

FROM THE CHAIR OF CTC

FEWER FARCILITIES

*Two campaigns conferences this summer persuaded **David Cox** that better cycling provision is achievable*



FIRST OF ALL some very good news: Paul Tuohy, our Chief Executive, came back to work in July after a serious motorcycle crash in April. Paul has had a remarkable recovery thanks to the skills of the Royal London Hospital and his own determination and energy. Needless to say he was on Twitter throughout but he is now pedal cycling again. I'd like to thank Carol McKinley, our Operations Director, and the whole staff team who have maintained momentum and kept CTC on track over a busy few months.

For me, June was cycling conference season. Sharing experiences with other cycling advocates boosts my confidence that a modal shift to cycling to create a better, healthier and more sustainable world is entirely possible.

It is easy to get downhearted as a cycling advocate. While the political profile of cycling is higher than ever, and investment is going into improving cycling in major British cities, towns and rural areas seem to be missing out. The investment is minor compared to the vast amount spent on infrastructure trying to speed up motor vehicles. Too much provision is below par; either unlikely to be safe enough to attract new people to cycling or discontinuous, narrow and poorly surfaced 'shared use' of pedestrian pavements.

So it was inspirational to be able to go to VeloCity in Nantes in June (see p12) to find out what other parts of the world are doing to transform themselves through cycling. We were welcomed by Johanna Rolland, Mayor of Nantes, a city whose ambition to be green and people-friendly is evident as soon as you arrive. Cars are discouraged from the central area. Investment in pedestrianisation, cycling, trams and buses has been key to regeneration.

Adrian Lord and I did a presentation about Birmingham's Cycling Revolution: 'Motown to Biketown?' But compared to Taipei, Sao Paulo, Paris or Nantes (let alone northern Europe), my home city's achievements thus far are modest. The takeaway messages for me were that, firstly, cities and regions with devolved autonomy do better at resolving



● UK cycling provision needs a fresh direction. And not this one!

transport and cycling issues. Secondly, that political will, vision and leadership are essential to challenge car dominance and transform a city. Finally, that safe, inclusive cycling, like walking, is a human right that challenges transport poverty and helps regenerate public space and local economies.

Back in the UK, I went to the Cycle City Active City conference in Newcastle, and then to a Sustrans meeting in Manchester. It was good to meet colleagues and catch up with cycling developments in other cities. There is some great commitment and high quality research. I was most impressed with a presentation from Steven Pleasant, CEO of Tameside Council and health lead for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. He

set cycling in the context of economic development, public service reform and healthy societies. Congestion costs £1.3billion per annum. Areas adjacent to key commuter routes exceed EU pollution targets. Healthy life expectancy in some parts of Greater Manchester is as low as 57 years. They have set the ambitious target of 10% of all journeys being made by bicycle by 2025, and this is achievable with sustained investment. It won't be achieved by shared-use pavements or narrow lanes painted on major roads.

There is all to play for, and we at CTC are determined to continue to build the momentum to make cycling an everyday and aspirational form of transport for everybody across the UK. ●

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