

Cycle Journey Planner

Frequently Asked Questions

March 2009



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Introduction

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) relate to the process of developing a Cycle Journey Planner, rather than using the Planner itself. They are thus likely to be of most interest and relevance to local authorities, as well as others, interested in getting Cycle Journey Planner coverage for their area, rather than end-users. A set of FAQs, and answers, aimed at end-users will sit alongside the Cycle Journey Planner when it is up-and-running.

Who is developing the Journey Planner?

The Journey Planner is being developed in partnership by Transport Direct (www.dft.gov.uk/transportdirect) and Cycling England. Transport Direct are responsible for providing the technology and systems, while Cycling England are responsible for data depicting where it is good and safe to cycle. This data is gathered and maintained with the help of local authorities and cycling communities.

How is it being funded?

The development of the Journey Planner is being funded by the Department for Transport, with contributions from Cycling England and local authorities. Cycling England envisage contributing to the cost of data collection and preparation commissioned by local authorities. It is hoped these funding arrangements will be agreed and confirmed by the end of April 2009. The Cycle Journey Planner system will then be provided for a modest annual fee, met by local authorities, to cover maintenance and support.

Which areas have been covered so far?

The following areas have been included in an initial pilot phase: Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Derby, Exeter, Lancaster, Leicester (City), Leicestershire (County including Loughborough and Charnwood), Bristol, Peterborough, Oxford and Worcester.

When will the Cycle Journey Planners for these areas be available for general use?

There is a soft launch of the Planner across these areas during Winter / Spring 2008/9. During this period the different areas will be loaded and trialled, and the planner will be live for test purposes. Once the project partnership is satisfied with the quality of the results the Planner will be publicly launched, this is expected to be around April 2009.

Soft launch dates (where known):

Merseyside – mid December 2008

Greater Manchester – early March 2009

Bristol – TBC

Peterborough – TBC

Derby – TBC

Exeter – TBC

Lancaster – TBC

Leicester (City) – TBC

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Leicestershire (County) – TBC

Oxford – TBC

Worcester – TBC

Why were these areas chosen?

They were chosen as a good representative sample of different urban centres, including two large metropolitan areas, four Cycle Demonstration Towns and two Sustainable Travel Towns.

When will other areas be covered?

The Cycle Journey Planner team have initially focused on proving the concept in the eleven pilot areas. During the first quarter of 2009 plans to rollout to other locations will be developed. It is likely that the remaining Cycling Towns will be a priority. The project partnership will be communicating these plans to all local authorities as soon as they are available.

What does the Cycle Journey Planner do?

The Cycle Journey Planner is a website which enables cycling journeys to be planned between two locations. The journey start point and destination are entered into the Planner – these can be defined as an address, postcode, rail station, facility, attraction, etc. Three route-planning options are offered:

Quietest: if a route that prioritises the use of cycle paths, cycle lanes, quiet streets and routes recommended for cycling is preferred.

Most recreational: if a route that prioritises cycling through parks and green spaces, in addition to the features listed above under “Quietest”, is preferred.

Quickest: if a route with the shortest cycling time is preferred. This is the default option.

The Journey Planner then utilises the information provided to offer a recommended route. This is presented as a series of turn-by-turn directions, accompanied by a gradient profile and illustrated maps.

How is this information accessed?

The Cycle Journey Planner will, eventually, be available via the Transport Direct portal (www.transportdirect.info) and linked from the individual local authority websites. Emerging elements of the Journey Planner can currently be accessed at <http://www.transportdirect.info/web2/journeyplanning/findcycleinput.aspx>.

Can this information be used ‘on the move’?

The Cycle Journey Planner provides printer friendly route instructions, together with GPX files which can be downloaded to handheld / handlebar mounted GPS devices. The GPX route will provide turn-by-turn navigation.

Are there guidelines to ensure that those considering surveying an area for inclusion in the Cycle Journey Planner comply with its requirements?

An introduction to standard terms for those considering data collection for the Cycle Journey Planner can be accessed [here](#). A more detailed data specification is also available from the following web address <http://www.cyclenexchange.org.uk>.

However, this is a very technical document and, based on the experience of developing the data for the pilot areas, it needs to be updated to provide a more

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complete and accessible specification document. This will be available in due course. Please contact Jo Cleary (jo.cleary@clearystevens.co.uk), a member of the Cycling England Professional Support Service, if you would be like to be notified when this documentation is available.

Who is responsible for researching and verifying the route choice options?

Reliable journey planning is made possible through accurate data depicting where it is good and safe to cycle. For the pilot areas the data has been surveyed by Cycle City Guides, and this is being used to prime the Journey Planner initially. Once base data of sufficient quality has been collated and processed for inclusion in the Journey Planner, local authorities will be able to update and manage their own data through an online tool provided by Transport Direct.

Can the Cycle Journey Planner use existing data held by a local authority?

Yes, if data meets the specification then it can be used. This will improve the speed of roll-out. An independent assessment will be carried out on any existing data to determine what work is required, be it gathering additional data, or desk-based data processing.

Is there a list of organisations qualified / accredited / geared-up to carry out this work?

There is currently no definitive list of such organisations. Cycle City Guides have developed a good level of expertise in this area. However, it is anticipated that as demand for this type of work expands, other suppliers will enter the marketplace.

Will the Journey Planner tell me about temporary changes to routes, e.g. as a result of road works?

Such choices are left to the discretion of the local authorities that are responsible for updating and maintaining the data for their area. The frequency of these updates will vary between authorities, but it is hoped any significant changes, such as closures of roads on the cycle network for significant periods, will be reflected in the Journey Planner.

Will the Journey Planner keep up-to-date with the developments that affect the choice of cycle routes, e.g. cycle infrastructure improvements, increases in traffic levels on particular roads, etc?

Again, local authorities are responsible for updating and maintaining the data for their area. However, the Cycle Journey Planner model supports quality assurance provided by Transport Direct, as well as user-generated feedback. Thus, a user can submit a comment about any planned route to Transport Direct, who will act on it and / or pass it on to the relevant local authority.

If users become aware of better, or new, cycle route options that don't presently feature on the Journey Planner, how can they communicate these?

The Cycle Journey Planner supports the standard Transport Direct user feedback mechanism. A user can submit a comment about any route, this is submitted to Transport Direct who will act on it and / or pass it on to the relevant local authority.

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Will the data captured as part of the Cycle Journey Planner be used for other purposes?

Local authorities could use the data for a variety of purposes, including the preparation of cycling maps, cycle network audits, or indeed other journey planning systems, and this will be strongly encouraged. However, the data references – and is only really meaningful when used with – Ordnance Survey data, to which licensing conditions apply.

What will happen if a local authority can't afford to fund its element of this national project?

A national Cycle Journey Planner is the vision. However, the initial focus will be on working with areas that are keen, motivated and have funds to contribute to the cost of providing the Journey Planner for their area. It has not yet been decided how local authorities that don't have access to such resources will be engaged and / or supported.

There are a number of journey planners aimed at cyclists already in existence, e.g. for Cambridge Cycle Campaign (<http://www.camcycle.org.uk/map/route/>), London (<http://journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk/>) and Brighton (<http://www.journeyon.co.uk/>). Will these eventually be incorporated into the Transport Direct Cycle Journey Planner?

There are a number of good journey planners for cyclists already, and some of the people responsible for developing these have been involved in the Transport Direct project. For example representatives from Cambridge Cycling Campaign and Transport for London were involved in the data specification. However, it is unlikely these journey planners will be incorporated into the Transport Direct Cycle Journey Planner, as they have evolved and are managed independently. Nevertheless, all these planners depend on good quality data, and the Transport Direct project is as much about developing the tools to allow robust and reliable data to be produced, as developing the Cycle Journey Planner itself. In theory, the data produced by such tools can be used for any journey planner.

Who should I contact for more information about the Transport Direct Cycle Journey Planner?

Please contact Jo Cleary (jo.cleary@clearystevens.co.uk), a member of the Cycling England Professional Support Service, if you have any other questions or enquiries.