



**Cumbria County Council's
Cycling Development Action Plan
Review of progress and
recommendations for future progress**

September 2006

Introduction

In June 2006 Cumbria County Council applied for assistance to review its Cycling Development Action Plan (CDAP) under a programme of free consultancy advice and support for local authorities provided by Cycling England. Following an assessment of the needs and commitment of the County Council, Cumbria was awarded five days of support, the maximum available to any authority outside the Cycling Demonstration Towns. Cycling England local authority support team member Jo Cleary (from Cleary Stevens Consulting), who is based in Cumbria, was appointed to work on this assignment.

The report summary is reproduced below. For further information on this report, please contact Cumbria County Council.

Summary of key recommendations

This section is a summary of key recommendations. The detail of these recommendations and the reasoning behind them, along with other recommendations, appears in the final section: 'Review of progress on the CDAP and detailed recommendations'. Of these key recommendations, the two marked with three 🚲 symbols, should be considered the highest priority. Those marked with two 🚲 symbols can be addressed relatively quickly to make a difference on the ground. The remaining recommendations in this section should also be addressed as soon as is practicable.

🚲🚲🚲 Consider appointing a **full-time County Cycling Officer**, who would be responsible for dealing with all aspects of cycling, utility and leisure, including securing additional and outside sources of funding for the implementation of cycling projects. The post holder would sit within the County Council, as the highway authority, working cooperatively with the Area Engineers but would act as a focal point of activity and information relevant to the CCC, the district councils, the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria Tourism (CT).

🚲 Consider merging the Cycling Development Action Team, the Cycle Panel, and possibly also the Cycle Coordination Group into **one county-wide group**, comprising named (and ideally interested) CCC officers and members, as well as representatives from interested and relevant strategic organisations. The role of this group would be to guide the overall direction of activity to promote cycling for all purposes across the County. It would meet two or three times a year.

🚲 To make better use of experienced cyclists in the detailed planning of facilities, have **a cycle coordination group for each district**, again looking at all aspects of cycling, but at a much more focussed and detailed level than the county-wide group. These would comprise representatives of organisations interested in promoting cycling in that area, even individual cyclists, also the Area Engineer for that district, as well as a representative from the Capita area office. A cycling representative from each local group would also sit on the county-wide group to act as a conduit of information between the two tiers.

🚲🚲🚲 There is a need to address the **paucity of political support** for cycling in Cumbria. Allow representatives from local cycling groups (or the proposed district level cycling coordination groups) to attend Area Committee meetings once in a while to appraise them of the importance of promoting cycling, and the opportunities for doing so in their area. There are proposals to guide Local Area Committees to spend a proportion of their 2007/08 Annual Package of Measures budget on four key policy areas, in line with the policy objectives outlined in the Local Transport Plan. One of these policy areas is the promotion of cycling and walking.

🚲 Consider whether investment in new cycling infrastructure is the best way forward to achieving a sustainable modal shift in favour of this mode. A growing number of people are becoming aware of the benefits of cycling, and getting on their bikes **to use the existing road**

environment. It may be better to focus a greater proportion of resources on raising awareness among officers, members, employers, school communities and the general public about the benefits of, and opportunities for, cycling.

☞ One way of contributing towards this objective would be to accelerate and expand the programme of cycle training for children and adults in Cumbria, utilising additional funding for this purpose soon to be made available through Cycling England. This will enable people to feel comfortable riding on ordinary roads, the majority of which are adequate for the competent cyclist.

☞☞ There is a need to put right defects in what already exists, as this undermines the usefulness of past investment in cycling, and to plug strategic gaps in the cycle-friendliness of the all-purpose road network. Revisiting the audit of existing cycle facilities carried out by Capita, and acting on the '**quick wins**' would be a good place to start. There is a strong argument that priority should be given to these ahead of developing new schemes that would place further burdens on an already stretched maintenance budget.

☞ Promoting cycling through **school travel plans** will require, in addition to National Standard **cycle training**, an examination of the cycle-friendliness of the road network surrounding schools, with improvements where opportunities present themselves, as well as the provision of secure cycle parking facilities within the school grounds.

☞ Explore the scope for tailoring delivery of the three levels of the national standard cycle training package to the needs and development of individual pupils, rather than being constrained by the age of participants. One class of 10 year olds will contain children with widely different experiences of cycling, generally dependent on the enthusiasm and participation of their parents in cycling activity. Concentrate training on 'real-life' situations that will encourage children and their parents to consider cycling as a means of transport, and to recognise the links between training and school travel plans. For example, use routes to schools for on-road training sessions, where possible.

☞ Give the Better Ways to School team a clear remit to identify possible sources of funding to support pro-cycling measures within school travel plans, including infrastructure, cycle training, education and promotional activities.

☞ Consider improvements to the public rights of way network as a means to providing cycle routes to schools (e.g. upgrading a public footpath to a bridleway and providing a suitable year-round surface for cycling).

☞☞ The County and district councils, who are encouraging other organisations and employers to develop **travel plans** through encouragement and the land use planning system, should set a good example by preparing and implementing their own travel plans.

☞ A simple travel planning measure that could easily be implemented to encourage cycling, is to increase the mileage allowance for business journeys made by bike.

☞☞ Take-up the PTRC **professional training programme** for those engaged in providing for cycling. Plan attendance at each session to ensure the most appropriate individuals attend.

☞☞ Liaise with other bodies, e.g. Amey, Capita, district councils, Primary Care Trusts, the Lake District National Park Authority, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Cumbria Tourism, etc, to ensure appropriate individuals are given the opportunity and encouragement to attend training modules relevant to their area of work, and to share the cost of the training package.

☞☞ Ensure staff assigned to cycling-related project work are suitably skilled and qualified, not only on the design side but also in consultation.

☞☞ Encourage Capita to engage specialist cycling sub-consultants where appropriate, to supplement (and strengthen) in-house skills and resources.

☞☞ Involve interested members of the cycling community in Cumbria to attend appropriate training sessions, e.g. Stakeholder engagement, Promoting cycling, Rural access and recreational cycling. This will help foster better liaison with this community,

acknowledge and help reward their largely unpaid contributions to promoting cycling in the County, and bring a wider range of experiences and perspectives to the training sessions.

- 🚲 Tourism is important to the economic stability and prosperity of Cumbria, so *recreational cycling* should not be considered an 'optional extra', or less important than utility cycling. Separating the two in promotion and provision fragments the limited resources available for the facilitation of cycling.