

Motorcycle Action Group West Midlands Response to Worcestershire County Council LTP4 Consultation

Introduction

MAG welcomes the motorcycle related policies laid out in the Transport Policies document but feels there is room for improvement. There certainly seems to be one major area where potential benefits have been overlooked.

We would like to refer you to the Motorcycle Safety and Transport Policy Framework published in partnership by MCI, NPCC and Highways England. This policy framework demonstrates the growing awareness of the need for motorcycling to be fully integrated in transport policy to unlock the positive benefits to all road users.

Below is an excerpt from an article in British Dealer News by Jenny Luckman, programme manager for the Motorcycle Safety and Transport Policy Framework which gives a brief overview of the 7 themes of the Framework.

The first theme covers “awareness”. We all know that if drivers were more aware of riders a significant number of accidents would never happen. We want to make sure the next generation of drivers is aware of motorcycles, and we intend to lobby for road safety education to be integrated into the National Curriculum.

Theme two is “educate to deliver”, which focuses on the more traditional elements of road safety: education and enforcement. Actions within this theme are designed to improve the standard of motorcycle training and to encourage the DVSA to allow riders to do extra training to gain a licence, rather than taking another test on a bigger bike. Indeed, this is one of the areas to which you can add your voice by commenting on the current DVSA consultation on testing and training, which is live until 17 February.

Theme three advocates “motorcycles as a practical solution”, which is something everyone in the industry wants to see given more prominence. Motorcycles and scooters can reduce congestion and are an affordable form of personal transport and we want more people to be made aware of this. Our recent work with Northamptonshire County Council’s Motorcycle Northants initiative is an example of how the framework can be utilised by local authorities to incorporate motorcycles into local transport policy.

The number of motorcycles and scooters licensed for the road is at its highest for seven years, so we know that more people are getting on to motorcycles and scooters, but this choice needs to be recognised in mainstream transport policy, the way cycling is.

Choosing to ride a PTW needs to be properly supported in sympathetic road design, and theme four – “safer infrastructure”, led by Highways England – will address this. Being responsible for more than 4000 miles of motorways and major A roads, Highways England is in a position to make physical changes to roads to make them more rider-friendly. The company also works with other road agencies, so we have a real chance of making sure the needs of riders are embedded into road planning culture across the whole UK.

Theme five is about “unlocking the benefits of motorcycling”. The industry contributes over £7 billion a year to the UK economy, employs 58,500 people in 5700 businesses - and this needs to be recognised. We will be lobbying for incentives for those who commute via PTW, in the way that these are available for cyclists, and will also be looking for opportunities, post-Brexit, to have VAT removed on personal protective clothing, which price-sensitive riders feel is too expensive. We will also work to highlight the fact that many small motorcycles and scooters already meet the criteria to be considered ultra-low emission vehicles.

We know that new products and technologies will increasingly contribute towards better motorcycle safety and theme six calls for “better motorcycle industry engagement in society” by focusing on the development of safer vehicles and technologies. This theme also looks at the way in which the industry promotes itself, for example, through media campaigns, point-of-contact material, support of things such as Wheels to Work and “try out” opportunities.

Cyclists and PTW riders have a lot of shared issues and it makes sense to collaborate to make improvements for both. Theme seven addresses this, calling for a “partnership with cycling”, and actions around this theme will involve working with cycle groups to benefit the riders of all two-wheel vehicles.

Northamptonshire County Council, mentioned in the above article, is the first Council in the country to fully embrace the concept of a positive policy of encouraging a modal shift from four to two wheels, not just pedal cycles which is part of the central government supported

major policy to promote “active” travel, but also to powered two wheelers as they fully recognise the benefits provided by this form of transport.

- PTW’s provide an economical form of transport that can bridge the gap when cycling distances are too large to be practical.
- PTW’s contribute to reducing congestion by virtue of the same “single track” benefits that pedal cycles have, thus requiring far less road space.
- PTW’s contribute to reducing pollutants in comparison with cars, proven to be up to 6 times less polluting on like for like journeys in studies carried out by TfL.

We would therefore like to urge Worcestershire County Council to review their LTP4 in light of these benefits to more fully integrate PTW’s into their transport policy.

We would be happy to meet to further discuss and explain how PTW’s can be part of the transport solution in the county.

Recommended Amendments to LTP4 Policies Document.

Policy M1

We note that in Policy C1 for cycling the following statement is made: “Worcestershire County Council will work in partnership with the City, Borough and District Councils and other organisations, including voluntary interest groups and fora, to continue to develop a comprehensive cycling network”

There appears not to be a similar level of commitment for Motorcycling. We would urge that a similar statement is made in Policy M1. Motorcycle Action Group would like to be given the opportunity to work with the Council.

Policy C1 also states that the Council will “identify features which act as barriers to cycling and formulate a long-term programme to overcome these.”

Again we feel that a similar stated commitment to removing barriers to modal shift from cars to PTW’s should be included in the policy statement.

MAG would recommend that reference is made to the Motorcycle Safety and Transport Policy Framework with a commitment to review possible introduction of policies and action plans in line with the Framework

MAG welcomes the proposed policy statement re motorcycle access to bus lanes. MAG has actively campaigned for this concession for many years, and has at no point found any logical fact based argument against this access. No trial access scheme has ever resulted in access being removed. We would suggest that the comments with respect to bus lanes are billed as a separate policy in the way that policy C2 exists for cycling. We would also urge that a commitment is made to a measurable deadline/action plan for review of existing bus lanes.

MAG would also urge that the statement in M1 re maintenance is again separated out into a separate policy statement to reflect C3 for cycling.

MAG would also like to see an equivalent policy statement to C4 (Spatial Planning and Developer Contributions for Cycling) that applies to PTW’s. We would like to see a policy that equally provides for the needs of PTW riders for accessibility, parking, changing and storage facilities for PPE etc.

Policy M2

MAG would like to see Policy M2 make reference to a specific review of a Wheels to Work Scheme as successfully run in other parts of the country. The Wheels to Work Association (W2WA) is the representative organisation for Wheels to Work programmes throughout the UK.

Policy M3

MAG welcomes policy M3 (Motorcycle Parking) without reservation and looks forward to the provision of more, better signed, secure motorcycle parking throughout the county.

New Motorcycle Policy - Travel Choices

Worcestershire County Council runs its Travel Choices scheme to promote and encourage choices for travel for all journeys in the county. The scheme appears however to make no reference at any point to motorcycles. MAG therefore proposes that an additional policy is

included to fully integrate use of PTW's in all Travel Choices schemes, promotions, literature and advertising.

MAG views this as the key element missing from the LTP4 that will prevent the full benefits of PTW's being realised in the County. Without this policy and a meaningful action plan the potential benefits of the Motorcycling Policies will not be fully realised.

MAG would be delighted to work in partnership with the Council to help integrate motorcycling into the heart of the Travel Choices scheme.

Recommended Amendments to LTP4 Main Document.

Introduction

Travel Choice section on P4 makes no reference to PTW's. Modal shift to PTW's should be included to follow policy M2 in the Policies document. Equally reference should be made in para 5 on P5

Recommended Amendments to LTP4 Network Management Plan.

Objectives

P4 bullet point "The provision of infrastructure and promotion of travel choices (particularly walking and cycling)" should include motorcycles as a travel choice

Network Management Toolkit

Bullet point on Travel Choices needs to include support of increased use of PTW's

Travel Choices

Modal shift to PTW's seems to be totally excluded from all consideration in this section. This oversight is wasting a significant potential benefit to all road users in terms of reducing congestion and reducing emissions. We believe that this is *the* significant gap in the LTP4 that if not resolved will prevent the benefits of PTW's being realised. PTW's should be fully integrated into the Travel Choices scheme.

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