

Surrey County Council's Draft Transport Climate Change Strategy with particular reference to cycling – note prepared for Waverley Cycle Forum

Summary

Surrey is in the process of drawing up its new Local Transport Plan which will take effect from April 2011. To help in preparing the plan SCC is producing a series of consultation documents. Apart from a note on "Vision and objectives" the consultation on climate change strategy is the only one so far issued for consultation and can be found at: http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Transport+Climate+Change+strategy+Consultation+-+Contents?opendocument.

The context of the paper is "to address the transport aspects of the Surrey Climate Change Strategy which is a partnership plan involving 11 Districts and Boroughs, Surrey Police, NHS and Surrey County Council".

The deadline for comments is 17 June. The Waverley Cycle Forum meeting on 3 June will provide an opportunity to discuss key points and decide if it would be helpful for the Forum to submit comments.

Given the remit of this paper it is no surprise that it is very supportive of cycling. Key points:

- Increasing cycling is one of the key objectives for achieving reduced emissions and managing climate risk.
- The target for reducing total carbon dioxide emissions from transport in Surrey by 2020 is 20 per cent over which equates to a per capita reduction of 25 per cent having regard to the expected population growth in this period.
- The LTP3 is required to contribute to national targets via the South East Plan.
- Indicators for the level of CO2 emissions will be monitored, and 'journeys made by cycling' will be one of the measures.
- The paper acknowledges the exceptionally high level of car ownership in the county and notes that these have hitherto been coupled with lower levels of walking and cycling.
- Opportunities for encouraging cycling in Surrey include: "Scenic lanes and some offroad routes for leisure to encourage people to take up cycling.

Policy options and measures are set out, and under the heading 'What we are already doing' the paper cites:

- Land use planning decisions in favour of development near existing infrastructure and increased urban densities to reduce travel distances and increase cycling and walking facilities.
- School travel planning including Bikeability.
- Cycle network improvements, both on and off-road routes.
- Cycle parking at town centres, workplaces, stations, schools and other community facilities.
- Bike rental schemes also cited as an option, though there are no details at this stage.

One key conclusion is that *New infrastructure for cycling and electric vehicles has been modeled as the most cost effective of infrastructure improvement options.* See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/08/26141950/5>

Comments

The paper's recognition of the importance of cycling in the context of addressing climate change in a cost-effective way is very welcome. The challenge will be to bring about the necessary changes on the ground. Later papers may go into more detail but in any case the Forum may wish to flag up some key points/questions.

- Some of the schemes implemented in Surrey have been very poor, often resulting in them having to be modified. There is little enough money spent on cycle facilities without wasting it on schemes that do nothing to encourage more cycling.
- There should be explicit reference to the approach that will govern implementation of cycle schemes, such as the Manual for Streets and Cycle Infrastructure Design. There needs to be much better consultation with cycling groups, such as the Forums, in the detailed design of schemes.
- Monitoring is often mentioned, but statistics on cycle usage are poor. More thought is needed on exactly how to measure changes in cycle usage.
- It would be good to have more information on cycle security. This should be evidence-based: how can cyclists best minimise the risk of theft and maximise the chances of getting their bike back if it's stolen.
- What is being done to ensure that LTP3 takes on board the Rights of Way Improvement Plans?
- There is mention of charging points for electric cars. Electric bicycles are catching on fast in some parts of Europe – for example accounting for 10 per cent of new bikes in Holland. (There's a stronger need for them in countries which are not so flat!) Are charging points for electric bikes and issue that should be considered?

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