



Newcastle, 16 June 2015

Dear Nick

Thank you very much for your thoughtful letter dated 16 March 2014 in reply to our communication from 30 November 2014. Your warm and encouraging words are very welcome; and it is good to hear about the direction you envisage the city to take under your leadership. In the spirit of mutual cooperation we would like to share some thoughts (based on a handful of very recent experiences \*) with you.

We are thrilled that Newcastle has decided to go on a city-wide transport transition. For that to happen smoothly, we feel that spending more time on planning is crucial. That is why we must repeat our suggestion: it is **now** fundamentally important that the council employs an **urban expert** to manage progress inclusively and steers a sound technical course based on knowledge and evidence. The council is putting a lot of hard work into trying to design for cycling but this is very difficult without the expertise of such a person.

This urban expert, we suggest, would oversee the setting up, and then preside over, a **plan for the transport transition** incorporating principles of *Sustainable Safety*. This expert would lead a special team dealing with:

- **Planning the transport network** - road classification, network management, neighbourhood zoning and local movement plans (cutting rat runs to tame unnecessary motor through traffic to open up streets for people)
- **Engineering the future** - training engineers and planners, project management, cycle infrastructure design, tackling the out-dated processes still in place
- **Empowering community engagement** - setting up a sustainable transport forum with an inclusive chair and good governance
- **Councillor training** - council policy, community engagement, transition processes

We think you understand that we are the voice of Newcastle's cycling future envisaging a city where people of all ages and abilities can cycle in comfort and with convenience. The current cycling conditions are dire, dangerous and often made difficult by the lack of

understanding of what's truly needed to enable inclusive cycling for everyone. We congratulate anyone who is currently brave and fit enough to persist with it. It must be noted however, that we have also heard of many who have tried to cycle and then stopped due to aggressive road environments, lack of safe space for cycling and protected cycleways in places that they want to go to.

We hope you find this continued exchange useful and hope that you do not mind us repeating some of the original asks from November. It is solely because we feel these are necessary for Newcastle's success. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks and with my best wishes,

Katja Leyendecker

[newcycling.org](http://newcycling.org)

Chair

**\* Reference list, we would like to refer to these recent examples:**

**John Dobson Street (NCN725)** - good conceptual design, but still awaiting to see details, traffic lights, reducing motor dominance, network connections, cycling safety during construction  
NCN725, city centre 'place and movement' plan, car parking strategy

<http://newcycling.org/john-dobson-street-formal-order/>

**Clayton Street** - quality of cycle-friendly design and the introduction of new infrastructure to the public / road user is lacking <http://newcycling.org/contraflow-design-controversy/>

**Barras Bridge plans (NCN725)** - good plans but again: bigger picture lost, city centre 'place and movement' plan is vital so that people can access shops and facilities, car parking strategy missing (no link, as plans are not in the public domain)

**Great North Road Regent to Broadway (SCR4)** - conceptually fine, but implementation is very messy, many design details are wrong or not clear, cycling safety compromised during construction, and bigger things wrong still (slip road, light settings, including public realm and convenience for walking) <http://newcycling.org/caring-designs-are-not-always-sharing/>  
and photos from 10 June 2015

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/katsdekker/sets/72157654342712401>

**Brandling Park (SCR4)** - wider area approach good, but design not child/cycle friendly as lacking ambition to traffic reduction and details, (construction implementation worries)

<http://newcycling.org/brandling-park-plans-including-village-and-school/>