

London Cycling Campaign response to the Abellio Greater Anglia Cycling Strategy

December 2014

The London Cycling Campaign (LCC) has more than 12,000 members, and 40,000 supporters, and has been the voice of cycling in London for more than thirty years. We welcome the opportunity to comment on on Abellio Greater Anglia's cycling strategy.

Introduction

We note and welcome the opening statement that Abellio is a supporter of the development of cycling and that it recognises that the East Anglia area is particularly conducive to increased cycle use.

The strategy also highlights Abellio's well-established Dutch connections. It is therefore disappointing that the scale of ambition in the strategy does not match Abellio's efforts in the Netherlands. Abellio states on the opening page that cyclists will continue to be 'a minority' of its customer base. That may not be the case in the future especially at stations like Cambridge where Abellio plans to install 3000 cycle parking spaces.

It would be welcome if Abellio set itself an aspiration to significantly raise the modal share of people travelling to stations by bicycle cycling. The Better Stations report for government in 2009 suggested that a 5% target by 2014 was achievable. As Abellio knows from stations in the Netherlands, some 40% of Dutch passengers arrive at stations by bicycle. With the right cycle parking provision, improved cycle routes, and clear messaging many more UK passengers would also choose to cycle. Setting a target for both increased arrivals by cycle and passenger increases would assist Abellio in planning as well as setting a standard for other TOCs to follow.

The strategy does not provide any data on existing patterns of cycle parking and carriage nor on the potential for growth. It does not directly make the point that the multi-modal cycle-rail journey is a sustainable transport solution that must be encouraged and facilitated.

Unlike Abellio's presentations on cycle rail to stakeholders and politicians the strategy does not highlight that the transfer from arrival and departure modes to rail is a key issue for passengers and addressing this specific part of a journey requires particular attention.

Access

We share Abellio GA's view that arrival at stations needs to be made safe and convenient for cycle users. The lack of clear and convenient access is a common problem at central London stations. The strategy suggests that this will take 'years' (p6) to address. We do not accept that measures such as clear signage, minimum standards, cycle parking and banding of stations require 'a number of years' to deliver.

Cycle carriage

Greater Anglia Rail established an award winning record for its cycle carriage policies and Abellio should seek to build on this rather than highlight cycle carriage as a cause for concern in the opening paragraphs of its strategy. Cycle carriage by commuters would be less necessary if secure cycle

parking was installed at all stations. While Abellio appears to be progressing at some stations there is no commitment in the strategy to satisfy demand at all stations.

Cycle carriage on the Stansted Express needs to be permitted at all times for those who are travelling to the airport for flights with their cycles. This has previously been allowed if cycles are packed for travel.

Cycle carriage for people with disabilities is not considered at all in the strategy. People on adapted cycles or using cycles as a mobility aid should be afforded the same status as wheelchair users. Unlike the able bodied, people on adapted cycles cannot hire a cycle at their destination therefore cycle carriage is of much greater importance to them.

Abellio's search for solutions is declared in the strategy (p12 'lies in the longer term.') but not addressed. Solutions adopted in other locations must be considered. In France for example, specific trains are assigned for cycle carriage and identified as such in time tables. In Germany special cycle carriages are provided on trains where demand is high. In Holland cycle parking at stations is so well developed that there is little need for commuters to put cycles on trains.

Cycle Parking

Abellio's cycle hub in Cambridge will be the largest in the UK by a considerable margin. Stations in the Netherlands routinely have several thousand cycle parking spaces. While progress in Cambridge is welcome, Abellio, and other TOCs, need to ensure that that provision of cycle parking exceeds demand and enables all who wish to park at stations to have the confidence that they will be able to secure a space on arrival. The current Cambridge situation where passengers have to wait until a space becomes free before they can park discourages cycle-rail travel because it creates an unforeseen delay during the 'transfer' period. It would be welcome if Abellio GA were to make a commitment in its strategy to satisfy current and future demand for cycle parking.

While unmet demand at Cambridge is being addressed this is not the case at all Abellio stations. Liverpool St , a flagship station, in particular should have sufficient high quality secure parking. We welcome regular reviews of provision in consultation with stakeholders.

The strategy could be strengthened as regards standards. The ATOC cycle rail toolkit is not specific about two tier parking designs and the use of substandard installations in several UK locations has led to injuries and inconvenience bringing two-tier parking into disrepute. Abellio, as a Dutch operator, could choose to follow the existing, and detailed, Dutch standards for two tier parking. When UK standards are approved these could be substituted.

Bike &Go

While these programmes are commendable in principle it is our understanding that take up remains low. Abellio, with its un-rivalled experience of similar programmes in the Netherlands should evaluate its UK schemes and consider what action can be taken to improve usage

Rules for Customers

This section of the 'strategy' appears to be an instruction for customers rather than content of a strategic nature. It is best placed in an appendix.

The rules governing folding and unfolding cycles appear to have been written without recognising the distances that folded cycles have to be carried at some stations. Observation shows that people invariably adapt to the conditions they encounter and behave in a manner that is courteous to other passengers. Confrontation with rail staff over impractical rules rather than over inconsiderate behaviour is not purposeful. Other passengers are quick to point out inconsiderate behaviour and this is what it is purposeful to address.