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SPACE FOR CYCLING

To get Dutch facilities here, planners must reallocate space. Cyclists need more. **Chris Peck** explains CTC's new campaign, and how you can take part

A better standard of design for cycle facilities. Proper provision for cyclists on the busiest roads. Those are the aims of CTC's Space for Cycling campaign, which is being run in conjunction with local campaign groups around the country.

Last year, the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) launched its Space for Cycling campaign, demanding better quality cycling provision in the capital. This campaign crystallised out of huge demonstration rides following cyclists' deaths and inadequate designs for major junctions in London.

Thanks to generous cycle industry funding from the Bicycle Association's 'Bike Hub' fund, CTC and campaign groups federation Cyclenation will be taking LCC's campaign national. Cycling campaigns

from many of Britain's other big cities – Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield – as well as those from smaller towns and cities, are working on a shared vision.

The aim is to secure commitments from government at all levels to principles of good design for cycling, and to provide the funding required to implement them. At a local level, campaign groups and individuals will be lobbying local authorities to commit to the highest standards of cycle provision, and to set aside local authority funding to help match any central government money.

Space for Cycling isn't aimed solely at existing cyclists. Only a third of the population ever rides a bike, and only half of those ride regularly. If we want to get the majority cycling regularly – particularly

children and older people – we have to deal with the barriers they face. Barrier number one is busy roads: two thirds of people agree with the statement: 'the idea of cycling on busy roads frightens me'. Big, busy roads are too inhospitable for most people to feel safe on. Yet most of the trips people make by bike will, at some point, require the use of these roads.

ALONG METROPOLITAN LINES?

Although London's campaign is the inspiration for the wider national campaign, the story there is not completely comparable to the rest of the country. Grand promises from the Mayor of London – including funding pledges of £913m to build cycle networks 'to at least adequate standards, or not at all' – require political backing at a local level. The 32 boroughs



In the photos
1 UK cycling facility: cyclist in the gutter
2 Dutch facility: road-space reclaimed

“LOCAL AUTHORITIES RARELY REMOVE SPACE FROM MOTOR TRAFFIC AND MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO CYCLISTS”

(and the City of London) control 95% of the roads and streets on which any new infrastructure will be constructed. The LCC’s Space for Cycling campaign will therefore target all of the candidates for the May 2014 local elections in London, with specific messages and demands for improvements in each location.

Outside London, there are no 2014 elections in Wales or Scotland and the local elections in England are less important; only a third of councillors are elected in most places, and many of the local authorities hold only planning powers. This means that although they might set out favourable planning policies, for the most part they don’t control the streets on which the improvements need to be made.

Many of the major English cities will nevertheless have the opportunity to

challenge their candidates to sign up to a Space for Cycling message. In towns and cities elsewhere, it will be necessary to seek commitments from existing councillors.

In places where there aren’t active campaign groups, CTC will be helping new groups to form and decide for themselves what they should be calling for locally, such as junction improvements, new routes along busy roads, or 20mph limits.

There’ll be a tool to make it easy to contact your local councillor and challenge them to pledge to implement the Space for Cycling plan in your area – go to ctc.org.uk/spaceforcycling to find out more.

CARVING OUT SPACE

Too often, designs for cycling fail to meet our expectations. Instead of gleaming, wide, Dutch-style cycle tracks that glide, >

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FEATURE
Space for cycling



In the photos
3 Dutch cyclepaths don't end in 'cyclists dismount' signs
4 In the UK, transport schemes are often about improving priority for buses

with priority, through junctions, we get narrow, badly-maintained strips of tarmac at the side of the road that stop and start.

Why does this happen? Local authorities rarely show the political will to remove space from motor traffic and reallocate it for cycling. Most local authorities' transport schemes aren't primarily about cycling: they are designed to improve bus priority, or add traffic capacity to reduce congestion. Cycling is usually at the bottom of the list, and any facilities for cycling are considered marginal and therefore must fit in where space and junction capacity permits.

Where engineers are tasked with trying to include cycling schemes, they are often hamstrung by inflexible regulations, and they may lack the skills and training to know what works best and how to do it.

MONEY, NOT RHETORIC

Alongside improving design standards, the other major stumbling block to

implementing good facilities is the lack of cash. Whereas London now has a commitment to spend significant sums on cycling over the next decade, outside the capital, the funding situation is less rosy. Although the eight cities awarded funding last year have cash to implement their projects up to 2015, there is nothing promised after that. Funding from central government, dedicated specifically for cycling, could help drive local politicians to do something more courageous when it comes to reallocating road space and junction capacity in favour of cycling.

Providing facilities for cycling may require a fraction of the cost of building new roads, but it's still not cheap. A high-quality cycleway can cost as much as £1m a mile to do it properly. Major junctions are even more costly. However, while longer term funding is desperately needed, progress could be made faster if the hundreds of millions spent on road maintenance each year included careful consideration of how the situation for cyclists could be improved when roads are resurfaced.

With a general election now just over a year away, the next few months will be the time to influence the major parties who are writing their 2015 election manifestos. The final part of the Space for Cycling campaign will be an action to target MPs in the run up to the election and make sure that, come May 2015, there is strong commitment from all parties to allocate sufficient funds for cycling in the next parliament.

If you want to see significant, long term funding for cycling, please visit ctc.org.uk/spaceforcycling to find out more and sign up for updates. ☺

COUNCIL TASKS

FIVE THINGS that councils must do to create Space for Cycling.

1 On busy roads, dedicate space for cycling, designed so that anyone can ride there with a feeling of safety.

2 On less busy streets, limit the speed of through traffic. Reduce speed limits to 20mph in built-up areas and 40mph or lower on rural lanes.

3 Ensure that cycling route networks are continuous and interlink seamlessly, with major junctions no longer posing barriers to cycling.

4 Create traffic-free routes that provide a sensible alternative to, not a replacement for, the most direct on-road route.

5 Maintain roads with cycling in mind. When resurfacing roads, make space for cycling

