

Walking and Cycling Action Plan Summary

“A Catalyst for Change”

The Regional Transport Strategy for the west
of Scotland 2007-2021

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Purpose

This Walking and Cycling Action Plan is one of a series of action plans developed as part of the Regional Transport Strategy, approved by Scottish Ministers. This Action Plan sets out the key issues, objectives and recommendations for encouraging more individuals to walk and cycle in the SPT area. It summarises work undertaken in analysing the issues and challenges for encouraging walking and cycling, and is intended to set out a clear programme of action to take forward.

Issues, Constraints and Opportunities

The following issues, constraints and opportunities were identified following analysis by SPT and consultation with SPT member councils and stakeholders as part of the RTS development process.

- **Perception of walking and cycling**

In order to encourage more individuals to walk and cycle, safety and peoples' perception of safety need to be addressed. Many individuals are discouraged from walking or cycling because of fears for their personal security. This is often due to poor lighting and poorly maintained paths, which highlights inadequate infrastructure. Improving the quality of routes and raising awareness of these will help improve the perception of walking and cycling.

- **Travel awareness**

The need to improve awareness of travel choices has been a common issue raised by consultees. Many people are put off walking and cycling because they are not aware of the different routes that are available to them. In order to encourage more people to walk and cycle there needs to be adequate information and improved travel awareness of the travel choices that are available.

- **Social Inclusion**

Social inclusion was a key issue raised by stakeholders. Improved access to and from employment, healthcare and areas of deprivation is necessary. Walking and cycling have the potential to make a contribution to closing the opportunity gap for those on low incomes and for disadvantaged groups. Safer walking and cycling routes and more people using them can create both stronger and safer communities, while making it easier for people to get to work by cycle or on foot will increase the potential of people who do not own a car to become employed and remain so.

- **Environment**

Both walking and cycling are non-polluting forms of travel that help reduce congestion and contribute to better air quality. The Scottish Executive aims to stabilise road traffic at 2001 levels by 2021 and SPT, member councils and a range of other stakeholders will require to play their part in achieving this target. There are also UK targets of reducing CO₂ emissions by 12.5%

by 2008-2012 and of reducing UK CO₂ emissions to 20% below 1990 levels by 2010. It is therefore important that the environmental benefits of walking and cycling are promoted because they can contribute to the achievement of these targets.

- **Health**

More needs to be done to encourage active travel. Both walking and cycling can improve health and levels of fitness, enabling people to be more physically active. It has been scientifically proven that moderate physical activity such as brisk walking and cycling helps improve mental health and reduce obesity, heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. This is highlighted by Active Travel Scotland, the Scottish Executive's 'Lets Make Scotland More Active – an Action Plan for Physical Activity' and the UK Government's National Cycling Action Plan. Walking has also been identified as the focus of the new Scottish Physical Activity Research Collaboration (SPARColl).

- **Economy**

Reducing car travel was a key issue raised by stakeholders. Cycling is an economical mode of transport compared to car travel. The initial cost of a bicycle is low and running costs are negligible. Cycling can also increase transport capacity by making better use of road space and reducing road maintenance requirements.

Improvements to walking and cycling routes and the development of new routes can enhance the attractiveness of walking and cycling, opening up new opportunities for tourism.

In addition many organisations are developing travel plans aimed at encouraging employees to use more sustainable modes of travel to get to work. Walking and cycling can form important parts of these travel plans, reducing organisational requirements to provide staff car parking. Commuting by bicycle and using bicycles for business travel can reduce business costs as employees spend less time in traffic and are likely to be healthier and as a result take less sick leave.

- **Safety**

People are often concerned about the perceived dangers of walking and cycling. Accident statistics show that in the SPT area 35 pedestrians were killed in 2005 and that 17 of those fatalities were over 60 years. Eight cyclists were killed in 2005 compared to one in 2004 and between two and four in previous years. (Strathclyde Police).

- **Lack of infrastructure**

A key concern identified by stakeholders is the lack of adequate infrastructure that is in place to support commuting and other everyday needs. The workshop highlighted that there is a need to join up the network for walking and cycling. Having better links in place will help encourage more people to walk and cycle and open up opportunities for employment, tourism and recreation.

- **Integration of walking and cycling with other modes**
In order to encourage walking and cycling both modes need to be integrated with other modes of transport. There needs to be adequate links to bus and train stations and adequate cycle parking at these interchanges. Making such improvements has the potential to increase public transport patronage.
- **Integration of walking and cycling routes**
There is a need to have an integrated network for walking and cycling. Currently there are numerous localised walking and cycling routes across the region but without an integrated network, there will be limitations to how well these are used. In order to encourage people to switch from the car to cycling or walking for short, functional journeys, then short, direct routes are important.
- **Short journeys**
 - 43% of all journeys in the region are 3km or less and 18% are 1km or less.
 - 36% of all car journeys (as a driver) are less than 3km
 - 63% of all taxi journeys are under 3km
 - There is an opportunity to encourage more school children to walk and cycle to school. Currently only 20.2% of 10-11 year olds walk to school and this figure decreases to 15.3% amongst 12-13 year olds. (Local authority School Travel Coordinators are working to encourage more schoolchildren to walk or cycle to school).
- **Core path planning**
Core Path Planning is one of the main duties placed on all planning authorities to ensure a network of access routes, which provide reasonable access to their local population. Throughout the consultation process, planning authorities will identify routes which can be part of the Core Path Plan. A large number of other routes, which people use or would like to use, will form part of the wider core path network and increase links between communities. The routes making up the Core Path Plan will be both surface and unsurfaced routes, for a variety of users and catering for all abilities. There will also be a mix between functional and recreational routes.
- **Assessment of Cycling in Scotland**
In 2004/05 Cycling Scotland undertook an assessment of cycling in Scotland by local authority area in order to establish a baseline and to collect better information on cycling for policy and planning purposes.

The main recommendations of the assessment were as follows:

- Dedicate more staff time to cycling development
- Establish a multi-agency cycle forum to ensure stakeholder involvement
- Develop a programme of safe cycling routes to train stations and other transport interchanges.
- Establish and maximise the provision of on-road cycle training

- Review, Targets and Monitoring – reconsider baseline and increase target for walking and cycling
- Establish a process to communicate and consult with internal colleagues and departments on cycling development
- Promote the extensive network of B, C and unclassified roads as integral part of the cycling network
- Promote and monitor uptake in travelling to school by bicycle
- Targets for promotional activities should include support for Bike Week, a range of events throughout the year and provision of materials on a variety of topics
- Establish a cycle network and ensure updated provision of cycle maps and other promotional material

Cycling Scotland intends to monitor progress by repeating this audit. The assessment will be repeated in 2007/8 and will be extended to include an assessment of regional transport partnerships' plans for walking and cycling.

- **The views of children, young people and parents**

Research¹ undertaken on the attitudes of children, young people and parents towards walking and cycling concluded that they are influenced by factors such as:

- the strong culture of car use
- fear and dislike of local environments
- parental concern about the safety of children as responsible transport users

Cultural views on transport vary by age, sex and location (urban, suburban or rural).

Two effective, promising and appropriate interventions have been identified: the extension and improvement of cycle networks and the creation of tailored marketing messages for subsets of children, young people and parents specifically geared to appeal to different ages, socio-economic classes, sexes and locations.

- **European Research**

The European Commission's research and development programme, 2007-2013 provides an opportunity for SPT and its partners to explore examples of best practice from key cities and regions in Europe and to participate in benchmarking.

¹ Brunton G, Oliver S, Oliver K, Lorenc T (2006) *A Synthesis of Research Addressing Children's, Young People's and Parents' Views of Walking and Cycling for Transport*, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London

Objectives

The vision for the Walking and Cycling Action Plan is to:

- Make walking and cycling a more attractive and realistic mode of travel for people of all ages and abilities in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their environment.

The objectives are to:

- Improve walking and cycling access for people of all ages and abilities to schools, workplaces and leisure facilities
- Raise the quality of life for all by promoting walking and cycling and encouraging active travel
- Increase the role of walking and cycling as a realistic mode of travel, particularly for shorter trips by further developing an integrated network of walking and cycling routes
- Ensure the walking and cycling environment is an attractive, safe and convenient one through the development and maintenance of suitable infrastructure
- Enhance the environment by designing areas that best support walking and cycling in order to encourage a reduction in vehicle traffic and improved air quality
- Ensure walking and cycling are integrated into transport interchanges to ensure that intermodal, seamless journeys are possible.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will be developed in partnership with member councils and key stakeholders. These recommendations were approved by the Strategy and Programmes committee on 25 January 2008.

Information

- Improve walking and cycling information.
- Conduct benchmarking and market research into walking and cycling to fill knowledge gaps.

Infrastructure

- Improve lighting on key routes across the region
- Review signage on key routes across the region and, where appropriate, provide information on nearby facilities.
- Support the introduction of improved cycle parking facilities and cycle access at key transport interchanges.
- Connect walking and cycling routes to create a quality regional route network linking regional hubs and complementing the National Cycle Network and local routes.
- Integrate the planning of core paths with other development plans.

Travel Awareness/Promoting Walking and Cycling

- Promote walking and cycling to encourage both children and adults to walk and cycle for leisure and work/education.
- Ensure the needs of both pedestrians and cyclists are being addressed in the planning and development of new schemes. This may include the development or revision of guidelines.
- Support measures to promote inclusion and widen the appeal of walking and cycling.
- Identify where improved walking and cycling access to healthcare facilities can be implemented.

Travel Planning

- Support the development and implementation of more workplace travel plans to facilitate cycling by staff.

Initiatives

- Pilot a street-based bike rental facility
- Encourage the carriage of bicycles on public transport services.
- Consider the potential to establish a homezone(s).
- Implement a pilot project to improve walking and cycling access to a specific town(s). This may form part of the proposed Sustainable Travel Towns initiative.
- Monitor the number of people walking and cycling.

Target

To develop a programme for the implementation of the Walking and Cycling Action Plan through SPT's Business Plan.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the agreed programme will be incorporated within SPT's Business Plan monitoring process.

Further Information

Related reports are available on our website www.spt.co.uk and further information is available from rts@spt.co.uk or by contacting:

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