

South Gloucestershire Council
Corporate Research & Consultation Team
Cycling Strategy Consultation
Civic Centre
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15 January 2016

Dear Corporate Research & Consultation Team

CYCLING STRATEGY FOR SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE - DRAFT

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

Thank you for asking us to comment on the South Gloucestershire Cycling Strategy and for allowing us, and our members, the opportunity to feed into the development of the Draft Cycling Strategy through the series of workshops held over the Summer.

North Bristol SusCom welcomes the Council's development of a Cycling Strategy for South Gloucestershire. It is very important that we have a long term vision for cycling provision in the area, that we address both current and future infrastructure needs and there are agreed standards to which everyone should adhere to.

Having read through the Draft Cycling Strategy, Technical Guidance and associated maps we have the following comments to make:

Draft Cycling Strategy Main document Page 4

Suggest the **Vision** could be simplified to something like:



‘Everyone aged 8 to 80 should be able to cycle in comfort in South Gloucestershire’

Wording it this way puts people at the heart of the strategy. Also ‘happy’ is a word that is open to mis-interpretation, and ‘comfortable’ and ‘able’ are more appropriate in this context. The re-formulation also uses fewer words – makes it sound less local government-speak.

Could we add in another cycling **aim**:

- Make cycling more comfortable (could replace Make cycling more attractive?)

Benefits of Cycling: it would be useful if the benefits were grouped by beneficiary – wider society (less pollution, less congestion, efficient use of space), user (cheap, healthy), employer (lower absence rates).

Page 5

Suggest the ordering of the **key principles** is given a bit more thought in terms of order of priority and perhaps changed to the following:

- Cycle routes will be suitable to use for everyone from ages 8-80
- Cycling will be a convenient, safe and enjoyable way to travel. Better Maintenance of routes, reducing traffic speeds and high quality design will be part of this.
- We will look to build a comprehensive network of cycling routes across South Gloucestershire – linking up key housing, employment and leisure sites.
- We will improve and maintain the existing network and develop new cycle routes linking new developments such as Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood and connect these with existing parts of South Gloucestershire.
- Cycling will link with other forms of transport to allow linked up and longer journeys.
- We want everyone to know about our cycle routes and we will promote this as often as possible and at schools and businesses as well as online.
- We will use the “think cycle” approach – where cycling will be a key part of all our decision making.
- We will put pedestrians and cyclists first.

Targets – suggest slide changes to targets and order:

- To ensure cycle routes will be suitable to use for everyone from ages 8-80
- To get more people cycling, more often
- To maintain, improve and expand our cycle network
- Cycling will account for 10% of commuter trips by 2020*
- Cycling will be the fastest way to get from A-B for most short journeys.

* it would be useful to know how this figure will be measured and what the current baseline is. Will it be through the Census – if so will it be for people travelling to South Glos to Work or from South Glos to Work. Or will we use the annual travel to work survey, which currently shows 13.3% of participants travel to work normally by bicycle – in which case the target would need increasing.

Page 6

Spelling of demonstrates (as demonstraits) is wrong.

The statement ‘and it will therefore be necessary to balance cycling priorities against competing demands from different modes’ seems to contradict the priority given earlier on in the document to pedestrians and cyclists. An explanation should be provided of what is meant by this. Also, the compromises that other modes need to make for the sake of cycling should be made clearer. Either South Glos is prioritising pedestrians and cyclists or they are not.

Page 7

Challenges for South Gloucestershire

Not sure we agree with the first bullet point. People are willing to travel longer distances – particularly those who commute on a regular basis by bicycle. We know many instances of people commuting to work in North Bristol from Gloucestershire, Chippenham etc. by bike. They may not do it every day but do it regularly. Part of this challenge may be the need to link up more closely with Bristol to ensure that there is a seamless network across the Bristol/South Glos urban areas so that longer journeys by bike are also possible as well as linking up/integrating better with public transport.

Hilliness may also be a challenge that needs listing here as there are certain areas on existing routes in South Gloucestershire that may not be 8-80 friendly.

It would also be good to be a bit clearer here about what the approach to rural areas will be rather than just saying we want to encourage cycling as a realistic option – how?

Page 8

On this page you mention 2011 Census data for journeys to work – is this people living in South Glos going to work or people coming to South Glos to work? The figure of 3.9% is mentioned – is this what you are hoping to increase to 10% in 2020?

Page 9

Somewhere in the document there needs to be a recognition about the need to improve the existing network and gaps in places where people already live and work in addition to new network investment around new developments.

Page 10

Again the suggestion is that the network will grow, but seemingly only in line with new developments. It needs to include addressing existing gaps otherwise it is a limited and limiting policy.

SPD/DC need to be spelt out in full.

Page 11

Again this is focussed quite a lot on new developments when there are also existing network deficits that also need addressing (South Glos Cycle trunk Route, pinch point at Hatchet Lane Bridge outside Parkway Station etc.).

Last para – Might be good to mention by name specific organisations that ought to be heavily involved – Sustrans, Bristol Cycling Campaign, North Bristol SusCom, the University etc.?

Page 12

6. Physical, Operational, Behavioural Measures

This section is a bit confusing as it doesn't really tell us anything – could it not list the best measures here and the summarising table still accompany the document for further information on all measures considered. I couldn't find the summarising table – is it missing?

Page 14

This section almost negates the whole strategy. It says we aspire to these

standards but these standard may not be met by constraints etc. It is basically saying cycling is important but if we cannot deliver it we will reduce our standards which is not something the Council would do for road building so we shouldn't do it for cycling if we are aiming for 8-80. This is a very important point for the strategy to be taken seriously and for the Council's commitment to be taken seriously. Whist inevitably there will be constraints they should be the exception rather than the rule.

The defect reporting could be further clarified. Surely the location of the defect within the cycleway is as important as the size. A pothole in the wheel track may be say 95mm x 95mm x 18mm and not be treated, but this would be inappropriate.

Draft Cycling Strategy – Technical Guidance

The technical guidance should definitely be updated in 2016 after publication of the Highways England Interim Advice Note on designing for cycle traffic.

Page 5 : Who benefits from cycle infrastructure

Can we put in that car drivers benefit from cycle infrastructure as it helps reduce congestion by encouraging people to cycle for some of their journeys. Also there ought to be something about the benefits of reducing pollution.

Page 6 : Our Design Principles

Again, would suggest the targets are amended as per earlier comments. Need to include target "to ensure cycle routes will be suitable for use from 8-80".

Page 8 : Section 2

Mention is made of working with adjacent local authorities. Mention should also be made of working with Highways England in the light of its emerging Cycling Strategy and design guidance.

Page 9

Map of key attractors. This is only 'half a map'. It does not show major attractors in Bristol. Many people live in South Gloucestershire and work 'over the border' in Bristol and vice versa. If the mapping only shows attractors in South Gloucestershire, then routes from South Gloucestershire to attractors in Bristol may get overlooked.

There is a real need for the strategy to demonstrate a need and willingness to work with Bristol to ensure that there is a comprehensive network regardless of what side of the “border” you are on. It is an administrative border only – it should not feel different in terms of transport.

Page 10 : Section 5 Monitoring & Evaluation

Reporting of near misses and accidents should form part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

Page 11 : Expectations for developers within South Gloucestershire

Can you insist developers engage with the local community, local cycling enthusiasts, cycle forum etc. Many developers are national organisations and may have more off the shelf ideas around cycling. You need them to work with local cycling champions to deliver the best possible schemes.

Page 13 et seq.

This section could be enhanced. There is a lot of design guidance that is not included. For example, the document references a design speed of 20 mph, but then does not go on to say what this means in terms of geometric design, and neither does it reference an appropriate document to help the designer.

Page 16

Is it appropriate for what are termed ‘major routes’ to have a design speed as low as 14 mph?

Page 17

In the section on ‘major routes’ the shows a route with symbols for pedestrians and cyclists as though they are mixed. Future designs for cycle traffic should not in principle, be shared use. The result is something less than appropriate for pedestrians and something less than appropriate for cycle users. Future design in South Gloucestershire should be aiming at a comprehensive network of routes for cycle traffic separated from pedestrians and separated from motor traffic, otherwise the vision of a network that is comfortable for everyone between 8 and 80 will not be achieved.

The photographs provided on page 25 demonstrate the inadequacy of provision when shared in any way with pedestrians, however the text does

not seem to be using the photographs as examples of inappropriate practice (There is inadequate widths and lack of separation between pedestrians and cycle traffic). Discussion of an 'optimum' radius of 2 metres suggests designers could still 'get away' with less, which would be inadequate.

It would be good to see a clear statement in either the guidance or the strategy as to how South Gloucestershire plans to improve the ring road cycle route and the Bristol Bath strategic cycle route – both of which in places need widening. A further problem on the ring road path is the lack of either separation distance or protection from fast moving motor traffic t key points.

Page 26

third from last line 'dependant' should be 'dependent'

Table 1 page 27. The buffer dimensions are inadequate for motor traffic speeds in excess of 30mph.

Page 37 : second set of bullets, second bullet, second line, should be 'installation' not 'instalation'.

Draft Cycling Strategy – Maps

General Comments

The Key across all maps needs to be consistent. On some Maps (01, 07, 09) the key lists Development Areas as light Blue and Enterprise Areas as pink. On Map 08 It lists Major Employment Areas as light Blue, Enterprise Areas as Hatched Pink and Area for Planned Development as pink.

If you are listing Major Employment areas then it should be consistent across all the maps.

I would suggest for each map you need to identify – Major Employment areas (places like Aztec West, MOD Abbey Wood – North & South, Aviva, Bristol Business Park etc); Enterprise Areas (which are employment areas but with special status); Areas for Planned Development (predominantly Housing with associated community infrastructure – shops, schools, leisure etc.).

Development Areas – Lyde Green is missing from map 01 and 09. Also Land East of Coldharbour Lane is not listed as a Development Area on Maps 07 or 09.

09 East Fringe map.

It would be helpful if this map recognised the need for some joint working with Bristol to develop a direct route from Soundwell and New Cheltenham to UWE and the North Fringe. Such a direct route would help reduce the ‘impression of distance’.

One other general comment is the need to highlight the A38 corridor as a Strategic Route and the need for a joint effort with Bristol to tackle this most widely used cycle route to make it safer for cyclists.

North Bristol SusCom will continue to support South Gloucestershire Council in the development of a long term strategy and delivery plan to achieve the aspiration of having a comprehensive 8-80 cycling network across the West of England.

We look forward to working with you on the Cycle Strategy to help ensure that it is given the level of priority it deserves so we can achieve the step change needed to make cycling the mode of choice for many more people.

Yours Sincerely



Ann O'Driscoll
Director
North Bristol SusCom Ltd

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