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Response to London Borough of Richmond LIP2 2011

Created by Richmond Cycling Campaign, March 2011

Summary

Richmond Cycling Campaign welcomes the objectives, targets and policies set out in the draft cycling strategy. We are supportive of priorities set out in the LIP and hope the council will recognise that cycling should play a major role in achieving the goals. However, in the main LIP document there is a lack of numbers, no explanation of how a modal shift will take place or which other mode(s) of transport will create this shift. It is clear to us that this document will do little to stop motor vehicles from remaining the dominant form of transport in Richmond. We feel that Richmond is a place that deserves better treatment for its cyclists and other vulnerable road users than the proposals laid out in this LIP.

Background

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Implementation Plan 2 (2011-2014) lays out its priorities as follows [LIP 4.2 p.29]:

1. Supporting the local economy, environment and quality of life for all residents
2. Improving safety for all road users
3. Enhancing travel choice and reducing congestion
4. Developing a transport system that is resilient and reflective of local needs and aspirations

These are in line with the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

The approach is to be [LIP 4.1 p.29]:

- Listening to the Communities
- All Modes of Transport are Important
- Staying Within our Means
- Working in Partnership

The LIP also says that the council will concentrate on [Draft Cycling Strategy, Annex C 1.15 p.17]:

- The provision of cycle friendly infrastructure on the highway network (on and off road routes);
- The provision of secure cycle parking across the Borough including partnership working to provide secure cycle parking at places of employment, schools, visitor destinations and railway stations;
- Securing adequate funding for improved cycle facilities and maximising the benefits for cyclists from all traffic management schemes;
- Monitoring the outcomes and effectiveness of policies;

- Providing training and support for all members of the community to cycle safely and considerately;
- Seeking enforcement of Road Traffic laws for the benefit of all highway users;

Also:

“the road network generally should be regarded as a facility for cyclists” [LIP 3.2.12 p.25]

Repeated in the Draft Cycling Strategy:

“the road network generally should be regarded as a facility for cyclists as much as for vehicular traffic. It is recognised that cyclists can and will use the highway network for their highly individual trips...” [Draft Cycling Strategy, Annex C 1.11 p.16]

Priorities

Supporting the local economy, environment and quality of life for all residents:

Cycling is a cheap and convenient. More people are likely to choose to cycle as the price of fuel continues to rise. Cycling improves the quality of life of everyone as it leads to a reduction in congestion and pollution. People who cycle live longer, healthier lives. People who cycle to town centres spend more per square metre of space allocation than people who drive.

Improving safety for all road users:

When we speak to people about cycling, they tell us they don't cycle because of the perceived and real dangers present on the boroughs roads. There is a real need to improve safety for people who cycle. Parents want to be able to send their children to school by bicycle. Primary schools actively discourage students from cycling to school.

Enhancing travel choice and reducing congestion:

Cycling is an important transport choice as it improves the lives of those who participate in a financial and physical way. The more people choose to cycle, the less congestion and pollution there is, resulting in a better borough for everyone.

Developing a transport system that is resilient and reflective of local needs and aspirations:

Many parts of Richmond are easy to reach by bicycle. However, some places are cut off by roads, railways or the river. Places like Teddington Lock show that if a useful, easy to use facility is built, then it will meet the aspirations and needs of the local residents. In this borough, it will also meet the needs of those of travel through it and in it – Teddington Lock is used as a commuter link and as a leisure link. It is primarily a pedestrian facility i.e. no cycling is allowed. Another similar example is the Meadway underpass.

Approach

Listening to the Communities

We have struggled to be consulted on schemes in the past. As all traffic schemes affect cyclists, we will now expect the council to consult us on all traffic schemes - "all those that are directly affected will have the full opportunity to comment".

All Modes of Transport are Important

Cycling is perhaps the most important mode of transport because it allows the council to achieve all their priorities. Encouraging people to cycle reduces congestion and pollution. Creating facilities for cyclists improves the environment for others (slower vehicle speed, fewer KSIs, safer streets). Motor vehicle traffic also has a detrimental effect on the environment and the borough's residents. At the present time, other modes of transport are not given the same status as the motor vehicle. Until they are, all investment should be used to bring the status of other modes of transport to the same level as motor vehicles.

Staying Within our Means

DfT figures show that cycling provides a value return of at least £1.50 in terms of increased cycling, improved health and wellbeing (reducing cost to the NHS), improved journey times (bringing benefits to businesses), reduced congestion and overcrowding (from mode shift) and reduced need to spend on increased capacity on other modes (such as extra train carriages or road lanes). This is more than any other mode of transport. Cycling should be one of the highest priorities in Richmond.

UK Cycling Demonstration Towns showed a return of £3 for every £1 invested. We feel that Richmond could be considered an equivalent because of the high modal share compared with other London Boroughs.

Working in Partnership

We look forward to a comprehensive and unified way of addressing the LIP priorities.

Comments

Draft Cycling Strategy (Annex C)

The Draft Cycling Strategy (Annex C) sets out many “pull” factors in the cycling objectives [Section 4 CO p.29], targets [Section 5 CT p.30-1] and mechanisms/policies [Section 7 CT p.31-44]. It also lays out a timescale of 14 years [Section 6.1 p.31]. We welcome this kind of strategy. This links with the LIP proposal to use the Smarter Travel initiative to encourage people to choose other modes of transport. We welcome the proposal to monitor all traffic schemes.

Modal Shift

We wonder how the modal share will be increased in line with the Mayors Transport Strategy (MTS). The MTS aims to increase the proportion of all journeys in London made by bike (the “modal share”) from the London average of 1% to 5%. The [London Travel Demand Survey](#) 2006 to 2009 lists the cycling modal share in LBRuT as 6%; the LIP quotes South West London as having a 3-4% modal share [LIP 3.2.12 p.26]. We note “% of trips by cycling” is a mandatory indicator [LIP 8.3 p.49] but are disappointed the target is not more clearly stated on page 46. We would like to see the council fall in line with the Mayor’s multiplier of 4, to set a strategic aim of 20% of all journeys made by bike: 1 in 5 rather than 1 in 20. There is a demand: “The existing levels of cycling are modest and surveys indicate there is still a large amount of suppressed demand to be met.” [LIP 3.2.12 p.26].

We wonder where this shift will come from. Increasing journeys by bike means that people will have to choose to use a bicycle as their mode of transport. This means that other modes will not be used. Therefore there will be fewer motor vehicle journeys. The main LIP makes no mention that this is the aim. In fact, phrases like “humane parking enforcement” [LIP 4.21 p.30] suggest that motor vehicle drivers will be encouraged to park, increasing congestion and reducing the quality of the environment, decreasing travel choice and increasing the risks for more vulnerable users (more cars = higher risks).

Policy

Some of the phrasing suggests that this document was not written with all modes of transport in mind. For instance, “The continued growth in traffic and limited scope to increase network capacity” [LIP 5.1 p.34] does not take into account that bicycles are traffic and that in order to encourage a modal shift and increase journeys made by bicycle, growth in bicycle traffic is essential and increasing the network capacity to allow for this growth is vital. This links with the phrase “the road network generally should be regarded as a facility for cyclists” [LIP 3.2.12 p.25].

Another example is “Efforts will be made to ensure that our transport proposals accept the importance of access to private means of transport in the daily life of our residents.” [LIP 4.2.3 p.31]. We hope that this will include bicycles.

Smarter Travel

“around 24% of households do not have a car” [LIP 3.2.1 p.20]

“The existing levels of cycling are modest and surveys indicate there is still a large amount of suppressed demand to be met.” [LIP 3.2.12 p.26]

This suggests that the recent Smarter Travel initiative has had limited success in “enabling residents to choose between the full range of travel options” [LIP 5.5 p.36]. Other methods should be investigated e.g. the creation of leisure bicycle facilities such as at Hillingdon, allowing more bicycle related activities to take place in the borough, removal of byelaws that restrict the usage of bicycles in the borough, creation of bike clubs at schools, creation of bike clubs for adults, advice for families that wish to cycle etc.

Budgets

We welcome the increase in expenditure on cycling over the next 2 years and we note that the Hampton Court toucan is now unlikely to go ahead.

“It is recognised that cycling specific budgets are unlikely to deliver the step change in the number of cycling trips that the Borough wishes to achieve and that the [sic] potential lies in maximising the benefits for cyclists and vulnerable road users generally, from all traffic management schemes.” [LIP 3.2.12 p.26]

One of the LIP priorities is safety. When people speak to us about cycling, the main reason for choosing not to cycle is safety. Increasing the safety of people who cycle means more people will cycle. Building general traffic schemes around cycling will make engineers focus their attentions on providing safe means for cyclists to travel, thereby achieving all of the priorities in the LIP: building for cyclists is cheaper than for cars, increased numbers of cyclists means fewer cars, fewer cars means less pollution.

Cycle Parking

Increasing cycle parking is a proven way of encouraging people to cycle. We have concerns over the recent increase in cycle parking. For example, there is little parking in George Street in Richmond but there is ample space for loading. We would like to see a commitment to install the same number of cycle parking spaces as there are motor vehicle spaces and loading bays (c.f. All Modes of Transport are Important [LIP 4.1 p.29]). All cycle parking products should be investigated e.g. hoops on walls in the alleys in Richmond town centre. Using imaginative products like the [Plantlock](#) or the [Cyclehoop](#) would provide a way of integrating cycle parking and at the same time improving the street environment.

Conclusion

We feel that there is little to make using a motor vehicle difficult (i.e. a push to encourage a modal shift) and that the pull is weak (c.f. “The existing levels of cycling are modest and surveys indicate there is still a large amount of suppressed demand to be met.” [LIP 3.2.12 p.26]). Admitting that the cycling budget will not deliver a “step change” and using the equivocal phrase “maximising benefits for ... vulnerable road users” [LIP 3.2.12 p.26] shows that cycling is not a primary focus of this document. As there are no concrete statements e.g. “we will reduce motor vehicle usage” or “we will increase bicycle journeys and create a modal shift”, it should be easy to escape any commitments by saying that “in this project, the benefits for vulnerable road users have been maximised.” We would like to see real statements and a shift in focus from motor traffic to other road users. This will create a modal shift and meet the priorities of this LIP.