

Sheffield City Council

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Cycling Inquiry:

Summary of responses to the Call for Evidence

What did people and organisations tell us?

Call for Evidence and methodology

An online call for evidence open to members of the public and any organisations with an interest in cycling in Sheffield was made as part of the Inquiry. 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.

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?

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.

This paper presents a picture on the response. The majority of the responses have been 'coded' in a spreadsheet with each mention of an issue recorded. The top issues for each question are shown in a table below.

It proved difficult to simply 'code' a dozen longer responses from organisations and people that take a political and instrumental interest in and standpoint on cycling, as well as the users' point of view. However, when looked at in detail this last set of responses agree with the majority of 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.

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 number of times an issue was mentioned
- Examples of quotes from respondents

Question 1:

What specific actions have helped the city achieve this growth?

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.

The main reasons people tell us there have been a rise in cycling and a rise in interest in cycling are:

- 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.
- 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;

Item	Score
Personal economics, savings on fuel, costs of running a car, fares, time	102
The public profile of cycling, eg TdF, Olympics, Team Sky, cycling as recreation and sport, seeing more people cycling, lifestyle choice	97
Installation of cycle infrastructure, lanes, paths, ASLs, bike parking	87
Incentives to cycle, eg Cycle to Work Scheme, CycleBoost, growth of cycle shops	55
Personal health benefits and environmental responsibility, cycling as responsible and utility, lifestyle choice	39
Education and Training, eg Bikeability, SCC's support for cycle training	22
Cycle campaigning and lobbying	13
Events and opportunities, eg cycle races, proximity to Peak District	6

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.”

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

Question 2:**What specific barriers prevent people from cycling or from cycling more frequently?**

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

There are significant links between 'infrastructure' and 'safety' issues with the potential causes of concerns around personal safety 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

Item	Score
Quality and amount of infrastructure (cycle facilities & roads), e.g. design and standards, incoherent, poorly maintained, not enough of it (including bike parking)	248
Concern for personal safety and perceived danger caused by poor infrastructure, road surfaces and traffic - amount, speed, and attitudes of drivers to cyclists	246
Hills and weather	64
Personal lack of: knowledge about cycling and where to go; will; physical strength; money to buy the 'kit', maintenance of a bike	28
Abuse of cycling facilities (eg parking) and lack of enforcement	23

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."

Question 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?

A wide range of good examples from the UK and other countries were received. 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.

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

Item	Score
Create a culture of cycling through policy AND practice (77) eg promotion of cycle tourism & promotion of the benefits of cycling for health and wellbeing and personal economics (30)	107
Cycling is supported by coherent, well designed, well maintained and often segregated cycle infrastructure and reduce motorised traffic, e.g. ban cars from city centre	74
Study overseas cities/countries Low Countries 24, Amsterdam 15, Copenhagen 13	73
Study UK cities, London 17, York 15, Bristol 11, Cambridge 11	65
Ensure there are bike hire schemes, including electric bikes, and allow bikes on public transport	7

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.

Question 4:

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

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.

Item	Score
Plan and build better cycle infrastructure (including secure parking) and roads (e.g. junctions that take a/c of cyclists) and ensure that it is all maintained to a high standard	321
Create a programme of education and training for both drivers (how to treat cyclists) and people starting cycling, be aware that many 'cyclists' are drivers too. And the other side of the coin is to enforce rules of the road with all road users	132
Incentivise cycling by promoting cycle to work, supporting enterprises to install bike parking and changing facilities, and SMEs should be incentivised to have sustainable travel plans	66
Planning and development should have cycling in its culture	33
Ensure there are measures to reduce traffic volume and speed	32
Promote and support events such as cycle races, off-road events	14

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**

Cycling Inquiry

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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