

# Dutch provide a lead in English cycle mapping

Promoters of better cycle infrastructure hoping to make the case for investment will soon be able to use a new online planning tool that identifies routes and areas where people are more likely to start cycling.

The 'Propensity to Cycle' tool has been developed by academics at Cambridge, Leeds and Westminster universities using data from England and the Netherlands and is funded by the Department for Transport.

It maps out which roads and areas have the greatest levels of potential for journeys in the saddle, based on census and travel survey data and topography.

The tool will be launched nationally following user testing sessions and a trial in Kent. From July the final version of the tool (currently in prototype mode) will be freely available for all English areas.

University of Westminster's senior lecturer in transport Dr Rachel Aldred, part of the team developing the tool, said: "We have not traditionally been very good at

predicting where uptake of cycling is most likely.

"We have to get better at this and build good quality routes where they will make the greatest impact. Increases in cycling can make a big difference in reducing congestion and carbon emissions and improving health," she added.

"It is therefore important to predict where growth could happen in future and this is where the tool comes in."

The tool uses information about trip distance and the location of hills to predict potential uptake of cycling. This involves 'distance decay curves' on how the likelihood of cycling changes as trips get longer or hillier.

The tool uses different scenarios including 'Go Dutch' employing data on Dutch propensities to cycle, based on trip lengths and hilliness. In highlighting route level potential the tool assumes cyclists want to travel on the fastest and more direct routes, which may be along main roads, although not always.

Rachel Aldred added: "This tool



Dr Rachel Aldred is helping local authorities develop new cycle routes

gives decision makers the ability to visualise the potential for cycling and shows routes likely to be used by cyclists in future. There's much potential for increases in cycling in both towns and cities and I hope this tool will be useful for those hoping to make the investment case."

One of the first towns to trial the new Propensity to Cycle tool is Tunbridge Wells in Kent, through a project funded by the Economic & Social Research Council. "This gives us the ability to quantify the likely demand for cycling on routes in different parts of the town and develop a stronger evidence base for investment," said Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's economic development officer for regeneration and transport Bartholomew Wren.

"Cycling has a significant role to play in overcoming congestion and we want to encourage more commuters to consider making short

journeys by bicycle. But like many large towns we have a long way to go if cycling is going to become more of people's everyday way of life."

A local cycling group in the town also welcomed launch of the tool. Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group co-founder Scott Purchas said: "This tool is welcome and should allow councils to use actual data and model scenarios to highlight the potential returns on infrastructure investment and highlight potential routes that can be improved.

"But it is not a silver bullet as it only includes commuting trips so may in some cases underestimate the levels of demand for cycling."

Dr Robin Lovelace of the University of Leeds added the team is working to access additional datasets allowing more trip types to be added to future versions of the tool.

To find out more about the Propensity to Cycle tool visit [pct.bike](http://pct.bike)



Most riders travel on the fastest and most direct routes

## Call rejected for cyclists to remain in lane

Cycling groups have dismissed a call from the Road Haulage Association for cyclists in London to be penalised if they fail to use dedicated cycle lanes where provided.

The association's chief executive Richard Burnett made his comments last month as part of a manifesto for the new London Mayor. He admitted that "some will be surprised" by the call to penalise cyclists who do not use cycle lanes but said he "welcomed the debate".

Cycling UK's campaigns co-ordinator Sam Jones said: "Cyclists

have every right to use the road just as much as other users. Where they are available the vast majority of cyclists will use a Superhighway but there may be areas where it is easier for them to be on the road."

British Cycling's campaign manager Martin Key rejected the haulage group's suggestion as "unhelpful".

He added: "We are only just starting to see the introduction of segregated cycleways that are safe and convenient. However the vast majority of cycle lanes are

inconvenient and incomplete so many people chose not to use them."

The Road Haulage Association had also called for the incoming Mayor to reject calls for a ban on rush hour truck deliveries and to repel a ban on lorries entering the capital at night. The association would also like to see heavy goods vehicles be allowed to use selected bus lanes in areas where it is clear that such a move would reduce overall congestion.

"Haulage operators provide work for tens of thousands of Londoners," Richard Burnett said. "That is why it's



Cyclists are urged to use cycle lanes where available

vital that the Mayor and other London politicians work with us and not against us. A London lorry rush hour ban would be a knee jerk reaction and counter productive move, as would trying to replace larger vehicles with many more smaller ones."