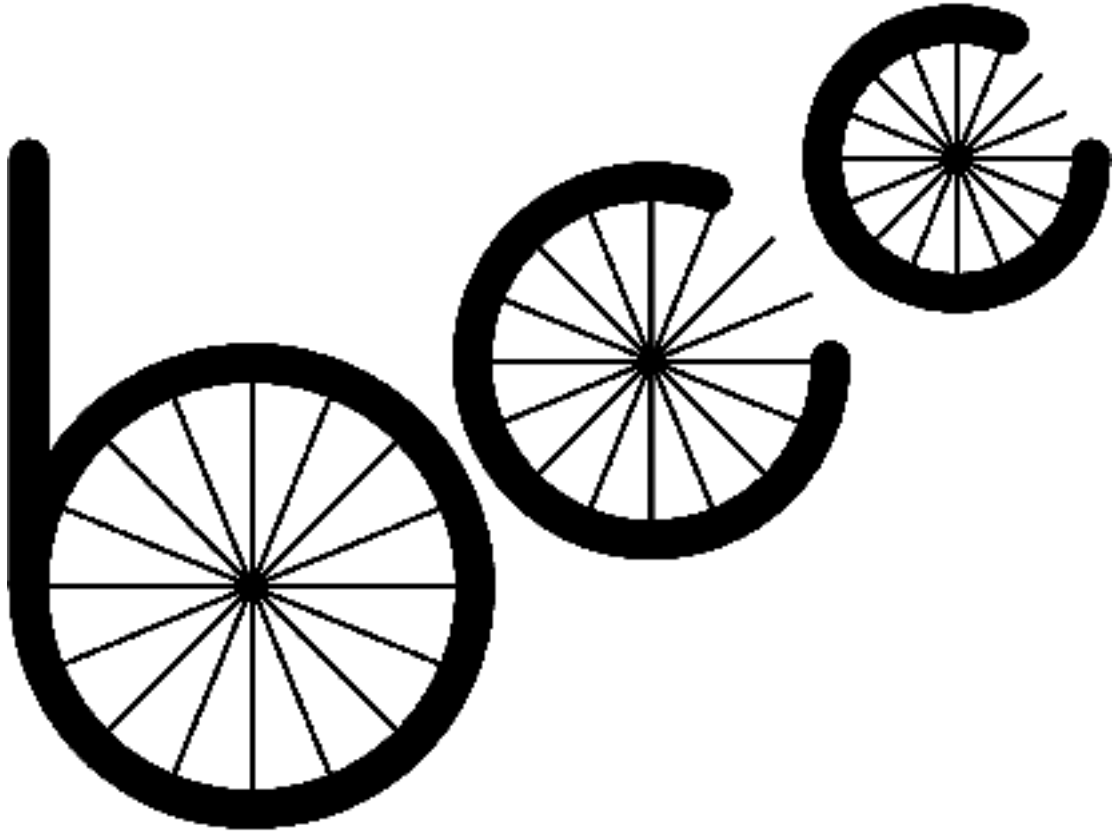


Cycling in Bristol

Strategies for a sustainable future



Bristol Cycling Campaign

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1. Introduction

Significant advances have been made in promoting cycling in Bristol in the last four years. Cycle journeys to work have increased by 27% since the first Local Transport Plan was produced in 2001, and we recognise the part the Avon area authorities have played in achieving this, together with the efforts of stakeholders in the voluntary, campaign and business community. But there remain serious challenges to be addressed if cycling is to become a realistic transport alternative for most Bristolians. The major problems of congestion, excess speed and dependence on the car still need to be addressed.

Unsustainable developments in Bristol and neighbouring local authorities continue to undermine sustainable transport solutions. Waste, in the form of spuriously designed infrastructure produced in little or no consultation with cyclists must be eliminated.

2. National Policy

The government's recent White Paper, "Transport: A Network for 2030" highlights the need for a more flexible approach to promoting cycling as a form of transport. It encourages local authorities to:

- adopt local targets to increasing cycling;
- work with stakeholders in the voluntary sector.

3. Resources

As we stated in the introduction, surveys have shown that cycling to work has increased by 27% in Bristol. The local authorities must ensure that this increase in cycling is matched by an increase in resources. By using funding from parking charges and penalties, the budget for cycle schemes and/or council resources should also be increased by 27% from 2001 levels. We want to see a "Cycling Champion" for Greater Bristol who is a high visibility, charismatic figure that will promote all the benefits cycling has to offer.

4. Better cycle facilities

We consider that quality of cycle facilities is more important than quantity. In particular, the location of cycle routes needs to be carefully considered with regard to safety, convenience and encouraging use. The 'Showcase' bus concept provides a good model of infrastructure improvements that could be applied to cycle routes through:

- targeting funds to whole routes - avoiding a piecemeal approach - by joining

locations that could encourage large numbers of cycle trips;

- developing a clear strategy for how the benefits of such infrastructure could be maintained, in particular through enforcing parking restrictions (see section on Parking Free Routes below);
- better road maintenance including a reporting scheme for potholes and obstructions on the road;
- Promotion, through clear signing and initiatives. The legible city programme for walking in the city centre provides a good example;
- Avoiding granting permission for poorly designed cycle parking - good examples include “Sheffield” and “Manchester” stands in well-sheltered locations such as at Sainsbury’s on Winterstoke Road, and secure cycle lockers at rail stations such as at Severn Tunnel Junction.



Sheltered parking at Winterstoke Rd Sainsburys

Fundamentally, poorly designed or over-narrow cycle lanes (e.g. The Portway at Shirehampton) can be more dangerous than roads, particularly when squeezed between parked cars. Reduction of traffic speed is of greater priority.

5. Design Standards

Currently cycle lane standards are poorly applied. Current routes should be reviewed to ensure that a minimum width for cycle lanes has been applied. Future lanes should only be considered where such minimum widths are feasible. A hierarchy of infrastructure should not be rigidly applied to the exclusion of a more flexible approach. Off-road routes are suited to certain locations, and on-road cycle and contraflow lanes are preferred in others.



Good segregation: Pritchard Street, St. Pauls

On road cycle lanes

The importance of only considering on-road cycle lanes where parking enforcement will be effective cannot be overstated. For corridors which attract large numbers of public transport and cycling trips, the introduction of red-routes should be considered. Physical segregation of on-road lanes from other traffic offers a simple solution to ‘designing out’ parking problems.

6. Parking Free Routes



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London has experimented with on-street parking bans as a means of enforcing urban clearways, with loading and parking prohibited during the day. The concept has recently been introduced in Birmingham, where it has successfully been applied to their Showcase bus routes. It is recognised that even low levels of unauthorised parking deter both buses and cyclists from using bus lanes, resulting in a lose-lose situation: no benefit to sustainable transport and reduced highway capacity despite loss of parking for everyone else. Providing better enforcement is therefore a key element of successful red-routes; in London this has been achieved through on-bus and fixed camera enforcement (http://www.tfl.gov.uk/streets/bp_enforcement.shtml). Here, the bus driver would press a button to take a digital photo of illegally parked cars, which would be timestamped and used as evidence for enforcement. Bristol Cycle Campaign pledges its support to these measures.

7. Small-scale, simple, and cost-effective measures

Too often, large sums are spent on grand transport projects where a larger number of smaller, well-targeted schemes would be better. Below are a number of examples of the latter.



Cycle ramps

Bristol should follow German cities by introducing a simple and cheap measure of aiding cyclists: installing ramps on steps. A pair of metal rails secured onto the top of sets of steps helps cyclists push bikes up and down with ease. A few have been introduced in Bristol (eg bridge across Cumberland Road near Gefle Close) but more would help.

Use of parks

Getting in Gear – the right signals

Small measures applied in multiple locations can often be highly effective. Where a cycle lane turns left at a signalised junction, the cycle lane should be a priority 'give way' lane, rather than having to wait at the lights. Small signs could be fitted to the traffic signals informing cyclists of this.

Advance stop lines and lanes, and magnetic cycle detection are a useful form of priority, although these must always be finished with coloured surfacing to remind motorists of their presence.

Recreational cycling is a cheap, healthy activity for those living in cities. But Bristol's parks could be much more of an asset in encouraging leisure journeys. The council must look to remove prohibition of cycling in parks where conflict with pedestrians would be low. For example, at several locations on Durdham Down, the footpaths are wide enough to

drive a bus down, yet cyclists cannot use them and are forced to use the busy roads such as Westbury Road and Clifton Down Road.

Improving the Centre

The centre has become a major route for both cyclists and pedestrians, yet conflict has not been resolved. Many pedestrians appear unaware that cyclists are permitted. Improved signage should be installed to alert pedestrians to the legitimate presence of cyclists.

Secure parking at smaller rail stations

The Council should work with rail bodies to obtain secure cycle parking at stations where this does not already exist and which are unstaffed. Theft and vandalism of cycles is still a major problem, deterring cycling by increasing the time taken to lock up bikes, by having to carry the extra weight of heavy-duty locks and by the threat of vandalism.

Supporting shops who want to be cycle-friendly

A fund for small businesses, especially shops, who want to provide cycle parking should be set up and publicised. Guidance on types of stands that are most secure, such as Sheffield stands should be provided. Such a scheme has been promoted successfully by Lancashire County Council (<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/twise/btw/bikeaid.asp>).

8. Working with the voluntary sector

Several organisations involved in promoting cycling are based in Bristol. We believe that these bodies are a great asset to developing a sustainable transport strategy. Ways in which Bristol Cycling Campaign could contribute through working with the council in the future include:

- Identifying areas where infrastructure improvements should be targeted, by consulting our membership;
- Accessing funding for specific initiatives, for example through the World Car Free Network, of which we are a member;
- Developing other promotion initiatives. For example, we would like to offer cyclists safety reflectors, hi-vis waistcoats or other items promoting safety either free or at substantial discounts at public events through joint funding with local authorities.



Cycle facilities at Gardiner Haskins, Lawrence Hill, implemented in consultation with Bristol Cycling Campaign

9. Car dependency

Bristol is still far too reliant on the car for journeys that could, in many cases, be transferred to bike. Cycling will never achieve its potential where roads are choked with fast moving heavy traffic. Radical measures need to be taken to reduce the effect of traffic on road casualties, pollution, climate change and the social life of the city:

- Within the next five years, Bristol's first car-free housing scheme should be developed in or near the city centre. Car free developments have been completed in European cities such as Freiburg, Ghent and Edinburgh, generally being most successful where they 'design out' the car rather than introduce prohibitive measures. This should be mainly social housing, and would act as a showcase for car-free living across the UK, raising Bristol's sustainability profile;
- Prioritise urban regeneration for high-density housing where opportunities for developing cycling are greatest, and within proximity to urban rail stations and quality bus corridors;
- Introduce congestion charging and/or significant increases in parking charges, hypothecating all additional revenue towards sustainable modes of transport, as London has done;
- Extend the concept of safe routes to schools and home zones by following London's lead in introducing a 20mph network across large numbers of Bristol's roads.
- Ensuring that for new developments Section 106 agreements are employed to secure the large amounts of the type of cycle facilities described here;
- Setting a challenging target for the number of firms where travel plans will be introduced annually.

Getting in Gear – parking mad

Gloucester Road in Redland has seen large increases in cycling since Showcase buses were introduced; well above the average for Bristol. This highlights the importance of reducing dangerous parking in cycle lanes to encouraging cyclists. However, no amount of traffic wardens seem able to prevent illegal parking, and hence the red-route/camera enforcement package is recommended above.

10. Summary: Four Ways to a Greener Bristol

Championing cycling

The increase in cycling in Greater Bristol needs to be met with an equivalent re-allocation of budget. Key to this will be a high-profile figurehead who can capture the public's interest and promote cycling at every opportunity, both to

the public and within the local authorities. Investment in infrastructure needs to be both committed to developing 'whole route' cycling corridors as well as implementing low-tech improvements in a large number of sites.

Reducing conflict

Highest priority for safety improvements should be reducing the conflict with parking and parked vehicles. Enforcement needs to be 100% to be an effective deterrent, and on high-volume public transport and cycling corridors parking free routes should be implemented.

Forging links

The voluntary sector, which includes Bristol Cycling Campaign, represents a wealth of first-hand knowledge and experience on cycling matters in Greater Bristol, and must be included much more in both an advisory role and in decision making, in line with new Government advice. Joint-funded initiatives between local authority, voluntary and campaign groups should be explored.

Car-free futures

The single greatest issue for Bristol Cycling Campaign is dependency on unsustainable motorised transport, particularly the private car. As well as supporting radical restraint measures, we also want to see the local authorities commit to the completion of at least one car-free development in the city during the next four years.

About This Document

Bristol Cycling Campaign currently has approximately 400 members who represent a wealth of experience of cycling issues across the city. The campaign takes a radical approach to solving the city's transport problems, and members have been instrumental in promoting World Car Free day, held each September, the city's "Switch Off" campaign and most recently contesting Wessex Trains' restrictions on peak hour cycle carriage.

Cycling in Bristol was produced by several members of the Bristol Cycling Campaign collective, with invitations for input put out to all our members. It was approved at our monthly meetings. We hope those who formulate transport policy in Bristol recognise the need for a radical agenda and work with us in promoting the "Four Ways to a Greener Bristol" above.

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