

Report of The Director of City Development

Report to The Executive Board

Date: 4 January 2012

Subject: DEPUTATION TO COUNCIL BY LEEDS CYCLING ACTION GROUP

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| Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary of main issues

1. In their deputation, Leeds Cycling Action Group (LCAG) points to the substantial benefits that cycling could bring to the Council's objectives on health and wellbeing, climate change and economic growth.
2. LCAG considers that the Council's strategy documents are positive about walking and cycling, but that the modes of transport are not prioritised in implementation, and that highway designs do not address cycling, with the result that few people are prepared to cycle.
3. The Council has been very active in promoting cycling through training and publicity and in providing the infrastructure to encourage more cycling, through implementation of the Leeds Core Cycle Network and other routes and by integrating good cycling conditions into highway schemes wherever possible.
4. The key difference between the position of the cyclists' deputation and the Council's position is perhaps one of degree rather than substance. There is limited funding and road space to accommodate the requirements of all road users and the Council's work reflects this situation in practical work programmes and initiatives.

Recommendations

5. Executive Board are requested to:

- i) Note the contents of the report.
- ii) Acknowledge Leeds Cycling Action Group's concerns and the programmes and initiatives being pursued by the Council to satisfy them, while maintaining a balance of provision for all road users.
- iii) Invite the Chief Officer Highways & Transportation to address the Cycling Consultation Forum.

1 Purpose of this report

1.1 To consider the points raised in a deputation from LCAG to Executive Board

2 Background information

2.1 A range of authoritative national bodies has called for measures to increase levels of cycling, for health, safety, social equity, congestion, environmental and sustainability reasons over a period of years. The previous Local Transport Plans, and predecessor transport plans have recognised the demand for better conditions for cycling in Leeds.

2.2 Consultation for the West Yorkshire Local Transport 3 (LTP) found cycling issues were frequently raised by respondents and were rated relatively importantly, especially in response to protecting and developing infrastructure. It found that:

- lack of appropriate infrastructure discouraged cycling;
- cyclists' safety was a key issue that discouraged more cycle use;
- the paucity of cycling trips was a key transport issue for carbon reduction in West Yorkshire;
- two thirds of adults do not meet recommended activity levels, which could be tackled by greater levels of cycling.

2.3 In 2009 LCC Executive Board approved in principle the first phase of a Leeds Core Cycle Network consisting of 17 mainly radial routes covering 71 miles. The core cycle network is designed to encourage more people to cycle in the main urban areas for utility purposes, e.g. to get to work and school, as well as to access the countryside. More routes are being planned which together will form a second phase of the Core Cycle Network making for a more comprehensive district wide network.

2.4 Since approval of the Leeds Core Cycle Network (LCCN), four of the routes have been provided with funding from the Local Transport Plan and from external sources administered and controlled by Sustrans. An additional three routes are to be provided this financial year, subject to approval with additional funding made

available through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Sustainable Transport Fund, resulting in parts of further routes being provided this year.

- 2.5 In the context of current funding pressures it is anticipated that the 17 route core cycle network will take a further five years to complete, depending on future funding allocations. Phase 2 of the network is presently unfunded and progress will therefore be contingent on future funding allocations.
- 2.6 To alleviate the funding pressures on the LCCN the Council has engaged with partners in the funding of schemes. Extensive working has already occurred with the environmental charity Sustrans and the Council will continue to seek funding partners to accelerate the delivery of the LCCN.
- 2.7 There has been a strong upward trend in the number of cyclists entering the city centre during the morning peak period between 2004 and 2010; data shows an increase of 118% over the period. Much of this increase has been on routes, including main roads, on which facilities for cycling have been introduced when opportunities have arisen but which are not on the core cycle network.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 In its deputation LCAG has identified a series of actions that it considers the Council should take and these are discussed below.
- 3.2 **LCAG** *Allocate a fair and proper proportion of road space in all improvement schemes. Excellent guidance is available from the Department of Transport, but this is mostly ignored by Leeds planners who aim to maximise capacity and speed, effectively pushing vulnerable users off the road.*

LCC. The guidance for cycling is taken alongside guidance for other users and all highway schemes are a balance of the needs of the various users. Schemes are routinely examined to investigate what can be done to improve conditions for cyclists.

- 3.3 **LCAG.** *Implement all the planned Core Cycling Network routes, maintain them properly, and ensure they can easily be accessed by cyclists on all types of bike.*

LCC. The development of the Leeds Core Cycle Network has formed a model for provision in the region. Four of the seventeen routes of the LCCN have been implemented and implementation of others, or parts of others, will commence soon subject to approval.

- 3.4 Funding pressures have limited the extent of the LCCN that can be undertaken. During this financial year and the previous financial year a total of £2.3m has been allocated to the LCCN. Of this over £1M of this has been funded by Sustrans and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Completion of the LCCN has been identified for approximately 2017, external funding may allow an earlier completion. Maintenance requirements are identified when detailed approvals are given.
- 3.5 Some of the routes use cycle tracks away from roads at places, and it is sometimes considered necessary to install barriers designed to prevent or deter use of the track by motorcycles. The design of these can inhibit access by some designs of bicycles, e.g. recumbents or three wheelers. In implementing the barriers, access for as

many types of cycles as possible is maintained, consistent with maintaining access for pedestrians and wheelchair users while inhibiting motorcycles.

- 3.6 **LCAG.** *Limit speeds to 20mph in all residential areas; this has local benefits far beyond cycling and walking.* 20mph speed limits and zones are being introduced to many areas of Leeds.

LCC. Funding pressures and regulations previously limited the scope for treatment, but the relaxation in the regulations now means that more 20mph schemes can be introduced in the future with the available funding. Six school pilot schemes have been introduced this year and a further six schemes are anticipated this financial year. It is anticipated that 12 schemes or more can be introduced in future years.

- 3.7 **LCAG** *Use the planning system to ensure employers and businesses provide cycle parking for customers, and changing facilities for their staff.*

LCC Through the Leeds UDP Review: policy T7A (adopted July 2006) all developments of offices, businesses, schools etc are required to provide cycle parking for long and/or short stay for their workforce/residents and for visitors/customers. New developments are also obligated through the planning system to implement travel plans, including measures to promote cycling and to provide adequate cycle parking and other facilities i.e. changing / shower facilities and lockers at workplaces (Supplementary Planning Document Travel Plans revised August 2011). Consequently the number of buildings with good quality cycling facilities is increasing.

- 3.8 **LCAG .** *Use existing Council communications to publicise the benefits of cycling, and the new routes and facilities already available.*

LCC A wide range of route leaflets and maps are produced that are also available on web site pages. Wider circulation Council publications regularly carry pro-cycling articles such as Bike Week events and have promoted cycling routes. The Council has led by example by operating the 'Bike to Work' scheme for its employees for four years, and it actively promotes cycling to the 100+ business members of the local Travel Plan Network.

- 3.9 Across the city the Council and School Sports Partnership together deliver Bikeability Level 2 training to over 5000 school children per year, and provide additional Bikeability Level 3 and adult Bike Buddy services to young people and adults. The Council has participated in national Bike Week in June for over 12 years providing opportunities to cycle and promoting its benefits to schools, workplaces, and the wider public.

- 3.10 A step increase in levels of promotion and support for cycling will take place over the next two years as part of the "Getting Transport to Work"; West Yorkshire's successful Local Sustainable Transport Key Component Bid. This will provide a revenue resource to promote cycling and cycle routes and provide training. The Council is working in partnership with Sustrans and Devon County Council to develop a £1.2m thematic Education bid for submission in 2012. It will promote cycling in clusters of schools and higher and further education establishments. The package includes enhancement to cycle parking and improved cycle access.

3.11 In view of the work now being undertaken it is therefore suggested that the key difference between the points raised in the cyclists' deputation and the Council's position is one of degree rather than substance. Nonetheless, the wide range of benefits to Leeds that cycling offers is both formally and informally recognised by the Council, and the rapid growth in levels of cycling that Leeds has been experiencing is welcomed. The long-standing positive contributions made by local cyclists and cycling organisations to developing cycling in Leeds is an exemplar of the community engagement that makes Leeds a great city, and it is beyond doubt that cycling will play an ever increasing role in Leeds in the future.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 All highway schemes are subject to consultations, the scale of which is dependent on the individual scheme.

4.1.2 Cyclists are consulted on a range of schemes and other matters principally through the Leeds Cycling Consultation Forum. This is a forum that has met quarterly (formerly bi-monthly) since 1992. The Forum is chaired by a City Council councillor and is attended by relevant officers. It is an open meeting for anyone with an interest in cycling matters and it is proposed that the Chief Officer, Highways & Transportation be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the issues surrounding the deputation.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The LCAG deputation considers that by not promoting cycling more than it already is promoted, people who wish to cycle more, including women and children, are disadvantaged. An Equality Impact Assessment recently completed (available as a Background paper) identifies that the introduction of cycling infrastructure addresses a number of equality and diversity issues.

4.2.2 The Equality Impact Assessment identified positive impacts of cycling projects on children, women, older people, ethnic minorities and some disabled people, who benefit most from safe cycling routes. Specific benefits are:

- Encouraging these (currently underrepresented) groups to engage with cycling as a form or regular physical activity, helping to reduce incidence of illness related to sedentary lifestyle
- Minimising the negative effects of traffic
- Helping foster independence of travel while ensuring road safety

4.2.3 Some potential small negative impacts have also been identified; specific concerns were focused on cycling facilities being shared with pedestrians, which has a potential negative impact on the perception of safety by blind, deaf and elderly pedestrians.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The development and promotion of cycling is consistent with the 'A Healthy City, Physical Activity Strategy for Leeds 2008 to 2012'. The strategy recognises that physical inactivity is one of the top ten leading causes of death and disability in the developed world. Active Travel provides one of the four key components of the strategy.

4.3.2 Development of the core cycle network and cycling in general supports the Local Transport Plan objectives to improve connectivity to support economic activity, to make substantial progress towards a low carbon transport system and to improve quality of life. Furthermore, the scheme is consistent with the detailed aims and proposals of LTP3 specifically:

- Proposal 22: 'Define, develop and manage networks and facilities to encourage cycling and walking'.
- Implementation Priority: 'Investment in low carbon modes of travel'.

4.3.3 The development and promotion of cycling is in line with the Leeds Vision 2030 which sets out plans for 'increased investment in other forms of transport, such as walking and cycling routes, to meet everyone's needs'.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 There is a wealth of evidence from the Cycle Demonstration Towns and other research on the benefits of schemes to promote cycling. These include:

- Health benefits with cost savings to the National Health Service
- Direct productivity benefits to firms through better employee health and therefore reduced absenteeism (recent Transport for London research suggests that this reduction can be between 33% and 50%)
- Conventional transport related benefits of user and non-user time savings and reduced emissions
- There is a safety benefit in providing improved conditions for cycling.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no legal implications and the report is subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 In terms of risk, the Council's cycling programme are considered at several levels. Cycling infrastructure programmes are assessed carefully including road safety audits. Similar promotional events and initiatives are subject to risk assessment procedures.

4.6.2 In terms of road safety recently there has been an upward trend in cycle injuries. However, this increase should be seen in the context of the increase in the levels of

cycling. Furthermore there is strong published evidence that the greater the total distance cycled, the lower the rate of cycling casualties.

- 4.6.3 There are also wider and well understood significant health benefits from cycling. Studies have shown that the extra beneficial health benefits can outweigh safety risks by a ratio of 20:1. Walking and cycling to school and work especially is authoritatively recognised as an excellent way of incorporating physical activity into everyday life and so address heart disease, obesity and other prevalent serious conditions.
- 4.6.4 In this regard the Council would endorse the general point made by the Deputation about the potential impact of greater levels of cycling on the wellbeing of the city.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 This report has outlined the key areas of activity that are being undertaken by the Council working with its partners to deliver a step change in the levels of cycling and to maintain safe levels of cycling for all users. In this respect the key difference between the position set out in the LCAG deputation and the Council's work is perhaps one of degree rather than substance. There is limited funding and road space to accommodate the requirements of all road users and the Council's work reflects this situation in practical delivery work programmes and initiatives.

There is therefore considered to be a measure of agreement between the deputation and the policies now being pursued by Leeds City Council. The difference is in the degree and pace of implementation where it is necessary to work within the funding pressures on the Council and around the practical limitation and demands on the limited road space available for users.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Note the contents of the report.
- 6.2 Acknowledge Leeds Cycling Action Group's concerns and the programmes and initiatives being pursued by the Council to satisfy them, while maintaining a balance of provision for all road users.
- 6.3 Invite the Chief Officer of Highways & Transportation to address the Cycling Consultation Forum.

7 Background documents

- 7.1 The following background documents relate to this report:
- West Yorkshire's Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid "Getting Transport to Work".
 - West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026.
 - Leeds UDP Review – Adopted July 2006
 - Supplementary Planning Document – Travel Plans (Consultation Main Report August 2011)

- Equality Impact Assessment on the development of cycling schemes.