cycling england

NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

CYCLING ACTION PLAN

A 'cycling paramedic' in Gentleman's Walk, Norwich.   Photo: Rob Marshall

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1. Background

Norwich City Council has always been keen to encourage and provide for cyclists and has worked with the County Council (the current highway authority) to do so. The City Council has consistently provided additional funds and staff resources to assist with this. The City Council has a dedicated, but part-time, cycling officer.

Recently, however, there has been a funding downturn and lack of progress in terms of the capital programme. With recent political changes there has been a renewed impetus to re-examine what can be done for cycling in and around Norwich and how best to use the limited resources available. The members seek a "more focussed and effective use of resources". Politicians have acknowledged that spending on cycling in Norwich is relatively low in comparison with many other UK cities. They are also aware that local cycling policies have been relatively ineffective and need strengthening as part of some kind of review.

Early ideas include a city-based cycle hire scheme though this has yet to be properly considered in the light of experience elsewhere (note that Bristol will be trialling such a scheme over the next three years as part of its 'Cycling Town' workplan).

Members are keen to develop a Norwich Cycling Action Plan and the City Council officers are seeking to draft and develop such a plan. They have sought some early guidance and an overview on a Cycling Action Plan from Cycling England through their Local Authority Professional Support Service.

2. Learning from other successful towns and cities

There are many examples on mainland Europe where cities and towns have created the conditions whereby a significant proportion of the local population cycle. Transport for London has reviewed the policies and measures implemented, timescales and financial resources spent on achieving good results.

Although there is no single formula, it is evident that a combination of measures have been undertaken, tailored to the local environment and situation. There are some common activities in the cities that have successfully increased and sustained high levels of cycle use. These include:

- A cycling plan, including both hard and soft measures, supported by a sustainable transport strategy
- Coherent and attractive cycle route networks that ensure good permeability, but not necessarily through segregated provision
- Sufficient and secure cycle parking facilities, serving both 'public' and 'private' destinations
- Traffic and speed reduction initiatives
- Broad public support for cycling
- High profile, innovative projects such as bike stations, bike bridges, 'flagship' routes and partnerships with large employers and primary care trusts
- A comprehensive, year-round marketing strategy

The above broad measures headings have determined the range of more specific objectives set out in section 2, at the start of this note.

3. Elements of a Cycling Action Plan

Suggested Action Plan elements should include:

3.1 Review of background to cycling in Norwich

Although there is clear national evidence about the value and benefit of cycling as an important urban transport mode, the local case should be set out, drawing on what is known from survey data, travel statistics, topography and distances, etc. There is considerable information available from local transport studies (Norwich Area Transportation Study and others) in addition to national data and survey work.

Utility cycling (cycling to work, to school or college and to the shops) will provide the best potential for increasing cycling in an urban area. Information about current cycling journey purposes, and an estimate for the potential to increase each of these and how, will be a useful exercise.

Set out the benefits to Norwich and the local population to include issues relating to:

- Environment
- Health and lifestyles
- Economy
- Business
- Social inclusion
- Crime and safety
- Recreation and tourism

3.2 Barriers to cycling

It is essential that there is an understanding of the factors that discourage cycling. It is widely accepted that barriers to cycling are covered in the following headings:

- Danger
- Effort
- Weather
- Poor cycling environment
- Cycle theft
- Lack of information and skills
- Culture, attitudes and credibility

Many of the above are more perceived than real in the minds of existing and potential cyclists and, therefore, makes it all the more important to understand to what extent these aspects put people off cycling. There has been extensive study done on this and there is useful information in the London Cycling Action Plan, p.16.

Norwich may wish to look into how, at least some of, the above disincentives don't apply in Norwich to the extent that they do in London and elsewhere. For example,

the City is relatively flat and compact, so 'effort' is less relevant that it might be in a place like Bradford. Similarly, cycle theft should be less significant than the likes of London. While eastern counties of England tend to have more of cycling culture and tradition compared to those further west, etc. Think about why Norwich is / should be a good place to promote cycle use and that it should be that bit easier to achieve.

It is worth identifying – and to celebrate / nurture / build-on – the many attributes of Norwich as a cycling city. This could include:

- Specific efforts by the rail operators to be fairly cycle-friendly (see Northern Rail's model cycling strategy in Further references);
- Specific efforts by local employers to promote cycling;
- Specific efforts by schools / colleges / universities to promote cycling;
- Average utility journey distances
- Average annual rainfall
- Description of the geography and topography
- Etc…

It is suggested that the following priority is adopted:

1. Raise the status of cycling in Norwich
2. Remove and/or reduce the barriers to cycling
3. Address the needs of current cyclists
4. Encourage new people to cycle
5. Promote equality and social inclusion

3.3 Objectives.

These could include:

- Provision of a high quality cycling environment

- Creating a 'permeable' city for cyclists

- Increasing cyclists' safety by reducing their exposure to significant volumes of motor vehicles as well as high speed traffic

- Increase cycle parking provision and quality

- Consider innovative approaches to better provide for cyclists

- Promote cycling and its status

- Incentives and encouragement and support for target groups (identifying who the target groups are first)

Professional Support Service

- Promote mutual awareness and consideration between cyclists and pedestrians (or 'all other road users')

- Encourage cycling and public transport integration

- Optimise the contribution to cycling from other schemes and initiatives

- Improve co-ordination and partnerships (between the key stakeholders in efforts to promote cycling, including the local authorities, PCT, employers, schools, the media, etc).

The above are very broad headings and will likely include a large number of more specific initiatives and actions that will further or help deliver the objective. Some suggestions are set out in **Appendix 1** at the end of this note against the objective headings.

3.4 Plan delivery

An important aim should be to produce a revised strategic cycle programme that better reflects the priorities and identified objectives. This should also include a review of the existing cycle network aspirations - including all local roads. This review should acknowledge the reaffirmed basic principle stated in the DfT's recent guidance LTN2/08, Cycling Infrastructure Design (see Further references), which states:

"The road network is the most basic (and important) cycling facility available, and the preferred way of providing for cyclists is on the carriageway where cyclists are content to use it, particularly in urban areas." 1.3.2, p.10

All too frequently, the well-intentioned but practically flawed belief that building (relatively expensive) off-road facilities will provide the catalyst for increased cycling, has resulted in compromised, sub-optimal designs, often within a wider network of limited connectivity and coherence.

Good design and consistent quality will ensure that what is delivered for cyclists will enhance safety and convenience and encourage new or occasional cyclists to cycle more. The latest DfT guidance gives clear information about good practice and standards and Cycling England's design portfolio (see Further references) provides additional information, inspiration and examples of good practice.

Changing attitudes towards cycling is also considered as important since this will affect the design and delivery of cycling initiatives and take up of cycling by the wider public. Initiatives that combine incentives, information, training and promotion, and are closely tailored to the needs of a specific target market should be considered. Cycling England's Smart Measures Portfolio (see Further references) gives many examples.

Cycling England is also providing support to elected members keen to see more cycling achieved through the political system within their area (see Further references.

Measures aimed at providing for every-day, routine, 'utility trips' should be a priority. This is where the greater potential for modal shift will come from and which will make a difference to people's lives and the effect of vehicular traffic in the urban environment.

3.5 Targets and monitoring

It is advisable to consider and have in place arrangements for monitoring based around targets and performance indicators, tied-back to local planning / transport / health-promotion / etc policies and strategies. Associated data and procedures could include:

- Current cycling volumes/levels
- Accident statistics analysis
- Review of existing cycling infrastructure for fitness for purpose, design and condition
- Qualitative feedback from cyclists about their satisfaction with the cycling environment
- Information on bicycle ownership and usage
- Existing cycle education programmes and other community based projects

Targets should be considered in order to keep track of, and to measure, progress. The targets could comprise:

An overall headline target:

- looking at an appropriate percentage increase in cycling levels at a future date compared with existing levels e.g. the London headline target is *to achieve at least an 80% increase in cycling levels by 2010 and a 200% increase by 2020 compared to cycling levels in 2000*

Medium-term targets – could include:

- Increase modal share of cycling trips
- Increase number of cycle trips per person per year
- Increase 'cycleability' and/or 'permeability' and user satisfaction with the local cycling environment

Long-term target:

- Relates back to the headline target and could be the cycling level increase aspiration for the end of the Action Plan period

Further references:

London Cycle Action Plan, 2004, TfL

http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/cycling-action-plan.pdf

Cycle Infrastructure Design, LTN 2/08, 2008, DfT

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/ltnotes/ltn208.pdf

Walking and Cycling Action Plan, 2004, DfT

http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/walking/actionplan/ingandcyclingdocumentinp5
802.pdf

Sheffield Cycling Action Plan, 2006, Sheffield City Council

http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/EasySite/lib/serveDocument.asp?doc=90567&pgid=87559

Cycling Action Plan, 2009,Haringey Council

http://www.haringey.gov.uk/cycle_action_plan.pdf

Cycling England Design Checklist

http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk/engineering-planning/design-checklist/

Cycling England Smart Measures Portfolio

http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk/encouraging-cycling/smart-measures-portfolio/

Cycling England Member Support

http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk/encouraging-cycling/member-support/

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APPENDIX 1: Cycle Action Plan Objectives and supporting initiatives	
Objective:	Consider providing action by:
Provision of a high quality cycling environment	• Reducing traffic speeds • Reducing traffic volumes • Reallocating road space • Removing road centre lines (where appropriate) • Undertake cycle awareness training to update skills
Creating a 'permeable' city for cyclists	Undertake a permeability review that: • Reviews streets for closure to traffic, or limited access, with exceptions for cyclists • Reviews 24 hour access through vehicle restricted areas • Reviews crossing opportunities of busy roads • Reviews cycling on all one-way streets • Reviews all turning bans to exempt cyclists • Reviews cycle bans through parks and other open spaces • Review provision and timings of busy road crossings
Increasing cyclists' safety and reducing exposure to high volumes and high speeds traffic	• Review of accident statistics and develop programme of remedial works where appropriate • Traffic speed reduction measures • Traffic volume reduction measures • Review operation and provision at junctions, particularly roundabouts • Priority crossings
Increase cycle parking provision and quality	• Work with relevant partners, e.g. the police, to develop a "Cycle Theft Reduction Strategy" • Undertake a city centre cycle parking review • Review of cycle parking guidance to reflect current best practice • Work with key employers on cycle parking improvements • Review rail station cycle parking (and access) • Encourage and promote better cycle parking at home, particularly flat and new developments • Lead by example
Consider innovative approaches to better provide for cyclists	• Review road centre lines and wider cycle lanes • Consider use of 'Hybrid' cycle lanes on key radial routes (eg Wroxham Road) • Priority crossings • New bridges (eg to Whitlingham) • Extending water-side routes • Support greater use of bikes for work • Consider bike-based delivery service for documents and other lighter goods • Consider supporting and developing bike loan and bike pool schemes • Consider cycle hire schemes, particularly in the longer term following improvements to cycling environment • Marketing and Promotions Plan
Promote cycling and its status	• Develop a year-round marketing and promotions plan and programme • Cycle route map updates and review – consider a 'cycleability' type review rather than one based on facilities • Review and improve the range of web-based info available

	• Lead by example –review 'in-house' aspects • Identify and promote positive role models and the practical • role and benefits of more cycling • Flagship events • Appoint an active, committed, cycle-aware Member 'cycling champion'
Incentives and encouragement and support for target groups	• Cyclist training – 'Bikeability' is new national standard so ensure local adoption • extend to adults and teenagers as well as schoolchildren • Encourage employers to facilitate staff cycling (Norwich City Council's own travel plan should be setting an example) • work with others to develop and promote cycling in schools • work with local disability groups to inform, better provide and encourage cycling • lead by example
Promote mutual awareness and consideration between cyclists and pedestrians	• Support constructive road safety campaigns, particularly those that promote benefits of cycling and cycling as fun • Review shared-use policies and encourage cyclists to give way to pedestrians (e.g. through signing and design) • Support compliance with, and awareness of, the highway code by all road users, including cyclists • Discourage anti-social behaviour by cyclists and other road users • Cyclist awareness initiatives for bus and taxi drivers • Enforcement policies both for cyclists and motorists could be reviewed
Encourage cycling and public transport integration	• High quality, secure cycle parking at stations • Additional services at stations • Access to stations • Carriage of cycles on trains • Availability of integrated travel information
Optimise the contribution to cycling from other schemes and initiatives	Complementary measures can support cycling indirectly: • Ensure that cycling objectives are achieved in city centre and local area schemes • Ensure that cycling objectives are achieved in major developments • Ensure cycle audit on all transport schemes so that cycling measures may be easily and cheaply included • Bus priority measures usually benefit cyclists • Support and promote lower speed limits and zones which automatically create safer, more pleasant cycling environments
Improve co-ordination and partnerships	Working with a wide range of partners and other organisations can only benefit the wider aspirations for cycling. Partners will include: • Cycle campaigns • Access groups • Education providers • Health Authorities and PCTs • Business and commerce groups • Employers groups • Local media

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