

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

HITRANS Response to CAPS- Cycling Action Plan for Scotland

General comment:

The questions are designed for responses from individuals, and favour the would-be cyclist. A corporate response follows.

Q1 Are there any actions or activities on planning and design that are missing and that would encourage you to cycle more often?

Transport planners and engineers must fully engage with the land use planning process in order to ensure cycle-friendly development. The 10% modal shift target (though this is unclear it may be supposed to be 10% of all trips) and physical health indicators should have parity of status with other environmental policies on construction standards including energy conservation.

Recreational routes whilst providing healthy lifestyle opportunities are often themselves generators of car traffic. HITRANS would wish to see a concentration of effort on utility cycling for work and education. This can only occur with full buy-in from schools, colleges and employers as well as targeted investments to make the bike journey safer and quicker, including training for young and returning cyclists.

Transport interchanges and journey-attractors must have safe secure cycle parking to overcome the acknowledged difficulties in meeting demand for cycle space on trains and buses.

Travel plans for new developments should be refreshed/reinforced with follow up visits.

Q2 How do we achieve these actions effectively? Who is best placed to deliver these changes?

Local Authority Single Outcome Agreements should include measures to increase cycling. In order to avoid a mis-match between trunk road and local road provision, Cycling Scotland could be fully integrated in Scottish Government to provide expertise, advice and funding to both LAs and Transport Scotland. LAs should have officers dedicated to green travel planning/cycling and walking.

Less than 1% of the Scottish transport budget goes on cycling. This must increase if we are to seriously hit the 10% target.

Q3 Would an improvement in local facilities for cycling encourage you to cycle more often? If not, what else could be done to change your mind?

Without doubt improved facilities encourage an increase in cycling (NCN usage increased 9% last year). But other factors also come into play, evidenced by the upsurge in London following on from increased congestion (and the C Charge itself), the suspension of transport networks after 7/7 and the rollout of cycle to work schemes. Cost and convenience are significant factors: the bicycle is the ultimate demand responsive transport, free at the point of use.

Retro fitting segregated facilities in both urban and rural environments should occur as part of a rolling programme but will rarely apply to the totality of an individual's journey. What is important is the need to make the potential cyclist feel part of the mainstream.

Concerted action is required to overcome the cyclist's greatest area of risk- the roundabout.

Q4 How do we achieve these actions effectively? Who is best placed to deliver these changes?

SG must ensure that the health and sustainable transport agendas are embedded all policy areas. In a relatively small country the lead is best taken by a cycling agency, perhaps involving Regional Transport Partnerships. This agency can provide technical expertise, training, advice to employers and quality control of facilities.

Q5 If your employer introduced the Bike to Work Scheme would this encourage you to take up cycling? What else could your employer do to encourage you to cycle?

Bike to Work schemes encourage an uptake in cycling, although actual trips are not necessarily recorded. Places of work should also provide secure parking and storage for personal gear. The non provision of showers does not preclude cycling, but the risk of bike theft does.

Given the positive impact of cycling on staff absenteeism and morale, and the saving on car parking provision, a business case already exists to encourage participation. This is particularly important across the Highlands and Islands where 90% of business employ 10 people or fewer.

Green Travel Planning including auditing of all staff activity to, from and during work will be key in SG's CO2 emissions reduction programme. 43% of the UK's CO2 emissions come from private motor transport.

Q6 Did you know that the route you drive to work may not be the same route you would use if you were cycling? Would free local maps encourage you to cycle? What other information do you think is missing?

This question assumes a drive to work. Many people walk, get lifts and use public transport. Utility riding demands fast transit- it's one of the bike's strengths. Therefore routes must follow desire lines. Local free cycle maps can help inform the would-be cyclist.

Q7 Would you use a public bike hire scheme in your town or city such as those running in successfully in Paris and Munich?

Public bike hire is a good way to increase visibility on the ground. However most settlements in our area are too small to support such a scheme, and heavy Paris-style bikes may represent a challenge. Folding and pool bikes are both lower cost alternatives, but the cheapest form of bike provision is nearly always DIY.

Q8 Which organisation/s in your opinion are best placed to deliver the actions in this section?

An enhanced Cycling Scotland could take the lead, both encouraging and reinforcing the message, building on some of the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places experience.

HITRANS, in conjunction with its local authority partners, has been undertaking Active Travel audits in the key H&I settlements, identifying where investment can be targeted to enable new trips to be generated.

Q9 Should liability laws be changed to give cyclists (and pedestrians) more protection? If so, how?

Cyclist should be offered the same legal protection as in, for example, Holland, where the onus is on the motorist. The current hierarchy of road users (CAPS p14) is not matched in law. This is vital in the early days before critical mass in cycling can be achieved which will of itself generate compliance.

Q10 Should all road users pay road tax? If so, how much should it be for cyclists and how could it be enforced?

The Road Fund was introduced in 1920 to receive all Vehicle Excise Duties to pay for roads. Hypothecation came to an end in 1937, and now Vehicle Excise Duty, which is increasingly based on environmental impact, goes straight to the Treasury.

Cycle impact is negligible, and any revenue collection costs would outweigh income. Additional bureaucracy would only serve as a disincentive to would-be cyclists.

Q11 Should current powers of enforcement be better used? If so which ones and how?

Pedestrians and cyclists require greater legal protection, and the police should ensure compliance with all road traffic legislation.

Q12 Should local authorities make greater use of their powers to re-determine the use of roads which are footways/pathways to create cycle tracks which can be used by both cyclists and pedestrians, where it is suitable to do so? Would this encourage you to cycle more?

Re-determination can provide low cost cycleways but care must be taken in highly trafficked areas where conflict may arise between cyclists and pedestrians. Re-allocation of road space may overcome this, as in Oxford.

Q13 Who is best placed to deliver these changes?

Scottish Government should enact changes following recommendations by LAs and Transport Scotland.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 20th August 2009