

Waverley Cycle Forum Annual Report

The Forum was established in 2005. Its terms of reference are on the Forum's website. Future annual reports will summarise the activities and achievements of the Forum over the previous year and set out the main priorities for the coming year. As this is the first time such a report has been produced it was felt to be more useful to take stock of what has been achieved over the life of the Waverley Cycle Plan which was published in 2005.

Introduction

The essential role of the Forum is to facilitate "...communication between cycling groups and users and the officers and members of the councils" with a view to improving the quality and extent of cycling provision in the borough. The key document that sets out cycling priorities for the borough is the Waverley Cycle Plan which was published in May 2005. The Plan lists individual schemes and includes a list of objectives together with a detailed action plan designed to ensure they are met.

Waverley Cycle Plan

The Plan has provided the main focus for the work of the Forum. The list of schemes covers everything from additional to major new routes such as the two Farnham Greenways. In the Plan they are accorded a score based on the contribution they would make to safety, continuous route provision and encouraging more people to cycle. The Plan initially listed 37 schemes and this has since risen to 46. [Only 2 of the original schemes have completed over six years.]

The Plan lists 11 *objectives*. These are set out below with an indication *in italics* of progress since 2005

- 1 To develop a network of safe, convenient and continuous cycle routes in the Borough, including links with adjacent cycle networks, and utilising rights of way and roads where appropriate.

Limited progress. The main success relates to one of the Farnham Greenways, The Scholars Greenway has been completed. National Cycle Network Route 22 between Guildford and Farnham opened in 2008. The work fell mainly to Sustrans.

- 2 To safeguard, maintain and enhance the suitability for cycle use of both the Waverley Cycle Network and the general road network, with priority given to the Waverley Cycle Network.

The Waverley Cycle Network includes a mix of on- and off-carriageway routes. some signed as part of the Surrey Cycleway. [What can we say about progress in recent years? I can't see much change in terms of the Cycle Plan, though we have had some new routes such as NCN 22 between Guildford and Godalming and Downs Link. But none

of this is directly down to anything the Forum has done and is not linked to the Cycle Plan]

- 3 To promote utility cycling and to improve the safety and accessibility of the centres of Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh to their adjoining residential areas and villages.

The Farnham Greenways are the main success. [Cranleigh?] There is disappointment that proposals for contraflow cycling in Godalming High Street, supported by an inquiry [details] has yet to be implemented.

- 4 To participate in the County-wide Safe Routes to School initiative;

There is a new path, the Tuesley Community Path, which is available to cyclists and walkers and avoids a stretch of road that can form part of a safe route to Rodborough. [Can we point to anything else?]

- 5 To integrate cycling with public transport services and facilities;

No significant progress, though there is improved cycle parking at some stations.

- 6 To exploit the potential for recreational and tourist cycling in Waverley's countryside and to ensure that where possible, designated cycle networks be linked to tourist attractions, pubs and food & drink establishments, nature reserves and public transport interchanges;

No significant progress. The redevelopment of the Hindhead area following the opening of the A3 Tunnel in 2011 will open up new possibilities.

- 7 To link the Borough to the National Cycle Network;

A section of NCN route 22 between Guildford and Farnham opened in 2007.

- 8 To improve the quantity, quality and security of cycle parking facilities at convenient locations;

New cycle parking has been provided in various locations across the borough. It is not possible to quantify this as different organisations make their own provision and there is no central record. [Can we point to specific Waverley successes?]

- 9 To raise public awareness of the environmental and health benefits to be gained from cycling;

There has been much central government publicity on these issues, not least the Active Travel Strategy published jointly by DfT and the Health Department in February 2010. This is not seen as an issue specific to Waverley though it forms part of the case for improving provision for cyclists.

- 10 To work with equestrian and pedestrian groups to enhance the ability of cyclists, walkers and horse riders to cross the A3 & A31;

[Can we point to provision in respect of the A31 at Farnham? There is a new underpass for the Greensand Way at Thursley and the Hindhead Tunnel will greatly improve things for cyclists, walkers and horse riders as the two areas of common land will no longer be bisected by the A3.]

- 11 To promote safe cycling and to make cycle training accessible to those who require it.

Surrey County Council has supported the Bikeability training scheme. [Details?]

These objectives are supported by an Action Plan which sets out the detailed steps required for successful implementation. Progress has been slow. Work has been done on producing a revised plan which seeks to address some of the lessons from past failure. There is a draft on the Forum's website and comments are welcome. It was decided to hold back on finalising a new plan until the new Local Transport Plan has been published since whatever Waverley produces needs to complement these other plans. Crucially, there is general agreement that more could be achieved by focusing on the most important schemes in each area so that for each year we have a short, manageable plan rather than a lengthy wishlist.

An important part of the Forum's work is to respond to consultations on issues which bear on cycling. Foremost among these in the past year has been the series of consultation papers relating to the Local Transport Plan which comes into effect on 1 April 2011. Comments were submitted on all the papers which had a bearing on cycling. These were:

- Transport climate Change Strategy
- Congestion Strategy
- Parking Strategy
- Passenger Transport Strategy Part 1 Local Bus
- Passenger Transport Strategy Part 2 - Information
- Air Quality Strategy
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Scoping Report

In addition comments were provided on SCC's *Public Value Review of Countryside*

The Forum had earlier (in 2006) submitted substantial comments on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). Rights of way are part of the highways network and there has been much interest in enhancing their role in promoting 'active travel' – walking and cycling.

In drawing up new local transport plans councils are required to have regard to RoWIP recommendations.

Other activities

SCC produced a set of cycle maps in 2004, covering the whole of Surrey. A second edition was published in 2007 and this included a grading scheme giving an indication of the cycle-friendliness of all the bridleways in Surrey. Forum members helped with the grading – getting volunteers to ride their bikes in the Surrey countryside proved to be quite easy!

Plans for 2011/12

Key priorities in terms of cycling schemes have been identified and include:

- Taking forward plans to improve the cycle link between Godalming and Farncombe by widening the path that connects Marshall Road and Bridge Street. Jewsons have offered to donate land which would enable the existing footpath to be widened so that a 3 metre wide path could be created, providing ample space for a shared use path.
- [Weyside Way?]
- [Cranleigh-Ewhurst?]
- Be involved in the cycling issues relating to the redevelopment of Hindhead and the surrounding commons which will follow the opening of the Tunnel.

Other issues

- SCC is due to produce a paper on cycling as a supplementary paper to the Local Transport Plan and the Forum will be involved in the consultation.
- The Forum will monitor planning applications to identify opportunities for planning gain money.
- The draft Waverley Cycle Plan will be revised to ensure it complements the Local Transport Plan
- The website will be developed to make it more lively and interesting to a wider audience
- Identify new priorities for 2012/13

The list is not exhaustive. Part of the Forum's role is to be seize any opportunities that may arise to make life better for cyclists.