



Environment and Transport Select Committee
27th October 2014

Surrey Cycling Strategy Update

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and Budgets

This report provides the Select Committee with an update on progress to date with the implementation of the Surrey Cycling Strategy.

Introduction:

1. The Surrey Cycling Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2013. It sets out the County Council's commitment to work in partnership to encourage more people in Surrey to cycle more safely. It seeks to encourage cycling as a means of transport and for leisure and health whilst addressing some of the negative impacts including the sharp increase in cycle casualties and the impact of the increased popularity of sports cycling on some rural communities.

Strategy Context

2. The Surrey Cycling Strategy was developed to address a number of issues facing the county:
 - 2.1 To promote cycling as a means of sustainable transport which is healthy and affordable, contributes to improved local air quality and reduced carbon emissions
 - 2.2 To capture the wider economic benefits from cycling including tackling congestion, improving journey time reliability, reducing absenteeism and providing local economic opportunities.
 - 2.3 To address the sharp increase in cycling casualties in Surrey in the last six years.
 - 2.4 To address the challenge of increased popularity of sports cycling and sportive events in rural Surrey with resultant high volumes of cyclists in narrow rural roads and communities.

3. The Strategy underwent extensive consultation, with over 3,600 individuals and organisations submitting their views.

Implementation progress to date

4. The Strategy identified 12 objectives to support delivery of the aim to get more people in Surrey cycling, more safely.

O1. Surrey County Council and its partners will work together to deliver improvements for cycling

O2. Surrey Local Committees will oversee development of Local Cycling Plans that reflect local priorities and issues

O3. We will develop a comprehensive training offer and ensure that cost is not a barrier to learning to ride a bike

O4. We will work with partners to ensure that Surrey's economy benefits from more people cycling for every day journeys and from Surrey's role as a centre for cycling

O5. We will seek funding to improve infrastructure to make cycling a safe, attractive and convenient mode of transport for people of all ages and levels of confidence

O6. We will encourage cycling as an inclusive, healthy and affordable means of travel through the provision of information, promotional activities and practical support

O7. We will work with Surrey Police and other partners to improve cycle safety and encourage respect between different road users through targeted campaigns and initiatives

O8. We will promote and encourage cycling for health and leisure

O9. We will encourage the provision of off road cycle trails and activities while managing the impact on Surrey's countryside

O10. We will take action to minimise the impacts of high levels of sport cycling on some roads and communities in Surrey

O11. We will lobby central government to ensure that regulations governing events on the highway are fit for purpose

O12. We will support major cycling events which inspire participation and bring economic benefit, while minimising impact on affected communities

5. Since the strategy was signed off in December last year, activity has focused on a number of areas. The key areas of progress are outlined below. A full report on progress in the first year against the strategy and action plan will be produced in January 2015.

Local Plan Development

6. The County Council is now working with three local committees on local cycling plan development and in early dialogue with a further three local committees to determine how they want to proceed. The plans are developed by borough and county officers, drawing on evidence relating to current participation rates, casualty data, existing infrastructure provision and results from the strategy consultation.

7. The most advanced Local Cycling Plan is in Mole Valley where the District established a member task group to progress the work, including

representation from the Local Committee. The Local Cycling Plan has been developed and signed off by the Local Committee and is awaiting sign off from the Mole Valley executive. The next stage of the plan is the development of a cycling infrastructure plan which will be led by the Local Committee, through a consultative process.

Cycle Training Provision

8. Schools-based training remains the bedrock of cycle training provision. In the financial year 2013/14, Level 1 training was delivered to 5,071 pupils and Level 2 training to 6,100 pupils. A new course was launched for year 2 pupils, called 'Pedals', and this has proved popular with 1,494 pupils undertaking the training. A further 61 secondary students undertook Level 3 training, this is the main area that we have identified for expansion, and also the most demanding on capacity as it requires one instructor per two trainees.
9. The County Council has also been carefully expanding its 'customised training' offer, available to all ages and at all levels from starter to cycling safely on busy roads. The most popular forms of customised training are complete beginner (both child and adult), family cycle training and returning to cycling, the last being popular with older clients. This financial year a government subsidy has enabled us to widen the offer.
10. Cycle training continues to operate on a cost recovery basis, with costs covered through a combination of course fees and government grants. In the last financial year, a grant of £240,000 was received for the school-based Level 2 and Level 3 training. At the moment, the County Council is offering customised training at £20 for three hours as a result of LSTF funding. This funding is currently in place until March 2016.

Infrastructure Provision

11. Through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Surrey County Council is investing in new cycle infrastructure in Guildford, Woking and Redhill. This work, in addition to the Redhill Balanced Network, will be complete by April 2015. For 2015/16, the County Council is bidding to the Local Enterprise Partnerships for Local Growth Funds for further sustainable transport schemes in Egham, the Blackwater Valley and Redhill.
12. The County Council is also investing funds in two schemes targeting two of the worst areas in the county for cyclist casualties: in Leatherhead - Ashted and Walton-upon-Thames – Upper Halliford. The Leatherhead – Ashted is nearing completion with the Walton scheme underway and scheduled to be completed by April 2015.
13. Through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, a Cycling Improvement Fund has supported Surrey organisations with additional cycle parking and other infrastructure to encourage cycling. In addition, work with South West Trains and Southern Rail is resulting in investment in new Brompton Dock cycle hire facilities at Guildford, Woking, Redhill and Reigate stations.

Cycle promotion

14. The County Council has undertaken a range of activities to promote cycling in 2014. These include cycle festivals in Guildford, Woking, Reigate and Merstham, which were attended by around 7,000 people, as well as the business focused Cycle Challenge. The County Council was successful in bidding for further funds for 2015/16 to support promotional activities.

Cycle Safety

15. The Drive SMART Partnership is currently undergoing a reorganisation as a result of Sussex Police taking responsibility for roads policing for Sussex and Surrey. Once the new arrangements are in place, a new Campaign Plan for cycle safety will be developed.
16. In the interim, work has been underway on a guidance document for police officers 'Improving the Safety of Cyclists' with details of options for advice and interventions relating to a range of behaviours and offences. This will be further developed and disseminated within the police force once the reorganisation is complete.

Sports Cycling and Unregulated Events

17. The County Council has no powers relating to sportive events. The Leader and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety were invited to give evidence at a Parliamentary Enquiry in February 2014 where they highlighted the problem of high volumes of sports cyclists and unregulated events in some parts of the UK, and calling for a change to current regulation to address this issue.
18. Work is also on-going to establish links to events that are unregulated and do not require the organiser to gain approvals or permissions from the statutory partners in Surrey. In addition, the County Council is in early dialogue with the LGA, Sport England and British Cycling to explore how the sport Governing Body can support our work to engage with event organisers and ensure that a voluntary code of conduct for unregulated events is implemented.

Regulated and Major Events

19. Events requiring a 16A road are now being fully administered through the 'Framework for coordinating and approving events on Surrey's Highway', a new Framework which was also approved by Cabinet in December 2013. Events that have been delivered through this framework include cycle events and half marathons.
20. The Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 and Classic events were successfully delivered on Sunday 9 August, despite very difficult weather conditions. Changes to the traffic management plan reduced the impact of road closures and research showed that extensive communications activity resulted in the level of awareness being much higher before the events.

21. Venues such as pubs and cafes along the route were offered a celebration pack to help them to maximise the opportunities provided by the crowds watching the events and a spectator hub was created in Dorking town centre. Research to assess the impact on businesses has been commissioned and topline results are expected around 13 October with a full report in early November.

Conclusions:

22. Work is underway to deliver the Surrey Cycling Strategy, with significant progress being made in the first 9 months since the strategy was finalised.

Recommendations:

- 23. The Select Committee is recommended to:
 - a) Endorse progress to date on delivering the Surrey Cycling Strategy
 - b) Identify priority areas where further consideration is required

Next steps:

An annual report on progress in delivering the strategy will be published in January 2014.

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Sources/background papers:

Surrey Cycling Strategy
Framework for Coordinating and Approving Events on Surrey’s Highway

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