

Sheffield City Council

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

Cycling Inquiry

Executive Summary

Cycling is important to thousands of people in Sheffield for transport, leisure and recreation. The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's 2013 report, Get Britain Cycling presented a good opportunity for us to review what we are doing in Sheffield and what we can do better, in order to improve the opportunities for cycling. We believe Sheffield is one of the first places to mirror this national approach at a local level.

Our key task was to propose an updated vision and strategic approach to cycling in Sheffield by identifying measures to broaden and increase participation in cycling in Sheffield. We have adopted a cross party approach to this task and have welcomed the direct involvement of cyclists in our work.

We reviewed the existing evidence on the impact of cycling on the local economy, health and the environment. Overall we are convinced of the benefits that cycling can make in these areas. It is also important to remember that for many people the motivation to cycle is because it is joyful and liberating.

We looked at what is happening in the city and compared Sheffield with other cities. We found that Sheffield compares reasonably well with other cities but we want to do even better. There is a lot of good work already taking place and we want to improve on this, for example by joining up planning and highway developments.

The Committee took the opportunity to directly ask people and organisations what they thought about cycling in Sheffield. We followed up the themes from the Call for Evidence with an oral evidence session to further explore potential solutions with a wide range of people and organisations. The key messages we heard from both the written and oral evidence was that there are a wide range of reasons why people cycle. In order to improve participation the city needs strong political leadership to promote the cycling agenda across the Council, as well as addressing behavioural issues and improvements to the cycling infrastructure. We would like to thank everyone who responded to the Call for Evidence or who gave oral evidence.

Our vision is:

To realise the full potential of cycling to contribute to the health and wealth of Sheffield, and the quality of life in our local communities, and to play its part in a fully integrated transport network that will encourage reduced car usage, alleviate congestion and ease pollution across the whole of the city. We believe this is both possible and necessary.

We need to get the whole of Sheffield cycling: not just healthy people or sporty young males, but people of all ages and backgrounds, in urban and rural areas.

We need to change the culture of how we use our roads, so that people are no longer afraid to cycle or allow their children to do so. Our streets, roads and local communities, need to become places for people, where cycling and walking are safe and normal.

We endorse the aim of the Get Britain Cycling report to see cycle use increase to 10% of all journeys in 2025 and 25% in 2050.

To help achieve this ambitious vision we have made 19 recommendations in the following areas:

Strong Leadership

- Political Leadership
- Working with others to develop and support cycling
- Making the most of opportunities

Getting the Right Infrastructure in Place

- A Long Term Plan
- Publicising the Cycle Network
- Integrating cycling with public transport
- Cycling and walking audits

Getting People Cycling

- Training
- Behaviour on our roads
- Cycle Tourism

There is a wealth of evidence and detail behind our report with a number of supporting documents available on the Council's website.¹

¹ <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/council-meetings/scrutiny-committees.html>

What did we do?

We adopted a Parliamentary Select Committee approach to our work, supported by a smaller Steering Group. The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's 2013 report, Get Britain Cycling presented a good opportunity for us to review what we are doing in Sheffield and what we can do better, in order to improve the opportunities for cycling. We believe Sheffield is one of the first places to mirror this national approach at a local level.

Our key task was to propose an updated vision and strategic approach to cycling in Sheffield by identifying measures to broaden and increase participation in cycling in Sheffield. We have adopted a cross party approach to this task and have welcomed the direct involvement of cyclists in our work. The full terms of reference are provided in Appendix A and the membership of the Steering Group is in Appendix B.

We issued a public Call for Evidence and were delighted to receive over 260 responses. A list of who the responses came from is provided in Appendix C. The Call for Evidence was open to members of the public and any organisation with an interest in cycling in Sheffield. We actively sought the views of a wide range of organisations, beyond cycling groups. The Call for Evidence noted that cycling more than doubled in Sheffield between 2000 and 2011 and asked four questions:

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 responses from the Call for Evidence informed the topics for the Committee's oral evidence session in December. This session heard from particular organisations and groups including representatives of cyclists; motoring organisations; public transport operators; South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive; and young people. A full list of people who gave evidence is provided in Appendix D. The minutes of this session are available online.²

We would like to thank everyone who responded to the Call for Evidence or who came to present oral evidence and answer our questions.

² <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/council-meetings/scrutiny-committees.html>

Why cycle?

We reviewed the existing evidence on the impact of cycling on the local economy, health and the environment. Overall we are convinced of the benefits that cycling can make in these areas. It is also important to remember that for many people the motivation to cycle is because it is joyful and liberating.

Economic impact

It is estimated in 2010 that there was a gross cycling contribution to the UK economy of £2.9bn. Contributing to this was bicycle manufacturing; retail sales; wages and taxation from employment; and reduced absenteeism.³

Cycling can help reduce absenteeism with research showing absenteeism in cyclists is significantly lower than in non-cyclists.⁴ Cycling is a transport choice that can enable individuals to save money on public transport fares or on the fuel, parking and running costs of a car. Economic benefits of cycling also extend across the wider community contributing to reduced congestion and carbon emissions.

Health impact

We heard that a lack of physical activity and sedentary lifestyle can make people ill and is very costly to health and social care. Currently in Sheffield we have over 70% of the population who are not doing enough activity to maintain health. There is strong evidence of an inverse relationship between inactivity and coronary heart disease, Stroke, Type 2 Diabetes, Hip Fracture, Breast and Bowel Cancer and depression. As well as being good exercise cycling can potentially fit into daily routines better than other forms of exercise as it doubles as a form of transport.

Environmental impact

Air pollution in Sheffield is estimated to account for approximately 500 deaths per year in Sheffield and these deaths are almost all preventable.⁵ More people cycling would help reduce air pollution and congestion.

Cycles take up less space for parking and create less noise than motorised transport. Cyclists are also more able to stop, get off and relax and enjoy the neighbourhood they are in.

³ The British Cycling Economy: 'Gross Cycling Product', LSE

⁴ The British Cycling Economy: 'Gross Cycling Product', LSE

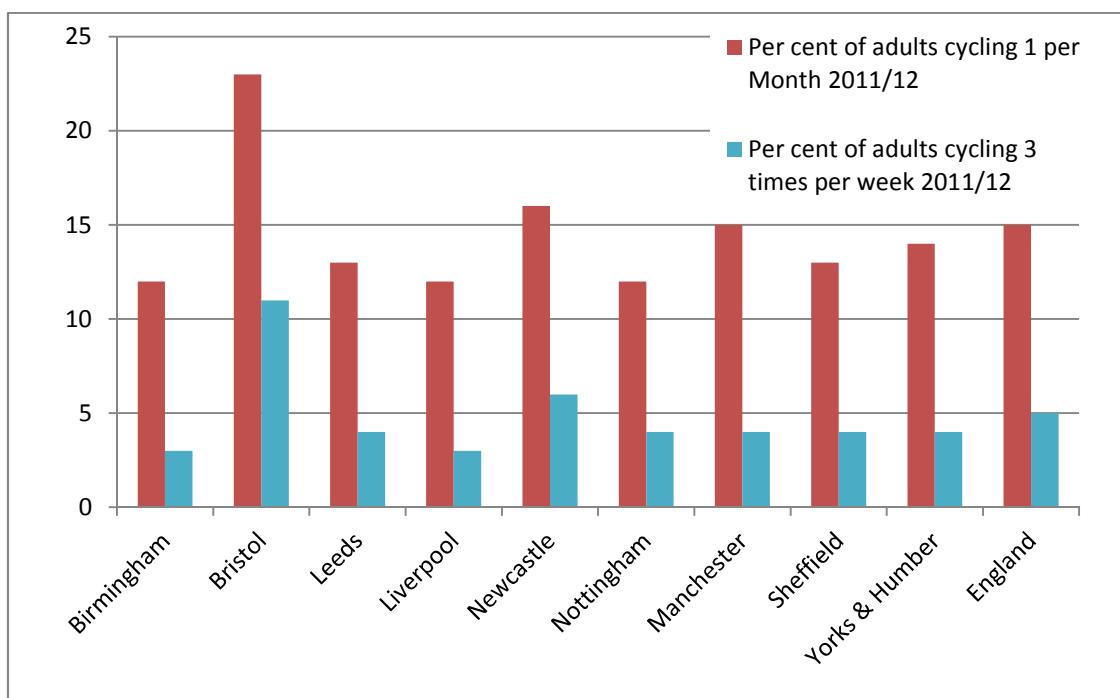
⁵ Director of Public Health Report for Sheffield 2013:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/caresupport/health/director-of-public-health-report-2013/public-health-outcomes/health-protection.html>

What's already happening in the city?

We looked at what is happening in the city and compared Sheffield with other cities. We found that Sheffield compares reasonably well with other cities but we want to do even better. There is a lot of good work already taking place and we want to improve on this, for example by joining up planning and highway developments.

Between 2001 and 2011 the number of people living in Sheffield cycling to work increased by 80%.⁶ We also know that cycling has increased by 106% in Sheffield between 2000 and 2011. Figure 1 shows the number of cycle journeys made in the 8 Core Cities – the 8 largest cities in England outside London – and the regional and national figures.



Cycle journeys made in Sheffield, with the exception of Bristol, compare fairly favourably with the other 'Core Cities'. However, they are slightly lower than the figure for England and the figure for Yorkshire and the Humber.

We recognise that a great deal of work has and is being carried out to enable and encourage people to cycle throughout Sheffield. This includes: infrastructure improvements; Streets Ahead programme; 20mph speed limit areas; the development of a 'Green Routes Network'; cycle parking; cycle maps; cycle coaching; cycle safety initiatives; Workplace Travel Planning and School Travel plans; and cyclists engaging with the Council mainly through the Cycle Forum. 'Cycling in Sheffield 2008 - 2013' looks at what has been done; has not been done; and what could be done better from a Council perspective and is on the website.⁷

⁶ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/cycling-to-work/2011-census-analysis---cycling-to-work.html>

⁷ <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/council-meetings/scrutiny-committees.html>

What did people and organisations tell us?

The Committee took the opportunity to directly ask people and organisations what they thought about cycling in Sheffield. We followed up the themes from the Call for Evidence with an oral evidence session to further explore potential solutions with a wide range of people and organisations. The key messages we heard from both the written and oral evidence was that there are a wide range of reasons why people cycle. In order to improve participation the city needs strong political leadership to promote the cycling agenda across the Council, as well as addressing behavioural issues and improvements to the cycling infrastructure. We would like to thank everyone who responded to the Call for Evidence or who gave oral evidence.

Call for Evidence

The response to the Call for Evidence was very good with the Committee receiving over 260 contributions. What follows is a summary of what people and organisations told us. A more detailed report – ‘Summary of Responses to the Call for Evidence’ is available on the website.

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 Cycling⁸ 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 saves money and time: it is cheaper than using a car (fuel, parking) or public transport; the rise in the cost of living means that some 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;

⁸ ‘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

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

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 that the Council should concentrate on allowing cycling through the city centre

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.

Oral Evidence

We followed up the themes from the Call for Evidence with an oral evidence session to further explore potential solutions with a wide range of people and organisations.

The oral evidence session took evidence from particular organisations and groups including representatives of cyclists; motoring organisations; public transport operators; South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive; and young people. A full list of people who gave evidence is provided in Appendix D. The minutes of this session are available online. The session focused on three aspects:

- Culture and Behaviour: ‘How do we make people feel safer cycling on our roads?’
- Integration: ‘Do we need to improve integration of cycling with public transport?’
- Broadening Participation: ‘How do we get more people to cycle in Sheffield?’

The key messages from the oral evidence session were:

- Increasing participation will require action to address both infrastructure and people issues, rather than focusing on one or the other
- A clear and coherent network is needed
- A joined up approach across the cycling network and public transport is needed
- It is important to maintain and promote cycle training
- Strong leadership is required as it can be easier to ‘say’ than ‘do’ and there needs to be a political voice for cycling

Overall the oral evidence supported much of the written evidence we received.

Our recommendations

Having fully considered the evidence we have developed 19 recommendations grouped in to three themes:

- Strong Leadership
- Getting the Right Infrastructure in Place
- Getting People Cycling

We analysed the evidence, including the responses and used it to inform our deliberations and discussions in coming to a judgement on the recommendations we believe are required. It is not simply a case of agreeing with everything we received or heard, or of weighing the responses where there was a range of views and going with the majority view.

We recognise the current public sector funding climate, but have not let this define the scope of our ambition. The recommendations have different timescales with some ongoing, some achievable in the short term, some in the medium term, and some over the long term.

Strong Leadership

Political Leadership

In order to provide political leadership which we believe is essential to move forward on cycling we recommend:

R1 That Sheffield City Council appoints a councillor to be a ‘Cycling Champion’ by June 2014.

Working with others to develop and support cycling

In order to maximise opportunities for funding bids and recognising that the Council and a range of partners have important roles to play to develop and support cycling we recommend:

R2 The Council works with the Sheffield City Region to ensure there are coherent plans in place to develop and support cycling by June 2015.

R3 Align funding streams with the NHS through the Health and Well Being board to maximise the health benefits that can be achieved through cycling.

In order to increase and broaden participation in the city, and recognising the importance of working at a local level we recommend:

- R4 The Council builds on best practice in working with a range of partners, including voluntary sector cycling groups.**

In order to help make changes at the national level to support cycling, for example, the Get Britain Cycling report highlights Department for Transport regulation on allowing separate traffic lights for cyclists we recommend:

- R5 The Council works with the City's MPs to support them to lobby government for key improvements.**

Making the most of opportunities

In order to exploit the potential that mainstream programmes have to contribute to improving cycling, for example the Streets Ahead Programme – a huge city wide programme that will upgrade the condition of the roads, pavements and streetlights, we recommend:

- R6 That as part of a Cycling Plan the Council takes a joined up and systematic approach to exploiting the opportunities to improve cycling across all areas of Council activity.**

We commend the introduction of 20mph speed limits and the benefits that brings for cycling.

Getting the Right Infrastructure in Place

A Long Term Plan

In order to improve the cycle network with a long term aspiration in mind and to provide a strategic approach for the city to bid for funding we recommend:

- R7 Sheffield should have a long-term strategic plan for a coherent and comprehensive cycling network in place by June 2015.**

Developing a network plan would be led by the City Council and involve a wide range of other partners.

This plan would set out a network of cycle routes which, if segregated where necessary and integrated where appropriate, would allow Sheffielders to choose to cycle between their homes and shops, and leisure and secure and safe bike parking near homes, shops, in the workplace and at schools and colleges.

As part of the Plan the Council should explore how the principles of shared space and living streets can be incorporated into urban design and re-development. It may not be possible to do this everywhere in the city and different spaces will have different solutions.

Publicising the Cycle Network

In order to better inform people and make the network more accessible and less daunting for people who might like to cycle we recommend:

R8 Identifying ways of improving the promotion and advertisement of the cycle network by June 2015.

This could include:

- Clear signage
- A regularly updated cycle map
- Council webpages with information such as bike rides, clubs, groups and shops.
- Information available at a wide range of locations, such as Council offices, libraries, leisure centres, health centres and bike shops.

Integrating cycling with public transport

In order to make sure that switching easily between bike and public transport is as simple as possible we recommend:

R9 Within the next three years the cycle and public transport networks should be combined as a single network with 'hubs' developed at strategic locations and existing hubs improved.

In order to enable people to take bikes on public transport where this could be appropriate we recommend:

R10 That the Sheffield City Region Authority and public transport operators identify opportunities and commit to undertake pilot schemes within the next 12 months, with priority be given to trials on the Supertram network.

We are not suggesting people should be able to take a bike on a bus to the city centre in the morning rush hour, rather to look at more appropriate ways of enabling people to take a bike on public transport and to test them out..

Cycling and walking audits

In order to ensure that residential, retail and business developments build in cycling at the design stage we recommend

- R11 **That the Council undertake cycling and walking audits for all development proposals and for all changes to highways and to public spaces.**

A cycling audit will assess whether a design is cycle-friendly and whether any specific measures to assist cyclists follow best practice.

Getting People Cycling

Training

In order to achieve the vision on participation there needs to be a coherent approach to training. We recommend:

- R12 **For the next year Sheffield must maintain its programme of cycle training so that in the short term at least the current numbers of adults and children receive training each year. Over the next three years in addition the Council and its partners should look to extend the cycle training to train increasing numbers of adults and children year-on-year.**
- R13 **These training opportunities need to be joined-up. Improved communication needs to be in place within the next year so that training can lead to broadening participation amongst all Sheffielders, whatever their age, gender or ethnicity.**
- R14 **That revenue funding needs to be a part of any funding bids. Where this is not possible the Council should press the case to enable this.**

Behaviour on our roads

In order to improve safety on our roads we recommend:

- R15 **The Council should take steps to encourage its contractors to provide practical cycle awareness training for their drivers. Within three years this requirement for this training should be built in to the procurement process, starting with HGV drivers.**
- R16 **Organisations in the Sheffield Bus Partnership should include cycle awareness training into all commercial and tendered routes.**
- R17 **The Council should lobby government to ensure local agencies, including South Yorkshire Police have the powers and resources to improve road safety.**

Cycle Tourism

In order to promote Sheffield as a cycling destination and sustain cycling in the city we recommend:

- R18 **The Council makes full use of the opportunity the Tour de France presents.**
- R19 **The Council improves the promotion of cycle tourism in and around Sheffield, including, for example, working with other local authorities, the Peak District National Park, Sustrans and hotels.**

Appendix A

Terms of Reference

The Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee has set up an Inquiry to look at cycling in Sheffield.

The terms of reference for the Inquiry are:

- To request and review written and oral evidence from a cross-section of people and organisations in the city with respect to cycling. This will include considering what measures have worked successfully within the city and elsewhere, and why they have worked.
- To identify measures to broaden and increase participation in cycling in Sheffield, with a particular emphasis on the economic, health and environmental impacts of these measures.
- To propose an updated vision and strategic approach to cycling in Sheffield in early 2014.
- To produce a report summarising the points above and identifying the next steps for the Council and partners.

The Council's Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development will be asked to respond to the report, setting out which parts of the report the Council will implement and over what timescale.

A representative from Cycle Sheffield will act as a voluntary adviser to the Inquiry. A City Council Policy and Improvement Officer who supports the Scrutiny Committee and a specialist from the City Council's Transport Planning team will provide support to the Inquiry.

The Inquiry will operate along lines similar to that of a Parliamentary Select Committee, mounting a short focussed inquiry, taking evidence and producing a final report.

Appendix B

Membership of the Steering Group

The work has been led on the Committee's behalf by a Steering Group. Mirroring the national report 'Get Britain Cycling' this has been a cross-party approach. The membership of the Steering Group is:

- Cllr Cate McDonald (Chair)
- Cllr Ian Auckland
- Cllr Tim Rippon
- Mick Nott, Cycle Sheffield
- Dick Proctor, Transport Vision and Strategy Manager, Sheffield City Council
- Matthew Borland, Policy and Improvement Officer, Sheffield City Council

Appendix C

Responses to the Call for Evidence

We received over 260 responses to the Call for Evidence. This included:

- Individuals
- Access Liaison Group
- Paul Blomfield MP
- CycleSheffield
- CTC (Cyclists' Touring Club)
- CTC Right to Ride rep for Sheffield
- East End Quality of Life Initiative
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Pedal Ready Cycle Training Co-operative
- ReCycleBikes
- Russell's Bicycle Shed
- Sharrow Cycling Club
- Sheffield Chamber of Commerce Transport Forum
- Sheffield Cycleboost
- Sheffield Hallam University
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- Sustrans, National Office
- Sustrans Rangers Volunteer Group in Sheffield
- 20s Plenty
- Transport 4 All
- Two members of Motorists Forum in an individual capacity
- Member of Sheffield on the Move in an individual capacity

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who responded to the Call for Evidence.

Appendix D

Oral Evidence Session

At the Committee's meeting in December the following people came to present evidence and answer our questions:

- Robert Baybutt, Institute of Advanced Motorists
- David Hall, regional Director, Sustrans
- Polly Blacker and Yvonne Witter, Sheffield Cycling Perspective
- Roy Mitchell, Principal Public Transport Manager, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- Paul Lynch, Managing Director, Stagecoach Yorkshire
- Tim Gillby, head of Finance and Commercial, Stagecoach Supertram
- Simon Geller, Northern Rail Cycle Forum
- Andrew Jackson, Manager, Heeley Development Trust
- Bryony Akroyd, Councillor in the Youth Cabinet), Young Peoples' Perspective, accompanied by Sue Mia, Young People's Involvement Worker (Citywide), Sheffield Futures

We would like to express our thanks to all of these people for giving their time to contribute to the Cycling Inquiry.