

Ask Councils about roads

We all need roads. Many need to drive to work, drive to take children to school, drive for the weekly food shop and drive to leisure and social events. In most U.K. communities car use is required by the geography and the transport system. Only in large cities are there mass transit systems with frequent services.

Those who claim to be greener because they have found safe cycle routes for school or work, or do have good trains or are close enough to work and shops to walk there still need roads like the rest of us. They need the diesel lorries to restock the shops, they need the on line delivery driver, the plumber and the builder to get to their homes by van . They would need an emergency vehicle to arrive if bad fortune struck them. The environmentalists that go by bus need good bus sized roads to have their way.

All but our main motorways and trunk roads are local Council monopolies, provided free to all users on the back of national and local taxation, supplemented in some places by user and environmental levies. Local elections are a good time to engage with Councillors and candidates about what they are going to do to make the roads safer and easier to use, and to bust congestion and delay which disfigures many of them.

As I travel around the country I come across many Councils that are out to get the vehicles off their local roads. They spend all too much money on narrowing usable roadspace, worsening flows at junctions and crowding too many different instructions and restrictions into too little road. In future pieces I will look at how Councils could help make our journeys easier and safer, and how they could back more use of alternatives without worsening vehicle use of their roads.