



The Voice
of
Cycling Campaign
for
North Bedfordshire

Issue 88
October 2020

*Will future travel
in
BEDFORD
herald a new*

**'GOLDEN AGE
FOR
CYCLING'?**

CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE

Founded 1992

Committee

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@cyclebedford



cycle_bedford

Campaigning Representation

CCNB was represented on the following past committees:

Bedford Cycle Strategy Group (disbanded July 2018)

Bedford Stations Travel Plan Steering Group

Bedford Hospital Bicycle Users Group

and was a key stakeholder on the preparation and implementation of the:

Bedford Green Wheel

Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

It is affiliated to  (<http://www.cyclenation.org.uk>)

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Editorial

The coronavirus lockdown on 23 March 2020 resulted over the following two months in a significant fall in vehicular transport on the roads and a huge surge in people cycling and walking. This reduced the level of pollution and carbon emissions, helping to improve the health of the population and reduce climate change.

traffic has now reached the levels previously seen

With the lockdown eased over the last few months traffic has now reached the levels previously seen and there has already been a UK tail-off in the number of people cycling (see pages 6/7) and pollution and carbon emissions again approaching previous levels.

Atmospheric carbon dioxide measurements by the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii in early October at 411.16ppm still show a slight increase (0.7%) since last year and 6.3% higher than 10 years ago.

Although the coronavirus pandemic has had an enormous effect on the world's population and passed its peak in most countries, a second wave is now occurring in many areas and the virus is likely to continue to have a profound effect for many years to come.

In the meantime, creeping up rapidly is the big one, Global Climate Change, with only a few years left to try and stop it becoming irreversible.

The UK has not been the hottest in the world during 2020. In July Bagdad recorded a temperature high of 51.7°C and Death Valley in California 54.4°C.

Over the first half of the year even Siberia in Russia experienced temperatures significantly higher than normal, with one area on one day registering a record high of 38°C, melting the permafrost and starting intense forest fires releasing significant greenhouse gas emissions. High temperatures have also heated the Arctic at double the rate than in the past causing significant ice and glacier melting. If the whole of the ice sheet melted, although unlikely, sea levels would rise by six metres.

It is therefore extremely important to achieve the government's target of zero carbon by 2050, preferably by 2030 (Bedford borough target).

In Bedford borough the main generator of emissions, is carbon dioxide, given off by motor vehicles. The latest government 2018 figure for the

creeping up rapidly is the big one, Global Climate Change

borough is 41%, a value which has progressively increased since 2011.

Cycling (or walking) will not solve the climate crisis but will help to reduce pollution and go a long way in improving the health of the nation.

It was therefore gratifying over the summer during the easing of the coronavirus lockdown to hear the government become serious about diet, exercise and green transport with the announcement of a strategy to reduce obesity and plans for a cycling and walking revolution.

The government in the document '**Gear Change – A bold vision for cycling and walking**' (page 8) stated that in order to see the increases in cycling wanted, the quality of cycling infrastructure installed must drastically improve. It went on to say that:

Inadequate cycling infrastructure discourages cycling and wastes public money. Much cycling infrastructure in Britain is inadequate. It reflects a brief, conscious or otherwise, that hardly anyone cycles, that cycling is unimportant and that cycles must take no meaningful space from more important road users, such as motor vehicles and pedestrians. It offers little protection from motor vehicles and gives up at the points where any difficulty is faced or inconvenience to motorists is risked. These are often, of course, precisely the places where cycling provision is most needed.

Cycling will not solve the climate crisis but will help

At the same time as the above announcement the long awaited update of the Department for Transport's '**Cycle Infrastructure Design Guide**' was published (page 11). This sets out the much higher standards required for schemes if they are to receive funding. These will be enforced by a new inspectorate, **Active Travel England** (page 12). It will be expected that all Local Authorities and developers will utilise the guidance regardless of whether they are seeking Government funding.

It is hoped that these initiatives will result in the installation of better cycle infrastructure. In poll after poll the main reason for not cycling is the perception that it is not safe particularly in today's heavy motor traffic.

Bedford borough has excellent cycling policies and a reasonable cycle network but there is still much to do especially to resolve CCNB's three main campaigns - two-way cycling in the High Street (page 14) and safe crossings of Bromham Road railway bridge (page 28) and the A6/A421 junction (page 30).

Finally to finish on a positive note, CCNB congratulates Slovenian cyclist, Tadej Pogačar, for becoming at 21 years old the youngest winner since 1904 of the recent delayed 2020 Tour de France.

Cycling during Coronavirus Pandemic

To monitor the use of the transport system during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Department for Transport since 1 March has provided daily statistics on transport use by mode. These can be seen on:

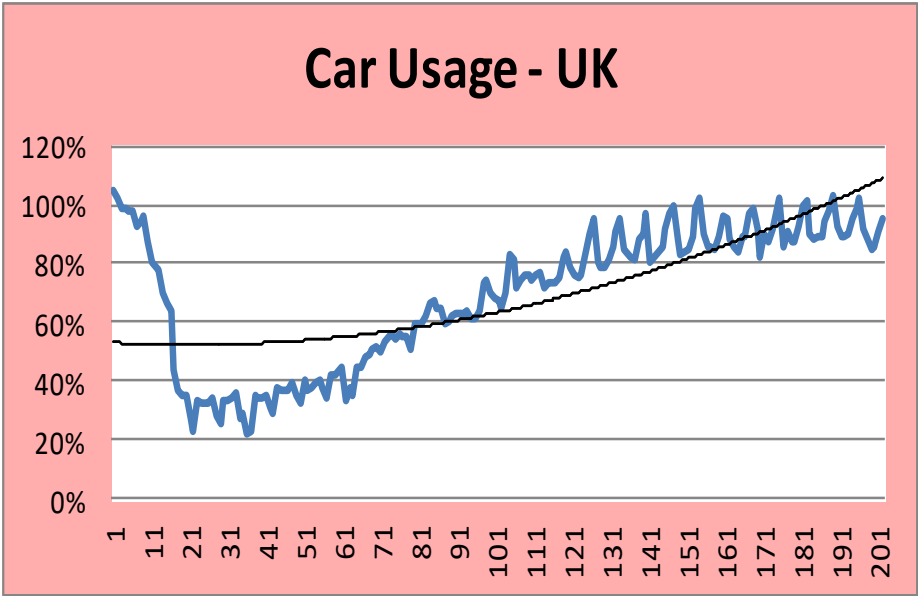
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic?utm_source=b20e6bae-2226-4a1d-be74-83b46c0db187&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

For the two months following the lockdown on 23 March 2020 there was a significant fall in motor traffic and a large upsurge in people cycling and walking with car use down by 80% and cycling almost doubling in the week and trebling at the weekend.

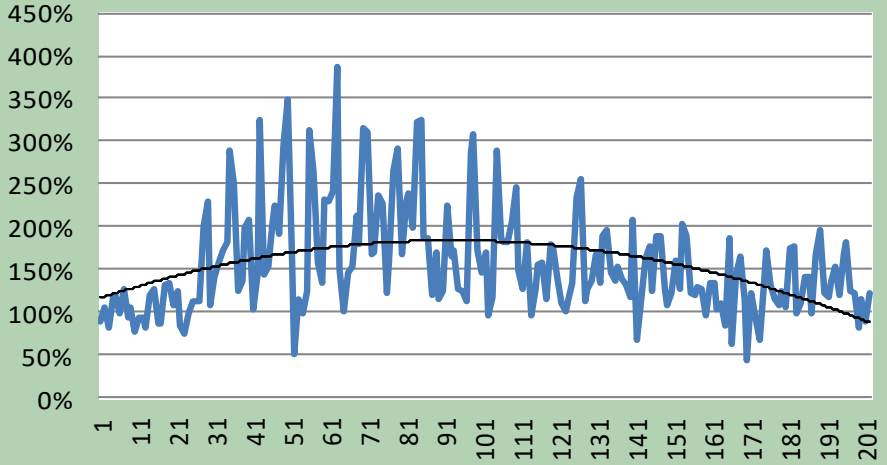
This helped reduce the level of pollution and carbon emissions, improving the health of the population and helping to reduce climate change.

Following the progressive easing of the lockdown over the last few months traffic has now seen a corresponding increase to almost previous levels and a tail-off in the number of people cycling.

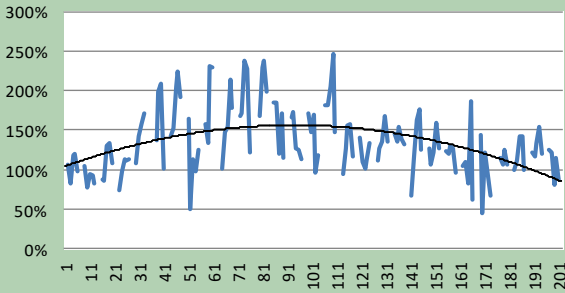
The figures below and right show UK car use, total English cycle use and split into weekend and weekday use for the period between the beginning of March and the end of September 2020.



Cyclist Usage - England

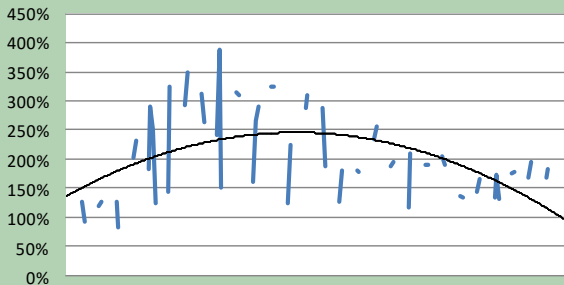


Weekday Cyclist Usage - England



Weekday cycling in England

Weekend Cyclist Usage - England



Weekend cycling in England

Government's Summer Announcements

Cycling is still uppermost on the Government's mind with continued announcements being made over the summer period with the promise that sufficient funding would be made available to follow through all the actions proposed.

Following on from the 6 May 2020 announcement in parliament by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, that the UK is looking ahead to life after the coronavirus lockdown with a new '**Golden Age for Cycling**', a speech on the economy on 30 June on the theme 'Build, Build, Build' mentioned a forthcoming '**massive new plan for cycleways**'.

The plan finally arrived on 28 July 2020 when he repeated his previous '**Golden Age for Cycling**' by announcing that we had to "shift gears and press ahead with our biggest and boldest plans yet to boost active travel", and take the opportunity to continue the momentum and growth in cycling that has been one of the few silver linings of the corona pandemic.

The ambitious plans on increasing active travel to help reduce the obesity of the population and the health of the nation were put forward in a document '**Gear Change - A bold vision for cycling and walking**'.



The DfT publication can be downloaded at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

A few of the actions in the document under four themes are:

Cycle Infrastructure

The commitment to long-term funding, to include improving the National Cycle Network and building “thousands of miles” of new protected cycle routes in towns and cities.

Highway Code Consultation

The opening of a consultation on the Highway Code (page 10).

Cycle Vouchers

The £50 voucher scheme to help people get their old bike road worthy announced by the government in May 2020 finally came alive at 11.45 on Tuesday 28 July 2020. The website immediately crashed due to overload but in the end the first 50,000 vouchers out of 500,000 were given out within the hour. The delay had been due to a wait for bike repairers who had been overwhelmed since the start of the lockdown to have some breathing space. The second wave is still outstanding (Oct).

Bike repairers have to register their interest in taking the voucher. In Bedford only Cycle King in Greyfriars and Halfords in Rope Walk have agreed to participate in the scheme at the present time.

For guidance see the website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fix-your-bike-voucher-scheme-apply-for-a-voucher>

E-Bikes

A national e-bike programme is to be set up to help those who are older, have to travel long distances or are less fit to take up cycling.

GPs

To help people to live healthier lives a new approach will be piloted in selected places with poor health rates by encouraging GPs to prescribe cycling, with patients able to access bikes through their local surgery to make them more fitter.

New Cycle Infrastructure Design Guide

The long awaited updated cycle infrastructure design guide was published in July 2020 (page 11) to raise quality standards.

Cycle Training

To encourage people to continue to take up cycling, cycle training will be made available for every child and adult who wants it, accessible through schools, local authorities or direct from cycle training schemes.

Active Travel England

To create a new commissioning body and inspectorate (page 12).

Highway Code Consultation

The Department for Transport opened a consultation on 28 July 2020 on a review of the Highway Code to improve the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and horse-riders. In the foreword to the document it states:

“We are seeing record numbers of people taking up cycling and the Highway Code needs to keep pace with how people are using the roads. We want to encourage people to think about how they travel and choose more sustainable and active modes. As we look to the future it is sensible that our transport recovery plans support our goals to decarbonise, and to improve air quality and public health. This takes account of how people’s travel habits and preferences have changed as a result of coronavirus, and how we can embed the active travel benefits that we are seeing in both our cities and rural communities. Safety is a key factor in determining that choice, so the changes proposed in this review of the Highway Code focus on improving safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders and will initiate a positive shift in user behaviour.”

The review has therefore focussed on the vulnerable groups mentioned above with specific consideration on overtaking, passing distances, cyclist and pedestrian priority at junctions, opening vehicle doors and responsibility of road users. Three key changes have been proposed through the consultation:

- Introducing a hierarchy of road users - pedestrians, in particular children, older adults and disabled people, cyclists, horse riders, and motorcyclists before other motorised vehicles - which ensures that those road users who can do the greatest harm have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger or threat they may pose to others
- Clarifying existing rules on pedestrian priority on pavements and that drivers and riders should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross the road;
- Establishing guidance on safe passing distances and speeds when overtaking cyclists or horse riders, and ensuring that they have priority at junctions when travelling straight ahead.

As nearly three-quarters of crashes involving cyclists take place at or within 20 metres of junctions, it is hoped that the changes under this rule change in the Highway Code will help make them safer.

The consultation on the review closes on 27 October 2020 and can be downloaded at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904038/consultation-on-a-review-of-the-highway-code.pdf

Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance

At the same time as the Prime Minister's announcement on 28 July 2020 the long awaited update of Local Transport Note 2/08 (October 2008) was published as Note 1/20.

The document has been completely revamped with a list of 22 principles to help practitioners deliver high quality infrastructure based on what has been delivered to date.

The main principles are:

- Cycle infrastructure should be accessible to everyone from 8 to 80 and beyond: it should be planned and designed for everyone. The opportunity to cycle in our towns and cities should be universal.
- Cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians. Where cycle routes cross pavements, a physically segregated track should always be provided.
- At crossings and junctions, cyclists should not share the space used by pedestrians but should be provided with a separate parallel route.
- Cyclists must be physically separated and protected from high volume motor traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them.
- Largely cosmetic interventions which bring few or no benefits for cycling or walking will not be funded from any cycling or walking budget.
- Major 'iconic' items, such as overbridges must form part of wider, properly thought-through schemes.
- Access control measures, such as chicane barriers and dismount signs, should not be used.
- All designers of cycle schemes must experience the roads as a cyclist.

The guidance emphasises the five core design principles which represent the essential requirements to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot, based on best practice both internationally and across the UK - that networks and routes should be **Coherent; Direct; Safe; Comfortable and Attractive**.

Cycle route provision on busy roads which consist of painted markings or cycle symbols will no longer be acceptable and will not be funded. As many as possible of existing painted lanes should be upgraded with physical separation.

Every local authority should have a trained cycling and walking officer in post.

The note can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

Active Travel England

The formation of a new funding body and inspectorate, Active Travel England, was another of the recent announcements made by the government.

Active Travel England will be led by a new national cycling and walking commissioner and will be responsible for holding the cycle and walking budget and enforcing the standards set out in the latest Cycling Infrastructure Design Guidance by examining all applications for funding and refuse any that are not compliant. It will inspect finished schemes and ask for funds to be returned for any which have not been completed as promised or which have not been started or finished by the stipulated times.

From 2021 it will also begin to inspect and publish annual reports on all highway authorities, whether or not they have received government funding, grading them on their performance on active travel and identifying particular failings in their highways for cyclists and pedestrians.

Active Travel England

- **Hold the budget**
- **Approve schemes**
- **Inspect schemes**
- **Training, good practice, knowledge sharing**
- **Inspect highway authorities**
- **Review major planning applications**

There have been two previous bodies over the last 25 years with similar remits. It will be interesting to see how long this new body will last.

National Cycle Strategy (1996-2005)

The Department of Transport (DfT) put forward a National Cycling Strategy (NCS) in July 1996. In the foreword it stated 'it was crystal clear that the bicycle had been underrated and underused in the UK for many years. This was especially true when one looked at other European countries where cycle use had been increased and maintained by deliberate action at both local and national level.'

The NCS represented a major breakthrough in transport thinking in the

UK at the time by saying that promoting cycling priority on the highway, in the centre of towns, at the workplace and in new developments would generate a culture change for cycling. Most people wanted to cycle, especially for local trips and with safer conditions on the road a 'critical mass' of cyclists would be encouraged. Cycling would then feed on its success and make our streets safer and cleaner for everyone. A target was set to double cycling use in the UK by 2002 and to double it again by 2012. Unfortunately the targets were later abandoned.

In 2001 the DfT 'kick started' the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) in announcing a board chaired by Steven Norris to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy.

As the 2002 target for doubling the number of cycle trips over that of 1996 was likely to be missed, a £2m cycling project fund was announced in April 2001. A bid submitted by Bedfordshire County Council was not one of the 138 successful ones (September 2002) out of 567 applications submitted.

An English Regions Cycling Development Team was recruited in 2002 to support the board with responsibility for assessing each area's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Annual Progress Reports (APR). The eastern region (including Bedfordshire) team member was Robert Marshall.

The board announced a further £1 million cycling fund in January 2003. Bids were submitted by the then De Montfort University, Bedford Hospital, Borough Council and Bedfordshire Parish Partnership but the only successful one was for cycle stands in Russell Park to encourage cycling to the park.

Cycling England (2005-2011)

Cycling England was founded in 2005 as an independent body funded by the Department for Transport to replace the National Cycling Strategy Board. It ceased to exist on 1 April 2011 following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending review.

It had the motto:

More people cycling , more safely, more often

In 2005 six towns were selected as Cycling Demonstration Towns to receive European levels of funding (£14m over three years) to significantly increase their cycling levels and in 2008 a further 11 towns/cities were given a further £140m over three years.

Unfortunately Bedford did not put in a bid in either year.

During this period Cycling England administered the new cycle training programme which became 'Bikeability'.

One of its last acts of Cycling England was to publish a report in 2010 on 'Making a Cycling Town', a compilation of practitioners' experiences from the Cycling Demonstration Towns programme.

Government Emergency Active Travel Fund

In the previous newsletter it was reported that Bedford had been allocated a total of £606,000 under the government's emergency Active Travel Fund for Covid-19 made up of £121,000 under a first tranche for temporary cycling and walking infrastructure facilities and £485,000 under a second tranche.

First Tranche

In early June The Mayor announced that to encourage pedestrians and cyclists back into the town centre safely the High Street would be reduced to one lane and the pavements widened as a temporary arrangement until the permanent scheme was introduced in 2021 having been delayed due to the coronavirus lockdown. No mention was made for any improvements along the road for cyclists as per the permanent scheme. The works commenced on Monday 22 June 2020 and were completed some 10 days later.

It was also announced that cyclists would be catered for by introducing new cycle lanes and markings later in the summer on River Street, Greyfriars, Bromham Road and the Embankment (see pages x,y,z)..

CCNB was extremely disappointed to hear in July that the bid for the above schemes put in to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the first allocation resulted in only £30,250 (25%) being received whereas all other Local Authorities (LAs) in the area (Central Beds, Cambs, Luton and MK) received 100 or 110%, a total for the four of £1,309,883.

Bedford was one of only three LAs, Rutland and Blackpool being the other two, out of 78 LAs which received this lower level. The reason given was that the submitted schemes did not meet the guidelines for giving cyclists and pedestrians more space to make them safer against Covid-19 and road traffic. The guidelines had said that advisory cycle lanes and those only marked with white paint on the carriageway as was done along The Embankment, etc would not meet the requirements.

The national cycling charity, Cycling UK, summed up the lower allocations received by saying that "*it believed these councils showed a lack of understanding of what was needed to make active travel look and feel like a natural and safe option for short journeys*", but the charity said it was not too late to do more.

CCNB has been concerned the changes made in the High Street have if anything reduced the safety of cyclists and urged that the permanent schemes which had to be put forward for the second tranche by 7 August 2020 would meet the guidelines:

<https://road.cc/content/news/bedford-wider-pavements-putting-cyclists-danger-275113>

Second Tranche

The borough's bid submitted for the second tranche of £485,000 was for the provision of a new segregated cycleway on Goldington Road from Perkins Road to Norse Road costing £500,000+.



Goldington Road between the two roundabouts looking west

Goldington Road currently has a 1.8 metre wide dual use path on its north side between the two junctions.

As of the beginning of October the DfT's final allocation was still awaited.

UK Bike Sales Increase

UK bike sales have continued to rise over the last few months.

One of the major UK traders, Halfords, continued their earlier good news with bike sales in the 20 week period to 21 August showing a 59.1% rise. Sales of electric bikes and scooters powered much of that growth with a staggering 230% year-on-year increase. These good results were at the expense of motoring.

Equivalent figures for their motoring division showed a 28.6% decline.

Halfords CEO has however sounded a cautious note as to whether or not the Covid-19 inspired boom will continue with the changing weather of the autumn and winter periods although the five weeks to 25 September sales still showed a 46% like-for-like growth.

High Street Improvements!



High Street/St Peter's Street junction

High Street/Mill Street junction



High Street/St Paul's Square north junction

The Embankment Cycle Lanes/Symbols

Cycle symbols were marked along The Embankment and Newnham Road at the beginning of July 2020 as part of the measures to improve the safety of cycle routes as part of the government's Covid-19 Emergency Access Fund. Cycle lanes were marked across the junctions at Albany Road and Shaftsbury Avenue and along the south side of The Embankment from Longholme Way to just west of Shaftsbury Avenue.



The Embankment cycle symbols

Albany Road cycle lane across junction



Greyfriars Cycle Lanes/Symbols

Cycle lanes have been introduced northwards from the old Police Station to Alexandra Place and southwards from just south of Bromham Road to Beckett Street. Cycle symbols have continued the route northwards from Alexandra Place and Bromham Road and southwards from Beckett Street to the Greyfriars roundabout.



*Old Police Station to
Alexandra Place*

*Alexandra Place to
Bromham Road*



*Just south of
Bromham Road
to Beckett Street*

Greyfriars (South)/River Street Cycle Lanes/Symbols

Other cycle lanes have been put on the west side of Greyfriars between the roundabout and Midland Road and a Advanced Stop Line (ASL) and run-in lane at the Midland Road junction. On the west side of River Street from the roundabout to Midland Road are cycle symbols and a lane.

Greyfriars Midland Road junction ASL



Greyfriars (south) west side cycle lane

River Street (west side) cycle lane and ASL at Midland Road junction



Bromham Road Cycle Lanes

The existing cycle lanes outside the British Telecon building in Bromham Road have been extended as advisory lanes on the south side to Hasset Street and on the north side to near Adelaide Square. Cycle lanes have also been added from east of Roise Street to Greyfriars and on the north side from Union Street to The Crescent.



Bromham Road/St Lloyes junction looking west

Bike Advertisement



Colourful bike used as advertising - Leicester

Autonomous Bike Prototype

At CCNB's 2017 AGM your Editor's presentation concluded with a spoof video of an autonomous bicycle taking two young children to school

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSZPNwZex9s>

This has now partly become a reality with a recent prototype developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

MIT has proposed a solution to develop current bike sharing systems even further, with an on-demand autonomous bicycle that they say "can not only operate as part of the shared economy, but also provide a convenience that has not been achieved with other existing solutions."

It believes that docked bike systems frequently have problems rebalancing their fleets due to commuting patterns, or an abundance of bikes in one location, with no docks available. Dockless systems often suffer from over-quantification, which creates additional problems like bikes being parked illegally, tossed in piles, and cluttering pavements.



One of the key aspects in the mechanics of making a bicycle drive autonomously is self-balance. To solve the issue, a mechanism has been designed that provides two different configurations, a mechanical attachment that allows it to shift easily from bicycle mode (when in use) to tricycle mode (when the user dismounts, and the bicycle rides to its next destination).

The current prototype includes motors for its movement in autonomous mode: a drive motor for the propulsion and another motor for steering is operated through a remote control.

https://youtu.be/wXzw_JCKt1Q

20mph Latest News

20mph speed limits continue to be introduced in the borough to help improve the safety of the road network for all users but particularly cyclists and pedestrians.

In July 2020 the Borough proposed a Traffic Regulation Order (TPO) to reduce the speed limit on Saploe Lane, Saploe to 20mph.

In August 2020 a TPO was proposed to make the whole of The Embankment a 20mph speed limit from the High Street to Newnham Avenue/Longholme Way.

It should be noted that the old County Council had planned to reduce the speed limit in the whole of the Castle Road area twelve years ago in 2008 between Newnham Road, Goldington Road, High Street and the riverside including The Embankment but due to their demise in March 2009 it was never carried out. It was then programmed again by the new Bedford Unitary Authority in 2012 but still never completed.



In September 2020 a series of TPOs were announced to reduce the speed limit to 20mph in:

- 1 - Green Lane and Church View in Clapham
- 2 - All roads in the Aspire Estate off Norse Road
- 3 - Caves Lane and surrounding roads

and a temporary one for 12 months in Meadow Lane Cardington while the construction of a commercial glasshouse takes place on land east of Meadow Lane to comply with a planning condition from planning application 18/01502/MAF.

Critical Mass Cycle Rides

Bedford Green Party organised the town's first of a monthly Critical Mass Cycle Ride on Saturday 1 August 2020 on what it was hoped would help promote a better cycling infrastructure in the town and the fact that every cycle on the road is one less car – making for less congestion, fewer climate wrecking emissions, improved health and better air quality. Bedford could be a cycling town and we assert our right to be there! The more cyclists there are, the safer we will be.

Critical Mass is a movement which originated in San Francisco in the 90s and is held monthly in many larger towns and cities all over the world - highlighting the need for safer cycling routes and celebrating the bicycle.

It is also based on the idea that there is safety in numbers - cyclists being safer in towns and cities where there are joined-up cycling routes, their numbers are high and therefore drivers are used to not always having priority.

Organised at short notice, the ride involving two loops of the town centre and The Embankment was supported by more than 40 cyclists wearing masks and keeping to social distancing.



A second ride on Saturday 5 September attracted around 45 cyclists. Due to the coronavirus October's ride was not a formal meeting but any group of up to 6 cyclists was asked to cycle around the town as many times as they liked.

Town Deal Board

As mentioned in the last CCNB newsletter, Bedford was selected in August 2019 as one of 101 towns to develop a Town Investment Plan to bid for a Town Deal of up to £25m.

Over the last few months a draft Town Investment Plan has been put together and was presented to the Council's Executive Committee on 16 September 2020.

The Plan is now due to be signed off at the next Town Board meeting on 12 October and sent to the Government to meet the 31 October 2020 deadline for submission. The outcome of the Plan is expected in January 2021 with up to one year to devise a business case for the agreed projects which must then be completed by the 2025/26 financial year.

The draft addresses the requirement that to help solve the town's connectivity issues which restricts the ease of access in and out of the town further investment is required above the £22.5m project Transporting Bedford 2020 currently in progress to improve many of the town's junctions.

It also acknowledges there is a need to improve Bedford's cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. New targeted investment in safe cycle and pedestrian routes will promote a healthier and more environmentally friendly mode of transport, as well as ease congestion and improve air quality in the town through reducing car use in the town centre.

Investment in active travel modes is an important priority for the town, with a vision to promote walking, cycling and public transport as set out in Bedford's Local Transport Plan 2011-2021.

The cycle network within Bedford is currently disjointed with many routes situated along main roads alongside traffic. The investment will deliver a package of network improvements, including further development of the 'Green Wheel' of routes around the town and cycle links to Bedford Midland Station. The amount in the plan for cycle infrastructure has been costed at £5m and complements the Towns Accelerator Fund Cycling Enhancements project (see right).

The short-term priorities of the plan are intended to deliver a comprehensive suite of cycling improvements across Bedford, including a new orbital cycling route as well as providing safer cycling conditions at two priority junctions through signalling measures.

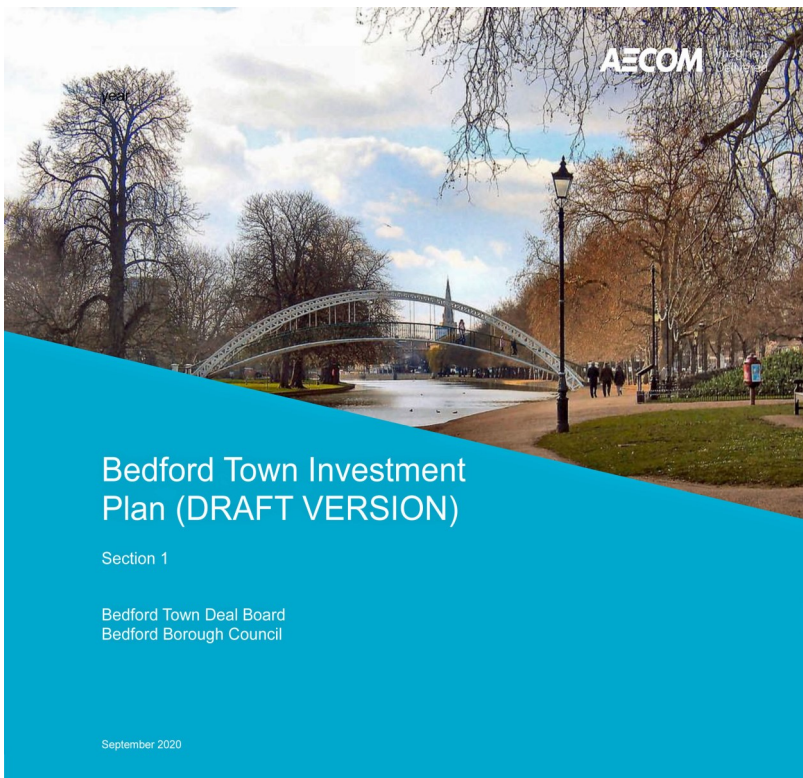
A wide range of other cycling improvements have been suggested and are currently being costed,

It has been disappointing that after more than 25 years of active consultation with the borough CCNB has not been a party in any of the decisions taken (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan page 35).

Town Deal Accelerator Fund

At the end of July 2020 the Borough was advised by the Government that all the towns which had been selected to submit a town investment plan would be rewarded capital funding to help quicken the pace of recovery within their town from the Covid-19 pandemic. There would be no competition for the fund but a reply on how a town would spend the money had to be submitted by 14 August 2020 and had to be spent by the end of the financial year (31 March 2021).

For Bedford the amount from the fund was £1 million. Five projects have been submitted one of which was £380,000 to signpost the 27 routes into the town centre and the Avenue and Green Wheel circular routes which make up the town's cycle network and also to enhance secure cycle parking in the central area.



The plan can be seen at:

<http://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s51235/Item%2013%20Draft%20Town%20Investment%20Plan%20APP%20A%20-%20Bedford%20Town%20Investment%20Plan.pdf>

Government Cycling Statistics 2018/2019

The latest cycling statistics were published by the Department for Transport on 5 August 2020 covering the period 2018/2019 until mid-November 2019. They can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2019>

The figures are derived from the Active Lives Survey (ALS), an annual household survey administered by Sport England and the National Travel survey.

The ALS reported that:

- 11% of adults in England reported cycling at least once a week
- in most local authorities (96%) less than 20% the adult population reported cycling at least once a week

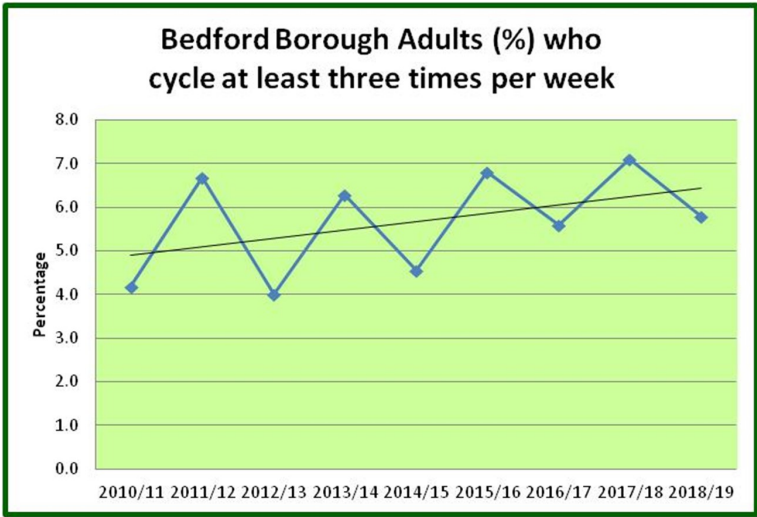
and the National Travel survey that:

- people made an average of 17 cycling trips and cycled an average of 54 miles per week
- people cycled 41% further compared to 2002

The results for Bedford Borough residents over 16 years old showed:

- 18.5% cycle at least once per month
- 13.2% cycle at least once per week
- 5.8% cycle at least 3 days per week
- 2.6% cycle at least 5 days per week

This is an average increase of 24% since 2010/2011 or 3% per year.



Bedford Station Counts

CCNB cycle counts at Bedford railway station were suspended in late March due to the coronavirus lockdown.

At the height of the lockdown commuters (and leisure customers) dropped to almost about 20% of the normal level. Four cycle counts have been taken over the last three months with the results at 45, 70, 100 and 90, the latter two just under a quarter seen during Summer 2019.



Empty cycle stands in middle of pandemic



Bromham Road Railway Bridge

In the absence of a decision by the Minister of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, on the Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level Crossing and Bridge Works) Order to allow Network Rail to rebuild Bromham Road railway bridge and CCNB's objections with regard to the absence of a cycle track across the bridge following the Public Inquiry held in Bedford in February 2019, CCNB has asked for a copy of the inspector's report using the Freedom of Information Act.

The request was turned down by the DfT as making it available to the public may interfere with the space required for it to undertake its decision making processes without external interference or distraction.

The bridge was rebuilt under other regulations and opened in May 2020 following a closure of nearly one year.

It has been noticed however that signage put up by the borough on completion (see photographs below) allows cyclists to cross the bridge on the south side footpath but not on the north side where the dual use cycle track to Bromham is situated.



The Borough Council remains committed to the provision of a separate cycle bridge but until the East-West Rail Company (EWRC) has finalised route options for the extension of the East-West railway line to Cambridge through Bedford station no plans for the bridge can be decided.

EWRC is expected to finalise details of the route towards the end of 2020.

Allhallows Revamp

A major project started at the beginning of August to revamp Church Square and the whole stretch of Allhallows between St Loyes and Midland Road. Allhallows is a key part of Bedford town centre, and is a busy link between the town, the bus station and the train station.

Completion is not expected until next spring with a break in December for the busy Christmas period.

The work will transform this busy area of Bedford town centre, with the existing pavements and roadway being rebuilt and re-laid with a high quality granite surface. It will also see new cycle stands as well as a new seating and lighting and a new public space for people to enjoy and help attract new businesses.



Allhallows including the adjacent part of Greenhill Street up to the start of the project had 16 'Sheffield' type cycle parking stands for safe parking of 32 bicycles; 2 stands outside Nationwide Building Society, 2 stands outside Superdrug and 2x 4 stands outside Costa Coffee and 4 stands outside Martins.

When it is completed there will be 23 'Sheffield' type cycle parking stands for **46 bicycles, a 44% increase**, made up of 6 stands outside Nationwide, 5 stands opposite Nationwide, 8 in Church Square outside Peacocks and 5 stands in front of the square.

A6/A421 Junction Update

An update on a cycle track across the A6/A421 junction was given to the Environmental and Sustainable Communities Overview and Security Committee at their September meeting.

CCNB's recap, a cycle route to link the new Wixams settlement to the Ampthill Road cycle track to Bedford was one of the routes to be provided as laid out in the Heads of Terms Section 106 agreement for the development, the final version which was signed off in 2003.

In 2008 the crossing of the junction was put on hold due to safety concerns by the then Highways Agency. It was then to be done as part of the junctions signalling for the NIRAH project which was eventually abandoned in 2014.

In 2015 Highways England (HE), the successor to the Highways Agency, then listed the junction as one of the first schemes to be signalled as part of their 2015-2020 Delivery Plan for 'cycle proofing' the highway network.

The proposed plan was approved by both the Borough and CCNB but was again put on hold in 2016 by the HE due to perceived 'lack of value for money'. In 2017 the HE admitted their mistake and it was put back in their programme but has never been done.

It was disclosed to the meeting that HE had secured funding for further design work to attempt to identify a safe crossing of their network for pedestrians and cyclists.

An initial feasibility design would be completed by April 2021 and if a viable design was identified, and subject to available funding, construction **might** commence during 2022/2023. Developer contributions to funding would increase the viability of the project. To inform the initial feasibility design the Council would prepare a business case and provide HE with details of funding available from Section 106 receipts.

Ampthill Road/Cow Bridge

The Transporting Bedford 2020 scheme for Ampthill Road is expected to start in March 2020 and last for 8 months.

Work at the Cow Bridge end of Ampthill Road has now been scaled back and will no longer include the originally planned new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the East-West railway line to enable a further traffic lane to be installed.

It is hoped that a 3metre wide cycle track will still be available on each side of this busy junction.

Abandoned/Stolen Bikes

Bikes dredged from the River Great Ouse next to the Town Bridge in July 2020.



Government's Latest Coronavirus Poster



The government's latest guidance for the coronavirus

Heartlands Draft Transport Strategy

England's Economic Heartland area stretches from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire and brings together the region's Local Transport Authorities in a strategic partnership that works with the region's local enterprise partnerships to provide leadership on strategic infrastructure.

Following on from the publication of an Outline Transport Strategy in July 2019 (see the previous CCNB Newsletter Issue 87) and a call for views on the outline, a draft strategy was launched on 14 July 2020 with a consultation open until 6 October 2020.

The documents involved can be downloaded from:

<http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/transport-strategyconsult.aspx>

The strategy is based on the Government's legal requirement to deliver net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2050 and takes into account that the region's transport system is the largest greenhouse emitter and carbon emissions from transport are higher than the national average and are increasing at a faster rate.

Modelling by Oxford and Southampton universities has shown that the region can achieve net-zero by 2050 by building on two pathways:

- Reducing the need to travel by having a highly connected transport system and
- Reducing reliance on the private car by having a behavioural shift policy

The pathways are to be aligned with investment in digital infrastructure and energy systems.

The final version of the Transport Strategy will be published at the turn of the year.

Alongside the publication of the Draft Transport Strategy for consultation, England's Economic Heartland is also seeking views on the proposal to establish the Sub-national Transport Body (STB) on a statutory basis. This will be one of seven STBs outside London.

It would give unprecedented access to investment decision making due to STBs' unique role as a single voice for their region and the legitimacy that statutory status gives them to prioritise investments based on their regional transport strategies. The document can be seen on:

<http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Documents/Proposal%20to%20Establish%20a%20Statutory%20Sub%20national%20Transport%20Body.pdf>

Rayleigh's New E-Cargo Bikes

Bike brand Rayleigh of Nottingham in July announced a new range of e-cargo bikes to tap into the rise in the delivery market for last mile delivery.

The e-bikes come as a two wheeled option, the Pro Bike Mid-motor giving 350 litre storage or as a trike, the Pro Trike SL with 900 litre capacity. The bikes have been available in the UK since September and offer optional individual branding with company logos on the box.



Borough's E-Cargo Bike Survey

Over the last few months the borough council has asked residents to complete a short e-cargo bike survey consisting of four questions to help them understand how much residents know about this type of bike and its uses.

The questions were:

- Do you know what an e-cargo bike is?
- Have you ever seen an e-cargo bike being used in Bedford?
- Have you ever ridden an e-cargo bike?
- Would you consider riding or purchasing an e-cargo bike? :

E-Scooter Rental Trials

Unlike in many other countries It is currently illegal to ride e-scooters in the UK although they are readily available to buy and many can be seen being ridden **illegally** on the footpaths and roads of Bedford.

It was announced by the government on 30 June 2020 that due to the easing of the coronavirus lockdown they would amend the regulations to allow local authorities to host the fast tracking of trials of rental e-scooters for 12 months only from 4 July 2020 to evaluate whether they reduce traffic as well as their impact on the safety of users and others. Future regulations would then be based on the outcome of the trials.

Guidance for local areas and rental operators was issued under:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators>

The rental e-scooters are limited to a top speed of only 15.5mph and are strictly prohibited on pavements but may be used on roads, cycle lanes and tracks.

Users need a full or provisional car, motorcycle or moped licence to take part in the trials and must be 16 years old or over. Helmets are recommended but are not mandatory.

The e-scooters must have motor insurance, which will be provided by the e-scooter rental operator.

Full guidance for users has been published under:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users>

Local Schemes

There are no e-scooter rental schemes planned for Bedford.

Nearest rental schemes are in Milton Keynes, Northampton, Kettering and Cambridge.

The Milton Keynes scheme was launched in the middle of August by Lime, which operates the e-bike sharing scheme, using up to 500 e-scooters and the same app claiming it will be the first UK service on a par with other cities worldwide.

The Northampton, Kettering and Cambridge schemes will be run by the Swedish firm Voi. The first two were launched in early September using 300 e-scooters.

The coronavirus is said to have accelerated the demand for reform in the UK but had deterred people from using shared schemes in the early stages of lockdown.

Both companies say that every scooter will be disinfected on a daily basis, while Voi is covering its handlebars with antiviral copper tape.



Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plan

The government in its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy document published in 2017 requested that all local authorities draft and publish a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP).

Bedford Borough Council drafted a document more than two years ago but it has never been consulted on or formally adopted although it has been mentioned in a number of documents.

CCNB's recent request to see a copy under the Freedom of Information Act as been rejected by the borough. The reason given was:

We have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. The factors we considered in deciding where the public interest lay are because we are considering the feedback on the draft LCWIP from the Department of Transport. Similarly, we are reviewing the document in response to the recent Government announcements relating to Covid-19 measures as well as in the context of the recently published Local Transport Note 1/20. In addition, we will consider the draft document in light of the decision the government makes in relation to our forthcoming Town Deal submission.

Diary

16 - 22 November 2020 - Road Safety Week

This year's theme is 'No Need to Speed'

16 - 18 April 2021 - The Cycle Show

Alexandria Palace London after nine years at NEC Birmingham

See <http://www.ccnb.org.uk/diaryb.shtml> for details & other events

Local Cycle Rides Contact:

Cycling UK (CTC) - North Beds Section - (01234) 219148

Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire



Our Vision

To see Bedford as a

'Town of Cyclists' & 'Cycle Friendly Communities'

Objectives

- ◆ To promote, encourage and support cycling as an important means of transport and recreation.
- ◆ To encourage consideration of the needs of cyclists in all aspects of transport planning and management, access issues and recreational use.

Membership

Please contact us if you have any cycling issues or better still, consider becoming a member to give us added weight in our discussions with the relevant authorities. Write to:

Membership Secretary, c/o 15 Dove Road, Bedford, MK41 7AA

including your name, address, postcode, telephone number and e-mail address (if available) together with your subscription.

Single £3.00 (£13 for 5yr); Family £5.00 (£22 for 5yr)