

Question to Ian Bates, Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning

County Council meeting 27th March 2012 -

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Two motions today focus on the importance of a high rate of cycling to Cambridge's economy.

These new developments, bringing tens of thousands of new people to the area, are dependent on efficient transport. The transport modelling for the NIAB site, for instance, requires 60% walking/cycling share to prevent increased problems on the A14. So these new developments, and the areas around them, must make cycling the fastest and easiest choice.

There would be no economic sense in knocking down huge numbers of buildings in Cambridge to make more space for more queuing cars. Therefore the only solution is alternatives to the car if we are to cater for a growing population.

Most people who cycle in Cambridge own or use cars. We have often proposed that the County Council undertake computer modelling of a 'no-cycling day' – this would demonstrate the congestion that would result if these existing residents used their cars instead.

Now imagine tens of thousands more people, from the new developments, driving rather than cycling and using public transport. Gridlock. Companies will not move to or stay in a city where people cannot move around easily. And this is why cycling is so important to high-tech Cambridge: it lets the city function.

The Chisholm Trail, for instance, would get city drivers on their bikes and free up road space for those who have to drive in from the surrounding villages.

Cycling isn't some namby-pamby form of hippy transport. It's absolutely key to the ability of Cambridge to work. All groups of people, whether they be wealth creators in suits, people undertaking high-tech research, or those on the minimum wage who form the bedrock of our employment centres, can be found cycling to work. (The majority do so responsibly, and continued work to crack down on those without lights etc. is needed.) People cycle because it is efficient and has predictable journey times.

Cambridge depends on high rates of cycling, and as more people come to live here, cycling has to get much better if our high-tech economy is to survive.

Do you agree that the growth of Cambridge and the health of its economy are absolutely dependent on increased investment in cycling infrastructure?