

I write on behalf of Dynamo (Lancaster & District Cycle Campaign in response to the Lancashire draft cycling and walking strategy. This is an updated response to that sent in November 2016.

1. This is a very upbeat document, using “champions” and inspiring tales to encourage and promote cycling and walking amongst groups with low levels of physical activity. Dynamo acknowledges the challenges Lancashire faces with its public health brief in a county where activity levels are below the national average.
2. Nevertheless, Dynamo finds the targets for cycling unambitious in only doubling the rate in TEN years from a very low base in certain areas of the county. (However, it’s far more ambitious than the walking increase of 10%!) Given that cycling and walking address at least 4 of the priorities in the Local Transport Plan at a time when the population (at least in Lancaster) is increasing, the targets should not be so modest. Again, as regards Lancaster and Carnforth, cycling and walking also need to be prioritised to deal with air quality management issues.
3. We are pleased to see importance attached to cohesion and directness of routes (page 4), connectivity (page 5) and normalising cycling (page 12). These are all key to making cycling and walking attractive choices. We would like to see a greater emphasis on everyday utility cycling and an explicit statement that cycling and walking (complemented by public transport) is essential to reduce the number of car journeys.
4. The strategy lacks any mention of curbing car use. It is the elephant in the room: without a reallocation of road space and discouragement – however subtle – of the private under-occupied car, traffic will continue to grow and add to congestion, low physical activity levels, road danger and poor air quality. This risks negating any benefit of increased active travel.
5. You need a strategy to ensure that increased leisure cycling does not automatically lead to more car journeys (i.e. to start cycling from a car park).
6. The document mentions increasing (unquantifiably) the number of children walking to school, but there is (as far as I can see) no mention of pupils cycling to school or learning to cycle at school. It is crucial to get children cycling, otherwise the idea of the bicycle as a normal way of getting around skips yet another generation. Funding of a dedicated officer/team at County and local level is essential.
7. On page 14 a Walking & Cycling Steering Group is mentioned. Could you tell us more about this, please? How often has it met? Are there any notes of its meetings?
8. The same page also mentions that local-level groups and forums have been established. We have heard nothing of these since the departure of Alasdair Simpson as Senior Cycling Officer. We would be pleased to hear that these groups have been re-activated – again, please let us know more. In the absence of such groups, it is hard to believe that the County takes cycling and walking seriously.
9. The County should look to other local authorities for inspiration and comparison. Some councillors support Cycling UK’s “Space for Cycling” (<http://www.cyclinguk.org/campaign/space-for-cycling>) which aims for a minimum of 5-10% of the local transport budget to go to cycling, and Cheshire East Council has gone so far as to support it formally.

We look forward to hearing from you with further information about the Walking & Cycling Steering Group and the local forums.

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April 2017