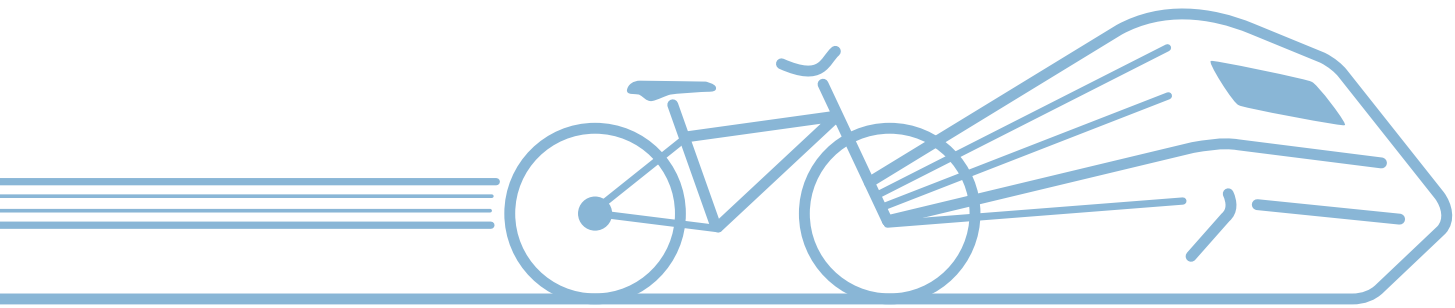
BRITAIN'S RAILWAY, PROPERLY DELIVERED

STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY

Cycling Policy

For Consultation



Contents

Chairman's foreword

This document sets out for consultation the SRA's draft policy on cycling.

Passenger travel has risen by 38% since privatisation. Over three million people now use trains each working day. As the number of rail passenger journeys grows, there is increasing pressure on access to stations, with increasing road congestion and more demand for car parking spaces. Eight cycle-stands fit into one car parking space, making cycling an efficient way for passengers to access stations. Most people in the UK live within a fifteen minute cycle ride of a rail station.

The SRA has a duty to consider rail transport in the context of other transport modes including cycling, walking, bus, underground and car. The passenger's total journey experience should be as integrated and seamless as possible. This consultation aims to ensure better integration of rail and cycling.

Cycling is a cheap, efficient and flexible form of transport that offers significant health and environmental benefits. The Government has set a target to triple cycle journeys by 2010, recognising the clear benefits cycling offers. The Government has said that public transport operators have an important role to play by facilitating cycling as part of a longer journey.

I welcome your comments and views on the draft policy. The policy will be taken forward in 2004 to deliver real improvements.

Richard Bowker
Chairman and Chief Executive
Strategic Rail Authority

April 2004

1. Introduction

The Government's White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' recognised the potential benefits of cycling as a flexible, relatively cheap and environmentally friendly way to travel with important health benefits for people of all ages. The Government's 10 Year Plan has an objective of tripling cycling journeys by 2010. Local authorities and other public bodies are expected to provide the necessary facilities to make this happen. Public transport operators have an important role to play by facilitating cycling as part of a longer journey. The Government has endorsed the National Cycling Strategy[1] which encourages bike-rail journeys and aims to improve cycle parking at stations and cycle carriage on trains.

Rail passenger travel has increased by 38% since privatisation in 1997. This has led to increased pressure on roads and car-parking spaces near stations. As passenger journeys continue to grow, access to stations by foot, bus and cycle will become increasingly important.

One of the central purposes of the SRA as set out in the Transport Act 2000, is to contribute to the development of an integrated system of passenger transport. The SRA must therefore consider how rail transport links with other transport modes including cycling. The London Mayor's Directions and Guidance require the SRA to work with Transport *for* London (T*f*L) to facilitate improvements in the integration of local rail transport in London with other modes. The Scottish Executive's Directions and Guidance place similar requirements on the SRA. The Mayor's guidance also says that the SRA should aim to require franchise holders to simplify and reduce the restrictions on the carriage of cycles on trains where capacity is available.

This consultation document does not start from a blank sheet. The railway already offers considerable provision for cyclists. The SRA's National Passenger Survey (NPS) shows 2% of passengers use cycles to access stations[2].

- All passenger Train Operating Companies (TOCs) already provide for carriage of cycles in off peak periods. Some TOCs also provide for cycle carriage in peak periods.
- Around 48% of stations currently have dedicated parking facilities for cycles.
- A brochure[3] explaining the provision made for cyclists is available at all manned stations (summarised at **Appendix A**).

[1] National Cycling Strategy, DETR 1996

[2] SRA National Passenger Survey, Autumn 1999 – Autumn 2003

[3] Published by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC)

- The SRA has encouraged best practice in the industry through its sponsorship of the CycleMark Award Scheme in 2001 and 2002. This long running scheme was established at the start of the privatisation. Alternative ways of promoting bike-rail integration and encouraging further industry initiatives are currently being explored.

The SRA's Cycling Policy does not exist in isolation and should be considered alongside its other policies and strategies such as those relating to franchising, rolling stock[4] and community rail development.

This consultation document seeks your views on the following areas:

- Objectives of this review;
- Benefits and costs of cycle provision;
- Access to stations;
- Cycle parking at stations;
- Cycles on trains;
- Cycle hire and repair at stations; and
- Provision of information on facilities for cyclists.

Responses to this Consultation will inform the SRA's Cycling Policy which it expects to publish in autumn 2004.

[4] The SRA consulted on its rolling stock issues in June 2003 and published its Rolling Stock Strategy in December 2003. Many respondents to the Rolling Stock Strategy consultation commented specifically on the carriage of cycles. Their responses are summarised at Appendix B.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the SRA's cycling policy are to:

- Encourage passengers to cycle to stations, especially as an alternative to driving;
- Encourage TOCs to take into account the wider benefits of cycling in decisions about investment in facilities for cyclists and in formulating the rules on the carriage of cycles;
- Encourage the provision of appropriate parking facilities for cycles at stations;
- Allow TOCs discretion to determine the appropriate facilities for carrying cycles on trains, taking into account the trade-offs specific to their passenger market; and
- Ensure that clear information is available for cyclists as to the provision for cycles on rail services and the facilities they can expect.

The above objectives must be read in the context of the SRA's overall objectives, which cover safety, performance, and affordability.

Questions for consultees

1. Do you agree with the SRA's policy objectives in relation to cycling?

3. Policy overview

The SRA's draft cycling policy can be summarised as follows:

- Franchised passenger train operating companies (TOCs) should work with local highway authorities to promote easier and safer station access for cyclists;
- TOCs and Network Rail should aim to provide appropriate cycle parking as justified by demand, except where the costs of provision are unusually high (for example where space is only available at a high cost), or where it would be impracticable. Within the next five years the SRA aspires to see cycle parking facilities, where they can be physically accommodated, at all but the most lightly used stations;
- TOCs should promote the carriage of cycles on off peak services (with appropriate restrictions on numbers, charges, and reservations as appropriate for their specific market);
- TOCs should promote the carriage of folding cycles at all times;
- TOCs should not be *obliged* to carry cycles during their peak although they should be free to do so, if their particular circumstances allow. This is because the benefits of cycle carriage on *heavily loaded trains* will normally be outweighed by the:
  - Impact on train service performance of time taken loading and unloading cycles;
  - Loss of space available to other passengers;
  - Reduction in comfort of other passengers; and
  - Potential safety concerns.
- When procuring new rolling stock, or carrying out major refurbishment, space for cycles should be considered alongside other potential uses of flexible space such as passenger standing room during peak hours, pushchairs or bulky luggage. Under the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR), space for wheelchair users should be distinct from other flexible space, and wheelchair users should have first call on it; and
- TOCs should provide clear information on their provision and facilities for cyclists. The SRA should work with ATOC to ensure that this information is centrally available in a consistent format applying to all TOCs. This information should be stocked at all staffed stations and freely available on the Internet.

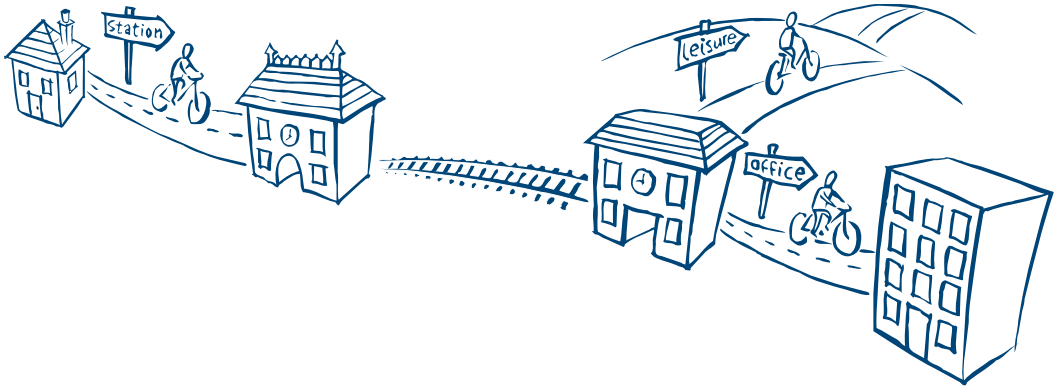
Questions for consultees

2. Do you agree with the SRA's overall statement of its cycling policy?

4. Benefits and costs of provision for cycles

Provisions required by cyclists to use rail

Journeys can commonly be broken down into a series of interconnected parts. For example, a commuter into London may cycle to their local railway station where they park their cycle, take a train to a London terminal and then the Underground to their final destination. In this example three distinct modes are used; cycle, national rail and Underground. The role of an integrated transport system is to make the whole journey as easy as possible by creating good links between the component parts of the journey.



Access to/from stations:
Effective signage
Cycle lanes and tracks
Dropped kerbs

Cycle parking:
Sheffield stands
Lockers
Secure stores
Compounds

Carriage on-trains:
Rules on carriage
Charges for carriage
Quality of on-train facilities
Adequate space

Leisure market:
Off peak cycle carriage
Cycle hire facilities

Commuter market:
2nd cycle (parking facilities)
Folding cycle

Clear information

As illustrated above, when people choose to make their journey by a cycle-rail combination, they consider the 'cycle-friendliness' of:

- Access roads – road safety, traffic signals, signage, dropped kerbs, cycle lanes;
- Cycle parking provision – availability, location, convenience, weather protection and security. (25% of commuters say that they would find it advantageous if cycle parking and access were improved to allow them to cycle from home to the station[5]);

[5] Countryside Agency Research Note CRN41, 2001

- Restrictions, charges, facilities, and space for carrying cycles on trains;
- Information. To plan journeys with confidence, people need to know in advance whether they will be able to carry their cycles on trains, and whether appropriate cycle parking will be available; and
- Signage at and within stations.

Commuters who want to use cycles may be unable to avoid travelling at peak times. Cycle carriage on busy commuter trains cannot normally be justified. Commuters will therefore usually have the choice to:

- Cycle at one end of their journey only;
- Use a folding cycle; or
- Keep a cycle at either end (with consequent additional demand for secure overnight parking).

Leisure travellers may want to use their cycle at their end destination. Folding cycles can be less suitable for leisure activities than for commuting. Leisure travellers will often be able to choose to travel off peak. Cycle hire options are also relevant for leisure travellers. TOCs operating on leisure and tourist routes are best placed to take advantage of these opportunities.

Sections 5 to 9 of the document consider provision for cyclists at each stage of the journey in more detail.

Affordability and appraisal

Where there is a good commercial business case for a cycling related investment in rail, it should generally go ahead without need for SRA intervention or subsidy. However, many investment projects are not financially profitable, but nevertheless have a positive economic business case when non-financial impacts (such as road decongestion) are taken into account. The SRA's Appraisal Criteria[6] evaluates the case for subsidising projects on the basis of their total costs and benefits. They include effects on both passengers and non-users, for example benefits for road users from reduced road use such as reduced congestion and environmental impacts. Where costs or benefits cannot be quantified (because of their nature, or because of lack of data) they are still considered in the appraisal.

The SRA can consider funding investments that have a positive economic business case (i.e. the benefits are greater than the costs). Projects with positive business cases are weighed against other calls on the SRA's budget to determine an appropriate funding allocation. Not all projects with a positive business case can be funded. SRA has not currently allocated funds for investing in additional facilities for cyclists above and beyond TOCs' existing plans. In recent years the SRA has been one of a number of partners providing funding for facilities for cyclists on the railway. It is envisaged that partnership

[6] The SRA's Appraisal Criteria are consistent with the Department for Transport's New Approach to Transport Appraisal.

funding, from local authorities and the Countryside Agency for example, will remain an important feature of future provision.

This consultation document sets out an indicative economic business case for:

- Investing in cycle parking facilities at stations;
- The carriage of cycles on trains (both peak and off peak); and
- The provision of facilities on trains designed to be able to accommodate cycles.

The benefits of cycling

The use of cycles by rail passengers to access railway stations offers significant benefits including:

- **Financial benefits.** Cycling generates additional revenues for the railways where:
  - Cyclists would not otherwise have travelled by rail. Generation of off peak leisure trips is believed to be particularly important;
  - By switching from car to cycle, car parking and road spaces are freed up for other potential passengers (eight cycle stands can fit in one car parking space), this generates additional revenue albeit reducing road decongestion benefits; and
  - Any charges for cycle carriage or use of secure cycle parking facilities also form part of the 'financial benefits' for the industry;
- **Road decongestion benefits.** When passengers switch from car to cycle, there is a reduction in air pollution and there are reductions in journey times for other road users. Cycling produces minimal noise and requires only small amounts of road space;
- **Health benefits.** Regular exercise can lead to substantial reductions in the risk of coronary heart disease, obesity and high blood pressure[7]. Stress levels can be lower for cyclists as they can avoid traffic queues and overcrowded public transport. These health impacts are partially offset by any increase in road accidents due to the high vulnerability of cyclists; cycling accounts for less than 2% of all trips in London but accounted for over 7% of all road casualties in 2001[8];
- **Tourism and sustainable communities.** Tourism can benefit where new leisure journeys are encouraged, especially in rural areas;

[7] BMA 1990: Cycling towards Health and Safety

[8] The London Cycling Action Plan. Consultation Draft. Transport *for* London

- **Social inclusion.** As a low cost form of travel, cycling is widely accessible. A national survey in 1990 showed that 99% of adult men and 87% of adult women claimed they were able to ride a bike[9]. *T*fL's 2003 cycle study found that 55% of Londoners have access to a bicycle;

- **Other economic benefits.** The purchase costs of a cycle are low, and running costs are negligible. With no running fuel costs to pay the cost of cycling is only 1/12th the cost of car travel[10]. Cycle commuting can reduce business costs as employees spend less time in traffic queues and are less likely to take sick leave[11]. Within cities, cycling can offer journey time savings over other modes; DETR's 2000, Journey Times Surveys showed that a five mile radial door-to-door journey between central and outer London took 35 minutes by cycle, 40 minutes by car, 46 minutes by tube, 62 minutes by bus and 90 minutes on foot.

The costs of rail provision for cyclists

Set against the benefits of cycling as a means of access to stations, are various costs. These differ according to market and circumstances.

Carriage of cycles on trains
Peak:
• Loss of capacity for other passengers.
• Negative impact on performance detriment due to longer station stops to allow time for cycles to be loaded and unloaded. In busy peak-timetables, this can cause significant knock-on delays.
• Reduction in comfort and accessibility for other passengers.
• Potential safety impact if cycles are carried on peak trains with high passenger load factors.
Off peak:
• Limited numbers of cycles can be accommodated without significant costs being incurred. We recognise that the peak period varies by TOC and by route.
Where modifications are required to rolling stock:
• If physical alteration of rolling stock is required to carry cycles, it may involve capital costs. It would only normally be cost effective to make such modifications as part of a major refurbishment required for wider reasons.
Provision of cycle parking facilities:
• Purchase and installation costs of cycle stands/lockers[12]/secure compounds/cycle centres.
• Cost of space requirement for cycle stands including opportunity costs of potential other uses, for example retail opportunities.
• Installation and operating costs of CCTV or providing supervision (unless part of wider surveillance scheme, for example for safe parking, where marginal cost to incorporate the cycle parking area could be minimal).

[9] Mintel 1990, Bicyles

[10] The London Cycling Action Plan. Consultation Draft. Transport for London

[11] European Commission1999: Cycling, The Way Ahead for Towns and Cities

[12] The installation of cycle stands and lockers must be compliant with the Secretary of State's National Railway Security Programme (NRSP). Further details in Section 6, 'Station security and cycle parking'.

Business case summary

Initial appraisals on a number of projects have been carried out, generally yielding the results below. A more detailed analysis will be included in the Cycling Policy document after further analysis and consideration of responses to the consultation process.

Proposed investment evaluated:	Results:
Carriage of cycles on heavily used commuter (peak) trains	Negative
Off peak carriage of cycles	Positive
Where capital investment is required for modification of rolling stock in order to accommodate cycles (not always the case – sometimes, modification can be as simple as removing a row of seats)	Negative
Provision of cycle parking facilities at stations is not (normally) financially generative after costs are taken into account. However, total benefits significantly outweigh costs when road-user and environmental benefits from decongestion are considered	Positive

Questions for consultees

3. Do you agree with the high-level description of the facilities required for cyclists to use rail?

4. Have the benefits of cycling been properly identified?

5. Have the costs of provision for cycles been fully identified?

6. Do you have comments on the business case method as applied to cycling?

5. Access to stations

The primary means of access to stations is on the public highway network, which is owned and maintained by the local Highway Authority. Stations are also accessed by private approach roads which, like the station itself, are generally leased by the TOC from Network Rail.

Local highway authorities have been encouraged by the Government to develop local cycling strategies and many have set targets for an increase in the number of cycling journeys. Increases in cycling can also help other local authority targets such as car reduction, reductions in air pollution and improvement in health. Better and safer on-road facilities are seen by the Government as the biggest factor in increasing cycling. To support local highway authorities the Department for Transport has, through the Local Transport Plan system, increased funding of local transport. The 2004/05 Local Transport Capital Settlement allocated £659 million to local authorities to provide for small-scale integrated transport improvements. This was an 8% increase on the corresponding allocation for the previous year.

Spending (outside London) on cycling infrastructure was £36 million in 2003/04 and the forecast for 2004/05 is £39.4 million. £40 million is projected to be open in 2005/06. These figures reflect a 33% increase since 2001/02 and suggests a step change in commitment in authorities' provision for cycling.

The charity Sustrans, using Millennium funding, devoted considerable resource to the development of a National Cycling Network and some improvements in access to stations.

Local highway authorities and TOCs have opportunities to work together so that improved access to the station from the surrounding catchment area is matched by good access to the station on arrival and good facilities at the station for cyclists. A 10-15 minute cycle journey can significantly increase a station's catchment area over walking with the possibility of attracting extra passengers.

The main ways to improve access around stations are:

- Improved signage;
- Dropped kerbs;
- Safe cycle lanes and tracks;
- Road markings; and
- Changes to traffic management and control.

SRA policy on access to stations

- Station operators should actively engage with the local Highway Authority to improve access for cyclists to stations and seek their assistance to ensure that access is easy, safe and properly signposted
- Station operators should, where they exist and where possible, provide good access for cyclists over private approach roads, including providing facilities that link with Highway Authority schemes
- When carrying out enhancement or refurbishment schemes, station operators should consider appropriate provision for cycle access

Questions for consultees

7. Do you agree with the SRA's policy on cycle access to stations?

6. Cycle parking at stations

Improvements in secure cycle storage at many stations have been achieved through co-operation between (and funding from) TOCs and local authorities as well as the SRA's Rail Passenger Partnership Fund. Network Rail has invested at a number of its major stations to meet demand for secure cycle storage.

In providing cycle parking facilities station operators need to consider:

- Capacity;
- Type of provision – e.g. weatherproofing;
- Ease of access and convenience;
- Security; and
- Charges.

Capacity

Within the next five years the SRA aspires to see appropriate cycle parking facilities installed, in so far as they are justified by demand, at all but the most lightly used stations. Around half the stations on the network already have cycle parking facilities. A recent survey[13] showed that many cycle parking stands are currently not used on any one day. Where existing provision for cycle parking is already unused, there will not be a case for additional cycle parking. Conversely, evidence of unmet demand implies that additional provision is justified at some locations.

Recent surveys have shown that 48% of Britain's 2,500 stations already have cycle parking facilities. Quantity of provision varies across the network. Some areas, such as East Anglia offer universal provision.

	All stations	National hub stations[14]	Medium sized stations[15]	Small unstaffed stations[16]
Number of station in survey	1,835	25	1,051	740
Stations with some cycle parking spaces (%)[17]	48	85	71	24
Of those stations with cycle parking facilities				
Average spaces per station	23	115	25	9
Spaces occupied at each station (%)	24	70	27	9
Stations with >95% spaces occupied (%)	4	13	4	0.8

Source: CTC volunteer survey 2003

[13] CTC's volunteer survey, 2003

[14] Category A stations.

[15] Category B, C, D and E stations.

[16] Category F stations.

[17] Figures in the 'stations with some cycle parking spaces' row are taken from a DfT data set, all other figures are from the CTC volunteer survey. DfT data set covers more stations than the CTC volunteer survey, but contains less detailed information about provision. Percentages of stations with cycle parking facilities vary between the DfT and CTC surveys due to the different data sets.

Cycle parking at Bristol Temple Meads

Many factors affect the demand for cycling parking at a station. The most important of these can be independent of the railway, for example, the age distribution and bicycle ownership of a town's inhabitants. In a university town for example, demand is likely to be high. In a hilly or rural location it may be lower. This means that the appropriate number of cycle stands or lockers varies widely by location. Therefore, the SRA does not believe that it should set minimum numbers of cycle parking stands or lockers to be provided (e.g. X stands per 1,000 passengers). Instead, the SRA believes that TOCs and Network Rail should monitor demand for cycle parking at their stations. Where there is evidence of frequently unmet demand, they should seek to provide additional facilities.

At present, the station operator specifies the number of cycle storage spaces provided, or agrees the number with co-funders such as the relevant local authority or the SRA. Most stations have some unused space on which cycle parking facilities can be installed. However, at mainline and busy stations there are often competing demands for space. Space used for commercial activities, such as catering or retailing, provides added value services for passengers and generates income for the station operator. It may not always be possible or affordable to allocate sufficient space to fully meet demand for cycle parking at every station. At some stations, the physical layout may limit space for cycles, or preclude direct supervision by staff.

Type of facility

	% of spaces			
	All stations	National hub stations	Medium sized stations	Small unstaffed stations
Under cover	54	79	54	25
Sheffield stands	72	91	68	76
Lockers or secure compounds	7	2	7	12

Source: CTC volunteer survey 2003

The types of facility provided can influence demand for cycle spaces because cyclists prefer to leave bicycles in secure, weatherproof locations. As the table above sets out, 54% of cycle stand spaces are currently under cover. Covered accommodation should be provided wherever possible to ensure weather protection for cycles. Sheffield stands currently make up 72% of cycle spaces. They provide a basic and cost effective solution. In areas of high demand, or where cycle theft is a problem, cycle lockers, secure stores or compounds can be more appropriate[18]. Station operators should consider these factors when choosing type of facilities.

Ease of access and convenience

Not surprisingly, there is greater demand for cycle parking that is easily accessible and convenient for users. Station operators should consider these factors when locating facilities.

Cycle security from theft/vandalism

Data from the Transport Research Laboratory[19] showed that nationally 17% of cyclists had suffered bicycle theft in the past three years. Risk of theft has an impact on levels of cycling: 24% said that they no longer cycle at all and 66% cycle less often because of the risk of theft.

There is no fixed definition of security from theft or vandalism, which in any case will vary according to the risk at each location. However, the SRA is required under its Directions and Guidance to encourage station operators to gain accreditation under the Secure Stations Scheme. For a cycle parking facility to be considered 'secure'[20] the SRA would expect that it exhibit at least one of the following characteristics:

- At a staffed station, be within the regular view of staff as they carry out their duties;
- Be under regular observation by live monitored CCTV;

[18] Would normally expect charges to be levied for these facilities.

[19] TRL report 284, for the Financial Times.

[20] It should be noted that station operators have some security related restrictions placed upon them by the Department for Transport with respect to where they locate cycling facilities at some stations. However, these restrictions do not prohibit the provision of cycle parking.

- Be under continuous observation by recorded CCTV;
- Comprise of cycle lockers, a secure cycle compound, or cycle centre; or
- Be part of a station with secure station accreditation.

Station security and cycle parking

It is essential that cycle parking facilities at stations cannot be misused, creating a security risk. The installation of cycle stands and lockers must be compliant with the Secretary of State's National Security Programme (NRSP). The NRSP permits cycle parking facilities at all stations as long as they meet certain criteria. At about 180 stations, cycle parking facilities in certain locations must be sited under CCTV coverage. The NRSP also offers guidance for cycle parking facilities at all other stations. At certain major stations, lockers are not permitted in specific areas. Where lockers are permitted, CCTV coverage and locker management procedures are required.

Charges

Cycle parking should normally be provided free to the user. However, charges may be levied for the provision of *enhanced* facilities, such as cycle lockers, or where the opportunity costs of providing the facility are exceptional (for example where prime land had to be purchased).

Conclusions of business case analysis

- The net economic business case for the installation of cycle stands is positive, as long as there is sufficient unmet demand for the new facilities. Where existing facilities are already under used, the business case for adding more of the same type of capacity would obviously be negative.
- Total costs are relatively low and fixed. Conservative assumptions about usage and the generative effect on passenger miles lead to costs outweighing benefits. But after environmental and road decongestion impacts are taken into account, there is a positive business case.

Secure cycle lockers

SRA policy on cycle parking at stations

- Station operators should:
  - Assess demand for cycle parking at their stations; and
  - Make appropriate level of provision, commensurate with other consideration set out below.
  - Monitor the condition/quality and usage of the cycle parking that they provide.
- Cycle parking facilities should be provided, where physically possible, at all but the most lightly used stations over the next five years.
- In determining how many cycle parking spaces/stands/lockers to provide, TOCs should consider evidence of unmet demand.
- Station operators should consider providing 'secure' cycle parking.
- Cycle parking should be accessible and convenient for passengers to use.
- Weather protection for cycles should be provided wherever practicable.
- Cycle parking should normally be available free to the user unless enhanced facilities such as lockers, cycle compounds etc are provided, or costs of provision are exceptional.

Questions for consultees

8. Do you believe that the SRA should work towards the provision of cycle parking at all but the most lightly used stations or where the costs of provision are unusually high?

9. Do you agree that the SRA should not specify a fixed number of spaces to be provided because the appropriate number will depend on local demand?

10. Do you agree that station operators should be free to charge for the use of cycle parking facilities where there is a specific reason to do so?

7. Cycles on trains

In the 1970s, considerable van space became available for cycle carriage, as the transport of mail and parcels by passenger train declined. A decision not to charge for cycle carriage encouraged cyclists to use rail. As loco-hauled trains were progressively replaced by diesel multiple units (without van space), BR banned cycles from many routes at peak periods. Immediately before privatisation, the conditions for carriage of cycles varied between BR divisions, reflecting real differences in passenger markets, and logistical constraints in cycle carriage.

Current differences between TOCs' detailed rules for carriage of cycles reflect the differences in the passenger markets they serve and different facilities on the rolling stock they use. All TOCs currently allow cycles to be carried on off peak services although several TOCs restrict the number of cycles per train or require advance reservations. Most TOCs make no charge for cycle carriage or reservation, whilst some charge a fee of between £1 and £3. The details are set out in a leaflet produced by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and summarised at **Appendix A**.

All rolling stock currently on the network can accommodate cycles, but some better than others. Some rolling stock has dedicated cycle space. Other vehicles accommodate cycles within the door vestibule or other flexible space. This can be uncomfortable for other passengers, especially when trains are full.

Flexible space

While cycle parking at stations is important to some groups of users, others want to use their cycles at both ends of their train journey. The carriage of cycles on trains is perhaps the most difficult cycling policy issue due to the competing needs of different passenger groups and the limited space available on board trains.

Space on passenger trains is at a premium. Rail vehicles are expensive – typically between £800,000 and £1.2 million for each new coach.

The demand for passenger space varies widely by area, time of day and time of year. This makes it difficult to set a single level of cycle provision on trains.

Train operators have sought to deal with the conflicting demands for space to carry cycles on trains in a number of ways:

On board cycle racks

- Some modern trains have 'flexible space' which is available for passengers with special needs including wheelchair users, those with pushchairs/prams and cyclists with cycles. Some companies designate part of this area for cycles and indicate this with a cycle symbol on the exterior of the train; and
- On some routes there are no specific facilities for the carriage of cycles. Cyclists can stand with their cycles in the door vestibules, but are often prohibited during busy periods from travelling with their cycles;
- ScotRail provides road transport for cycles in high summer on the Far North and West Highland lines, but this is expensive;
- On NS (Netherlands Railways) generous provision of storage space is made at stations, but passengers are discouraged from taking cycles on trains;
- Folding cycles are normally allowed without charge. They are used by increasing numbers of commuters and provide a practical solution to the pressures on space within passenger carriages, since they can usually be conveniently stored as luggage.

Given the importance of trains running reliably and on time, it is essential that the time taken to load and unload cycles does not result in delays. Where delays do occur from extended station stops they can often have knock-on effects on other trains on the network.

Conclusions of business case analysis

- Peak – the costs of cycles on trains during the peaks, in terms of negative impact on capacity and performance, consistently outweigh the environmental and decongestion benefits. We recognise that the peak period varies by TOC and by route.
- Off peak – a positive business case exists for encouraging the carriage of cycles on off peak services. Available capacity reduces the uncertainties around crowding and performance implications and benefits outweigh potential costs.
- The capital costs of any necessary rolling stock modification cannot be justified by the benefits offered in peak or off peak. Capital costs are not always required if the modification is as simple as removing a row of seats.

SRA policy on cycles on trains

- When buying new trains, or when carrying out rolling stock refurbishment, train operators should consider whether dedicated flexible space which can carry cycles can be economically provided.
- Train operators should decide the appropriate level of dedicated and shared cycle carriage spaces on each route after considering the level of demand and the needs of all railway users through consultation with relevant parties including the local Rail Passengers Committee and cyclist representatives.
- Non-folding cycles cannot normally be carried on heavily used services (for simplicity, defined as peak services), unless permitted by the TOC.
- The general presumption should be that non-folding cycles *can* be carried on off peak services although train operators may:
  - Place restrictions on the carriage of non-folding cycles where this is in the interests of other passengers;
  - Operate a pre-booking system for cycles and decline to carry cycles where the dedicated storage space is full; and
  - Charge for the carriage of non-folding cycles.
- The carriage of folding cycles that can be accommodated as luggage within the passenger saloon should be unrestricted and should not be charged for.
- Where appropriate, and commercially viable to do so, train operators may use other ways of satisfying the demand for the carriage of cycles and may make a reasonable charge for such a service.

Questions for consultees

11. Should a charge be made for the carriage of cycles and if so, in what circumstances? (e.g. if a charge is levied should it guarantee a space for the cycle on the train?)

12. Should charges for the carriage of cycles be uniform throughout Britain, or should operators be free to make charges, according to local circumstances?

13. Should the pre-booking of cycle spaces on trains be mandatory for all journeys?

14. Should cyclists be permitted to use ‘flexible space’ in trains for cycle storage?

8. Cycle centres at stations

The popularity of cycling in some locations has led to the provision of additional facilities at or near stations such as cycle hire and repair and secure parking. There are examples at Bath Spa, Barnstaple, Brockenhurst and Windermere. The current examples tend to be associated with tourism where visitors use the train to reach a destination and then hire a cycle for sightseeing.

Cycle facilities for tourists at rural stations

The potential for these facilities is likely to be limited, but where commercially viable they can bring wider benefits such as maintaining a presence at otherwise un-staffed rural stations.

This is an ideal area for partnership ventures, involving private initiatives, Community Rail Partnerships, local authorities or the Countryside Agency as appropriate. Opportunities like the Market Towns Initiative could be used as the stimulus to provide such facilities as part of the regeneration of local stations. Such facilities should not be subsidised by the SRA, but operators of smaller stations might want to consider changing only a nominal rental where the accommodation would otherwise remain unused.

Case study

Munster (North-West Germany) is a city of 280,000 inhabitants, which in 1999 built a large bike station facility at the railway station. The facility provides secure parking for 3,300 bicycles for a daily fee of 40 pence or £40 per annum. Integrated in the bike station is a bike repair shop, bike hire facilities, lockers and a tourist office. One in four rail passengers now cycle to or from the station.

SRA policy on cycle hire and repair at stations

- Station operators should consider whether they have premises that are suitable for encouraging the provision of commercial cycle hire and repair facilities.

Questions for consultees

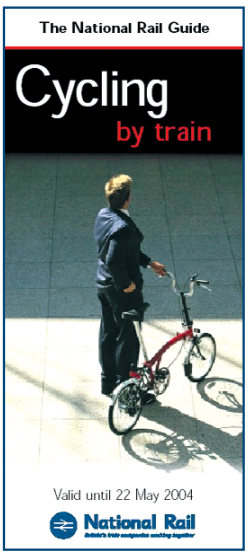
15. Should station operators consider encouraging the provision of commercial cycle hire and repair facilities?

9. Information for cyclists

At present the provision of facilities for cyclists varies across the rail network. This can act as a barrier to passengers planning journeys, but good information can help them plan appropriately.

ATOC currently produces a general guide for cyclists while individual train operators produce more detailed information. Information for cyclists is also available through www.nationalrail.co.uk and train operators' websites.

However, there may be scope to further simplify and integrate the information available to passengers wanting to take cycles on trains. This could especially assist leisure travellers wanting to use more than one TOC. There could also be scope to provide more information about facilities at stations as most of the current information focuses on on-train carriage.



SRA policy on information

- All train and station operators should produce clear information for cyclists wishing to use their services.
- The information should be stocked at all staffed stations and freely available in printed and electronic format.
- The information should be simply expressed and easy to understand, using a common format.
- Train and station operators should disseminate information through local and national cycling groups.
- The SRA should review with ATOC, the adequacy of cycle information provided, and consider providing a single portal to avoid the need for cyclists to contact more than one TOC when making a long journey.

Questions for consultees

16. What information should train and station operators provide to assist cyclists?

17. What are the most effective channels for disseminating information to cyclists?

18. What are the key issues that cyclists need to know about before they travel?

10. Responding to this consultation

Our intention is to use the responses from this consultation exercise to help inform the development of the Cycling Policy to be published in autumn 2004. We will also engage with the industry and stakeholders during the course of the consultation period to explore the issues in more detail. In the meantime this document poses questions to which consultees are invited to respond. For convenience, we have included the consultation questions at **Appendix C**. Your responses need not be limited to these questions – we would welcome other comments.

A list of the bodies formally consulted and which have received a copy of this consultation document is at **Appendix D**. Please let us know if there are other bodies you think should receive a copy of this document.

This document can be made available in an accessible format on request.

Please make your responses in writing to:

Elliott Ball
Strategic Rail Authority
55 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

E-mail: Cycleresponses@sra.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7654 6486
Fax: 020 7654 6010

The deadline for responses is 14 July 2004, but earlier replies would be very welcome.

We may make your consultation response public unless you specifically ask for all or part of it to be kept confidential.

Appendix A: TOC arrangements for carriage of cycles[21]

Train Operating Company	Cycles allowed in peak*	Cycles allowed off peak	Reservation necessary	Reservation fee	Cycle surcharge	Cycles per train
Anglia Railways	✓	✓	✓ – on certain routes	✗	£1 or £3 depending depending on route	4 on local, 6 on mainline
Other comments:	*Tandems are carried on Mainline services.*					
Arriva Merseyside	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Arriva Northern	✗ – not on commuter routes	✓	✓ – on certain routes	✗	✗	2
c2c	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	2
Central Trains	✓	✓	✓ – on long distance services	£1	✗	2
Chiltern Railways	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Eurostar	NA	NA	✓	✗	£20 each way	Space permitting
First Great Eastern	✗ – can be carried on non commuter routes	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
First Great Western	✓	✓	✓	£1, £3 if booked less than 2 hours before travel	✗	6
Other comments:	*Cycle capacity includes space for 1 tandem.*					
First North Western	✓	✓	✓ – on long distance services	✗	✗	2
Gatwick Express	✓	✓	✓ – only large groups need book	✗	✗	Space permitting
GNER	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	5
Other comments:	*Booking must be made 24 hours in advance.*					
Heathrow Express	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	3 at busy times
Hull Trains	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Other comments:	*Reservation advised, but not required.*					
Island Line	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	4
Midland Mainline – High Speed Trains	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	Space permitting
Midland Mainline – Turbostar	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Scotrail	✓	✓	✓ – on long distance	✗	✗	2 – 6
Other comments:	*Bus service was provided to carry cycles on certain routes in summer 2003.*					
South East Trains	✗ – except on trains with a guard van	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Silverlink Train Services	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting

[21] Information based on the National Rail Guide to Cycling by Train (ATOC). Some train companies have changed since publication of the Guide.

Train Operating Company	Cycles allowed in peak*	Cycles allowed off peak	Reservation necessary	Reservation fee	Cycle surcharge	Cycles per train
South Central	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
South West Trains	✓– only on non commuter routes	✓	✓– where space is limited	✗	✗	Space permitting
Stansted Express	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0
Other comments:	*Cycles that have been flat packed in preparation for transport are OK.*					
Thames Trains	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Thameslink Rail	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Valley Lines	✓ – some restrictions	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Virgin Trains	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	4
Other comments:	*West Coast services can carry 2 tandems, CrossCountry can not.*					
Wales & Border	✓	✓	✓ – not needed on local services	£3, £1 if booked more than 2 hours in advance	✗	2 on long distance services, no limit on local
Wessex Trains	✓	✓	✓ – not needed on local services	£3, £1 if booked more than 2 hours in advance	✗	2 on long distance services, no limit on local
West Anglia Great Northern	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	Space permitting
Other comments:	*Cycles are never allowed on services between Drayton Park and Moorgate.*					

Cycle carriage is at the discretion of the conductor.
* - Peak times vary according to TOC.

Appendix B: Responses to Rolling Stock consultation

Nearly half the respondents to the Rolling Stock consultation mentioned cycling in their replies:

Space

The most frequently cited issue was that of inadequate or poorly designed space for the carriage of cycles. A common complaint was that the only place that cycles could be carried on new rolling stock was by the doors, which was frustrating for cyclists and other passengers when boarding and alighting, especially during peak hours, as they were acting as an impediment to other users. This was an observation made principally by PTEs, cycle lobby groups and individuals.

Information provision

Respondents proposed that the SRA's cycle policy should ensure that the currently inadequate information provision for cyclists using trains is improved. This includes signage in stations and on trains, and other information resources such as online reservation facilities if prior notice is required of cycle carriage. This was primarily a concern of cycle lobby groups.

Reservation and pricing

Concerns were expressed that cyclists should be able to access trains at all times without a requirement for advance notice. In addition, many lobby groups felt that cycle users should be provided with better carriage facilities without incurring a higher fare. However, by contrast, one cyclist suggested that he would be happy to pay a higher fare assuming facilities warranted such a supplement.

Safety and security

Cycle users suggested that carriage facilities must be safe in that cycles must be strapped in and unable either to fall or impede others. The current hook system used on some rolling stock is an awkward method of accommodating cycles. Users would prefer a system of secure parallel cycle storage, for example as used in the Netherlands. In addition, as with other luggage, cycle carriage must be visible to owners to act as a deterrent to thieves.

Sustainable and integrated transport

The encouragement of cycle carriage on trains has wider benefits, including the promotion of sustainable modes of transport and alternatives to the car. It could act to relieve congestion on metropolitan bus and rail services, on which over-reliance currently causes occasional closure due to overcrowding during peak hours.

Station cycle parking

Respondents commented that a cycle policy for trains had to take into account the provision for cycle access to – and secure storage within – stations.

Compatibility with other users

Some user groups remarked that specifications designed for cycle carriage would also be compatible with other users with access difficulties on trains, most notably disabled users but also those with young children or large amounts of shopping. By contrast, two other user groups including the RPC feared that rolling stock specifications designed for cyclists might have the reverse effect, inhibiting access for other passenger groups. TOCs argued that regular seat space should be prioritised ahead of cycle space, especially during peak hours. TOCs said that space for one cycle would typically use the space required for two seats.

SRA specification

A cross-section of respondents, including a manufacturer, a ROSCO, a user group and Transport *for* London, all felt that a minimum specification articulated by the SRA would be beneficial in providing clarity as to the expected standards of accessibility for users with cycles.

Peak hour consideration

PTEs in particular suggested that in order to accommodate the needs of all rail users, the SRA's cycle policy must reflect levels of usage at peak versus off peak hours.

Wider benefits

Respondents pointed to the benefits of promoting cycling:

- Greater social inclusion;
- Public health benefits; and
- Benefits for sustainable tourism.

SRA involvement

- Cycle policy must involve SRA strategy and support;
- There are inherent trade-offs between 'passenger benefits' that the SRA seeks to accommodate, such as seating space versus cycle carriage;
- The SRA should be more prescriptive to accommodate cyclists;
- Cycle use should be monitored statistically by the SRA to assess effects of cycle policy; and
- Provision for cycle users must be compatible with the SRA's own Appraisal Criteria.

Other specific issues

- Rail replacement buses should also be accessible to cycle users;
- Accommodation of non-standard cycles (e.g. tandems) should be considered;
- Peak hour restrictions on cycle carriage are too inflexible; and
- Partnerships should be developed between TOCs and cycle rental shops.

Appendix C: Consultation questions

The questions raised in the paper are set out below.

Questions for consultees

1. Do you agree with the SRA's policy objectives in relation to cycling?
2. Do you agree with the SRA's overall statement of its cycling policy?
3. Do you agree with the high-level description of the facilities required for cyclists to use rail?
4. Have the benefits of cycling been properly identified?
5. Have the costs of provision for cycles been fully identified?
6. Do you have comments on the business case method as applied to cycling?
7. Do you agree with the SRA's policy on cycle access to stations?
8. Do you believe that the SRA should work towards the provision of cycle parking at all but the most lightly used stations or where the costs of provision are unusually high?
9. Do you agree that the SRA should not specify a fixed number of spaces to be provided because the appropriate number will depend on local demand?
10. Do you agree that station operators should be free to charge for the use of cycle parking facilities where there is a specific reason to do so?
11. Should a charge be made for the carriage of cycles and if so, in what circumstances? (e.g. if a charge is levied should it guarantee a space for the cycle on the train?)
12. Should charges for the carriage of cycles be uniform throughout Britain, or should operators be free to make charges, according to local circumstances?
13. Should the pre-booking of cycle spaces on trains be mandatory for all journeys?
14. Should cyclists be permitted to use 'flexible space' in trains for cycle storage?
15. Should station operators consider encouraging the provision of commercial cycle hire and repair facilities?
16. What information should train and station operators provide to assist cyclists?
17. What are the most effective channels for disseminating information to cyclists?
18. What are the key issues that cyclists need to know about before they travel?

Appendix D: List of consultees

- All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group
- Alstom
- Angel Trains Ltd
- Ansaldo
- Association of Community Rail Partnerships
- Association of London Government
- Association of Train Operating Companies
- Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
- Bikerail
- Bombardier
- British Transport Police
- CAF
- Centro (West Midlands PTE)
- Commission for Integrated Transport
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
- County and Unitary authorities with an LTP responsibility for cycling strategy
- Cycling Campaign Network
- Cycling Scotland
- Cyclist Touring Club
- Department for Transport
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- English Regional Assemblies
- Friends of the Earth
- Greater London Authority
- Greater Manchester PTE
- Health and Safety Executive
- Heritage Railway Association
- Highland Rail Partnership Group
- Hitachi Europe Ltd
- HSBC Rail
- Local Government Association
- Local Government Association for Wales
- London Boroughs
- London Cycling Campaign
- London Transport Users Committee
- Merseytravel (Merseyside PTE)
- Metro (West Yorkshire PTE)
- National Cycling Strategy Board
- Network Rail
- Nexus (Tyne & Wear PTE)
- Office of Rail Regulator
- Passenger Transport Executive Group
- Porterbrook Leasing Company Ltd
- Rail Passengers' Committee Eastern England
- Rail Passengers' Committee for North Eastern England
- Rail Passengers' Committee for North Western England
- Rail Passengers' Committee for Scotland
- Rail Passengers' Committee for Southern England
- Rail Passengers' Committee for the Midlands
- Rail Passengers' Committee for Wales
- Rail Passengers Committee Western England
- Rail Passengers' Council

- Rail Safety and Standards Board
- Railfuture
- Railway Industry Association
- Regional Development Agencies
- Regional Government Offices
- Rotem
- Scottish Executive
- Siemens
- South Yorkshire PTE
- Strathclyde PTE
- Sustrans
- Tandem Club
- Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit
- The Countryside Agency
- The Institution of Railway Operators
- Train Operating Companies
- Transport 2000
- Transport *for* London
- Visit Britain
- Visit Scotland
- Welsh Tourist Board
- Welsh Assembly Government
- West Yorkshire PTA

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