

CTC – the UK’s national cyclists’ organisation

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Making cycling mainstream is a "Breakthrough for the 21st century"

Ideas for making cycling a normal day-to-day activity put forward by CTC – the national cyclists’ organisation, will be unveiled today at a conference showcasing 19 top breakthrough ideas for transforming the UK into a sustainable society. The event, hosted by Anna Ford, Jonathan Dimbleby and Rosie Boycott, marks the launch of the Sustainable Development Commission’s “Breakthroughs for the 21st Century project”, and will include a special visit by HRH the Prince of Wales.

CTC’s Policy Co-ordinator Chris Peck will be there to outline his “Making cycling mainstream” proposals, to help cycling become the normal choice for journeys of up to 5 miles. His ideas were selected by SDC Commissioners from among almost 300 suggestions put forward by members of the public, businesses, academics, and sustainability professionals.

Chris Peck believes the time is now right for “Making cycling mainstream”. He said: “Cycling ticks every box the government could wish for. It is good for our health, for streets and communities, our environment and our quality of life. People of all ages, income groups and backgrounds can enjoy the benefits it brings.”

In response, Jonathan Porritt, chair of the Sustainable Development Commission, said: “This isn’t a novel idea – but it’s one whose time has come. At the very least, we should aim to double cycling levels within ten years. The bicycle is the most efficient and environmentally benign form of transport ever invented; we know it’s good for health, and we look forward to a world in which it’s taken for granted that both we and our children can get around cheaply and independently by bike.”

The SDC’s endorsement of CTC’s proposals comes two days after the Government announced plans for a new National Cycle Plan and an Active Transport Strategy, as part of Gordon Brown’s ‘Building Britain’s Future’ programme, announced in Parliament in Monday.

Chris Peck said “It is very encouraging that the Government has renewed its interest in cycling. However this should not be seen as a party political issue and we hope all parties will support the development of the new plans. Previous efforts suffered from over-ambitious targets which lacked the funding and wider policy support needed to meet them. This time we know what works. With the right incentives, policies and funding commitments in place, there is no reason why we can’t double cycle use and halve the risks of cycling within 10 years”.

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For more information, contact Debra Rolfe, 01483 238324

Notes to editors

1. The Sustainable Development Commission is the Government's independent advisory body on sustainability issues, made up of 17 Commissioners, and reporting directly to the Prime Minister, the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales and the First and Deputy First Ministers of Northern Ireland. SDC's 'Breakthroughs for the 21st century' report can be downloaded from the Commission's website, www.sd-commission.org.uk. For more information, contact Rhian Thomas on 0300 068 6266 / 07825 106 803, or email rhian.thomas@sd-commission.org.uk.
2. Gordon Brown's programme of activity for "Building Britain's Future" (www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingbritainsfuture.aspx), announced in Parliament on Monday, includes both a National Cycle Plan (to be developed by the Department for Transport) and an Active Transport Strategy (to be developed jointly by the Transport and Health departments). See www.hmg.gov.uk/media/27749/full_document.pdf (see particularly p92, or p90 of the PDF).
3. CTC unveiled its "New Vision for Cycling" earlier this year (www.ctc.org.uk/newvision), setting out how to double cycle use and halve of the risks of cycling within 10 years, and the benefits this would bring.
4. CTC's subsequent "Safety in Numbers" campaign (www.ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers), launched by CTC President Jon Snow in Parliament in May, presents new evidence that cycling gets safer the more cyclists there are, with drivers becoming increasingly aware of cyclists and adjusting their behaviour accordingly. For instance, cycle use in London has increased by 107% since 2000, while the absolute number of serious and fatal cycle casualties has gone down by 21% since the late 1990s. However, road safety officers have often been reluctant to encourage cycling for fear that this would increase the number of people injured in our roads, contrary to their casualty reduction targets. CTC's 'Safety in numbers' evidence has show that it is entirely possible to achieve more as well as safer cycling, thus maximising its health and other benefits.
5. CTC believes the key to unlocking these benefits is to tackle the fears which deter people from cycling – traffic speeds, irresponsible driving, hostile roads and junctions, and dangerous vehicles notably lorries – while providing people with the cycle training and other incentives to given them the confidence to cycle safely on the roads, and allow their children to do likewise. A Parliamentary Early Day Motion in support of these aims ([EDM 1431](#)) has attracted the signatures of 186 MPs, making it among the top 25 most supported EDMs in the current session of Parliament.
6. CTC has welcomed the Government's backing of CTC's proposal for a new "rate-based" target in its draft Road Safety Strategy, to halve the risks of a serious or fatal cycling injury per 100,000-km travelled. This target can be met even if cycling injuries go up slightly, so long as cycle use grows more steeply. It therefore encourages local authorities and others to aim for more as well as safer cycling. CTC believes the target to reduce the risk of cycling can be strengthened by aiming at the same time for substantial increases in cycle use, as the two aims will support one another through the "safety in numbers" effect.
7. CTC is the oldest and largest cycling body in the UK. Established in 1878, it now has 70,000 members and affiliates in 250 clubs across the UK. We provide a comprehensive range of services, advice, events, and protection for our members and work to promote cycling by raising public and political awareness of its health, social and environmental benefits. For more information see www.ctc.org.uk.
8. CTC supports cyclists – that is why we provide all our members with 3rd party insurance and [unrivalled legal advice](#).