

Transport Board
Active Travel Design Principles

Purpose of Report

To set out the Design Principles for Active Travel Infrastructure.

Thematic Priority

Secure investment in infrastructure where it will do most to support growth.

Recommendations

That members of the Transport Board recommend the design principles and the approach to creating inclusive active travel infrastructure for approval at the MCA Board.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The SCR Transport Board agreed to create a set of minimum standards for active travel infrastructure at the July 2019 meeting. These were proposed to include:
1. Continuous minimum widths for cycle tracks to include 3 and 4-wheel cycles and for footways to include wheelchairs.
 2. Separation of footways and cycle tracks from high volumes of traffic, high vehicle speeds (above 30mph) or significant amounts of large vehicles.
 3. Separation of highway footways from cycle tracks for significant distances. Shared use only to be used for placemaking and some off-road routes.
 4. Clear priority for active travel routes at junctions, continuing cycle tracks and footways straight across side roads and reducing crossing times.
- 1.2** On June 1st 2020 the MCA agreed to adopt the Active Travel Implementation Plan (ATIP) which sets out the overall approach to inclusive design. The ATIP specifically requires the development of a set of design principles by the SCR Active Travel Programme and Advisory Boards.
- 1.3** The proposal is for SCR to adopt high level design principles. We are awaiting detailed national infrastructure design advice from the DfT which will be issued this summer and it is proposed that the SCR standards meet or exceed those from DfT as schemes funded through the majority of Government funding, including the Transforming Cities Fund, must meet this minimum criteria.

2. Proposal and justification

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Active Travel Design principles apply to all infrastructure that is funded through the Sheffield City Region. The proposed standards are attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The intention is that the MCA only adopt high level design principles, as detailed design will be guided by statutory guidance and any adopted local detailed design advice (providing it does not contradict the above). The programme will not commission detailed design standards as they would need constant updating, and national guidance will be released soon (1.4).
- 2.3 The design principles all contain a proposed standard and details of likely exceptions. Where proposed infrastructure does not meet the standards, the expected allowable exceptions are detailed. Where the proposed infrastructure is beyond an allowable exception it will be referred to the Active Travel Programme Board to resolve the matter and recommend a solution.
- 2.4 There are proposed to be four standards:
- 2.5 Standard 1 covers when active travel infrastructure should be segregated from vehicular traffic, and where the footway should be separated from other active travellers. The basis for segregation is homogeneity of speed where a large volume of users is expected, so that:
- Footways are reserved for pedestrians, slower mobility aids and joggers.
 - Active travel lanes are for cyclists, scooter users and electric powered wheelchairs, bikes and scooters.
 - The roadway is for any vehicle, including those cyclists that choose to use it, unless explicitly prohibited
- 2.6 Standard 2 covers lane widths and is to make sure that all the infrastructure planned is fully accessible for the whole length of the route. It also covers the use of constrictions and barriers to deter illegal use, which often stop legitimate users gaining access, or continuing their journey.
- 2.7 Standard 3 covers active travel route surface and continuity. In order to make active travel routes attractive and desirable routes should minimise delay and diversion. In most settings the surface should be tarmac, or another sealed surface that is well drained and smooth. Guard railing will not be routinely used at junctions.
- 2.8 Standard 4 deals with crossings and how signals respond to active travellers. We would welcome more crossings with little or no wait times, especially on popular running routes. Elsewhere we would routinely expect simple junctions to have a wait time of 30 seconds or less. We also would like to see the end to pedestrian islands in the middle of a road, with virtually all crossing movements to cross a road in a single phase. For more complex and busy junctions, we would like crossings to be simplified, and if traffic volumes are so high that this is impossible, grade separation should be presented as an option.
- 2.8 Subject to agreement by the Transport Board, the intention will be to progress these standards to the MCA to adopt the principles as policy.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1 When the active travel programme started there were no accepted standards across the region although some Authorities were already applying excellent practice. The absence of agreed standards was resulting in very different approaches to infrastructure, and in a few cases not meeting the standards has added financial risk to programmes.
- 3.2 The standards detailed in this report have been already applied to some Transforming Cities Fund programme infrastructure, some of which has already been built. We recognise the considerable efforts of the local authority partners in changing programmed schemes, and the approach of some to set up design panels including programme staff and advisory board members.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

The adoption of standards may increase material capital scheme costs, but so far have shown to reduce design costs, by reducing iterations in the design. They also reduce the cost of not meeting the yet to be published national design standards for DfT funded projects.

The higher standards will also increase the benefits, and the lifespan of the asset and therefore the whole-life cost benefits.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal implications at this stage.

4.3 Risk Management

Adopting standards lowers the risk of not meeting standards.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The standards presented are aimed to make the infrastructure far more inclusive to those with impairment across all strands of society.

5. Communications

- 5.1 Many stakeholders have been demanding higher standards, and the publication of these standards is a key milestone in the ATIP

6. Appendices/Annexes

- 6.1 Appendix 1 -Draft standards paper.

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: n/a