

NEWS

Cycling potential not being reached, riders say after figures released

Newham isn't fulfilling its cycling potential, according to group Newham Cyclists.

Transport for London (TfL) figures released at the end of January reveal that in 2014/15, Newham had the lowest percentage of adults who cycle monthly, and the second lowest weekly, of all the London boroughs.

This is despite it having four of TfL's 20 top potential connections for cycling routes.

"It's not cycle friendly," said Arnold Ridout, co-coordinator of Newham Cyclists.

"In comparison to boroughs next door, like, Hackney, which has the largest rate of commuter cycling in the country, Newham is low."

In an analysis of London

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cycling, TfL outlined 20 routes with potential for development. Of these, four were in Newham, with routes running from Stratford to Ilford, Leyton to Barking Road, Canning Town to Barking and Manor Park to Woolwich.

"Newham is the ideal place to cycle because it's flat, it's got good connections and it has low car ownership," Arnold said.

"The thing that's preventing more people cycling is the council approach over the long term. There seems to be little cycling ambition."

Arnold labelled the council's cycling strategy incoherent. Cycle



The Newham Cyclists group on the Greenway section of a ride to Rainham Marsh last year.

Picture: NEWHAM CYCLISTS

lanes in Romford Road, for example, are operational between 4.00 and 7.00pm, but in some sections parking is in operation from half six. "There's great potential, but there ought to be a systematic vision of what can be done," he said.

Last week, charity Cycling UK revealed that cycling more could reduce NHS obesity costs, which

are estimated to be £5.1 billion.

Their Big Bike Revival project, which helps train people to cycle on roads, saw 18,500 people begin regular cycling last year.

A Newham Council spokesperson said: "The council has been commissioned by Transport for London (TfL) to review and extend bus priority measures – such as bus lanes –

along the entire length of the Romford Road. As part of this work the layout and hours of operation of the cycle ways will be reviewed, along with any issues around parking. The work is due to be completed in the financial year 2018/19. The council is also finalising its cycling strategy which it hopes to publish shortly."



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