



To West of England Partnership

**By Stephen Kinsella,
CTC campaigns and policy representative for South West Region.**

Regional Planning for Bicycle Traffic

SUMMARY

I represent CTC Charitable Trust, which works to promote cycling in the UK. My subject matter is planning for everyday cycle transport.

56% of car journeys are short trips of less than 5 miles. Many of these trips could be carried out by bicycle.

Since RFA1 we now have new objectives - an 80% cut in CO2 emissions in the Climate Change Bill, DfT's *Delivering a Sustainable Transport System*, cost of oil, and tackling the obesity crisis. RFA2 will take us into the second decade of a changed world - where the use of cars will be changed dramatically, and cycling will be the logical transport choice for many short journeys.

The most successful way of encouraging more cycling is by providing infrastructure that's designed for bicycle traffic.

We need investment to allow for safe and comfortable cycling. Funding should allow for the infrastructure needed. Separate cycle tracks for roads with high speeds and high traffic volumes. For minor roads - speed limits of 20mph to help people to cycle on the general highway.

For longer door-to-door journeys the combination of bike and rail has every advantage, so funding must be targeted at new railway links and stations.

Regional transport planning needs to allow for bicycle traffic, and for related expansion in public transport - not more roads for cars.



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Regional Planning for Cycle Transport

I represent the charity CTC, which works to promote cycling in the UK by raising public and political awareness of its health, social and environmental benefits. My subject matter is everyday cycle transport.

Over the next 40 years our transport systems will have to change dramatically.

The Climate Change Bill (requiring an 80% cut in CO2 emissions), peak oil, and the DfT consultation document *Towards a Sustainable Transport System* (TASTS) mean that personal motor transport will have to change from its present oil based energy source. The most likely direction of change is to electric cars. At current levels this would place an unrealistic demand on the electricity supply system. Even on the current demand basis, which largely excludes transport, it is going to be difficult to meet the massive shift to renewable energy needed to meet the CO2 emissions reduction and oil supply constraints.

Consequently it is necessary that by 2050 people use personal motor-powered transport a lot less than now. This pressure alone points to a shift towards human powered transport for short journeys. Added to this, government reports have shown that we need to work now to stop the obesity trend. These factors place a high value on cycling as the transport choice for short journeys. Planning towards this should be happening now.

Modal shift from car to bike for short journeys gives these benefits:

1. Reduces congestion.
2. Improves health
3. Reduces pollution.
4. Reduces CO2 emissions (as indicated by TASTS)
5. Benefits the economy through increased productivity.
6. Improves community cohesion and social interchange.

Cycle transport is not a "local issue" outside the scope of regional planning. The changes needed to encourage a significant transfer from driving to cycling for short journeys needs action at all levels. Regional planning and funding includes the roads used for short journeys. 56% of car journeys are short trips of under 5 miles, most of which could be carried out by bike. The Region needs to take into account of the desirability of a modal shift from driving to cycling and funding needs to include the provision to achieve it.

The most successful way of encouraging more cycling is by providing infrastructure that is designed for bicycle traffic. Roads in UK over the past four or five decades have not been designed for cycle traffic and this has resulted in much less cycling than in many parts of mainland Europe. It is in the nation's interest for this to change.

I am not referring to cycling as an activity for enthusiasts. I am referring to use of bikes by all sorts of people as a normal means of transport.

England is set to overtake the Netherlands as most densely populated European country. Nevertheless the results of long term transport planning in the Netherlands show us what we can do here. Despite their high population density, through investment in cycling infrastructure Dutch people are more active and their children have more freedom than here. We should aim to shift 80% of short car journeys to bike and shift a proportion of longer journeys to a cycle-rail/tram solution. This means investment in reallocation of existing road space to provide for safe and comfortable cycling, and in public transport. There are standard guidelines for cycle infrastructure provision, and funding should allow for the infrastructure needed. For roads with high speeds and volume of motor traffic, separate high quality cycle tracks are needed. For lesser speeds and volumes cycle lanes can be adequate. For residential and lightly trafficked roads a speed limit of 20mph enables people to cycle on the general highway. The latest DfT guidance is *Cycle Infrastructure Design*, 2008.

Another bonus will be reduced congestion for car drivers despite the increased population.

With regard to the agenda paper appendix 4 on the suggested way forward for handling CO2 emissions, I would like to point out that models such as REAP, national DfT and HA Regional road network model have limited application to correct modeling of cycle traffic, and use unreliable data on bicycle ownership. Parallel approaches will be needed to handle modal shift to cycling.

For door-to-door longer journeys, the combination of bike and rail has every advantage for those within 3 or 4 miles of a railway station. Funding must be targeted at increasing the catchment area for rail journeys, and for large scale secure cycle parking at stations.

Changes in spatial planning are also needed, to stop straggled suburban development.

In conclusion, the Regional Transport Board needs to take fully into account the necessity for provision for bicycle traffic in all major schemes, and for related expansion in public transport.

References and further information:

1. Briefing paper written by John Meudell, CTC Council Member, on the DfT National Transport Model [of which the National Road Network Model (NRNM) is an element]
2. Regional cycle ownership data from the National Travel Survey. Bicycle ownership by region (SW is as high as the SE, and nearly the highest in the UK).

3. House of Commons Select Committee report on Obesity 2004
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmhealth/23/23.pdf>

“Only just over a third of men and around a quarter of women achieve the Department of Health’s target of 30 minutes of physical activity 5 times a week. Levels of walking and cycling have fallen drastically in recent decades, while the number of cars has doubled in 30 years.”

4. Obesity and overweight % in children age 13-17 for European countries. England is next to the worst 18%, Netherlands next to the best at 9%. (Adults are similar)
<http://www.easoobesity.org/docs/table%203.pdf>

5. DfT Cycle Infrastructure Design 2008
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/tnotes/lt208.pdf>

6. I have not included references to TASTS or Climate Change Bill as these are already familiar to SWRA Regional Transport Board.

only 25% lower than Sweden, yet usage is one quarter of that of Sweden and comparison with Holland suggests a similar picture albeit with slightly different proportions. Overall cycle ownership is seen to be increasing, more than 45% of households now owning at least one cycle, although use as a transport mode is still declining.

Cycle infrastructure in the UK is not well developed, indeed it is only relatively recently that cyclists needs were recognized with overall road planning, beginning with the National Cycle Strategy in 1996. Shortly afterwards the National Cycle Network project was launched aimed, it must be said, at the leisure cyclist, in the hope of encouraging an increase in cycle use. However, despite an increase in cycle use on the network itself it has not had the desired effect and cycling as a transport mode continues to decline.

Walking is the oldest form of transport, and until about 150 years ago, was the only transport mode used by most people. Now, in the UK, in terms of miles travelled, it is only about 3% of the total. Each person on average travels 192 miles a year on foot. This total has been declining over recent years. But in terms of journeys made, it represents 25% of all journeys taken. And most journeys by public transport or by car incorporate an element of walking, even if only from car park to office! In terms of total time on journeys, total walking time is about 1/3 of total time in a car. So, walking is still an important form of transport in the UK.

Surveys also show the biggest barriers to increased walking and cycle use as a transport (and, to a less extent leisure) mode is road safety, with lack of, or poor, facilities and high traffic speeds generally cited as the main concern. This is a particular issue for school children with surveys highlighting even sharper decline in schoolchildren walking or cycling to school.

References

“National Transport Model”, Working Paper 1, Department of Transport, 2003

“Development of National Transport Modelling Techniques”, Final Report to the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions HETA Division, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, Mott MacDonald, 2001

“Cycling in Great Britain”, Department for Transport, 1996

“Focus on Personal Travel”, National Statistics and Department for Transport, 2005

“National Cycle Strategy”, Department for Transport, 1996

Bicycle ownership by region, Great Britain, 2004-2006

	percentage			
	Own a bicycle	Have use of a bicycle	Have no use of a bicycle	Total
1 North East	32	1	67	100
2 NW & Merseyside	39	1	60	100
3 Yorkshire & Humberside	40	2	59	100
4 East Midlands	47	1	51	100
5 West Midlands	39	1	61	100
6 Eastern	50	2	48	100
7 Greater London	30	2	68	100
8 South East	49	2	49	100
9 South West	49	1	49	100
10 England	42	1	57	100
11 Wales	39	1	59	100
12 Scotland	38	1	61	100
Great Britain	41	1	57	100

TABLE 3

Overweight and obesity prevalence: latest available survey data for European countries and regions. All figures are based on the IOTF criteria for defining overweight and obesity in adolescents using age and gender-specific cut-offs equivalent to adult BMIs of >25 (overweight) and >30 (obesity).

