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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Embargo: Thursday June 12, 1997

Cycling Campaign to address County Council's Environment & Transport Committee

Cambridge Cycling Campaign is taking advantage of an opportunity to address County councillors at the meeting of the Environment & Transport Committee on Thursday June 12 at 2.30 p.m. in the Kreiss Viersen Room at Shire Hall. By a happy coincidence, this meeting is being held during National Bike Week.

The address is in support of the petition presented to the Environment & Transport Department in May. The petition was signed at our stall in the Market Square by people who currently drive but said they would cycle if only it were safer and more convenient to do so.

Campaigner David Earl (who will be making the speech) said: "The need to impress on councillors the problems cyclists still face in the City is more important than ever. The traffic levels and speeds put people off starting cycling, yet there is so much potential to relieve the City of some of its traffic problems by more people cycling."

The text of the speech, which the Council limits to 3 minutes, is attached. Because of the change of administration at the County Council, we will be stressing the framework the previous Government had started putting in place (and which the new Government also supports).

ENDS

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**Text of speech to be given to Cambridgeshire County Council's
Environment & Transport Committee on June 12 by
Cambridge Cycling Campaign**

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address the committee. It is an appropriate time to be here, as this week is National Bike Week.

The petition was signed by people who approached our stall in the Market Square, who said they currently drive, but would cycle if only it were safer and more convenient.

The context for cycling has changed enormously over the last five years.

The National Cycling Strategy, which was adopted and promoted by the Conservative Government last year, sets a target of doubling cycle use by 2002. In Cambridge that is ambitious. But, please don't just dismiss it as unachievable. Consider that that would still leave us at a lower level than some European cities which have made a concerted effort.

The Road Traffic Reduction Act, also passed with all party support, puts a duty on you to set targets to reduce motor traffic.

To achieve even the targets of the Council's own Cycling Strategy means further emphasising both convenience and safety in policy making. When every junction bar one on the ring road is a roundabout, it is not surprising that this barrier daunts people unused to cycling. And so long as the A14 roundabouts have to be negotiated on the footway, new cyclists will be put off by the slip road crossings carrying fast traffic. Existing cyclists will continue to moan about the sharp turns, the bumpy surface, the angles of vision and the difficulty of finding a safe gap in the traffic.

There is much evidence, locally and nationally that roundabouts and cyclists do not mix. That's why, Mr Chairman, we were worried to see that the scheduled work on the Royal Cambridge Hotel junction has not started.

I must acknowledge the work that has already been done. For example, the cycle bridge at the station, the Mill Road / Gonville Place junction, and more recently, forward stop lines and the Bridge Street changes.

Cycle Friendly Infrastructure, another Conservative Government endorsed publication, promotes a hierarchy of measures to make cycling safer and more convenient. It puts a greater emphasis on making the whole road environment more cycle friendly, through

- traffic reduction,
- traffic calming,
- junction treatment,
- traffic management,
- carriageway redistribution, and, only at the bottom of the list,

- cycle lanes and tracks.

Quality of construction, both in attention to detail and on key indicators such as width and surface finish are very important for cyclists. There is a legacy in Cambridge of cyclists and pedestrians being thrown together into the same limited space, and neither group is comfortable with this arrangement.

Finally I would like to ask you to consider your approach to road safety promotion. In particular we would like to commend to you the Road Danger Reduction Charter, now adopted by over 40 local authorities, which moves away from a victim-centred approach to one of controlling the principal sources of threat. We would like to see a greater emphasis on enforcement on the road (and I have no reason to exclude cyclists from that). We would like to see more speed cameras and speed limitations, considering that the key difference between a crash at 20 and 40 mph is between slight injury and death.

I hope, Mr Chairman, that we will be able to see the hundreds of people who signed this petition confident to use their bikes. Let me exhort you to follow the lead the Conservative Government started, on the ground here in Cambridge.