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## Delivery of the National Cycling Strategy: A review

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## **1. Introduction**

The Government is committed to encouraging more cycling in England, because cycling has the potential to contribute to the achievement of important objectives in the fields of transport, public health and liveability. Over the past few years there has been a significant increase in the levels of funding for cycling. In the current financial year, 2004/05, local authorities outside London are forecast to spend Â£36m on cycling measures. This compares with less than Â£30m in 2000/01. In London a record Â£13m was invested in cycling in 2004/05. Yet despite this investment and increased government interventions, the number of cycling trips has not risen overall: there are pockets of increased activity and there are exemplary success stories in some towns and cities but on the whole cycling levels have not increased in proportion with the quantity of public funding committed to it.

To seek to address this issue, we have carried out a review of the delivery mechanisms that are in place to support cycling, and in particular of the role of the National Cycling Strategy Board, which is the main national advisory body on cycling. In the light of our review, which is summarised below, we have concluded that we should:

Reform the current NCS Board, to increase its autonomy and to enhance its role in programme delivery. We propose that the new body is called Cycling England

Establish a steering board of funding government departments to co-ordinate government cycling strategy and direct the work of Cycling England

Improve our performance management of local authorities in their role as delivery agents for cycling policy

These proposals are detailed in Section 8.

## 2. Background

The National Cycling Strategy (NCS) was launched in 1996. It was developed collaboratively by the public, private and NGO sectors, and was supported and endorsed by a wide range of stakeholders. It set a headline target to quadruple cycle trips by 2012 and a number of subsidiary targets concerning related issues such as land-use planning, safety and security. (See Annex A for list of NCS objectives.)

Following publication of the Strategy, a National Cycling Forum was established to support and promote its objectives. The Forum was a relatively large, advisory body, made up of representatives of cycling organisations across the UK; its size was one of its disadvantages and in 2001 it was replaced by the - much smaller - NCS Board, currently chaired by Phillip Darnton (full list of members attached at Annex B).

Over the past few months DfT has been reviewing the impact of the NCS, focusing particularly on the various mechanisms established for the delivery of the strategy and the effect these have had on the volume of cycling. This work has been carried out in consultation with the Board Chairmen (Phillip Darnton and Steven Norris, the Board's first Chairman), Members, local authorities and other key stakeholders. The analysis in the rest of this paper takes account of the views of these various stakeholders, and we have been grateful for the contribution they have made to our work. In particular, the NCSB Paper "Bike for the Future" (September 2004) has made a very valuable contribution to this review.

## 3. Trends and targets

Today most stakeholders accept that the original NCS target of quadrupling the number of cycle journeys by 2012 will not be achieved, although some of those consulted in this review have recommended that it be retained as a longer-term objective. In fact, over the last decade, the number of cycling stages  $\frac{1}{5}$  in England has fallen by a fifth, from 20 stages per person per year in 1992/1994 to 16 in 2002/2003. Cycling currently makes up 1% of all trip stages. It is difficult to assess trends in distance cycled as the our two main sources of information, the National Travel Survey (NTS) and road traffic estimates, show different trends since 2000. Both show a small increase between 1993 and 2000, but between 2000 and 2003 the road traffic figures show an increase in distance cycled whereas the NTS figures show a decrease. Both sets of figures are volatile because of the small numbers of people cycling and therefore recorded in the NTS or by traffic counts.

In *The Future of Transport*, the White Paper published by DfT in July 2004, the Department dropped the national target for cycling, as part of a wider rationalisation of its suite of targets. This reflected our assessment that the existence of an aspirational national target had not been effective in supporting better performance management of cycling by local authorities. While some local authorities have found the target useful - "it's something to aim for" - many more considered it counter-productive at local level, since it is difficult to encourage political or officer commitment to take action to meet a target which is considered unattainable in the first place.

Our new approach to cycling is to encourage the development of soundly based local targets to which we can reasonably expect local authorities to be accountable. This approach will be supported by recent organisational changes within DfT which enable officials to engage more closely with local authorities. The Department is now organised along geographical lines that allow officials to work directly with local authorities as well as through Government Offices, to support the development of challenging but realistic targets for all key transport outcomes as part of the development of second round Local Transport Plans (LTPs - see section 6 below), and to monitor progress towards delivery of targets. Cycling is a mandatory indicator for the second round of Local Transport Plans and so it will be included in this process of engagement.

## **Local successes**

Within the rather unpromising national trends, there have been pockets of success in individual local authorities: TfL data indicates that in London cycling increased by over a fifth between 2003 and 2004, attributed to several factors, including the sheer volume and relatively slow speed of traffic in the capital, the introduction of the congestion charge, and improvements in cycling infrastructure; in York the opening of the Millennium Bridge with cycling facilities in 2001 led to an increase of 17% in the number of cyclists crossing the river; and in Hull, where the Local Authority has adopted a range of speed management policies and cycling levels have, traditionally, been relatively high, 14% of journeys to work are by bike. (Source: ERCDT). There are more detailed case studies in Section 6.

It is important to note that, although these authorities have covered common ground in improving the integration of cycling delivery into wider transport policies, the detailed measures which have been put into place by each have been significantly different. This suggests that there is no single blueprint for achieving higher levels of cycling: different local circumstances call for different measures. By focussing on local instead of national targets, and with the new organisational structure adopted by the DfT, government should be better positioned to respond to local requirements. Our new structure should also increase our capacity to encourage and disseminate good practice of various kinds around the country, building on the benchmarking work of the English Regions Cycling Development Team (ERC DT - see section 4 below) and CTC, the national cycling organisation, carried out since 2000.

## **Recreational cycling**

Recreational cycling has increased in recent years, which is good in itself, as it is a form of exercise for adults and children that can play a part in improving health, and as a way of encouraging novice cyclists who might subsequently use a bike for a wider range of journeys. There is a real need for recreational, off-road cycling opportunities for the full range of cyclists, from those on family outings to experienced mountain bikers. The 2003 monitoring survey by Sustrans of the National Cycle Network (NCN) indicates that there were 77 million cycling trips on the network, representing a year-on-year growth of 10% in the number of cycle trips. On the basis that 17% of cyclists using traffic-free sections of the NCN were novices, we can assume that a significant number of users of the rest of the network are also novices. In the course of research carried out on traffic-free routes of the NCN, 41% of cyclists said they planned to cycle more in the future; this growth effect was particularly strong among novice cyclists, of whom 59% said they planned to cycle more compared to 37% of experienced cyclists.

## Monitoring mechanisms

There have also been long-term concerns about the capacity of current monitoring mechanisms to give a true picture of performance. Our assessment of the national level of activity in cycling is based on figures drawn from the NTS and the road traffic estimates, as referred to above. It is now widely accepted that the NTS under-records the true level of cycle trips, but we do not know by how much, and we need to improve alternative cycling counts to be able to calibrate the NTS findings.

Cycling is difficult to measure in the NTS because of the small numbers who cycle in the week of any given survey. Students and young men are notoriously difficult to capture in surveys so their cycling activity will be under-recorded - and we believe they cycle more than the rest of the population so the distortion is even greater. The small numbers cycling mean that cycling is also difficult to measure using the road traffic estimates. Also, four fifths of cycling takes place on minor roads and estimates are less robust for these than for major roads, which are more intensively sampled. Long term trends can also be masked by weather effects. Looking at the data on a regional level does not yield any conclusions either - it is too volatile on an annual basis.

DfT is seeking to improve the monitoring of cycling in two ways: first, by installing a larger network of automatic cycle counters and, second, by requiring local authorities to collect information on cycling trips as part of the monitoring of their local transport plans.

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A **trip** is defined as a one-way course of travel having a single main purpose. A **stage** is a subdivision of a trip, and a new stage is defined when either there is a change in the form of transport or there is a change of transport requiring a different/separate ticket.

## 4. Delivery mechanisms

A key purpose of this review is to evaluate the effectiveness of the various delivery agents which are currently involved in the promotion of cycling. The following institutions and delivery agents are used now:

### Local Authorities

At present, local authorities are the main delivery agent for initiatives to improve cycling, especially where this involves work on the highway, which is funded through Local Transport Plans. In addition to these engineering functions, local authorities carry out a wide range of promotional and behavioural programmes ("soft demand management") such as school and workplace travel planning, personalised journey planning, and so on. Traditionally, Road Safety Officers based in local authorities have also had a major role in delivering cycling training both to children and adults.

DfT's ability to make a real difference on cycling relies heavily on our ability to direct funding to local authorities and hold them to account (mainly through the Local Transport Plan system) for the quality of what they are delivering. There are limitations to this system which are discussed in more detail in section 7. The mainstream local authority performance management systems do not offer great assistance. None of the Best Value Performance Indicators, a measure used across government, relate to cycling. And in the

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime, managed by the Audit Commission, transport does not even have a category of its own - it is brigaded within "environment". Transport - unlike, for example, Education or Health - is a relatively low profile activity for local government as a whole, and cycling is a very small part of transport, which limits the effectiveness with which we can use mainstream performance management levers to deliver specific cycling outcomes.

## **Non-Governmental Organisations**

There are also a number of professional, focussed and efficient NGOs working for the promotion of cycling. Most of the successes in raising numbers of cycling trips at local level have been achieved by close partnership between the local government and NGO sectors - for example cycle training organisations like Cycle Training UK Ltd, Life Cycle UK and Bike Right have been very successful in training children and adults to ride safely and so encouraging them to take up cycling. NGOs bring considerable energy and commitment to cycling in England and any discussion of delivery mechanisms should take account of this fact. For other cross-government priorities - such as public health or regeneration - NGOs are relied upon as direct delivery agents more than is the case for cycling. But it is probably fair to say that the agendas of the different cycling bodies are not always identical and that there is no single representative body for cycling.

## **The NCS Board**

The NCS advocated an integrated approach to the challenge of increasing the number of cycling trips. In its work to date, the NCS Board (NCSB) has built on this approach - for example it has played a leadership role in improving co-ordination with the railway sector, and in promoting the potential synergies between road safety and cycling initiatives. The Board has also sought to integrate its thinking into wider policy areas in line with changing public and government concerns. So, for example, as public health has increasingly become an area of public attention, the Board has been able to draw on the expertise of one of its members, an expert in health, to focus some of its work on NHS professionals and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and their potential contribution to cycling activity.

The Board provides an opportunity for DfT to hold discussions with experts who have a range of knowledge and interests, but is not so large as to run the risk of becoming a talking shop. This gives all sides a chance to discuss otherwise contentious issues (such as the subject of targets) and work on them together, without turning the discussion into a confrontation. The Board is a forum where unentrenched advice and different expertise come together, and in some cases members have cycling interests outside the NCSB that they use as a sounding board for different proposals and this has proved to be a very effective mechanism.

The Board's recent Work Programme (attached, Annex C) gives an indication of the range of work undertaken and of the integrated approach of this work.

## **AEA and ERCDT - Working for the NCS Board**

The Board has at its disposal (after agreement with the DfT) the services of AEA Technology, a consultancy employed on a 3-year contract by the DfT to support the work of the NCS Board. AEA in turn employs the English Regions Cycling Development Team (ERCDDT), a group of 20 cycling officers based in locations throughout the country. Between them, AEA and ERCDDT are responsible for:

- Ensuring that central advice on cycling reaches the right people at local and regional levels
- Auditing local authorities to ascertain what level of provision exists for cycling (first assessment completed July 2003; review completed in summer 2004)
- Establishing effective means of exchanging information and best practice, creating partnerships between organisations involved in encouraging cycling, providing support to cycling officers, engineers, travel planners, Road Safety Officers
- Bringing to the notice of the Board, DfT and local authorities examples of good practice that merit wider attention and dissemination

The work of the ERCDT has added value to cycling in two major ways. Their assessment of English Highway Authorities, published in July 2003, was a detailed report giving an overview of the state of cycling in local authorities across England. It added significantly to the existing body of knowledge on cycling, and provided a sound foundation for identifying further areas of work and making future decisions; it also raised the profile of cycling in many local authorities and helped drive internal change in a number of Authorities.

More recently, ERCDT has worked on a new initiative using the CTC's benchmarking programme to create a network of local authorities and support them in the implementation of their cycling policies. The process entails assessing policy and practice to determine what can work in encouraging cycling in the UK context and it has been welcomed by a number of authorities.

The DfT's contract with AEA Technology comes to an end in May 2005. The body of work delivered by AEA in the course of the contract provides a basis from which to identify areas of further work and target resources more specifically and more efficiently to those areas.

## **DfT**

DfT also plays a hands-on role in the delivery of cycling policy through projects like the Cycling Projects Fund which has provided direct support for nearly 300 small-scale schemes (such as cycle parking, training, short sections of route and promotional schemes) to encourage higher levels of cycling. DfT is also providing indirect support for cycling via its major project with DfES on school travel (see DfES paragraph in section 5 below) and by direct funding to the Sustrans Links to School project, also discussed below.

## **5. HMG funding for cycling**

### **DfT funding**

Most of the public money invested in cycling directly is channelled through local authorities in the form of Local Transport Plan (LTP) funds to be spent on capital projects, namely on-road and off-road cycle routes and cycle parking. Local authorities have discretion over how to spend the money but their decisions are informed by DfT guidance. In 2004/05, Â£39m is earmarked by local authorities outside London to be spent on cycling schemes through LTPs and in 2005/06, Â£46m. These figures refer to schemes which are primarily aimed at promoting cycling; cycling can also benefit from a wide range of small local transport schemes aimed at improving safety or liveability, such as the introduction of traffic calming or home zones.

London is a separate category: Transport for London (TfL) and London Boroughs can spend at their discretion, again basing their decisions on central government guidance; their spending allocation for 2005/06 is not yet confirmed but is forecast to be £17m (Source: TfL).

Non-capital funding includes the money for the AEA/ERCDDT contract, projected to be £4.7m (incl VAT) in the years 2002-2005, and a much smaller amount (£136k in 2004/05) for NCS Board programmes and running costs, mostly covering marketing costs.

One-off projects are also funded from time to time. In 2004/05 there has been significant investment under this heading. £10m is being channelled through Sustrans for cycle routes linking selected schools with the National Cycle Network -local authorities matched any contribution from Sustrans for a route in their area with their own investment, and a total of £17m was generated this way. £600k was granted to SRA as a contribution to building better cycle parking facilities at stations, and £50k was given to CTC to establish their cycle training advisory service. The Cycling Projects Fund (see section 4 above) also received £ 4.38m of funding in two rounds between 2002 and 2004.

## **DfES**

DfES also provides support for cycling, mainly as part of its participation in the "Travelling to School" initiative, which is funding the roll-out of school travel plans at schools across England. DfT and DfES jointly support 250 school travel advisors, each department providing £3.75m each (2004/05 figures). And under the School Travel Plan, DfES provides £20m pa in grants to schools (£5k for primary schools, £10k for secondary ones) with approved school travel plans to provide facilities such as cycle parking and lockers. In 2005/06 DfES is also providing £45k through Sport England (see below) to increase the number of links between schools and British Cycling clubs.

## **ODPM**

Liveability funding has been made available for a number of initiatives involving better provision for cyclists.

## **DEFRA**

DEFRA agencies support cycling in the following ways:

### **Countryside Agency**

The Countryside Agency is involved in a number of initiatives including:

- Production of interim technical advice on Quiet Lanes which can be designated by local authorities under the Transport Act 2000 as networks of minor rural roads that are appropriate for shared use by cyclists, walkers, horse riders and motorists;
- The Rural Transport Partnerships scheme has supported an extensive range of rural transport projects including some to assist cyclists in rural areas;
- Promoting Greenways designed for shared use by people on foot, bike or horseback for car-free commuting, play or leisure trips;
- Production, in partnership with DfT, of Bike & Rail, A good practice guide.

- Promoting the integration of cycling and public transport interchange facilities through the Gateways Stations project.
- Encouraging local authorities to develop robust Rights of Way Improvement Plans which assess the needs of cyclists and identify necessary improvements to the network.

## **Forestry Commission**

The Forestry Commission's *Forest Fitness* campaign aims to allow everyone to take advantage of the huge network of cycling trails in their forests to improve fitness levels in attractive outdoor settings.

## **Environment Agency**

The Environment Agency manages 600 sites for public access and recreation as part of its duty to promote recreation on or near inland and coastal waters. It works closely with other bodies to support and influence the delivery of new recreational opportunities including cycling. The Agency supports the National Cycling Strategy; is working with Sustrans to develop the National Cycle Network, and supports and promotes green commuting including Bike to Work Day and the production of cycle maps. The Agency has also been involved in a number of successful partnerships to help local communities and visitors discover and enjoy walking and cycling alongside waterways, including the Kent Millennium River Walk, the Thames Path, Severn Way and Houghwell Burn Path.

## **Department of Health**

DH has supported cycling in the following ways:

- The new 3 year funding for Primary Care Trusts (announced on 9 February 2005) allocates Â£211 m in 2006/07 and Â£131 m in 2007/08 for implementing the Choosing Health White Paper. This includes an allocation of Â£21m in 2006/07 and Â£34 m in 2007/08 for "action on diet, physical activity and obesity" some of which would be open to PCTs to spend on cycling related work.
- Funded Sustrans to run a series of Green Travel Plan seminars for NHS Trusts, and to develop quarterly newsletters for the NHS, in support of the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease milestone that the NHS should develop 'green' transport plans.
- Funded Life Cycle UK to pilot cycle training as part of rehabilitation for heart patients, part of DH's Section 64 general scheme of grants to voluntary organisations. DH is presently funding SUSTRANS as part of a three-year Section 64 grant to promote active travel for health, including a "Safe Routes to Healthcare" best practice project.
- Committed funding to a Health Impact Assessment of the Sustainable Travel Towns pilots.

## **DCMS/Sport England**

Sport England provides Â£3.5m for cycle sport activities in England annually, through grants to the British Cycling (BC). The main annual grant to fund BC's *One Stop Plan* is Â£2,900,000. Just over half of this funds sports talent development. The remainder is used to support a regional network responsible for development of clubs, competition and schools activity - the latter including BC's Go Ride scheme, which provides playground training to children on riding their bikes. The success of the grant will be assessed by reference to BC's achievement in improving participation in the sport, clubs, club membership, coaches, volunteers, and international medals.

A further *Step Into Sport* grant of Â£50,000 aims to increase the number of young volunteers associated with cycle sport and a *Club Links* grant of Â£45,000 is designed to increase the number of links between schools and BC clubs.

A Community Club Development Programme grant of Â£556,000 aims to improve club facilities in areas of deprivation.

In addition to the Sport England contribution, UK Sport will provide around Â£2.75m annually to support elite, international standard cycling and DCMS will provide Â£900,000 to support participation in cycle sport.

Sport England recently changed its remit to allow it to take a wider view on physical activity rather than promoting sport per se. It is pioneering the marketing of healthier travel through its "Everyday sport" campaign, which is currently being trialled in the North East of England.

## 6. What does this money provide?

The bulk of the money, LTP funds to local authorities, has been spent on infrastructure projects: namely cycle tracks, cycle lanes, new advanced stop lines, new cycle parking facilities and other cycling schemes. The following table shows what the funds have been/will be spent on by local authorities outside London, based on progress reports provided on the delivery of their Local Transport Plans.

	Unit	Outturn					Forecast		
		98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
Cycle Track	KM	210	221	477	804	848	539	517	456
Cycle Lane	KM	146	179	368	405	361	369	846	419
Cycle Track	Number	94	121	334	458	561	536	542	451
Cycle Lane	Number	119	147	327	352	406	361	416	380
Cycle Track	Â£000				16,166	23,545	18,850	18,613	26,598
Cycle Lane	Â£000				6,528	7,870	6,774	7,767	8,609
New advanced stop lines	Â£000				39	145	148	173	169
New cycle parking facilities	Â£000				475	826	605	1,055	1,030
Other cycling schemes	Â£000				6,375	7,509	8,375	8,456	9,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>Â£000</b>				<b>29,583</b>	<b>39,895</b>	<b>34,752</b>	<b>36,064</b>	<b>45,906</b>

In London, the Cycle Centre of Excellence (CCE), a part of TfL, invested in a range of facilities in 2003/04 which they believe have contributed to the increase in cycling: improvements to cycling infrastructure (over 100km of links plus junctions and access); nearly 3000 additional cycle parking spaces on streets, at stations and at schools; free cycle maps showing quiet routes and bike shops; and free cyclist training.

Through the Local Transport Planning (LTP) regime, local highway authorities (LAs) have been encouraged to have strategies for increasing cycling and to invest more in it. In the first LTP period, 2001-2006, investment in cycling facilities has increased substantially and is forecast to rise again by the end of this period (see table above).

## **Impact of spending**

So there is a clear picture of increasing levels of funding (in the form of capital projects) that have not been matched by increases in the number of cycling trips. By contrast, cycling on Sustrans' National Cycle Network is rising by 10% p.a. It is hard not to conclude that, on the whole, LAs are failing either to build facilities in the right places, and/or of the right quality and/or to adequately promote those facilities. ERCDT, in their Assessments of English Highways Authorities in 2003, found that in nearly all authorities examined there was insufficient promotion of cycling provision, and that in many cases cyclists' needs were considered as an afterthought rather than at the design stage of a road scheme. The "engagement" exercise that DfT undertook in the early part of 2004 with key LAs reinforced our presumption that, in most authorities at least, cycling was not a visible issue at senior management level.

The average LTP capital spend on cycling in England is about Â£1 per head per year, although figures vary from 6p to Â£7. (Figures from ERCDT analysis of LA capital spend 2001-2006.) Evidence from European cities that have successfully increased cycling suggests that they have typically spent around Â£5 per head per year for an intensive period of 10-15 years in order to make cycling the easy, convenient, safe and attractive choice. (Information provided by Lyn Sloman, member of the NCSB.) This might include traffic calming and 20mph zones as well as "dedicated" cycling facilities such as cycle tracks. Once a high quality network is substantially complete, lower levels of spending may be needed. However there is no straightforward correlation between the amount of money a local authority spends per head and its success in increasing cycling levels - raising further questions about the targeting of local authority spend on cycling. Hull, for example, is not one of the highest spenders, spending on average just under Â£2 per head per year, yet it is among the most effective local authorities in raising cycling levels (see box below).

There is also an issue about the efficiency with which money is spent for building infrastructure. The cost of building off-road cycle paths is considerably lower for Sustrans than for local authorities, due to a number of factors: Sustrans is a not-for-profit organisation so the profit element of "cost" is missing; they use small contractors with whom they work in partnership; and they have a lot of experience in this type of construction, as they build across the whole country unlike local authorities which by definition concentrate on their own areas.

So, from the information and evaluation of past cycling spending, we conclude that what is crucial is not only the absolute level of funding but that funds are allocated in ways which achieve the best outcomes - and therefore obtain the best value for money. In our proposed arrangements for the governance of cycling we will ensure that we learn from the past in order to make better use of funds in the future, and we will

take steps to ensure that Cycling England, the proposed new cycling body, achieves value for money in its work programme.

## **Case studies of success**

Across London, as mentioned in section 4, the nature of the transport market (with limited parking supply and issues of congestion on both road and public transport networks) increases the attractiveness of cycling as an option for routine journeys. Hackney, for example, is one borough where cycling levels have risen - 6% of all trips are bicycle trips (source: TfL). This is attributed partly to the poor public transport facilities in the area. Individual boroughs have implemented appropriate local schemes: Camden invested in infrastructure such as segregated cycle lanes which encourage new cyclists, as they feel safer when separated from vehicular traffic; Kingston developed a network of signed routes to cater for utility trips and promoted this through the distribution of the "Cycling in Kingston Map" (30,000 copies distributed in one year).

Hull is one of the "top ten" cycling cities in the UK. Flat terrain and a long tradition of cycling are helpful but in addition the City Council has invested almost Â£2million to develop a comprehensive network of facilities for cyclists over the last few years. There are also 90 areas with 20mph speed limits, more than any other city in the UK, and the LTP includes a Road User Hierarchy which puts pedestrians and cyclists at the top. In one particular scheme that runs along Hessle Road, one Hull's busiest roads, significant investment and improvements led to a 53% reduction of cycle accidents between 2000 and 2003.

*It should also be noted that measures leading to an increase in cycling levels are not always cycling-related policies. For example in Bristol, a showcase bus route corridor, whereby a 14km bus priority route re-allocated road space and led to more space for cyclists, had the effect of increasing cycling. This was a bus policy that will appear as a bus cost, yet the effect on cycling was very significant.*

## **7. Weaknesses of the existing arrangements**

### **Local authorities as delivery bodies**

There are two central issues around the relationship between any national strategy for increasing cycling and local authorities.

The first is how to work with local authorities, at present the main delivery agents, to deliver. Our main performance management system for local transport - the Local Transport Plan (LTP) system - identifies cycling as one of a large number of "products" that central government is purchasing from local government in return for the capital investment. But, in practice, our work with local authorities reveals that cycling, in most cases, is a significantly lower priority for transport investment than other outcomes, such as better public transport or small-scale highway improvements.

Despite the transformation in the availability of local transport capital since 1997 and the increased investment in cycling under the LTP regime, levels of expenditure on cycling still lag well below those in successful cycling cities outside the UK. Central government cannot insist that local authorities adopt a particular cycling programme, nor would it want to, given that the direction of local government policy is to increase the autonomy of local government; however it can influence authorities through the LTP process.

This suggests that, if cycling is genuinely a national priority, more diverse delivery mechanisms need to be introduced, to complement and increase the impact of what local authorities are doing.

The second issue is about broadening the constituency of public sector stakeholders and funders with an interest in cycling (at a time when competition within local authorities for revenue funding in particular is generally tight). Given the potential of cycling to contribute to a wide range of local priorities, it would be advantageous for "the cycling world" to be able to draw support and funding from a wider range of funding pots than at present. For example, given the potential role of routine physical activity in tackling obesity and heart disease, support for cycle training and promotion might be a worthwhile use of public health resources. The Public Health White Paper, *Choosing Health*, published in November 2004, suggested that PCTs might have an enhanced role in direct delivery of opportunities for physical exercise.

At local level there is an additional complication where there are different perceptions of priorities and targets between Cycling Officers and Road Safety Officers, where local targets for casualty reduction and targets for modal shift are seen to be in conflict with each other. This is especially true in places where road safety officers have responsibility for cycle training, advertising and promotional activity.

## **NCS Board as a delivery body**

The remit of NCSB - outlined above - makes clear that, in addition to its advisory functions, it was expected to play a direct role in the delivery of NCS targets. In reality the Board sits uncomfortably between advisory and executive roles and its organisation is such that it can not fulfil both functions. A body that primarily has a delivery role needs rather different structures, membership and financial arrangements from a largely advisory body.

## **Organisation**

The NCS Board has a part-time non-executive Chairman and is supported by a part-time Secretary, funded by DfT. DfT staff provide administrative support. The Board also has a DfT Director General as a member.

Membership of the Board is by Ministerial invitation (in practice on the advice of the Chairman), designed to include individuals on the basis of their personal knowledge of and expertise on cycling matters. Members are therefore not there in any representative capacity or to express the views of an organisation. The members are drawn from a variety of backgrounds: cycle industry, local authorities, engineering, cycle campaigning and public health. The Board meets bi-monthly.

Issues that have arisen in our review in relation to the executive functions of the Board include:

The complexity of the tri-partite relationship between DfT, NCSB and ERCDT. Both the DfT and NCSB commission work from ERCDT, with DfT paying. Management of the contract and monitoring of work is therefore complex and the situation is exacerbated by the relationship between the DfT and NCSB whereby there are no clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

The extent to which a body funded by DfT, without separate budget control and with high level DfT Membership is genuinely independent from DfT (or indeed whether independence is what it should be aiming for);

The shift in the balance between "advisory" tasks (work on delivering the target), "executive" tasks (the Philip Darnton-led initiative on marketing) and "lobbying" tasks (eg on cycle helmets). A clearer remit and a structure to reflect it are needed.

Effectiveness has been further limited by lack of time for a thorough discussion of issues. Short bi-monthly meetings and busy agendas, combined with the fact that many members do not have time outside the actual meetings to contribute to the work of the Board, have rendered the Board less efficient than it could be.

## **Role of Other Government Departments**

Within Government, cycling has been seen as a transport issue and DfT is therefore seen as the responsible Department. The NCSB's relationship with Government has been almost exclusively with DfT, despite the fact that DH, DfES, DCMS, DEFRA, ODPM and even HO have a clear interest in achieving more and safer cycling.

## **8. What to do next**

The preceding analysis suggests that, in order to create a new structure for delivering cycling, which builds on the successes which have been achieved, we will need to put into place a new structure which meets a number of key tests. These are:

That our delivery mechanisms for cycling should not simply rely on local authorities, but that we should also have a trusted delivery agent which is capable of achieving the best outcomes from local authority investment in cycling, and of taking responsibility for managing key national initiatives, such as the new training standard and national marketing and capacity building

That any external delivery body should have a much more transparent relationship with HMG than at present: that HMG (a wide coalition of Government Departments, not just DfT) should steer, set objectives for, and fund the body, but not be formally part of it

That any external body should have more authority in decisions over how resources for cycling are allocated, and should have certainty of funding for an agreed forward plan, rather than having to seek approval from DfT for even the smallest item of spend, as at present

That any external body should have some independent executive support, to create a clearer separation from DfT

We have identified three broad options for a structure that will meet these criteria.

### **Option 1: working exclusively through NGOs.**

Under this structure, we would give up any idea of having an independent advisory or delivery body for cycling, but would channel central government spending on cycling through one or more existing and trusted external partners and direct them to implement a programme of work to achieve government objectives on cycling. Possible candidates for such a role would be Sustrans, CTC or Groundwork. Under this model, we would abolish the NCS Board, and offer the resources currently dedicated to national

cycling initiatives (roundly Â£2m of resource, plus any capital projects funded from future Local Transport Capital budgets or from external grant giving agencies) as a straightforward grant to one or more third parties.

The advantage of this approach is that we could build on existing structures and expertise and avoid incurring the overhead associated with running an external advisory or delivery body. This model is currently working very successfully in the roll-out of the National Cycle Network (NCN) Links to Schools programme, which is being delivered through a straightforward Â£10m grant to Sustrans.

The downside is that it would fail to reflect the benefits of a more joined up governance of cycling. It would also leave with generalist civil servants in central government a very active contract management role, which could be carried out more effectively by a body with more expertise in and long-term commitment to cycling. Nonetheless, this option has some clear attractions, especially given the relatively modest sums that are available for direct national investment in cycling projects, compared with those being spent via local authorities.

## **Option 2: reform and refocus the NCS Board**

In option 2, we address a number of the key problems with the current structure and governance of the NCS Board and amend its remit to give it responsibility for taking forward a limited number of key initiatives. However, under this option, we do not go as far as creating an entirely new independent delivery body, with a separate legal existence over DfT, and wholly independent spending powers.

The key reforms we would make would be:

- Reduce slightly the size of the membership, including removing DfT membership (DfT would take on a more detached steering role, in consultation with other HMG stakeholders).
- Give the Board the role of recommending and supporting delivery of a programme to promote cycling, within a budget to be defined by HMG, and subject to HMG satisfying itself that the programme would pass the normal financial propriety and VFM tests for public spending
- Position the Board to champion cycling interests in seeking funding from third parties, including the health, sports and liveability sectors

In the light of the change to this more operational remit, we might rename the Board "Cycling England". Draft Terms of Reference for the new body, outlining the financial and contractual relationships between it and the government group are attached at Annex D.

The key activities of the reformulated body would probably include:

- *Management of the new cycle training standard. We have commitments in the Public Health White paper and the Walking and Cycling Action Plan to roll out the new standard which has been negotiated for cycle training. This will require close working between cycling and road safety bodies, and the Board would be ideally positioned to take this forward, including working with DfT and DfES on securing commercial sponsorship for training delivery.*
- *Promotion and marketing. The existing Board has made good progress in developing the "Bike It" and "Bike for" brands and the cycling portal Bike for All. The next phase is to roll these out fully, through key intermediaries such as our network of school travel advisers and through publicity.*

- *To take on a leadership role in developing capital projects to promote cycling (though under this model, it could not fund them directly). The Board could also champion bids for funding from third parties, and might also be offered the opportunity of submitting bids as part of the annual process of allocating local transport capital funding (though this budget is already oversubscribed for the current Spending Review period).*
- *To identify and appraise cycling schemes which offer the best outcomes for the given budget (best value for money) and to make sure the expected outcomes materialise.*

## **Management**

"Cycling England" would be managed by a steering board of funding government departments - likely to include DfT, DfES, DH, DCMS/Sport England - plus a small number of key external experts. The steering board would agree the budget and objectives for the new body, and would monitor progress against key milestones. The steering board would in turn report into the existing Ministerial structures for taking forward work on public health and physical activity; specifically the Activity Co-ordination Team and the Misc. 27 Committee on Public Health.

### **Option 3: New external delivery body**

Option 3 takes Option 2 a stage further, and establishes a major new delivery body for cycling, with significant capital and resource budgets. This new body would have an independent, dedicated budget for cycling (both revenue and capital), and would be charged with carrying out a clearly defined list of cycling specific interventions, to meet our shared objective of achieving more cycling, more safely.

Such a new body would have an ability to take independent spending decisions entirely without reference to DfT, and would have very clear contractual relationships with its delivery agents, which would probably predominantly be NGOs. It would also have an ability to employ staff directly.

While there would clearly be advantages from moving to such a model over time, the our current view is that such an approach is not viable at present, as the administrative overheads associated with establishing and managing an entirely independent body would be disproportionate to the level of core funding available to it. As the bulk of investment in and promotion of cycling, even under this review, will properly rest with local authorities rather than any central body, we are not persuaded that establishing an entirely separate body would represent an effective use of the funding available.

## **Better working through Local Authorities**

For all these options, there are some common measures to be put into place to improve our performance management of cycling delivery by local authorities.

In December 2004 we announced that the number of cycling trips will be a mandatory indicator for the second round of Local Transport Plans. In parallel with the work we are doing to improve the monitoring of cycling, we need to start to develop a timeline for building cycling into the suite of Best Value Performance Indicators (which are of central importance to senior management within local authorities).

We also need to continue to work through the LTP system itself to encourage local authorities to implement the kind of schemes which we know from experience are effective in promoting cycling. This does not necessarily just mean schemes which are labelled as cycling schemes. Some of the most effective ways of increasing cycling are not cycling measures - we referred to Bristol's bus priority route in Section 6; other examples are parking control and demand management (see TfL London Cycling Action Plan Feb '04). We will also encourage local authorities to work with Primary Care Trusts to link cycling with other wider government priorities such as tackling childhood obesity and health inequalities.

Cycling has the potential to contribute to better delivery of all four elements of the transport shared priority (safety, air quality, congestion and accessibility). The new approach that the Department has developed to the delivery of local transport, which involves much closer working with individual authorities, and promotion of transport as a mechanism for enabling achievement of wider social, economic and environmental objectives, should support a wider understanding of these benefits.

## **9. Conclusion**

This paper has identified a number of key building blocks which need to be put into place to improve the delivery of cycling, including more effective performance management of local authorities, and better sharing of good practice from current success stories. We have already moved away from a single national target for cycling to more targeted local discussions, and we believe that this will build more focus and realism into the promotion of transport within local authorities. We are also taking steps to improve the monitoring of cycling, both on the road (by putting into place a better network of counters) and by journey purpose (especially to school).

The paper also proposes a number of alternative structures for the future governance of cycling at national level, which reform some of the current flaws in the current relationship between NCSB and Government, about which we have found considerable consensus during the course of this review.

In our view, the best option at present for enhancing the effectiveness of national work on cycling is the intermediate option 2, which represents a significant reform of the current institutions. A move to a more fully autonomous body should not be ruled out as a long term option, as policies and programmes especially in the public health field continue to evolve.

**Department for Transport**

**March 2005**

## **Annex A - Objectives of national cycling strategy, 1996**

### **1. Increase cycle use**

â€ Target (number of trips)- double by 2002 quadruple by 2012

## **2. Establish a consensus**

â€ Support for the broad thrust of NCS document. -Wider support for the NCS

## **3. Take action**

### **Planning for sustainable access**

- Plan for short trips - Increase accessibility to facilities by short trips.
- Establish indicators of sustainable transport schemes and packages
- Create local cycle network - Link development and cycle route networks to public transport
- Provide wider access - Link urban route networks into the countryside and the National Cycle Network

### **Integration with other modes**

Enable combinations of cycling and public transport - Programme of refurbishment (rail) and design (coach and rail) for bike carriage

### **Improve cycle safety**

- Improve road user courtesy traffic law
- Identify the possibility of a cycling safety target by rate (exposure), consistent with increasing cycle use
- The overall content of Local Safety scheme programmes to reflect the extent of casualties to Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs)
- Reduce traffic speeds
- Identify scale of and solution to HGV threats
- Improve road user courtesy traffic law

### **Create a cycle-friendly infrastructure**

- "Think cycling" in all highway management and public transport schemes
- Agree initial guidance for a "Cycle Audit" procedure by 1997
- Reallocate road space
- All major guidance to reflect Cycle-Friendly Infrastructure Guidelines
- Promote "people capacity" - Strategic cycle review of all LA areas by 1998/9.
- Reallocate road space - Cycling priority strategies in all LAs by 1999. Study cycle access to Vehicle Restricted Areas

### **Provide for cycle parking**

- Secure, ample cycle parking at key destinations in towns and at public transport interchanges
- Secure, ample cycle parking available at places of education and the workplace

## **Reduce theft**

- Improve security - Set graded standards for cycle security devices
- Increase recovery - Effective cycle registration and recovery scheme linked to the Police National Computer
- Promotion of linked schemes at point of sale

## **Shift travel incentives**

- Reward cycle use
- Establish parity of allowances between cycles and other transport

## **Raise public awareness**

- Educate transport providers and trip generators
- Raise awareness of good practice in cycle-friendly provision
- Take a lead as an employer
- Inform potential cyclists
- Re-establish cycling as normal transport, cycling as a fun and health activity
- Cycle users to respect traffic laws
- Engage other road users
- Establish that cyclists are a legitimate road user with equal status to drivers
- Recognise the speed and convenience of cycling
- Recognise the potential for improvements from and impacts of non-cycling programmes.
- Educate retailers
- Provide customer bike parking

## **4. Unlock resources**

### **Resourcing to meet the NCS objectives**

- Highlight cycling in local transport funding
- Broaden funding sources for cycling
- Develop the Common Appraisal Framework to reflect the benefits of cycling in local transport plans
- Staffing: All LAs to prioritise cycling; DOT to consider staff resources for cycling sufficient to meet new policy objectives

## **5. An ongoing process**

### **Progress the NCS**

- Afford the NCS processes a high status
- Establish the National Cycling Forum
- Annual report of progress
- Local Authorities to regularly assess progress towards local targets for cycling

## **Research and Development**

- Increase cycle use -Review the data collection on cycle use
- Study "best practice" in medium sized European towns
- Safety - Investigate the basis for cycling safety (exposure) targets
- Identify the scale and solution to Heavy Goods Vehicle threats
- Expertise -Review professional training courses
- Guidance -Review all technical guidance
- Standards - Review highway authority standards
- Cycle parking -Study standards of cycle parking equipment and installation
- Attitudes -Develop a research basis for attitudinal monitoring

## **6. Monitor progress**

### **Key indicators**

- Improve public transport links -Measure and identify targets for increased combined trips with public transport
- Improve Safety -Investigate a cycling safety target by rate (exposure)
- Establish cycling policies - LAs to adopt a Cycle Strategy by 1999
- Reduce cycle theft -To measure, and later target, reductions in cycle theft
- Improve cycle parking - Secure, ample cycle parking at key destinations
- More cycle users - Monitor use and attitudes by gender and age
- Increase cycle use -Local increases in cycle use to contribute to the central target
- Resource the process - Increase funding for cycle-friendly measures

### **The headline target**

- Target (number of trips)
- - double by 2002
  - quadruple by 2012

## **Annex B - NCS board membership, November 2004**

### **Chairman:**

**Phillip Darnton**

President, Bicycle Association

## **Members:**

### **Dr Alison Hill**

Director of Public Health Resource Unit Programme

Director, South East Public Health Observatory

### **John Grimshaw**

Sustrans Director and Chief Engineer

### **Olly Hatch**

Conference Director of Velo City

### **Councillor Roger Horton**

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

### **Lynn Sloman**

Transport for Quality of Life

### **Christian Wolmar**

Journalist

### **Councillor Shona Johnstone**

Cambridgeshire County Council

### **Robert Devereux**

DfT, Director General - Roads, Regional and Local Transport Group

## **Annex C - NCS board work programme, March 2003 - January 2005**

From March 2003 to March 2004 the Board worked on the following items:

- Increase cycle parking and other facilities; and develop innovative measures
- Promote examples of good practice to key players
- Improve levels of professionalism amongst practitioners working on cycling
- Promote the public health benefits of cycling
- Explore opportunities to introduce fiscal mechanisms encouraging cycling
- Increase combined journeys by bike and public transport
- Develop model cycling towns
- Create new initiatives to market cycling
- Re-establish a national standard for cycle training
- Monitor and guide the performance of the ERCDT

The Board's proposed work programme from March 2004 onwards was

- improving local highway authorities' performance;
- public health issues;
- professional development;
- public transport links;
- Marketing

## **Annex D - Cycling England: Draft terms of reference**

### **Introduction**

The DfT review of the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) concludes that to deliver higher levels of cycling activity more effectively and efficiently, the existing governance arrangements should be modified. The NCS board will be replaced by a new body, Cycling England, made up of individuals on the basis of their knowledge and expertise of cycling matters and charged with planning and co-ordinating investment in cycling to best effect. Government input will be in the shape of cross -government coalition of funding and steering Departments - "The Government Group".

If, at a future date, significantly more funds are available for cycling, Cycling England could be reconstituted into a free-standing body with direct responsibility for managing capital and revenue projects, and these two functions would pass to the new body. Ministers have taken the view that for now the administrative overheads of such a body would be disproportionate to its programme funding.

The immediate framework for Cycling England is intended to be one which can be scaled up to accommodate more responsibilities as economic circumstances change. This note sets out the roles of Cycling England on the one hand and Government on the other.

### **Principles**

The Government Group will be responsible for

- Direction and strategy for increasing levels of cycling in England
- Financial propriety
- Letting contracts for work
- Funding
- Monitoring against government objectives

Cycling England will be accountable for

- Business Planning to produce a single cycling work plan for England
- The plan will:
  - - propose programmes to be funded directly from the budget specifically earmarked by the Government Group for spend on Cycling England
    - take account of other programmes, planned and ongoing, on cycling, to achieve maximum

co-ordination

- Budgetary allocation to the work programmes within the plan
- The identification and appraisal of schemes to recommend the best in terms of VFM to achieve government objectives
- Day -to-day management of work
- Monitoring of work carried out by intermediaries
- Evaluating progress of work against strategic objectives
- Advising on all government programmes with cycling-related investment
- Seeking funds from other sources, e.g. sponsorship

## **Membership**

### **Cycling England:**

- Experts appointed by Transport Minister to cover transport policy, public health, engineering and design, cycle industry, education, cycle training and cycle sport
- Salaried Part-Time Chair

Supported by Full-Time Programmes Co-ordinator

### **Government Cycling Steering Group:**

Senior Civil Servants from interested/funding Government Departments: Transport, Health, Education, Sport England, ODPM, DEFRA

## **Financial arrangements and responsibilities**

1. DfT is the lead department of the Government Steering Group for so long as it remains principal funder.
2. DfT is responsible for co-ordinating funding from OGDs.
3. To ensure financial propriety DfT is responsible for letting both revenue and capital contracts in line with work plan requirements.
4. DfT is responsible for letting contracts to ensure financial propriety.
5. DfT is responsible for payment of contractors.
6. The Government Group is responsible for giving notice annually by [date] of the budget available to support the work plan, with separate figures for (a) capital and (b) revenue programmes.
7. Cycling England and DfT are jointly responsible for managing delivery of capital and revenue contracts.
8. Cycling England will draft annually by [date] a work plan setting out the key work programmes for the year. The work plan will contain a budget for each work stream with the total allocated not exceeding the relevant funds available for capital and revenue programmes respectively. The plan will also relate the proposals to other programmes, planned and ongoing, on cycling, to achieve maximum co-ordination and impact of investment in cycling.
9. Cycling England will provide to the Government Group a sufficiently robust appraisal of each scheme proposed in the plan to allow an assessment of value for money (VFM) to be made. This appraisal should be in accordance with DfT appraisal guidance on the New Approach To Appraisal

(NATA). Option appraisal should be carried out where appropriate in accordance with DfT appraisal guidance to identify the best course of action.

10. For programmes over Â£1m, Cycling England will provide the Government Group with a robust appraisal in line with DfT appraisal guidance resulting in a benefit/cost ratio. For schemes below this threshold a simpler evidence-based quantitative and qualitative assessment will be needed.
11. By [date] annually, the Government Group will make the necessary VFM scrutiny of the draft work plan and submit it to Ministers for their approval or, exceptionally, amend it following discussion with Cycling England. The VFM evaluation will be key to the acceptance or otherwise of a programme.
12. Cycling England will monitor the outcomes of programmes it undertakes against the expected benefits of each to inform future programmes.
13. Within the year covered by the work plan, Cycling England may vary funding of individual programmes by up to [15%] of each of the revenue and capital allocation within each of the revenue and capital allocation. It may vary funding of workstreams by greater proportions than this only with approval by the Government Group.
14. Cycling England is accountable to the Government Group for the review of its budget and spending at quarterly intervals.
15. Cycling England will provide quarterly reports to the Government Group covering progress against work programmes within the plan, in terms both of finance and outputs.

## **Non-Financial responsibilities**

### **Government Steering Group**

1. Set strategic objectives for Cycling England
2. Approve work plan drawn up by Cycling England.
3. Seek Ministerial approval for work plan as a block of actions.
4. Monitor delivery of work programme against government objectives.

### **Cycling England**

1. Draw up annual work programme comprising the optimum mix of measures to increase cycling levels within available budget. Work programmes to include:
2.
  - management of new cycling standard
  - promotion and marketing, including disseminating best practice
  - leadership role in developing capital projects to promote cycling
2. Ensure delivery of the work programme through day-to-day monitoring and management of contracts with third parties
3. Evaluate progress of work against strategic objectives
4. Advise on any proposals to invest in cycling by Government Departments so as to maximise the co-ordination of cross-Government investment in cycling
5. Liaise with cycling organisations and take lead role in collective bids for other funding by cycling groups
6. Meet regularly to oversee this work