

Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework



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Objective 3

Provide designated rural signed cycle networks providing especially for visitors and recreational cycling

Discussion

Ireland currently does not have a National Cycle Network on the ground. However, Fáilte Ireland has produced its Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). This strategy identified an approximately 3000km long network running from Donegal along the West, South and South-east coasts and continuing along the East coast as far as the Northern Ireland border. While the main target market of the cycle tourism strategy is visitors – both overseas and domestic – the secondary target market is recreational cyclists. From the perspective of the National Cycle Policy Framework, encouraging recreational cycling is a key element of

creating a cycling culture in Ireland and recreational routes in and around urban areas, which, in turn link to rural areas are very important.

The network identified will mainly use a mix of minor roads, and some greenways. The greenways are especially important for, typically, the first 10km along the routes emanating from busy town centres which are heavily trafficked and particularly unattractive for inexperienced or very young cyclists. While the overall framework of the tourism network has been identified, there is more work to be carried out to identify further routes, particularly in the Midlands and particularly to use existing traffic free routes such as the canal and river tow paths. There is also further work to be carried out in identifying which sections of the extensive network of disused rail-lines would be most suitable to be converted to high quality, traffic-free routes suitable for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

No.	Policy	Implemented by
3.1	National Cycle Network (NCN) We will construct the National Cycle Network (NCN) as identified in the 2007 Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism. We will ensure that the Regional Authorities will incorporate the appropriate policies into the Regional Planning Guideline so as to facilitate in the implementation of the National Cycling Network.	DoT, NRA, DAS&T, Fáilte Ireland + LA's
3.2	Expansion of NCN We will carry out further research and surveying work in order to expand the network to include rural recreational routes around urban areas and to connect major urban areas. We will pay special attention to the opportunities of using both the extensive disused rail network and canal / river tow-path networks as cycling / walking routes. In expanding the network, we will examine the recent UK experiences of the construction of their networks.	DoT and LA's
3.3	Hard Shoulders and Contiguous Areas We will examine the idea of using the hard shoulders and the contiguous space of roads with an arterial character as part of the National Cycle Network. We will ensure that those hard shoulders have the same maintenance and drainage standards applied to them as to the rest of the carriageway.	DoT and NRA
3.4	Upgrading of National Roads In regard to the upgrading of national roads, we will ensure that any such proposals do not impact negatively on the safety and perceived safety of the roads for cyclists.	DoT and NRA