



# £22 million bid for phase 3 of BCR.

Following an announcement by Nick Clegg MP at the end of November 2014 of a further £114 million for the 8 cities who received Cycle City Ambition funds in 2013, Birmingham City Council (BCC) has submitted a bid for a further £22.1 million, matched by £7.9 million of local funds. This is phase 3 of the Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR), as a further £8 million for phase 2 was secured by BCC last summer (although these two pieces of funding will run side-by-side). The decision on this bid will be announced by the DfT in March, and will be reported on our website.

In BCR Phase 3, there will be 5 main corridors undergoing improvements: Harborne Road, Lichfield Road, Coventry Road (A45), Bristol Road and Birchfield Road (A34). The bid documents refer to "high-quality 'showcase' routes" to be delivered on some of these main corridors, which should mean wide, protected cy-

cle lanes. On these routes, however, the challenge will be providing safe space for cycling dangerous junctions, such as the Bristol Road / Priory Road junction which suppress demand for cycling and walking. The bid refers to providing pedestrian and cycle phases at this location, which will be a positive improvement, but whether a single attractive infrastructure

**the challenge will be providing safe space for cycling on dangerous junctions**

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[www.pushbikes.org.uk](http://www.pushbikes.org.uk)

Getting Birmingham  
in the saddle

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➡ *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 1st Tuesday of each month at 19:00.*

# Update on the Birmingham Cycle Revolution.

solution can be found for the cycle users who currently ride on the carriage-way and those who use the shared-use paths remains to be seen.

## **What about Sprint rapid transit buses?**

In November 2014, BCC also launched 'Birmingham Connected', which lays out a vision of a network of rapid transit buses, called 'Sprint', as a mass transit solution which is cheaper than laying down tramlines. One key corridor is the A45 (Coventry Road) leading from the city centre to Birmingham airport. The 'Birmingham Connected' paper argues for road space re-allocation to sustainable modes of transport, and if a Sprint project goes ahead on the A45, it would bring in extra money for a significant level of infrastructure change which could also benefit cycles. But it is important that there is joined up planning between BCR and any Sprint project to ensure that work done under BCR is not later undone by a Sprint project.

## **Canals and green routes.**

By the end of Phase 3, in 2018, all canals within Birmingham city boundaries will have had their towpaths on at least one side resurfaced and new access points will be added. In addition, BCC propose a further 21km of upgraded green routes in phase 3 and a trial of lighting (possibly solar) in critical areas. The importance of this was highlighted in December after a couple of muggings on green routes near Stirchley

and Kings Heath. One factor appears to be the lack of over-head lighting on these routes, and it is important that BCC takes steps to improve this. The green routes need to be useable the whole year round in order to properly bring about a cycling revolution.

## **Local links - liveable streets.**

As well as continuing to deliver connections where green routes meet the highway network, the BCC are proposing a pilot scheme in a residential area to improve connectivity and permeability for cycling and walking trips, while discouraging rat-running. Measures would include exempting cycle users from traffic regulations such as banned turns and one-way streets, closing residential streets to through motor traffic and upgrading paths linking cul-de-sacs to permit cycles on them. Small measures such as these are relatively cheap to implement, but can make a very significant impact on the environment of residential streets and can provide important routes for cycle users. Dutch residential areas don't have the through motor traffic that British residential areas do, and it is measures such as these that achieve that difference. This is an important step forward that was previously missing from the Birmingham Cycle Revolution.

# Update on the Big Birmingham Bikes

The first draw for the 3,000 bikes has taken place, with about 2,200 people applying for the first 1,500 bikes available. The second draw is open for applications until Monday 30th March, and will allocate the remaining 1,500 bikes. To qualify for a bike, applicants need to undertake bikeability level 2 training as well as maintenance training, provided by Bikeright! and Cyclechain.

The Bikeability sessions started on the 12th January and early reports are that the training courses have been fully signed up, despite the cold weather. For many partici-

pants, it appears to be the offer of a free bicycle that has encouraged them to take up cycling. Bikeright! have reported that at least one participant had never ridden a bicycle at all before winning a free bike. Hopefully, with the maintenance training as well, the new bicycle owners will be able to help their friends and family get their bicycles working too.

There will also be bikes available for 6 month loans. More information about Birmingham Big Bikes is available at <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bbb>



Cllr Lisa Trickett and Phil Woodward from Raleigh with 2 of the Big Birmingham Bikes (note: the bikes will have mudguards and lights)

[www.pushbikes.org.uk](http://www.pushbikes.org.uk)



[www.cycleinjury.co.uk](http://www.cycleinjury.co.uk)

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# Cyclescape - discussing infrastructure across Birmingham.

Cyclescape is an online campaigning website that is designed to assist cycle users to report and discuss infrastructure problems in their local area.

Push Bikes has just set up a Cyclescape group to help us keep track of infrastructure issues around Birmingham. This is so that we can report these to Birmingham City Council and track the progress of improvements as they are made. Previously reports of problems can seem to fall into a black hole, with no subsequent follow up. Having the issues logged on Cyclescape will enable us to review progress and find out what has happened.

Our group can be found here: <http://birmingham.cyclescape.org>. This group is open for anyone to join - you do not have to be a paid-up Push Bikes mem-

ber to do so - and will be regularly monitored. Please do join up, and encourage your friends to do so too, and start logging issues in your area.

Something that Push Bikes will be exploring in the coming months is how to use Cyclescape to engage with councillors about cycling issues in their local areas. For councillors who do not cycle, the barriers to cycle use are not normally obvious, and we are hoping that by seeing these barriers on Cyclescape, councillors will gain a better appreciation of the many small but vital measures that can be taken to improve conditions for cycling. So, please do contribute issues and comments on Cyclescape and contact your councillors with the appropriate links so that they can see those issues too.



# Bourneville Gentle Cycling report

Two years ago Push Bikes started leading rides aimed at people who were hesitant to cycle in traffic or who felt the need for a little encouragement to find suitable local routes. Apart from a few very wet or cold days we have had rides starting at 10am on Saturdays for up to 20 people through parks, paths, and quiet roads at a gentle pace and returning by 12.30. During the ride we usually find a cafe for a chat and rest. We are often surprised to find routes suitable for cycling that are impossible by car and open up new areas.

Some riders come regularly, some occasionally, some move on to more 'adventurous' rides but most enjoy the experience and get the confidence to cycle on everyday journeys.

These ride are freely available to anyone; just turn up with your (roadworthy) bike at Rowheath Pavillion Heath Road Bournville at 10 a.m any Saturday. (If notified in advance we can arrange for you to borrow a suitable bike).

For more details visit our blog at <http://bournvillegentlecycling.blogspot.co.uk>

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# Thoughts on DIY Streets Kings Heath

Sustrans have been working on a DIY Streets project in Kings Heath high street, funded by Lottery money, with additional funding from Birmingham City Council, to look at public realm issues in the area. In January, the DIY Streets team put out a possible plan for the high street, and while I personally don't support the proposals for Kings Heath high street, the proposals do have support within Push Bikes. I've written a personal opinion article, which is on the Push Bikes website, to look at the positive aspects of the scheme and to also explain my reservations about the proposals as a whole.

I think this Sustrans project in Kings Heath is important because it presents a good example of community engagement working to build support for some positive changes to Kings Heath high street at the expense of relocating a few parking spaces. It is indicative of the poor state of the transport debate in the UK that a few parking spaces can create opposition to public realm improvements, but this project is part of changing that debate.

Sustrans carried out 'pop-up park' activities in parking spaces on to enable people to imagine what a difference relocating those parking spaces would make. This involved

closing the parking space for a day and putting in displays and tables and chairs to make the spaces feel welcoming.

In the coming years there will be good examples of cycle infrastructure spreading through Birmingham as the Birmingham Cycle Revolution main corridor works start this spring. These will be important examples for us to have, as a good flagship scheme can really help in gaining community buy-in elsewhere through enabling the community to imagine change. But if we can not manage to get a good example of cycle lanes working on main roads in a local centre, then it is going to be difficult to help people imagine that possibility elsewhere. Local centres present a challenge because of the numerous demands on limited space, and it would be good for Birmingham City Council to take on board the way in which Sustrans has carried out public engagement activities to enable the local residents and businesses to imagine how changes to the street layout would work.

Chris Lowe

Blog post:

<http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/blog/personal-view-diy-streets-kings-heath>



## Meeting with David Jamieson, West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner

On Friday 20th Feb, representatives from West Midlands campaign groups met with David Jamieson, WM PCC, to discuss road safety. The meeting was organised by Denis Murphy, from the Campaign for Better Transport. It was also attended by representatives from Sandwell CTC, Push Bikes and Living Streets.

Denis Murphy highlighted the importance of improving road safety for vulnerable road users, to bring the West Midlands up to the standard of countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. While the UK does very well for safety for people in motor vehicles, risk for people walking and cycling is too high. Denis argued that there must be evidence based strategy setting - that the West Midlands police must use traffic policing strategies that have been proven to succeed, rather than using polite notices about speed that are ignored. David Cox, for the CTC, highlighted the high compliance with traffic regulations in the USA due to strict policing measures.

David Jamieson told us about his review of the Police and Crime Plan that will be released soon, along with a supplementary document with 116 steps for the police to follow to implement this plan. He highlighted the addition of road safety to the plan where previously it had been absent. In the West Midlands, 6 of the 7 local police boards had

previously put road safety on their list of priorities but that had not been recognised in the regional plan. This plan will be released soon (watch Push Bikes' website for details).

The issue of the split personality of people was discussed: Most people are strongly in favour of controlling motor traffic on the street where they live, but then want to 'make progress' (not be delayed) when they are driving elsewhere. We must have a road culture that recognises that residential roads are for people, not for rat-running, and the police need to play their role in enforcing that.

Speed cameras are an important part of enforcement, but the old film cameras have been decommissioned. Local authorities are responsible for buying new digital speed cameras (£30,000 each), while the police are responsible for processing the tickets afterwards.

Another issue is how easy it is to report road traffic incidents. We have heard that people are discouraged from making reports because of the long process involved. It is important that the West Midlands PCC ensures better processes are in place for reporting.

See Push Bikes' website for a more detailed report.

# Join Pushbikes and help improve cycling for everyone in Birmingham



# CycleBirmingham

The rides & social part of Push Bikes

## **Weekly Evening Ride & Social:**

The rides vary from 2 to 12 miles, depending on season and weather, with the pace set by the group. We try to use quiet routes for most of the rides, and advise on route type for each ride. Most destinations have food if you don't have time to eat after work. We try and pair you up with other members of the group for your return journey home, for example a number of the women riders cycle home together.

## **Weekly Saturday Morning Rides in Bournville:**

A gentle ride starting from Rowheath Pavillion, Heath Road (B30 1HH) 10am each Saturday Morning.

## **Monthly Sunday Rides:**

The rides vary in length and tend to be a bit quicker and longer than the Wednesday or Saturday rides. They

usually return to the area they start from after a leisurely lunch at the destination.

## **Evening & Sunday ride details can be found on the following sites:**

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/CycleBirmingham](http://www.facebook.com/CycleBirmingham)

Visible without a Facebook account - Click 'Like Page' and Tick 'Get Notifications' and 'Following' to ensure you receive regular updates or bookmark it in your browser if you don't have a Facebook account. There is also an older Facebook Group in existence (This older group is only visible with a Facebook account).

**Twitter:** @cyclebirmingham

Saturday Bournville ride details can be found at: <http://bournvillegentlecycling.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Futurerides>



# What is the future for cycling events in Birmingham after Sky?

In January, it was announced that Birmingham had missed out on a big SkyRide for the second year in a row. To be fair to Birmingham City Council, there were only 16 available dates in 2015 for big SkyRides and the calendar had filled up by the end of 2014. But this has been seen as an embarrassment for Birmingham City Council when they are trying to build their Birmingham Cycle Revolution.

At the Bike Lounge in February, Karen Creavin, the council officer in charge of Wellbeing in Birmingham, came to talk about possibilities for a large festival of cycling in September. She emphasised the important role that a large, visible, cycle event can play in encouraging people to take up cycling to get more exercise. The large SkyRide events are good at raising the profile of cycling, but there may be other ways to run these events to reach out more effectively to people who have a low level of activity. This is an opportunity for us to ask "What do we want as a city?" and plan accordingly.

A big question is how to enable people to reach the event. While big SkyRides are great events, there is a worry that to get there people will drive with their bikes on the car. For a cycle festival in Birmingham to reach all communities, there must be ways for families with children to reach it even if they don't have a car.

We discussed the issues of reaching the city centre, and some different ideas were suggested.

One option is to have a central hub with routes radiating out to the different parts of Birmingham to help people reach the centre. There are a lot of parks in Birmingham that could be used as nodes on those routes for extra events and activities. Another option is to have a

**“.. an opportunity for us to ask “What do we want as a city?”**

single linear route that reaches out to the countryside, to show people how they can get out of the city on their bicycles.

What is important is for any future event to have participation from all communities across Birmingham. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Big Birmingham Bikes team - [bigbirminghambikes@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:bigbirminghambikes@birmingham.gov.uk)

See the Push Bikes website for a fuller report.

# Merritts Brook Greenway: a user's review

The Merritts Brook Greenway is a new cycling and walking route that runs from Stirchley to just short of Frankley Reservoir, built using LSTF money. A winding and at times ludicrously narrow shared-use path that ends in nowhere in particular, it is none-the-less pleasant as a leisure route.

Some sections are finished in smooth bitmac, but other sections are finished with unswept spray and chip. The section between the Bristol Road and Cob Lane is particularly challenging, as it is also narrow, twisty, and unlit. However, it is not as narrow as the section between Cob Lane and Bournville Lane where two cyclists with straight bars would not be able to pass each other, and pedestrians are presumably supposed to move off the path to let cyclists pass. This section is also unlit, and disappears under leaves in Autumn.

At Bournville Lane cyclists are expected to dismount to cross the road and cycle along the pavement to get to the entrance to the boating lake park. This is not the only CYCLISTS DISMOUNT sign on the route; there is a second one where it crosses the Bristol Road. There is in fact a much better parallel route along Charfield Close, which is lit, and finished with brand new bitmac for the very few motorised vehicles

that use it. It is possible to cross Bournville Lane safely here to reach the park (I've been doing it for many years), and the greenway continues on the opposite side.

Signage is sporadic, which makes following the route using the signs completely impossible. An absent sign on Woodbrooke Grove resulted in me carrying on up Middlepark Drive, rather than turning right on to Manor House Drive as I should have done.

But despite its faults, it is a pleasant route and will appeal to local families with young children who don't care that they can't ride very far. Some may even use it as part of a commute, though the absence of lighting would make that not so pleasant in the winter. Would I use it? Possibly. It runs parallel to part of a route I take from time to time to get me out into the countryside, and it would allow me to cut out some cycling that is not very enjoyable.

Robert Latham.

(Unabridged blog post with photos on the Push Bikes website - <http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/blog/merritts-brook-greenway>)


## Join Pushbikes

Birmingham is starting to plan better 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. With the Birmingham Cycle Revolution

approaching its second stage, it is even more important that we influence local planners and Centro and local councils to build good quality infrastructure that increases the safety of cyclists.

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

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

## Push Bikes Members' Discounts:

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Red Kite Cycles	Shirley (B90 3DX)	Bikes
Sprocket Cycles	Digbeth (B5 5TH)	None
On Your Bike	Digbeth (B5 6HY)	Bikes
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