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20 Dec 2011

Dear Andrew

**Re: Eastbourne draft cycling strategy – Bespoke response**

I am writing on behalf of Bespoke, Eastbourne's cycle campaign group, to comment on your draft cycling strategy for Eastbourne, Sept 2011 version.

We welcome the strategy and thank the councils for the work that has gone into it.

We are very pleased with the strategy. It encompasses all the positive features that increased cycling could bring to the town, in terms of mental and physical health, community interaction, reduced congestion, etc. Many journeys in Eastbourne are under 3 miles and could easily be done by bike. What stops people cycling is fear. Our questionnaire studies of people in Eastbourne found that most people do not cycle because they perceive it as unsafe. To work well for utility cycling, routes have to be felt to be safe in all weathers, in the dark and in the rush hour.

You will remember that we had a petition, presented to ESCC in September 2011 with 3200 signatures that *"We, the undersigned, would like better provision for cycling in Eastbourne. We support a seafront cycle route"*

**In response to your specific questions:**

Happy with the strategy overall	- AGREE
The strategy objectives are clear	- AGREE
The strategy objectives are relevant to Eastbourne	- AGREE
The Strategy Approach contains the right policies to deliver the objectives – PROBABLY AGREE – MORE FINANCE IS NEEDED. CONSIDER USING MONEY FROM OTHER BUDGETS (SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, MOTOR TRAFFIC) WHERE SAVINGS WILL BE MADE	
The document is easy to read and understand	- AGREE

### **Specific items in section 1- section 3:**

1.1 – 1.1.6 Context: We agree that Eastbourne itself “has very limited cycling infrastructure” and that there is great potential to increase urban utility cycling.

1.2.2: we completely agree that the new infrastructure needs to meet minimum criteria. The key one is SAFETY

We want to make it clear that there is a wide variety of cyclists and potential cyclists. At Bespoke, in common with other organisations (Sustrans, CTC, etc.) we believe that in order to encourage more people to make the modal shift into cycling, there needs to be better infrastructure to help the less confident cyclist and children. Confident cyclists will usually be in the flow of the traffic.

2.3.4: We agree that priority routes are needed AND attention to small scale improvements as in (advanced stop lines, reduced restrictions for cyclists and signage). Many of the small scale improvements would also be useful for those with pushchairs and those using mobility scooters. Many small changes would be relatively cheap to implement.

The objectives are good. We especially like Objective 1 (creating a safer, more accessible cycle network with infrastructure, to encourage more people to cycle) and Objective 3 (reducing car dependency for short utility journeys)

3.2.1.2: We would urge caution in the transferability of the hierarchy of provision – unconfident cyclists and children will prefer to use segregated routes. Until there is a critical mass of people cycling, it may be better to have separated cycle paths and shared cycling-walking-and-other routes on “traffic free” routes pavements and paths.

3.2.1. Sections 6 and 7: Bespoke cycle group believe that attention to financing schemes (priority and small-scale) is key. It is only when infrastructure appears that is seen as possible and safe by potential cyclists. We would like to see any proposed development be considered for the ability to provide extra facilities for cyclists (eg cycle parking, dropped kerbs or a lane).

3.2.1 Section 8: we welcome the awareness campaign for HGVs. We understand that this has had some success in London.

### **Response to section 4:**

We note the Implementation plan, which does not go far enough or fast enough! We would prefer that new infrastructure work could be given a time-scale in the implementation plan. In particular, the recent consultation on cycling on Eastbourne seafront made it clear that the majority of responders and Eastbourne residents would like the whole of Eastbourne seafront to be adapted for cycling as soon as possible.

We agree with the primary routes, secondary routes and increases in cycle parking. We welcome feasibility studies of the primary routes. We would also suggest that some small-scale improvements are considered within the implementation plan, which may be cheap and benefit many users not just cyclists (eg those with pushchairs or using mobility scooters). People need to see the infrastructure. Education will not produce the changes needed unless the infrastructure is changed and cycling is seen as safer.

We would request that any future planning application is considered in the light of the cycling strategy. Although we are grateful for the 106 monies, it would be better if

facilities for cycling were incorporated into the design stages of developments, at which time the additional cost of implementing them may be very little.

We would request that more of the transport budget is set aside for cycling.

Furthermore, when any roadworks are planned, they should incorporate any items that would improve facilities for cyclists.

**Summary:**

The cycling strategy is desperately needed, to improve health and reduce congestion and pollution. We are pleased to be included in your list of stakeholders. We hope that enough funding will be identified to realise some of the ideals in the strategy. The key is infrastructure which is considered safe by those making the change to cycling.

We have more information on the benefits to all of more cycling in Eastbourne. Our website is [www.bespokecyclegroup.org](http://www.bespokecyclegroup.org)

Feel free to forward this letter as needed and to contact us at any time.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve the laudable aims in your strategy.

Yours sincerely,

*Scarlett McNally*

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on behalf of Bespoke cycle group