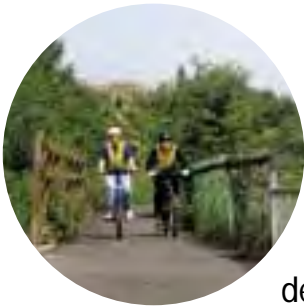


Cycling Strategy



Introduction and Need for a Cycling Strategy

The past few decades have seen the relentless development of a car-dependent culture with seemingly unstoppable traffic growth. This has brought with it the problems familiar to us all, accidents, road congestion, noise and air pollution, respiratory problems, stress and reduced levels of health and fitness. However, there is increasing recognition, both nationally and globally, that current trends are not sustainable and cannot continue.



Recent Key policy statements which support this view include the following:

- As a result of the **Earth Summit at Rio** almost all UK Districts (including Wigan) and communities around the world are preparing a **Local Agenda 21** for their own areas (i.e. an agenda for the 21st century). This will include plans for a sustainable transport strategy designed to encourage a shift away from private cars towards 'greener' transport, i.e. walking, cycling and public transport.
- The latest government white paper entitled *'Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation'* (1999) promotes cycling as both a benefit to the environment and to health.
- The Government's White Paper **'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'** was published in July 1998. This refers to the preparation of Local Transport Plans by local authorities. These plans will determine transport policies and funding for a period of 5 years. Subsequent guidance requires cycle strategies to be incorporated into Local Transport Plans. A joint Local Transport Plan has been prepared for Greater Manchester.
- **The National Cycling Strategy** was produced in 1996 and is referred to in the White Paper. This proposed the doubling of 1996 levels of cycle trips per person by 2002 and proposes a further doubling by 2012.
- The Greater Manchester Cycling Strategy published in March 2000 forms part of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, (LTP) and sets out policies and a framework for Local Authorities to work within.

Cycling is well suited to short journeys. Over 75% of all car journeys are less than 5 miles with half less than 2 miles, yet nationally less than 2% of trips are made by cycle. The figure for trips within Wigan Borough is similar. This compares with Germany (11%), Denmark (18%) and Holland (27%) - places which are not significantly different in climate compared with the UK and generally have higher car ownership.

More people than ever have access to a cycle - an estimated 20 million in fact. Cycle sales in the UK regularly outsell new cars. In particular, most children have access to a bicycle.

So why is cycle usage so low in the UK and what can be done about it in the Borough? People generally have positive views on the benefits of cycling but they have concerns about traffic danger, personal and cycle security and their own abilities as cyclists. For many, cycling to work also creates image problems. There are, therefore, two broad issues which need to be tackled through the cycling strategy for the Borough:

- **the development of a cycle-friendly transport infrastructure and facilities;**
- **the need to change attitudes to enhance the image of cycling and to educate both potential cyclists and other road users.**

Cycling can no longer be regarded primarily as a leisure or sporting pursuit. It must be recognised as a mode of transport, which can be used in place of the car for trips to work, school, the shops, etc. As such, it must form part of a wider integrated transport strategy for the future.

A Cycling Strategy for Wigan

The purpose of this document is to outline the approach being taken by the Council, the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive and local cycling organisations and individuals in addressing these issues, building on the activities already underway. In developing and implementing plans, the Council is committed to working closely with the cycling community and others, such as major employers, developers and transport providers. Existing links via the Cycle Forum and Cycle Liaison Group will be strengthened to encourage wider participation, giving all cyclists (and not just sports and leisure cyclists) across the Borough the opportunity to be involved in planning their own cycle network.

Key Objectives of the Strategy



- 1 To encourage utility and recreational cycling to encourage healthier lifestyles, improve the environment (by reducing pollution and traffic congestion) and reducing energy consumption;
- 2 To develop a transport infrastructure which makes cycling safer, more convenient and attractive;
- 3 To ensure the needs of cyclists are integrated into the Council's planning and funding processes;
- 4 To promote the benefits of cycling, develop a cyclist friendly culture and change attitudes among road users;
- 5 To facilitate collaborative arrangements which attract a representative input (from all sections of the cycling community) to the development and implementation of cycling policies and plans;
- 6 To encourage the development of mutually supportive links between utility, leisure and sporting cyclists;
- 7 To seek resources to implement the strategy over a reasonable timescale.

Policies

In support of its key objectives, the Council will pursue policies and undertake programmes of work covering cycle route development and maintenance, cycle security, promotion and encouragement and liaison with the cycling community and resources.

C1. Cycle Route Development and Maintenance

C1.1 A review of the Borough's existing road network and possible off-road tracks will be undertaken to assess the potential for route development and practical cycle-friendly measures (see Figure 1). The review will be carried out within the context of available resources and, as such, parts of the network will be prioritised for early review. The following considerations will be taken into account in determining priorities:

- relevant policies or development pressures and opportunities;
- existing and potential cycle use levels based on regular monitoring and modelling of demand;
- accident records;
- importance of the link to cyclists.

C1.2 A quality cycle route network incorporating on and off-highway routes will need to be developed. In this, key network priority will be given to major routes which serve utility cycling trips; in particular safe routes to schools and routes from residential areas to significant journey attractors.

Wherever possible, measures will be taken to make existing roads safe and convenient for cyclists to use. Other connecting routes, including inter-urban links and recreational routes, will also be covered. These will include the main existing and potential routes shown on the plan in Figure 2. These include canal towpaths (subject to the agreement of British Waterways and the Bridgewater Canal Company - the latter does not currently permit cycle use), certain dis-used railway

lines and other routes which are protected as the Greenway Network in the Unitary Development Plan. They will also include links to the National Cycle Network and, where practicable, links to the Trans-Pennine Trail and other regional routes and links to neighbouring authorities.

C1.3 Cycle audits will be carried out on new developments and highway schemes. This will ensure that schemes do not sever existing and potential cycle routes, and that adequate provision is made for cycling within them.

C1.4 Measures to facilitate the full integration of cycling with public transport will be encouraged. Where possible, measures to facilitate cycling will be integrated with measures to aid pedestrians and people with mobility difficulties.

C1.5 Care will be taken to ensure that an increase in cycle use does not lead to increased cycle casualties - this will require monitoring accidents involving cyclists. Account will need to be taken of cyclists' needs in the design of infrastructure (see C1.3) and in the conduct of road safety campaigns (See Figure 3) including the use of safety helmets. In order to reduce the number of accidents between pedestrians and cyclists, the Council will not normally allow shared use paths along the public highway, (i.e. footpaths and cycle paths).

C1.6 The Council will undertake to review its existing highway maintenance regime to ensure the needs of cyclists are more fully accounted for.

C2. Cycle Security

C2.1 Adequate cycle parking will be encouraged at existing educational establishments, retail centres, public transport interchanges, leisure facilities and other major journey attractors. Employers will be encouraged to provide cycle parking at workplaces

C2.2 Cycle parking standards will be adopted to ensure that new developments incorporate cycle parking facilities which are secure and accessible and, where possible, well lit, under shelter and conveniently sited to serve the cycle route network.

C2.3 The development of a cycle theft reduction strategy will be explored in conjunction with Greater Manchester Police. This should consider parking facilities, cycle registration schemes, publicity on theft awareness, measures that individuals can take to increase security and the monitoring of cycle thefts.

C3. Promotion and Encouragement

C3.1 A 'School Travel Plan' will be developed in the context of existing programmes. The plan should set out an integrated strategy for reducing car use and improving children's safety on the journey to school. This will include measures which encourage and facilitate cycling and reduce traffic congestion and danger around schools. It will recognise the role which cycling and walking has to play to improve the fitness and independent mobility of school children. The introduction of a pilot scheme at one or more schools in the Borough will be considered.

C3.2 A programme of 'cycle friendly' employer initiatives will be established. The Council will set the example by reviewing its policies towards cycle use by employees. It will also ask the Wigan Borough Partnership and other organisations to join with it to promote a 'cycle friendly employers' service', by offering support, practical advice and information to encourage cycle promotion. This will take place within the wider context of policies and initiatives designed to encourage the implementation of integrated transport strategies and Travel Awareness Plans.

C3.3 The Council will endeavour to provide, in conjunction with local cycling organisations, on and off-road training for cyclists of all ages.

C3.4 The Council will join with existing cycling organisations and others to support the development of mutually supportive utility, leisure and sporting cycling links as a means of expanding cycle usage, particularly for utility trips.

C3.5 Implementation of the cycling strategy will include a sustained programme of complementary publicity. This will include support for national and local publicity campaigns aimed at educating cyclists about responsible behaviour, and other road users about considerate driving and the needs of cyclists and other vulnerable road users. Related to this, the Council will liaise with the Police to ensure that the enforcement of traffic law receives due priority.

C4. Liaison with the Cycling Community and Community Involvement

C4.1 Current consultative arrangements via the Cycle Forum and Cycle Liaison Group will be maintained and strengthened. To this end, the development of a structure to bring in wider representation of, in particular, utility cyclists will be encouraged and supported.

C4.2 Wider community consultation and involvement will be promoted in order to raise the profile of cycling issues.

C5. Resources

C5.1 Resources will be sought to develop and implement programmes of work against each of the objectives and policies outlined above. The aim will be to achieve this over a reasonable timescale, subject to budgeting priorities. Principal sources of funds are likely to include: government funds and the borrowing consent approved through the Local Transport Plan process for on-highway measures, road safety and public transport interchange, grants for derelict land reclamation, grants for countryside projects, such as from the Regional Development Agency and the Countryside Agency, private developers, through the incorporation of cycle provision in new developments and the Council itself.

Road Accidents involving Cyclists in Wigan 1998-2000

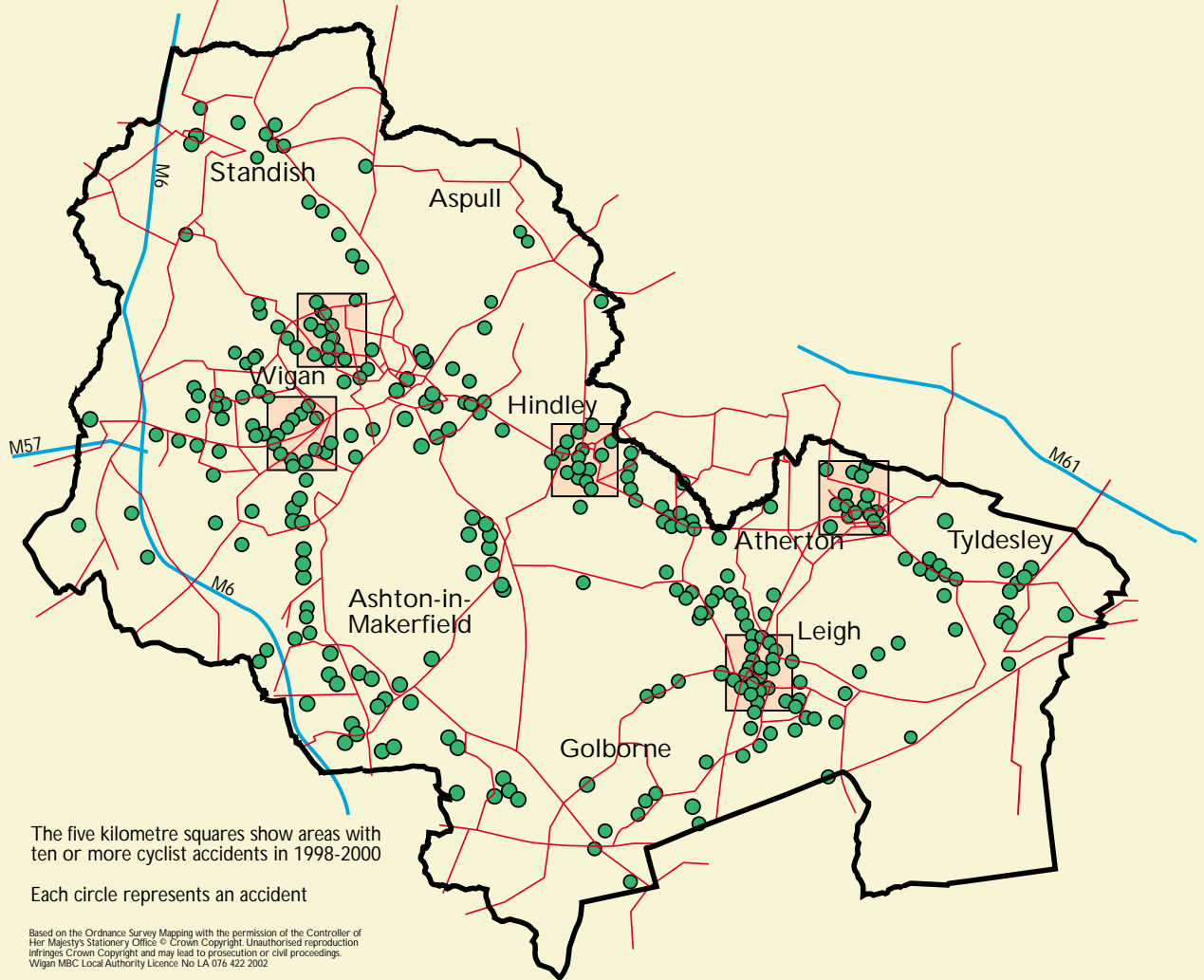


Fig. 3