

Department for Transport
Draft Cycling Delivery Plan Consultation Response

27 November 2014

North Bristol SusCom welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Department for Transport's Draft Cycling Delivery Plan.

North Bristol SusCom is a group of major employers, located in North Bristol, promoting **sustainable commuting** for our 40,000 employees and 30,000 students. We are working together to influence and improve local sustainable transport provision to **combat traffic congestion** and reduce the impact upon our environment.

Our employers are working hard to increase the numbers of staff traveling to work by sustainable means. Collectively, we already have around 19% of our combined workforce regularly commuting to work either by cycling (12.2%) or walking (6.5%).

We know these numbers can be increased and, with support from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, we have already seen some good progress made – through personalised travel planning, travel roadshows, employers grants, commuter challenges, improvements to infrastructure etc.

Through regular staff surveys we know there are many more people who would like to take up cycling for a wide range of reasons – save money, improve health and fitness, quicker than walking, better for the environment etc. But many are put off because of poor infrastructure, concerns about safety and lack of segregated routes or lack of routes in general.

We support the Government's approach to looking at cycling infrastructure in the longer term and making sure that AAA (accessible to all ages and abilities) infrastructure is provided.

With these points in mind we wanted to make the following specific comments on the Draft Cycling Plan:

Theme 1 – Vision, leadership and ambition

- Ultimately, we want to see an overall reduction in the number of single occupancy car journeys taking place. Looking at increasing cycling figures alone could be misleading as there is often movement between those that cycle, those that walk and those that use public transport. It is important that in trying to measure success, that whilst we want to see cycling numbers increase we need to make sure that single occupancy journeys are decreasing at the same time to have the desired impact.
- There needs to be greater thought or clarity given to the role that Local Authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership will both play in delivering the cycle delivery plan. At present our Local Enterprise Partnership works very closely on strategic infrastructure investment around public transport and rail but cycling is left to individual authority levels. Cycling needs to be addressed at a strategic level. It needs to be given the same status/priority as public transport and rail. We have an opportunity to move towards much more integrated transport investment and away from looking at transport as a series of individual projects addressing single modes of transport.
- Money should be made available to help develop local Cycling/ Active Travel Plans so routes can be safeguarded for the future and funding opportunities seized as they arise.
- Longer term funding certainty is needed. Programmes like LSTF have been vital to helping us encourage modal shift but are allocated on a year-by-year basis with no funding certainty and no long-term funding plan. This approach means that it takes longer to get projects up and running and it becomes harder to retain expertise that has been built up as there is no certainty of funding into the future.

Theme 2: Funding

- Funding – the funding situation outside London is very different to the rest of England and local areas would need considerable devolved funding to reach the level of £10 per head/per annum

investment. Also there is the challenge of certain funding streams coming through Local Authorities and other funding via the LEPs.

- To date a lot of investment in cycling has been to a much smaller scale than other transport infrastructure projects. We would like to see support and funding available for major cycling infrastructure projects that can really transform an area. Without that possibility we will not see the transformation and increase in cycling numbers that we all desire.
- Current funding limits the amount of integration that can happen between modes when it comes to delivery. DfT must ensure that future investments allow for additional resources to be included to address multi-modal needs. For example, some current junction capacity/pinch point funding being delivered in our area is solely focused on car users at the expense of public transport and cyclists. With additional funding, the needs of all these groups could be met. Investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure benefits everyone, especially car users, by getting more people out of their cars.

Theme 3: Infrastructure and Planning

- Unfortunately, the Prime Minister's intention to cycle proof the road network has not translated into much action on the ground. Recent pinch point improvements underway by the Highways Agency in our area have not addressed the needs of cyclists and in some cases have made things less cycle friendly. Effort will need to be made to ensure that those bodies receiving funding are addressing the needs of cyclists in their plans.

Theme 4: Safety and the Perceptions of Safety

- As mentioned earlier, safety is an issue that comes up time and again from employees as a reason for not wanting to cycle. We believe this needs to be addressed through better cycle infrastructure and maintenance of that infrastructure as well as better awareness of cycling issues by other road users.
- A specific point is made in the document about promoting safe and sustainable travel to school. More needs to be done to engage teachers and parents as well as children. It is often the adults fear or

perception of danger that influences the way a child gets to school.
Engaging all parties is essential.

Finally, we believe that LSTF or similar should be continued. It could be more targeted but having access to smaller pockets of both capital and revenue funding to help individual employers and groups of employers undertake behaviour change activity and promote active travel is vital.

Often transport projects take a long time to develop, get through planning, deliver on the ground and we have found that our employers have remained engaged in the sustainable transport agenda because there has been support through the LSTF for more immediate measures – improved cycle parking, travel roadshows, personalised journey planning, electric car charging, bus shelters, car clubs etc. LSTF has helped our businesses make the internal business case for investment in on-site sustainable transport infrastructure and it would be a shame for that to reduce or disappear.

Yours Sincerely



Ann O'Driscoll
Director

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