

Draft Final Report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel into the Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit



NOVEMBER 2005



www.chorley.gov.uk

1. PREFACE

I am pleased to introduce the final report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panels inquiry into the 'Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit' in Chorley.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested the Panel to look into this topic for scrutiny.

The Panel took evidence by way of presentations from several representatives as well as documentation specifically relating to the topic.

The Committee made several observations and recommendations which will be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Cabinet.

None of our recommendations have major budget implications.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny, officers and all the committees for their compilation of this report.

Councillor Thomas McGowan (Chair)

2. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee referred an Inquiry entitled "Accessibility of Cycling as Leisure Pursuit to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The subject of the inquiry came to the attention of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 June 2003, scoring three for both importance and impact on the Scrutiny Top Selection Assessment.

2. Aims/Objectives

The Panel's key aims and objectives were:

- a) To assess the dual use areas (ie recreation grounds, car parks, parklands).
- b) To highlight the areas for development and improvement.
- c) To identify the current areas and can they be extended.
- d) To reduce confrontation between various activities.

3. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Inquiry were as follows.

- a) To conduct a scrutiny investigation into the leisure side of cycling and the dual use of areas to enable all leisure activities to be accommodated.
- b) To assess the current difficulties.
- c) To report on the investigation findings and make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the various organisations within the investigation objectives and its desired outcomes.

3. ACCESSIBILITY OF CYCLING AS A LEISURE PURSUIT

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Membership

The inquiry commenced on 26 June 2003 so the Membership of the Panel is spread over the Municipal Years of 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06.

Membership 2003/04	Membership 2004/05	Membership 2005/06
Chair: Councillor Stephen Fenn	Chair: Councillor Lesley Brownlee	Chair: Councillor McGowan
Councillors: David Dickinson Daniel Gee Harold Heaton Michael Iddon Margaret Iddon Roger Livesey Laura Lennox Raymond Parr John Walker	Councillors: David Dickinson Daniel Gee Henry Caunce Harold Heaton Margaret Iddon Roy Lees Roger Livesey Raymond Parr Shaun Smith	Councillors: David Dickinson Thomas Gray Henry Caunce Harold Heaton Margaret Iddon Roy Lees Marian Lowe Roger Livesey Shaun Smith

Officer Support:
Democratic Services Mr Gordon Bankes.

Contribution of Evidence

The Panel would like to thank those representatives from Lancashire County Council, Lancaster City Council, United Utilities and Cycling Touring Club - Right to Work Network and other representatives and organisations who gave evidence and contributed to the Inquiry.

4. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel after taking account of all the evidence recommends the following:

Aims/Objective

a) To highlight the areas of development and improvement

1. That those landowners who have shared user routes improve the environmental conditions by improving sight lines and visibility.
2. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating short circular routes suitable only for families driving out to the country to take their children for a five mile ride as exists in National Parks and some Access Areas.
3. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a mountain bike trail in Rivington which would be a year round activity and would be good for the local economy.
4. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a purpose built off-road leisure track for youngsters and children in Yarrow Valley Park (Youths and youngsters with support to take over the design and maintenance of this facility which would enhance the vision that the Council is considering sports for all and encouraging children/youths to have a "Healthy Lifestyle".
5. That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a safe cycle route along the Yarrow Valley and River Goit between White Coppice and Anglezarke.
6. That the Council examines ways to improve the publicity of existing routes.

Aims/Objectives

a) To reduce the confrontation between the various activities

7. That the Council facilitates the education of users by a Code of Conduct to focus on the rights and responsibilities of all user groups in order to reduce ambiguities concerning issues such as rights of way, passing etiquette, the increase use of bells, control of dogs and the recommended speeds that should be adjusted for safety and courtesy.
8. That those land owners who have shared use routes should have information panels to the access points detailing the Code of Conduct and a contact point to where comments, complaints and conflicts can be reported.
9. That the Council looks into the feasibility of funding cycling and proficiency schemes within the Borough. (NB already a LCC function via Education in Schools).

c) Aims/Objectives

To identify the current areas and can they be extended

10. That the responsible authority be requested to improve both off-road and the Sustrans route 55 through Chorley as well as developing the route through Chorley to join up the route from Preston to Wigan.

11. That the responsible authority be requested to complete the SUBTRANS route 55 as far as Adlington, to provide the connecting route via route 91 to the Rivington areas, as well as forming the primary route where other on/off-road cycling schemes can join to form a hub in the future.
12. That the Council examines ways of better provision to encourage children to cycle to school; this would ease local traffic congestion. For example the off-road cycling scheme along Foxholes Road (near Tesco's supermarket), but stops abruptly at the roundabout where it matters. This scheme should be extended along Balshaw Lane; the road is wide enough, if the grass verge was used on both sides of the road. This needs some commitment, it has been done in many towns elsewhere.
13. Where an off-road scheme finishes the cyclist is left to rejoin the highway, by a halt sign, as in the design on the A6 at Cuerden and A581 at Euxton. A good design has been used in Blackburn.

5. FINDINGS

<u>Objective/Key Issue</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Findings (in brief)</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
1. To assess the dual use areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Countryside Agency and LCC reports. • Presentations from LCC, Lancaster City Council and Ranger for West Penning Moors (United Utilities). • Research Notes from the Countryside Agency "How people interact on off-road routes". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acknowledge there to be a difference and to understand the impact of 'actual and perceived' conflict. Conflict can be complex and to progress an inquiry on these lines would be time consuming and would not achieve a successful outcome in relation to the Council's top priorities. • Research has shown there to be a perceived conflict, particularly intrusiveness and hostility as well as anxiety and fear about personal safety. This feeling was intensified by a number of factors including crowding, cyclists, cyclists travelling at speed, meeting groups (especially young people) and encountering poor environmental conditions that reduce sight lines and visibility. In the extreme, these perceptions can lead to people avoiding shared use routes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council looks into the feasibility of the Council funding cycling proficiency schemes within the Borough (already a LCC function via Education in Schools). • That those landowners who have shared user routes improve the environment conditions to improve sight lines and visibility.
2. To highlight the areas for development and improvement.			
3. To identify the urgent areas and can they be improved.			

<u>Objective/Key Issue</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Findings (in brief)</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
4. To reduce confrontation between the various activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research has found that conflict is very infrequent, is generally slight and is mainly concerned with intrusion. Results of the behavioural observation demonstrate that actual conflict is a rare occurrence. Research has supported this. Conflict where it occurs can be caused by people (such as the behaviour of others) or the environment (such as inadequate maintenance of the route). That route users should accommodate others by changing their speed and pattern of travel; cyclists to slow down while walkers move in a straight line and speed up. • That research had found that when people gather together to talk about conflict they talk it up and their recollection how many others they meet while on route escalates. Their perception of conflict were much higher than that actually experienced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council facilitates the education of users by a Code of Conduct to focus on the rights and responsibilities of all user groups in order to reduce ambiguities concerning issues such as right of way, passing etiquette, the increased use of bells, control of dogs and the recommended speeds that should be adopted for safety and courtesy. • That those land owners who have shared use routes should have information panels at the access points detailing code of conduct and a contact point to where comments, complaints and conflicts can be reported.

<u>Objective/Key Issue</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Findings (in brief)</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a need to improve signage, both off-road and the Sustrans route 55 through Chorley as well as developing the route through Chorley to join up the route from Preston to Wigan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve signage, both off-road and the Sustrans route 55 through Chorley as well as developing the route through Chorley to join up the route from Preston to Wigan. To finish Sustrans route 55 as far as Adlington, to provide the connecting route via route 91 to Rivington area as well as forming the primary route where other on/off-road cycling schemes can joint to form a hub in the future.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take the opportunity to trade on the success of the Commonwealth Games cycling events and build a purpose built off-road route, hard enough to encourage visitors which would increase tourism into Chorley. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating short circular routes suitable only for families driving out to the country to take their children for a five-mile ride as exists in National Parks and some Access areas.

<u>Objective/Key Issue</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Findings (in brief)</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Lancashire the only available mountain bike trails are in Gisburn forest travelling from Chorley to this venue area is difficult. Funding is available for cycle sport development, such as European match funding, A recent cycling scheme aimed specifically for mountain biking in an area of South Scotland is worth £3m to the local community. Once funding is secured, mountain bikes can put something back into the trails and help to build them. eg Glentress, Inneleithen, Mable and Dalbeattie Forests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the Council looks into the feasibility of creating a mountain bike trail in Rivington which would be a year-round activity which is good news for local economy. To look at the facility of creating a purpose built off-road leisure track for youngsters and children in Yarrow Valley Park (youths and youngster with support, to take over the design and maintenance of this facility which would enhance the vision that the Council are considering sports for all and encouraging children/youths to have a "Healthy Lifestyle". That better provision be provided to encourage children to cycle to school, this would ease local traffic congestion. For example the off-road cycling scheme along Foxholes Road

(near Tesco's supermarket), but stops abruptly at the roundabout where it matters this scheme should be extended along Balshaw Lane; the road is wide enough, if the grass verge was used on both sides of the road. This needs some commitment, it has been done in many towns elsewhere.

- Where an off-road scheme finishes the cyclist is left to rejoin the highway, by a halt sign, as in the design on the A6 at Cuerden and A581 at Euxton. A good design has been used in Blackburn.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Overview and Scrutiny Project Outline
Appendix B	Scrutiny Inquiry Information Checklist
Appendix C	Scrutiny Inquiry Witness Checklist
Appendix D	Scrutiny Relevant Minutes from Panel Meetings 26 June 2003 (Overview and Scrutiny Committee) 12 February 2004 18 March 2004 29 April 2004 15 July 2004 17 February 2005 17 March 2005 9 June 2005 1 September 2005

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY PROJECT OUTLINE

Review Topic: Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit

Investigation by: Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Type: Inquiry

Objectives:

1. To assess the dual use areas (ie recreation grounds, car parks, parkland).
2. To highlight the areas for development and improvement.
3. To identify the current areas and can they be extended.
4. To reduce confrontation between the various activities.

Desired Outcomes:

- To reduce the damage to the countryside from mountain biking.
- To reduce the conflict between cyclists and walkers etc.
- To increase and attract access to the countryside.

Terms of Reference:

1. To conduct a scrutiny investigation into the leisure side of cycling and the dual use of areas to enable all leisure activities to be accommodated.
2. To assess the current difficulties.
3. To report on the investigation's findings and make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the various organisations within the investigation's objectives and its desired outcomes.

Key Issues:

1. The nature and scale of the problem.
2. Impact on the countryside.
3. Safety of participants.

Risks:

1. Raising expectations, beyond the capacity to deliver any improvement.
2. Not having the capacity and/or skills to undertake the investigation successfully.

Venue(s):

Town Hall, Chorley

Timescale:

Start: 12 February 2004 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Finish: To be determined

Information Requirements and Sources:

Documents/evidence: *(what/why?)*

Cycling maps held by Regeneration Section and Lancashire County Council (Environment Directorate) Sustrans Network.
Evidence of Publicity.

Witnesses: *(who, why?)*

Lancashire County Council Officers
Cycling Touring Club representatives
Mountain Bike Association
Ramblers Association (mid-Lancashire area)
Countryside and Woodlands Officer
Bridleways Association
Planning Services – Buckshaw Village
Rivington Recreational Management Zone
Yarrow Valley User Group

Consultation/Research: *(what, why, who?)*

Consultation with organisations, clubs, to identify the nature of the problem and establish the areas mostly affected.
User Groups identified above.

Site Visits: *(where, why, when?)*

To be determined during the investigations but likely to be areas affected where it is known to be a conflict between cycling and other activities.

Officer Support:

Lead Officer:
Jamie Carson
Head of Leisure & Culture Services

Committee Administrator:
Mr Gordon Banks
Democratic Services Officer

Corporate Policy Officer:
To be identified when required.

Likely Budget Requirements:

Purpose

£

Correspondence

Total up to

£1,000.00

Target Body¹ for Findings/Recommendations

(Eg Executive Cabinet, Council, PCT)

Executive Cabinet, Lancashire County Council

SCRUTINY INQUIRY INFORMATION CHECKLIST

Name of Inquiry: Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit

Scrutiny Body: Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Ref.	Information Required	Source Details	To be sourced by
1	Local Transport Plan 2001/02 - 2005/06	Report	LCC website
2	Lancashire Cycleways	Report	LCC website
3	Leisure Cycling in Lancashire	Presentation Handouts	LCC
4	Background Information	Letter	LCC (Countryside Service)
5	Cycling Strategy	Chorley BC Report	Democratic Services
6	Waterways Code (Use of Canals)	Leaflet	British Waterways Board
7	Cycling Demand Study - Full Report	Report	LCC
8	How people interact on off-road routes.	Research Notes March 2001	The Countryside Ranger
9			
10			

SCRUTINY INQUIRY WITNESS CHECKLIST

Name of Inquiry: Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit

Scrutiny Body: Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Ref.	Witness	Information Required	Date	Venue
1	Alasdair Simpson LCC Environment Directorate	Legality of off-road cycling. Problems of joint use. Solution to problem.	29.04.04	Town Hall
2	Cllr Geoffrey Russell (Chorley Borough Council)	Background information.	29.04.04	Town Hall
3	Gordon Maclay Senior Engineer - Projects Lancaster City Council	Examples of dual use in Lancaster. Legal requirements. Solutions to problem.	15.07.04	Town Hall
4	Hazel Gannaway (United Utilities) Ranger for West Pennine Moors	Identify problems in Rivington.	09.06.05	Town Hall
5	Michael Prescott Cycling Touring Club (CTC) Right to Ride Network	Examples of dual use. Solutions to problem.	01.09.05	Town Hal
6				
7				
8				

EXTRACT FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 June 2003

03.OS.08 SCORING OF OUTSTANDING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Committee received a list of the outstanding items compiled from meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees A and B, which required to be processed by way of the Scrutiny topic selection process.

RECOMMENDED - (1) That consideration of the Highways Partnership Agreement with Lancashire County Council be deferred for 12 months as the Partnership has only just started.

(2) That the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel will carry out an inquiry into the leisure side of cycling and the dual use of areas to enable all leisure activities to be accommodated as well as looking at safety, transportation and encouragement of a healthy lifestyle, which scored three for both importance and impact and was therefore a possible topic for scrutiny, but not a priority.

(3) That the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel considers the impact of the One Stop Shop as this is a priority topic for scrutiny, but should be considered after six months as it has only just come into operation.

(4) That as the IEG (Implementing Electronic Government) was an on-going process, the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel measures the Council's progress.

(5) That as the involvement of the Parish Councils in the Council's website, was currently being addressed the subject did not meet the necessary criteria.

(6) That the request from Coppull Parish Council to review the decision of Blainscough Industrial Site, Preston Road, Coppull was not appropriate for selection, as:

- **The key issues have already been reported to the Development Control Committee (formerly Planning Committee) for discussion.**
- **The matter has been investigated under the complaints procedure.**
- **There is no evidence to suggest that the subject is related to the Council's strategic aims or that it has a wider policy implication.**

(Councillor Mrs Walsh declared a prejudicial interest in the item relating to Blainscough Industrial Site and left the meeting during the discussion and voting).

EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

12 February 2004

04.ENV.08 LEISURE SIDE OF CYCLING AND DUAL USE OF AREAS

The Panel carried out a scoping exercise on the topic of the leisure side of cycling and dual use of areas to enable all leisure activities to be accommodated as well as safety, transportation and encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. The topic had been referred to the Panel from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The Panel processed this topic through the four relevant stages which incorporated consideration of the following:

- Objectives
- Desired outcomes
- Terms of reference
- Key Issues and areas of focus
- The risks involved in undertaking the inquiry
- How and where evidence should be taken
- Timescale

The Panel outlined from where the main information requirement would be received as well as identifying officer support, likely budget requirements and the main target body for the findings/recommendations.

RECOMMENDED - That the scoping document be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval to enable the Panel to proceed with the Inquiry.

**EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
18 March 2004**

04.ENV.13 LEISURE SIDE OF CYCLING AND DUAL USE OF AREAS

The Panel received the scoping document, completed at the previous meeting, which had been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Panel discussed the information they would require. This included the receipt of cycling maps of the Chorley area and invite representatives from Lancashire County Council, Cycling Club to commence the inquiry.

RESOLVED - That a Special meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel be held on Thursday, 29 April commencing at 6.30pm with a representative from Lancashire County Council (Environment Directorate) and Councillor Russell invited to attend, to give the Panel a background knowledge of the issues relating to the inquiry.

**EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
29 April 2004**

04.ENV.16 LEISURE SIDE OF CYCLING AND DUAL USE OF AREAS - GATHERING EVIDENCE

(a) Presentation

As part of the evidence gathering process for the Panel's inquiry into the leisure side of cycling and dual use of areas, the Panel received a presentation from Alasdair Simpson, a member of the Cycling Team Traffic and Safety Section of the Environment Directorate at Lancashire County Council.

Set out below is the background evidence to commence the inquiry.

Reasons for Supporting Cycling.

- Congestion.
- Pollution
- Health
- Better Environment
- Leisure
- Economic

The national target is to treble cycling flows by 2012. From information provided in the 2001 Census for Chorley with comparisons.

	Public Transport	Car	Cycle	Foot
Chorley	5%	73%	1.7%	9%
Lancaster	7%	63%	3.8%	14%
Oxford	18%	42%	15%	15%

The main problem in Chorley is the A6 dual carriageway and roundabout. It also makes east-west trips difficult with high accident rates.

A good example of cycling in Lancashire is the City of Lancaster, with well used tracks with good leisure routes built up from the city centre into the countryside. It was pointed out that it was quicker to go by bicycle from Morecambe to Lancaster, than by car.

Ways to increase cycling

On the road

- Cycle lanes.
- Cycle facilities at junctions.
- Quiet roads.
- Traffic Management & Calming.

Cycling Parking

Off Road Cycle Paths

There is a market for leisure cycling particular mountain biking with different levels of expertise.

Market for Leisure Cycling.

Mountain Biking

- Short trails.
- Long scenic trails.
- Special features

Shared Cycling Paths

- Family cycling
- Utility Cycling - Cycle route between Lancaster and Morecambe good example
- Routes into the Countryside.

Study of demand for of road cycling in Lancashire by Bowles Green.

- Demand for of road cycling exceeds level of provision.
- Market size : $\frac{1}{4}$ of population plus people in neighbouring areas.
- Illegal use of footpaths suggests inadequate supply.
- Means of low income groups accessing countryside.

The study has identified the illegal use of footpaths by mountain bikers.

The legal basis for off road cycling.

- Bridleways.
- Cycle tracks.
- Permissive paths.

Problems of joint use of paths.

- Conflict with horse riders.
- Conflict with pedestrians.
- Problems for the blind.
- Narrow width, poor forward visibility.
- Poor maintenance.

Countryside Agency Research

- Actual conflict low.
- Perceived conflict higher than actual conflict.
- Narrow paths/poor sightlines can increase conflict levels.
- Cyclists travelled in elongated s-shaped pattern
- Workers took a more erratic path.
- Made it difficult to anticipate what the other users might do and what side to pass.
- Cyclists slow down when passing walkers.
- Meeting with other users rare event eg once every seven minutes.

Recommended minimum width of Cycle Tracks.

- Three metres generally recommended minimum width.
- Two metres absolute minimum.

A cycle or pedestrian takes up about 0.7 metres each.

Solutions to conflict.

- Codes of conduct.
- Encourage cyclists to ride on left and walkers to walk on right.

Solutions Signing

- Way marking.
- Raised white line.

Solutions Physical

- Wide paths.
- Good forward visibility.
- Segregation by kerb.
- Measures to control cyclist speed eg avoid long downhill sections.
- Separate paths.
- Special mountain bike courses.

Conclusion

- Joint use of paths generally benefit walkers as much as cyclists.
- Actual levels of conflict low.
- Problems can be reduced by good design.
- Codes of conduct can also help.

The following were identified as issues that the Panel may wish to look at further.

- Width of roads are narrow in the countryside making cars passing groups of cyclists difficult.
- Problem of gutters in the road for cyclists on a cycle lane
- Problem of cyclists riding side by side on busy roads making vehicle passing difficult.
- Dual use of footpaths by children, pushchairs.
- Possible invite to the Panel of the United Utilities ranger for Rivington area.
- Mountain bike organisations to sign up code of conduct.
- Better way marking.

The Panel received Research Notes compiled by The Countryside Agency entitled "How People Interact on Off-Road Routes".

These findings are significant as they shed light on the difference between real and perceived conflict involving people on foot, bike or horse both in terms of accidents and verbal disagreements.

The Research Notes also include how people interact on off road routes. These two distinctive elements of the concept of conflict were defined and measured, actual conflict and perceived conflict.

(b) Background Information received from Councillor Russell

As a long standing cyclist Councillor Geoffrey Russell was invited to the meeting to give some background information to the inquiry.

He informed the Panel of his knowledge of cycling in the area and that he had a good perspective of cycling, pointing out that there was a lot of prejudice towards cyclists from car drivers, walkers etc.

He pointed out that conflicts occur all the time, pointing out that the main routes such as the A6 are not a problem. The Lancashire Cycle Way route is well marked for leisure cycling.

The main criticism is the local road system and the roads do not cater for cyclists. So far in Lancashire, too little, too late.

An example was given of the railway bridge on Balshaw Lane, Euxton with the cycle path terminating on the crest of the bridge, forcing cyclists onto the road at a point where they are most vulnerable.

The cycle route through Astley Park was not a main part of a route and is little used by cyclists.

Councillor Russell pointed out that only a minority of car drivers pose a problem for cyclists but all road users should be mature enough to cope with each other whether they are walkers, car drivers or cyclists.

Solutions have been found in countries like Germany, Holland and Denmark and in Chorley not a lot of work has been done, unlike Lancaster where a great deal of progress has been made in providing cyclists with a safe environment. The roads in Chorley are inadequate, poorly swept and roads in poor condition.

The following were identified as issues that the Panel may wish to look at further.

- Enforcement of the restrictions.
- Should not discriminate between : leisure
: utilitarian routes
: children use of these routes
- Major routes in and out of the town.
- Specific route in the countryside for mountain bikes.
- Safe route to the hospital and Buckshaw Village with proper routes outside the Buckshaw Village area.

EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

15 July 2004

04.ENV.20 LEISURE SIDE OF CYCLING AND DUAL USE OF AREAS – PRESENTATION BY GORDON MACLAY, SENIOR ENGINEER-PROJECTS, LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

The Chair introduced Gordon Maclay, Senior Engineer – Projects, from Lancaster City Council who had been invited by the Panel to deliver a presentation regarding cycling and the dual use of areas as part of the information gathering stage of the Scrutiny Inquiry.

Mr Maclay outlined different areas in Lancaster that had provision for cyclists and general information regarding issues that affected cycle paths.

River Lune Millennium Path

The River Lune Millennium Path was 3.0 metres wide and provided unsegregated shared use. The path had moderate utility use and experienced a high level of weekend use. Members noted that the verges on either side of the path were around 1 metre wide. The verges could be mown to ensure hedges did not encroach on the path. This enabled cyclists to pass each other and pedestrians with more space and improved the cyclists' sight line. The path was a public footpath and was shown on the Ordinance Survey map as a cycle way. Members noted the street lighting on the path and discussed the positive and negative aspects of this, security versus creating a meeting place.

Funding had been received for this path as part of Millennium European Development. Mr Maclay reported that there was a need to have commitment from all service units to have a successful funding strategy.

Millennium Bridge

The Millennium Bridge was 4 metres wide and provided unsegregated shared use. The path was considered a safe route to school and experienced very high levels of pedestrian and cycling use. The electronic counter registered around 900 cyclists a day. There was a good relationship between cyclists and pedestrians with only a small number of known accidents. Members noted that there were signs giving directions for key destinations.

Lancaster to Morecambe

The Lancaster to Morecombe path was 3 metres wide and provided segregated use, with a white line defining cycle and pedestrian uses. The surface material was tactile to highlight the segregation. High levels of utility use were reported. In the main pedestrians and cyclists did keep on the correct sides.

Highway Development Control

There were a number of methods via highway development control:

- Section 38 agreements: regarding cycle routes and facilities on sites, although there could be conflict between security considerations and pleasing layouts.
- Section 106 agreements: for example to deliver a new route to school.
- Facilities within the site, for example, storage for bikes.

Types of surfacing

There were various types of surfacing that could be used for cycle lanes.

- Tarmac: good life expectancy, but had cost implications.
- Limestone to Dust: doesn't really last, popular with horses, but not suitable for commuter roads.

- Permapave: good life expectancy and could be slightly cheaper than tarmac.

Members noted that there was a conflict of opinion about the best materials between engineers, cyclists, horses and conservationists.

Cycle tracks

There were legal requirements surrounding cycle lanes and tracks, for example, regarding traffic not encroaching or parking. Mr Maclay reported that cycle lanes worked better if there were a double yellow line in the cycle lane. There could be mandatory cycle lanes or advisory cycle lanes.

If there was a public right of way land could be converted to a cycle track, but if objections were raised the path would have to go to a public inquiry. Off road cycle lanes and tracks would depend on the ownership of the land. Various factors would need to be considered to determine an appropriate width for a cycle track.

Mr Maclay suggested the Cycle Friendly Infrastructure by the Institution of Highways and Transportation for further information.

Rossett School, Harrogate

The School had used a section of the playing fields to build a cycle track with a gentle ramp. Permission had been obtained from the schools governors, Local Education Authority and the Secretary of State. Cycling initiatives worked towards the governments' aims for healthy children.

Horses

The 1968 Countryside Act advised that cyclists could use bridleways. The Highway Authority and land owners would not have to upgrade bridleways for use by cyclists but could improve and maintain the surface, with consideration given to the levels of use and location. The Panel noted that cyclists should give way on bridlepaths and not their ring bell. A Code of Conduct could be displayed on the bridleway but not everyone would use it.

Motor Cycle Barriers

In some cases motor cycle barriers might be required. When designing these, several aspects would need to be considered: What was the purpose of the barrier? To inhibit or permit cycles or motor cycles? To slow cycles or pedestrians. Would blind people use the path? Would emergency vehicles need access? Should the design allow for all types of prams?

Conclusions

Mr Maclay advised that shared use was a complex issue and that problems depended on where the cycling took place, on a purpose built cycle track or a busy road. The Panel discussed the different areas in the Borough where cycling took place, for example, the West Pennine Moors, along canal banks and in more urban areas, such as Pall Mall, Moor Road, Gillibrand Link and Eaves Green Link Roads.

The Panel discussed the scope of the Inquiry and agreed that gathering information on issues relevant to cycling in the Borough would aid them to narrow scope of Inquiry.

Members suggested site visits to Lancaster to investigate further good practice and also to sites within the Borough. Possible witnesses were suggested as being West Pennine Moor Rangers, cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and dog walkers, An issue was raised regarding cycle tracks on roads that narrow and the cycle track would disappear. Members noted that dog walkers were an excellent source of info.

The Chair thanked Mr Maclay for the presentation and contribution to the Inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- 1. Previous documentation regarding the Inquiry be distributed to the new Panel members**
- 2. The Executive Member be invited to the next meeting of the Panel.**
- 3. The following information be presented to the Panel:**
 - Maps of current cycleways and Chorley Borough Council Cycling Strategy.**
 - A report outlining the regulations regarding cycle tracks and lanes.**
 - The Cycle Friendly Infrastructure by the Institution of Highways and Transportation.**
 - The Lancashire Transport Plan and any relevant cycling schemes.**
 - The Chorley Borough Council Local Plan.**
 - Quiet Roads Initiative.**
 - Research notes “How People Interact on Off-Road Routes” compiled by the Countryside Agency.**

EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

17 February 2005

05.ENV.07 ACCESSIBILITY OF CYCLING AS A LEISURE PURSUIT

The Panel's instructions were requested on a strategy to progress the Panels inquiry into 'Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit'.

Members received a number of documents produced for their information as well as providing documentary evidence to assist the inquiry.

In order for the Panel to progress the inquiry contact should be made with the representatives of the undermentioned user groups to establish from their perspective what they consider are the issues which effect them:

Cyclists.

Walkers.

Horse Riders.

Mountain bike users.

Rivington Recreational Management Zone Advisory Committee.

Yarrow Valley User Group.

The Groups be requested as to whether they wish to attend a future meeting of this Panel or whether they would prefer representatives from this Panel to meet them.

Problems can be identified, with the Groups such as:

- Signage.
- Code of Conducts, for users.
- What are the problems of current cycle routes eg bottlenecks.
- More cycle routes and what suggestions.
- Publicity for cycling routes.
- Lack of publicity in general.

The following issues to be established:

- i) Definition of a bridleway.
- ii) Use of canals for cycling (permissive cycling).
- iii) Map of all footpaths and bridleways in Chorley.

Members to visit shops etc to establish what literature, as well as maps, available on cycling.

**EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
17 March 2005**

05.ENV.12 ACCESSIBILITY OF CYCLING AS A LEISURE PURSUIT

The Panel contained to make progress in its inquiry into the 'Accessibility of Cycling as a Leisure Pursuit', examining the areas of the Borough where it was considered to be confrontation between the various activities and whether these areas could be developed for improvement.

Interest and user groups would be contacted for their views and objections on the nature and scale of the issues within the inquiries Terms of Reference.

EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

9 June 2005

05.ENV.17 ACCESSIBILITY OF CYCLING AS A LEISURE PURSUIT

The Chair introduced Hazel Gannaway, The Ranger for the West Pennine Moors (West) who had been invited to provide evidence that would assist the inquiry into the 'accessibility of cycling as a leisure pursuit'.

She explained that she was not aware of any reports received relating to complaints of poor behaviour, but it may be that people are unaware of who to report complaints to, or where.

User groups such as horse riders have commented on the fast speed by some cyclists passing horses on bridleways.

Some routes around Rivington have suffered from erosion created by mountain bikes.

A visitors survey was likely to occur in the near future to obtain the numbers coming into the Rivington area as well as receiving their views on how the area is managed.

Set out below is a brief summary of cycling in the Rivington area.

- There is an extensive network of bridleways in the Rivington area offering the opportunity for cyclists to explore the area.
- Great House Information Centre is open Wed - Sun (and Bank Holidays) 10.30am - 4.30pm and receives very few complaints about cyclists behaviour.
- GHIC stocks maps and publications on cycle routes in the area and beyond and the staff offer advice on routes.
- As a Ranger for the area she had spoken to cyclists on numerous occasions for either being on a footpath rather than a bridleway or for cycling in a discourteous manner when near to other site visitors.
- The cycling events for the Commonwealth Games were held in this area, cyclists regularly request details of this route from GHIC or take it upon themselves to cycle it despite the fact some of the route used footpaths not bridleways. Two photos circulated showed an area of erosion from cycles. There is also a section of cut fence further on this track and others in the area, I do not know who has cut the fences but have seen cyclists making use of the gaps.
- Cyclists have created ramps and jumps in woodland areas.
- Some requests have been received for cycling events in the area but in comparison with other activities eg runs, walks and horse riders the number of requests are low. Again some request areas that are on footpaths so consent is not granted.

EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

1 September 2005

05.ENV.26 ACCESSIBILITY OF CYCLING AS A LEISURE PURSUIT

The Chair introduced Mr Michael Prescott from the 'Cycling Touring Club (CTC) Right to Ride Network' who had been invited to provide evidence within the Inquiry's Term of Reference that would assist the inquiry into the accessibility of cycling as a leisure pursuit.

Mr Prescott's presentation covered the following areas.

- SUBTRANS and the need for positive motivation to finish the Route 55 through Chorley to complete the link from Preston to Wigan.
- To build on the success of the Commonwealth Games cycling events.
- To build a purpose built off road route, hard enough to encourage visitors, which would increase tourism into Chorley.
- The damage to the countryside caused by off road cyclists using non designated areas and private land.
- As used in France Alps, signage recommending that vehicles pass cyclists at no less than 1.5 metres.
- Since 1968 cyclists using bridleways are expected to 'give-way' to all path users, even when they come up behind a group of walkers who are obstructing their passage.
- To create short circular routes suitable only for families driving out to the country to take their children for a five mile bike ride. These exist in National Parks and some Access areas.
- Conflict with vehicles on the route to off road cycling facilities.

Mr Prescott provided useful evidence which would form the basis of the Panel's recommendations.

RESOLVED - That the Panel considered that enough evidence had been presented to the Panel over the past months to enable recommendations to be formulated and these would be circulated to the next meeting for consideration in the final report.