

Cycle Strategy Response

Thank you for inviting Cambridge Cycling Campaign to respond to your draft cycle strategy.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign is the largest cycling campaign in England and Wales outside London. We have over one thousand paying members, and are a registered charity. We work constructively with many local organisations.

Below we make comments on:

1. **Cycle Parking** – We welcome increase in cycle parking but express concerns on security at smaller stations and accessibility of two-tier parking
2. **Abellio Bike&Go** – A promising scheme for which speed of use and bike availability will be paramount
3. **Bikes In The Station** – We question requirement to fold bikes before entering the station as less convenient for all users of the station
4. **Bike on Trains** – We accept reasons behind ban on peak commuter trains, but communication must be clear and use case of carrying personal bikes for leisure remains
5. **Maps For Cyclists** – Suggested routes for cyclists would be the perfect companion to hire schemes

Any Greater Anglia Cycling Strategy must not conflict with the guidance given in the ATOC Cycle-Rail Toolkit, which should be referred to when considering bicycles. Facilities such as the wheeling channel and lifts on the bridge to the new platform at Cambridge do not meet them.

1. Cycle Parking

The lack of cycle parking at Cambridge train station has long been an issue for the Campaign, and we welcome the planned increase in cycle parking capacity at the station. We are sure this will prove popular, and may need expanding in years to come.

We also welcome your understanding on the issues of:

- Convenience of location
- Sheltering parking
- Security

If commuters need to have two bikes, then security at smaller stations will need considerable improvement. For example, for someone working at Melbourn Science park leaving their bike at

Meldreth Station, the need for a bike to be left overnight in this quiet spot will inevitably increase the risk of theft.

We understand that two-tier cycle racks can be a useful way to increase capacity in limited space, but are concerned that they should not be a first choice over allocating sufficient area. Cycle parking is already a very space-efficient way of getting customers to trains, allowing 10 passengers to park bikes in the space required for one car.

Two-tier racks are unsuitable for use by bikes with trailers, or tricycles, and require strength to use. The cycling population around Cambridge is varied, taking in all ages and fitness levels, and the mobility advantages of cycling are lost if it is impossible to use the cycle parking available because lower racks are occupied.

2. Abellio Bike&Go

We welcome the Bike&Go scheme as an additional option for combining cycling and train travel. We would be very interested in an opportunity to observe one of these facilities.

In order to be a successful option, particularly for commuting and thus reducing pressure on parking facilities and bikes on trains, the facilities must address issues of:

- Speed and ease of hire, even at peak times. The predictability of cycle journey times is a large factor in the appeal of cycling for transport, and the hiring procedure should not compromise this through delays, or it is likely to be rejected by users.
- Availability of hire bikes and ability to reserve, including on a long-term basis for commuters. Users must be able to know availability prior to arrival at the station.

3. Bikes In The Station

Use of folding bikes is one solution which suits both the commuter who wants the flexibility of taking their bike on the train, and the operators and other passengers by taking up less space.

We therefore question the requirement to fold bikes before entering the station, when wheeling the bike is the easiest method to get it to the train, maintaining flow through the station. Folding bikes are quite heavy and are more likely to be bumped against other people if carried than if wheeled. They are also awkward to manoeuvre through barriers when folded as this requires the bike to be carried in front or behind. It is easier and much more practical for everyone - cyclist, other passengers, and the railway companies - if they are wheeled to the train. Of course, they should normally be folded before getting onto the train.

Requiring the bike to be folded before entering the station makes as little sense as requiring users of wheeled luggage to carry their bag rather than drag it behind them, and takes up no more space.

4. Bike on Trains

We understand that some peak-time commuter trains are already at capacity and that this capacity would be reduced if passengers are allowed to take non-folding bikes on routes where cycling is popular.

We therefore do not object to the principle of peak-time bans where necessary, but such bans should be clear to users both at the station and when booking by other methods. Ineffective communication will lead to time wasted on enforcement, ineffective bans, and frustration by all users.

Clear communication must include:

- Definition of what is an acceptable 'folding bike' so that users are not caught out trying to take the wrong kind of bike
- Clear timings: times of cycle restrictions defined by departure time and station are easier to understand than by arrival, where it may not be clear if a partial journey is allowed

However on trains where crowding issues are not present, we would like to see greater flexibility to allow passengers to take bikes, and would not support this policy if it led to more bans on uncrowded trains. The combination of parking and bike hire does not cover all use cases, such as travel to cycle events, as part of cycling tours or travel to off-road facilities where hire bikes would not be suitable. Destination stations for leisure cycling are often rural and therefore would not have hire schemes in place in any case.

Current standards of four bike spaces per local train for services in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire are in practice far below the carrying capacity of the train, which could be two bikes per vestibule for those trains with double doors. We suggest an increase in the guidelines to reflect this.

Although policy states that exceeding guidelines is at the discretion of the conductor, our members have found in practice that they are cited the standards as limits, enforced even on half-empty trains for a single stop. Issues of education apply to both sides, and the culture of Greater Anglia staff must support the cycling strategy for it to be successful.

In the long-term, we think that a strategy is incomplete without addressing the issue of proper facilities to carry bikes on trains. Without special facilities bikes on trains are liable to fall over, to require moving at each stop where the platform side changes, and take up more space than is necessary. Facilities such as [this](#) and [this](#) get bikes out of vestibules, are space efficient and

secure the bike so it will not fall over. They can also be used for wheelchairs, luggage or flip-down seating, resulting in no loss of capacity when required by something other than bikes.

While retro-fitting such facilities may not be possible, we would expect them to be considered for new or replacement carriages, in sufficient number that there is no loss in bike capacity over vestibule use.

5. Maps For Cyclists

Bike&Go would be ideally combined with information on suggested cycle routes to major nearby attractions. The routes which are most attractive for cycling are not necessarily the same as those for other methods of transport, and maps for cyclists would aim to encourage use of all the facilities proposed.

Services such as CycleStreets <http://www.cyclestreets.net/> can be used to formulate suggested routes.

Thank you again for the invitation to respond to the strategy. If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised please get in touch at contact@camcycle.org.uk

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Hester Wells

Co-ordinator