

Union stance on cycling in London

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Background

This paper aims to give the union a stance on cycling infrastructure in London, particularly on roads commonly used by its students including Queensgate, High Street Kensington, Brompton/Lillie Road and Cromwell Road.

The Union Notes

- Between the 5th and the 18th of November 2013, six cyclists died in London: Brian Holt, 62; Francis Golding, 69; Roger William De Klerk, 43; Venera Minakhmetova, 24; a 21-year-old man from St John's Wood and a man believed to be in his 60s (BBC News)
- Lories account for over half of cyclist fatalities despite making up just 5% of London's traffic (London Cycling Campaign)
- A significant number of the union's members' cycle to and from college on a daily basis
- Imperial College is committed to aiming to increase the number of its staff and students cycling as part of its 'StepChange' campaign
- The road infrastructure should allow for the needs of all its users including drivers and pedestrians, but the current infrastructure does tend to provide these groups with their needs

The Union Believes

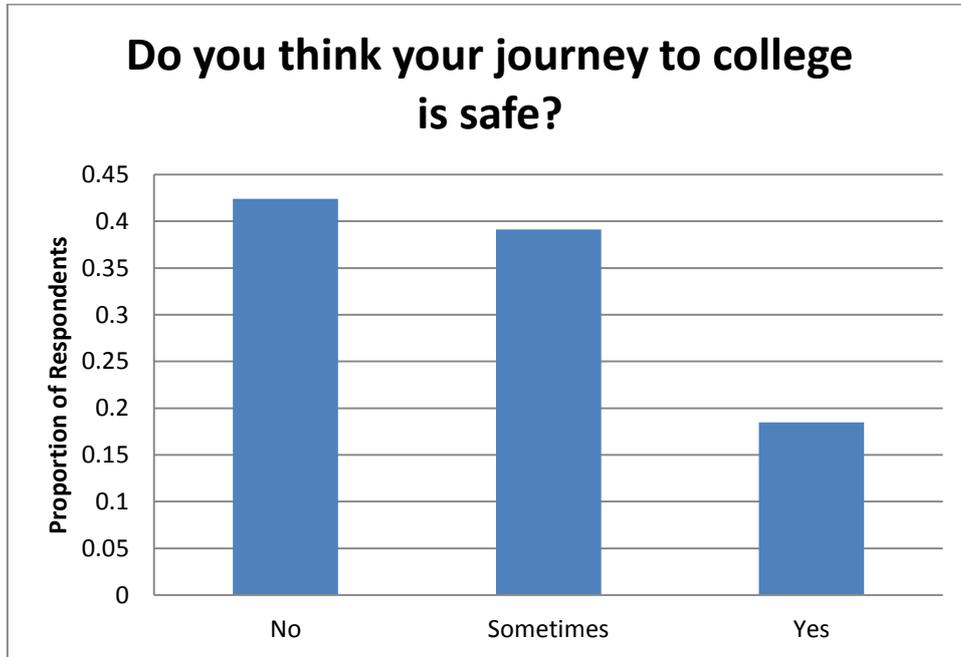
- Cycling should be a safe means of transport, accessible to all
- People who want to cycle to college, should not be deterred by dangerous roads, HGVs and junctions
- Cyclists deserve cycling infrastructure which is consistent along routes and which separates them from motor traffic at the most dangerous junctions

The Union Resolves

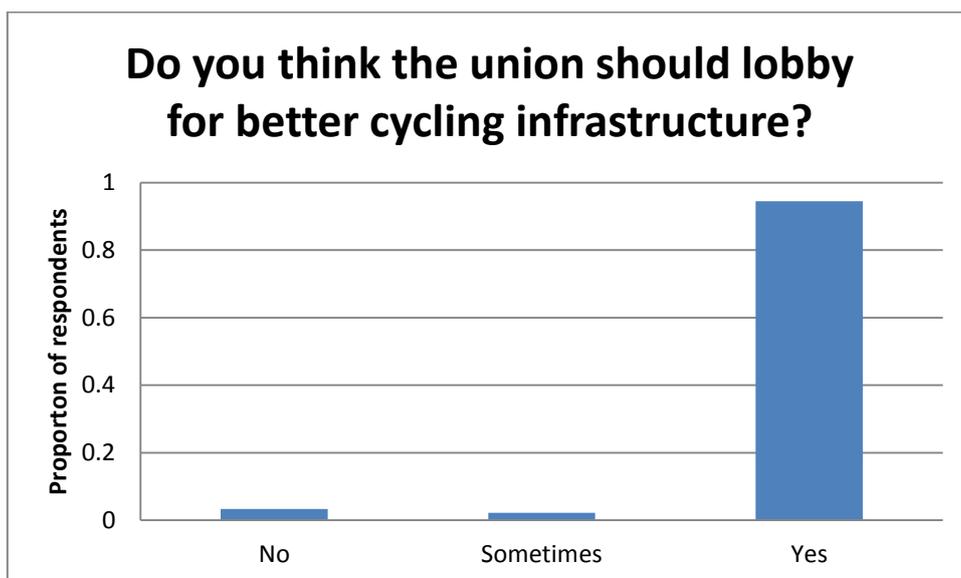
1. To lobby the college to take a public position pro improving the cycling infrastructure in London for the safety of its students and staff.
2. To lobby local authorities and MPs for improved cycling infrastructure across London including
 - a. Consistent cycle infrastructure on routes, particularly those most used by Imperial students
 - b. Compulsory proximity sensors and other cyclist safety devices on all HGVs
3. To liaise with the London Cycling Campaign to see what role it can play in lobbying for better cycling infrastructure

Appendix

To support this paper, members of the bike users group were asked for their answers to four questions, how often do you cycle to college, do you think your journey is safe, should the union lobby for better cycling infrastructure and what would you tell policy makers about your experience of cycling in London? The full results are available upon request from the author on george.butcher11@imperial.ac.uk. These are some of the results.



Of the respondents who replied sometimes or yes, they tended to describe the actions they took to make their route safe. Some respondents cycled through Hyde Park. The author is struck by how many seemed to accept a certain level of danger as understandable.



The sample was inherently biased towards cyclists. They are never going to say that the union should care for cyclists, but the very high number of respondents who said yes, clearly shows the demand for union action.

Free Text

Highlights of the free text are as follows. Ninety four responders wrote over 11 000 words between them so I didn't include all of them. They are available upon request.

"Yes, I think that if roads were safer, more people would cycle, without any fear. I have got used to it by now, but I know a few people who do not cycle because they are scared it would be too unsafe."

" Road architecture in London is not very well suited for increasing cyclist numbers and this needs to be addressed. Other European cities can manage wide sea changes and I don't understand why London cannot."

"It is the union's role to be a voice for it's [sic] students on important issue. Many students (and staff) currently cycle and cycle safety is an important issue for them. Cycling offers great benefit to one's health and one's wallet, not to mention being lots of fun and so doing anything to increase the likelihood of students cycling would fall within the union's remit (and one of the primary reasons people don't cycle is safety fears)."

"Nearly died 4 times"

"I love cycling, London and cycling in London but the statistics show that it really is an unnecessarily dangerous pastime and gives the city a bad reputation - the terror on my mother's face when I told her I was cycling to Uni said it all! Cycling is great for the health (and would be better if the air was better), mood and a sense of connection to the city."

"Striking the balance between a car-friendly environment and a cyclist-friendly one is a very difficult task. There is no clear resolution that leaves both parties happy. However, the current set-up overwhelming accommodates for cars over cyclists and in the short-term, this balance needs to be re-dressed."

"Hammersmith roundabout is hell"

"Most of the time, cycling in London feels safe. However, it is the occasions where 'luck' seems to play a part in survival which need to be assessed. By improving cycling infrastructure, you would be removing this reliance on luck, and giving all road users the means to be FULLY in control of their own, and others, safety."

"I love cycling in London and I want to be able to feel safe to do it"