

1. Starting a Local Group

Only a small number of people are needed to form a group. Groups formed over the history of Cyclenation have come from a wide variety of cycling, environmental and transport campaign backgrounds. Initial meetings between individuals can be very informal prior to formation of the group, but once the decision has been made to form a group a more formal meeting will be required.

The inaugural meeting need not immediately adopt a constitution or elect a committee but at some point these will be necessary. Please get in touch with a member of the Cyclenation board. Someone from Cyclenation will be happy to come along to give advice and support starting a group.

2. What Does a Group Do?

The group has been formed so what does it do?

In no particular order:

- Key local contact for local authority
- Respond to traffic orders consultations
- Run campaigns with leaflets
- Press releases on local cycling issues
- Draw up a cycling strategy for the local area
- Feed ideas in the local transport plan process
- Produce local cycling map
- Letter writing to press
- Influence local politicians, meetings letters
- Maintain dialogue with local traffic engineers
- Cycle surveys, cyclists and parked bikes
- Run campaign on parking, identify parking requirements
- Set up local cycle forum
- Get involved with Local Area Process
- Identify local barriers to cycling
- Decide what your key objectives for the local area are eg 20mph area
- Respond to local development proposals

3. How to run a meeting

Running a meeting is a skill which can largely be learnt through experience. There is a variety of types of meeting and the type will dictate how they are run. Increasingly organisations are using teleconferences and even video conferencing for making decisions. However, local campaigns are likely to need face to face meetings, if only for there to be a social side to the organisation.

Committee meetings

This is the most common type of meeting. Inevitably, even in the larger groups the bulk of the work will be done by a relatively small group of committed individuals. Committee meetings are important for the working of any voluntary organisation, if only to parcel out the work load and agree how work is delegated. Ideally there should be a rough agenda before the meeting so people can prepare. If not then the agenda needs agreeing at the beginning of the meeting.

The challenging thing for whoever chairs the meeting is to keep everyone to stick to the agenda rather than wander off onto a different topic. Someone needs to keep notes of the decisions made, not how they were arrived at.

Public meetings

Public meetings need to be for a specific purpose, such as a particular campaign, and need an experienced chair. If there is no one in your campaign who feels confident, hire one from another voluntary organisation.

General Campaign meetings

The campaign will not generally require these all the time though of course will require one once a year. A general meeting will need a draw such as a good speaker, or film to encourage members to attend what on the surface may appear an unattractive proposition. Refreshments, at least tea and coffee. There may be opportunities for other refreshments such as cake.

Strategy meetings/brainstorming sessions

Any organisation will from time to time have to agree a strategy of some sort and this is best done separate from the routine business of a campaign.



4. Planning your campaigns and activities

Why plan?

Never underestimate the importance of planning. There is always a temptation to dive straight into a campaign or activity without fully considering a plan of action.

Proper planning will help:

- Define your aims and objectives
- Keep you organised
- Focus your activities/events
- Plan your time effectively
- Identify resources in advance
- Involve other members

Where do you start?

For some local groups choosing a campaign to work on isn't a problem. There may already be a red hot issue in your area that really concerns cyclists, this could be the removal of cycle parking at a local shopping centre, closure of a popular cycle lane, giant crater sized potholes and so on.

But for those groups who do not have an obvious campaign opportunity, or those wanting to refocus, a little time spent thinking about issues in your area can really help towards concentrating your groups activities.

Group Exercise – What gets your goat?

Spend 15 minutes brainstorming all the issues that concern you and your members.

To kick off ideas think about:

- What gets you *really* angry about cycling in your local area?
- What issues concern you?
- What would you like to do/or see done?
- Why did you join the group?

Generate as many suggestions as possible. Let your imagination run – a wacky idea could be the foundations of something great! Don't discuss your ideas in detail. Write everyone's suggestions down on a large sheet of paper for everyone to see.

Display ideas – have a look at them:

- Can you identify any running themes?
- Does anything obvious jump out at you?
- Can you begin to pick out key priorities?

Spend 20 minutes discussing your list in more detail:

- Focus on identifying key issues in which to base your campaigns.
- Prioritise this list and come up with a top 3 concerns.

5. Planning your campaigns and activities

Having honed in on a particular issue to work on you will now want to develop your ideas.

1. Define your aims and objectives

Defining your aims and objectives is simply stating what it is you want to achieve and how. An aim is what you are going to achieve overall. The objectives are the actions you are going to take to achieve the aim.

When creating aims and objectives make sure they are **SMART!**

Make it SMART

Specific Are your aims specific enough? Your aim maybe "To get more cycle parking stands in the local area". A more specific aim would be "To get more cycle parking stands for every shopping and leisure facility in the local area."

Measurable Can you measure your aim? Saying you want to get more cycle parking stands is rather vague. Saying you want to get 10 parking stands at every shopping and leisure facility gives you something concrete to aim for.

Achievable	Is your aim achievable? Most likely you will want to set your sights high, but do seriously consider what is achievable. If you pick an aim that isn't achievable within a reasonable timeframe you will run the risk of completely demoralising your members, wasting your resources and feeling like you aren't getting anywhere.
Realistic	Ask yourself honestly is your aim realistic? Aiming to get 50 bike stands on every street is probably not realistic!
Time-specific	When are you going to achieve your aim? If you define a date/timeframe you will have something to aim for. Saying you can do this in a year is good – saying this will take ages is not good!

2. Identify your targets

Who is it you need to target in order to make your aims and objectives happen? This could be your local councillors, council officers, cycling officer, an MP, local people, an employer, school governors, teachers, parents, the media and so on.

Once you have identified your targets start examining **who and what influences them**. For example, if your target is the Highway Committee of the council then influences could be:

- Council Officers
- Constituents
- Local media

3. Identify your allies

Know who your allies are as well as your targets. Are there other groups working on similar issues you could link-up with? Could you encourage others to sign up to support your campaign? Groups may include –

- Residents associations
- Pedestrian groups
- Local Schools
- Local businesses
- Bike shops
- Environmental organisations
- Community groups
- Civic forums

4. Develop your key messages

When thinking about your targets what key messages can you send them in order to get your point across? These need to be simple, clear and aimed at your targets. Can you think of a snappy slogan?

Also consider ways in which you can display your key messages - posters, stickers, fliers, badges, T-shirts, etc.

Don't forget to have solutions to the problems – no good moaning about something if you can't offer a solution.

5. Do your research

What do you need to know, in order to begin your campaign or activity? Gather all the facts that you can about your issue. If certain information isn't available then think about ways in which you might be able to gather information yourself – for example, surveying people at a location to find out how many would use cycle parking facilities if provided.

6. Tactics

What tactics are you going to use to achieve your objectives and spread your key messages? Examples could be - public meetings/ debates, demos, letter writing campaign, cycle rides, surveys, reports, publicity campaign, street stalls, direct lobbying, conferences, local media etc...

NB - Media will be a key component of any campaign. Consider how you will use them to get your messages across.

7. Resources

Identify what resources you will need and when. Then consider how you can get hold of them.

Your members will often have access to all sorts of resources. Consider doing a skills assessment of your members and find out what might be available. See chapter B2 for more information.

Two things are always guaranteed when planning campaigns and activities - you will always need **people and money!**

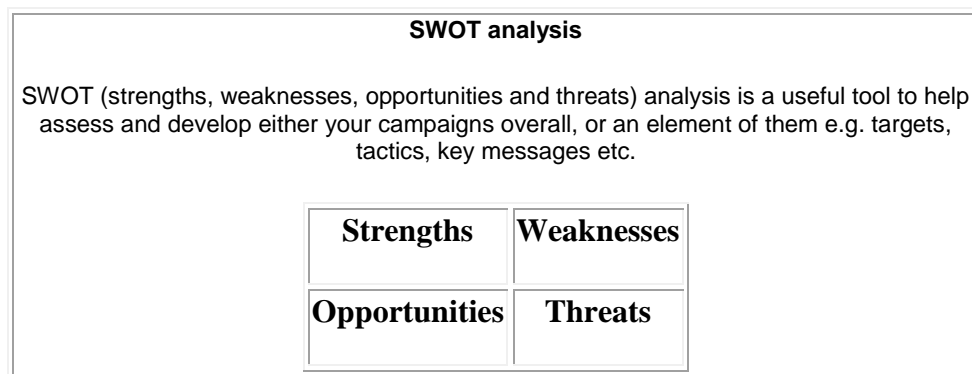
- **Recruitment** – think about the actions and activities you are going to plan and how you can use them to recruitment new people?
- **Fundraising** – consider ways in which you can fundraise for the campaign or activity. Collections at public meetings, sponsored events, social events, stalls at fairs, grants from other organisations, may require special permission or a license. If in doubt contact the LCC office.)

8. Timeline

- Draw up a schedule to timetable your key events/activities
- Think of the things which need to be done in advance
- Don't do everything all at once – stage your event
- Consider and plan for key diary dates – council meetings, bike to work day, Car Free Day etc.

9. Evaluate/monitor progress

This is often forgotten but shouldn't be. Things will change as time goes on, situations alter – make sure your campaign reflects this. It's also important to review what you have done. What worked well? What didn't work well?



6. Local forums

Attending local forums can be important for any cycle campaign group. No two forums are the same. Forums are a way of making contact with a variety of decision makers, ensuring that the group is consulted on issues that affect local cyclists and a vehicle for building alliances.

The function of forums varies depending on whether they are run by a local authority, and whether the local authority is the highway authority or not. If the forum is at Highway Authority level then the campaign group needs

to try and steer the forum to consider strategic and policy issues rather than minutiae of individual schemes. A forum can quite easily be distracted by considering design details rather than considering strategy on traffic management, parking, targets, road safety strategy, spending priorities and the Local Transport Plan and indeed specific policy on cycling.

It is important that cycling Forums at a Highway Authority level are attended by senior officers. If only a junior officer with the title of Cycling Officer attends, it will be ineffective. It will give support to the cycling officer but officers who are in decision making positions as well as budget holders need to sign up to taking part in the forum for it to be truly effective. It is also important that a cabinet member of the local authority chairs the meeting. The politicians need to be engaged else it will not work effectively, and this is a role that any cycle campaign group can take up, ensuring the local political leaders make a commitment to the cycle forum and cycling in general .

At a local level such as District, Borough and Town, forums can consider more detailed local issues including specific schemes.

Some cycle campaign groups, where the local authority has not set up a cycling forum, have taken the lead and set up the forum. This has the advantage that the campaign group can pick the partners in the forum. Local forums can open channels of communication with a wide range of groups from the local university, the health community, key businesses. The choice will of course depend on local circumstances and contacts.

7. Other local cycling groups

There are often other cycling groups or representatives of national cycling organisations in any area covered by a cycle campaign, in particular CTC and Sustrans. There may other cycling groups for mountain bike and sports cyclists that it might be worth working with.

We are not in competition with each other and often have complimentary roles with group members also being members or supporters of one or other of the other groups. CTC, Sustrans and Cyclenation are inextricably bound up together through tradition and history as well as by working together in various ways.

Sometimes by having more than one group, it means that cycling gets more than one seat at the table, though it is important to try and ensure that the views are not too disparate between the various cycling organisations.

