



Press Release from Cycling England

Date: 28 July 2005

CYCLING PLANS GET GOVERNMENT BACKING

Five towns are to become beacons of cycling as one aspect of a Work Plan announced today by Cycling England, the new body set up by government to get “more people cycling, more safely, more often”.

The five towns will be selected over the next few weeks and will receive extra funds to provide cycling facilities and other measures to enable people to use their bikes.

The Cycling England programme will also focus on schemes that help young people get on their bikes and that support wider aims of improving public health.

With an annual budget of £5 million, Cycling England aims to obtain the maximum impact by creating ‘beacons of excellence’ – projects and places where effort and investment is concentrated, and initiatives are co-ordinated for maximum effect.

Cycling England is supported by a Government Group comprising several government Departments, including those covering health, education, planning and sport, as well as transport.

There are four main programmes:

- Youth - to create the best circumstances to encourage more pupils to cycle to school. This includes everything from secure bike storage and making routes safer, to cycle training by accredited instructors to a new National Standard.
- Place - five ‘cycling demonstration towns’ will be selected for significant investment by Cycling England and matched funding from the local authority. This will create a community-wide programme involving schools, employers, hospitals, retailers and public transport operators with the local authority to build a cycle-friendly environment.
- Support for local authorities and other providers - Cycling England will fund a series of projects to benchmark, support and increase the skills of professional groups in local authorities.
- Public Health - Cycling England will work closely with the Department of Health and other key government Departments to ensure that major programmes designed to encourage physical activity, a healthy lifestyle and greater accessibility also include the promotion of cycling whether for transport or recreation.

All these programmes will be supported with marketing and promotional funds to ensure well-targeted communication.

Announcing the Work Plan, the Chairman of Cycling England, Phillip Darnton, said:

“The team has put a lot of effort into creating a well-structured plan, fully supported by the key government Departments. We are now working quickly to make things happen, and make a real difference to cycling, by building strong partnerships with local authorities and government agencies.

“We want to support people and groups already committed to cycling by encouraging existing initiatives, and ensure that future efforts on behalf of cycling - whether by central Government, local authorities, or the wider community - are as fully integrated as possible.

“The support and collaboration of a number of government Departments will make a big difference both to public attitudes and to changing behaviour towards more cycling.”

Notes to Editors

1. The Cycling England Work Plan is being published in full today on the National Cycling Strategy website, at www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk
2. The formation of Cycling England, including its objectives and a list of its members, was announced in March 2005 (see Department for Transport News Release 2005/0024, 10 March 2005).
3. The Government Group of senior civil servants comprises representatives of the Departments of Health, Education and Skills, Environment, Sport England, Culture Media and Sport, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It is chaired by Robert Devereux, Director General, Road, Regional and Local Transport, Department for Transport.

Any enquiries on this press release should be made to Cycling England member Lynn Sloman (tel. 01654 781358).