

SCOTTISH OFFICE CYCLING ACTION PLAN TRUNK ROAD CYCLING INITIATIVE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The National Roads Directorate's 'Trunk Road Cycling Initiative' is the first part of a Scottish Office Cycling Action Plan launched by Lord James on the 12 November 1995. This Office Instruction sets out the policy background to our Initiative and details each relevant action point, setting out the broad considerations to be taken into account when assessing the needs of cyclists within proposals for new and improved trunk roads including major structural maintenance schemes and bridges. A plan outlining the Initiative is attached.

2. Policy Background

- 2.1 The basis of our Cycling Initiative is support for the development of Sustrans National Cycle Network (NCN) an undertaking that has had Government support for some time and which attracted Millennium Funding in early October 1995. In Scotland, it is expected that the developed NCN will become a tourist destination in its own right, as successful as the West Highland Way, creating employment, generating income (particularly in the tourist industry) and encouraging general health improvements through increased public participation in cycling.
- 2.2 Other aspects of our Initiative fell out of previous policy statements. For example, the Dundee Conference, 'Roads, Bridges and Traffic in the Countryside,' gave rise to the M6 cycleway while the Scottish Office Road Safety Plan committed us to the re-determination of suitable trunk road footways for joint use by cyclists and walkers as well as to fostering development of the NCN including provision of the necessary trunk road crossings. The further decision to provide the trunk road interface sections of the NCN relates to our historic policy of favouring alternative local authority roads for cycling rather than mixing cyclists and heavy vehicles on the busier trunk road network.
- 2.3 The proposed NCN will provide a dedicated network of routes for cyclists which parallels much of the Scottish trunk road network using a mixture of new cycleway, local roads and superseded sections of trunk road. As such, the demand for long distance cycling over long lengths of our network will be satisfied by the remote NCN. This holds true for most of the A75, A77, A737, A8/M8, A9, A90, A92 and A96. Overall, by providing the NCN trunk road interface sections where no alternative exists (approx. 31 km in total) together with the trunk road crossings for the NCN, the Directorate is facilitating a development which will effectively remove leisure cycling from well over 1000 km of trunk road carriageway.
- 2.4 As the National Cycle Network will adequately cater for long distance touring by bicycle on nearby parallel routes, it is not expected that we will require to develop comprehensive cycling facilities on these trunk roads. However, there will still be certain lengths of trunk road where local leisure cycling and commuting takes place. For example, the proximity of Selkirk and Galashiels on the A7 encourages commuting and other trips by bicycle between these towns. Elsewhere, new local cycle routes may benefit from the redetermination of existing trunk road footways. Overall, the Initiative has 5 action points which directly affect various Branches of the Directorate. These are set out below together with the broad considerations which apply to each point.

3.0 Action Points

- 3.1 *The provision of trunk road sections and trunk road crossings for Sustrans National Cycling Network.*** This commitment will initially involve NRD and Sustrans compiling a mutually acceptable programme of works to implement the trunk road crossings and interface sections of the Millennium NCN between 1996 and the year 2000. The programme will be taken forward by Network Management Division with Route Managers being responsible for commissioning detailed design and implementation of the necessary works including any Draft Orders etc.
- 3.2 *The provision of technical and administrative advice to Sustrans to enable the Charity's development of the National Cycling Network.*** Sustrans requires the assistance and co-operation of roads and planning authorities, countryside, waterway and forestry organisations, charitable trusts, landowners and the general public if the Charity is to achieve its aim of completing the main millennium routes of the National Network by the year 2000. The Scottish Office as trunk road authority and local councils as planning and roads authorities will have to assist Sustrans with Statutory procedures and technical advice including land purchase, Order procedures, design and construction services, adoption and maintenance. This is an extremely large project upon which Sustrans is embarked. Project management advice should be made available in the context of contemporary experience of road infrastructure procurement as should general advice and encouragement when requested.
- Even cycleways can have environmental effects and in situations such as Glencoe, for example, the existing environment **and other policies** may well outweigh cycling needs. Advice on this type of situation and the application of environmental guidelines including European Directives should be made available to Sustrans. There are many more aspects which may require formal and informal advice and assistance. All staff should be aware of this requirement to assist Sustrans albeit that the first point of contact should be the Directorate's cycling officer.
- 3.3 *The re-determination of suitable urban and rural trunk road footways for joint use by cyclists and walkers.*** Existing trunk road footways are often suitable for both cycling and walking and the re-determination of these has been Scottish Office Policy for some time. While some lengths of existing footway may form parts of the NCN trunk road interface sections, other lengths may well provide important links in local cycling networks for commuting and leisure/tourism. For instance, the existing A68 footway between Dalkeith and Soutra Hill would provide an excellent facility for the trunk road section of a local tourist route to Haddington just as the A1 footway between East Linton and Beltonford now forms part of the Linlithgow - Dunbar cycleway. Route Managers will be responsible for taking this aspect of our Initiative forward from April 1996 onwards with priority given to NCN re-determination requirements in the first instance.
- 3.4 *Provision of a dedicated cycle route alongside the new sections of M6 motorway from Gretna northwards.*** This commitment will be taken forward by Project Design Division and will probably form part of the final DBFO contract which will finish the upgrading of the former A74 between Douglas and the National Border. Staff should note that the cycleway will extend only as far north as Douglas because the all-purpose route to the north of that point is no longer trunk road. The future local roads authorities are to be encouraged to extend the new cycleway north of Douglas.

- 3.5 *Special consideration for cyclists in all new trunk road schemes and within improvements of existing trunk roads (including bridge and structural maintenance improvements).*** There is a new requirement to fully consider the effect on our Trunk Road Cycling Initiative of any trunk road improvement. The necessary considerations extend from whether or not the scheme is safe for cyclists through to whether or not the improvement will impact upon the NCN and require a trunk road crossing/interface section/signs etc. A central consideration is the standard of provision adopted for the improvement. For example, wide single carriageway overtaking and climbing lane improvements without metre hard strips and no NCN or local road alternative will require dedicated verge cycling facilities. In the case of bridges, where decks are being replaced (rather than strengthened) consideration should be given to incorporating any cycling requirements. In this latter case it will be seen that other policy issues may well outweigh cycling needs and this should be borne in mind and advice sought when necessary. However, generally speaking the considerations fall into 3 categories:
- 3.5.1 to ensure that there are no hazards to cyclists built into the scheme;**
 - 3.5.2 to ensure that the opportunities for cyclists within the scheme are recognised and exploited;**
 - 3.5.3 to ensure that the opportunities for cyclists on the surrounding networks, including the NCN and superseded sections of trunk road, are recognised and exploited.**
- 3.6 Project Sponsors, Route Managers and AIP Staff must ensure that current and future schemes fully consider the needs of cycling in terms of these 3 broad considerations. For larger projects (including bridge projects) this will entail including consideration of cycling from the project brief stage onwards through the whole assessment process with mandatory consultation with NRD's cycling officer before the completion of the Stage 2 and Stage 3 Assessments. For smaller schemes such as structural maintenance and local improvements the Project Sponsor or Route Manager should consult the NRD's cycling officer prior to instructing detailed design. Existing schemes must be checked to ensure that cycling is adequately catered for in terms of our new commitment. If there are any doubts NRD's cycling officer is to be consulted.
- 3.7 AIP Staff are to ensure that the Safety Audit process fully reflects these requirements.
- 3.8 Finally, staff are reminded that a public commitment has previously been given to include details of any proposed cycling facilities within Draft Roads Orders. All staff must ensure that this commitment is adhered to.

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