



Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014

*By email to: [Walking.Cycling@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Walking.Cycling@dft.gsi.gov.uk)*

### **Cycling Delivery Plan consultation**

We welcome the release of the Cycling Delivery plan and the opportunity to make suggestions to strengthen and develop the plan before it is finalised.

Leeds Cycling Campaign is a not-for-profit cycle advocacy group, seeking to make Leeds a better and safer place to cycle. We work closely with the local authority and regional combined authority and recently attended one of the DfT Cycling Delivery Plan consultation events. This response contains comments from our members and from the other attendees of the consultation event.

### **Theme 1: Vision, leadership and ambition**

1. The Get Britain Cycling report, building on a huge body of evidence, set out 18 recommendations. While it may not be possible to implement them all, a useful structure to the Cycling Delivery Plan would be to address each recommendation and set out what has been included in response to each recommendation, or why that recommendation has not been followed.
2. The targets are insufficiently ambitious to create a step change. Starting from a very low baseline, and with the planned investment and growth in cycling in London, this target is feeble.
3. By definition national targets are generally not locally applicable. We would recommend the setting of ambitious local targets for active travel, drawing on best practice examples for different types of location.
4. The Cycling Delivery Plan would achieve greater support and buy-in from decision makers and the public if it focused not simply on cycling but set out a vision of the 'places for people' or liveable communities which are created by a focus on cycling and walking.

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5. The plan does not set out a clear vision of a future where cycling is a normal, everyday activity for the majority. Such a vision can be a great help in winning support, as we have seen from the success of our own local vision of a cycle-friendly future:

<http://www.leedscyclingcampaign.co.uk/?q=vision>

## **Theme 2: Funding**

6. The call for long-term, specific funding for cycling has been made time and time again and if the government can find £15bn for new road building the continued lack of commitment to cycling is even more distressing. If the government is committed to cycling and walking, it must provide either a sustained and reliable funding stream or real incentives and drivers for local authorities to use local and regional funding for cycling.
7. The recommendation in the Get Britain Cycling report was for £10 per head per year was an initial minimum. Aiming to reach this level by 2020/21 is not ambitious and will not result in the desired step-change.
8. There are opportunities for development of high quality cycling infrastructure during the planning of new developments. Use of the Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus Fund for improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure should be explicitly encouraged.

## **Theme 3: Infrastructure and Planning**

9. While funding for cycling has been in small pockets, local authorities have had no incentive to plan strategic cycling networks. The result has too often been short, disconnected stretches of cycle facility that disappear at junctions where they are most needed. As described in the Active Travel (Wales) Act, local authorities should be required to outline cycling networks and work towards putting these in place over time.
10. Cycle-proofing is not clearly defined and understood. Clear standards (not just guidance) for high quality cycling infrastructure are urgently needed and these must specify infrastructure that is suitable for all users, regardless of age and ability. The 'dual network' approach recommended in LTN2/08 is outdated and wasteful.
11. There are opportunities for improvements to the cycling and walking experience through routine road maintenance and street renewals, yet in practice renewals rarely result in improvements for cycling and often the reverse. Infrastructure standards and steady investment in cycling would allow the more detailed and time-consuming design work required to turn like-for-like replacement into cycle-proofing.
12. At key locations such as high-capacity junctions on major trunk roads, the only way to provide high quality cycling experience is grade-separation using bridges or underpasses. The level of capital investment needed for this type of project is unlikely to be made available locally or regionally, and without it the creation of coherent cycling networks is impossible. Central government could make a clear statement about its commitment to cycling through a programme of targeted interventions for this type of solution.

13. Some local authorities perceive their statutory responsibility known as “network management duty” to override all other considerations. In some cases even where there is, for example, a strong safety argument for including a pedestrian crossing, the requirement to keep motor traffic moving is prioritised. High quality pedestrian and cycling infrastructure cannot be provided on busy roads and at busy junctions unless this duty is open to compromise. Lack of flexibility on motor traffic, combined with limited investment, lead to cycle facilities that disappear at junctions.

If the government is committed to improving conditions for walking and cycling, local authorities must be encouraged to view reduction in motor flow in key locations as an acceptable compromise to achieve an increase in walking and cycling. This is especially important as walking, cycling and public transport are much more efficient ways to move people around cities and towns: encouraging car use by prioritising motor traffic is not just unsustainable but also irrational.

#### **Theme 4: Safety and Perceptions of Safety**

14. We support the intention to review sentencing guidelines in response to legislative changes on road traffic offences. In particular we would support strengthening of the use of disqualification to remove dangerous and careless drivers from our streets. A change in culture is desperately needed so that driving is not seen as a right that cannot be removed: other forms of transport are available.
15. Training and education are desperately needed to help motorists understand cycling. Our members support the future inclusion of a cycling element in the driving test, requiring a practical element. This would help drivers to understand the experience of cycling and the behaviour of cyclists.
16. At local level, road safety initiatives are frequently victim-focussed. We would welcome a change in road safety culture to embrace the switch of focus to Road Danger Reduction (focussed on reducing *sources* of danger), and the increasing use worldwide of zero-tolerance approaches to KSI targets.

#### **Governance and Monitoring**

17. Clearer monitoring and evaluation needs to be in place locally, to prevent investment intended for walking and cycling to be used inappropriately, or only marginally impacting on walking and cycling. The European Union government bodies are able to audit and claw back funding that has been used inappropriately; similar powers would encourage proper use of investment identified to support this plan.

#### **Partnerships**

18. There could be more recognition of the breadth of partnership that will be required to implement the plan successfully. The plan could explicitly recognise the variation in local authority structures and the existence of two tier authorities, and the contribution of voluntary and community organisations, which should be included in the partnerships that will implement the plan.

19. Local authorities and partnerships developed in response to this plan should be encouraged and facilitated to exchange best practice and learn from each other's innovation and responses to local challenges. This should build on the exchange already happening as a result of the Cycling Ambition Grants.
20. The contribution of LEPs to implementation of the plan is not well understood at local authority level. While LEPs may be able to provide substantial investment to make the plan a reality, their motivation to do so is unclear and may be non-existent. While they lack local accountability and representation, LEPs can too easily ignore calls to support this plan.
21. Currently local authorities can choose to take part in this process, yet the plan states the government's commitment to cycling as a realistic choice for all ages and abilities. The danger is that unless local authorities are given stronger incentives to participate, those most needing to change may choose not to engage and people living in those areas will be left behind.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Reather, Chair

For and on behalf of Leeds Cycling Campaign