



Information campaigns (6/6)

We strongly believe that it is most important to only promote something that is worth promoting. We therefore support promotional campaign only if these are coupled with physical infrastructure improvements (through points made in parts 1 to 5 of this series).

The reason for this course of action is that we have looked at the reasons why people don't cycle. Research tells us exactly why the UK is not a cycle nation. A three year sociological study "Understanding Walking and Cycling" completed in 2011 concluded that people are put off by today's road conditions. For most people, cycling therefore feels alien and not normal – and that, again, is linked to the lack of road space that's currently afforded to cycling.

This manifests itself in people saying "there are no cycleways or safe route; I simply don't know where to go; it doesn't feel safe". So. in order to 'normalise' cycling and thereby making it available to everyone, much more than just information initiatives are needed.

Once Newcastle has constructed one of their seven planned Strategic Cycle Routes and provided the infrastructure is of good quality, we'd welcome an info initiative that positively promotes this route, makes people aware of it and attracts new users to it. Such an initiative would be a welcome expense and worthwhile expenditure. In general, we'd like to see Newcastle City Council talk more positively and widely about their ambitious plans to develop a cycle network and a more people friendly city centre.

Another example is cycle training. We believe, it is absolutely paramount that children learn to ride a bike – every child should have that chance - yet we think road conditions, road environment and road layouts must change drastically on many routes to school so that children with their parents can enjoy their bike commute to school. Newcastle City Council, through Department for Transport funding, provides cycle training to schools, but due to the lack of safe routes we have very low levels of 'cycling to school' in Newcastle, and countrywide. We'd like to see better walking and cycle routes to school, and to major workplaces, the city centre and shops.

Naturally, we do support creating a cycling culture in our city, and a strong advocacy voice for a liveable, green and healthy city. And we will support any leaflet, event, talk or film that speaks about cycling positively and addresses the bigger picture of inclusive transport and sustainability.



It is also important for information initiatives to address the problem head-on and not tackle secondary causes. Road danger should be tackled by campaigns for better driving rather than through scare campaigns like Newcastle's Ghost Street. Go to the website to see examples of pedal-positive campaigns that talk about transport inclusively and fairly.

The city of Stockholm for example was handing out 'thanks for cycling' goodybags to cyclist. Just imagine, you are stopped and someone says "thank-you for using a bike today". Wouldn't that be great!

Go to our space4cycling webpage for more info

<http://newcycling.org/space4cycling/buildingblocks>

<http://newcycling.org>

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