

Cycling delivery plan consultation
Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary: This report summarises, for members' information, the details of the Government's recently published draft 10 year cycling delivery plan for England and National Parks England's response to the consultation.

Recommendation: That members note the contents of the report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides members with information on the Government's recently published draft cycling delivery plan for England. The Draft Cycling Delivery Plan document originates from the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group and the All Party Commission on Physical Activity which in turn led to the allocation of £94 million of grant to 8 English cities and four National parks. Taking account of the recommendations of these groups the Government has published a draft 10 year plan setting out its vision which is to facilitate and encourage cycling to the extent that cycling levels in England rival those in Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany.
- 1.2 Government sees the draft plan as the key mechanism for achieving its ambition. The plan groups the proposed actions into four main themes: vision; funding; infrastructure and planning; and safety and perceptions of safety. The consultation, which closed on the 13th of November, sought the views of stakeholders on the scope of the plan and additional suggestions as to how the Government could deliver the plan. In view of the tight deadline for responses National Parks England responded to the consultation on behalf of the English National Parks Authorities having carried out internal consultation. This report therefore summarises the collective response of National Parks England to the consultation. Appendix 1 sets out the key actions identified in the consultation document.

2 Consultation response by National Parks England

- 2.1 Appendix 2 sets out the full response submitted to the consultation by National Parks England.
- 2.2 The response welcomed the consultation and encouraged the Department for Transport (DfT) to acknowledge that National Park Authorities are important delivery vehicles for the Cycling Delivery Plan. However the response also identified that while the funding that has been provided in recent years for

cycling initiatives has delivered improvements for cycling in some National Parks not all National Parks have been able to benefit from it. The response identified the importance of encouraging more people to access National Parks by bike or by public transport with their bike. National Parks England went on to say that at the very least those who arrive by private car should be encouraged to park in the most appropriate locations and continue their visit by more sustainable means such as walking and cycling.

- 2.3 As can be seen from the consultation document the Government refers to Local Authorities as having a key role in the delivery of the plan. The consultation states that the Government intends to set up partnerships with Local Authorities and specifically asks for Local Authorities who are interested in this approach to contact the DfT as soon as possible to register their interest. If Local Authorities do this they will receive access to supporting tools and incentives, including knowledge sharing and priority access to funding. The consultation response welcomes this initiative but as the document doesn't mention National Park Authorities in the section on partnership, seeks confirmation that National Park Authorities are eligible to enter into these partnerships either jointly with other Local Authorities or on their own behalf.
- 2.4 As regards funding, the response welcomes the commitment in the consultation to explore ways of increasing funding but expresses disappointment that the plan lacks a commitment to provide the levels of funding for cycling that are currently enjoyed in London given the fact that the benefits of cycling to health, the environment, access and the economy are proven.
- 2.5 The consultation also mentions that the DfT's Roads Investment Strategy will include a programme to tackle issues that have constrained the strategic road networks' potential to improve cycling including cycle proofing parts of the network. The consultation response welcomes this but requests that this programme is not restricted to routes where major works are proposed to tackle congestion.
- 2.6 Government is also intending to publish a further consultation on how best to distribute the £976 million annual highways maintenance fund up to 2021 to ensure that a fair share goes to cycling and walking. National Parks England will also respond collectively on behalf of the National Park Authorities to this consultation.
- 2.7 As regards infrastructure and planning, the consultation mentions a number of proposals to ensure that cycling is considered appropriately in road and other schemes being delivered by highway authorities including a review into how the planning system supports cycling and walking provision. These proposals are welcomed in the consultation response. However, the response identifies that, in relation to infrastructure, the summary of actions misses the opportunity to encourage the carriage of cycles on public transport. This is seen as being of vital importance by all the National Park Authorities as the ability to take cycles on public transport, both trains and buses, is key to reducing the number of car journeys by visitors to National Parks. The response therefore indicates that National Parks England would welcome the

piloting of schemes to encourage greater use of public transport by visitors with cycles and that it would be prepared to work with Government to identify locations where this could take place.

- 2.8 In relation to the theme of safety and perceptions of safety the response welcomed the commitment to improve safety but pointed out that this needed to be backed up by committed funding to address these issues in rural areas, particularly National Parks.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 The proposed 10 year plan set out in the consultation document has the potential to deliver significant benefits for cycling in National Parks. Officers consider that the issue of improving facilities for visitors to take cycles on public transport should continue to be emphasised as being of crucial importance for improving the sustainability of visits to the National Parks and would welcome involvement with any initiative that seeks to deliver improvements in this regard.
- 3.2 While mentioning a commitment to walking in other documents Government does not specifically make commitments to making improvements for walkers in this consultation. The National Parks England response questions whether the intention is to progress the walking agenda through a separate consultation and recommends that if this is not the case Government should change the title of the plan to include walking and give equal weight to it in the plan. Officers would also agree with this approach as many routes in the Broads could be improved to deliver benefits to cyclists and walkers alike potentially delivering improvements under the themes of the Authority's Integrated Access Strategy.
- 3.3 Officers also consider that further discussion should be undertaken in relation to the ability of National Parks to register interest for partnership working with the DfT and other Local Authorities as this could potentially improve opportunities for partnership working with the County and District Councils.

Background papers: Cycling Delivery Plan (Department for Transport)

Author: Adrian Clarke

Date of Report: 13 November 2014

Broads Plan Objectives: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 Cycling Delivery Plan consultation summary of actions
Appendix 2 National Parks England's consultation response

Annex A - Summary of Actions

Theme 1 - Vision, Leadership and ambition: summary of actions		
ACTION	OWNER	TIMESCALES
Local authorities to register their interest for creating a cycling and walking vision	Local Government	Initial call for registrations of interest - autumn 2014 Partnership discussions - 2014/15
Summit to launch the partnerships arrangement, developed in line with the principles above, and the Government vision for walking and cycling	Government	Autumn 2014
Shape partnership commitments between local and central government: Local authorities to shape their local ambition, vision and targets and government to develop their responding support package	Government Local Government	Autumn 2014 onwards
Allocate support for partner authorities to develop their own case for cycling and walking	Government Active Travel Consortium	By May 2015
Build on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund's knowledge sharing hub to support walking and cycling projects	Department for Transport Local Government City Ambition Grant recipients	2015
Promote emerging government opportunities to partner authorities, businesses and other interested stakeholders	All Government Departments	Ongoing

Theme 2 - Funding: summary of actions

ACTION	OWNER	TIMESCALES
Work to reduce the administrative burden on local authorities in bidding for funds	Department for Transport	2015
Seek out new funding opportunities for cycling and walking, either through discrete funding streams, joined up cross-government funding, or innovative mechanisms such as Social Impact Bonds. Investment will be prioritised in local authorities signing up to the commitments in Theme 1	Department for Transport Government Local Government	Ongoing
Provide a continuous source of seed funding, up to 2021, to enable Partner Authorities (those signing up to the commitments in Theme 1) to access wider funding opportunities	Department for Transport	2015-2021
Utilise new and existing funding and investment programmes such as the Local Growth Fund and potentially Highways Maintenance to ensure that cycling and walking is considered as part other transport investment and improvement programmes	Local Government	Ongoing

Theme 3 - Infrastructure and Planning: summary of actions

ACTION	OWNER	TIMESCALES
Work with local authorities to promote cycle and pedestrian proofing of local roads	Government Local Government	Ongoing

Cycle proof the Strategic Road Network, and set out how this will be progressed in the forthcoming Road Investment Strategy	Highways Agency	2015-2021
Through the Cycle Proofing Working Group, seek to identify best practice in cycle proofing Promote conclusions to Local Government and engineers and create a One Stop portal for best practice	Department for Transport Cycle Proofing Working Group	2014 - 2015
Review the training needs of transport professionals in order to ensure a consistently high standard of inclusive and accessible provision of walking and cycling infrastructure on the Strategic and Local Road Network	Department for Transport Highways Agency Cycle Proofing Working Group	2014-2021
Complete the consultation and finalisation of the revised Traffic Signs and Regulations General Directions for 2015	Department for Transport	2015
Explore how pedestrian and accessibility representations can best be aligned within the Cycle Proofing Programme Ensure that, where possible, any new cycling infrastructure projects take into account pedestrian needs, and vice versa	Department for Transport Highways Agency Local Authorities	Ongoing
Undertake a six month review into how the planning system supports cycling and walking provision. The review will report back with specific, realistic recommendations for how we can improve application of the existing planning framework when it comes to walking and cycling.	Cycle Proofing Working Group Department for Communities and Local Government	2014/15
In the longer term, work to ensure 'cycle proofing' of all transport modes is mainstreamed	Department for Transport All partners	Long Term

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Consultation on the Draft Cycling Delivery Plan

Response on behalf of National Parks England

12 November 2014

Summary

National Parks England welcomes the opportunity to be able to comment on the Consultation on the Government's "*Cycling Delivery Plan*". National Parks England collectively represents the views of the nine English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority, and our response follows internal consultation amongst the authorities. Over recent years National Park Authorities and their partners have collectively received significant funding from Cycling England and the Department for Transport to deliver cycle schemes. These schemes are achieving improvements to cycling facilities within and around national parks for residents as well as promoting cycling to a wide audience of visitors to national parks. Evidence from the monitoring of the initial Pedal Peak District Project demonstrated large numbers of new and returning cyclists, often from less represented groups, both resident and visitor. We note that DfT research¹ has demonstrated a cost benefit ratio of 5.5:1 – whereby spending £1 on cycling in National Parks generates £5.50 worth of social benefit. The same research says that in relation to National Parks, 'the grants are therefore considered to deliver very high value for money' (page 11). As a consequence **National Parks England would encourage DfT to ensure that National Park Authorities are acknowledged as important delivery vehicles for the Cycling Delivery Plan.**

English National Parks collectively account for more than 90 million visitors a year² and as such National Park Authorities are in a position to influence a good number of people who are making leisure visits and tend to be more amenable to trying new or unfamiliar experiences. The recent funding for cycling in national parks will enable new and returning cyclists to have a positive leisure cycling experience. It is recognised that leisure cycling contributes to a number of benefits including health and the economy. It is also the most obvious route into cycling for everyday purposes, such as for access to work, education and other services. The provision of funding for cycling in national parks is also in keeping with the Government's 2010 circular on National Parks, by helping to maintain access to jobs education and services in those locations where public transport provision has reduced over recent years.

Whilst the funding that has been provided over recent years has proved most welcome, not all National Parks have been able to benefit from it. Even where funding has been made available, there are still opportunities to extend facilities for cyclists and to help engender cycling as a lifestyle choice by encouraging more people to access national parks either directly by bike, or by public transport with their bikes. At the very least, we should be encouraging those who arrive by private car to park in the most appropriate locations and giving them every opportunity to continue their visit by more sustainable means including walking and cycling. However, this will require consistent investment to allow a more efficient delivery of both schemes and their benefits to help deliver the cycling revolution envisaged by the Prime Minister through removing barriers for a new generation of cyclists.

¹ DfT (2014) [Value for Money Assessment for Cycling Grants](#)

² National Parks England [Infographic](#)

In responding to this consultation, National Parks England will focus on those areas that are particularly pertinent to National Parks and National Park Authorities, or those areas where we are best able to provide an input based on our experience of on the ground delivery.

Detailed comments on the Draft Cycling Delivery Plan

Introduction

Paragraph 2 – National Parks England welcomes the Department for Transport’s commitment to publish a paper setting out the economic case for cycling. Whilst, National Park Authorities can point to local evidence, (quantitative and qualitative), robust national and international evidence will enhance our ability to provide accurate Cost Benefit Ratios for future schemes.

Theme 1: Vision, leadership and ambition

Paragraph 1.2 – National Parks England welcomes the Department’s commitment to walking, but we feel that the draft delivery plan looks and reads like a plan for cycling rather than for both cycling and walking. Therefore we would question whether the intention is to progress the walking agenda through a separate document? If this is not the intention, then we would recommend that the reference to walking should be reinstated into the title and equal weight given to it within the Plan.

Paragraph 1.4 – National Parks England welcomes the plan for partnerships between government and local authorities to deliver the Cycling Delivery Plan. Over recent years National Park Authorities have forged partnerships with both constituent and neighbouring local authorities to deliver LSTF and Cycling Grants. **Can you confirm that national park authorities are eligible to enter into these partnerships either jointly with other local authorities or on their own behalf?**

As mentioned above National Parks have been very successful in delivering cycle projects, including many kilometres of new routes. For example within the Wider Peak District area recent funding has / will lead to the opening up of approximately 60km of multi-user routes. Similarly, in the South Downs National Park, more than 65km of new or improved multi user routes has been/will be delivered. However, it should be recognised that National Park Authorities have neither the land ownership nor highway powers enjoyed by other local authorities, particularly highway authorities. In addition the high environmental designation of national parks can mean that arriving at the appropriate design for a project and undertaking appropriate consultation can also be time consuming. Therefore we would welcome the outlined approach of partnership working which should give more leeway for a proactive approach, whilst hopefully tempering some of the time constraints experienced over recent years.

Theme 2: Funding

Paragraph 2.1 – National Parks England welcomes the commitment to explore ways of increasing funding for cycling to £10 per person by 2020-21. However, considering the undoubted benefits of cycling including health and wellbeing, environmental, transport / access and economic, we are disappointed that the Cycling Delivery Plan lacks a firm commitment to the levels of funding currently enjoyed in London; particularly as the aforementioned benefits from cycling are being clearly demonstrated within the Capital.

Paragraph 2.6 – We welcome the commitment to cycle proof parts of the strategic road network, but would request that this is not restricted only to those routes where major works are proposed to tackle congestion.

Theme 3: Infrastructure and Planning

Paragraph 3.2 – We welcome the commitment to address a number of issues related to cycle proofing.

Theme 4: Safety and Perceptions of Safety

Paragraph 4.1 – Whilst we recognise cyclist perceptions of the dangers of road cycling are less than those who do not cycle, it is still of concern that almost half of all cyclists (48%) perceive road cycling as

dangerous. It is also concerning that two thirds of non-cyclists also think that it is dangerous. Both groups will need to be reassured in order for the hoped-for step change in cycling to take place. We therefore welcome the commitment to improve safety and the perceptions of safety for cyclists.

It is important that some thought, backed up with committed funding, is given to addressing such concerns in rural areas, and in particular national parks given the high volume of visitors that they experience. In such areas, outside of settlements, traffic speeds are significantly higher, whilst the levels of environmental protection coupled with topography make the traditional approaches to cycle safety inappropriate. Therefore, we would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to identify more innovative solutions that are in keeping with national park purposes and settings to address this issue. For example this might include working with sat-nav companies to make motorists aware of locations where they might expect large numbers of road cyclists.

Annex A: Summary of Actions

Theme 3 – Infrastructure and Planning: summary of actions – Whilst the action related to improving cycling facilities at railway stations is welcomed; the plan misses the opportunity to encourage the carriage of cycles on public transport. In order to address some of the issues related to travel by private motor vehicle, particularly into national parks, it is vital that visitors who wish to transport their bikes can do so by public transport – both bus and rail. The piloting of such schemes would be welcomed, and National Parks England would be keen to work with Government to identify locations where this could take place.

NPE

November 2014