



HUNTINGDONSHIRE



CYCLING STRATEGY

Travel and traffic have grown very rapidly over the last 40 years and are still doing so today. Increasing demands for mobility has more than trebled passenger travel with all the growth occurring in private car usage. This has led to concern about the costs of this growth in terms of congestion, air pollution, noise and disturbance to communities and demand for land in sensitive areas. The Government have recognised these concerns and attempted to address the unacceptable economic and environmental consequences through an integrated transport policy. This policy seeks to draw together various transportation measures in an attempt to redress the current imbalance between the various modes of transport. This strategy should be assessed in conjunction with other proposals in relation to traffic restraint measures, car parking policies, walking, green commuter plans, etc.

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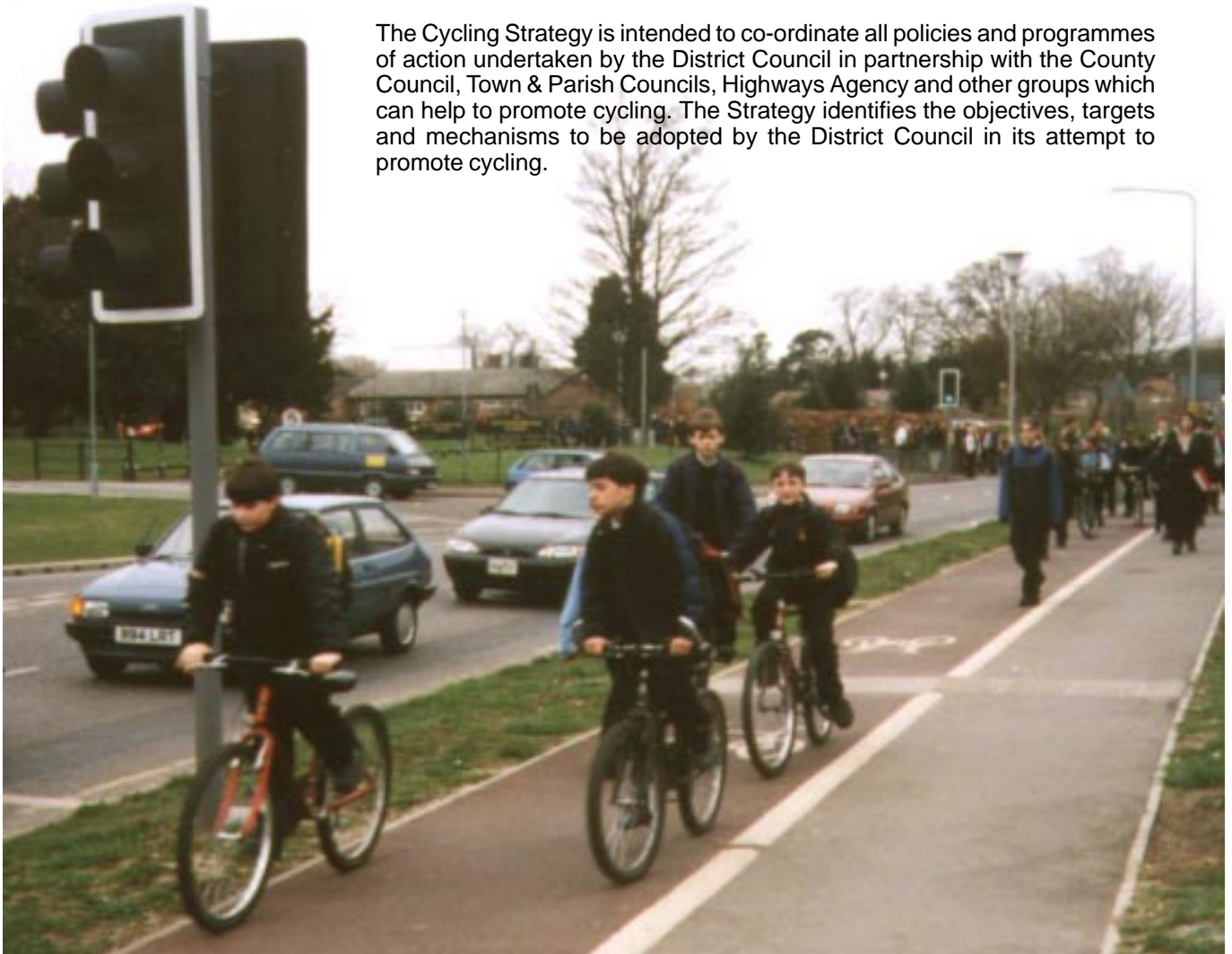


INTRODUCTION

Cycling has a key role to play in an Integrated Transport Strategy. It is widely acknowledged that there is a need to provide sustainable transport options for everyday trips to work, school or the shops and leisure trips. It can offer practical alternatives to the private motor car to ensure long term economic vitality, safe and pollution-free environments and a fitter and healthier population. Cycling can also offer a widely accessible, convenient and environmentally friendly means of making local journeys which is healthy, enjoyable and an economic and efficient mode of transport.

Cycling as a mode of transport however has been in decline for many years and accounts for only 2% of trips made in the UK today. In Huntingdonshire cycle use tends to be slightly above the national average. The 1991 Census found that 6% of working residents in the District travel to work by bike, a small decline compared to 1981 when the equivalent figure was 8%. Despite the present low levels of bicycle use however there is a strong interest in cycling in the UK signified by buoyant cycle sales and high levels of cycle ownership. Existing travel patterns would also support cycle use with 72% of all trips made less than five miles and 50% less than two miles in length. These are distances that can be cycled comfortably by a reasonably fit person. This suggests that there is enormous potential to convert an interest in cycling into increased levels of cycle use. This potential should be realised through the provision of better cycling facilities.

The Cycling Strategy is intended to co-ordinate all policies and programmes of action undertaken by the District Council in partnership with the County Council, Town & Parish Councils, Highways Agency and other groups which can help to promote cycling. The Strategy identifies the objectives, targets and mechanisms to be adopted by the District Council in its attempt to promote cycling.



BACKGROUND

In July 1996, the Department of Transport responded to the new sustainability agenda with the launch of the National Cycling Strategy (NCS). This clearly signalled that cycling had become an important part of a sustainable transport strategy for the UK. The NCS was designed to:

'promote cycling priority on the highway, in the centre of towns, at the workplace and in new developments'

The key strategic output of the National Cycling Strategy is:

Objective	To increase cycle use
Mechanism	The implementation of the National Cycling Strategy
The Central Target	Double the number of trips by cycle (on 1996 figures) by end 2002. Quadruple the number of trips by cycle (on 1996 figures) by end 2012.
Local Targets	Local authorities and other transport providers and trip generators to set local targets which will contribute to the central targets to increase cycle use.

Nationally, significant progress is being made in the development of cycling schemes and related traffic measures through the local transport funding process outlined in The Government's Transport White Paper – 'A new deal for transport: better for everyone'

A number of schemes and local programmes are being developed elsewhere in the country that demonstrates how rapid change can be effected.

Cambridgeshire County Council has also prepared a Cycling Strategy that comprises the objective, policies and targets for cycling in Cambridgeshire, and how they will be achieved. The objective of the County Council's cycling strategy is to encourage cycling as an alternative to the car with a target set to increase the proportion of all journeys by cycle by one percentage point each year.

The County Council also has a Road Safety Strategy (Road Safety Plan, 1995) which aims to improve safety for all road users including cyclists. To help achieve this the Road Safety Plan seeks to change attitudes through education and awareness campaigns and to introduce speed-reducing features targeted at accident problem sites. The Road Safety Plan also makes provision for a Safer Cycling Training Scheme in primary schools and specifies detailed performance targets in relation to cycle safety.

The County Council is also developing the Safer Routes to School Initiative, in partnership with other organisations including Huntingdonshire District Council, outlined in Chapter 4.

The District Council supports the provision of cycle route networks through Policy T20 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan that states:

'The District Council will identify segregated cycleway routes to be provided by developers in association with certain housing, employment and shopping developments'.

This Strategy is intended to develop and extend the District Council's approach to cycling outlined in the current Local Plan objectives and policies.



OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The Cycling Strategy includes the following objectives (CO)

- CO1** *To maximise the role of cycling as a transport mode, in order to reduce the use of the private car.*
- CO2** *To develop a safe, convenient, efficient and attractive transport infrastructure which encourages and facilitates cycling within and beyond Huntingdonshire and which minimises reliance on, and discourages unnecessary use of, private cars.*
- CO3** *To ensure that policies to increase cycling and meet the needs of cyclists are fully integrated into the Local Plan and in all complementary strategies including transport, environmental improvement, leisure, tourism and Local Agenda 21 strategies.*
- CO4** *To ensure that the development of cycle networks in Huntingdonshire considers where appropriate the views of the general public and other interest groups, through regular consultation.*

The Cycling Strategy identifies the following local targets (CT). The progress towards achieving these targets depends on the availability of sufficient funds from the District Council and other funding bodies.

- CT1** To increase the proportion of journeys in Huntingdonshire made by bicycle by 1% per year in line with the target set by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- CT2** To provide safe, convenient, efficient, attractive and appropriately signed cycle networks within each of the market towns by the year 2012 to coincide with the Government's 15 year timetable set out in the National Cycling Strategy.
- CT3** To provide safe, convenient, efficient, attractive and appropriately signed cycle networks connecting villages, tourism and recreational destinations and urban areas by the year 2012.
- CT4** To provide secure, accessible, well lit, sheltered and convenient cycle parking in each of the market towns and at key destinations by the year 2012.
- CT5** To ensure that cycling is fully integrated with all public transport to facilitate cycle use as part of longer journeys by the year 2012.
- CT6** To publicise the cycle network and other facilities, emphasising the health, financial and environmental benefits of cycling and the need for reduced use of private cars, as and when applicable.
- CT7** To undertake research to inform and support the activities of the District Council in relation to providing cycle networks and cycle facilities, as and when applicable.

MECHANISMS TO ACHIEVE TARGETS

To achieve targets **CT1**, **CT2** and **CT3**, the primary aim will be to provide a cycle-friendly infrastructure. This will comprise the road network, modified where necessary and supplemented by special cycle routes, to enable cyclists to reach all destinations safely and conveniently. The following mechanisms will be applied (CM)

- CM1** The District Council will undertake a strategic cycling review and consultation process to assess locations and routes on the basis of the criteria coherence, directness, safety, attractiveness and comfort for cyclists and produce an indicative Route Network Plan. This will include consultation with interest/user groups and directly affected parties/landowners.
- CM2** The District Council will prepare high quality route networks for cyclists, with priority given to the market towns and links to surrounding settlements, which generate significant amounts of commuting. The route network will comprise the highway network, modified where necessary using traffic management and/or engineering measures, and segregated cycle paths where appropriate to enable safe and convenient access to all destinations.
- CM3** Cycle route development will adopt the following order of priority:
 1. Major routes which serve everyday cycling trips; in particular safe routes to schools, routes from residential areas to significant journey attractors such as major employers, public transport interchanges, hospitals, leisure and recreation facilities, retail centres and other education facilities.

2. Other connecting routes used for everyday cycling, including inter-urban links.
3. Recreational routes away from the major areas of population and significant destinations, including links to non-urban sections of the National Cycle Network.

Priority is to be given to cycle route development where it is most likely to attract cycle users and where it is likely to have a significant impact on reducing traffic and congestion. Priority will therefore be given to the journey to work and for children, the journey to school. The District Council will however seek cycle route development that can connect several significant journey attractors and offer opportunities for as many different journeys as possible.

- CM4** The District Council will ensure that the Cycling Strategy Objectives are reflected in its Capital Programme, in accordance with its Key Drivers, during its Annual Review.
- CM5** The District Council in partnership with the Highway Authority and/or Highway Agency will undertake traffic management and/or engineering measures as necessary to treat problem sites and routes i.e. where traffic danger or detours and time delays reduces the attractiveness of cycling as a mode of transport.
- CM6** Route networks will achieve the following high standards recommended by the IHT/DoT/CTC/Bicycle Association publication: Cycle-friendly Infrastructure, Guidelines for Planning and Design.

Coherence The cycling infrastructure should form a coherent entity, linking all trip origins and destinations; routes should be continuous and consistent in standard.

Directness Routes should be as direct as possible, based on desire lines, since detours and delays will deter use.

Safety Designs should minimise casualties and perceived danger for cyclists and other road users.

Attractiveness Routes must be attractive to cyclists on subjective as well as objective criteria. Lighting, personal safety, aesthetics, noise and integration with the surrounding area are important.

Comfort Cyclists need smooth, well-maintained surfaces, regular sweeping and gentle gradients. Routes must be convenient to use and avoid complicated manoeuvres and interruptions.

- CM7** The District Council will consider introducing innovative schemes in order to achieve the Objectives, for example, the introduction of 20mph speed limit zones within the market towns, advanced stop lines at signalled junctions for cyclists and two-way cycling in one way streets.

- CM8** The District Council will ensure that development does not sever routes used by cyclists or unjustly prejudice accessibility by cycling.

- CM9** The District Council will make use wherever appropriate of planning obligations and commuted payments to improve transport infrastructure to aid cyclists and to improve accessibility within new developments.

To achieve target **CT4** the primary aim will be to provide cycle parking which is both secure and safe to use. The following mechanisms will be applied:

- CM10** The District Council will undertake a strategic review of existing cycle parking in market towns and at key destinations to assess their level of adequacy in relation to target CT4.

- CM11** The District Council will seek to ensure adequate and safe cycle parking at strategic locations on the cycle network and at educational

establishments, retail centres, leisure facilities, and other major journey attractors. Employers will be encouraged to provide cycle parking at workplaces.

- CM12** The District Council will adopt cycle parking design standards to ensure that cycle parking facilities are secure, accessible, of sympathetic design and where possible are well lit and under shelter.

- CM13** The District Council will adopt cycle parking standards for new development as part of the Local Plan Review.

To achieve target **CT5** the primary aim will be to encourage the combined use of cycling and public transport for long journeys by integrating public transport interchanges with the cycle network. The following mechanisms will be applied:

- CM14** The District Council will seek to ensure adequate, secure, covered cycle parking at train and bus stations.



CM15 The District Council will encourage public transport operators to provide convenient carriage of cycles on trains and buses.

To achieve target **CT6** the primary aim will be to ensure all potential users are fully aware of the cycle routes available to them. The following mechanisms will be applied

CM16 The District Council will support its infrastructure measures with a sustained programme of complementary publicity to publicise the cycle network and associated cycling facilities.

CM17 The District Council will integrate publicity for cycling with other campaigns and initiatives in relation to health, environment, leisure and national initiatives like Green Transport Week.

To achieve target **CT7** the primary aim will be to ensure all actions the District Council adopt are appropriate and supported by the wider public. The following mechanisms will be applied

CM18 The District Council will ensure that its programme of cycling schemes and all cycling infrastructure proposals are supported by monitoring of cycle use and by regular consultation with local cycling organisations.

CM19 The District Council will consider establishing an appropriate forum, which will include councillors, council officers, and members of local cycling organisations and other interested parties to give regular advice and feedback on cycling matters.

As well as ensuring all new cycling infrastructure meets high standards of safety, the District Council also wishes to encourage cyclists and other road users to act responsibly when travelling to improve safety and reduce accidents involving cyclists. This can be achieved through appropriate Road Safety education and awareness campaigns. The District Council therefore supports the objectives identified within the Cambridgeshire County Council's Road Safety Plan and the actions undertaken by the Road Safety Team.

MAIN SOURCES OF FUNDING

The District Council's programme to increase cycling will require a substantial shift of resources to cycling schemes and complementary measures from internal budgets and additional external sources. The District Council has identified below the potential funding sources for cycling in Huntingdonshire and future budgets to deliver the objectives will depend on the availability of these resources.

- **Local Transport Plan**

Capital funding for local transport programmes is provided through the Cambridgeshire Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP is an important document for cycle network initiatives as central government places particular emphasis, through the Plan on encouraging alternative modes of travel to the car.

Cambridgeshire County Council as the local highway authority make the bid to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) in partnership with both Huntingdonshire District Council and the other local authorities of Cambridgeshire, excluding Peterborough. It is therefore important that the District continues to work in partnership with the County Council to avoid duplication of effort and ensure consistency of approach.

- **District Council Funding**

The District Council can provide funds from both revenue and capital budgets. There are opportunities to use local authority capital budgets, such as those for leisure, tourism or environmental schemes; in ways which incorporate or support cycling measures. Cycling programmes have a distinct advantage in that they are relevant to the wider objectives of planning, leisure and community services and therefore a single scheme can contribute to several services.



- **Town and Parish Councils**

Town and Parish Councils may wish to support the provision of cycle route networks and cycle facilities as and when appropriate.

- **Highways Agency**

The Highways Agency has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Trunk Road Network. The Road Users Charter, published by the Highways Agency in 1996, contains a commitment to provide safe-crossing facilities across trunk roads for the National Cycle Network proposed by Sustrans, wherever this is practical. New Trunk Road schemes managed by the Highways Agency can include the provision of cycle infrastructure along new or widened roads to form part of wider cycle routes.

- **Local Health Authorities**

Local Health Authorities and Trusts have responsibility for health promotion within their areas. This may include the remit to promote cycling as a form of healthy physical activity. Although grants are not normally administered for such projects, many health promotion units work on a wide range of projects in collaboration with groups from other sectors, for example Safe Routes to School.

- **Safe Routes to Schools**

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) is a national project seeking to influence the transport choices of children and young people. It aims to reduce traffic congestion and to encourage children towards more healthy lifestyles by cycling and walking to school. The SRTS Steering Group for Cambridgeshire is investigating ways of working towards creating a safe and healthy environment for children and young people in pilot areas across the County, which includes Huntingdonshire. Funding from the LTP process may be available for cycling infrastructure where it can be shown to improve conditions for children cycling to school.

- **Sustrans**

The Millennium Commission awarded a grant of £43.5million in 1995 to Sustrans to support the development of the National Cycle Network by the year 2005. This grant will contribute up to 50% of route survey costs and up to 50% of land and legal costs for all sections of the National Cycle Network. There are three sections of the National Cycle Network within Huntingdonshire.

- **Landfill Tax**

HM Customs and Excise introduced the Landfill Tax in 1996. The tax is levied on registered landfill site operators, who may divert up to 20% of their landfill tax liability to Environmental Bodies. These are organisations registered with the Landfill Tax Regulatory Body, Entrust, and who intend to use the funds received from diverted landfill tax payments for approved projects. Recreational cycling routes have been listed by the DETR as eligible for this funding.

The District Council cannot register as an environmental body itself, however they would be able to work in partnership with an approved body. Operators may contribute up to 90% of project costs using diverted landfill tax funds, but 10% of their total contribution must be from their own funds. Third parties can subsequently reimburse operators to offset some or all of their 10% contribution.

- **Planning Obligations**

In certain circumstances, Section 106 planning obligation agreements can require the provision of cycle facilities in conjunction with development. Developer contributions can be sought particularly where a proposed development will create a need for a particular facility.

- **Partnerships with Public Transport Operators and Local Employers**

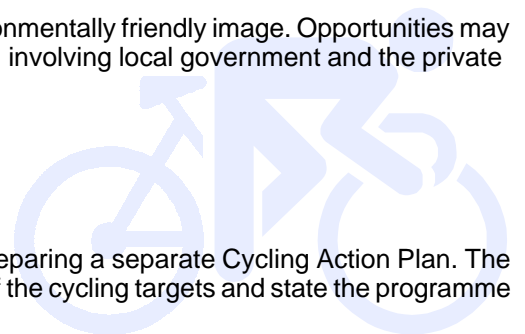
Entering into partnership agreements with public transport operators and local employers can offer opportunities to fund cycle infrastructure, particularly cycle parking and changing facilities at public transport interchanges and workplaces. Funding of access links to identified cycle networks may also be sought.

- **Private Sector Sponsorship**

Cycling is attractive to sponsors because of its healthy, environmentally friendly image. Opportunities may arise for partnership funding of cycling initiatives or publicity, involving local government and the private sector.

MONITORING PROGRESS

The District Council intends to develop further the Cycling Strategy by preparing a separate Cycling Action Plan. The Plan will be an annual publication that will review progress towards each of the cycling targets and state the programme of measures to be undertaken in the year ahead.



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