

Published by the LCC in Brent

Dec/Jan 2008-9

www.brentcyclists.org.uk

Meeting with Matt Winfield of Sustrans

At our meeting on **Wednesday 3 December** we should be talking with Matt Winfield, director of Sustrans in London (his visit was originally scheduled for July but was postponed). Come along to find out what the national cycling and walking charity's plans are for London and how we in LCC can work with them. Meeting details at the end of the newsletter. (Note we will have no meeting in January.)

A chat with the Chief Executive

Koy Thomson, Chief Executive of LCC, talked to members of Brent Cyclists at our November meeting on the subject of dealing with the political realities of the new mayor and GLA in control of Transport for London, and the balance of power in London Councils (the organisation in which the boroughs meet, which also wields some influence over roads policy). All these organisations are now under Conservative control. What will this mean for cycling?

Koy said he had been surprised that Boris has not tried to hide the fact that he is a cyclist, and that it has not proved to be irrelevant to his attitudes to transport. This is evidenced in his first quasi-policy paper on transport, which is called *Way to Go* and is available from the Mayor's website (www.london.gov.uk). In this Boris has said clearly that he wants to reduce car-dependency, and that he believes "a cycle-ised city is a civilised city" He is maintaining the cycling budget at his predecessor's level of £55 million, but indications are that it will be spent differently in the future. The LCN+ programme is widely viewed to have failed in its objectives, and future expenditure is likely to be on a cycle hire scheme similar to the Paris model, and on something called "cycling superhighways" for commuters. However, it is not at all clear what these will actually be in reality.

At London Councils, Koy has had discussions with the Transport Committee chairman Daniel Moylan. He is keen on the concept of reducing "street clutter", and both he and Boris use the language of "allowing choice" rather than "prioritising" when talking about the transport modes. Koy pointed out the problems with this: transport is not a free market, and one person's choice to drive tends to limit other people's choices in walking or cycling. Nevertheless, it is important to understand this language that is being used. Cyclists generally want a more permeable city, and Moylan, in his other job as Deputy Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council, has been pushing forward the experiment there to allow cyclists to go the "wrong way" down one-way streets, without special lanes. The fact that there are now pro-cycling politicians in the most influential positions in transport in London gives Koy considerable hope for the next few years.

Questions to Koy focused on understanding the differences between the situation in inner London, where cycling seems to be booming, and the outer suburbs, where there has not been much change. The patterns of movement and demand in outer London, and the barriers that exist, need to be better understood to provide the stimulus to increased cycling there. Koy pointed to the success that some other LCC local activists have had in getting their "community leaders", who had not tried it before, cycling. This has sometimes proved a good way for LCC groups to "make friends and influence people", and he urged us to try it.

It was an interesting meeting with much food for thought, and we expressed our thanks to Koy for having cycled up from Southwark to see us. His experience of Brent's roads had given him a new perspective as well.

WAY TO GO!

Planning for better transport



MAYOR OF LONDON

Is the cover of "Way to Go" evidence that the Mayor is putting cycling at the top of his transport agenda?

Brent Cross Crickwood News

Representatives of Brent Cyclists and Barnet Cyclists met with the development director, Jonathan Joseph, and his transport consultants on 21 October to discuss cycle provision in and around the proposed development. Also present were transport officers from Brent and Barnet Councils. The latter were very quiet, but the Brent officers were supportive of the points we had to make.

Over

While the developer and his consultants seemed to have some worthy intentions with regard to encouraging cycling (and walking), their grasp of the subject was woeful, to the almost comical extent of the consultant announcing that one of his proposed cycle routes through the development involved cyclists getting in a lift! This would be funny if the issue were not so serious. The developer, in order to redesign the Staples Corner junction to smooth the flow of traffic, wants to make it impossible for cyclists to travel from north to south along the A5 (except via the highly dangerous and unsuitable flyover). The alternative being offered is this route involving a lift. A Brent officer commented that he did not believe a route with a lift would conform to London cycle design guidance.

Then there is a new pedestrian and cycle promenade being offered along a re-aligned River Brent, but where this route emerges onto the A5 at Brent Park Road it will offer absolutely no-where to go except back into the development area, because the A5 will, under the plans, be blocked southward at Staples Corner, and still, as it is now, blocked by the concrete wall of the flyover against continuing northwards or westwards. The response of the developers to comments on this, and similar issues, that these are “outside the development area”, is totally unsatisfactory. They have defined the development area themselves for their own convenience, and have not adequately considered the destinations and desires of pedestrians and cyclists.

We hope that we have persuaded the development team to reconsider these issues. We hope further meetings will occur; in the meantime Brent and Barnet cyclists have put a list of our requirements to the developer. These include:

- Maintaining and making safer for cycling the direct route at ground level along the A5
- Provision of practical, direct routes through the development which do not involve steps or lifts or have unnecessary delays due to push-button crossings or needing to cross roads for short distances
- Improvement of the north-south A5 alternative via Claremont Road
- A route along the River Brent (E-W) which can be accessed properly at both ends
- An new safe crossing of the North Circular Road
- Access to the existing shopping centre from the north
- Another E-W route south of the North Circular, across Clitterhouse Playing Fields, linking to the A5

Apart from the A5, all this is in Barnet, and Brent Council has no real control over what happens. However, Brent could probably seek money from the developers (known as Section 106 money) for work to defray undesirable effects of the development on Brent (i.e. traffic).

Brent Cyclists has collected a petition signed by about 150 Brent residents calling on the council to oppose the development in its current form. Many of these signatures were collected at our highly popular stall at the Queens park Festival in September. We are in the process of submitting this to the council, who should then commission a report by officers, which will lead to discussion by the council.

Several other voluntary groups, such as Brent Friends of the Earth and the Campaign for Better Transport are opposing the development for similar or different environmental reasons.

Additionally, through the prompting of BC committee member Neil Nerva, our member of the GLA, Navin Shah, put the following question to the Mayor in September: *Would the Mayor wish for the new Brent Cross development to be accessible by bicycle? What discussions has he had with the London Borough of Barnet about transport provision? Is the Mayor aware that Barnet set a deadline for comments on the consultation before the Transport Assessment was released? Does the Mayor think this is a holistic and successful approach to planning a major development?*

The answer from the Mayor was:

It is important that the Brent Cross Cricklewood development proposals are fully accessible by bicycle. Transport for London is in active dialogue with Barnet Council officers and the developer on these proposals and will be responding to the transport assessment which was recently submitted to Barnet Council and will be formally consulted upon in the next few months.

But at time of writing this, mid-November, the Transport Assessment is still not publicly available.

Forthcoming events

Saturday 29th November: Ride: Chalfont St Giles

10:00am outside Queensbury Underground Station. A ride to Bucks, crossing the Grand Union Canal at Harefield, with a lunch stop and then return via Northwood. 35 miles; all welcome.

Wednesday 3 December: Brent Cyclists Meeting with Matt Winfield of Sustrans. 7.30 pm Samaritans Centre, 1 Leopold Road NW10. Preceded by business meeting at 6.30; all welcome to attend

Wednesday 4 February: Brent Cyclists Meeting 7.30 pm Samaritans Centre, 1 Leopold Road NW10. Preceded by business meeting at 6.30; all welcome to attend

For further details, see the website, or contact our events co-ordinator Paul Hayward on 07762 279149

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