

Briefing: Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan

Juliet Hope-Dunbar and Robert Huxford, *Institution of Civil Engineers, UK*

This briefing sheet is a summary of the 62-page Department for Transport document *Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*, published June 2004.

1. COMMENTARY

*Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*¹ is an update of existing and planned measures that contribute to walking and cycling from the Government's perspective. However, much of the delivery is in the hands of local authorities.

The ICE recommends the following.

- An evidence-based design approach to design guidance for highways and the public realm.
- Management of highways and the public realm using integrated public realm strategies incorporating a street management code.
- Extending the Local Transport Plan system to include both capital and revenue funds and public realm expenditure.
- Development of an integrated transport system to manage the highway network—providing navigation, congestion charging, speed control and collision avoidance systems—enabling a safe and pleasant environment for walkers and cyclists.
- Recognition that:
 - (a) walking is the basic building-block of the transport system
 - (b) integrated transport is where transport is integrated with life.

2. SUMMARY

The Government wants to encourage as many people as possible to walk and cycle, especially those undertaking short trips: 42% of journeys are less than 2 miles.

The number of people walking and cycling has been in steady decline over the past 20 years, but to return to 1975 levels of walking would require people to walk just 65 miles extra per year, which is just over a mile more a week.

The Government proposes the following.

- Creating places that people want to walk and cycle in.
- Providing high-quality facilities for safe walking and cycling.
- Influencing travel behaviour through education, training and marketing.
- Monitoring success through better targets and indicators.

3. IMPROVING THE WALKING AND CYCLING ENVIRONMENT

Local authorities will have to plan their town centres giving priority to cyclists and walkers; this includes well-marked bike lanes, well-maintained and well-lit wide, clean boulevard-style pavements.

Specific measures include the following.

- Using the land-use planning system to promote better provision.
 - Planning Policy Statement 6.²
 - *Going to town*—a DfT Publication.³
- Using transport planning to make it easier for walkers and cyclists to get around.
 - LTP process—updated advice will be issued.
 - Rights-of-way improvement plans.
- Improving liveability.
 - Clean Neighbourhoods Bill⁴—to streamline litter, graffiti and fly-tipping control.
 - Better street-lighting—PFI programme.
- Designing streets for people.
 - Local authorities ceasing to misapply design guidance intended for trunk roads on local roads.
 - *New Manual for Streets*.
 - Home Zones—new regulations and guidance.
 - Quiet lanes—new regulations and guidance.
- Controlling anti-social behaviour.
 - *Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention*⁵—ODPM Guidance.
 - Anti-social Behaviour Act⁶—new powers for police.

4. BETTER FACILITIES FOR WALKING AND CYCLING

The 2002 DfT survey on walking and cycling⁷ found that:

- walkers would like safe routes with clutter-free pavements
- cyclists would like more on- and off-road cycle lanes and better parking facilities.

Key initiatives include the following.

- Better enforcement—through the Traffic Management Bill.⁸
- Better walking and cycling routes—guidance in the new local transport notes.
- Inclusive design—promoted by DfT.

A three-year review of road safety strategy entitled *Tomorrow's Roads—Safer for Everyone*⁹ emphasises that safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists are a vital part of encouraging more journeys on foot and bike. Safety is a major deterrent against people cycling and walking. To help people feel safe, traffic-calming measures need to be included, such as speed cameras and 20 mph zones.

- Cycling projects fund.
- Walking and cycling fund toolkit will be produced.
- Extending the national cycle network.
- Cycle parking at rail stations.

If people use public transport they almost all have to either walk or cycle at the beginning and the end of their journey. Journeys under 3 km made by bicycle will almost always be quicker than the bus, allowing for waiting and walking time. The Strategic Rail Authority is currently consulting on cycle policy that includes bike parking and carriage.

5. INFLUENCING TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

The following findings are from the DfT Survey on Attitudes to Walking and Cycling.¹⁰

- Some 88% of respondents said they walk for more than 10 min at least once a week, while 13% said they cycle at least once a week. Sixty per cent said they never cycle and 5% said they never walk, compared with just 3% who never travel by car.
- A total of 38% of respondents did not think that walking is an important form of transport for them.
- Some 58% of respondents said that they currently use a car to make journeys within walking or cycling distance.
- Over 90% of respondents agreed that people should be encouraged to walk to help their health (97%), help the environment (94%) and to ease congestion (92%).

Individuals need 30 min of moderately intense physical activity at least five days a week.

5.1. School journeys

Between 8 am and 9 am, one in ten car trips in urban areas in term times were taking children to school, increasing to one in five at 8.50 am. For both transport and health reasons children should be encouraged to cycle and walk.

- DfT DfES *Travelling to school* initiative—encouraging preparation of school travel plans. Every school to have a travel plan by 2010.
- Good practice guidance on school travel plans will be published by end of 2004.¹¹
- Five-minute walking zones—walking zone set up 5 min walk from the school gates—all children, parents and staff are encouraged to walk.

5.2. Training

Child pedestrian training manuals.

- *Step Forward*.¹²
- *Let's Decide—Walk Wise*.¹²
- *Making Choices*—teacher resource.

Other initiatives include the following.

- *Kerbcraft*—new skills-based training pilot for children aged 5–7.¹²
- *Bike it* is an initiative set up by the National Cycling Strategy Board and the cycle industry to encourage older children to bike to school. It brings together cycle parking, training and traffic calming.
- National Standard for Child Cyclist Training.

5.3. Travel to work

DfT research to be published this year will cover the effectiveness of:

- workplace travel plans
- personal travel planning
- travel awareness campaigns.

Other initiatives include the following.

- TravelSmart—local information on walking, cycling and public transport.
- Sustainable travel towns—three towns showcasing sustainable travel.

5.4. Educating motorists

- Driving test includes a section on road users.
- Theory test has been expanded and now includes hazard perception.

Other initiatives include the following.

- Everyday sport—promoted by Sport England.
- National Cycling Strategy Board.
- National bike week.
- Britain on the move campaign—ITV.
- National walking website: www.walk21.com.
- Cycling portal: www.bikeforall.net.
- Transport Direct.
- Walking maps—good practice guidance to be produced.

5.5. Skills and capacity

The Government needs to know that:

- those who are charged with increasing levels of walking and cycling have the right skills to provide for and promote safe cycling and walking
- there are sufficient numbers of people with those skills in the health and safety sector and that their work is assisted by training and support networks.

Training initiatives are listed, including:

- professional training for cycling and walking
- accredited cycle trainers
- transport planning skills initiative—Transport Planning Society.

6. MONITORING SUCCESS

The best indicators for walking and cycling would be those of outcome: the changes in the levels of walking and cycling, both

locally and nationally. However, obtaining this data is expensive. Alternatives would be the following.

- Outputs—new cycle routes, pedestrian areas, quality of routes, etc.
- Inputs—spend on cycling per head, etc.

The Government wishes to focus on the outcome measures. Initiatives will include

- automatic cycle counter network
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment—2005 will cover design, maintenance and improvement of street layouts.

The changes in behaviour that this document is seeking to bring about can only be measured across the population in the longer term through national trends in walking and cycling.

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