

Waverley Cycling Plan 2011

Introduction

1. The benefits of cycling have long been recognised and successive governments have set ambitious targets to increase the number of journeys undertaken by bicycle. This reflects strong and growing concerns about health-related problems associated with inactive lifestyles; congestion and its impact on journey times and associated costs; and the impact on air quality and the environmental impact of vehicle emissions. Despite the benefits it has proved extremely difficult to bring about any substantial change in local government commitment and funding. The purpose of this updated Waverley Cycle Plan is to set out a strategy to encourage cycling in the Borough over the next few years.

2. The Plan will be kept under review by the Waverley Cycle Forum which will seek to respond quickly and positively to new developments. This may include incentives from local or central government to support cycling initiatives including those that should flow from implementation of Surrey's latest Local Transport Plan.

3. Waverley has a lot to offer cyclists. There is an excellent network of country lanes, many of which are quiet, narrow roads that follow old and winding routes. Some of these lanes form part of the Surrey Cycleway, a signed on-road leisure route. There is also an extensive and well-used rights of way network, including sections of important long distance routes such as the Downs Link (Regional Route 79), National Cycle Network Route 22 and the Christmas Pie trail between Guildford and Farnham. These routes are popular with both utility and leisure cyclists.

4. In any plan for cycling, safety is of paramount importance. Although the figures suggest that cycling in Waverley is relatively safe and accident rates are low, perceptions are another matter. The findings of a survey in Godalming in 2007 were in line with evidence from surveys elsewhere: there are a lot of people who are keen to cycle more but are deterred because they do not feel that they and their families will be safe as roads are so busy. This underlines the point that there is more to boosting cycling levels than improving the infrastructure. It is vital also to equip people with the skills that will give them the confidence they need, and for Waverley to apply the lessons from other areas about what has worked in persuading people that cycling is for them.

5. In Surrey a major problem is the sheer volume of traffic. Most people in Surrey own a bike but average distances covered and frequency of cycling are low even though around two thirds of Surrey journeys are less than five miles. The conclusion is that there is substantial latent demand and that cycling could replace many journeys currently undertaken by car. Waverley Borough Council first published a Cycling Plan in May 2005 at a time when there was an national target (dating from 1996) to quadruple cycling by 2012. This and subsequent more modest targets were dropped when it became clear they were not achievable. But getting more people to cycle remains an important goal.

6. The Transport Act 2000 required local authorities to produce and maintain a local transport plan setting out their strategies and policies for all modes of transport together with an implementation programme. The first Local Transport Plan was published in 2001 and covered the period from 2001/02 to 2005/06, so the original Waverley Cycling Plan dates from this period. In the meantime Surrey's updated Local Transport Plan (LTP2 has come and gone. It covered the period 2006/07 to 2010/11 and supported the development of cycling throughout Surrey but there is little evidence that it did much to increase cycling in Waverley.

Local Transport Plan

7. Surrey's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) took effect on 1 April 2011. As with previous Local Transport Plans it is highly supportive of cycling. But the previous two plans fell far short of their aspirations for cycling and the challenge is to do better this time. It is therefore worth summarising some of the LTP3 objectives which relate to cycling as it sets the context for the Waverley Cycle Plan. (The full Plan is available on the SCC website.)

Air quality. Given that most trips in Surrey are under five miles many could easily be cycled or walked. This would help economic growth, cut emissions, contribute to road safety and improve public health. It would also help with the long-term aim of decarbonising road transport. Any money raised by introducing 'sticks' to discourage travel, especially by car, "would need to be reinvested in public transport and improvements to cycling and pedestrian facilities and promotion, in order to have a positive contribution to reducing emissions".

Climate change strategy. The Travel Planning Strategy details plans for support for schools and workplaces focusing on self-help resources to support behavioural change, including a switch to cycling and walking. This will be supported by the Cycling Strategy which includes a commitment "to fully consider cyclists in the design of new highways schemes [and] to recommend good provision for cycling in new developments".

Passenger Transport Strategy – local bus services. Cycle access to railway stations has been much improved in recent years and ideas for installing good quality cycle facilities at key bus stops to increase the catchment area for bus services are now to be taken forward.

Parking. As parking by business employees contributes to parking congestion SCC's Community Travel Team works with businesses to develop plans aimed at reducing the number of cars used for commuting to work. Cycling is seen as part of the solution.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Scoping Report. The strategy will focus on measures designed to encourage a switch from cars to bicycles.

Main Infrastructure Measures (promoted under the Cycling Strategy)

- Advanced stop lines.
- Contra-flow cycling on one way streets
- Cycle parking
- Cycle route signing
- New &/or improved cycle lanes
- New &/or improved cycle tracks
- New &/or improved shared use footways

Secondary Infrastructure Measures (promoted primarily under other strategies)

- New &/or improved traffic-free, safe routes for cycling close to / linking with local communities, businesses & facilities
- New &/or improved traffic-free, safe routes for equestrian use.

Main Promotional and Behavioural Measure (promoted primarily under the Cycling Strategy)

- Support for setting up community based workshops providing bicycle maintenance & recycling in the community

Secondary Promotional and Behavioural Measures (promoted primarily under other strategies)

- Cycle training
- Police enforcement
- School travel planning
- Workplace travel planning

8. The above approach is also supported by Waverley's own *Draft Spatial Portrait, Issues, Objectives and Spatial Vision* and by the Surrey Structure Plan which dates from 2004 but remains relevant. The Waverley paper says:

Providing improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services and facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport, rather than having to rely on access by car, whilst recognising that this may be difficult in rural areas.

And the *Surrey Structure Plan* says:

- Measures to encourage cycling (along with walking and public transport) should be incorporated in development proposals.
- Development proposals should help to promote sustainable travel choices "by reducing the amount of land used for car parking but increasing cycle parking facilities"
- 'Green tourism' schemes which promote cycling (along with walking and horse riding) "are particularly welcome."

9. In promoting cycling over the next few years Waverley will need to play its part in developing schemes that support LTP3. The Waverley Cycle Forum will have a central role in bringing key people together to identify opportunities and facilitate the implementation of priority schemes.

10. One further document of major significance for cycling is the *Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)* published in November 2007. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 required all highway authorities in England to prepare such plans and to ensure that they are fully integrated into the Local Transport Plans and the RoWIP accordingly forms part of LTP3. Key recommendations that bear on Waverley's plan include the following.

- Identify, create and improve and promote greenways giving access to the countryside from urban areas.
- Develop and improve routes for recreational cyclists, including family cycling groups,
- Use the opportunity the RoWIP represents to help improve access to local services such as schools, work, GP surgeries and shops bearing in mind that it is the primary means of bidding for funding for these purposes to Central Government.
- New developments are often a threat to rights of way but can also offer opportunities and the RoWIP says "it is essential that local planning policies reflect and support the aims of this Plan".
- Consideration should be given to upgrading footpaths to bridleways where appropriate to allow multi-user routes.
- On funding: "...rights of way can offer exceptional value for money in comparison with conventional highway schemes."

Gathering and using evidence

11. The main objective of plans, policies and strategies is to change things for the better and to do so as cost-effectively as possible. Knowing what measures work best, and at what cost, is essential if future investment is to be as productive as possible. There have been many national and local cycling targets over the years but most have been missed, though the paucity of good data makes it hard to be sure just what has been achieved. There are no easy answers: effective measurement can be expensive and could divert resources from the task of making improvements on the ground. But there are things that can be done.

12. The traditional traffic measure of roadside counters is a non-starter in Waverley. There aren't any at present and a substantial number would be needed to yield anything useful in terms of cycling data. A further complication is that cycling is split between roads, Sustrans routes (where monitoring does happen), rights of way (mostly bridleways) and permissive paths.

13. Other attempts have included counting number of bicycles parked at railway stations but so far within Waverley this has only been done at Farnham. Surveys of numbers of pupils cycling to school can also be worthwhile and schools sometimes have relevant data. Travel surveys provide another option but are expensive unless conducted as part of more wide-ranging research. Because estimates suggest that only around 2 per cent of Surrey journeys are by bicycle a large survey would be needed for changes in use to be measured with any precision.

14. One useful approach is to look at the experience of Cycling Demonstration Towns (CDTs), where monitoring has been done as the main point is to see what works and spread good practice on the basis of solid evidence. Of course, one cannot assume that things that have worked in one locality will necessarily work in the same way or to the same degree elsewhere. But at least experiments such as those in CDTs gives policy-makers a starting point for determining what kinds of initiatives stand the best chance of success. In Waverley it would not be difficult to get volunteers to undertake systematic surveys eg of numbers of bikes parked at specific locations and to collate basic data from schools.

Developments since 2005

15. There is only modest evidence that the original Waverley Cycle Plan has made a difference, with little progress on the proposed schemes listed in it. But there have been some worthwhile developments in recent years, notably strong progress with the Farnham Greenways. A detailed summary is provided in the 2010/11 Annual Report of the Waverley Cycle Forum at Annex B. Because this is the first time such a report has been produced it reflects on progress over the past 6 years. It covers the development of cycling in the Borough generally and does not focus narrowly on the Forum's own efforts.

Future arrangements

16. Following consultations with Forum members and others it has been decided that a new approach to implementation of the Cycle Plan is needed. This will involve picking out a small number of the most urgent schemes in each area to be undertaken – or at least initiated - in the next financial year. In setting priorities the feasibility of the timetable, including availability of funding, will be major considerations.

21. Action would not be restricted to the schemes picked out for priority treatment. Other schemes

should be taken forward wherever possible, for example if new sources of funding can be found or if a scheme can be rolled up into other highways work that is happening anyway.

22. The Forum is responsible for monitoring progress, identifying obstacles and finding solutions. The Forum will keep the Plan as a whole under review to ensure that new opportunities – for example through planning gain – are not missed. The Forum welcomes public involvement is to be welcomed: a Plan of this sort relies for its successful evolution on the detailed knowledge and experience of local people. It is regrettable that hitherto there has been little input from those parts of the Borough that are not served by a cycle campaign group. Better publicity including a higher profile for the Cycle Forum could help in developing a more comprehensive approach.

Setting annual plans

23. The Action Plan and associated schemes in the 2005 plan were sound but arguably over-ambitious as judged by results. In part this is a matter of resources, not just in terms of investment in schemes or staff input but also in terms of the amount of time volunteers can devote to the range of tasks that clamour for their attention. The Cycle Forum concluded that the full list of schemes, which includes a scoring system to indicate the level of priority, is worth maintaining. Although it has come to be regarded as more of a wish-list than a firm plan of action it serves a purpose. Such a list needs to be a living document which is regularly refreshed with new ideas, but without it opportunities will be missed. However, a sharp focus is needed on a few schemes to be accorded highest priority in each area. In future these will be identified by the Forum and then form the basis of an agreed annual plan.

24. The main burden will fall to the Waverley Cycle Forum, working with Surrey County Council, and other organisations such as Sustrans and CTC (through its Right to Ride network) to determine priorities for each year which will then need to be signed off by the Local Committee. The Forum will monitor progress and seek to keep the Plan on track.

25. To some up, these key tasks that will be undertaken by the Forum in the first instance:

- Identify priority schemes in each part of the Borough for inclusion in the annual plan for the forthcoming financial year.
- Update the full list of schemes which will then be worked through systematically as resources allow and will provide a starting-point when developing future annual plans.
- Identify the scope for additional soft measures – training for adults and children, and encouragement to cycle more through education and information.
- Identify all possible sources of funding for cycling initiatives.
- Set out the mechanisms for reviewing and updating the Cycling Plan, including the role of Waverley Cycle Forum, Surrey County Council and other relevant bodies.

26. Experience across the country shows that getting schemes right for cyclists requires a great deal of expertise: resources are scarce yet are often badly used and fail to deliver what cyclists actually need. To help address this problem clear and authoritative guidance on the development and implementation of cycling schemes was published by the Department for Transport in October 2008. It is entitled *Cycle Infrastructure Design* and in deciding what should be done and how, there is an overriding principle that all schemes should be consistent with this guidance unless there are compelling reasons against. There are many examples around the country of poorly implemented schemes and in drawing up the new guidance DfT was motivated in part by concern that the limited resources available for cycling schemes must be used better.

Aim and measures

The central aim is to increase the level of cycling throughout the Borough, particularly where cycling replaces car journeys.

28. Measures

1. Draw up a list of key destinations for which improved provision for cyclists is particularly important. Schools and railway stations are examples. Come up with plans for improving priority routes, consulting as widely as necessary. **WBC/WCF**
2. Ensure 'planning gain' opportunities are used to the full and that new developments include good cycle parking provision. **WBC**
3. Update the list of schemes to be included in current or future annual plans as required and maintain an up-to-date list on the website. **WBC**
4. Provide information for the public using eg the Waverley magazine; maps (including contributing to those published by SCC) and relevant websites. **WBC/SCC**
5. Work with local businesses (cycle shops, pubs, those providing holiday accommodation) to promote cycling. **WCF/WBC**
6. Forum to review cycle parking and identify gaps in provision. **WCF**
7. Liaise with Surrey police to identify where bike thefts occur and consider what measures could be taken to reduce the level of theft. **WBC**
8. Provide cycling proficiency training for both children and adults. **SCC**
9. Develop a first class website to bring together all the information relevant to those who cycle, or could be tempted to cycle, in Waverley. **WBC**

Conclusions

29. In a document of this sort the focus is on how to improve facilities and in doing so emphasises the shortcomings of existing provision. It is too easy to miss the positives. Many of us – though not yet enough – love cycling in the Borough, on roads, cycle routes, bridleway, tracks and mountain bike trails. At its best, cycling in Waverley is healthy, exhilarating and fun. For journeys of a few miles it can also be quick - often quicker than car especially as one can travel door-to-door without the need to search for parking. And because cyclists are less affected by traffic conditions journey times are usually more consistent and predictable.

30. Add to that the fact that burning calories is good for people and burning fossil fuels is bad for the planet and a switch from cars to bicycles for many journeys is in everybody's interests. In reducing congestion, particularly by switching to alternatives to cars for short journeys, there would be a disproportionate benefit in terms of reductions in pollution and CO2 emissions.

References

The Surrey Local Transport Plan, LTP3, April 2011

Surrey Structure Plan 2004

Surrey County Council Cycling Strategy 2007-10. (Produced to support LTP2) Revised version due soon.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey. November 2007

Department for Transport Note 2/08. Cycle Infrastructure Design October 2008.

Information to be included on Cycle Forum website

Maps showing local routes (which should not stop at Waverley's boundaries where the route continues in adjacent areas)

Cycle parking provision throughout the borough

Details of all maps of particular relevance to cyclists, including the Surrey Cycle Guides

Minutes, agendas etc for Cycle Forum meetings

Details about who to contact on different aspects of cycling issues

Security advice

Safe routes to school

Any Newsletters about cycling produced in the area

Where to go for training

Links to other relevant websites

Annex A

Bodies and individuals responsible for cycling in Waverley

Surrey County Council Highways authority is responsible for roads and rights of way. SCC also provides cycle parking facilities in towns and works with Railtrack to provide parking at railway stations.

Waverley Borough Council is responsible for planning issues, in particular for securing cycling facilities through funding from developers through planning gain under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. More generally, WBC work in partnership with SCC to identify priorities for new cycling facilities or improvements to current facilities.

The Waverley Cycle Forum brings together councillors, local cyclists and council officials to help determine priorities through consultation across the Borough and helps keep plans on track. [Could annex terms of reference but maybe better just as link when this goes on website]

Surrey established a Local Committee in Waverley in 2002 to bring its decision-making and its services closer to the communities it serves. The Committee comprises 9 County Councillors and 9 Borough Councillors who meet regularly to discuss a range of local issues including highways and transport.

Sustrans are a registered charity responsible for the National Cycle Network and links to it. They have a particular interest in facilitating the development of safe routes to school.

Waverley has a Voluntary Cycling Coordinator to liaise with stakeholders to help ensure that the Cycling Plan is implemented effectively.

CTC – the UK's National Cyclists Organisation works with local authorities to provide training for both children and adults. CTC also has a network of Right to Ride representatives who campaign on cycling issues locally and work with other stakeholders to secure improved provision for both road cyclists and mountain bikers.