

BIRMINGHAM Cyclist

The newsletter for *push*  *bikes*



**BIRMINGHAM
CYCLE REVOLUTION**



A revolution for cycling in Birmingham.

At the end of April, Birmingham City Council submitted their bid for the DfT's Cycle City Ambition grants, under the title of 'Birmingham Cycle Revolution'.

The bid is worth around £20 million to Birmingham over 2 years, equating to £10 per person per

year, to be spent on infrastructure alone. The Birmingham Cycle Revolution bid is built on a detailed 20 year plan for Birmingham's cycle infrastructure drawn up by Adrian Lord of ARUP, focused on the city centre and a 20-minute radius for cycle commuters to the centre.

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www.pushbikes.org.uk

Getting Birmingham
in the saddle

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A revolution for cycling in Birmingham

Continued from front page....

In February 2013, the DfT announced £42 million for 3 Cycle City Ambition grants, comprised of 1 first wave city and 2 second wave cities, with £10 per head per year to be provided over two years.

Birmingham is in the first wave group, competing with Newcastle, Bristol, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Nottingham. The DfT has specified that the bids be for projects that will be transformational and part of long-term cycling plans, something that Birmingham has not traditionally had.

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The level of ambition in this plan is clear.

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However, perhaps this has changed. Clear plans for Birmingham's cycle network have been mapped out, showing what it will look like in 2016 and in 2023. The contrast with the current map of Birmingham is clear – the isolated sections of cycle routes in 2013 should be joined up by 2016, with continuous routes into the city centre from all directions, consisting of a mix of



Jenny supports the Birmingham Cycle Revolution. Join her!

An image from online supporters of the bid.

routes along main corridors such as Bristol Road and parallel routes away from busy roads. As long as these routes have well-thought out infrastructure, there should be a clear improvement in cycling in Birmingham. By 2023, all major corridors should have cycle facilities, while the parallel routes will have expanded so that most people have a cycle route close to their home. Canal towpaths are also being targeted, with plans to provide sealed surfaces for all-weather cycling. The level of ambition in this plan is clear.

However, the question is where will the money to finish the plan come from? The bids also need to show local funding for the projects of at least 30% of the DfT funds paid in, and, significantly, contributions from Public Health authorities are mentioned by the DfT. As the DfT also suggests using the WHO's 'Health Economic Assessment Tool' to calculate the

A revolution for cycling in Birmingham

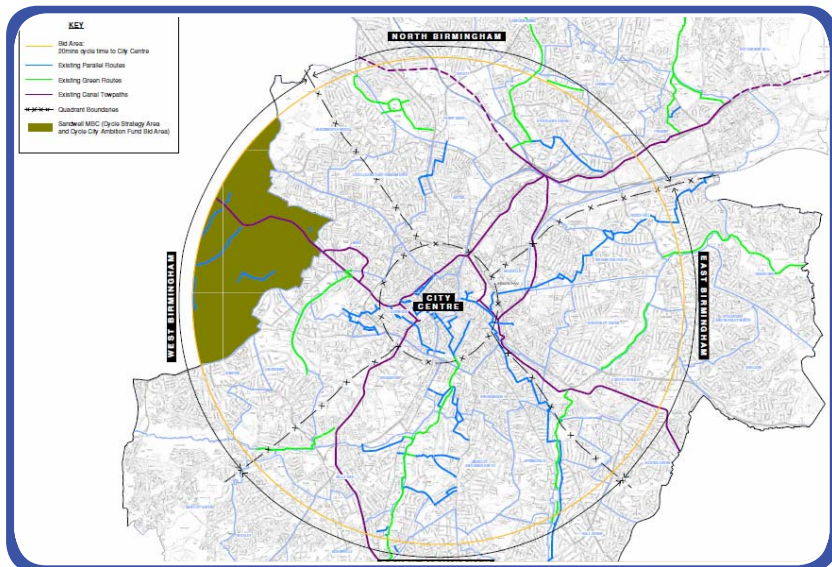
Continued from page 2...

benefits of increased cycling and argues that perhaps 70% of the economic benefit will be from improved health, it seems that they are arguing for NHS money to be used to pay for improvements to the transport network. Health funds in Birmingham are already spent on cycling, through the Be Active scheme, but with less health money per head as cities such as Manchester and Liverpool, there may not be enough health funds to support the revolution to 2023 or beyond.

It may be, however, that by the time the Cycle City Ambition money runs out, Birmingham might not need to scabble around for the

funds to continue. The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's report, 'Get Britain Cycling', calls for at least £10 per person per year to be spent on cycling in the UK, to achieve a modal share of 10 percent for cycle use by 2025. The report stresses that on-going funding for cycling is essential, rather than the short-term projects, such as the Cycle City Ambition funds, that have previously been offered in the UK. If national government follows this report's recommendations, there certainly could be a Birmingham cycle revolution. ◀

Chris Lowe



Birmingham's Current Cycling Network

Cycling in Birmingham; the City Council's view?

Over the last few years we've had the Cycling Strategy "Bike Birmingham", the "Local Sustainable Transport Grant" both proclaiming a new cycling horizon for the City.

Now there is a new report published on April 9th by the City Council's "Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability Overview & Scrutiny Committee. (Please don't be put off by this overblown title- this report could have important consequences for cycling in Birmingham). The report's titled "Changing Gear :Transforming Urban Movement through Walking and Cycling in Birmingham"

In June 2012 the newly elected leader of the Council (Sir Albert Bore) issued a Policy Statement including a commitment to "publish an Action Plan for Urban Mobility that will identify priorities for public and private investment in transport infrastructure in the city."

This report is the result of the committee's deliberations. Councillor Victoria Quinn (the Chair) says in the introduction that the Committee initially focussed on cycling and canals as both are providers of movement around the city, offer responses to the health, leisure, social inclusion, community safety, educational and growth agenda challenges. Cycling in particular offers opportunity to address modal shift.

The key lines of enquiry

Cycling

How can we encourage cycling in the city that is efficient, safe and practical, encouraging connectivity between areas and more sustainable urban mobility?

What are the barriers to this? Which partners can help us to do this and what resources do we need?

Canals

How can we fully exploit canals as transport networks and economic assets? How can we encourage use of canals to maximise the health and leisure benefits? What are the barriers? Which partners can help and what resources do we need? How can the community and local businesses/organisations be more involved in looking after canals?

The Committee's call for evidence received "a staggering level of



The Committee's call for evidence received "a staggering level of response"



response, interest and feedback, especially in relation to cycling.”

Recommendations

In summary the recommendations being submitted to the full Council are

1. An ambitious, target-driven strategy for improving cycling and walking in Birmingham. This ambition should have the effect of putting cycling and walking on a par with cars and public transport movement in the city.
2. That facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists are continuously improved and new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.
3. That the Birmingham Urban Mobility Plan explicitly sets out the role that the canal network can play in improving sustainable movement for pedestrians and for cyclists in and around the city.
4. That a cycling and walking champion is appointed from elected members, to promote and drive forward cycling and walking ambitions across all portfolios and directorates. That s/he is supported by a senior officer, with capacity to work with all partners, to deliver the ambitions set out in this report.
5. That the current Cycling and Pedestrian Task Force is revitalised with a new consultative role to allow user led scrutiny of policies and applications from pedestrian and cycling perspectives.
6. That the public health programmes inherited by the City Council are analysed at early stage to drive and resource opportunities to develop cycling and walking dimensions within the urban mobility plan.
7. That explore how we can resource encourage cycling in schools as a means of delivering the national curriculum physical education requirement; provide bikeability training and a target level of cycles available in schools
8. That Birmingham adopts the Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance, and where possible exceeds them.
9. That all relevant Highway and Transportation officers are appropriately trained (using “Better by Design” standards).
10. That the city centre is made is safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, and that public transport hubs are connected by cycling and walking routes.

Cycling in Birmingham; the City Council's view? Continued from page 6...

11. That the city's 20mph zones are explicitly linked to our cycling and walking ambitions.
12. That there is a single, simplified, instantly recognisable map of cycle routes for the city.
13. That access to cycling is improved through working with third sector and social enterprise organisations, with local councillors actively facilitating links.
14. Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability Overview and

Scrutiny Committee no later than November 2013.

Comment

In many ways it was refreshing to observe and contribute to the discussions of the committee – mainly because there seemed to be a genuine willingness to take action. In truth, most of the recommendations on cycling could have written beforehand by Push Bikes but the difference is that the Council has a duty to implement them. Let's see whether the full Council accepts the report. Only then could we say a real change in behaviour is being made. ➡

John Bennett

Contact Us

We are based in the Friends of the Earth building:

'The Warehouse', 54-57 Allison Street, Digbeth, BIRMINGHAM B5 5TH

Telephone: 0121 632 6909

E-mail: secretary@pushbikes.org.uk

Facebook: facebook.com/PushBikesBum

As a voluntary organisation, the office is not manned on a regular basis. The most effective means of contacting us is by e-mail.

We hold meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 19:00.

A test case for the City's cycling ambitions!

One of the major infrastructure schemes for cycling improvements in the city appears to be running into trouble. Part of Centro's successful £33 million LSTF bid is to be spent on shared path improvements along Bristol Road between the Ring Road (at Belgrave Middleway) and the City boundary at Longbridge.

In previous newsletters we reported that Push Bikes had advised City Engineers on necessary changes to crossing points, removal of obstructions by street furniture and the quality of path surface.

The first works budgeted at £600,000 were planned for this financial year (now ended) between the Ring Road and Selly Oak but nothing has started –not even a plan has been published. The silence from BCC has been deafening –all queries have been shrugged off.

It's easy to see why!

This level of funding may seem considerable but, along with everything else, it won't cover major changes necessary to provide continuity and protection for cyclists at junctions such as Priory Road. Ideally the shared path should continue across the junction but this can only occur if it is protected from traffic turning off the carriageway. At present there is no separate phase for pedestrians

and cyclists to cross; they have to run the gauntlet as the lights change. Introducing a separate phase would reduce its capacity—a cardinal sin—in the eyes of road engineers.



But this is exactly what must be done



But this is exactly what must be done if the aim of the project is to be achieved. Omelettes and eggs come to mind!

This makes for a very obvious test case about enhancing the position of cycling within the political vision of the city. If the council is serious about encouraging cycling it must say to its engineers come up with a solution that provides a safe and continuous crossing of this road (and all the other crossings on the route) even if it means interfering with and reducing the capacity for other traffic. After all by planning and providing for an increase in cycle 'traffic' there will be a reduction in other 'traffic.'

Otherwise –don't pretend that Birmingham has any ambition to be a 'Cycling City.'

John Bennett

An Imaginary Dialogue Between Cyclists And Other Users Of A Shared Path

WALKING



RUNNING



CYCLING



Cyclist - It's a fundamental law of the universe - pedestrians ALWAYS keep to the very centre of the path. It doesn't give me enough space.

Jogger - I'm innocently running along this SHARED path when suddenly "Whoosh" "A bike will zip by noiselessly with no warning. Why can't they ring their bells?"


Cyclist - These pedestrians all have earphones. They wouldn't hear a bell even if I had one. Bells are too heavy for my lightweight bike.

Walker - By Law all new bikes should be fitted with bells. But if cyclists don't have bells why don't they just say something? "Hi" or "excuse me" or "on your right"? The Highway Code calls it "audible warning of approach"

Runner - Years ago there were slogans relating how different groups "do it" eg -----

Cyclists do it silently and they make you jump!

There's an old railway track in Burgundy. 40km long. It's excellent. It's used by many different groups - Joggers, Runners, Walkers and people on all sorts of bikes from fast road cycles to small pink affairs with tassels sprouting from handlebars favoured by little girls. I was on a tourer.

Every single overtaking cyclist (except the little girls) said "Passez a gauche" or "Passez a droite". No bells but audible warning of approach. It would be nice if this could happen in Birmingham. 

Mrs Bella Ring

Cycle City Expo conference

Nearly 500 delegates gathered in the Council House for the two-day Cycle City Expo How to get Britain cycling - delivering on the All Party Vision.

With two Plenary sessions and fifteen workshops over the two days, there were plenty of examples of 'best' and 'worst' practice around the country – and often one man's 'best' is another's 'worst'! There was very little consensus of measures that would satisfy every cyclist.



Plenary Session on Friday

'Segregation' was heavily mentioned but, contrarily, the town (Stevenage) that had built an ENTIRELY separate cycleway network that avoided all roads, had NOT experienced a massive level of cycling and this workshop told us why. Removing cyclists from the roads had made it much easier to get around by CAR! So the only ACTUAL MEASURE I heard from the plenaries and the workshops I

attended (delegates had to choose one of five at each 'breakaway' period) was to limit or restrict the use of the CAR. Now several towns

**“
Meanwhile, we
HAVE to use the
roads and handle
traffic as we find
them today**

and cities on continental Europe do this; how 'politically acceptable' it would be in the U.K?

On the Thursday, Victoria Square filled with organisations promoting bikes and cycling. Push Bikes was there, next to Sustrans, Bike North Birmingham and the rest. We gave around 30 of our 'goody bags' to interested visitors and I thank our members who helped, particularly while John Bennett and I were in the conference!

But until all or some of the measures recommended to our local Scrutiny committee and nationally to the Parliamentary Inquiry actually start happening – and timescales are a few or many years away, we have to cycle on the

Cycle City Expo conference

Continued from page 10...

road system as we find it now.

But aren't the roads just "too dangerous"? 12 cyclists were killed in London last year, Andrew Gilligan (ex. The 'Today' programme and now Boris Johnson's cycling 'tzar') told the conference. Simon Hughes MP had described this figure as "carnage". But there had been 182 MILLION cycle journeys in 2012, so while the deaths were of course regrettable, this was hardly 'carnage' commented Andrew.

So, how to get Britain cycling? Certainly there is no 'quick fix' – widespread segregation will take major infrastructure changes, restricting the use and convenience

of the car was the only 'solution' that I heard from the workshops I went to.

Meanwhile, we HAVE to use the roads and handle traffic as we find them today – and probably tomorrow. Observation, anticipation, planning and positioning are skills that cyclists must use when on their bikes, as they do when driving their cars. ◀

Graham Hankins



Push Bikes table with goody bags and maps

Council Report

The Scrutiny committee's 80 page (yes, 80!) report and recommendation for cycling in Birmingham was presented to the full council by the Scrutiny chair and Cabinet member for Transport, Cllr Victoria Quinn. The session was webcast – many council meetings now are.

Cllr Quinn stated that cycling “sat at the heart of the report” and that its content was to be actioned by eight members of the executive committee. There would be appointed a Cycling Champion at Executive level plus a consultative role of cyclists. Statistics for cycling levels in Birmingham were very poor compared to many other cities; there has been only a 3% rise in cycling in the past 10 years, yet Manchester has seen cycling increase by 59%!

Cllr Quinn continued to summarise the report. There was much to be done to improve the canal towpaths joining them with the city centre (tell me about it) and providing some 20 mph zones. Only 0.6% of Birmingham children cycled to school, yet the national figure was 3%.

After Cllr Quinn had spoken on the report, the Mayor called on other councillors. Cllr Huxtable seconded the report and asked “how canal towpaths could be improved to meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists”. “We need to overcome

the ‘barriers’ that discourage people from using the towpaths”. (Note: the canal system was one entire session of the Scrutiny

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We need to overcome the ‘barriers’ that discourage people from using the towpaths
//

inquiry, so the ‘barriers’ were well-known). To illustrate the ‘barriers’ to cycling along my local towpath, I have sent a DVD of photos taken along the Grand Union to Cllr Quinn!

Next up was Cllr Burden, who considered that “Birmingham was a very poor place for cyclists” adding “I take my life in my hands when I go down the Stratford Road.....I won’t let my children use the Stratford Road to school”. Well don’t use that route then, councillor – use the city’s Cycling Map to find alternative routes.

Another councillor I had not met was Susan Barnett of Billesley.

Council Report

Continued from page 12...

Although supporting the Report, the councillor admitted that she had not cycled in Birmingham after hitting a car door just six months after moving to the city from York. Now several of us have probably been caught by 'dooring'



The council fully endorsed the Scrutiny report.



yet continue to cycle, so I have written to this councillor hoping she will consider this incident as an unfortunate 'one-off' and get on her bike again, but leaving the space of an opening door from parked cars as recommended in all cycle training.

David Radcliffe is well-known to Push Bikes and also supported the report. Mentioning the 10 and 20 year timescales Dave said the report was "Evolution, not revolution".

The council fully endorsed the Scrutiny report. ➡

Graham Hankins



Victoria Quinn Presents Scrutiny Report to the Full Cabinet

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CycleBirmingham

The rides & social part of Push Bikes

We are a friendly and welcoming social and leisure cycling group. We organise a weekly Wednesday evening ride, Saturday Gentle Cycling rides and a monthly Sunday ride, plus some additional rides and social events from time to time.



Weekly Wednesday Evening Rides:

The rides vary in distance to the destination from 2 to 12 miles. There is often food available at many of the destinations we go to if you don't have time to eat after work. We vary the pace to meet the needs of the riders and never leave anyone behind. Most of the rides start from the Midland Arts Centre (MAC) in Cannon Hill Park, meeting from 7:15 pm and setting off at 7:30 pm.

Weekly Saturday Gentle Cycling Rides

Short family/beginner rides from Bournville Green at 10am.

Monthly Sunday Rides:

The rides vary in length from 15 to 40+ miles on a round trip. Mainly start from Kings Norton.

Routes:

We usually use cycle-paths, parks, towpaths, quiet side roads and country lanes for our rides and will advise on the route type for each ride.

Information on our rides can be found on our three social media sites:

1. Facebook: CycleBirmingham
Facebook.com/groups/
cyclebirmingham/
Click 'Join group'. 'Closed' just means posts and photos are only visible to members of the group.

2. Twitter: @cyclebirmingham
Twitter.com/cyclebirmingham

3. Birmingham Cyclist website:
Below the profile of our group on this site:

BirminghamCyclist.com/group/
cyclebirmingham

This site is for the benefit of those people who are not on either Facebook or Twitter. (If you join the Birmingham Cyclist website as a member and then join our group on there also you should get notified when we post something new on the group profile).

Rides Team Members (leaders & helpers): Andrew, Brian, Donna, James, John, Kate, Nick and Simon

You can email the ride leaders at:
pbrides@pushbikes.org.uk

Happy and Safe Cycling!
Simon

Chad Valley Route Draft Proposal

A Pushbike member Roy Watson has proposed an off road route that would put University of Birmingham and a number of prominent Birmingham schools on National Cycle Route 5.

The aim is to offer an alternative to the Bristol Road and Hagley Road and to improve the access to the city centre by opening the disused rail tunnel adjacent to the Mailbox. This would help to reduce congestion on Westbourne Road and Edgbaston Park Road. The route would also provide a traffic free path from Cannon Hill Park to Warley Woods running via the Nature Centre on Pershore Road to the Kings Head pub on the Hagley Road.

The route lies almost entirely on the Calthorpe Estates and follows the course of the Chad Brook. For almost 300 years Calthorpe Estates have been at the forefront of environmental issues in Birmingham. When linked with the existing Worcester Canal and the Harborne Walkway it provides a sustainable transport network for Edgbaston at relatively low cost.

One of the advantages of the scheme is that it consists of a number of minor links or improvements to existing tracks all of which have merits. These could be introduced as small stand alone projects.

- Lordswood Road to Harborne Walkway (1km)
- Rear of Parkhill Road (0.25km)
- Yateley Road (0.5 km)
- Richmond Hill Road to Worcester Canal (0.5km)
- University Vale to Bristol Road (1km)
- Pebble Mill Site (0.25km)
- Bristol Road to Priory Road (0.25km)
- Widening of Worcester Canal Towpath (1km)
- Re-opening of the Disused Rail Tunnel under Gas Street Basin (0.25km)
- Opening of passageway next to The Mailbox

About 5km in all of pathway plus pelican crossings.

The major cost item is the need for a subway or walkway to cross the railway line at The Vale Halls of Residence.

Birmingham City Council are interested in this proposal and Sustrans have helped to prepare the draft report. Preliminary discussions chaired by Marketing Birmingham have taken place with the major landowners. A lot more work needs to be done to prepare the business case for funding.

There would be advantages for all the communities in Harborne, Bearwood, Edgbaston, Moseley, Kings Heath and Selly Oak as well as the schools along the route. The biggest beneficiary would

appear to be the University, - so if there are Pushbike members at the University or BUBUG members who can lobby for this it would be helpful. Any emails/ letters of support would also be helpful.

Please note this is a draft proposal which is being discussed and will undergo numerous revisions. ➡

'Gentle Cycling' takes off!

With the support of Bournville Village trust Push Bikes is organising some 'Gentle Cycling' rides to encourage people with bikes who are hesitant about using them. Our aim is to go on paths and quiet lanes (currently around Bournville) in a group with lots of stops and encouragement.

Having planned throughout the winter to start when spring is due -we chose 23rd March for the first ride. With several inches of snow it was no surprise that nobody turned up! Since then, however, the weather on successive Saturdays has gradually improved -as have our numbers from 10 to 16 and then 22.

We've been to Birmingham University and the QEHB returning through Harborne; sampled

the Rea Valley path and visited Woodgate Valley Country Park.

Interestingly even local riders have been on routes that are unfamiliar to them and on paths that they didn't know existed. We've managed to pass the time of day and have a chat to pedestrians and dog walkers -quite a social event!

There's always a chance for new people to join in -just look us up on the Push Bikes website www.pushbikes.org.uk and come along. Alternatively give John Bennett a ring 0121 459 9319 ➡

There are details of all Push Bikes rides on:

www.facebook.com/groups/cyclebirmingham/

birminghamcyclist.com/group/cyclebirmingham/

twitter.com/cyclebirmingham


A Gentle Review

GENTLE CYCLING - the first ride was on Saturday 30 March. The advertised initial ride was postponed because of the snow. Eleven well wrapped cyclists met on Bournville Green. One rode a smart new recumbent. The sun was shining and purple crocuses were out in force.

John Bennett took us on a ten mile circuit on paths and quiet roads. Yes there were patches of compacted snow but we just walked through those. The roads were dry and ice free. We ended up

at the Rowheath Pavillion in Heath Road, Bournville. The manager there had heard about the ride and opened up specially. We had good coffee and yummi chocolate cake.

One of the riders was John Pitcock - a founder member of PushBikes. He's lived in Birmingham for thirty five years and was pleased to go on some small paths he never knew existed.


For more information on Gentle Cycling please see page 18. 

Kate Fox

Route 5 Is Being Repaired

Remember the tree routes crossing the path on the section between Cecil Road and Second Avenue? Well they are being removed. On the stretch between Cartland Road and Dads Lane a few trees have been cut down. Hopefully this will curb root growth and make the path smoother for us. Work on the River Rea bridge continues slowly but the wooden boarding has been painted three times.

The editor didn't seem to think that a photo of a few patches of

new Tarmac would make a useful edition to the newsletter. Have a look yourself. 

Kate Fox

Free Family Cycle Rides in Birmingham

Northfield Family Cycle Rides are back! At Northfield Ecocentre they are willing on the warmer weather with free cycle rides in and around south Birmingham for people of all ages and cycling abilities. Taking place on the second Sunday of every month between April and October 2013, the family friendly rides will follow easy routes with few hills, and mainly on off-road paths.

Anne Dasgupta, Ecocentre cycle ride leader said "Northfield Family Cycle Rides are an opportunity for families to spend time together, out and about in the fresh air having fun and keeping fit. It's a great social occasion, when families can get together in a safe environment

and learn to cycle together, at a pace that suits the group."

The first cycle ride will take place on Sunday 14 April 2013. Each ride will start in Northfield, meeting at 10.30am at the multi-games area in Victoria Common, two minutes from Northfield centre. Families will need to provide their own bicycles and bring suitable all weather clothes, a bottle of water and a light snack to eat. All children should be accompanied by a responsible adult. A list of future cycle ride dates and routes can be found on the Ecocentre website at: www.northfieldecocentre.org/activities/events/sustainable-travel

Ecokids

Other family friendly activities at Northfield Ecocentre include Ecokids, which take place every school holiday, including this Easter. Kids learn to be green and have fun doing eco crafts, games, quizzes and nature trails - and make new friends at the same time! EcoKids activities are aimed at children aged 3-8 years old. Booking essential. For future Ecokids dates and activities visit: www.northfieldecocentre.org/activities/ecokids ➡

For more information and booking for Northfield Family Cycle Rides and Ecokids contact Anne at the Ecocentre by telephone on 0121 448 0119 or by email using admin@northfieldecocentre.org.



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Pushbikes on Air

Chris Lowe, the Chair of Pushbikes, was in BBC WM Breakfast Show talking about the council's 'cycle revelation' – Changing Gears report with Pete Morgan on Monday 8th April.

There are worries that Birmingham City Council was not putting enough effort into looking into cycle path and road safety to encourage people cycling compared to London and Manchester after 2012. Councillors in the Birmingham City Council said that the city was lagging behind and cycling and walking will be in priority over cars when coming into planning new roads and developments in the future.

Although the number of people cycling in Birmingham is increasing, it still only counts for 1% of commuter journeys and less than 3% of all trips according to BBC WM. A survey showed that more people are getting on their bikes after 2012 - Britain most successful year for cycling, but West Midlands are getting behind with the lowest cycling rate across the country and the number of children cycling to schools in Birmingham are at a significant low.

A report from Sustrans also pointed out that 3 into every 10 cars journey could be shifted to cycling. 1/5 of car journeys are less than 2 miles and could easily made by cycling and walking.

When talking about what puts people off cycling, the BBC reporter Kevin Pushby believed it's the road safety. 265 cyclists were involved in road accidents across Birmingham last year and this figure has been on the rise for the last 3 years.

The number of people that were seriously injured or killed went from 26 people in 2005 upto 46 in 2011.


Chris Lowe, the Chair of Pushbikes, said that Birmingham has a strong link with the car industry and there are a lots of engineers who built their careers around designing for cars. It's very difficult to change that institutional culture. The Changing Gear Report looked into how the council can improve the design process and for cycling infrastructure and how to consult cyclists.

He gave an example on Selly Oak new road. This road was built to help traffic moving through Selly Oak. There are cycling lanes on the pavements. However, it's impossible to use those cycle lanes, because of the way they've been designed. For example, cyclists have to do a 5 minutes de-tour to negotiate the roundabout and the curves are so big - you cannot join the road again. Pushbikes talked to the road engineers who designed Selly Oak new road and they said they didn't have any guidance about how to design cycling lanes.

When presenter Pete Morgan asked Chris if he'd think Birmingham will be nice to cycle around after 10 years at the end of the interview, Chris said that it depended on whether we've got the money to build the infrastructure. "Unfortunately, in Britain money comes in dribs and drabs – we get a million pounds here and a million pounds there. In Holland, the government spends £25 per person per year towards cycling. The money that Birmingham City Council is bidding for is going to be about £5 per person for only 2 years." He understood that Birmingham City Council didn't have much money at the moment. However, he believed that the savings from cycling were huge.

"The government says that if you can get £2 back from every £1 you

put into a project and that's high value. Cycling - you get almost £4 back from every £1 you put in from healthcare saving and congestion saving, etc. Congestion costs a lot of money. If we can get 10% people out of their cars and the roads will be running much more smoothly."

Later in the morning, Yvonne Gilligan, Sustran regional director West Midlands and the Councillor Victoria Quinn, Chair of the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability Overview & Scrutiny Committee also joined the breakfast show. In the afternoon, a group of cycling campaigners and two Councillors holding Changing Gear reports in their hands had a photo taken in front of the city council. 

Shu Wang



From left: David Cox (CTC Chair), Councillor David Radcliffe, Councillor Victoria Quinn, Councillor Tim Huxtable, Councillor Steve Bedser, Roy Watson (Greenways of Birmingham) and Chris Lowe (Pushbikes Chair)

City bidding for £20million from Government for cycling

Competing with 6 other english cities Birmingham is submitting an ambitious plan 'The Cycling Revolution' with the aim of securing £20 million of DfT funding spread over two years. Beyond this the City is committed to find resources to fund a 20 year scheme to develop cycling infrastructure.

The main elements are:

- to provide continuous cyclepaths along all major city highways
- surfacing and improving canals paths
- providing alternative parallel routes on quiet roads and connecting routes within the city

About 100 cyclists were present to discuss the proposals at the Cyclists

Forum on April 16th. Lots of details were raised and the general feeling was of enthusiasm tinged with apprehension. The scope of the plans should truly revolutionise cycling in Birmingham -not only commuting, but local journeys in a safe and secure environment.

However implementation will be the crucial factor. Ambitious plans are not new; dust laden Cycling Strategies abound. Will it be different this time? Even if the DfT money kickstarts the process will the City Council really provide the long term resources to carry it out? Ultimately it will be up to the voters to determine whether we want a cycling revolution. Further justification for the campaigning pressure that Push Bikes and others can apply! ➡

John Bennett

Join Pushbikes

Birmingham has done much for cycling, but there is still a lot to do.

We currently have several campaigns in progress and are in frequent contact with local councils over cycling issues whether raised by cyclists or matters the councils

contact us about, as they believe they might affect cyclists and therefore ask for our views.

Your support for PushBikes will help benefit cyclists in and around Birmingham and Solihull.

Please fill in the form to the right to join us.

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