



Cycling Strategy 2007

Message from Railways Minister, Tom Harris

"I congratulate Northern on publishing their Cycling Policy and for recognising the benefits of encouraging bike and rail to passengers.

It is in all our interests to enable more people to combine bike and rail to make their journeys."



Endorsement from Cycling Organisations

"Magnificent! I've waited 10 years for this. We are particularly pleased with the recognition that the journey to and from the station is as important as facilities at stations and on trains. This puts Northern in the lead as Britain's most cycle-friendly rail company."

John Grimshaw, Director, Sustrans

"The most important aspect of this strategy is that it is supportive of cycling and it is based on encouraging rail travellers to use bikes. Rather than treating cyclists as a problem, Northern has recognised that they are an important market and that the combination of bike and rail is the most environmentally sustainable form of transport".

Christian Wolmar, Board Member, Cycling England

"Throughout its long history, CTC promoted the cycle-rail combination as a perfect door-to-door transport choice, not only for the cycle users, but the wider travelling public, and rail operators themselves, with gains for local economies, our health and the environment. So we welcome Northern Rail's work with its Cycle Users Forum to deliver a Cycling Strategy which addresses all the issues and options: access to and within stations, cycle parking, hire and storage, cycle carriage on trains, with information and publicity, consultation and monitoring arrangements. We are delighted to endorse this Strategy as an excellent model of best practice which we very much hope others will now follow!"

Kevin Mayne, Chief Executive, Cyclists Touring Club

Contents

Executive Summary	3
1 Introduction: Cycling with Northern	4
2 Northern and the cycling community	6
3 Getting to and from the station	7
4 Leaving bikes at stations	8
5 Taking bikes on the train	10
6 Folding bikes	11
7 Cycle tourism and rail	11
8 Promotion	13
9 Resourcing our Cycling Strategy	14
10 Northern staff and cycling	15
11 Good practice in the UK and beyond	15
12 Links to other Northern initiatives	16
13 Conclusion: Challenges and opportunities	16
Summary Action Plan: 2007	17

THANKS

To members of Northern's Cycle Users Forum for all their helpful suggestions and advice in creating this Strategy.

To Europcar at York station for their assistance in providing a bike and a member of staff for the photographs.

Executive Summary

Northern is strongly committed to promoting cycling as a sustainable and healthy means of transport which complements our services. Our vision of being an operator 'connecting people to opportunities by the most sustainable means' includes how our customers get to and from the station. Cycling has an important role to play and we want to do more to make this an attractive option.

We will work with our partners in local authorities and the cycling community to identify opportunities to make stations more cycle-friendly, with secure storage facilities. We will work closely with local highway authorities on safe routes to and from stations.

We will maintain our policy of free carriage of cycles, with no requirement for reservations. This is subject to a normal maximum of two cycles per train, at the discretion of the conductor. When trains are undergoing refurbishment we will look at opportunities for providing additional 'flexible' space for cycles and other luggage. We will ensure that cycle space on trains is clearly marked, both internally and externally.

Cycling has potential both as a form of 'utility' transport, getting people to work and education, but also for leisure. We will explore opportunities to provide facilities for leisure cyclists around our network, including scope for cycle hire at our stations and production of cycle route maps from stations.

We will continue and develop our Cycle Users' Forum, ensuring it is representative of cycling interests across our network. The Forum will monitor progress in implementing the Strategy.

DEFINITION

In this document a 'cycle' refers to an unpowered two-wheel cycle. It does not include tandems, tricycles or power-assisted cycles.

1. Introduction: Cycling with Northern

Northern serves all of the North of England and parts of the East Midlands. Many of our partner local authorities and passenger transport executives have a strong commitment to promoting cycle use. As a company we want to promote sustainable transport in all forms, as part of a seamless transport chain. Our vision is to 'connect people to opportunities by the most sustainable means'. This includes how people get to and from the station - clearly there is a very important role for cycling which is likely to increase as car parking space at stations runs out and policies to promote cycling become widely established.

In our franchise agreement with the Department for Transport we made a commitment to establishing a 'Bicycle Users Forum' and to produce a Cycling Policy relating to cycle carriage and reservations. We want to exceed our basic franchise commitment and produce a strategy which has clear, deliverable outputs which benefit our customers, our partners and our business.

Cycling has strong health and environmental benefits. It is becoming increasingly recognised as an important element of a sustainable local transport network. For train operators, it presents an opportunity to provide our customers with an easy and enjoyable link from home to station, without the hassle of finding a parking place. It makes both commercial and ethical sense for us to promote 'cycling with Northern'. We recognise both the leisure potential of cycling as well as 'utility' cycling for our business.

Railways and cycling should go together well – both are highly sustainable forms of transport, at a time when major concerns are being expressed about climate change and its impact on our lives. We want to work with the cycling community and local authorities to encourage more rail/cycling links, particularly to and from our stations. However, there are real constraints in some aspects. Introduction of modern rolling stock without the traditional space for parcels and bulky items has meant that the space for carrying bikes on trains has diminished. Most of our trains can carry only two bikes in the designated area. This means that on some occasions we cannot meet demand. As our trains get more and more crowded as passenger numbers increase, the problems will intensify.

However, we will look at making best use of currently available space with better signage. In addition, we will look at facilities at stations to ensure there is safe and secure space to leave bikes. More and more of our car parks are full, and by encouraging cycling to stations, with safe storage, we can provide extra capacity for our customers at far less cost than building additional car parks or even expanding existing ones. As well as our car parks being full, more and more of our trains are at capacity in the peak periods. We are working hard to acquire additional rolling stock.



We will work with local authorities and major employers on 'travel planning' programmes to promote alternative options to car dependence, both for journeys to and from work, and for leisure.

Northern has strong 'pro-cycling' credentials. We are part-owned by NedRail, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Netherlands Railways (NS). An astonishing 30% of all rail passengers in The Netherlands arrive at their local station by bike – with about 10% leaving their destination station by the same mode. We want to learn lessons from the experience of NS and The Netherlands, where cycling is very much a way of life.

This Strategy is the start of a process of engaging with the cycling community and trying to make a practical change in how we accommodate the needs of cyclists. We very much welcome the views of cyclists and other rail users on this document, including suggestions which we can incorporate in future versions.



2. Northern and the cycling community: a positive partnership

Northern established its Cycle Users Forum in November 2005. This is part of our franchise commitment and we are pleased to work with the cycling community across the North of England. The Forum brings together representatives of the Cyclists' Touring Club, Sustrans and local cycling groups – as well as representatives of local authorities and passenger transport executives with responsibilities for cycling. We are also keen to work with Cycling England, RDAs, national park authorities, tourism agencies and the recently-formed Natural England.

The Forum is resourced by Northern and normally meets at Huddersfield – a reasonably central venue for attendees. However, we will consider suggestions to vary the location during 2007 so that organisations from all parts of our franchise area are involved.

The Forum covers all of the Northern Rail network - a very large geographical area which includes a substantial part of the East Midlands as well as the three Northern regions. During 2006 the Forum has met on three occasions and has developed an agreed agenda for achievable measures which Northern can take forward as part of its Cycling Strategy. We are committed, as part of our policy on stakeholder management, to going out into the community and discussing our services with all interested parties. We will do our best to respond positively to invitations to talk to local cycling groups around our network. The Forum will have a central role in monitoring progress in implementing the Strategy.

During 2007 we will:

- Hold a minimum of three meetings of the Cycle Forum
- Respond positively to invitations to meet local cycling groups
- Build links with PTE and local authority cycling officers
- Strengthen links with Sustrans, CTC and local cycling groups



3. Getting to and from the station

One of the biggest challenges of urban cycling is using the local road network to access stations. Routes to and from stations must be 'DIRECT - ATTRACTIVE – COMFORTABLE' (based on Dutch cycling design guides).

With larger stations we will work with the local highway authority to ensure that there is signage to and from the station and encourage highway authorities to implement 'safe routes to stations', in partnership with the local authority, Sustrans and local cycling groups. There are opportunities in several locations for measures that limit car traffic and give priority to cycles. In terms of directions 'from' the station this could include signage to town centres or to off-road cycle trails, e.g. National Cycling Network (NCN) routes.

At selected stations we will provide 'welcome to cyclists' maps showing cycle routes from the station. We hope to trial this in Calderdale in 2007. Possible routes to stations, including access points and parking locations, could be included on local cycling maps prepared by local authorities or cycling groups.

Sustrans has published a very useful note on 'Safe Routes to Stations' which provides examples of good practice. It quotes DfT guidance on Local Transport Plans (2000):

'We are interested in, and keen to support, an initiative proposed by Sustrans to develop better access to and from bus and rail stations for people on foot and cycling... authorities should indicate within their LTP how they plan to address the issue of access to stations by these modes'.

During 2007 we will:

- Work with local authorities and Sustrans to develop 'safe routes to stations'
- Provide 'welcome to cyclists' maps at selected stations, on a pilot basis



4. Leaving bikes at stations

Having safe and secure facilities to leave bikes at stations is crucial. We want to look at ways in which more people can cycle to the station instead of arriving by car. We are running out of car parking space at many of our stations and encouraging cycling makes good commercial sense. The cost of providing cycle storage is far less than providing additional car parking.

At some stations we already have adequate facilities but in many cases there is insufficient storage space. Most of our stations are unstaffed and many in urban areas particularly are prone to vandalism. This presents us – and cyclists who want to leave their bike at a station and find it there when they come back – with challenges.

There are some exciting opportunities. We want to test out the 'Eco Station' concept, which we are developing with Lancashire County Council. This is effectively re-inventing the 'local station' to be an environment-friendly hub for the community. Having bike hire, and possibly cycle maintenance/purchase facilities, forms part of the concept.

We will need to identify suitable space for cycle parking both at passengers' 'home' station and also where they get off the train so they can cycle to their final destination. Most potential for the latter will be at larger city or town centre stations with a large through-put.

In general, cycle storage will be free. However, we will explore potential for 'bike locker user club' facilities, as piloted by Greater Manchester PTE, where cyclists pay a small annual fee for access to safe storage facilities. This scheme was piloted at Stockport and won a 'highly commended' award at the National Cycle Rail awards in 2006. We will also look at the 'secure compound' approach which has worked successfully elsewhere. We will look for commercial sponsorship and advertising to help cover the cost of facilities.

Northern will also pro-actively influence local authorities and other train operators to provide the best possible cycle parking facilities at third party-managed locations which complement the Northern rail network, e.g. major network stations and park and ride sites.

We will develop a hierarchy of stations managed by ourselves based on the following but respecting specific local conditions:

- Busier, fully staffed stations: Lockers (with or without registered keyholders) at these stations and 'Sheffield' stands. The 'secure compound' approach would also be appropriate. These are likely to be where support from PTEs and local authorities is forthcoming.
- Less busy, staffed stations: 'Sheffield' type cycle stands, or similar, under cover and in open view. In some cases, lockers could also be appropriate. Where access permits, these are best on platforms.



- At unstaffed stations (or those where the station is single shift or employs only one person) Sheffield stands may be appropriate in some locations but cyclists are likely to be reluctant to leave their cycles in open sites with no-one observing the stands. In these cases, stands should only be provided where there is CCTV or located in an area with other public activity. There may be scope for arrangements where adjacent businesses (pub, shop etc) could accommodate the stands. Equally, local authorities may be able to assist in identifying suitable storage space near to the station. The 'secure compound' approach may also be appropriate at certain unstaffed stations where CCTV is provided.
- Abandoned cycles left on stations will be removed after 4 weeks.

During 2007 we will:

- update our register of cycle facilities at stations so that it properly reflects what currently exists; this will be in co-operation with cycling organisations
- identify locations which currently do not have cycle storage facilities and discuss opportunities to provide them, with PTE and local authority partners. In some cases a simple 'Sheffield Stand' may be appropriate, with suitable cover, whilst in other locations more robust secure storage may be required.
- set targets for progressive implementation of cycle facilities at stations, once the audit of existing facilities is complete.
- Work with GMPTE to extend 'bike locker user clubs' to a minimum of six Northern stations
- make sure that where we have CCTV facilities these cover the area of the cycle lockers/stands
- advertise the fact that stations do have facilities for bike storage
- Explore potential and suitability of 'secure compounds' at selected stations
- Develop the 'Eco Station' concept to include an integral 'bike hub' at trial stations.



5. Taking bikes on the train

Many of our trains consist of only two (or in some cases one) carriages. This presents us with serious difficulties in accommodating more than two bikes. In addition, our passenger numbers are growing by about 10% each year so more and more trains are crowded.

We wish to maintain our current flexible approach which avoids specific bans on rush hour trains and allows bikes to be carried free of charge.

However, conductors have responsibility for the safety of their train and have the right to refuse entry if the train is crowded. Equally, if there is space on a particular train for carrying more than two cycles, the conductor can use his or her discretion to allow more bikes on. We cannot guarantee this.

On some peak hour trains there will be space, especially on what are termed 'contra flow' services going out of major cities in the morning and into the cities in the evening peak.

We will ensure that spaces for cycles are clearly and prominently marked both on the exterior and interior of trains. Internally, we will do our utmost to ensure that dedicated cycle areas are kept free of other luggage or equipment.

We operate several different types of train with varying amounts of cycle space. We will look at ways we can make best use of this space both for cycles and stowage of other bulky objects. There may be opportunities arising when particular classes of train undergo refurbishment. Very often the specification will be determined by a PTE and we will work with them to identify opportunities for improved cycling space. The recently refurbished class 321 electric train fleet has been adapted to provide four cycle spaces in all (two at each end of the train).

If in the future a business case is made for new rolling stock we will ensure that flexible space is designed in to the specification, and consult with members of the Cycle Users Forum on design issues related to cycles.

During 2007 we will:

- Ensure that staff, particularly conductors, are fully briefed on cycle policy
- Maintain our policy of not charging
- Maintain our policy of no formal peak restrictions
- Maintain our policy of 'no advance reservations'
- When trains are scheduled for refurbishment we will explore opportunities for improving cycle space, on the principle of providing flexible space
- Ensure that all the Northern fleet is signed externally and internally showing where bike space is located
- In any future programme for new designs (e.g. Pacer replacement) we will ensure that flexible space is available for cycles and luggage



6. Folding Bikes

This is a growing market and we are happy to work with cycling organisations to encourage the use of folding bikes for cycle commuting. They take up minimal space and there are no restrictions on the number carried per train.

During 2007 we will:

- Work with members of the Cycle Users Forum to explore opportunities for encouraging greater use of folding bikes
- Acquire a small pool of folding bikes for use by Northern Staff

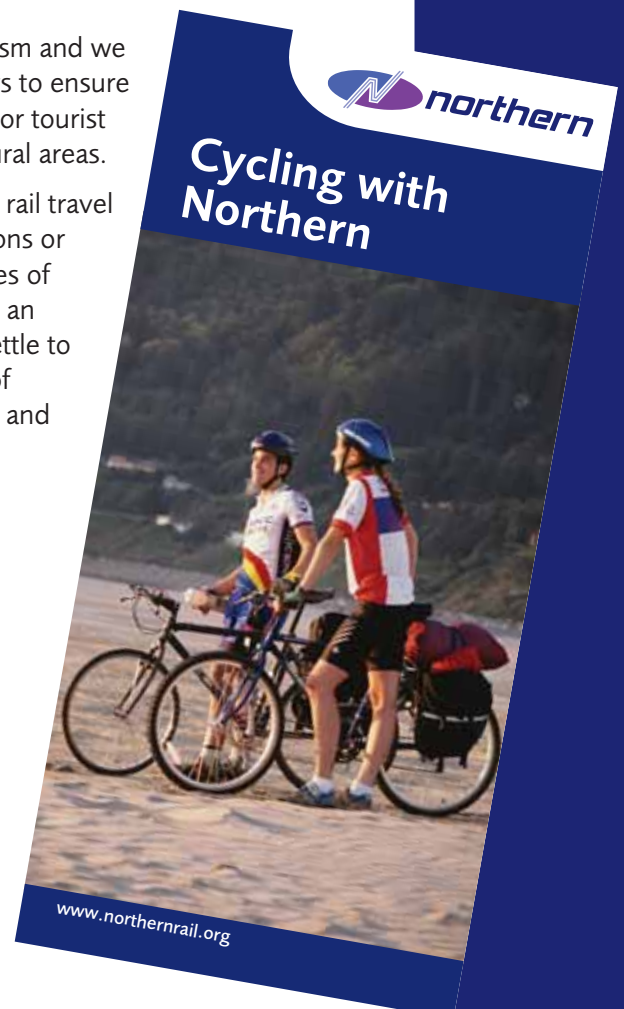


7. Cycle Tourism and Rail

Many local authorities have policies to encourage sustainable tourism and we need to identify and exploit opportunities for working with partners to ensure that cycling and rail travel are linked together. This will include major tourist destinations on our network as well as more specific locations in rural areas.

There is considerable potential to develop packages which involve rail travel and cycling. The focus should be on encouraging bike hire at stations or from locations close to stations. Currently we have several examples of bike hire firms at or near our stations, including Settle which offers an award-winning package which includes one-way rail travel from Settle to Ribbleshead or Garsdale, and a downhill cycle ride back! This sort of scheme works well on routes which are not liable to overcrowding and could be tried on other routes, e.g.

- Esk Valley (Middlesbrough-Whitby)
- Cumbrian Coast (Lancaster – Barrow – Carlisle)
- Cleethorpes - Barton upon Humber
- East Lancashire Line (Preston – Colne)
- Penistone Line (Huddersfield – Sheffield)
- Tyne Valley Line (Newcastle-Carlisle) - outside peak periods





Manchester Airport has an innovative 'bike shop' on the railway station. We will work with the airport to make this facility more widely known across our network. The bike hire facility offers a gateway from the rail network to quiet rural lanes in Cheshire.

We will work with existing bike hire companies to develop packages which include rail travel and bike hire. We will also assist in producing 'cycle trails' from our stations. Any bike hire company we enter into partnership with will be subject to quality checks.

We will work with local authorities and cycle hire providers to identify new opportunities. For example, if we have unused railway property in our lease, we may consider making it available to a bike company on preferential terms, especially if the firm is a social enterprise, given our commitment to corporate social responsibility.

We will consider opportunities for promotional fares involving train/bike, recognizing that single fares are relatively expensive compared with returns. This will link into our range of day ranger tickets which offer opportunities for 'triangular' journeys.

Lancashire County Council has produced a series of leaflets on cycle rides in West Lancashire, with each starting from a station. We will encourage more such initiatives around our network and where possible assist with funding and distribution.

During 2007 we will:

- Produce a general 'Cycling with Northern' leaflet for Northern Rail services
- Explore opportunities for more localised 'cycle-rail trails'
- Develop at least one package with a bike hire company
- Identify stations with potential for bike hire facilities



8. Promotion

We will publish a general leaflet promoting 'Cycling with Northern' by June 2007. We will consider on a case by case basis more localised publicity and promotions, e.g. cycle trails from particular stations. This could be particularly useful where a station is at or near part of a National Cycle Network route. Particular opportunities will present themselves where a community rail partnership is in existence or likely to be developed.

Where a station is on a National Cycle Route we will ensure there is appropriate signage at the station. As can be seen below, several NCN routes link into community rail partnerships. There is scope for community rail partnerships (CRPs) to collaborate on leaflets which promote rail access to particular cycleways which link into more than one CRP route – for example Pennine Cycleway which covers six!

We want to trial innovative approaches to promoting cycling along a line of route. We have selected the Caldervale Line between Manchester Victoria and Leeds via Halifax. We will work with the local authorities along this line, and the South Pennines Rail Partnership, to identify a range of opportunities along the route including 'welcome maps' at stations (including isochromes showing distances from the station) and test out different options for cycle storage at stations.

During 2007 we will:

- Produce a general cycle leaflet and localised leaflets, with assistance from members of the Cycle Users Forum
- Ensure signage at stations on NCN routes
- Develop the Caldervale Line as Northern's 'cycle route of excellence'
- Support events such as National Bike Week (June 16-24) and Mobility Week with media campaigns to encourage cycling to stations.



9. Resourcing our Cycling Strategy

The chair of the Cycle Users Forum (Head of Community and Regional Strategies) will champion the cause of cycling within Northern. However, it is essential that there is wider involvement from many different functions within the company, if the strategy is to succeed. There are opportunities to make greater use of our team of Client and Stakeholder Managers for particular local schemes or regional promotions. Our station managers are able to progress schemes at particular stations. Our Marketing and Communications team will lead on production of leaflets and other publicity. Northern's Engineering Director and his colleagues will work with the Forum on rolling stock issues.

We need to rely on the help and support of our external stakeholders. We have been very encouraged by the offers of help and support from members of the Cycle Users Forum, including members of CTC and Sustrans. Similarly, most of the PTEs and local authorities we work with have officers with a cycling remit. In taking some schemes forward, these are invaluable allies.

In addition, Northern sponsors a growing number of community rail partnerships and these are well placed to pick up on opportunities for promoting cycling as part of their community route strategies. As will be seen from the list of NCN routes in Northern, several are on lines with active CRPs including:

- Hadrian's Cycleway: Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership
- C2C: Cumbrian Coast Community Rail Partnership (to be formed 2007)
- W2W: Heritage Line Community Rail Partnership and Esk Valley RDC
- Trans-Pennine Trail: Yorkshire Coast CRP; Barton Line CRP; West Lancs CRP, Penistone Line Partnership
- Pennine Cycleway: Hope Valley and High Peak TP, East Lancs CRP, South Pennines RP (to be formed in 2007), Settle-Carlisle RDC, Penistone Line Partnership, Tyne Valley CRP

The embryonic 'South Pennines Rail Partnership' will have a particular remit to promote sustainable tourism and this could be a very useful model to test out more innovative approaches. The proposed 'South Pennine gateway stations' will have bike hire at or near each and will actively promote cycling from and to the stations. Its objectives include: 'to promote complementary links from the rail network to the surrounding area (walking and cycling, bus and community transport links). This could include bike hire at selected gateway stations'. The proposed pilot route on the Caldervale Line is covered by the Partnership and it will play a key role in implementing the 'cycle route of excellence'.

We will work with local authorities to promote use of more 'local' trails which intersect with our services, e.g. The Middlewood Way which links Rose Hill (Marple) with Middlewood and Macclesfield.



During 2007 we will:

- Convene a seminar involving a wide cross section of Northern staff and cycling representatives to discuss cycling issues and ways of implementing this strategy. This will be the launch event of the Cycling Strategy and will take place in March, at Manchester International Airport.

10. Northern Staff and Cycling

We are already encouraging our own employees to cycle more, including to and from work. We have offered new bikes for sale to staff at preferential rates during 2006. Our new offices in York have improved cycle storage facilities. We will look at opportunities for similar facilities at larger workplaces, e.g. our main offices and depots.

As part of our charity/corporate social responsibility policy we will encourage sponsored cycling events which raise money for charitable causes.

During 2007 we will:

- Continue to promote cycling to work as a healthy, sustainable and cheap form of travel
- Offer low-cost cycle purchase options to staff
- Identify opportunities for investing in better cycling facilities at workplaces
- Establish a small pool of folding bikes at our York office (including folding bikes)

11. Good Practice in the UK and beyond

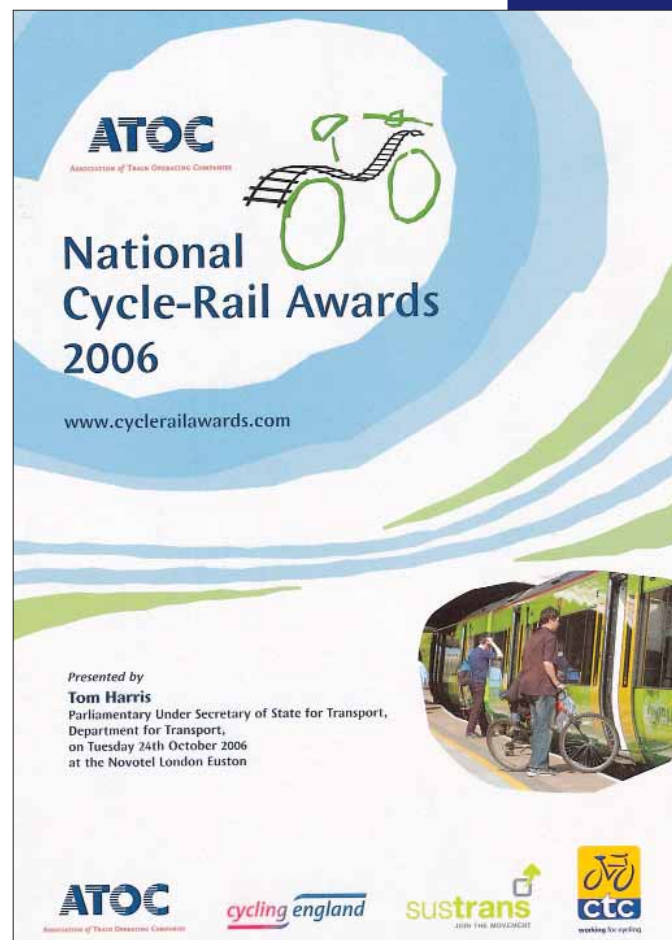
We want to learn from the experience of other train operators, and we will work with bodies including ATOC, individual train operators and DfT to share good practice.

We will develop links with our colleagues in NS on cycle-rail development, as part of our 'best practice exchange' programme.

We will participate in the 2007 'National Cycle-Rail Awards' event, including entering examples of excellence in cycle-rail development within Northern.

During 2007 we will:

- Build links with other TOCs involved in cycling development
- Work with ATOC on cycling policy
- Enter 2007 National Cycle Rail Awards



The poster for the National Cycle-Rail Awards 2006 features a stylized green bicycle with a blue and green background. The ATOC logo is at the top left, and the event title is in the center. A photograph of a person with a bicycle on a train platform is in the bottom right. Logos for ATOC, cycling england, sustrans, and CTC are at the bottom.

ATOC
Association of Train Operating Companies

**National
Cycle-Rail Awards
2006**

www.cyclerrailawards.com

Presented by
Tom Harris
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport,
Department for Transport,
on Tuesday 24th October 2006
at the Novotel London Euston

ATOC
Association of Train Operating Companies

cycling england

sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

ctc
working for cycling

12. Links to other Northern initiatives

There is a lot of scope to link our work on cycling with other Northern initiatives. In particular, our cycling work dovetails with our developing work on environmental issues. During 2007 we will publish our first Environment Plan and promotion of cycling will feature strongly. Our 'ECO stations' project includes promotion of cycling at stations.

Our work on corporate social responsibility also offers some exciting opportunities. We are interested in looking at ways of linking our work with schools and young people to schemes involving young people in recycling bikes (e.g. The Cycle Magic scheme in York).

Our Corporate Social Responsibility policy encourages greater use of social enterprises in providing goods and services. We will be especially interested in working with 'social enterprise' cycle businesses.

During 2007 we will

- Ensure cycling is taken fully into account in our Environment Plan
- Work with social enterprise cycling companies where suitable firms exist
- Make links between our youth work and cycle projects



13. Conclusion: Challenges and opportunities

As passenger numbers increase the issue of cycling will offer us both challenges and opportunities. Many of our trains are full at peak times and the demand for car parking spaces is not sustainable. As space runs out, we need to encourage more people to cycle or walk to our stations.

We can achieve much more if we work in partnership with the cycling community and local government. With cycling organisations we can discuss practical opportunities to provide better facilities. With our local government colleagues we can take this further by identifying possible funding streams for:

- Safe routes to stations
- Safe cycle storage
- Cycle carriage within rolling stock replacement/refurbishment programmes
- Cycle-rail tourism initiatives

In the longer term, if funding becomes available for new rolling stock, we will work with DfT on opportunities to provide flexible space to accommodate cycles and other bulky items. We will identify opportunities for external funding which can help deliver many of our objectives.

We want to be recognised as a cycle-friendly company which not only encourages cycling by our customers but by our staff as well. As we move to an increasingly environment-conscious future we would be foolish to neglect the importance of cycling to our business. There are real commercial opportunities to grow our business by encouraging more people to cycle to our stations, and it's the right thing to do.

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN: 2007

- Complete an audit of existing cycling facilities at Northern stations
- Publish a 'Cycling with Northern' leaflet
- Strengthen links with cycling organisations, locally and nationally
- Work with local authorities on 'safe routes to stations' for cyclists and pedestrians
- Provide information on cycle facilities at stations, including 'welcome to cyclists' maps at selected locations
- Develop on ongoing programme of improved cycling facilities at stations
- Apply signage to all Northern trains, internally and externally, showing location of cycle storage areas
- Develop the Caldervale Line (Manchester – Halifax- Bradford – Leeds) as Northern's 'cycling route of excellence'
- Develop leisure opportunities with cycle hire providers and tourism agencies
- Brief all relevant Northern staff, particularly conductors, on Northern's cycling strategy and specific cycle policies

If you want more copies of this document, in paper or electronic format, contact

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