

## **Cabinet**

**11 July 2012**

### **The County Durham Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2012-15**



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#### **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development**

**Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks agreement from Cabinet to adopt the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2012-15.

#### **Background**

2. The strategy and action plan have been prepared in conjunction with key colleagues within the local authority and cycling groups and partner organisations such as the County Durham Local Access Forum. The draft was developed following research into successful cycling cities across the world and through the feedback from the public consultation on the draft strategy.
3. The draft strategy was made available on the County Council website for an 8 week public consultation and was emailed to an extensive list of stakeholders. The responses were mainly supportive, with constructive suggestions for amendments etc. Other comments were on people's experiences and aspirations on cycling in the County. A summary of the comments received is included in Appendix 2.
4. The majority of comments on cycling issues related specifically to Durham City - difficulties getting across the city, secure parking, inadequate signage, the need to educate highway users of their rights, driver behaviour and maintenance of routes were the most common problems encountered.
5. Where possible and appropriate we have taken on board and incorporated the comments to strengthen specific sections and have redrafted the document to produce this final version. All the comments have been compiled into a report which will be made available on the cycling pages of the County Council website and a link will be sent to all respondents.
6. An Equalities Impact Assessment and Joint Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment have been carried out on the draft plan. Amendments

were made to the draft following these processes in the production of the final version. The assessments will be made available on request.

### **Strategic Framework**

7. The Cycling Strategy and Action Plan fits within the authority's broader strategic framework and is influenced by the overarching plans and ambitions for the County as set out in the Regeneration Statement, the Local Sustainable Community Strategy, County Durham Plan, Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. In particular, the strategy can assist the delivery of spatial, social, health and economic aspirations through:
  - The prioritisation of high quality improvements and creation of cycle super highways in and between major centres
  - Promoting the County as an attractive and green location for investment through a safe and high quality cycle network as part of its green infrastructure
  - Creating active travel opportunities for workforces
  - Enabling more people to be healthy, happy and confident through an active lifestyle in an attractive and vibrant County
  - Supporting sustainable tourism opportunities
  - And through the sustenance of a high quality environment.

### **Vision, Aims and Objectives**

8. The Aims and Objectives of the cycling strategy are set out in Chapter 5 of the document, together with an overall vision for cycling in County Durham:

*“Cycling is a visible, normal, everyday activity. Cycling is part of Durham’s culture and is a safe, affordable and enjoyable mode of transport as well as a fun, family-friendly, cheap and accessible and competitive leisure activity.”*

### **Delivery Programme**

9. Walking and Cycling have been well supported by the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital programme since 2005. Cycling infrastructure delivery will continue to be supported through LTP3. Other funds are available to support leisure and health schemes and we will continue to seek match funding for cycling initiatives.
10. The document includes an Action Plan which will be used to create annual work programmes. A working group will be established to act as independent critical friend to assess progress against the Action Plan through regular updates and reports.

11. The key areas of action include;

- Creating a safer and more attractive cycling environment through highway user education and network creation and improvement
- Developing major cycle super routes in and between the 12 main towns
- Installing cycle parking at key location
- Ensuring developments include provision for cyclists
- Auditing, monitoring and recording the cycling network
- Producing cycling maps for the 12 main towns.

### **Recommendations**

12. Cabinet is recommended to agree the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2012-15.

### **Background Papers**

County Durham Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2021)

County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy (2010-2030)

Regeneration Statement (January 2010)

County Durham Plan - Issues and Options

Council Plan (2010-2013)

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-14

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**Contact: Victoria Lloyd Tel: 03000 265 311**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance –**

The work programme for Year 1 has been agreed. The Strategy will access to the capital funds from LTP3 Walking and Cycling budget (£619,000 for 2012/13) and other funds will be secured for other elements such as promotion.

### **Staffing –**

Development, implementation and monitoring of the action plan will be carried out by existing staff within the Transport Service.

### **Risk – N/A**

### **Equality and Diversity –**

The Cycling Strategy will have due regard of the Equality Act 2010 and will actively promote more accessible routes and a more comprehensive network for a wider audience as well as more affordable and sustainable travel.

An Equalities Impact Assessment and Joint Health and Sustainability Impact Assessment have been carried out and will be available on request.

### **Accommodation – N/A**

### **Crime and Disorder – N/A**

### **Human Rights – N/A**

### **Consultation –**

The development of the draft strategy involved research and understanding of the audience through published literature and work with cycle forums and users. The draft strategy was available for an 8 week consultation period.

### **Procurement –**

Individual schemes delivered under the action plan will be implemented in accordance with the corporate procurement strategy.

### **Disability Discrimination Act –**

The strategy has due regards to the Equality Act 2010 and actively promotes more accessible routes and a more comprehensive network for a wider audience.

### **Legal Implications – None**

## Appendix 2: Summary of Comments from Public Consultation

We received 54 responses to the strategy consultation with responses coming in via letter, email and Twitter. The comments were mainly supportive (52 out of 54) and the majority of comments related to the draft document itself with constructive suggestions for amendments and additions.

Most of the other comments were people's own cycling experiences and aspirations. A few of these comments were about specific ideas for projects but the majority of cycling comments related to Durham City with reports on poor route quality due to potholes, thorns etc, difficulties crossing the city by bike, lack of secure cycle parking (especially in Durham Market Place and University sites), poor signage, safety on the roads and conflict between users (both on and off road) and lack of information on cycle routes.

The railway paths were mentioned by several cyclists as a well maintained and well regarded resource.

Overall, the feedback indicates that the production of a Cycling Strategy is welcomed and that the Action Plan will deliver on key areas of concern for cyclists and other highway users.

A selection of individual comments reflecting the overall feedback have been included below:

*"A laudable plan to increase the use of cycling as a means of personal transport, fitness and enjoyment. I hope some such accommodation to the needs of pedestrians can be included in an otherwise exciting and visionary document."*

*"I believe this is much needed and is a very good step in the right direction. I believe this is an excellent document and fully support its objectives." (BA Cycling Club)*

*"The booklet seemed to dot aimlessly between cycling for leisure, to cycling as a sport, to cycling as an alternative form of transport, from city cycling, to cycling between towns, to cycling in the countryside, to cycling in protected environments such as Hamsterley Forest, without ever acknowledging that they are completely different activities, needing completely different strategies."*

*I thought the policies themselves sounded good, but - in the present climate - thought them worthless unless they are properly costed and embedded in the current budget.*

*"In general I think this is good and ambitious strategy; I particularly like the road space review which hopefully will lead to the removal of on-street car parking in City Centre locations."*

*"My mom was visiting from the US (New York) and she was appalled by the seeming lack of rights that pedestrians/cyclists have on the road. I took her for a cycle ride and I was very scared that she would be run over – motorists were very unkind and it made me feel ashamed about where I live; I want to be happy to share Durham with family and friends who visit from abroad."*