Northamptonshire Cycling Strategy

Contacts and Further Information

This is Northamptonshire County Council’s Cycling Strategy.

It sets out the overarching vision for cycling within Northamptonshire and sets out our strategy to achieve it. This strategy is one of a series of thematic daughter documents to the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan that was adopted in April 2012.

Consultation on the first batch of the thematic strategies, including this Cycling Strategy, took place between 3rd September and 19th October 2012. A summary of the consultation responses can be found on our website at:


If you have any problems accessing Northamptonshire County Council’s website or do not have access to the internet, please contact us using the details below.

This strategy was approved and adopted by Northamptonshire County Council’s Cabinet in December 2012.

This strategy together with the other Batch 1 daughter documents and the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan itself can be viewed on the County Council’s website at:


Should you have any queries regarding this strategy, please contact the Transport Planning Team.

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Northamptonshire Transportation Plan: Fit for Purpose

Transportation is not an end in itself. The movement of people and goods takes place not for its own sake, but to fulfil the diverse needs and desires of the public. Therefore the County Council’s transport policies are similarly promoted for their effect on other specific goals, priorities and objectives, rather than as an end in themselves.

**Northamptonshire Transportation Plan Vision:**

For Transport and Travel to contribute towards making Northamptonshire a great place to live and work, through creating tangible transport options to satisfy individual needs and to encourage more sustainable travel. The transport system will provide fast and efficient movement of people and goods, and will be accessible for all. Expanding networks and capacity of networks in Northamptonshire will be fully integrated into new developments and regeneration areas to support more sustainable communities.

Economic growth and prosperity is a top priority for Northamptonshire and connectivity has a vital role to play in encouraging businesses to locate to the area, and getting people to work and services such as education and health, as well as to leisure activities and for shopping. Improved technology and local accessibility will reduce the need to travel, whilst supporting economic growth, within a low carbon environment and Northamptonshire will become an exemplar for the latest developments in information technology, fuel technology, and new forms of transport.

The county council will work in partnership with all stakeholders and the wider community to deliver this transport vision and strategy.

This transportation plan needs to be both aspirational and realistic at the same time. Current economic climates mean that transport is certainly in a more austere time than in the last 15 to 20 years and this plan needs to reflect that but at the same time still plan for future growth.

The overall aim for this Transportation Plan is:

‘Northamptonshire Transportation - Fit for..... Purpose’

The aim ‘fit for purpose’ means creating a network that delivers exactly what Northamptonshire needs to be able to function plus what it needs to be able to grow, no more and no less.
This overarching aim can then be broken down into six objectives that have been chosen to guide the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan. These objectives have been drawn up to reflect the issues which have been identified as locally important through consultation, while at the same time reflecting wider national and local policy context. These objectives have been deliberately chosen to reflect the main impacts that transport can have on the wider community, rather than being linked to particular schemes or measures. They form the basis upon which the policies and programmes contained in this Plan have been developed.

1. **Fit for........the Future** – creating a transport system that supports and encourages growth and plans for the future impacts of growth, whilst successfully providing benefits for the County.

2. **Fit for........the Community** – through the transport system help to maintain and create safe, successful, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities where people are actively involved in shaping the places where they live.

3. **Fit to........Choose** – ensuring that the people of Northamptonshire have the information and the options available to them to be able to choose the best form of transport for each journey that they make.

4. **Fit for........Economic Growth** – creating a transport system that supports economic growth, regeneration and a thriving local economy and successfully provides for population and business growth.

5. **Fit for........the Environment** – to deliver a transport system that minimises and wherever possible reduces the effect of travel on the built, natural and historic environment.

6. **Fit for........Best Value** - being clear about our priorities for investment and focusing on value for money by prioritising what we spend money on and how it can be beneficial for the county as a whole and search for alternative sources of funding.
Daughter Documents

This Strategy is the part of a series of documents which will eventually form the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan ‘suite of documents’. This suite of documents will include strategies or plans covering a range of transport themes and also detailed geographic strategies or plans for the Northamptonshire’s main towns.

The diagram below illustrates the thematic and town strategies that will be developed as daughter documents to the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan, of which the Cycling Strategy is one.

The Northamptonshire Transportation Plan, and its associated Daughter Documents, fit with the Northamptonshire Arc and help us to deliver the Local Plans (Core Spatial Strategies) in West and North Northamptonshire and supports the work of the Local Enterprise Partnerships. Improved cycle networks can also have advantages in terms of equalities and quality of life, particularly for those who do not have access to a car.
1. Introduction

This strategy sets out the overarching vision for cycling in Northamptonshire and outlines our approach to making cycling more attractive for shorter, local utility journeys within Northamptonshire as well as for leisure purposes. Encouraging more people to cycle to work and for other journeys will bring significant benefits, reducing congestion on our roads, cutting carbon emissions, creating healthier communities and contributing to economic prosperity.

The cycling strategy has been produced to support the delivery of the strategic objectives and policies outlined above in the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (adopted April 2012) as part of the County Council’s statutory duty to produce a Local Transport Plan (Local Transport Act, 2008).

The following organisations were consulted in the development of the strategy: Borough and District council officers, Cycling Touring Club and Sustrans. As with the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan, this strategy will be reviewed as and when appropriate.

Need for a strategy

As a growth area, Northamptonshire is facing unprecedented levels of population growth – as much as 100,000 in the Northamptonshire Arc by 2026 and possibly another half as many more again by 2031. Transport modelling has shown that if left unrestrained, traffic growth will result in higher levels of congestion, making it increasingly difficult and unpredictable to move around Northamptonshire, particularly its town centres.

Exacerbating this issue is that for a number of people, the automatic choice for undertaking short journeys (less than 5 miles in length) is by car. These trips make up around two-thirds of all trips we make and could be easily made by more sustainable modes such as cycling.

People’s reluctance to cycle is not in the main due to lack of bike ownership, it is attributable to a number of perceived barriers; the most significant of which is cycling on roads with other traffic which is perceived as unsafe and unpleasant. If this and other barriers explored later in this document can be overcome, cycling offers a transport mode that is inexpensive, environmentally sustainable, that brings enormous health benefits, reduces traffic congestion and improves accessibility to key services such as education, employment and leisure and recreation, especially for those people without access to a car.

This strategy has been written to encourage cycling for all – novice and inexperienced cyclists alike as well as those with mobility impairments. The strategy outlines how infrastructure gaps will be filled, the standards to be met and how they will be complemented by a range of softer measures to bring about modal shift.
To create an inclusive network, both the highway network and the off-road cycle network needs to be considered. Thus, in the context of this document, the cycle network refers to both the highway network and the dedicated off-road cycle network. Cycle infrastructure refers to on-road dedicated infrastructure such as advanced stop lines and on off-road infrastructure such as shared use tracks, toucan crossings etc.
2. Aims and Objectives

The overall aim for the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan is ‘Fit for...Purpose’ which means creating a network that delivers exactly what Northamptonshire needs to be able to function, plus what it needs to be able to grow, no more no less.

The following table shows how the Cycling Strategy ties in with the six over-arching Northamptonshire Transportation Plan objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycling Strategy</th>
<th>Fit for..... the Future</th>
<th>Fit for..... the Community</th>
<th>Fit to..... Choose</th>
<th>Fit for..... Economic Growth</th>
<th>Fit for..... the Environment</th>
<th>Fit for..... Best Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the number of short trips that are made by cycle will help us achieve the modal shift targets that will support growth.</td>
<td>Encouraging local people to make more trips by cycle helps communities take ownership of their streets</td>
<td>Improving the cycle access to local facilities gives people more options when choosing how to travel for a short journey.</td>
<td>Improving cycling access to employment sites allows more people to access jobs and benefits business by reducing the need for car park space.</td>
<td>Improving the cycling environment reduces the impact of people making short trips and reduces carbon emissions.</td>
<td>Cycling improvement schemes are relatively low cost compared to schemes for other modes.</td>
<td></td>
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To encourage more people to cycle will require a combination of physical improvements to the cycling environment (both on-road and off-road) and promotional initiatives to foster behavioural change to achieve the Cycling Strategy aim outlined below.

The Cycling Strategy aim is to...

Increase the number of people choosing to travel by cycle for trips under 5 miles through a combination of improvements to the on and off-road cycling environment, promotion and training.
The Cycling Strategy will positively contribute to the overall objectives of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan whilst having the following specific objectives of its own:

**Objective 1**
Providing a quality environment for cyclists through enhancement of the existing on and off-road provision and the creation of new links to increase connectivity to retail, employment, education and leisure to support economic growth.

**Objective 2a**
Encouraging more Northamptonshire residents to cycle by promoting and publishing the benefits of cycling for health, the economy, and the environment giving them the confidence, information, skills and incentives they need.

**Objective 3**
Increasing the accessibility of the cycling network to all by removing the barriers to movement to increase people’s transport options.

**Objective 4**
Reducing congestion and improving air quality by promoting cycling to work and to other key destinations through development of safe, convenient, efficient and attractive cycle routes which enhance quality of place and in doing so support the enhancement of town centres and residential areas, boosting property values and retail vitality.

**Objective 5**
Getting more people cycling, more safely, more often, to reduce the impact on the environment and increase health and wellbeing.

**Objective 6**
Prioritising investment in cycling schemes and supportive measures, delivering best value for money and making best use of the network working with partner authorities.

**Targets**
The Northamptonshire Transportation Plan sets two targets for modal shift, based on 2001 Census journey to work data, to achieve by 2031. The cycling strategy will directly contribute towards delivery of:

- A reduction of 5% in single occupancy cars journeys to work from the existing built up areas of the towns; and
- A reduction of 20% in single occupancy car journeys to work from new developments
3. Benefits of Cycling

Cycling is an inexpensive and environmentally sustainable form of transport and recreation, which has many benefits to people’s health, the environment, the economy and the local community.

Cycling is already the third most popular recreational activity in the UK with an estimated 3.1 million people already riding a bicycle each month. Cycling is very flexible – you can cycle at a time that suits you and it saves you money. Moreover, cycling can be enjoyed by all; toddlers, pensioners, the able bodied or people with disabilities if they have the right equipment.

Cycling also has the potential to deliver real modal shift through people taking up cycling for the short to medium journeys of less than 5 miles. Around two thirds of all car journeys in the UK are less than 3 miles in length, making a significant contribution to carbon emissions and congestion. Shorter journeys such as these could easily be made by bike, with an average cyclist making the same journey in around 15 - 20 minutes. Compared to the private car, cycling can even offer competitive journey times, particularly in the rush hour.

Encouraging cycling to work and cycling to school has the greatest potential to deliver modal shift, however it is important to encourage leisure cycling as evidence suggests those that begin recreational cycling are more likely to cycle for utility purposes.

Cycling and the Environment

Increasing the number of people cycling benefits the environment by:

- Helping to reduce traffic congestion and creating ‘liveable’ streets;
- Reducing emissions and improving local air quality. Road transport currently contributes around 70 per cent of air pollution in UK towns and cities damaging the local environment, climate and biodiversity. Cycling is a pollution free form of transport that creates no harmful emissions and by taking cars off the road it improves local air quality; and
- Reduces car dependency.

Cycling and the Economy

More people cycling helps to support local economies through:

- Boosting local journeys to town centres. Cycle parking, way-finding and new routes to improve access to town centres can all make it easier for people to make local journeys by bike. This in turn can benefit local shops and services;
- Economic modelling commissioned by Cycling England has calculated that a 20 per cent increase in cycling by 2015 would save £107 million in reducing premature deaths, £52
million in lowered NHS costs and £87 million through reduced absence from work (Valuing the benefits of cycling – A report to Cycling England, May 2007)

- Competitive journey times – the bicycle can deliver journey times which are competitive with the car particularly in the rush hour, where cycling is often the fastest mode of transport for commuting short distances;
- Improves accessibility to education, employment, transport interchanges and recreation, especially for those people without cars; and
- Enhancing rural recreation cycling routes can support the rural economy through increased access to tourist attractions.

**Cycling and the Community**

Cycling benefits the local community by:

- Creating more active communities;
- Fewer cars on the road and more cyclists and pedestrians means safer roads;
- Easier and quicker to get around in towns and cities;
- Reduces social exclusion; and
- Off-road cycle facilities if designed appropriately can also help the mobility and independence of the growing number of elderly and disabled people who use electric pavement scooters

**Cycling and Health**

Research has proven that cycling is good for people’s health, in particular:

- Regular cycling can help people to lose weight, reduce stress and improve their overall fitness;
- As a low-impact type of exercise it’s easier on your joints than running or other high-impact activities;
- Someone who weighs 80kg (12st 9lb) will burn more than 650 calories with an hour’s riding, and tone up. Riding up hills or off-road will also work the upper body; and
- Regular cycling can reduce the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. It can also boost your mood and keep your weight under control.
4. Cycling in Northamptonshire

Numbers of people cycling

Like many other areas, the proportion of cycling in Northamptonshire has historically been low and there is relatively little cycle culture, unlike in cities such as Cambridge, Oxford, York and Bristol, so the task to increase the levels of cycling will be challenging. The cycle mode share for journeys to work in Northamptonshire is around 2%, compared to a figure of 8% in Bristol and 28% in Cambridge, so there is still much progress to be made.

Since 2005, cycling trips have been shown to be declining in Northamptonshire, based on automatic cycle counter data collected across the county. To some extent the decline is partly due to missing data as the cycle counter equipment was found to be faulty. A programme of replacing the cycle counters was completed in 2009 which is reflected in the rise in trips recorded in 2010. At the time of going to press, figures for 2011 were still being complied. Taking the base year as 2004, the annualised index of cycling trips is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LTP3 - Cycling trips (annualised index)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Actual Figures</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>92.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trajectory</td>
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<td>100</td>
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The latest Travel Diary Survey (2010) which surveyed 1,100 people across Northamptonshire found cycling to work trip rates to be 2.6%, a small increase on previous years. Comparison of the soon to be released 2011 Census data, to that collected in 2001 will give a more robust indication of cycling trends in the last decade; however anecdotal evidence suggests that cycling seems to be increasing in the county, so determination to succeed has been renewed.

Source: Travel Diary Survey, Northamptonshire 2010
**Existing Cycling Network**

The Council has and continues to be proactive in maintaining, promoting and enhancing the cycling network within the historically limited resources available for cycling. As such, the existing cycling network varies across the county, with some town on and off-road networks more developed than others, which is examined in more detail in the Town Strategies.

The compact nature of the towns and in most cases relatively flat topography, presents significant potential to increase cycling trips within the major towns through addressing key missing links and junction treatment. In addition, there are opportunities, if sufficient funding became available, to develop inter-urban links between the main towns and from smaller outlying settlements. The town networks are complemented by the National Cycle Routes 6 and 50 which run north to south through the county, which are used on the whole as leisure routes.

As part of the Growth Agenda, in the last five years, there has been additional funding available for a number of schemes within the major towns through Growth Area Funding (GAF), in addition to funding received through other sources such as the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Integrated Works programme, the Lottery and contributions received from central government and developers to fund piecemeal requests or as part of new developments. Two examples of recent large scale infrastructure schemes are outlined below as case studies.

### Case Study - Connect 2 - Walking and Cycling Improvements

In December 2007, the sustainable transport charity Sustrans won £50 million of BIG Lottery money by popular vote to implement 79 cycling network development schemes throughout Great Britain. Each of the 79 Connect2 (C2) schemes had been initiated by local partnerships, commonly led by highway authorities.

Northamptonshire's "Ways Through Waterside" (WTW) Connect2 bid was made in collaboration with West Northants Development Corporation, Northampton Borough Council and British Waterways and is guided by a steering group attended by representatives from community interests including Northants Wildlife Trust, the Ramblers Association and Cyclists Touring Club.

The aim of the WTW was to connect existing and planned but isolated cycling facilities in Camp Hill, Briar Hill, Ladybridge Drive, Upton, Sixfields and the big development areas to the West of the town across the Nene floodplain and towards the town centre. Work started in January 2009 and is due for final completion in 2012. A community led project, it includes replanting and landscaping and other such schemes that ensure a holistic approach to the community rather than just providing the cycle infrastructure.
Case Study NORBITAL

Norbital is a new circular cycle route around Northampton. The new cycling infrastructure connects together a large number of residential areas with areas of employment and education around the periphery of the town, such as the University, Brackmills and Moulton Park.

The route also crosses other on and off-road cycle routes that can be used in combination with Norbital to easily get into the town centre by bike.

The Norbital route is predominantly on dedicated cycle tracks separated from traffic, with just a few short sections that use quiet residential streets and as such, 100% of the route is on a paved tarmac surface.

Alongside investing in new infrastructure, in recent years the Council has worked closely with District and Borough partners, Sustrans and health authorities to make progress with promotional material and education.
The Council now offer various cycle maps to help residents and visitors get the most out of cycling within the county. Cycle maps for Corby, Daventry, Northampton, Kettering and Wellingborough, as well as more specific ones developed to promote recent infrastructure investment, for example the Brackmills Industrial Estate cycle map are available to download from the Council’s website and held at libraries.

For more rural communities, cycling can be a convenient option for travelling to nearby larger settlements for facilities such as shopping, leisure, education and employment. An inter-urban map showing suitable routes will be developed in the coming years.

The Council has also run a very successful cycle training programme, Bikeability, since 2008 to improve children’s skills and confidence cycling. More information is outlined in the case study below. Adult cycle training is provided by Northamptonshire Sport through the Easy Rider Cycle Club and is also available through Adult Learning Courses provided by the Council for a fee.

Case Study – Bikeability Northamptonshire

Bikeability is the cycling proficiency test, designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes safely on today’s roads. The outcome in Northamptonshire is to have ‘more children cycling more often and more safely’.

The National Standard for cycle training, which underpins Bikeability, has been developed by a number of road safety and cycling partners. It is endorsed by the Department for Transport because cycling plays a key role within an integrated transport strategy, especially for shorter journeys to work and school. It is supported by the Department for Health and Education because cycling offers an easy, convenient form of exercise that can be built into our everyday lives and can deliver significant health benefits for people of all ages and is one of the easiest ways for our children to lead more active and healthier life styles.

Northamptonshire County Council offers two levels of National Standard cycle training. Level 1 is aimed at children in Year 5 when they start to cycle on off-road facilities or when supervised by adults. The course covers bike safety, starting off and stopping, steering, gears, and giving signals. Level 2 is aimed at children in Year 6 aged 10 and over. The course refreshes Level 1 manoeuvres plus includes on road turning & emerging left & right at junctions.

The information accompanying each level of the award gives clear advice to both children and parents on what trips the child is trained to make following their training, parents are then encouraged to give the child as much practice as possible to keep their skills fresh and build experience.
Northamptonshire County Council provides National Standard trained instructors to deliver cycle training. Every instructor has successfully completed a National Standard Cycle Instructor training course, will be an experienced, competent cyclist who cycles regularly in current traffic conditions.

The County has appointed 8 cycle instructors from a cross-section of the community who now deliver all levels of Bikeability to primary schools within the county. To date, over 5,000 children have completed the training, with a further 3,600 forecast to be delivered to 2012/13.

Barriers to Cycling in Northamptonshire

As traffic volumes have increased over the years, nationally cyclists’ fear of injury has become more significant and it is the perception of danger that discourages cycling. This perceived fear of injury can lead directly to restrictions on children’s independent mobility and subsequently increases to motor vehicle traffic to transport children and decreases in the fitness and psychological well-being of children who no longer walk and cycle at will. Nationally, the actual injury statistics have decreased gradually since 1994, albeit with some peaks and troughs.

Under the Road Traffic Act, for a cycle collision to be recorded, the accident must involve a motor vehicle, unless fatal. The data presented below therefore are only cycle collisions involving a motor vehicle, and do not take account of collisions between cycles or cycle pedestrian conflicts.

In Northamptonshire the number of collisions involving cyclists has steadily decreased since November 2001, particularly collisions involving children, shown in the graph below.
In recent years though, adult collisions appear to have risen compared to other years and continued monitoring, investigation and implementation of road safety initiatives is needed to ensure this does not become a long-term trend.

The graph below outlines collision rates by severity. Overall, fatal accidents have remained fairly static in the last 10 years, serious injuries plateaued at around 20 collisions a year between November 2006 and October 2010, but since then seem to have risen slightly. During the same time period, slight accidents experienced a peak between November 2007 and October 2009.

It is important to recognise that these accident figures should not be considered in isolation, but in the wider context of cycling levels in the County.

Having more cyclists on the roads makes conditions safer because drivers’ attitudes and behaviour are better adjusted to sharing the road space. But if cycling declines, the remaining cyclists find themselves in an increasingly hostile environment.

The higher performance of modern cars has tended to increase not just speed but also acceleration. Rapid acceleration can be as intimidating and dangerous for cyclists as high speeds, especially at junctions and roundabouts.

Highway design and the layout of junctions have been modified over the years to accommodate increasing motor vehicle volumes and this has nearly always been to the disadvantage of cyclists.
Additional narrower lanes have been implemented at many junctions leaving no room on the road for cyclists between the lines of cars. Dedicated left turning lanes put cyclists in great danger.

Measures to help pedestrians can sometimes disadvantage cyclists. Pedestrianised areas which exclude cyclists often lead to longer and more dangerous routes on busy roads if cyclists’ interests are ignored. Central refuges if not properly designed can cause a source of potential conflict with motor vehicles by those who have to cycle through the narrowings.

Traffic management schemes can also be a cause of more illegal cycling with increased hostility from other road users. One-way streets to manage vehicle flow resulting in circuitous and inconvenient routes are inappropriate for bicycles as the extra distance is significant. The combination of traffic danger, unfriendly infrastructure and lack of training or skill on the part of the cyclist results, in some urban areas, in the majority of cycling taking place on footways.
5. The Strategy

Introduction

The previous sections of this strategy have considered the existing situation with regard to cycling and the vision for maintaining and enhancing the network. This chapter outlines the strategy elements which together will deliver a range of measures and initiatives to meet the objectives.

The differences across Northamptonshire from the individual towns to the rural areas, means that a relatively broad strategy approach will best suit the varying needs of the county. The strategy itself aims to cover the prevalent issues that affect cycling in Northamptonshire through a series of policies which set the principles and priorities for the cycling strategies for each of the towns within the Town Strategies.

Northamptonshire’s Cycling Strategy needs to address:

1. **Policy framework for cycling**
   - Recognising cycling’s full benefits and integrating with wider objectives for transport, road safety, planning (including urban design), health etc

2. **A quality environment for cycling**
   - Setting key principles of cycle friendly highway planning and design, and providing the policy context for delivery of quality off-road leisure routes, access to key destinations, signing and cycle-friendly road and path maintenance policies and procedures

3. **Promotion, information and incentives**
   - Maps, journey planners, promotion, individualised marketing, and incentives.
   - Cycling events, cycle training, schools, workplaces, health, minority or disadvantaged communities

4. **Partnerships**
   - Working with Boroughs and Districts
   - Working with schools/colleges, health sector, employers and businesses, public transport operators and the police
   - Engaging communities and the voluntary sector in developing, delivering and monitoring an effective local cycling strategy

5. **Resources**
   - Revenue as well as capital, plus suitably qualified / trained staff

6. **Monitoring**
   - Commitment to substantial increases in cycle use
- Monitoring to promote more and safer cycling and reduce fear
- Identify suitable data collection methods to obtain the best value for money

Policy Framework

Setting a clear policy framework is critical to recognising cycling’s full benefits and integrating them with the wider objectives for transport, road safety, planning and health to ensure that cycling is embedded in policy within the Council and within the policy documents of partner organisations. The Cycling Tourist Club’s ‘Cycling: a local transport solution’ document which was produced in November 2009 is a useful reference point for how this can be achieved and has been referred to in the production of this document.

Having a cycling strategy as part of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan reinforces the importance of cycling held in the Council’s wider transport policy in the Council, such as the Transport Strategy for Growth and the Place and Movement Guide as well as wider policy relating to the environment. The Council will work internally, and with partners to ensure that there is a focus on cycling embedded within emerging documents such as:

- **Core Spatial Strategies** – Produced for North and West Northamptonshire, the Joint Core Strategies are the statutory spatial planning policy documents to identify locations for growth within the County. North Northamptonshire is currently reviewing their adopted Joint Core Strategy with a view to examination in summer 2013. West Northamptonshire is due to submit their Joint Core Strategy in December 2012. Sustainable transport such as cycling is recognised in these documents as necessary to facilitate growth and they incorporate policies on reducing the need to travel, especially by private motorised transport, and securing provision and facilities for cycling in all developments.

- **Area Action Plans** – establish a set of proposals and policies for the development of a specific area and for part of the Local Development Framework. The majority of the major towns now have an Area Action Plan which has been adopted and support the provision of cycling infrastructure as part of future development plans.

- **Health sector strategies** – health sector policies should support the increase in cycling levels as a way of improving public health. Local health trusts can work with local highway and planning authorities through the Local Strategic Partnerships and other means, to support cycling.

- **Road Safety Strategy** – One of the key objectives should be to aim for more, as well as safer cycling, recognising that cyclists gain from “safety in numbers” and that the benefits of increased cycle use and improved road safety can and should be seen as entirely complementary aims. This will aid in tackling fears that deter people from cycling.
A Quality Environment for Cycling

Creating a quality environment for cycling in town centres and residential areas alike is recognised in national guidance as being about providing coherent, direct and convenient, attractive, safe and comfortable cycle routes for experienced and less experienced cyclists alike to provide access to key destinations such as health, employment, education and leisure.

This section sets out the key principles of cycle friendly highway planning and design that all cycling infrastructure within the county should be designed to meet. The principles are based on the guidance outlined in the Local Transport Note produced by the Department for Transport, Local Transport Note (LTN) 2/08 Cycling Infrastructure Design, and Cycling England’s Design Guide. This, and best practice from other sources such as the Manual for Streets documents have informed the production of the policies contained within this document and should be referred to in designing new facilities.

The diagram overleaf outlines how the policies in the Cycling Strategy relate to the five elements of delivering and promoting a high quality cycling network ‘Fit for Purpose’.
Cycling Policies

Policy 1

Cycling Hierarchy of Provision

Policy 2

Cycle Review

Policy 3

Cycle Audits

Policy 4

- Traffic Volume Reduction
- Speed reduction
- Junction and hazard treatment
- Reallocation of road space
- Cycle tracks and off-carriageway features
- Signage
- Cycle Parking and Interchange
- Integration of into Development Proposals

Policy 5

Policy 6

Policy 7

Policy 8

Policy 9

Policy 10

Policy 11

Policy 12

Policy 12a

Policy 13

Policy 14

Policy 15

Promotion, Incentives and Education

Implementation of Infrastructure

Partnership

Physical Measures
The Hierarchy of Provision

To make cycling attractive for those already cycling and to attract mode shift from single occupancy car use, how the network is designed is critical. An effective network needs to create a safe cycling environment and give advantage to the cyclist as appropriate through on-road infrastructure, supplemented by high quality off-road routes which are quicker, more direct or are safer and more attractive for cyclists happy to travel at a more leisurely pace. Furthermore, in certain locations, good urban design can be used to create an environment which encourages cycling, whilst being sensitive to the surrounding environment and without the requirement for significant pieces of infrastructure.

The key to achieving the above is to consider the Hierarchy of Provision as set out in the key guidance documents namely; Department for Transport’s Manual for Streets, guidance notes Local Transport Note (LTN) 2/08 Cycling Infrastructure Design and LTN 1/12 Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists and Cycling England’s Design Guide.

The Hierarchy of Provision states that where possible, the priority should be to look for solutions with cycle-specific measures that reduce the impact of motor traffic. Where this is not appropriate, redesign of junctions, reallocation of road space and the provision of off-road cycle tracks should be pursued. In this way, it is often possible to meet cyclists’ needs without the need for cycle-specific infrastructure, potentially freeing up cycling budgets for other smarter choices measures.

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<td><img src="image" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td>1. Traffic Volume Reduction</td>
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<td>2. Traffic Speed Reduction</td>
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<td>3. Junction or Hazard Site Treatment, Traffic Management</td>
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<td>4. Reallocation of Carriageway Space</td>
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<td>5. Cycle Tracks Away from Roads</td>
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<td>6. Conversion of Footways to Shared Use for Pedestrians and Cyclists</td>
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However, each situation needs to be assessed on its own merits, and in many cases, off-road links provide facilities for inexperienced cyclists and those new to cycling and are critical to encouraging more people to cycle more often. Moreover, in some situations off-road routes are the most appropriate way in which to provide safe cycling facilities.
One example is the cycle route running parallel to the A45 in Northampton. For safety reasons, most cyclists would agree that riding on a designated cycle route parallel to the A45 would always be preferable to riding along this busy dual carriageway and indeed should be seen as good practise for all busy dual carriageways within the county. The same can also be said for busy roundabouts, for example Barnes Meadow Interchange. Therefore the Hierarchy of Provision should be applied with consideration to providing routes for experienced and inexperienced cyclists alike, as recognised in LTN 1/12.

**Cycling Policy 1**
When developing the main route networks the hierarchical approach as recommended in the LTN 2/08, Manual for Streets, Cycle Audit and Cycle Review will be used.

A useful process map for scheme development is outlined below.

Source –
LTN 1/12
(Figure 2.1)
**Cycle Audits**

Many major roads or junctions present a hostile environment for cyclists. One way of tackling this is ensuring that cyclists are at the heart of new or proposed changes to the highway network by undertaking a cycle audit.

The aim of a cycle audit is to encourage increased use and ensure that the needs of cyclists are considered during the design stages and indeed once the new scheme has been implemented. Cycle audits ensure that opportunities to encourage cycling are considered comprehensively and that cycling conditions are not inadvertently made worse. Cycle audits should therefore audit against coherence, directness and convenience, attractiveness, safety and comfort, through referencing the cycling vision for each of the major towns in the Cycling Development Plans (see page 43 for more details). Undertaking regular audits can also bring significant benefits, particularly through its education of designers; knowledge which can be applied to future schemes.

Ideally cycle audits should be conducted on every new scheme in accordance with the Department for Transport Guidelines for Cycle Audit and Cycle Review (1998). However, a decision on the amount of resources invested in an audit or review should reflect both the current level of cycle use and the likely extent of any suppressed demand. For example, there may be little benefit in spending a great deal of time auditing a remote rural road with steep gradients.

To help with identifying those schemes to be audited, prioritisation should be given in the following order:

- **Cycle Pro-active Route** (strategic or local cycle networks; and roads that are, or could be, popular with cyclists);
- **Cycle Friendly Route** (where there is a general desire to encourage cycling, e.g. distributor routes); and
- **Cycle Neutral Route** (all other routes where cycling is permitted)

In densely populated urban areas, audits of schemes that are not on routes classed as pro-active or friendly routes should not be disregarded as the number of cyclists and importance of the route as a short cut or connection between pro-active routes needs to be recognised.

The guidelines recommend four stages for an audit; Preparation of a Design Brief, Preliminary Design, Detailed Design and Substantial Completion. However, it is entirely appropriate to tailor the number and timing of individual stages, depending on the type, size and complexity of the
scheme to be audited. This often results in only two stages being required. In all cases, the auditor should refer to the latest cycling guidance available, and seek to advise in the context of any wider transport, planning and design objectives to ensure that measures complement the quality of place and urban character of streets.

The cycle audit should not duplicate any work carried out as part of a safety audit. However, when a road safety audit has not been done, any audit should also consider safety. In either event, the relative safety of cyclists using alternative routes should be considered. The Cycle Audit process should also form a valuable part of a Quality Audit. For more information on Cycle Audits please refer to Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/11 – Quality Audit, Department for Transport 2011.

### Cycling Policy 2
Cycle audits of all relevant transport proposals will be undertaken, in accordance with national guidance, to ensure that opportunities to encourage cycling are considered comprehensively and implemented appropriately.

### Cycle Review

Cycle reviews follow a similar approach to cycle audits, but relate to identifying positive and negative attributes for cycling on a corridor by corridor basis and designing improvements on existing transport networks. This methodology, which has three stages; review of conditions, appraisal of cycle friendliness and assessment of measures, is useful for drawing up local cycling strategies, such as Cycling Development Plans to support the development of the Town Strategies.

Undertaking a full cycle review of the entire transport infrastructure is resource intensive and therefore priorities for review will be decided by existing and potential levels of cycle use, accident records, the location of schools, employment and other attractors.

### Cycling Policy 3
Cycle reviews of relevant parts of the transport network will be undertaken, in accordance with national guidance, to identify their cycle friendliness and to identify broad ways that those networks can be improved to encourage cycling. These will form the basis of the Cycling Development Plans to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

### Physical Measures

There are a number of physical measures that can be implemented to create safer, more direct and more comfortable walking and cycling environments. These are outlined in brief under each of the Hierarchy of Measures.
Traffic Volume Reduction

Reducing overall traffic volume on a particular section of road is not necessarily restricted to closing access to motor vehicles while retaining cycle access. There are other ‘invisible measures’ that can improve conditions for cyclists such as car parking management, speed reduction, land-use planning, redistribution of the carriageway into wide bus lanes and traffic calming as well as many other policies aimed at curbing motor traffic and prioritising cycling.

Where it is proposed to introduce one-way working for general traffic, two-way cycling should be the default option. This should be achieved by giving priority to cyclists over motor vehicles through exemptions from road closures, one-way streets (i.e. implementing contra-flow cycle lanes), turning bans and vehicle restricted areas, to shorten journey time and distance cycled making routes more attractive. Where this is not appropriate, consideration should be given to allowing access to cyclists outside of the busiest pedestrian hours, for example as has been achieved in Kettering town centre.

Cycling Policy 4
Cyclists will be exempt from restrictive Traffic Regulation Orders such as for one way streets unless there is a good reason for including them. Existing orders will be progressively corrected to facilitate cycle access, where appropriate.

Speed reduction

Reducing traffic speeds can help to reduce or eliminate the need for special facilities for cyclists as well as contributing to casualty reduction and the creation of a more ‘people friendly’ environment where people are more likely to walk or cycle.

Since 1999, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act (Amendment) Order 1999 (SI 1999 No. 1608), it is permissible under certain conditions to apply 20 mph speed limits if they are self-enforcing through environmental improvements such as varied surfacing materials and the layout of on-street parking areas. These measures should be prioritised as they can often overcome the need for additional traffic calming, in the form of road humps which can be hazardous and not to mention uncomfortable for cyclists.

In 2011, the Department for Transport revised the regulations surrounding 20 mph limits, through the Traffic Signs Policy Paper: Signing the Way (2011). The document sets out more Local Authority flexibility to reduce the level of prescription by:

- Providing more flexible regulation to enable more choice;
- Reducing the requirements for Secretary of State approvals of non-prescribed signing;
Further deregulating lighting requirements for signing to help reduce energy costs and environmental impact;
- Making the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) more user friendly;
- Retaining national consistency to help ensure essential road user understanding.

This extra flexibility means that more innovative uses of 20 mph zones are achievable, but where traffic calming is used to achieve speed reductions it must be carefully designed and built to avoid creating difficulties or unforeseen hazards for cyclists.

Careful urban design can also create an attractive and functional environment in which cycle speeds are low and pedestrians clearly have priority. The positioning of features such as trees and benches and the use of surfacing materials can suggest a preferred route for cyclists without employing road signs while creating a legible environment for blind or partially sighted people.

**Junction and hazard treatment**

Signal controlled junctions are the most common kind of major junction on busier roads in urban areas. In general, they are safer for cyclists to use than roundabouts, particularly the larger ones and present opportunities to provide an advantage over motorists through advanced stop lines (ASLs) etc. However, without due consideration of their needs, signalised junctions can unnecessarily create difficult conditions or delays for cyclists.

Roundabouts are, in general, more hazardous for cyclists than signalised junctions, however careful design can mitigate their impact. The use of continental style roundabouts, with tighter geometry, single lane entry and exit and a narrow circulating lane should be considered where appropriate to improve conditions for cyclists.

As with busy dual carriageways, large roundabouts should include appropriate quality off-road routes that give cyclists advantage over the motorist. However, off-road routes should be seen as additional to, not instead of, creating a comprehensively cycle-friendly road network.

The provision of ASLs with feeder cycle lanes sufficiently long enough to bypass queues at signals should be implemented. If space is not sufficient then ASLs should not be provided.

**Reallocation of road space**

Reducing the road space available to motor traffic helps create better conditions for cycling, particularly if the remaining road space remains open to cyclists. Bus lanes can be a means of achieving this, and in London the introduction of bus lanes and bus priorities has been one of the most important measures benefitting cyclists.
Where provided and developed, bus lanes should always be open to cyclists and wide enough for buses to overtake cyclists safely (around 4.5m wide) where the carriageway width allows. Providing a direct and barrier free route, they are generally popular with cyclists compared to parallel shared footways.

In some situations, on-road cycle lanes can also be beneficial and where provided should be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide, preferably 2 metres, continuous, made conspicuous across side roads at junctions and not abandon cyclists where roads become narrow, for example at right turning lanes. When cycle lanes are being introduced, the cost of remedial measures to the carriageway surface should be included within the scheme budget.

Recent research found that cars overtook significantly closer to cyclists on two roads with cycle lanes compared with the same road where no cycle lane was present. This suggests that where cycle lanes are implemented extra care needs to be taken to provide a minimum width of 1.5 metres and the rationale for implementing a cycle lane should be considered carefully.

Where cycle lanes are marked on the offside of a line of parallel parking bays, a buffer zone between the bays and the cycle lane of between 0.5 and 1 metre should be provided.

Where carriageway space is restricted on quieter roads, consideration should be given to the removal of centre lines and implementation of advisory cycle lanes to retain two general traffic lanes whilst providing cycling priority as has been achieved on Rowtree Road, in Northampton.

Cycling Policy 5
Where provided, new cycle lanes should be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide, preferably 2m.

Cycle tracks and off-road features

Off-road links can offer enhanced permeability, potentially safer routes for cyclists and advantageous journey times compared to motor traffic. These need to be designed, built and maintained so that they achieve their intention of drawing cyclists away from less attractive routes on the carriageway. To be effective, cycle links should be clearly signed, direct and relevant to cyclists’ needs.

As with cycle infrastructure in general, shared cycle routes can be visually intrusive to the streetscape if not designed sensitively. Colour surfacing in particular in urban and rural settings can have a negative visual impact and there is also a cost implication (for examples please see Local Transport Note 1/12).
Facilities should be integrated with other shared use cycle tracks away from main carriageways through parks, alongside rivers, canals or using old railway alignments to provide an attractive alternative to the road network for all cyclists. Route such as these can also support the rural economy and opportunities to investigate designating rural recreation routes should be investigated. These types of routes are generally more closely associated with leisure routes, but are just as valuable as part of utility routes. A good example of this is the Connect2 scheme in Northampton.

Where shared use cycle tracks are provided adjacent to the carriageway, they are often unattractive to experienced cyclists due to the time penalty of stopping at junctions. They also require careful design, particularly relating to the integration between on and off-road infrastructure, but can bring benefits to pedestrians, those with mobility impairments and pushchairs.

New shared use tracks should be 3 metres wide to reduce conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, however where constraints on site mean the full 3 metres cannot be achieved, the importance of the link as part of the whole network should be considered and subject to a cycle audit, a narrower track should be provided.

In some circumstances, such as urban areas where there are high flows of pedestrians and cyclists, shared use tracks will not be appropriate due to potential conflict.

To reduce the time penalty of stopping at junctions, which results in shared use tracks being less attractive, the following should also be considered as part of the design of shared use tracks:

- **Priority at junctions with side-roads** – giving cyclists priority reflects the general behaviour of cyclists and is more convenient. Design details for these important treatments need to be done with great care.
- **Priority or signal crossings of roads** – in some cases it will still be possible to provide priority for cycle tracks over roads using a humped crossing. In other cases a well designed signal crossing may provide the best solution.
- **Providing priority on return to carriageway** – where a cycle track ends and the route continues on the carriageway it is important to ensure that the cyclists safety is upmost, an example of how this can be done is using a
build-out to shelter the entrance, allowing cyclists to rejoin the carriageway without yielding priority, but there are other ways that this can be achieved.

Shared use tracks should be designed to benefit not just cyclists, particularly novice ones, but to assist disabled people with mobility scooters and parents with pushchairs. To ensure that the network is Fit for Purpose for these users, the following should be considered:

- **Quality of surface and maintenance** – the surface of shared use tracks must be maintained to an appropriate standard. Extra maintenance of cycle tracks may be required to keep the surface swept clean.
- **Ensuring all kerbs are flush** – even slight up-stands in the cycle route can provide discomfort and danger to cyclists and other users. Where cycle tracks cross side-roads, rejoin the carriageway or meet other facilities the two surfaces should be flush.

### Cycling Policy 6

New shared use tracks will be 3 metres wide or wider, except where constraints on site mean that 3 metres cannot be achieved and the link is deemed of significant strategic importance in line with advice from LTN 1/12.

To assist disabled people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters and parents with pushchairs, shared use tracks will be designed to meet the Equality Act (2010).

### Signage

Key to delivering a coherent and direct network is its legibility. To improve legibility a comprehensive signage strategy should be drawn up for each of the major towns.

As part of the Norbital and Kettering Green Links schemes, the Council implemented innovative signs developed as part of the Cycling Demonstration Towns that display distances and times. Signs such as these are based on cycling times for averagely fit cyclists travelling at 12mph and are useful in dispelling perceptions that key destinations are vast distances away by bicycle.

Signs should be carefully positioned not to reduce the effective width of cycle tracks. Guidance suggests a distance of 500mm back from the beyond the edge of a cycle track. Where walls or fences prevent this they should be placed tight up against them.
Where vandalism is a problem signs should be mounted high enough to discourage graffiti and square posts used to prevent rotation.

Signage should be appropriate to the location and excessive repeater signs should be avoided to minimise street clutter. Similarly, if appropriate, signs should be implemented on existing lamp columns.

**Cycle Parking and Interchange**

The introduction of good quality cycle parking is a key element in developing a cycle friendly environment. Cycle parking should be provided at all major destinations, including schools and other educational sites, hospitals, employment sites, and leisure attractions in both towns and villages.

Cycle parking is best when it is situated as close as possible to the destination to preserve the advantage of cycling over other modes and is subject to natural surveillance, whilst not being in a position that causes an obstruction to pedestrians.

**Cycling Policy 7**

We will work with Borough, Districts and Parish Councils, major employers, businesses and leisure, transport and education organisations to provide cycle parking at schools, retail centres, transport interchanges, residential and leisure facilities in towns and villages or attractors which meet recognised design standards appropriate to each location.

In addition, providing cycle parking at public transport interchanges such as bus stations, major bus stops (e.g. park and ride sites) and railway stations is key to creating good links between sustainable modes. Where cyclists are leaving their bikes for long periods of time, the importance of well lit, secure and covered cycle parking is critical.

Key routes leading to and from transport interchanges including railway stations, bus stations and major bus stops should be developed to provide suitable cycling friendly infrastructure. The aim is to develop selected bike and ride facilities at targeted locations where a community of cyclists can be served by public transport. The key bus stops in particular, at strategic locations on major radial routes, could provide this quite easily.

**Cycling Policy 8**

Cycle friendly infrastructure will be developed at, and on key routes leading to, transport interchanges and key bus stops.
Integration of Cycling into Development Proposals

All new developments should be accessible by bicycle, and fully integrate with the existing cycle infrastructure (on and off-road) in the area. New developments should also provide for, and fund, links to the wider cycle network including to town centres, schools, employment sites and transport interchanges. The Place and Movement Guide (2008) sets out the Council’s expectations with regards to cycle provision in further detail. The cycling links should be developed in association with travel plans to ensure that the impact of their development on the existing walking and cycling network is fully mitigated.

Cycling Policy 9
New developments will be required to demonstrate or provide connectivity into the existing cycling network and within the development as appropriate.

Implementation of Infrastructure

Ensuring that facilities provided for cyclists is of the quality necessary in order to attract and retain users will be in part delivered through the auditing of schemes. Schemes should however be designed according to the criteria recommended in LTN 2/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design and outlined in the Cycling England’s Cycle Design Checklist.

Cycling Policy 10
Facilities for cyclists will be of an appropriate quality in order to attract and retain users. All schemes will have to demonstrate that the design criteria recommended in Cycle Infrastructure Design, or other recognised sources of guidance was applied in developing designs.

The long term maintenance of a new scheme should also be considered during the design process to minimise situations where cycle tracks become unusable because they cannot practically be swept clean of glass, leaves etc.

In many schemes compromise is usually necessary, but where this compromise could result in removing most of the benefits to cyclists, then the option of providing nothing should be considered e.g. if advanced stop lines, with no feeder lanes, are used due to insufficient carriageway width, then they can often place cyclists at more danger than having no advanced stop lines.

Cycling Policy 11
If after considering all options and available resources, facilities for cyclists could not be constructed to a standard consistent with Cycle Infrastructure Design, the option of providing nothing should be considered.
Approximately 10% of cyclists’ injuries result from road defects. The discomfort from poor road surfaces can be a major deterrent to cycling and impact on the attractiveness of a route for cyclists. Maintenance of off-road shared use tracks is also equally important.

Bringing the quality of the road surface up to standard must be seen as a priority, especially where roads are used as priority cycle routes.

Facilities should be designed to appropriate standards that minimise future maintenance liabilities. Maintenance will include rapid response repairs to dangerous potholes, regular sweeping, street lighting repairs, salting in winter and cutting back vegetation. The 2 metre strip alongside the kerb is where most cyclists ride on any road and so needs the greatest attention for maintenance.

**Cycling Policy 12**

Bring the standard of the carriageway surface and off-carriageway surfaces up to an appropriate standard to ensure our network is ‘fit for purpose’.
6. Promotion, Incentives and Education

The previous section has outlined the physical measures that should be considered to improve the environment for cycling in Northamptonshire, outlined in further detail in the area-specific Town Strategies. Alongside investment in infrastructure, a package of promotion, education and incentives have been proved to be influential in changing travel behaviours and generating mode shift. In fact, a Department for Transport review of smarter choices measures published in June 2005 called Smarter Choices: Changing the Way we Travel found that they typically had benefit-to-cost ratios of around 10:1, representing exceptionally good value for money in terms of transport spending.

Promotion

The Council is committed to the promotion of sustainable transport, and will continue to promote cycling through a combination of the measures below and in accordance with the marketing and information action plan outlined in our Smarter Travel Choices strategy.

a) Advertising and promotional material

A key rule in delivering effective promotional campaigns – whether on billboards, leaflets or media advertising – is to show a positive image of cycling. Cycling needs to be depicted as a desirable activity, open to people of all ages and backgrounds, where one can look relaxed and happy in whatever clothes one would normally wear when out and about. There is also much research that shows that cycling promotes good health and leads to a longer life. Cycling for at least 30 minutes a day gives people a level of fitness equivalent to being 10 years younger. Therefore the health benefits of cycling and its role in healthier lifestyles as part of active travel is a powerful tool to use in promoting cycling.

b) Cycle maps

Good quality cycle maps can encourage novice cyclists to explore routes away from main roads while they gain confidence. The Council has already produced a suite of cycling maps which shown not only dedicated cycle facilities but also grade the whole road network to show how busy each route is and what level of confidence a cyclists needs to handle each road in the network. These maps build on an original initiative by Cycling Tourist Club Northants and Milton Keynes, who produced the first two maps (Kettering and Northampton) in 2008 with support from the County Council, Borough Councils and the NHS. This approach has been recognised at a national level as being best practice. The Council will continue to update cycling maps as and when it is required and funding is available, particularly drawing on good practise examples from similar sized Cycle Towns such as Derby and Aylesbury.
c) Individualised Travel Marketing

Individualised Travel Marketing (ITM, also known as Personalised Travel Planning, PTP) involves offering individuals tailor-made information to support people in choosing to walk, cycle and use public transport more often.

Resource intensive, initial contact is made by phone or on the doorstep, and individuals are segmented into those who are already primarily using sustainable transport, those who are interested in making changes to the way they travel and those who are not.

For many people in the middle group, providing them with a bus timetable or a cycle route map is enough to do the trick, highlighting possibilities they were unaware of or journey time savings they would not have expected. For others, a fuller discussion of their travel patterns and some advice on how they could be met more easily by sustainable travel is required. Research has shown that PTP is most effective if follow-up contact is made in the months subsequent to the initial contact to reinforce the sustainable options available to an individual and to create a change in behaviour.

Experience in Cambridgeshire, sourced from the Cycle Cambridge – End of Programme Report, June 2011, has found that new developments are easier to target through this method as travel patterns are yet to be established, however cost savings can be achieved by targeting existing communities near to new developments as much of the information and publicity can be shared.

d) Bike Week and other cycle festivals

Bike Week takes place annually in the second week of June, and the EU-sponsored In Town Without My Car day is in September. Both are great opportunities for councils, employers, schools and local cycling groups to come together and create opportunities for would-be cyclists to give it a try. These events and others are a crucial part of a softer measures approach to raise publicity of cycling and an opportunity to promote newly implemented schemes and upcoming events.

Cycle Policy 13
We will promote cycling through producing advertising and promotional material, cycle maps, individualised travel marketing and through one-off events, subject to available resources.

Incentives

There are a number of ways and specific schemes to incentivise cycling. These are aimed primarily (in some cases exclusively) at promoting work-related cycling through Travel Plans, although some can be adopted in other contexts too.
Travel Plans set out suggested measures to achieve a reduction in private car use and increase in sustainable modes. The measures can include reducing the number of car parking spaces, increasing charges for car parking, promotional activities and materials, incentives and the provision of new cycle-friendly infrastructure on and off site, such as cycle parking or a new toucan crossing.

Funding for Travel Plans should normally be encouraged from the industry that it serves. However, existing industries not planning a change or future development may not be willing to fund the plan, and therefore alternate funding may be required.

Examples of incentives that can be introduced as part of Travel Plans to encourage cycling are:

- **Mileage allowances** – The Government’s cycling allowance is currently 20p per mile for business journeys made by bike. Higher payments will be subject to tax. Nevertheless, many employers do pay a considerably higher mileage allowance and the money is an obvious inducement to travel by bike. For example, Richmond Council currently pays 50p per mile making cycling on business a financially attractive form of transport. An alternative way of offering an incentive for cycle use is to ‘pay’ people in the form of extra time off. Several companies grant staff an extra five minutes holiday every time they cycle to work. It does not sound a great deal, but for regular cyclists it can amount to an extra two-and-a-half days’ leave each year.

- **Pool bikes** – A pool of bicycles can be useful for travel on-site, for short business trips, site visits, or for staff to reach nearby shops or cafes at lunchtime. The bikes will almost certainly be used by those new to, or returning to, cycling rather than experienced cycle commuters (who will, of course, have their own bikes). Pool bikes are therefore acting as ambassadors for cycling. The hope is that, after a few trips on a pool bike, the borrower will be so impressed that he or she will invest in a bicycle of their own. So pool bikes need to be comfortable, easy to use and reliable. Some companies such as the Inland Revenue allow employers to offer interest-free or low-interest loans of up to £5,000 where repayments are deducted from employees’ monthly salaries. Such loans can enable staff to invest in good quality bike and accessories relatively painlessly.

- **Guaranteed ride home** – ‘What happens if my bike gets pinched?’ ‘What if I have a puncture?’ ‘Suppose I have to work late?’ People’s worries about potential pitfalls and disruptions often deter them from cycling. Employers can address these concerns by guaranteeing staff a free taxi ride home in the event of an emergency or the need for unexpected overtime.

- **Cycle skills training** – Cycle training has a proven track record as a way of increasing people’s skill and confidence and inspiring them to cycle.
Cycle to Work Scheme – In 1999, the Government introduced an annual tax exemption which allows employers to loan cycles and cyclist safety equipment to employees as a tax-free benefit. Employers either run a cycle to work scheme themselves or through a third-party provider, like a bike shop; and the bike must be used mainly for ‘qualifying’ journeys related to work. The loan payments are paid over an agreed period and usually taken out through a ‘salary sacrifice’ arrangement. At the end of the loan, the employer may give the employee the opportunity to purchase the bike for its full market value, or the employee can continue to loan the bike at no cost – as long as it is used for qualifying journeys.

The Council will continue to work with a number of Northamptonshire’s major employers where high proportions of staff travel by car to work to produce Travel Plans.

Cycling Policy 14
Travel plans will be used to ensure that an integrated approach is used to promote alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing the workplace, school or public transport interchange.

Education

One significant barrier to cycling is the perceived safety issues and vulnerability of being a cyclist on today’s busy roads. Therefore cycle training for children and adults is particularly important in giving individuals the knowledge, confidence and assertiveness to cycle on the road.

The Council has a long-standing Cycle Training Programme for school children in Northamptonshire as outlined earlier in this document which has recently been offered to adults through the Adult Learning Courses, training is also offered through Northamptonshire Sport’s ‘Getting Back In To’ series.

Cycling Policy 15
Subject to available resources, Level 1 and Level 2 Bikeability cycle training will be offered to school children of the right age, and all opportunities will be taken to extend it out to secondary, university and college students, as well as directing adults interested in learning to ride to available courses.

Safer Routes to School

A Safer Routes to School scheme provides engineering solutions to help improve safety, accessibility and encourage more children to walk or cycle to school. It is hoped that the scheme will result in less traffic and congestion and improved air quality in and around the school area.
Engineering improvements may include a combination of 20mph zone with traffic calming or other speed reduction measures as required, safer crossing points, new or extended lengths of footway, cycle facilities and enhanced signing, lining and lighting in the area. However, highway changes alone are not enough to make a safer route to school scheme successful. The involvement of the school community is vital if we are to see a real shift towards walking and cycling.

**Cycling Policy 16**
The need for facilities to encourage children to cycle to school will be considered in every Safer Routes to School scheme. Cycle facilities provided under the Safer Routes to Schools programme will be integrated into the Cycling Development Plans.
7. Partnership Working

Encouraging cycling contributes to a number of national priorities such as improving people’s health and wellbeing, reducing absenteeism, supporting the economy and reducing congestion. Therefore partnership working with authorities and organisations responsible for these areas can be beneficial in supporting initiatives and pooling resources.

The cost of physical inactivity and therefore the potential benefits of encouraging people to exercise on a regular basis has been estimated by the Department for Health to be around £9m for Northamptonshire, based on estimating the average healthcare cost of primary and secondary care costs of physical inactivity across England based on 2006/2007 figures.

In a recent report prepared for Cycling England the extent of benefits was found to vary depending on the profile of new cyclists as well as the amount of cycling. Most interestingly, the benefits were found to be higher for older people who were encouraged to become active than younger people.

This does not mean that the focus of cycling investment should be only on older age groups. It is just as important to encourage younger people to cycle in order to develop healthy habits and encourage continuing physical activity. Influencing children’s development and attitudes towards cycling at an early age will have significant benefit in future years for the child and later, for the economy.

The contribution to congestion and pollution rests on the extent to which new cycle trips replace car journeys and the values associated with both congestion and pollution are much higher in urban areas than rural ones. In total, the values vary to a maximum of just over £300 per additional cyclist per year, but actual values will depend on the distances and frequency of trips and the characteristics of the new cyclists.

The Cycling England report examines four examples of cycling intervention. Each is shown to produce positive returns to investment. The benefit to cost ratio ranges from 7.4:1 in the case of a cycle training programme to 1.4:1 for Bike It, an initiative that funds cycling officers who work with selected schools to encourage cycling. The two physical infrastructure projects show returns of between two and four. These values exclude any potential benefits to children’s health or contribution to preventing or reducing obesity (see the table overleaf).
As well as the health authority, partnership working is critical with local businesses, education, public transport and the police through Local Strategic Partnerships.

Engaging with the voluntary sector and local community to promote cycling, and establish a cycle forum is also worthwhile to raise the profile of cycling.

Because cycling contributes to a number of policy agendas the benefits are substantial when brought together. This does not mean that all investment in cycling will produce high returns. Each case needs to be assessed on its own merits, but the relatively high values where projects are able to generate new cyclists, suggests that there is a major opportunity to make investments that will, over time, more than repay their costs.
8. Delivering and Monitoring the Strategy

Delivering the Objectives

The table below demonstrates how the policies outlined in chapter 6 and 7 contribute towards delivery of the objectives of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan and the objectives of the Cycling Strategy.

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<tr>
<td>Fit for...the Future</td>
<td><strong>Objective 1</strong>: Providing a quality environment for cyclists through enhancement of the existing on and off-road provision and the creation of new links to increase connectivity to retail, employment, education and leisure to support economic growth.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective 2a</strong>: Encouraging more Northamptonshire residents to cycle by promoting and publishing the benefits of cycling for health, the economy, and the environment giving them the confidence, information, skills and incentives they need.</td>
<td>12a, 13, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit to...Choose</td>
<td><strong>Objective 3</strong>: Increasing the accessibility of the cycle network to all by removing the barriers to movement to increase people’s transport options.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit for...Economic</td>
<td><strong>Objective 4</strong>: Reducing congestion and improving air quality by promoting cycling to work and to other key destinations through development of safe, convenient, efficient and attractive cycle routes which enhance quality of place and in doing so support the enhancement of town centres and residential areas, boosting property values and retail vitality.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit for...Best Value</td>
<td><strong>Objective 5</strong>: Getting more people cycling, more safely, more often, to reduce the impact on the environment and increase health and wellbeing.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective 6</strong>: Prioritising investment in cycling schemes and supportive measures, delivering best value for money and making best use of the network working with partner authorities.</td>
<td>3, 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scheme Delivery

The Cycling Strategy will be delivered through a combination of county-wide initiatives and a policy framework that secures the importance of cycling at a county and local level. The majority of the strategy will be delivered through the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan Delivery Plan guided by the prioritisation outlined in the Town Strategies developed for Brackley, Corby, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Northampton, Towcester and Wellingborough.

The cycling elements within the Town Strategies are drawn up reflecting the policies in this document and work done as part of the production of Cycling Development Plans produced for Northampton, Daventry, Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough, Towcester and Brackley.

Cycling Development Plans, outline an overall vision for increasing cycling levels within a specific area and are formed of a combination of short (‘quick wins’) and medium term improvements that tie into the long-term overall strategy (most commonly a 20 year horizon). The principle objectives of the cycling development plan are to identify missing links in the existing network and identify cost effective ‘quick wins’, medium term improvements and a long-term development strategy with a view to accommodate growth alongside supportive strategy items (cycle parking, signing, maps etc).

They are intended as working documents to be updated on a regular basis and draw together and provide coherent facilities as part of a holistic plan to deliver modal shift.

The key strategy action points and delivery timeframes are outlined below by strategy theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy element</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Time-frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Quality Environment for Cycling</td>
<td>Identify key corridors in the main towns for cycle routes improvements (in reference to the Cycling Development Plans) and programme for delivery to be published in each Town Strategy.</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County wide</td>
<td>Implement missing links along key corridors through available funding streams</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>2012-2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate at a rural level the potential to designate rural recreation routes, similar to the National Cycle Route scheme at a local level, targeted to different levels of cycling ability and introduce improvements to make these routes attractive and safer for cyclists to support the rural economy by encouraging access to local tourist attractions.</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>2012-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a centralised GIS system for accessing the Cycling Development Plans proposals.</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>2012-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cycling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promotion, Incentives Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>County-wide</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a prioritisation methodology for scheme delivery based on the principles outlined in this strategy</td>
<td>NCC 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake cycle audits on all new highway schemes and undertake cycle reviews.</td>
<td>NCC On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an overarching Signage Strategy for the county to be delivered through the Town Strategies.</td>
<td>NCC 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an Inter-Urban Cycling Development Plan to investigate the potential to link the major towns together where possible and to outlying villages</td>
<td>NCC 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the land use planning framework to encourage mixed use developments and continue to seek cycling links for new developments, particularly integration into the existing cycling network (negotiate section 106 contributions from developers)</td>
<td>NCC/ Districts/ Boroughs On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review cycle parking at key transport hubs as part of the development of the Northamptonshire Arc Transit network and implement as necessary – particularly long-term cycle parking</td>
<td>NCC 2012-2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County-wide</strong></td>
<td>Produce any outstanding town cycle maps</td>
<td>NCC 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Produce an inter-urban/ rural cycling map</td>
<td>NCC 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review existing maps as appropriate, and as funding allows</td>
<td>NCC On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to offer Level 1 and Level 2 Bikeability Training for school children (and examine opportunities to extend out to secondary, university and college students as funding allows)</td>
<td>NCC On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Run Adult Cycling Proficiency Training through Adult Learning as demand dictates</td>
<td>NCC On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote Bike Week and other events/ incentives</td>
<td>NCC Annually</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with key employers in Northamptonshire to develop and implement Travel Plans</td>
<td>NCC On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County-wide</strong></td>
<td>Update centralised GIS layers on Northamptonshire interactive mapping site.</td>
<td>NCC 2012-2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work in partnership with Boroughs and Districts as part of the implementation of the Local Development Framework to develop cycling connectivity</td>
<td>NCC/ Boroughs/ Districts On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bid for funding for cycling investment in partnership with other relevant parties (Health Authority, Sustrans, Neighbouring Authorities etc)</td>
<td>NCC/ Partners On-going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scheme Funding

Funding for cycling schemes will come from a number of different sources:

- The Integrated Transport Block (Northamptonshire Transportation Plan);
- Central government grants;
- Section 106 Agreement contributions from developers;
- Developer led Infrastructure delivery secured through Section 278 agreements;
- Localism;
- Match funding from the public sector;
- New sources of grant funding from public bodies;
- Community Infrastructure Levy; and
- Partnership with commercial operators

Reductions to the Integrated Transport Block means that there will be less funding available specifically for cycling, but increases to the maintenance budget will directly benefit cyclists. The Local Enterprise Partnerships, Regional Growth Fund and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund also could offer real opportunities for the Council to take forward projects over the next few years.

With a series of independent funding sources, a coherent strategy is required to achieve the most equitable and efficient use of limited resources. One example of delivering best value is by joining smaller schemes together to gain economies of scale in terms of design and implementation.

With an increased pressure on resources, a clear method for prioritisation of schemes to be implemented is required. Prioritisation should be given to schemes to improve accident rates, deliver accessibility to education, healthcare and employment locations as well as to growth areas (sustainable urban extensions etc). Schemes should also always be considered from their ability to deliver utility trips, i.e. through generating the modal shift and the greatest cost-benefit ratios.

The following general prioritisation for schemes may be useful in determining between schemes:

1) New developments
2) Town centre
3) Intra-urban links
4) Inter-urban
5) Rural/Leisure
Monitoring

The Council has a monitoring programme with 89 automatic cycle counters across the county located on and off-road (please see table overleaf for broad locations). The Council began monitoring these sites in 2000 and the number of counters has steadily increased in the last decade. A number of these counters have been implemented to monitor particular schemes such as Connect 2 and the Norbital. The most recent automatic counters also detect pedestrians, information which is also collated as part of the monitoring regime.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>On-road</th>
<th>Off-road</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daventry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Automatic Cycle Counters in Northamptonshire

The counters will continue to be used to monitor the level of cycling in Northamptonshire, which in turn will be used to highlight where scheme best value can be achieved.
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Appendix 1 - Summary of Policies:

**Cycling Policy 1**
When developing the main route networks the hierarchical approach as recommended in the LTN 2/08, Manual for Streets, Cycle Audit and Cycle Review will be used.

**Cycling Policy 2**
Cycle audits of all relevant transport proposals will be undertaken, in accordance with national guidance, to ensure that opportunities to encourage cycling are considered comprehensively and implemented appropriately.

**Cycling Policy 3**
Cycle reviews of relevant parts of the transport network will be undertaken, in accordance with national guidance, to identify their cycle friendliness and to identify broad ways that those networks can be improved to encourage cycling. These will form the basis of the Cycling Development Plans to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

**Cycling Policy 4**
Cyclists will be exempt from restrictive Traffic Regulation Orders such as for one way streets unless there is a good reason for including them. Existing orders will be progressively corrected to facilitate cycle access, where appropriate.

**Cycling Policy 5**
Where provided, new cycle lanes should be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide, preferably 2m.

**Cycling Policy 6**
New shared use tracks will be 3 metres wide or wider, except where constraints on site mean that 3 metres cannot be achieved and the link is deemed of significant strategic importance in line with advice from LTN 1/12.

To assist disabled people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters and parents with pushchairs, shared use tracks will be designed to meet the Equality Act (2010).

**Cycling Policy 7**
We will work with Borough, Districts and Parish Councils, major employers, businesses and leisure, transport and education organisations to provide cycle parking at schools, retail centres, transport interchanges, residential and leisure facilities in towns and villages or attractors which meet recognised design standards appropriate to each location.
### Cycling Policy 8
Cycle friendly infrastructure will be developed at, and on key routes leading to, transport interchanges and key bus stops.

### Cycling Policy 9
New developments will be required to demonstrate or provide connectivity into the existing cycling network and within the development as appropriate.

### Cycling Policy 10
Facilities for cyclists will be of an appropriate quality in order to attract and retain users. All schemes will have to demonstrate that the design criteria recommended in Cycle Infrastructure Design, or other recognised sources of guidance was applied in developing designs.

### Cycling Policy 11
If after considering all options and available resources, facilities for cyclists could not be constructed to a standard consistent with Cycle Infrastructure Design, the option of providing nothing should be considered.

### Cycling Policy 12
Bring the standard of the carriageway surface and off-carriageway surfaces up to an appropriate standard to ensure our network is ‘fit for purpose’.

### Cycling Policy 13
We will promote cycling through producing advertising and promotional material, cycle maps, individualised travel marketing and through one-off events, subject to available resources.

### Cycling Policy 14
Travel plans will be used to ensure that an integrated approach is used to promote alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing the workplace, school or public transport interchange.

### Cycling Policy 15
Subject to available resources, Level 1 and Level 2 Bikeability cycle training will be offered to school children of the right age, and all opportunities will be taken to extend it out to secondary, university and college students, as well as directing adults interested in learning to ride to available courses.

### Cycling Policy 16
The need for facilities to encourage children to cycle to school will be considered in every Safer Routes to School scheme. Cycle facilities provided under the Safer Routes to Schools programme will be integrated into the Cycling Development Plans.
Northamptonshire Cycling Strategy

For more information please contact LTPConsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk