

Foreword by Dr John English

Chair of the Cycle Lanes Task Group

I am pleased to present this foreword to the Cycleways Task Group's report, an area which is of particular interest to me because I am a regular bicycle user.

During the process we undertook a comprehensive study of Wiltshire's cycle lanes, receiving evidence from Officers, Cycling bodies like Sustrans and Cogs, and from members of the public.

From the detailed evidence a number of clearly defined areas emerged such as linkages between cycling and health, and the importance of training and safety in encouraging usage.

In order to be balanced in our approach the Task Group also looked at areas where it was unsuitable to implement a new cycleway scheme, gaining a positive understanding on the difficulties faced by the Transport Planning Officers in the Authority, who are charged with increasing cycling levels in Wiltshire.

Finally, As Chairman of the Cycle Lanes Scrutiny Task Group, I would like to thank my fellow Members for their valuable contributions and support during the review, and I commend the report to Wiltshire County Council.

John M English.

Background

Why Undertake a Cycle Lane Scrutiny Review?

1. The justification for undertaking a scrutiny review of Wiltshire's cycle lanes can be traced to a combination of high level strategic goals and community feedback:

Strategic Level

2. The Wiltshire Strategic Board in its 10 year strategy for Wiltshire - **'a county fit for our children'** – (2004 -2014) noted that one of its key countywide objectives was:

'To improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly in urban areas'

Community Level

3. Following work undertaken in 2005 by Wiltshire County Council's community planners, a series of cross cutting issues were identified and detailed within the Community Area Plans. One of the topics of shared concern to emerge from this process of public consultation was cycle lanes – including facilities and routes.
4. With this representation from the community, combined with a clear strategic goal to encourage cycling identified, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - on 21st June 2005 - invited members to form a Task Group to scrutinise Wiltshire's cycle lanes under the following terms of reference:
 - To conduct a detailed review on Cycle Lanes (including facilities and routes);
 - In undertaking the review, to focus on the Key Targets and Objectives as set out in the Wiltshire Strategic Board Document 'Creating a County Fit for Our Children', namely to improve facilities for cyclists, particularly in urban areas
5. The Task Group Membership consisted of the following councilors:



Chairman – Dr John English
(Liberal Democrat Member for
Salisbury East)



Mr Patrick Coleman
(Liberal Democrat Member for
Chippenham North)



Mr Ross Henning
(Liberal Democrat Member for
Chippenham Central)



Mrs Margaret Taylor
(Labour Member for Devizes North)



Mr Charles Winchcombe
(Conservative Member for Devizes
South)

Evidence Gathering

6. In order to attain an overview of the issues integral to cycle lane provision in Wiltshire, the Task Group met firstly in a Committee based setting. Following this the Members chose to go on a collection of site visits to see at first hand the relevant issues and speak with members of the public.

7. The full programme of meetings is detailed below:

County Hall: Committee Room Meetings

1. Friday 2nd September - 2005
2. Thursday 10th November - 2005
3. Thursday 15th December - 2005
4. Thursday 19th January - 2006

Site Visits

1. Trowbridge 27th October - 2005
2. Chippenham 17th November - 2005
3. Salisbury 30th November - 2005
4. Devizes/Calne 9th December – 2005

8. In the meetings based in County Hall evidence was received from:

1. Wiltshire County Council officers
2. Representatives from the cycling charity – Sustrans who are committed to the delivery of a national Cycle Network, which currently stands at over 10,000 miles.

Figure 1



3. Salisbury Primary Care Trust – who represented the Healthier Wiltshire Project, which is the Wiltshire Strategic Board aim to become the healthiest county in England by 2014.

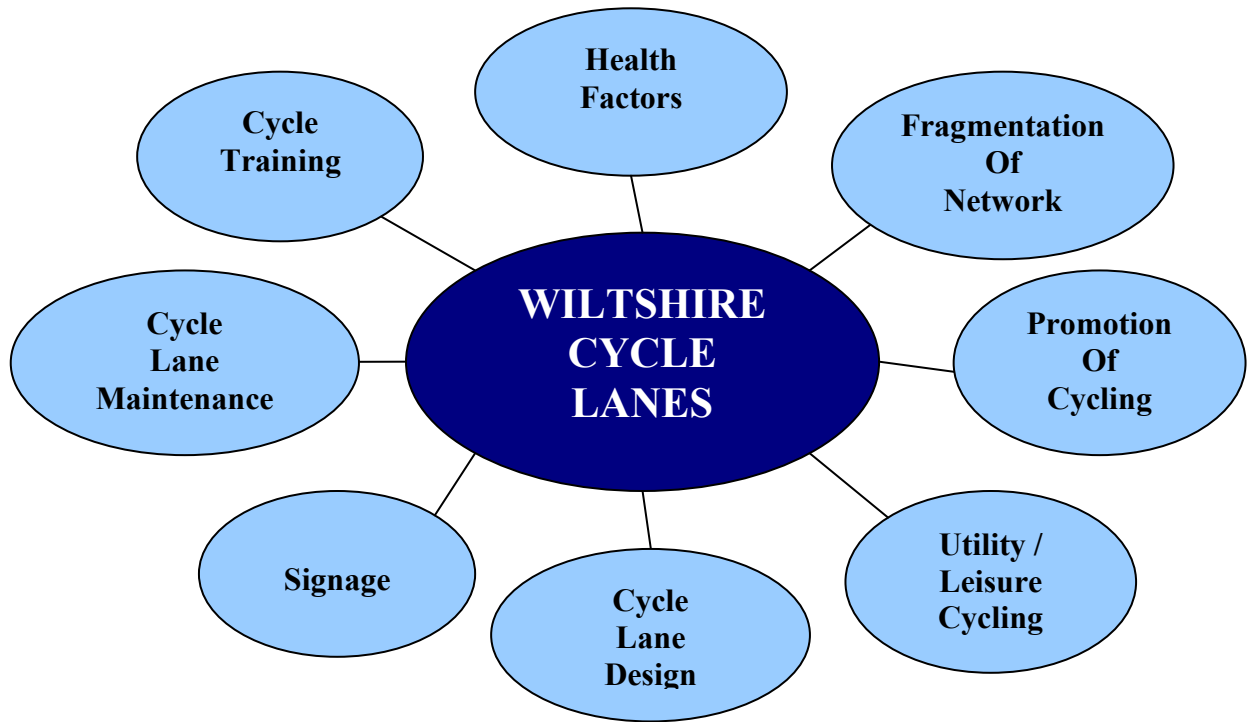
Figure 2



9. The site meetings consisted of visits to existing and proposed infrastructure projects, whilst also meeting with the cycling liaison panels based in Chippenham and Salisbury. It was hoped that by listening to the thoughts of these community cycling groups that the Task Group would receive valuable primary evidence. In addition to this programme the Chairman and Scrutiny Support Officer took the opportunity to cycle along elements of Trowbridge's cycle network.

10. The process of evidence gathering produced a large and often complex volume of information and data. This is presented within the report through a collection of themes, which are all are centred on Wiltshire's Cycle Lanes - as is illustrated in figure 3.

Figure 3 – Themes To Emerge From The Review



Theme 1 - Leisure and Utility Cycling

11. In an attempt to understand the infrastructure facilities available in Wiltshire the Task Group commenced the review by inviting officers of the County's two key providers of cycle lanes, Wiltshire CC (Environmental Services Department – ESD) and Sustrans, to outline their efforts in this area.
12. During examination the Task group quickly learnt that based on its location and scale, the provision of cycling infrastructure can help to encourage different forms of cycling; namely utility or leisure cycling. As a generalisation when considering the two infrastructure providers Wiltshire CC is biased towards utility cycling, whereas Sustrans focus more on leisure cycling.
13. The differences and interrelationships between utility and leisure cycling formed a key component to the review, with emphasis placed on understanding the two elements and the impact each had on the County's cycling network.
14. **What is Utility Cycling?**

'Encompasses any cycling not done primarily for fitness, recreation (bicycle touring) or sport (bicycle racing) but simply as a means of transportation. It includes commuting, going to school and delivering goods or services. Generally therefore, it involves travelling small and medium distances (several kilometres)'. (wikipedia, 2005).

Wiltshire County Council Infrastructure Provision

15. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) provides the overall direction to cycling provision by Wiltshire CC. The 2nd Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-11 has moved towards a more integrated approach with schemes now assessed on safety, congestion, air quality and accessibility. It was emphasised that the LTP is ever more a performance management document, with targets set about generating transfer away from the car to more sustainable means. With this in mind as the majority of people live in towns, and because 60% of car journeys are less than two miles, the emphasis for cycling infrastructure provision is on urban areas for users who cycle for mainly non-leisure purposes (**utility cycling**).

Figure 4 – The Local Transport Plan 2006-11



Figure 5 is an example of a cycle lane provided by Wiltshire CC to promote utility cycling in the town of Devizes.

Figure 5 – London Road - Devizes



Sustrans and Leisure Cycling

16. Leisure cycling encompasses cycling which is undertaken for leisure, fitness and recreation purposes. Sustrans who embody this form of cycling is committed to the delivery of a National Cycle Network which currently stands at over 10,000 miles. During the evidence gathering it was explained that to extend and sustain this network Sustrans must work in partnership with other agencies, including local authorities. National Routes 45, 24 and 4 pass through Wiltshire, with the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath being identified by Sustrans as one of their great successes.

Figure 6 – Sustrans Commemorative Emblem



Figure 7 - Cyclists Near Avebury



Figure 8 – The Kennet and Avon Cycle Path (National route 4)



17. The key issue to emerge from this examination of the two primary cycling infrastructure providers in Wiltshire was that at the start of the review the working relationship between the parties appeared to be not fully complementary. Correspondence had been sent between Sustrans and Wiltshire CC in which frustration was expressed in both directions. Sustrans argued that the local authority had not maximised its efforts towards the support of the National Routes within the County, whereas Wiltshire CC felt that Sustrans were not fully sympathetic towards the infrastructure targets driven by the Local Transport Plan. By including officers from both bodies in the scrutiny review there was an opportunity to develop a clearer appreciation of the goals and the problems each has.

Theme 2 - Cycle Lane Design

18. After the theoretical review of the interrelationship between utility and leisure cycling, the Task Group chose to go on a series of site visits to witness a collection of proposed and implemented cycle lanes. Following these visits a number of issues emerged in respect of the infrastructure observed:

19. **Obstructions**

There were two forms of obstruction observed along the cycle lanes visited. The first was caused by cars that were using the cycle lane as a parking facility, with the public highlighting this to be a particular problem in the evenings. The second form of obstruction was the result of signage and trees that were located within the cycle lane. In response to this issue the Task Group heard from officers that far from ideal, the relocation cost for a street light can significantly increase the cost of certain schemes, jeopardising their viability.

Figure 9 – Bath Road Chippenham



Figure 10 – Obstructed London Cycle Lane



20. Shared Use Cycling

When considering the potential risk between pedestrians and cyclists, statistically there have only been five accidents in Wiltshire in the last five years. Of these five, four involved elderly people. The Task Group visited two locations proposed for shared use paths in Devizes, as highlighted in the pictures adjacent. The Task Group felt that these were prime examples for illustrating the extremes of suitability, when considering the implementation of shared use facilities. Firstly, at Northgate Street, because the path would pass the frontages of houses, there was a real concern that residents could walk out of their house into the path of a passing cyclist, whereas along Nursteed Road this risk would not be realised, so therefore would be more suitable for shared use.

It was acknowledged that alternative solutions were limited in Northgate Street because of limited road space and empathised with the difficult position faced by transport planners in producing an economically viable safe solution

Figure 11 - Nursteed Road, Devizes



Figure 12 - Northgate Street, Devizes



21. Cycle Lane Segregation

It was observed that some of the white lines used to segregate shared use footways were ridged. It was emphasised by some of the cyclists interviewed that in wet conditions the lining can become extremely slippery potentially causing the cyclists to lose their front wheel. It was also noted on the Bath Road, Chippenham that there was no stencil on the cycle lane to indicate which side of the pavement the cyclist should ride, just a sign at either end of the facility.

Figure 13 – Cycle Lane Bath Road Chippenham



Figure 14- Cycle Lane Stencil



Pinch Points

22. The issue of pinch points, i.e. areas where the width falls under the minimum recommended width of 2 metres, and their impact on the viability of a shared use scheme also emerged in the review. The Chairman of the Task Group noted on the Trowle Common facility between Trowbridge and Bradford on Avon that at the point where the path became narrower than the recommended width, positive signage informed the cyclist that they should give way to pedestrians.

Figure 15 – Trowle Common - Trowbridge-BoA Cycle Lane



Contra-flows

23. The Task Group heard that contra-flows enable cyclists to travel in the opposite direction to vehicular traffic on one way streets. This allows improved journey times and minimises the number of junctions visited, where accidents are more likely to occur. It was noted that a contra-flow facility is in place adjacent to the old Ushers' Brewery site in Trowbridge.

Figure 16 –Contra-Flow Lane in Brighton



Design Implementation

24. Finally It was noted in the evidence gathering that although the people of Wiltshire have consistently been supportive towards the proposal to improve the County's cycling network, when it comes to implementing schemes the public in the immediate locality can sometimes offer vociferous objection.
25. The Task Group felt that before the implementation of a scheme the public consultation process followed by the Council was thorough and effective. The public had the opportunity to feed back any opinions about the proposals, and designs could be refined following the consultation period. The Task Group noted that throughout this process the continued involvement of the local member was vital, especially when considering their role in representing the community.

Theme 3 - Signage

26. A further issue to emerge from the review was that of cycling signage and its effectiveness in supporting the use of Wiltshire's infrastructure.

27. National Route Signage

When considering the National Routes that traverse Wiltshire, the message conveyed by Sustrans was that they have limited support from Wiltshire County Council, with the net result being poorly signed networks. The concern being expressed was that the cyclist would be unaware whether they are on the route, especially in the more rural parts of the network; therefore the concept of following a national route would be lost.

Figure 17 – National Route 45 Signage



Urban Network Signage

28. The Task Group when engaging with the public were told of the impressive new cycling infrastructure work that has been already been completed in urban areas such as Salisbury and Chippenham. However, it was felt that the limited levels of signage did not impress

upon the public that these excellent facilities were available for cycling and as a consequence usage was not maximised.

29. **Restrictions for Cyclists**

A frustration for many of the cyclists was the perceived emphasis placed on restricting cyclists from riding along certain paths, or specific foot bridges. It was recognised that this was in place for safety reasons, but it was felt that to an extent more emphasis was placed on telling cyclists where they can't cycle rather than where they can.

Figure 18 – National Cycle Route 71 Together with No Cycling Sign



30. Summarising this section there is a perceived need for more signage on the Wiltshire cycle networks in order to promote the facility and to mark the route.

Theme 4 - Cycle Lane Maintenance

31. The issue of maintenance of the cycle lanes was a factor to emerge in the evidence gathering, especially when the Task Group met with the respective members of the Chippenham and Salisbury cycling liaison panels. Areas of concern included:

Litter and Debris on Cycle Lanes

32. The problem of litter and debris building up on cycle lanes was particularly prominent on cycle lanes that were shared with the road; like that observed on the London Road, Devizes -See figure 19.

Figure 19 – Cycle Lane, London Road - Devizes



33. The feedback from some of the users of this type of facility was that it quite easy to puncture a tyre or become unstabilised from debris that vehicular traffic pushed into the cycle lane on the road's edge. The overwhelming wish from the users was for this infrastrucuture to be cleaned more frequently.

Hedge Trimming

Figure 20 – An Example of Hedge Trimming in Wiltshire



34. Hedge trimming was particularly frustrating for cyclists, especially when a hedge bordering a cycle lane had been trimmed. This again significantly increased the risk of punctures and the wish once more was for more effort to go into removing the debris resulting from this process.
35. The clear message to the Task Group was there was a perception amongst some of Wiltshire's cyclists that not enough commitment is invested to the maintenance and cleaning of the cycle network. This is perhaps best illustrated on the Clarence web page, which in its extensive list of advertised problems that it can deal with; there is no reference to cycle lanes.

Theme 5 - Fragmentation of the Network

Figure 21 – Example of a Fragmented Cycle Lane



36. Another key issue to become apparent following the site meetings was the relative fragmentation of elements of the cycling network. This was particularly noticeable in Salisbury near the new Tesco's on the A36 (Southampton Road) and Chippenham outside the B&Q on the Bath Road. At these two locations the Members noted a high quality new segregated shared use cycle path outside the development which led onto poor facilities where the cyclist had to move back onto the road, in sometimes cramped cycling conditions.

Section 106

37. This area of developer funding was explored by the Task Group. The Members wanted to understand how localised the money sourced for cycling improvements from a new development had to be spent. In response to this WCC Officers were asked to provide an overview of Section 106 agreements, which is the agreement made between Local Authority and Developer that determines the contribution the developer will have to make towards such areas such as cycling infrastructure:
38. This emerged from the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and at this time involves a negotiation process where it must be established that:
1. The proposals are necessary
 2. Directly related to the proposed development
 3. Fairly related in scale to the development
 4. Reasonable in all other extents
39. For cycling the key criterion is that the developer contribution is directly related to the proposed development. It was noted that officers will attempt to maximise the contribution from the developer, however it is important that the request is justifiable as planning permission maybe refused if the developer does not meet the terms of the agreement. Therefore, it is not possible to take a holistic/strategic view when utilising the funds generated from this area.

New Approach

40. It was explained that the future of developer contributions is currently being discussed within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. In the recent Planning Gain Consultation Document the potential of introducing a system of transparent and consistent contributions from developers is proposed. Officers highlighted that if materialised this would allow the Authority to take a more strategic overview towards the way that funding is used for such things as cycling infrastructure. At this stage negotiation is required between officer and developer; this would be removed as contribution would be determined by a formula. If this approach is adopted it is hoped that the fragmented lanes witnessed will be superceded by a more integrated network.

41. As well as looking at the direct issues associated with Wiltshire's cycle lanes the Task Group also explored the efforts to win the 'Hearts and Minds' of potential future cyclists.

Theme 6 - Cycling and Health

Figure 22 – Lance Armstrong 7 time 'Tour de France' Winner



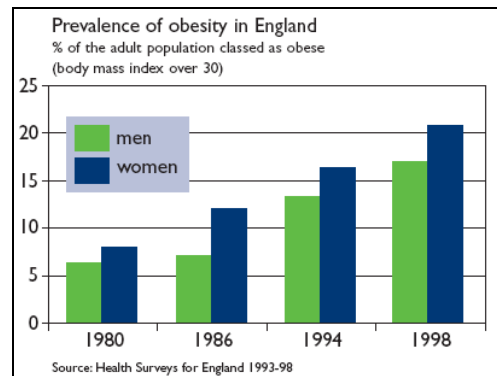
"A bicycle, no matter how elaborate the technology or how advanced the composite that it's made of, remains driven by the body. There is something fundamental about a bike: a frame with a crank, a chain and two wheels, powered by nothing more than my own legs. On a bike, you are under your own power, directed by your own hand. Your motor is yourself." (Lance Armstrong, 2003).

42. To understand the relationship between health and cycling, the Task Group Invited Mr Steve Webster of Salisbury Primary Care Trust to provide evidence.
43. As a means of background Mr Webster provided an overview of the problems being experienced in the country as a consequence of lack of exercise. A clear picture was portrayed of the value of exercise and the risk of physical inactivity.

England is a sedentary nation. Around 6 out of 10 men and 7 out of ten women are not active enough to benefit their health. Declines in cycling and walking have contributed towards this overall reduction in physical activity – which is having an adverse effect on our health. More sedentary lifestyles, together with changing eating patterns, have led to a tripling of levels of obesity in the last twenty years. (National Cycling Strategy, 2003)

44. Figure 23 graphically represents the steep rise in the obesity levels within England 1980-98. The graph shows that when considering the percentage of the total population who are obese, for males there has been a rise from 7% to 21%, whereas for females the respective rise has been from 6% to 17%.

Figure 23 – Prevalence of obesity in England



(Source www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk)

45. The Task Group was informed that cycling is a powerful tool in combating the health problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle, as detailed below:

1. Weight Management

Cycling is a clear form of aerobic exercise, which has the ability to cater for all levels of fitness. Cycling is an effective way of burning energy and consequently managing weight levels.

'A 15- minute bike ride to and from work five times a week burns off the equivalent of 11 pounds of fat in a year'.

(Bupa, 2005)

2. Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)

This is the biggest cause of death in the country, accounting for the lives of one in four men and one in six women. It is estimated that 36% of all CHD can be attributed to a lack of physical activity (National Cycling Strategy, 2003). Cycling is an excellent method of addressing this statistic.

3. Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is the most common metabolic disorder worldwide. Physical inactivity can increase the risk of developing this condition by up to 50%. Once again cycling is a powerful mechanism to combat this disorder.

4. Mental Health

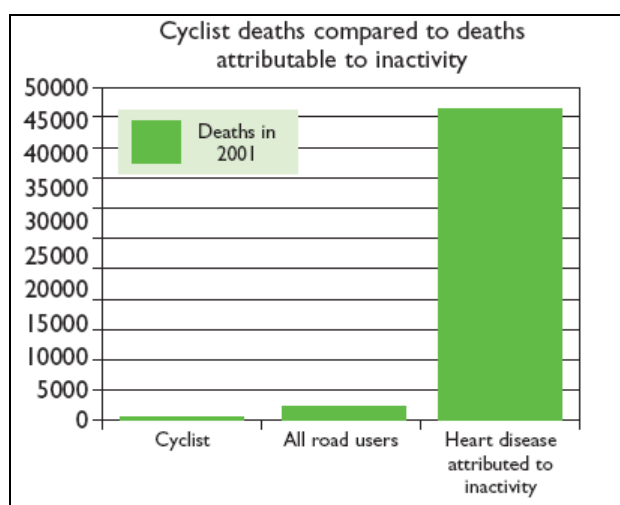
Moderate exercise has been found to reduce levels of stress and depression, improve mood and raise self-esteem. (Bupa, 2005)

5. Maintain Strength and Coordination

Cycling can help reduce the likelihood of falls, by facilitating the continued development of strength and coordination amongst older riders. Bupa (2005) note, that physically active older people are much less likely to fracture a hip following a fall.

46. The benefits to health from cycling were further put into context by looking at the 'risk of cycling'. In 2000, 125 people were killed in the UK whilst cycling. In the same year 125,000 people died from coronary heart disease, of which 45,000 were due to a lack of physical activity.
47. Figure 2 graphically represents this risk of cycling against inactivity, highlighting the difference in scale between the deaths of 125 cyclists against the 45,000 who die because of their sedentary lifestyle.

Figure 24 – Cyclist deaths compared to deaths attributable to inactivity



(Source www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk)

48. The powerful message to emerge from this element of the evidence gathering was the value that cycling has in addressing the health problems that develop following inactivity.

Theme 7-

Cycle Training in Wiltshire



49. To address the value and availability of cycle training in Wiltshire, the Task Group invited Mr Patrick McEune – Wiltshire County Council's Road Safety Manager – to provide evidence for the review.

National Cycling Proficiency Test

50. Historically the main method of delivering cycle training in Wiltshire has been through the volunteer led National Cycling Proficiency Scheme. The courses are organised by Wiltshire County Council's Road Safety Unit, who also train the volunteers that deliver the courses. In the school year 2004-05 1969 children received cycle training in 104 schools.
51. The course is available to all children over 10 years of age, but is predominantly delivered in primary schools. The course is run over 6 sessions with the first 2 covering a basic cycle check and cycle control, and the remaining sessions covering basic on-road training at a specified road junction and simple manoeuvres such as passing a parked vehicle.
52. The road safety unit also runs a scheme for 7-9 year olds which is delivered off road and develops skills and ability.

The key message to emerge to the Task Group was that because of the limited road experience that the training provides the cyclist, **parents are not given the confidence to encourage their children to cycle.**

The National Standard for Cyclist Training

53. In addition to the Cycling Proficiency Test a new National Standard for on-road cycle training has been put in place. The National Standard is a more comprehensive 3 tiered cycling scheme, which focuses on making a cycle journey.

Figure 25 – Example of Basic Control Skill Training



The three levels of the new standard are:

1. Level 1 - Basic control skills
2. Level 2 - Trains people to cycle on quieter roads
3. Level 3 - Trains riders to cycle confidently in a wide range of conditions

The training is delivered generally to students in their first years of secondary school. Following completion of the training the parent/guardian is given a written report of their child's progress, with the hope that this more detailed assessment will encourage positive parental support towards cycling.

54. Wiltshire County Council is the first local authority to become an accredited training provider for the new qualification and has already been commissioned to train South Gloucestershire's instructors to the new standard, generating over £3000 of income for Wiltshire CCI.
55. Instructors must be qualified to train all three levels and must be competent cyclists themselves, which it is hoped will further engage the children and encourage them to cycle in the future. In terms of cost an instructor can charge approximately £25 hr for their service, which is perhaps the key difference with the volunteer run cycling proficiency test. Therefore, if trained in a group of five the cost per child for the course would be around £25. The Road Safety Unit does not have funds to pay instructors to run National Standard Training free in schools, which differs to the neighbouring authority of South Gloucestershire who allocate £50k to their road safety unit in order to pay instructors to deliver free training. At this stage 25 volunteers who currently deliver cycling proficiency have expressed an interest to become a trainer of the new standard.
56. The future options for delivering the new National Standard for cyclist training can be separated into 3 options:

1. Volunteers – Training continued to be delivered free by volunteers
 2. WCC pay trainers as a casual member of staff but charge the school £30 hr
 3. Use private instructors who are paid the market rate
57. The key message to emerge in this evidence gathering is at this stage there are insufficient numbers of volunteers to deliver the new scheme county wide, therefore to enable Wiltshire's cyclists to attain this new accreditation, payment will need to be provided by the student, or the local authority will have to subsidise the programme.

Theme 8 - Promotion of Cycling

58. As well as creating an infrastructure for cyclists Wiltshire County Council has an active Travelwise Team who is responsible for promoting the use of sustainable transport modes such as cycling. The battle to win the 'hearts and minds' of the potential cyclists takes various forms:

School travel plans

59. Currently 30% of schools have agreed travel plans. A school travel plan is an agreed strategy to reduce private vehicle travel, particularly for journeys to and from school. Funding of £5k for primary and £10k for secondary schools is available for the development of individual plans. This money can be used to provide end of journey facilities such as bike sheds, to hopefully further encourage children to cycle rather than be driven to school.
60. The Task Group was also made aware of a recent Department for Transport sponsored study into the effectiveness of travel Plans. The document- 'Travelling to School Initiative: Findings of the Initial Evaluation' noted that there is 'little evidence to suggest that there has been a widespread modal shift, above that which may have happened anyway, in schools with School Travel Plans (DfT). Although it was emphasised a national study and that it in Wiltshire there has been positive results to travel plan introductions, with Colerne Primary School sited as a good example.

Further efforts

61. As well as School Travel Plans, Wiltshire County Council has helped develop approximately 25-30 work place travel plans in response to application for planning.

The Task Group also heard radio advertisements initiated by the Travelwise team to promote cycling for such organised events as 'Bike Week'.

The County Council also lead by example by encouraging cycling by providing end of journey facilities such as lockers and showers. They also have a secure bike shed and pay staff a comparable mileage rate for cycling rather than using the car.

Figure 26 - Pool Bike Lockers in County Hall



Figure 27 – Secure Bike Shed



62. The evidence received within this theme demonstrated a comprehensive and varied collection of methods that attempt to promote and encourage cycling that maximise its effectiveness when considering the resources readily available.

Conclusions

63. The Task Group has reached the following conclusions:

Utility/Leisure Cycling

64. Cycling can be classified under two distinct headings 'Utility' and 'Leisure' Cycling. As was outlined previously, the County Council is focussed closely on urban cycle lane provision. This tends to be associated with utility cycling, whereas with Sustrans' the emphasis is towards the national routes, which in Wiltshire have a more rural focus - encouraging leisure cycling.
65. The Task Group examined correspondence between Wiltshire County Council and Sustrans' in which frustration was expressed from both directions. The Task Group felt that it might be due to their having different, but unstated objectives. During the review there has been the opportunity to develop a clearer appreciation of the goals and problems each has. The Members are convinced that there needs to be a positive, co-operative relationship between the two in order to do the best for cycling in Wiltshire, and it is hoped that this will be one result of the Cycle Lanes Scrutiny Review.

Signage

66. The issue of signage is important for two main reasons, firstly it advertises the facility that is available, and secondly it acts as an information source to the cyclist – communicating the appropriate route to follow.
67. The message emerging from the evidence gathering was that Wiltshire County Council could be more proactive in the provision of signage for cycle routes within the County. The Task Group recognise there is a desire to maintain the rural nature of the County and signs can detract from this, however a cycle route without signage is not a visible route, and without this infrastructure cycling levels will not be maximised.
68. There was an added frustration amongst cyclists as they noted many signs prohibiting cycling within their communities, *such as 'cyclists dismount'* at crossings. The Task Group felt that only legally required signs of this sort should be erected.

Cycle Lane Maintenance

69. As detailed in the results section, litter and debris can be extremely frustrating for cyclists, mainly because of the damage it can do tyres. The Task Group recognise the goal of removing debris from cycle lanes is a huge challenge. However, the County Council does not openly advertise on its Clarence web page that members of the public have the facility to report damage to or debris on a County Council cycle lane. To encourage increased use of cycling the users must feel they have some sort of parity with motorists; the invitation to report damage to a cycle lane would be one way of achieving this goal.

Cycle Lane Design

70. The Task Group acknowledged the difficulty experienced by officers who receive feedback that the communities of Wiltshire would like better cycling facilities, yet when they attempt to implement schemes the public in the immediate vicinity to the scheme can sometimes offer strong objection. The Task Group recognise the thoroughness of the consultation adopted in a cycling infrastructure project but felt it important that the local member continues to be central to this process because of their role as the community voice.
71. In terms of the promotion of shared use footways where the front doors open directly on to the facility e.g. Northgate Street, Devizes; the Task Group has strong reservations centred on safety in response to this solution. Also of concern was cycle lanes that are bisected by roads, as the supporting literature suggested that this is where cyclists are most susceptible to accidents. The line that distinguishes which side the pedestrian and cyclists follow should not be raised as it is quite easy for the cyclist to lose their front wheel, especially in wet conditions. The cycle lane wherever possible should be free from obstructions such as lamp posts, as it is dangerous and it also seemed to be one of the key factors for public dissatisfaction towards cycling infrastructure. Finally, while the guidelines for width are generally to be adhered to, small substandard bottle-necks should not be allowed to negate potentially good schemes. However, the Task Group did recognise that affordable solutions are not always easy in the narrow busy roads found in the Wiltshire market towns.
72. Again, supporting literature suggested that one of the most dangerous environments faced by a cyclist is when emerging from a segregated cycle lane back on to the road. The Task Group feels that the County Council should continue to place greater focus on this area when designing schemes, to avoid accidents. The recently constructed Highways Agency scheme at Skew Bridge, Salisbury is a key example where cyclists join the road from a short segregated cycle lane and feel at risk from motor vehicles who are not expecting to see a cyclist emerge from their passenger side. As a result many cyclists ignore the facility and stay on the carriageway.

73. Contra-flow cycle lanes can be extremely effective in urban areas by reducing journey time and by minimising the number of junctions the cyclist has to manoeuvre. The Task Group feels that the County Council should look to use this design solution wherever possible, especially in the larger urban areas such as Salisbury.
74. Finally, following the site visits it was noticeable at some of the developer funded cycle lanes that the work had not been completed to the highest standard. For instance, the new path along Chippenham's Bath Road did not have stencils on the tarmac to indicate which side of the path the cyclist and pedestrian should follow. This would suggest that the procedures in place when utilising developer funds may require re-examination.

Cycle Training

75. The Task group would like to congratulate the Road Safety Unit on their achievement in becoming the first accredited training provider for the new National Standard for Cyclist Training.
76. The interrelationship between the standard of training and cycling usage was impressed within the review, with officers noting that the traditional cycling proficiency test does not instil a widespread confidence amongst parents to encourage their children to continue to use their bicycle. The new accreditation addresses this issue by providing a more extensive level of training and by providing parents a written report of their child's progress. At this stage Wiltshire County Council does not contribute funds to allow children to benefit from this higher level of cycling training, unlike the neighbouring authority of South Gloucestershire who contributes an annual figure of £50k.
77. The task group recognised the increased all round benefits of the new training qualification, but felt the historic cycling proficiency test should be retained for the immediate future because of the work it does in getting primary school children on to bicycles whilst improving their skills and awareness at the same time.
78. The Task Group felt there to be a huge potential for further interrelationships between the work of the Road Safety Unit and the Travelwise Team. Travel plans, as has been noted, have not brought about the huge 'sea of change' that was hoped. If schools were to benefit from this new high quality training available, the capital infrastructure improvements sourced from the travel plan funding would be complemented by children who are competent on a bicycle and have parental support. With this holistic package the conversion levels from car to bike can only be enhanced.

Promotion of Cycling

79. The Task Group would like to commend the officers, most notably in the Travelwise Team on their performance in attempting to promote cycling across the County. The use of the media, travel plans, and promotions has made cycling more attractive in Wiltshire and acts as a huge carrot for encouraging increased cycle usage.

Health Factors

80. The real issue in this arena impressed upon the Task Group was that the benefits of cycling outweigh the risks. When considering the available statistical evidence the dangers of choosing a sedentary lifestyle significantly outweigh the risks of cycling, with even modest regular cycling being shown to have considerable health benefits.
81. The pursuit of cycling lends itself to support the Wiltshire Strategic Board target to become the healthiest county in England by 2014 and the conclusion of the Task Group is that cycling can only complement this strategic aim.

Fragmentation of the Network

82. The current system where developer contributions are dependent on negotiation and funds generated have to be spent in the vicinity of the development can lead to a fragmented network. To counteract this, the Task Group feels that new cycling infrastructure should be either integrated into existing routes, including Sustrans' national routes, or to have the potential to do that in the near future. Cycle lanes should not be built purely because money has been extracted from developers.
83. The Task Group welcomes the proposals outlined in the Government's Planning Gain Consultation Document, which will allow developer funding to be utilised more widely when considering cycling infrastructure and provide transparency to the developer in respect of contributions.

84. Recommendations

1. Recognising the current financial position faced by Wiltshire CC, the Task Group recommends that the Council should pilot free training for the new cycling standard in one designated school. Following this, the exercise should be appraised to establish if the provision of free training should be expanded to other schools in Wiltshire.

Using figures provided by the Road Safety Unit the current cost of training children to the new standard is:

£125	5 students
£1,250	50 students
£12,500	500 students

2. The Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Economic Development and Director of Environmental Services to continue to develop working relationships with Sustrans, consulting with Sustrans on new developments and wherever possible improving the national route infrastructure.
3. Wiltshire County Council to allocate designated funding to improve signage on existing cycle routes, most notably the national routes 45, 24 and 4.
4. Environmental Services Officers to amend the council's Clarence web page to encourage members of the public to report problems on the County owned cycle lanes.
5. To combat debris build up on cycle lanes that share the road, more regular cleaning is required than present. A review of this by Environmental Services –Transport Planning Officers is recommended, to determine which roads with cycle lanes need the extra service.
6. The County Council to develop a more stringent 'signing off' protocol following developer funded cycle lanes. The Task Group recommends that a Wiltshire CC representative visits the site to ensure the cycle lane has been completed to satisfactory standards.
7. In recognition of how important it is to successful implementation, to ensure the continued inclusion of the local member in consultation undertaken in response to new proposals from embryonic to advanced stages.
8. To continue to support the role of the TravelwiseTteam in promoting cycling and its clear links to the healthier Wiltshire campaign.

9. The Task Group welcome the principles that underpin the new Planning Gain Consultation Document, which would increase transparency for officers and allow more strategic planning for cycling.
10. Officers to consider the increased use of contra-flow cycle lanes in urban areas.
11. Officers in their scheme designs to focus on the area where the segregated cycle lane rejoins the road, to minimise the potential of accidents.
12. Officers to continue to utilise shared use pavements for cycling, which the task group noted is not ideal but is the best option in some places. Absence of buildings opening on to it and low pedestrian use are favourable features, with the pavement from Salisbury to Wilton an example of these two points.
13. Wiltshire County Council to ensure the future use of non-ridged lining to separate shared use paths between cyclists and pedestrians.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Decision Making Process, Implementation and Monitoring of Recommendations

85. This Task Group report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 15 March 2006 for endorsement, following which it will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Economic Development for consideration and decision.
86. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will monitor implementation of the recommendations with a review to be undertaken in 12 months.

