

**THURSDAY, 06 APRIL 2017  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Metro mayor candidates unanimous in support for improving cycling conditions**

Ahead of the election for West Midlands new Metro Mayor on 04 May, Cycling UK, the national cycling charity, working with Bike West Midlands Network, has secured support from all five candidates for improving cycling, with several pointing out how more cycling can improve air quality and reduce congestion.

West Midlands is the first of the six new Metro Mayor locations to have all candidates from the main parties unanimously pledge their support for Cycling UK's campaign asks.

Cycling UK's president and Channel 4 newscaster, Jon Snow, wrote to each candidate asking them if they would support the following asks devised by the Bike West Midlands Network and Cycling UK:

- 1. Support the West Midlands Cycling Charter**

Aim to have 5% of all trips in the West Midlands made by cycle by 2023. Deliver a high quality and coherent cycle network across the West Midlands

- 2. Actively seek the funding necessary to implement the West Midlands Cycling Charter**

The Charter suggests a spend of £10 per person annually on cycling, rising over time to £20

The West Midlands Cycle Charter was published by the West Midlands Combined Authority in 2016. It outlined a target to have 5% of trips made by cycle by 2023 and to deliver a high quality coherent network of cycleways across the region. It recommends £10 per head annually should be spent to realise its ambition.

West Midlands residents have also been active, with nearly 150 emails being sent to the candidates, urging them to improve cycling in the West Midlands.

Through its Space for Cycling campaign, Cycling UK is working with local campaign groups in the six new Metro Mayor locations to urge the new candidates to make cycling a part of their future transport plans.

Conservative candidate Andy Street said:

“We need to supercharge cycling in the West Midlands to tackle congestion, air quality and inactivity. We must upgrade cycle routes, making the most of the canal network and off-road routes, whilst accelerating existing plans for on-road cycle superhighways”.

Green candidate James Burn said:

“I will actively seek the funding necessary, but it's important to be clear that the level of funding is currently very low, and forecast to drop even lower... As Local Authorities (and not the mayor) control cycle funding in large part, getting to £20 a head will be a real challenge, particularly in the light of huge government cuts.”

Labour candidate Sion Simon said:

“In addition to cycling, I will also support walking as a form of active transport - working with all Local Authorities within the combined authority to promote a campaign of encouraging 20mph limits in residential areas.”

Lib Dem candidate Beverley Neilsen said:

“As Lib Dem Candidate for Metro Mayor I am keen to promote cycling as a real alternative and to move as quickly as possible from 5% cycling and upwards to 10% plus. I would also like to link our cycleways into a network of cycle routes crossing our region and linking canals, rivers, and Sustrans network.”

Peter Durnell, UKIP candidate, said:

“I believe the further development of the West Midlands cycling network can and should play a role in helping reduce congestion and resultant air pollution across the region... I'll develop a proper integrated cycling strategy across the WMCA to better utilise our canals and achieve full cycle integration on public transport, including better way-finding, night-time cycling networks, bike racks on public transport and at public buildings, improved integration of cycle routes and facilities to rail and Metro stops.”

Tom Guha, Cycling UK's Space for Cycling Campaigns Officer, said:

“It is fantastic to see such cross-party support for Space for Cycling so early on in the election campaign. The West Midlands is currently the second most congested region in England, costing the economy billions every year, according to Greener Journeys.

“Cycling has real benefits not just in reducing congestion but also in improving air quality, so it's great to see the future Mayors all recognised that cycling is part of the solution. Cycling UK looks forward to working with whoever is elected to make the most of this opportunity to get the West Midlands moving!”

Dave Cox, Chair of the Bike West Midlands Network and former Chair of Cycling UK, said:

“We are delighted with the quality of the candidates from all parties and with how they have all engaged with us about the need for Space for Cycling right across the Region. Transport for West Midlands are a great team but they need political leadership and will to succeed with the West Midlands Cycling Charter. The Midlands Engine will have pedals!”

Residents will have the opportunity to meet all the candidates at the Bike Bike Picnic on Sat 22 April, organised by the Bike West Midlands Network and Cycling UK. Rides are organised from around the West Midlands to reach Cannon Hill Park for a picnic at 13:30.

All candidates have confirmed attendance and will be speaking at the event, except the Greens, who are sending a representative. More details can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/635742943278246/>

You can take action at: [www.cyclinguk.org/votebike17](http://www.cyclinguk.org/votebike17)

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For more information contact the national Cycling UK Press Office on 01483 238 315, 07786 320 713 or email [publicity@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:publicity@cyclingsuk.org)

**Notes to editors:**

1. Cycling UK, the national cycling charity, inspires and helps people to cycle and keep cycling, whatever kind of cycling they do or would like to do. Over a century's experience tells us that cycling is more than useful transport; it makes you feel good, gives you a sense of freedom and creates a better environment for everyone.  
[www.cyclingsuk.org](http://www.cyclingsuk.org)
2. The Space for Cycling campaign is a campaign for better cycle infrastructure, so that anyone feels safe to cycle anywhere. It was created by the London Cycling Campaign in 2014 and has since been taken national by Cycling UK. For more information on the history of the campaign see <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/article/campaigns-guide/space-for-cycling-background>
3. For more information on the Bike West Midlands Network, see: <https://www.pushbikes.org.uk/blog/bike-west-midlands-network>
4. For more information on the West Midlands Cycle Charter, see: <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/1067/cycle-charter.pdf>
5. The Vote Bike campaign is a tactical campaign launched by Cycling UK in response to elections.
6. For more information on our campaign asks in the West Midlands, including more detailed quotes from each candidate, see: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/blog/tomguha/vote-bike-west-midlands>
7. To see more details about our campaigns in other Metro Mayor region, see:  
Greater Manchester: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/blog/tomguha/vote-bike-greater-manchester>  
West of England: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/blog/tomguha/vote-bike-west-england>  
Liverpool City Region: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/blog/tomguha/vote-bike-liverpool-city-region>  
Tees Valley: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/blog/tomguha/vote-bike-tees-valley>  
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough: <https://www.cyclingsuk.org/blog/tomguha/vote-bike-cambridgeshire-peterborough>
8. Under the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016, combined authorities are offered a selection of new powers on condition that they agree to be chaired by a directly elected Metro Mayor. For more information on Metro Mayors and their roles and responsibilities, see <http://www.centreforcities.org/publication/everything-you-need-to-know-metro-mayors/#whois>