

Economic and Environmental Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Cycling Inquiry

Call for Evidence Summary: Interim Paper

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide the Committee with an update on the evidence received to inform the discussions at the oral evidence session on 11th December.

2. Call for Evidence

- 2.1. The Committee made an online call for evidence following its meeting on 11th September. This was open to members of the public and any organisations with an interest in cycling in Sheffield. The full Call for Evidence is attached as Appendix A. The Committee also agreed a list of stakeholders who would be approached and asked to contribute.
- 2.2. The Call for Evidence noted that cycling has more than doubled in Sheffield between 2000 and 2011. The specific questions asked were:
 1. What specific actions have helped the city achieve this growth?
 2. What specific barriers prevent people from cycling or from cycling more frequently?
 3. What evidence is there from other large cities or towns (in the UK or abroad) on broadening and increasing participation in cycling, with a particular emphasis on improving the economic, health and environmental impacts?
 4. What in your view are the top three actions that would broaden and increase cycling in Sheffield?
- 2.3. The response was very good with the Committee receiving over 260 responses to the Call for Evidence. The majority of these (202) were received through an online survey with the remainder submitted by email.

3. What does this evidence tell us?

- 3.1. This paper is a 'work in progress' and presents a picture on the evidence that has been studied in detail to date. Half of the 202 on-line entries have been looked at so far and a dozen longer responses from agencies and

people that take a political and instrumental interest in and standpoint on cycling, as well as the users' point of view. This last set of responses agree with the on-line responses in terms of what has helped, what have been barriers and where good practice exists elsewhere but they have also given much more consideration to what political and executive action is needed to make the changes they see as necessary.

- 3.2. There are still some on-line entries and short email submissions to code, although it is not anticipated that the issues or their weighting will change significantly.
- 3.3. The following sections look at each of the four questions and cover both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the evidence we received. For each question the following is provided:
 - A narrative summary of the evidence
 - The top answers given and the percentage of people citing them
 - Examples of quotes from respondents

What specific actions have helped the city achieve this growth?

- 3.4. Investment in training and infrastructure in the city has had in the most part a positive effect. Cycling is still at a low level accounting for less than 2% of trips, but this is comparable with most other English cities. Changes are needed to achieve the goals set out in the Get Britain Cycling¹ report of 10% of trips by 2025 and 25% of trips by 2050.
- 3.5. The main reasons people tell us there have been a rise in cycling and a rise in interest in cycling are:
 - British sports successes in road and off-road cycling;
 - many are making cycling a positive lifestyle choice for transport, recreation, health and wellbeing, and environmental concerns; as more people cycle then there is an increased interest;
 - cycling has advantages in that it is economical in money and time: cheaper than using a car (fuel, parking) or public transport; the rise in the cost of living means that people cannot afford to run a car anymore, commuting by bike can be quicker than using public transport or a car, one spends less time in congestion.
- 3.6. The data told us that people and organisations believe the following have helped increase cycling in the city:
 - Increased cost of fuel and public transport – 22%
 - Sporting successes inspiring people to cycle – 19%

¹ 'Get Britain Cycling', Report of the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group, 2013

- Cycle to work schemes – 17%
- Cycle training – 13%
- Cycling lanes – 13%

3.7. There was a mixture in the detail behind this with one person citing “the provision of cycle routes which are safe, convenient and well maintained.” An alternative view was expressed as “nothing more than the rising cost of car use with respect to incomes. Sheffield Council have done very little of use.”

What specific barriers prevent people from cycling or from cycling more frequently?

3.8. Key barriers identified were safety concerns; lack of coherent and consistent cycling infrastructure; Sheffield’s weather and hills; secure storage for bikes; and facilities at work for changing

3.9. The biggest barrier is concern for personal safety with potential causes being:

- poor road/junction design and other road parameters, e.g. narrowness of roads;
- poor road maintenance,
- poor driver behaviour especially treatment of cyclists and lack of consideration of cyclists by other road users, enforcement of errant driving and parking in cycle lanes

3.10. The quantitative evidence said the following issues were acting as the main barriers:

- Safety – 42%
- Poor attitude of all road users – 38%
- Poor quality roads – 27%
- Hills – 26%

3.11. A submission from a school encapsulated many of these issues “heavy traffic, lack of cycle lanes or safe ways round complex junctions as well as poor road surfaces mean many parents would not want their children to cycle to school.” One contributor neatly summarised the barriers as “danger, weather, theft, congestion, which is both an incentive for the brave and disincentive for the timid.”

What evidence is there from other large cities or towns (in the UK or abroad) on broadening and increasing participation in cycling, with a

particular emphasis on improving the economic, health and environmental impacts?

- 3.12. A wide range of good examples from the UK and other countries were received and these will be examined in more detail.
- 3.13. A lesson from Cycle England is that change is brought about by coordination of promotion, training and infrastructure. The spend on infrastructure needs to be, by far, the majority of the spend.
- 3.14. Overseas examples include:
- extensive coherent infrastructures that separate cyclists where necessary and integrate cyclists where appropriate;
 - much better integrated transport in terms of carriage of bikes and bike hubs and bike parking;
 - bigger per capita spend on cycling than in the UK
 - National laws and driving practices e.g. presumed or strict liability, priorities on crossings and at junctions
- 3.15. In terms of the quantitative evidence a variety of specific places and schemes were mentioned but the two things most quoted were:
- Cycle lane network infrastructure – 13%
 - Separate bicycles from cars – 11%
- 3.16. The approach to designing in cycling was cited frequently: “parts of Europe do much better and proactively build safe and segregated cycle routes into their road building not just as an after-thought.” Places that have reached a “critical mass” of cyclists were mentioned along with “making cyclists feel normal and not unusual.” It is worth noting that a number of respondents did not feel able to comment on this question.

What in your view are the top three actions that would broaden and increase cycling in Sheffield?

- 3.17. Suggestions about the actions included:
- Planning and installing a coherent cycle infrastructure with separation where necessary and integration where possible. There were suggestions that city centre is much more attractive through traffic reduction than it used to be and the Council should concentrate on permeability and allowing cycling in pedestrianised areas. The cycle network should be both urban routes and green routes and it should be developed route by route.

- Ensuring that cycling and walking are at the heart of all planning and development. Suggestions on how this is achieved include focussed leadership at the Council; cycling issues are represented appropriately in all decision making; work with other councils on a City Region approach.
- Promoting the wider benefits of cycling. Suggestions covered the development of cycle and walking tourism; development and promotion of cycle events, e.g. Sky rides; making sure a wide range of staff understand the benefits that cycling can generate.

3.18. The actions cited in the quantitative data are:

- Better cycle paths / networks – 58%
- Separate cycle routes – 31%
- Improve road surfaces – 26%
- Education of road users – 23%

3.19. Education was highlighted by one respondent “education of drivers (buses in particular) regarding the amount of room that cyclist should be given when overtaking.” There were a number of comments about cycle paths and the network which one person summarised as “create a comprehensive and integrated cycle network including links with public transport.”

**Economic and Environmental Wellbeing
Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee**

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Call for Evidence

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You are very welcome to submit existing documents as an appendix or links to websites that provide evidence. However, can you please limit a summary of your submission to a maximum of four sides of A4 that references the relevant part of an appendix or of a website that supports your submission.

The Committee will hear oral evidence at a public meeting on 11th December 2013 beginning at 4.30pm. Clearly not everyone who submits written evidence will be able to give oral evidence. However, the Committee may invite you to give oral evidence as well, so you may wish to pencil the date in your diary.

The Committee plans to publish all the responses received. If you do not want your response published can you please indicate this clearly and explain the reason why.

To submit evidence or for more information about the work of the Inquiry please contact Matthew Borland:

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