

## **INVITATION TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Appointment of a Member Champion for Cycling**

#### **Overview**

Cycling England is encouraging local authorities to agree the appointment of a Member Champion for cycling.

The appointment of a Member Champion for cycling offers a wide range of benefits to councils highlighted below and includes access to a funded package of support measures from Cycling England.

Cycling England is encouraging councils to designate a member for this role. Many councils already have established arrangements in place for the appointment of Champions; for those who would find it useful, more detail of the possible responsibilities, a person profile and a suggested appointment process are given in the Annex.

#### **Designation of Member Champions**

Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly announced an expanded £140 million programme for Cycling England in January this year. It will make a real difference to the way your community travels – to school, work and the station.

This unprecedented level of funding recognises cycling is uniquely placed to tackle two of society's biggest problems, the environment and public health. Whether it is through easing congestion, tackling traffic emissions or improving individual fitness, cycling can genuinely improve society and change the lives of individuals.

Cycling has a growing importance within transport, which is why there is now a mandatory cycling target in the new round of Local Transport Plans. It also contributes to all four of the LTP shared priorities of tackling congestion, delivering accessibility, safer roads and better air quality. The inclusion of cycling targets in some Local Area Agreements reflects the contribution cycling can make across a wide range of other policy agendas. These include health / obesity, economic development / regeneration, education / young people, social inclusion, climate change / pollution / recreation / tourism and planning.

A champion for cycling, with responsibilities across a range of policy agendas, can create new opportunities for a council to integrate its delivery of strategies across three of the biggest current challenges to society: congestion, health and pollution.

#### **How Councils Benefit**

The formal designation of a Member Champion for cycling offers a number of benefits for the local authority, including:

- Assisting the local authority in meeting a wide range of policy targets and objectives

- Facilitating the proper consideration of cycling in the various council meetings and other activities
- Improving relations with external stakeholder groups, particularly those involving local cyclists
- Enabling the Council to tap into best practice in other authorities and to link into the free support available from Cycling England.
- Offering personal and professional development opportunities for those taking on the role.
- Encouraging networking between individual councillors with an interest in promoting cycling.

### **Cycling England Support**

Cycling England offers a funded toolkit to support designated Member Champions for cycling in local highway authorities, including districts with agency agreements covering highways / traffic. This currently comprises:

- Welcome pack, including advice on best practice, key references and a flexible presentation on how cycling can contribute to a council's policies and strategies.
- A support hotline to Cycling England's consultancy team.
- Each Champion can make use of Cycling England consultants' time in support of their role, involving phone / email support, meetings / site visits as appropriate.
- Cycling Champions email discussion group linking them to Champions in other authorities.
- Regular e-newsletter and publishing advice / guidance for champions
- Free attendance at Cycling England led professional training events for Champions on existing and emerging cycling issues (subject to demand).
- National Standard Level 3 cycle training 'refresher' course to bring the Champion up to date on developments in cycle training, including the new Bikeability programme.

This will be further developed over the coming months as the number of Member Champions increases, and may include conferences, training events, regional seminars and study visits. A slightly reduced version of this toolkit is available to non-highway local authorities.

### **Taking it Forward**

Cycling England is encouraging local authorities to agree the appointment of a Member Champion for Cycling. Where there are existing arrangements for appointing Champions in place, the appointment could follow these. Otherwise this might take the form of a nomination by the Executive Member, possibly ratified at a later meeting of full Council. In doing this, the Council will be able to:

- Clarify their expectations of the role and define the scope of its responsibility, taking account of any established practice for Member Champions in the authority and the guidance in the attached Annex.
- Express support for the capacity and competence of an appropriate councillor by appointing them to the role
- Nominate one or more senior level officers to advise the councillor in their role
- Advise Cycling England of the decision, so that the support package can be put in place. Please reply with your Champion's contact details to:

Steve Garidis  
Cycling England  
PO Box 54810  
London SW1P 4XX

email: [steve.garidis@cyclengland.co.uk](mailto:steve.garidis@cyclengland.co.uk)

### **Further Information**

Should you have any questions on this, please do not hesitate to email Tony Russell at Cycling England: [tony.russell@cyclengland.co.uk](mailto:tony.russell@cyclengland.co.uk)

## **ANNEX: GUIDANCE NOTES**

### **Introduction**

This Annex includes guidance on the possible responsibilities of a Cycling Champion, a person profile and a suggested appointment process. Councils are encouraged to adapt it to fit in with their established processes.

### **Person Profile**

Key role: promoting and facilitating proper consideration of cycling issues in the execution of all aspects of the local authority's roles and engaging with the local community to promote support for cycling. The following bullet points list the qualities that a champion will either have or develop as they exercise this role.

You should be:

- A councillor who is a regular cyclist. You could be an executive or a non-executive member, depending on your Council's policy on Champions. You will have technical support from competent, senior, officers.
- Well respected, a good communicator and able to use your skills to promote the benefits of cycling to a wide variety of audiences, both internally and externally. You should be able to persuade colleagues both within the authority and in the wider community of the benefits that cycling can offer for all sectors of the community.
- A consensus builder, able to bring together the various stakeholders, within the authority, in cycling interest groups and in the wider community beyond cycling.
- Able to see the bigger picture and help develop a vision.

You should have:

- A commitment and passion for the benefits that cycling can offer. Whilst a working knowledge of current planning, engineering and promotional issues relating to cycling would be an advantage, it is by no means essential. Professional skills within your authority will complement your enthusiasm for the subject.
- An understanding of the workings of all the departments in your authority and an appreciation of the role that each can play in promoting and encouraging cycling.
- A track record of supporting cycling initiatives in your ward.

### **Duties of Role**

The key objective of an elected member nominated to act as a Cycling Champion will be to support and encourage the Council in its work to ensure that the promotion and encouragement of cycling as a means of transport as well as for leisure plays a central role in the development and implementation of all its policies and strategies. This will involve engagement with stakeholders and other partners both within your council and externally. You will be encouraged to undertake Level 3 National Standard cycle training (funded by Cycling England – see above). The key responsibilities and tasks

will depend on the individual and the time you can devote to the role.

### **Appointment of Cycling Champions**

Designation of a Member Champion for Cycling within a local authority will usually be approved by full Council, although in some councils this decision may be delegated.

Nomination could be by some combination of the following:

- Council members or officers could nominate a suitable person.
- A suitable councillor could volunteer, possibly as a result of Cycling England contacting individuals already known to be pro-active in their support of cycling.
- Local cycling interest groups (e.g. local campaign group, CTC, Sustrans) could identify and approach an elected member to take on this role.