

Cycling Steering Group
21st October 2009
Committee Room 2, Guildhall, Cambridge

Minutes

Attendees:

Cllr Nimmo-Smith (Chair)
Cllr Ward
Cllr Levy
Cllr Bick
Cllr Al Bander
Cllr Todd-Jones
Cllr Lynn
Karl Tattam – Support Services Manager, Finance Dept.
Chris Fagan – Pay & Reward Manager, HR Dept.
David Roberts – Head of Policy & Projects
Clare Rankin – Cycling & Walking Officer
David Bradford – Cycling & Walking Officer
Mike Davies – Programme Manager 'Cycle Cambridge'

Apologies:

Cllr Reid.

1. Minutes of the last meeting – 25th June 2009 and matters arising.

Minutes agreed as an accurate record.

- Bikeability cycle training for schools in and around Cambridge was launched in September. Cycle Cambridge attended this years freshers fair with over 100 students signing up to be contacted for cycle training and 4000 cycle maps were given to students. The Bikeability Officer is approaching student unions and colleges to promote cycle training to students and will also be offering group cycle training for foreign language students.
- Cycle hoops. The trial placing of cycle hoops at various locations within the city has received a positive response. This was taken to the Disability Panel who proposed that the hoops feature a bright yellow strip for the benefit of the visually impaired. The Group expressed some reservation to this visual intrusion but proposed that the visibility strips be introduced on a trial basis outside the historic core. According to CR, there is currently no monitoring of how frequently these new hoops are being used but there appears to be demand in the selected areas.

2. Cycle Town Update – Gilbert Road (MD)

Cllr Al Bander declared an interest as a member of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign.

Hybrid cycle lanes were initially proposed, although this would require trees being removed. The fallback proposal would be the introduction of parking restrictions. Wider Advisory cycle lanes or mandatory lanes could be introduced. According to MD, County Council Members had called for residents to be offered more than this, with re-surfacing with high quality red tarmac and appropriate speed management measures being introduced. The road could be made narrower to discourage cars speeding. Other traffic calming measures would have escalating costs attached. A consultation period is to begin in January with the Gilbert Road proposals being shown in the context of other proposed schemes in the city.

According to Cllr Ward, at the recent Joint Transport Forum workshop, there had been objections to a whole avenue of trees being lost, but not to the removal of one or two. Mandatory cycle lanes cannot have double yellow lines, which according to Cllr Al Bander, raised the issue of compliance and enforceability. Many of those who park in Gilbert Road are not residents. The Group expressed disappointment at the failure of the hybrid lanes proposal and were keen that cycling high standard facilities been considered elsewhere in the city.

ACTION: All Steering Group member to feedback any further comments on the Gilbert Road proposals to MD.

3. Dept of Transport Cycle Guarantee Scheme. (MD/DB)

This scheme is being implemented by the Dept for Transport and is intended to promote commuter cycling. Local authorities including Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County council have been asked by the DfT to become supporting members of the scheme. The County Council have given the scheme their support. Most points of the scheme are covered within the City Council Employee Travel Plan apart from the Cycle Purchase Salary Sacrifice element. 'Cycle to Work' will be launched nationally on Wednesday 28th October 2009.

Cyclescheme are a tax-free bike provider who have won a Central Government tender and have a procurement framework agreement in place. They presently provide a service for several Government offices including the DfT, 27% of Local Authorities including Hunts district council, the NHS including Addenbrookes, and for Cambridge University. Cyclescheme work with many local independent bike shops, which has the added benefit of supporting local business and giving employees a wide choice when purchasing a bike. It is proposed that Cyclescheme be invited to make a presentation to Cambridge City Council about the service they can offer.

According to DB, all the other Cycling Towns around the country provide Cycle Purchase Salary Sacrifice but Cambridge, as an influential cycling city does not. The scheme should offer savings with minimal administrative requirements. According to KT the scheme has some accounting issues and the cost of managing it would outweigh the benefits. If a bike was stolen for example, the staff member would still have to pay the tax benefit amount although DB pointed out that Cyclescheme offer discounted insurance and insurance advise. Can the long-term availability of the salary sacrifice be guaranteed? Would a fair market value be given for the bike at the end of the timescale? From the HR perspective, the demand on officer time would have serious resource implications according to CF. This cannot be compared with the childcare vouchers scheme, as this will be discontinued from 2011.

Cllr Al Bander expressed some concern that the scheme focussed too heavily on those staff on high salaries and that an alternative, possibly means-tested voucher scheme would be more effective in encouraging those on lower incomes and those new to cycling.

The Group agreed that further information is needed both on the staff numbers that would be prepared to sign up, and also on exactly what would be demanded of officers. Local organisations that have adopted the scheme could be approached to help answer key questions. The Chair stated that the City Council should support the Cycle Guarantee Scheme, as Cambridge is the leading cycling city in the country. The Chair agreed to write a response letter to the DfT that would mirror that sent by the County Council.

ACTION: DB to invite Cyclescheme Company to make a presentation and answer questions about the service they provide.

ACTION: KT/CF to assess and report on the expected additional hours that will be accrued by HR

4. Other Cycle Town Updates (MD/CR)

- Hills Road Bridge. Positive feedback has been received on the proposal to remove a traffic lane, potentially allowing for the installation of a cycle lane. Further consultation is due to take place in November, with a report to go to County Cabinet in January. The Area Joint Committee expressed their support and this will need to be fed into the report. It is hoped that the work can begin in April 2010 in conjunction with the Cambridge Gateway scheme.
- Monitoring and evaluation. The statistics on the usage of cycling facilities monitored every hour to reveal how well people are using the network have revealed higher than anticipated figures. The Riverside area has proved to be a great success (1500 trips per day), as has the Shelford to Addenbrookes route (800 per day). All data is fed into the National Cycle Towns statistics.
- Madingley and Cherry Hinton Road. Consultation is due to take place in January. MD will be meeting with the Cambridge Cycling Campaign

on Friday 23rd October to discuss Cherry Hinton Road and the provision of a mixture of on/off road cycling provision. Parking is a particularly sensitive issue on Cherry Hinton Road, as many local businesses need short stay parking spaces.

- Grantchester Road. This is the only road in Cambridge subject to a 60mph speed limit. Discussions with the police to have this dropped to 30mph continue, with the possible fallback of 40mph.
- Cycle training. 100 students had signed up at the Fresher' Fair.

The Chair enquired whether the roundabout at Cherry Hinton Road could be replaced with traffic lights. According to MD this is a possibility, although there is currently an obstruction being caused by telephone junctions and cabling. According to Cllr Bick, the call for improved labelling of shared paths is often mentioned at his Area Committee. It would be optimising resources if these areas could be identified and there could be a crack down on the illegal mixing of paths. MD stressed that as 'Cycle Cambridge' is requested to address a large number of maintenance issues, it would be helpful if these could be proved to make a huge improvement and were also innovative.

Cllr Lynn raised the issues of the Station cycle parking (and the related anti-social behaviour) and recent thefts at the Grand Arcade cycle park. MD stressed that any improvements to the Station cycle parking are tied in with the longer-term CB1 development. The current issues are largely the result of bad management by National Express according to CR and DB. In terms of the Grand Arcade, Grosvenor, not the City Council, own the cycle park. Any thefts should be reported to the police who can insist on seeing any CCTV footage, but they may not if a large amount of footage has to be viewed. There is the option of the valet cycle parking but this is only available within the opening hours of the Station Cycles shop (CR).

- Monitoring as Public Art. This has been adopted by various cities in Europe and can act as a positive promotion of cycling at a prominent location such as Parker's Piece (CR). The Group agreed this was a good idea that needed to be placed at a gateway location within the City, visible to non-cyclists. Cllr Bick stressed that residents are sensitive regarding the use of Parker's Piece for something so prominent, but this was worthy of further debate. According to MD, monitoring as public art would be more acceptable to the public but harder to deliver. CR stated that she would welcome discussion on other suitable sites.

5. Meetings in 2010.

The group considered the proposal of meeting twice a year, in spring and in autumn. This was welcomed providing any actions would be taken forward and outcomes fed back to the Group via email.

ACTION: Officers to canvass dates for two Steering Group meetings in 2010.