

CABINET

12 SEPTEMBER 2012

CITIES FIT FOR CYCLING

REPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS & INFRASTRUCTURE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

Notice of Motion - Council Meeting 18 April 2012

CAB2364 - Winchester District Cycling Strategy – 4 July 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In February 2012, The Times newspaper published their Cities Fit For Cycling campaign with an eight point manifesto, calling for cities to be made fit for cycling.

At Council in April former Councillor Jackson submitted a notice of motion asking the Council to support this campaign and it was agreed that the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration with a request that it make recommendations back to Council when the matter comes back to it for decision. There are no direct practical consequences for the City Council arising from a decision either way.

The full wording of the motion and comments made by Members to be taken into account in the discussion are attached in the Council Minute Extract at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Cabinet recommends to Council that the Notice of Motion be supported as an indication of the Council's support for measures to improve the safety of cyclists and the promotion of cycling generally.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 18 April 2012 a notice of motion was submitted by former Councillor Jackson requesting that 'This Council supports The Times 'Cities fit for Cycling' campaign with its 8-point manifesto for cities to be made fit for cyclists'. The motion was referred to Cabinet for consideration before the item comes to Council for debate.
- 1.2 The Times newspaper launched a campaign in February 2012 called 'Cities Fit for Cycling' following the serious injury of one of its journalists in a cycling accident in central London. The newspaper produced an eight point manifesto for the safety of cyclists in Britain's towns and cities.
- 1.3 This report considers whether Cabinet should pledge their support to the campaign in light of the recently agreed Cycling Strategy. It explains that the City Council's role in relation to the measures promoted by the campaign is limited because most relate to the County Council as transport/highway authority or to Central Government which is responsible for national policy and funding allocations. If the City Council were to formally support the manifesto it would not be making a commitment to direct action but it would be indicating its support for the objective of safer cycling which is clearly a desirable objective.
- 1.4 The eight points of the manifesto are as follows
 - *Lorries entering a city centre should be required by law to fit sensors, audible turning alarms, extra mirrors and safety bars to stop cyclists being thrown under the wheels.*

Comment

This is a matter for Central Government legislation. There is no direct action the City Council can take in this regard.

- *The 500 most dangerous road junctions must be identified, redesigned or fitted with priority traffic lights for cyclists and Trixi mirrors that allow lorry drivers to see cyclists on their near-side.*

- Comment

Hampshire County Council is responsible for identifying any highway junctions that are dangerous and implementing any necessary measures to reduce such problems. The County Council monitor all personal injury accidents and any significant clusters of accidents and those of a more severe nature are routinely investigated. The Government has recently announced a new funding source to improve junctions with known cyclist accident problems. The City Council could assist with any projects in the Winchester district.

- *A national audit of cycling to find out how many people cycle in Britain and how cyclists are killed or injured should be held to underpin effective cycle safety.*

Comment

This is a matter for the Department for Transport.

- *Two per cent of the Highways Agency budget should be earmarked for next generation cycle routes, providing £100 million a year towards world-class cycling infrastructure. Each year cities should be graded on the quality of cycling provision.*

Comment

Dedicating 2% of the Highways Agency budget for cycling schemes would be a matter for Government to determine. In terms of allocating the Local Transport Plan funding to cycling/ safety schemes then this would be a matter for Hampshire County Council, as Highway Authority, to decide upon. The recent production and adoption of the District Wide cycling strategy is a good mechanism to help secure such funding. This is also being used as the basis for the scheme list to be included in the District Transport Statement which the County Council is currently formulating. The City Council will use the documents to secure funding to support cycling from new development proposals

- *The training of cyclists and drivers must improve and cycle safety should become a core part of the driving test.*

Comment

Hampshire County Council undertakes cycle training and this is funded by the Government. Road Safety Education generally is a function of the County Council. The driving test criterion is set by the Government.

- *20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas where there are no cycle lanes.*

Comment

The introduction of 20mph speed limits is a County Council function and the City Council has been active in promoting 20mph speed limits, including a 20mph scheme around the Square/Market Lane in Winchester. The County Council has a pilot 20mph residential programme of schemes which it hopes to agree in September. Winchester Town Forum is keen to promote 20mph schemes in the Town and is actively seeking to encourage the County Council to implement additional schemes. The Local Sustainable Transport Fund allocation includes funding in 2013/2014 and 2015 for 20mph speed limit schemes. Details will be drawn up in consultation with Ward Councillors.

- *Businesses should be invited to sponsor cycleways and cycling super-highways, mirroring the Barclays-backed bicycle hire scheme in London.*

Comment.

The Barclays cycling super highways are approximately 15kms long each and are designed to bring commuters from the boroughs of London into Central London. Each highway costs approximately £8 million to £11 million to install depending on the infrastructure needed. This type of cycling infrastructure needs wide carriageway widths to fit within the existing highway. Winchester's historic layout and historic features means that carriageway widths in some places are very narrow.

- *Every city, even those without an elected mayor, should appoint a cycling commissioner to push home reforms.*

Comment

The new Winchester City Council cycling champion (Councillor Southgate) was appointed in Cabinet on 4 July 2012 along with a further Member representative to the Winchester Cycling Group (Councillor Weir). The Champion will raise issues about cycling across the District; attend and raise cycling issues on behalf of the City Council at the Cycle Working Group and be a liaison between Ward Members and the Cycle Working Group.

- 1.5 The City Council has a good record of supporting cycling and making Winchester more 'cycle friendly' despite the difficulties created by the topography of the town. The Winchester District Cycling Strategy was recently approved by Cabinet and promotion of cycling is an integral part of development proposals and the Winchester Town Access Plan. Although resources are limited, any opportunity to improve the accessibility of cycling as an option is looked at very carefully and a number of projects are underway.

- 1.6 Off road and quiet road cycling infrastructure such as the NCN 23 and Hockley Viaduct route are being improved by creating new cycleways allowing families to cycle from the south direction into Winchester away from busy traffic routes. The implementation of such schemes require a great deal of staff resource to deal with legal, planning, ecological and engineering matters, as well as the capital cost of constructing the scheme itself.
- 1.7 Funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund has allowed the Bikeabout Cycle loan scheme to expand to include cycle hires. This funding has allowed the scheme to increase its bike numbers, improve its publicity and expand. However, this funding will eventually run out, and sponsorship from a business could be explored to continually expand the scheme.
- 1.8 Officers' view is that indicating formal support for The Times manifesto would not have a direct impact on the City Council's work or resources, but would be a public statement of its positive attitude to promoting safer cycling and increasing the confidence of residents to adopt cycling as a means of transport.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 The promotion of cycling helps to deliver objectives of safer and healthier communities and a high quality environment.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 The City Council does not have a specified budget for cycling schemes or a dedicated cycling officer. Staff resources to help with cycling schemes and promotions are drawn from various teams within the City Council as required. There would be no additional resource requirements arising purely from the adoption of the manifesto.

3.2 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 3.3 Safety audits are undertaken as part of the assessment and design of all schemes as they progress

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

1. Appendix 1 - Minute Extract - Council Meeting 18 April 2012 - Notice of Motion

Appendix 1

2. Minute Extract - Council Meeting 18 April 2012 - Notice of Motion

Councillors Collin and Stallard both declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in the following Motion, as they were County Councillors and cycling routes and facilities were partly a County Council function.

The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Jackson:-

“This Council

- recognises that cycling is an extremely efficient form of transport for certain journeys, which is good for health, well-being and the environment;
- supports successive Governments’ commitment to encourage the use of bikes and reduce the number of cyclist-related road accidents;
- supports The Times’ “Cities fit for Cycling” campaign with its 8-point manifesto calling for Cities to be made fit for cyclists and
- calls on Hampshire County Council to give a much higher priority to the needs of cyclists - particularly as set out in the Winchester District Cycling Strategy. “

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hutchison.

Councillor Jackson explained that, following her submission of a formal Question about cycling to the last meeting of Council (Minute 620.6 refers) she was proposing this Motion to secure more commitment and action from the City Council.

Councillor Jackson highlighted that cycling was an activity which had been shown to improve personal fitness, reduce carbon emissions through fewer car journeys, improve highway safety and, generally, make sound economic sense. The 2001 Census confirmed that whilst 62% of people used cars for their journey to work, only 2% used cycles. A major factor in the reluctance of people to cycle was their fear of traffic and the attitude of some drivers to cyclists. A recent campaign promoted by The Times newspaper had sought to address some of those issues with an eight point plan which, whilst most relevant to London, set out an approach that could be adapted to suit districts such as Winchester (Cambridge was one area progressing cycling issues).

The Times plan stated:-

1. Lorries entering a city centre should be required by law to fit sensors, audible turning alarms, extra mirrors and safety bars to stop cyclists being thrown under the wheels.

2. The 500 most dangerous road junctions must be identified, redesigned or fitted with priority traffic lights for cyclists and Trixi mirrors that allow lorry drivers to see cyclists on their near-side.
3. A national audit of cycling to find out how many people cycle in Britain and how cyclists are killed or injured should be held to underpin effective cycle safety.
4. Two per cent of the Highways Agency budget should be earmarked for next generation cycle routes, providing £100 million a year towards world-class cycling infrastructure. Each year cities should be graded on the quality of cycling provision.
5. The training of cyclists and drivers must improve and cycle safety should become a core part of the driving test.
6. 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas where there are no cycle lanes.
7. Businesses should be invited to sponsor cycleways and cycling super-highways, mirroring the Barclays-backed bicycle hire scheme in London.
8. Every city, even those without an elected mayor, should appoint a cycling commissioner to push home reforms.

Councillor Jackson concluded by drawing attention to the excellent work of Sue Coles (Cycling Touring Club) and that an average spend on cycling related facilities of £10 per person per annum was required to make a real difference. Working closely with the County Council was also essential and it was noted that the Winchester Cycling Strategy was currently being reviewed.

During the debate which followed, some Members supported the general theme of the Motion and agreed that the high speed and volume of traffic, combined with driver attitudes, did indeed put many people off regular cycling. Therefore, designated cycle routes and reduced speed limits should be matters for consideration, where appropriate.

Other Members questioned whether cyclists should be subject to the same insurance and vehicle inspection controls of car drivers. It was also pointed out that walking had many of the positive benefits of cycling and, therefore, the condition of many pavements and footways should be improved, in order to make life more pleasant and less hazardous for pedestrians.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, Councillor Weston, commented that the Head of Access and Infrastructure continued to work hard to achieve positive outcomes for the cycling community.

At the conclusion of debate, the Council agreed that the matter should be referred for further consideration to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be referred to a future meeting of Cabinet for further consideration, with a request that it make recommendations back to Council.