Operationalising planning for cycling.  
An institutional perspective of Quietway 2 in London

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What changes do we want to make to the street environment?

If they weren’t implemented yesterday, how can we expect them to be delivered tomorrow?

“The daily bureaucratic routines that determine how actual streets are designed and built must be closely examined and changed if newer ideas about the role of urban streets are to be implemented.” (Hess, 2009 p.1)
Understanding governance for cycle design

• Projects manipulated to perpetuate and reinforce the status quo (Quietways?)

• Policy failure - the translation of good intentions in policy to street level changes

• Operationalisation - change needs to become boring and mainstream
Key findings for discussion

• Street level changes must be deliverable by existing planning bureaucracies (respect context)

• Understanding Key leverage points. The role of tools in the planning process (epistemic infrastructure)
Strategic road network tools map

Epistemic infrastructure for governing main roads

- Object
- Performance
- Calculative device
- Formal rules

Pedestrian network
- Total journeys
  - Journey time

Cycle network
- Total journeys
  - Journey time
  - Level of service

Strategic road network (cars)
- Total journeys
  - Flow/congestion
  - Junction saturation

Bus network
- Total journeys
  - Journey reliability

CLOS

Real time monitoring
- Modelling

Network assurance
- (traffic act 2004)

Ibus monitoring

Performance objectives
Are main road crossings a reasonable aim for QW projects?
Concrete pathways vs leaps of faith

Operationalising traffic reduction

“the old adage of ‘cause gridlock and they’ll all go over to cycling’, I don’t think we’d be quite that brave. Sometimes when I’m talking to Sustrans they are quite keen for that kind of approach, but I haven’t quite got wrapped up in it”

Interviewee, borough engineer
“and it’s assumed that given rideable quality there’s a latent demand that will rise to meet the good stuff when you put it out there. People will flock to it and start riding and that does seem to be the case, basically I can get growth by providing good stuff. Seems like an obvious statement to make, but it’s not.”

Interviewee, planner
“where we are reducing traffic we need to provide evidence for what it is and then it becomes a political decision essentially on whether that is acceptable or not.”

interviewee, borough engineer
Local road - performance measures competing for dominance through calculation

- Object
- Performance
- Calculative device
- Formal rules

- Pedestrian network
  - Total journeys level of service
  - Policy objectives

- Cycle network
  - Total journeys Level of service
  - Policy objectives

- Vehicular networks
  - Vehicular access Mobility for residents
  - Modelling (sporadic)
  - Network assurance (knock on impacts)

- Health
  - Air pollution
  - Air pollution monitoring (sporadic)
  - Policy objectives
Shaping epistemic infrastructure to aid governance

“tools are good, but it’s knowing which ones to use as there is always one that’s going to argue the exact opposite case.”

Interviewee, technical specialist (cycling)
“to be honest anything I can find to demonstrate positives, I will do[...] If there are more birds flying I’d want to count it.”

Interviewee, local politician
Healthy streets

Has it all been fixed whilst I was making coffee?
Recommendations

• Navigate institutional arrangements - focus on specific desired street level changes and barriers to their delivery in terms of planning tools

• Transform planning bureaucracies through the ways they produce knowledge about performance of the streets
Thank you

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CLOS as a planning tool

- TIL
- Borough engineers
- Cycle campaigners
- CLOS critical fails
- CLOS score
  - CLOS: visibility, quality, uniformity
- Inscription
- Cycle network

Flow:
- TIL to Borough engineers
- Borough engineers to Cycle campaigners
- CLOS critical fails to CLOS score
- Negotiation
- Formal sanction
Transitions in planning for cycling are too often liable to policy failure, with cycle infrastructure projects being manipulated to fit the existing status quo in planning. This project investigates the challenges and opportunities for local planning bureaucracies in translating abstract plans for ‘improving cycling’ into street level interventions, and the operationalisation and delivery of new street designs. Primary research is focussed on planners, engineers and politicians delivering Quietway 2, a project within the Mayor’s Vision for Cycling in London. It is shown that transformational street level interventions for cycling delivered by local boroughs are constrained by institutionalised practises, rules and toolsets that are framed around automotive planning. It is demonstrated that two distinct realms of planning exist; the strategic road realm and the local road realm, with each exhibiting differing barriers to implementing cycle infrastructure where disruption to current normative practises is required. As such it is suggested that future cycling projects attempt to better navigate and transform these institutional environments and build context sensitive, epistemic tools for local officers. Where Quietway type interventions are concerned, it is suggested that this focus be on operationalising traffic reduction on local roads, with pathways for achieving this suggested based upon analytical findings.
Point 1 - respect and understand context

• The system of planning constrains outcomes across boroughs to some extent - this is predominantly in the strategic road realm

• Definition of ‘performance’ for different road types/planning realms

• Local differences are evident, with rules in planning interpreted differently on local roads

• No clear pathways of outcomes for cycling measures
Applying historical institutionalism to planning in London

- **Institutional theory and planning**

  “it became clear that what we were uncovering was a condition of institutional stasis, a failure to respond adaptively to the key challenges of the twenty-first century” (Low and Curtis, 2012 p.23).

- **Historical institutionalism, a good fit for planning** (Taylor 2013)

- **What is an institution?**
  “frameworks of norms, rules, and practices which structure action in social contexts” (Hess 2009, p. 3)

- **Greater detail needed to explain how transport planning constructs the world.**
  Visibilities and epistemic infrastructure (Jensen, 2017)