

Southampton Cycling Campaign Newsletter

July 2004

Welcome to this my first newsletter. I would like to thank Lizzy for past newsletters and all her help in developing this one.

Help to address the problem of expanding bike bans and shrinking bike storage facilities by responding to a new survey currently being carried out by South West Trains (SWT). Whether you sea folder, leave your bike at the station or gamble on finding one of the diminishing number of allocated bike places on the train, it is important that SWT hears your voice. The survey is contained within a leaflet available from SWT stations.

If you would like anything included in the next newsletter you can send it to me at: tim@southamptoncycling.org.uk

Tim.

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November 2003 English Regions Cycling Development Team Summary Sheet - Local Authority Performance on Cycling

Introduction

Southampton is a large city tightly confined within its administrative boundary, which is no more than around 5 miles from town centre to boundary. It lies on the south coast, and forms part of the wider south Hampshire conurbation. The population is around 217,000 and the density very high at 44 pph. In addition, it is generally flat, although there are hillier areas east of the River Itchen. Overall, these factors suggest a good potential for increasing cycling. The volume and speed of traffic and its road system act as major deterrents to cycling. It is a busy port and major commercial and shopping centre, served by many major roads. M27 skirts

the north and a spur from this comprising a 6-lane dual carriageway leads to the city centre, which is ringed by dual carriageways. These major urban roads create severe severance and deterrents for cyclists Summary of the Local Authority's Progress on Cycling.

The Council has made some attempts at creating alternative or parallel cycle routes to these key radials, but in general these are circuitous, sub-standard in widths and sightlines and lose priority at junctions. In addition, distributors tend to be busy and have very few facilities to promote cycling. This means that it is difficult to realise the potential for cycle commuting. The wide central shopping street is pedestrianised but open to cyclists. There are major central developments taking place with a mixture of high density flats and leisure, but in spite of their central location these are not well connected to the town centre. The University of Southampton lies in a suburban area north of the town centre, and is a strong advocate for cycling, introducing numerous cycle tracks, cycle parking and other cycle friendly initiatives. Cycle use is not high at 4.3% of journeys to work in 2001 (unchanged from 1991). The Council has made minor improvements to cycling at the edges, but if cycling is to be fully encouraged, there will be a need to prioritise cycling, both on-road and where appropriate off-road, and provide complementary restraint on car use. Experience from Europe suggests that this will complement schemes to promote public transport use and reduce traffic congestion. There is a realistic potential to achieve a significant increase in cycling (with all its contingent benefits).

Recommendations to the Local Authority

Ensure that the impacts of targeted increase in cyclists are fully considered in all other proposals, and in particular, the City Centre Management Plan. Other programmes should ensure that they cater for the targeted increase in cycling either on or off road, without creating conflicts with pedestrians. Ensure that barriers of the inner ring road and other major roads are overcome to create viable cycle routes.

Ensure that major new developments contribute substantially to cycling targets by ensuring that they are fully and easily accessible and that cycling is given sufficient priority and advantage to be a realistic option for a large percentage of people and journeys.

With the assistance of the Cycling Forum and cycling groups, establish a strategic framework for a cycling network, with priority, secondary and access cycle routes. Use this where possible, to prioritise spending and developer gain, to encourage both urban-wide cycle commuting and local journeys.

The programme for 20mph zones near schools should be expanded with the aim of reducing traffic in all residential areas to under 20mph to meet safety targets, promote cycle use by children and adults. It is of some concern that the new PFI schools did not as a matter of course prioritise cycling journeys.

Set stretching targets to increase cyclist training provision. Investigate how other authorities have introduced best practice, including advanced training at secondary schools and how school training can be closely linked to safe routes programmes.

The Cycling Strategy includes procedures for cycle review, the hierarchy of solutions, key criteria and cycle audit. Adopt these procedures more fully in the implementation of cycle routes and other infrastructure.

Identify key barriers and quick wins to expand the cycle network.

Ensure that cyclists are accorded greater priority in all schemes, in line with the Strategy, especially at junctions, side roads and cycle parking in the most favourable locations.

Work in partnership with cycling groups to increase understanding of constraints and opportunities. Share issues of good design and learn from best practice elsewhere. Assessment against Key Criteria

Programme of work targeting list for improving cycling facilities in Southampton

1) climbing lanes-only Bitterne Road is mentioned-which section is proposed?

Climbing lanes are needed on:-

- a) Bitterne Road West (Lances Hill) from Midanbury Lane or Glenfield Avenue junctions eastbound
- b) Bitterne Road East from Mon Crescent (west arm) to Thornhill Park Road/Upper Deacon Road junction
- c) Bitterne Road East from Somerset Avenue west up hill to Commercial Street
- c) Bursledon Road-the various inclines ie Upper Deacon Road junction eastbound to North East Road junction traffic lights
- d) from Jewsons Antelope House access up dual carriageway eastbound
- e) Bursledon Road westbound up hill from Upper Deacon Road lights to Bath Road traffic lights

2) Cutbush lane-note proposal to remove order SE section.

It is disappointing to note there is no mention of converting the existing footway along A27 from Cutbush Lane junction at city boundary west along Gaters Hill/Mansbridge road to Mans bridge/Riverside Park to link to NCN route.

This footway was the subject of services installation scheme last autumn which resulted in all the overgrown vegetation being cut back/cleared along south side.

Now it is an even more attractive and used route than previously, particularly for eastbound less strong cyclists avoiding the narrow steep carriageway up A27 Gaters Hill from Gaters Mill to Haskins entrance .

It is a natural link from the Eastleigh BC route from Itchen Valley Country Park -Townhill Way-Cutbush Lane into /from the city.

It is also the main commuter route for Ford workers/university workers/workers going to Eastleigh etc etc from the east ie West End village/Hedge End/Bitterne/Harefield/Thornhill areas etc .

It is little used by pedestrians, has only one frontage residential property well off the road and could readily be signed up as a shared footway/cycleway giving much benefit and regularising the daily illegal footway cycling on this most popular link at rush hours and at weekends by recreational cyclists.

3) Again it is disappointing to see nothing mentioned about signing up the Sholing Valley greenway corridor from Bursledon Road to Millers Pnd then from Millers Pond south west along track bounding watercourse through bottom of Mayfield park to Weston grove road as a cycle route.

That route was previously marked as a possible shared route on the September 1994 Southampton Cyclists Guide map (the one that cost 20p).

Ten years have gone by and it has disappeared off the cycle map completely despite being increasingly used and being a very pleasant route and linking to the new route at Weston Shore from the north east of the city .

The route is there, it is used, why can it not be signed and recognised more formally-at least in part?

If Hinkler Road is addressed it would form part of a longer distance cross city traffic free route a link to the Eastleigh BC Hedge End extensive cycleway network which comes to an abrupt stop at the city boundary in Thornhill Park Road.

I have spoken to a governor at Kanes Hill Primary School, there would appear to be the possibility to create a link route from Hinkler Road along through the north - western edge of the school grounds to link to Kanes Hill

Hope you find the above comments helpful constructive comment, keep up the good work.

If you would like to meet me to look at any of these matters please contact me.

Eric Reed

Sustrans Liaison Ranger and

New Deal for Thornhill Transport sub-committee working group member.

What can local cycling campaigns do?

While most cycle campaigns have their own stated Mission or Manifesto, the key points of many can be summarised as:

"To get more people cycling, in a safer environment".

As a general rule, of course, the more concisely something can be expressed, the more variations it can cover. Campaigns work on many fronts, including:

- Publicise cycling as a valid and practical form of transport

Cycling is in many ways the ideal form of transport in an urban environment, and has significant health and environmental benefits. However it is still seen as a fringe activity by many - including many motorists and transport planners. Cycling campaigns tackle this in a variety of ways. One unusual but successful step taken by Hackney Cycle Campaign was to lend bikes to their local highway engineers during National Bike Week (see <http://www.hackney-cyclists.org.uk/shift.htm>). On a more everyday note, every cyclist on the road is an advertisement for cycling - hopefully a good advertisement.

- Say "Thank you"

When you get progress, drop a note of thanks - or more if appropriate - to the person or agency responsible. Make sure they know what they're doing is appreciated, and they're more likely to keep doing it!

- Provide information

Most campaigns hold monthly meetings to gather information and plan future projects. In some cases this may be combined with a ride or social event.

For those campaign members who cannot attend these meetings, the campaign newsletter provides vital information. These are normally sent out several times a year according to resources. They normally contain information on current and future campaign projects, information on any social rides the group may run, and general news and interest. Newsletters are often distributed to the public via local bike shops and libraries, and so may contain a brief introduction to the group and its aims for the first-time reader.

Besides the newsletter, leaflets can be used to distribute information - anything from a small flyer about the group handed out at events, to information on cycling and bike maintenance, or warnings of new developments which may not properly consider cyclists.

- Provide services and assistance

Many groups have managed to negotiate a small discount for members at local bike shops. Group members may also assist beginners as "Bike Buddies", by accompanying them on their regular rides to work or shops. A less "labour-intensive" version of this is to run occasional social rides for beginners.

Some groups provide various insurance and legal aid cover, as well as running classes in cycling or bike maintenance. This can, however, require more resources than some smaller campaigns have available, and these services may also be offered by commercial entities - info to follow.

- Represent local cyclists

In many ways the campaign can be a focal point for the needs and concerns of local cyclists. This platform can be used to address other road users, and the council, to make the cyclists' voice heard. Forward-looking councils will use this relationship to distribute information to, and seek opinion from, local cyclists.

Ideally, this will be a case of "working with the council". Unfortunately in many cases it is still a case of "applying pressure". Whichever it may be, it is always good to thank the council when forward steps are made; it justifies the effort expended by the council, and improves relations between the groups.

- Work with other local groups

Much can be gained by pooling resources with, for examples, local environmental groups or pedestrians groups. Besides sparing resources, the united front this presents can improve the credibility of the groups in the public eye.

- Organise Events

While groups can organise events for the public at any time, the focus is always on National Bike Week. Popular activities include:

Five Mile Challenge

Sixty percent of all journeys in the UK are under 5 miles - a distance that can quite easily be achieved on a bike. The Five Mile Challenge allows people to prove this to themselves. A 5 mile long circular course, preferably in light or no traffic, is marked out. The public is then invited to ride this in return for a certificate (produced on a home PC, or bulk printed if you're expecting a good turn-out).

According to the BMA, cycling 20 miles a week can vastly improve your overall fitness (works for me :).

Dr Bike

When someone tells you they don't cycle much because it's such hard work, take a look at their bike. You'll probably find a chain that's turning to rust, and tyres below 30 PSI. Very few people adequately care for their bikes - It is estimated that of the 20 million bikes in the UK, only 6 million are rideable. Providing a "Dr Bike" service at your events can therefore be very useful. It consists of making a few simple checks: tyre pressure, general condition of the vehicle, brake set-up, and fixing them where possible. If you can get your local bike shop interested, you can provide a more complete service. Beware of possible liabilities if you fix anything yourself, or incorrectly tell anyone that their bike is safe.

Just having a track pump available can produce results that make people say "this is easier than I remembered".

Information Stands

Stock up on your own leaflets, plus those from the CTC, Sustrans etc. Have a list of local bike shops and cycle routes, and collect some of your more recent cycling magazines. Add a few knowledgeable campaign members and you've got a very popular resource.

Static Displays

Clean your bike and stand it in front of the stall. Anything slightly unusual will interest the punters. If you can find a Moulton, Tandem or Recumbent, great, but even my MTB has gathered quite a lot of interest, set up with panniers, mudguards, rack etc for town use.

Talks

The topic can be anything from "The National Cycling Network" to "My tour through Zimbabwe". Make sure it's well advertised and prepared. If you're not used to public speaking, be wary!

Bike Sports

One of the slightly more complex options. Possibilities range from 100m grass races for kids, through obstacle courses, cycling treasure hunts, to demonstrations of "bike polo", whatever that is...

Again, watch out for Liability.

Commuter Challenge

The commuter challenge is quite simple; who can get through city traffic from A to B in the least time, obeying traffic rules and travelling safely. The contestants use different modes of transport, for example: bus, taxi, car, bike. The bike usually wins. Find an area of normal city traffic, not an area of empty roads (if your area has such a thing...).

Social Rides

Always a part of the arsenal, but in NBW, the public have that extra reason to join in.

Pannier Sales

In other words, a car boot sale without cars (sounds good to me). Bike trailers are, of course, allowed.

Bike to Work

Bike to Work day is in the middle of NBW. Car-free day is in Green Transport Week. Either of these makes an ideal time to get people to go to work by bike. One of the more popular incentives is to get the employer to offer a free breakfast. However, I have to admit that the prospect of riding to work without having eaten isn't a personal incentive ;)

- Join or Start a BUG (Bicycle User Group) at work

From the leaflets mentioned above

A bug is a group of people within an organisation who want to improve facilities for cyclists. BUG's are one of the best ways to support cycle commuting and thus promote cycling as a transport choice.

When you start running a BUG the support generated can encourage decision makers within the organisation to provide better facilities for cyclists. BUG's can also be a focus for social activities.

Getting Started

1. Find out how many staff are interested in starting a group, and bear in mind that many non-cyclists might cycle if conditions were better. Gaining support from one or more managers or senior managers will help get you ideas forward.

2. Hold an initial meeting. Keep it short, get names and numbers of attendees and find out what your members expect and want from the BUG. Decide whether or not you need to charge members a small fee. Set out your aims and draw up an action plan.

3. Having identified your aims, you need to decide how best to achieve them. Using your contacts, plan how to present your aims to management. Try to cover the following points:

- * Book an appointment
- * Present a clear copy of your action plan
- * Be ready and informed enough to answer questions (eg financial outlay, space etc.) Grants may be available from council or environmental groups.

- * Be positive and present the beneficial aspects of cycling for staff and the organisation. (see above)

- * Fix a date for the next meeting

4. Many local health associations keep a register of BUG's, and may be able to provide resources (posters, leaflets etc) and information on local events.

A couple of points I'd add to this. You may be able to get valuable help from your local cycle campaign, so contact them early on. A warning to those not used to presentations: Bear in mind that management may not initially be enthusiastic about the plans, so make sure your presentation is of good quality. Try and have it complete, and know exactly what you're going to say, a week before you present it. Even with Parkinson's Law, this should give you time to fine-tune it.

Once the group is established

There are many ways to sustain interest in the group:

* Raising the profile of cycling by supporting or arranging events like National Bike Week and Bike to Work Day.

* Arrange social events and encourage new cyclists.

* Promote your group in the local press.

* Join a larger cycle campaign or cycling club, and take part in their events.

What can a BUG achieve?

Besides the obvious benefits such as personal fitness, fun and saving money, a BUG can help raise awareness of the need for better facilities for cyclists at work such as secure cycle parking, showers and changing facilities and cycle travel expenses.

Richard George

Oxforddonstaughthowcycle

Oxford University is providing free cycle training for staff who are keen to adopt a greener transport policy but nervous about surviving 21st century traffic.

"If we are promoting alternatives to using the car we have to make sure we are looking after their safety," said the university's environment and travel officer, Ed Wigzell.

He said that about 75 staff took the course last year and a couple of dozen had signed up for the first sessions this year, with more coming through.

A survey had indicated that more than 3,000 of the university's staff cycled to work.

Although many trainees were experienced cyclists, some had "literally never been on a bike before".

They were taught road positioning, how to be decisive, how to create space around themselves and not get "marginalised into the gutter".

Car drivers are not the main problem.

"There are so many buses in Oxford. Buses and cyclists are quite a contentious subject," he said.

The courses are run by Bristol-based Life Cycle UK, which also lists Bristol University as a client.

The training in Oxford is essentially for staff only, though if more funding is forthcoming, as it might be, it could be extended to wobbly student cyclists.

CyclingImprovementattheTownhillPark,CutBushLane

As a response to the petition, a site meeting was held with representatives from EBC, SCC, and Hampshire County Council street lighting and the police. At the time there was objection from local residents and the Police, as they were concerned that if this section of road were lit, it would encourage young youths to hang around there. I still believe this is the case.

On a more positive note, Hampshire County Council are planning to change the barriers on cut bush lane, as there has been considerable complaints about motorcycles speeding along this route. Chicane barriers will be put to deter motorcyclists from using this route, but still allow cyclists and horse riders to pass through. The barriers and existing gates will also be painted or covered with reflective material, to make them more visible. It is anticipated that works will start April/ May this year.

I will also contact our grounds maintenance department to cut back the overhanging vegetation on this route.

Sarah Wallbridge

Getintouch

Chairpersons EricReed

Membership 39SwiftRoad,Woolston,Southampton,SO199FP

Wantsomethingraisedatameeting? CallPeteRoremail
agenda@southamptoncycling.org.uk.

Andfinally,tokeepourmeetingsontrack,howaboutgettingthatwingeof
yoursystembymailing
winge@southamptoncycling.org.uk



Meetings at 19:45 every 2ndMonday of the month
(exceptAugust)atFriendsMeetingHouse,Ordnance
Road.

This newsletter is available
online at
www.southamptoncycling.org.uk

Membershipapplication

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Annualfee(pleasecircle) £10Waged/£5Unwaged

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