



Working with your council to pass a Space for Cycling motion

A local authority can make a policy or funding commitment by passing a motion.

We have written a draft motion for you to take to your council, which lays out ways for your council to commit to creating Space for Cycling.

The following is a guide to working with your council to get the motion passed. Remember, local authorities differ massively, treat the following as a guide, not a set of instructions.

Process

Any councillor can submit a motion for debate at a council meeting. In most cases, for the motion to be debated, it must be seconded by another councillor.

Most local authorities require a motion to be voted on by all councillors. For it to pass, at least 50% of councillors must vote in favour.

In some local authorities motions can be passed by the cabinet or executive without going to a full council meeting. The same process of requiring 50% of cabinet members to vote in favour applies.

As political process differ, it may be worth double checking with your council's democratic services to check the precise political processes at your council.

First steps

Your first step is to find a councillor who is willing to take this motion forward. For advice on which councillors we suggest approaching first – and what to say to them – see our guide to [communicating with your council](#).

The support of the largest party is key to getting a motion passed, so we would suggest approaching sympathetic councillors from this group first. [\(More below\)](#)

Political structures

The political make up of your council will affect how you lobby for this motion to pass.

As explained above, once you get a motion on a council meeting agenda, you will require at least 50% of councillors or cabinet members to vote in favour of it.

Most councils have a ruling party (i.e. one party that have over 50% of the seats in the council). It is this party that form a cabinet and set the policy agenda.

Some councils have No Overall Control (NOC). In NOC cases, two or more parties will normally form a coalition to reach 50% of council seats and lead the council.

[Most parties vote in blocs](#), following a policy line decided by the party group leader or at party group meetings [\(more on this below\)](#).



In some cases councillors might rebel against the party line but they face penalties for doing so.

This gives some simple maths for you to figure out:

Which party has 50% of the seats? If your council is NOC, which combination of parties reach over 50% of seats the quickest?

While the support of the ruling/largest parties is imperative, it is also worth working with the smaller parties. You do not want to risk allowing cycling to become a divisive party political issue.

Tips

Things to find out early

Once you meet with a councillor(s) who is interested in taking this motion forward, it would be worth finding out from them:

- How do other councillors view cycling? Are there any obvious allies or people who could derail the motion?
- Who else should you speak to?
- What are the cabinet member for transport's views on cycling?
- Ask for contact details of the group member secretary. This person has the ability to open up discussions with the party as a whole.

Build up relationships with councillors

The more your councillors get to know you and respect you, the more likely they may be to vote in favour of your motion.

Reach out to councillors of all political colours, offer to meet with them, give them a briefing on why your motion will be good for the local community. We have various resources available.

[Attend party group meetings](#)

Ask the group member secretary for different parties (get their details from a councillor from their party) for a ten minute slot on their next party meeting agenda.

These meetings normally take place on a monthly basis. It could take a few months to get on the agenda.

If you do get a slot, this is your opportunity to persuade the party to vote in favour of your motion as a bloc.

The meeting is an opportunity to present your case. If you want, you can use this PowerPoint. Edit it as you wish beforehand to adapt it to local context. Be sure to read our briefings so that you are well informed and don't hesitate to get in touch with Cycling UK Head Office for a practice run at presenting or just for a chat to help you prepare.

Once you have presented, ask for a private policy vote on your motion (you will have to leave the room for this). If over half of the attendees at that meeting to vote in favour of your proposal it will become party policy. This means that councillors from that party will be 'whipped' (required) to vote in favour of it when/if it does make it to full council meeting.



If you cannot get an item on the party group meeting agenda, you can try persuading just the group member secretary to make your motion party policy.

Once you have a motion on the council agenda

Ask all councillors over the phone or via email to vote in favour of the motion. Get any other supportive residents in the local authority area to do the same.

Get supporters along to the meeting. Contact anyone you know to be supportive. Alert local press. See our working with the media briefing.

At the council meeting

There are normally a few minutes at the beginning of each council meeting for public speaking. Register to speak at the council meeting that your motion is being presented in.

Contact your council's democratic services to register. You will need to register before a deadline, usually a day or more ahead. There are not usually questions. You may want to read up on some of our briefings before you speak.

If the motion passes

Give an enthusiastic thanks to all the councillors who were instrumental in getting it passed and to all Councillors who voted in favour of it.

Issue a press release to local media in response. Offer praise to the council and your support in making a success of the motion moving forward.

Arrange follow up meetings with councillors and council officers to discuss next steps.