality cycle route network for West Yorkshire

The proposed strategic network is shown on the accompanying map. Of particular importance are the routes that are planned to become part of the National Cycle Network, and these will be provided within the five-year programme of the LTP. More detailed local networks will also be developed and shown in the action plans of the five district councils. Some routes will cater largely for local movements; others will also satisfy strategic movements within West Yorkshire and cross-boundary routes into neighbouring authority areas.

Sections of the networks will be developed using opportunities arising from reclamation schemes, new developments, canal towpaths, parks, disused railways and other tracks. The routes will be designed for both utility and leisure cycling. Links

will be provided to local shopping centres, business and residential areas, education establishments and leisure attractions.

The networks will achieve high standards of coherence, directness, safety, attractiveness and comfort. Use will be made of existing roads and tracks incorporating, where appropriate, measures to make them safer for cycling. Off road links will be considered where they can provide additions to the network that are useful and attractive to cyclists.

- **Provide measures, wherever possible, which improve cyclists' safety and give cyclists greater accessibility and journey time advantages over private motor traffic and which are cost effective.**

Measures will include:

- traffic management to reduce traffic volumes, supported wherever possible by exemption for cyclists from restrictions applying to general traffic, where it is safe to do so, such as one-way streets and road closures;
- cycle friendly traffic calming and speed reduction on both urban and rural roads;
- cycle lanes, cycle tracks, cycle / bus lanes and widened near-side lanes;
- junction modifications including advance stop lines and changes in priority;
- toucan crossings and cycle priority phases at traffic signals;
- direction signing of routes;
- shared use of suitable footways where there are no practical alternatives.

The design of measures to assist cycling will be sensitive to the needs and well being of pedestrians and people with mobility difficulties. This is of particular importance where the possibility of cyclists sharing space with pedestrians is being considered.

The following means will be adopted as appropriate in route design: traffic reduction, traffic calming, junction treatment and traffic management, redistribution of the carriageway, cycle lanes and cycle tracks. The design of all measures will be based on appropriate national guidelines

- **Ensure that new land use development proposals are located and designed to be cycling friendly.**

Best practice guidance will be provided to assist developers to incorporate high quality access and facilities for cyclists. This will be the responsibility of individual local authorities.

Advantage will be taken of the opportunities provided by developments to introduce facilities for cyclists. Transport Impact Assessments, which are a requirement of PPG13, will need to demonstrate that the needs of cyclists have been fully taken into account. In accordance with the policies of the relevant district Unitary Development Plans, planning conditions will be employed to ensure the provision of appropriate cycle facilities.

- **Undertake appropriate levels of maintenance of all cycle facilities and on roads where there is a significant cycle usage.**

A high standard of maintenance is essential. The quality of the riding surface is a more important determinant of the attractiveness of a route for cyclists than it is for car drivers. Poor surfaces will not only deter cyclists from using a route but are also inherently dangerous.

Facilities will be designed to (high) standards that minimise future maintenance liabilities. Cycle tracks that are constructed to appropriate standards, perform legitimate transport functions and create useful links in the network will be adopted.

Maintenance will include rapid response repairs to dangerous potholes, regular sweeping, street lighting repairs, salting in winter and cutting back vegetation. The two metre strip alongside the kerb is where most cyclists ride on any road and so needs the greatest attention for maintenance.

Specific standards for the maintenance of cycle facilities and routes will be adopted, subject to available resources.

- **Include a cycle audit within highway and land use development scheme procedures.**

The Local Transport Plan adopts a “hierarchy of consideration” which places cyclists near the top. Cycle audits will be used to check that the needs of cyclists have been considered during the design and implementation of each scheme and appropriate options chosen. Use will be made of the various national publications that give guidance on carrying out cycle audits.

- **Ensure that land use development does not sever routes used by cyclists or unjustly prejudice accessibility of cyclists.**

- **Protect disused railway lines and other potential cycle routes from development.**

Disused rail lines can make ideal off road cycle tracks for both leisure and utility use. However, just one building can isolate long lengths of track.

- **Promote the integration of cycling and public transport to facilitate cycle use as part of longer journeys.**

This will be developed in partnership with the public transport operators and will include the provision of parking facilities at bus and rail stations, the development of cycle park and ride and the carriage of cycles on public transport vehicles. Also cycle routes that link to strategic public transport interchanges will be developed.

- **Provide cycle parking at retail centres, educational establishments, transport interchanges and other facilities used by the public.**

Cycle parking needs to be conveniently located with the level of security being appropriate to the location and expected duration of stay. Requirements will be determined in consultation with local managers where appropriate.

- **Adopt guidelines for cycle parking standards applicable to existing and new developments.**

A balance needs to be achieved between parking for cars and parking for cycles. The new PPG 13 requires developers to provide secure cycle parking facilities in accordance with standards to be adopted by local authorities.

Encouragement

- **Local authorities will produce and implement Travel Plans and encourage other employers to follow suit.**

Employees can be encouraged to cycle by the provision of secure cycle parking, showers and changing facilities, cycle mileage allowances, loans for the purchase of bikes. Such measures should be adopted wherever appropriate in Travel Plans. Local authorities should set an example as cycle friendly employers and will actively encourage other employers, especially hospitals, to adopt Travel Plans that promote cycling.

- **Work with schools to encourage and facilitate safe cycling and promote cycling as part of safer routes to schools initiatives.**

Developing safer routes to school initiatives includes providing secure cycle parking facilities and cycle training, in addition to physical road safety improvements on the highway. Publicity to promote the benefits of cycling should also be carried out, namely improved fitness and independent mobility of school children. Close co-operation with school staff, governing bodies, children and their parents will be essential. Implementing Travel Plans for schools will also be encouraged.

- **Work with Health Authorities to develop health promotion initiatives.**

The health authorities are keen to spread the health message and there is scope for cooperation and co-ordination of efforts to mutual benefit, particularly through such as Health Improvement Programmes and Health Action Zones.

- **Promote the recreational and leisure uses of cycling and identify suitable leisure routes.**

Many people start cycling as a leisure activity. This needs to be developed so that more people are encouraged to use cycling as an everyday mode of transport.

Measures will include signing of leisure facilities and cycle routes and the organising or promoting of events and initiatives.

- **Publicise the cycle route network and other facilities and emphasise the health, social, financial and environmental benefits of cycling.**

People need to be made aware of both transport and leisure cycling facilities and the benefits to be gained from cycling, particularly the health benefits. Negative attitudes towards cycling need to be changed. One way to help achieve this will be through the production of maps and information leaflets for distribution to the public.

Cycling can also be promoted through such as health and environmental campaigns. National campaigns such as National Bike will be supported.

- **Work with the Police in the reduction of cycle theft and encourage the use of cycle security measures.**

The fear of theft is one of the reasons why a number of cyclists will not leave their cycles unattended and so will not use them for utility journeys.

Education

- **Provide or enable on and off-road cycle training for children of appropriate age and ability.**

Safety is paramount and it is essential that children are trained in the safe handling and control of cycles, coping with highway conditions and traffic awareness. On-road training is an important part of initiatives to increase the number of journeys to school made by cycle.

If sensible leisure use of cycles is to be increased, education is also needed in off-road leisure cycling, country code, cycle maintenance, legal rights and controls

If attitudes to transport are to be changed and more sustainable choices encouraged, the education of children in safe cycling will be a key activity.

- **Provide or enable education and training for young people, adults and family groups of cyclists.**

Education should not just be limited to children; older people also have a need for cycle training. Local cycling organisations may be able to play a part.

- **Promote and support initiatives aimed at improving the interaction between cyclists and other road users and so create an environment more conducive to safe cycling.**

A significant deterrent to cycling is the perception of danger and intimidation to cyclists caused by the inconsiderate and sometimes aggressive behaviour of some drivers.

Cyclists and motorists have to co-exist on the highway. Initiatives are needed to make both cyclists and motorists more aware of each others' needs, for example through instruction for the Driving Test, Advanced Driving courses, cycle training courses and publicity.

Enforcement

- **Support the Police in effective enforcement of road traffic law to benefit cyclist safety.**

This covers such things as motorists' excessive speed, dangerous driving and illegal parking and cyclists' use of lights, riding on footways and conformance with traffic signals and signs. Effective enforcement is considered an essential component of efforts to influence driver behaviour, which is a significant barrier to the regeneration of cycling.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

17. Regular monitoring of cycle use, injury accidents involving cyclists and reported cycle theft will be undertaken. The results of the monitoring will be used to guide the programme of infrastructure development and the progress being made towards achieving the objectives and targets. Reviews of progress will be made in the Annual Progress Report, which forms an integral part of the Local Transport Plan. The action plans, programmes and priorities will be amended as necessary to meet the targets.

18. Cycles are included in all manual traffic counts. Regular counts will be carried out at selected sites and studies will be undertaken before and after the implementation of

cycling projects. The impact of cycling projects, the effectiveness of cycle training programmes and the trends and distribution of reported cyclist casualty accidents will be monitored.

29. Consultation will continue to take place with cyclists, local cycling groups and the Police on the design of proposals and the effects of installed measures.

RESOURCES

20. Adequate staffing levels and expertise to meet the demands of the Strategy will be provided. Opportunities will also be taken to involve other agencies, where appropriate.

21. Funding will be sought for the implementation and maintenance of cycling facilities.

22. There are many potential sources of funding available including Government Grants and spending approvals, Lottery funds, sponsorship and partnership with other organisations.