

WHAT WE LEARNT FROM CYCLING AND SOCIETY 2025:

HOW BRINGING MOBILITY EXPERTS TOGETHER HELPED US UNDERSTAND GLASGOW'S PROGRESS TO BECOME A CYCLING CITY

- Dr Nick Davies (Glasgow Caledonian University)
- Dr Emma Lawlor (University of Glasgow)
- Dr James Bonner (University of Strathclyde)
- Amanda Livingston (Glasgow Caledonian University)

INTRODUCTION

- Reassembling in Lund after meeting in Glasgow a year ago…
- ……A fleeting moment where we came together…..
- Here we share our reflections and survey findings
- This story has value and is worth recognsing!



Setting the Scene - Cycling in Glasgow





- **Cycling and Society took place in Glasgow, September 2025**

GLASGOW 2025













The symposium gave an opportunity to:

i) Explore perceptions of Glasgow's progress towards becoming a cycling city, drawing on insights from 'fleeting' mobility experts and local stakeholders.

ii) Reflect on the impact and legacy of a cycling-focused symposium and identify learning to inform future C&S events.





Survey during C&S 2025

- Participants (n=28) came from 11 countries and were researchers, policy makers, members of charitable organisations, and practitioners from the UK
- Quantitative and open-ended questions
- Anonymous responses

Results - Survey

Have you cycled in Glasgow during this visit to Cycling & Society?	
No	8 (29%)
Yes	20 (71%)
Prefer not to say	0 (0%)

How well do you think Glasgow currently supports cycling?	
Not well at all	3 (11%)
Slightly well	9 (33%)
Moderately well	11 (41%)
Very well	4 (15%)
Extremely well	0 (0%)
No response	1 (3.7%)





Glasgow's Strengths

- *Political backing a lot of projects underway low public back lash*
- *Having 3+ universities and a strong young, student population. Students are a huge resource!*
- *The river area and canal network are great, accessible routes. The abundance of green spaces.*

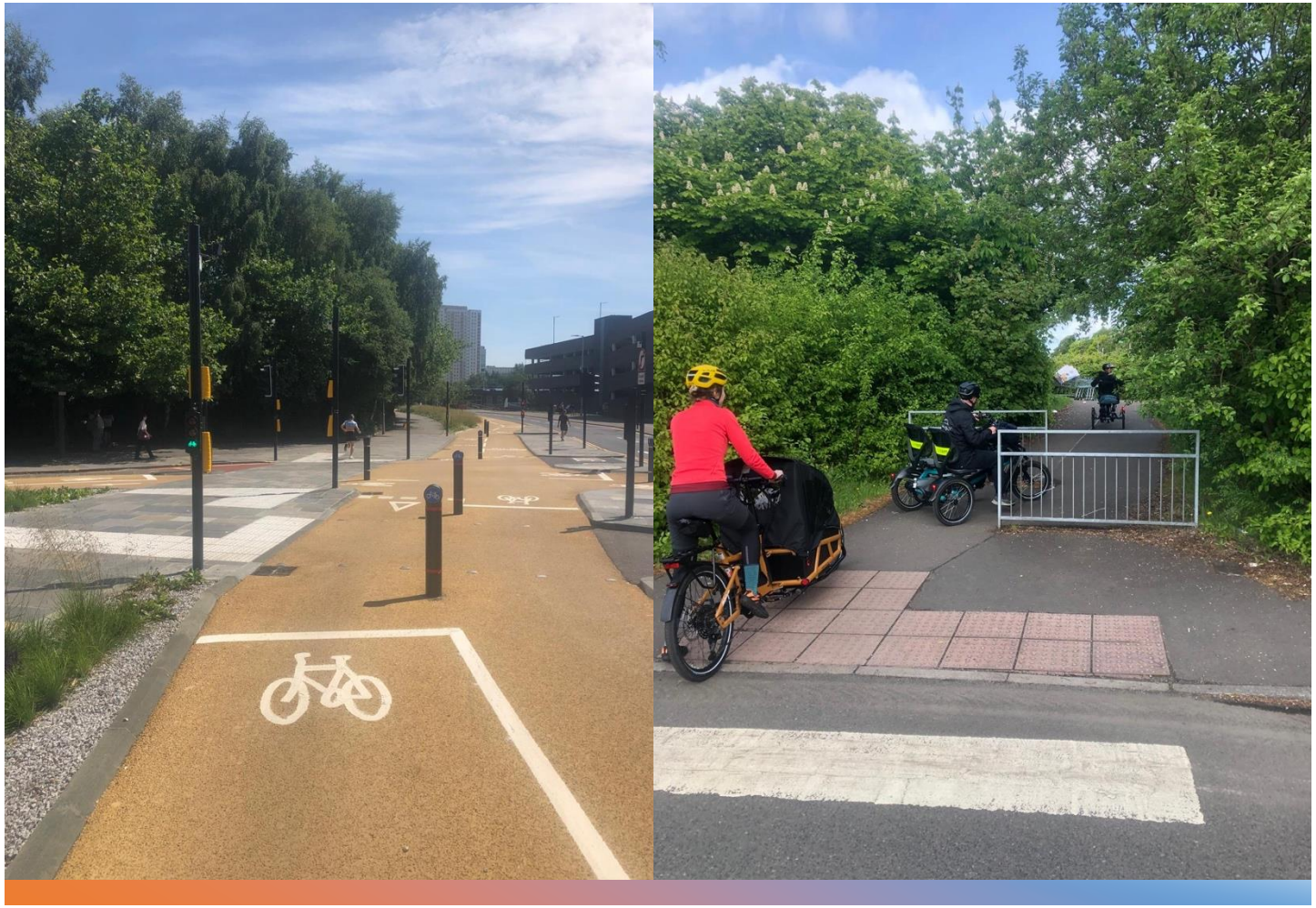
Learning from other locations

- *Affordable dockless bike hire including ebikes*
- *Bicycle lanes which can be implemented quickly*
- *Ensuring connectivity of cycling infrastructure*



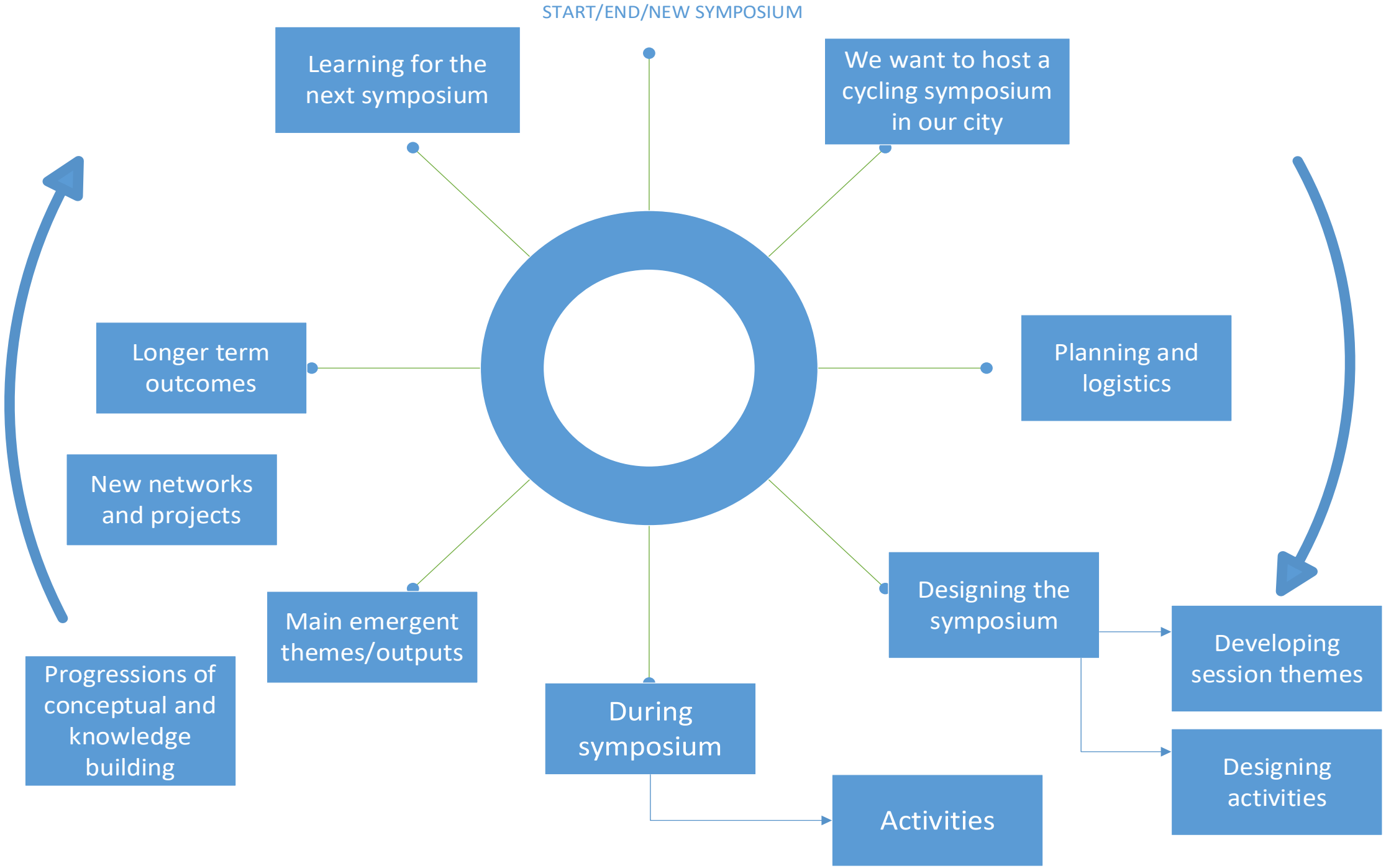
What Glasgow should prioritse:

- *Network connectivity - high-quality links between existing routes and continuous, joined-up corridors*
- *Quality connections between existing routes and quiet streets*
- *Building cycle lanes, training courses and handing out bikes to new users*



Post-event group interview

- Reflective questions about the process
- Guided by the work experience student
- 1.5 hours where each of us reflected in depth on impacts and legacy of the event


START/END/NEW SYMPOSIUM
Learning for the next symposium
We want to host a cycling symposium in our city
Longer term outcomes
Planning and logistics
New networks and projects
Main emergent themes/outputs
Designing the symposium
Developing session themes
Designing activities
Progressions of conceptual and knowledge building
During symposium
Activities



The symposium was rewarding but demanding:

“Actually, when I got to the end, I thought this is excellent. Even when I got to about day two and I knew everyone was OK and having a good time, I was quite happy about that. But leading up to it, that was quite stressful.” (Nick)

Accessibility mattered:

“The one thing that was over my head all the time was I've got to make sure this is cheap for everyone because there's some people who, a lot of people are funding themselves.” (Nick)



Goodwill was central to success

“A lot of stuff is done on goodwill... people really care for the Society and what it's done and the network that it's built.” (James)



Collective ownership was important

“…it's a bit more grassroots and everyone helping out and it's more a shared collective.” (Emma)

“There was a lot of goodwill…everybody was kind of very motivated and all pitched in.” (Emma)

Networking and relationship-building were among the strongest outcomes:

“For networking purposes, it's been excellent... to bring it here, get to meet people in Glasgow who also have got the same interests.” (Nick)

The symposium was about people as much as presentations

“Sharing and building network and friendships over the time (…) *I think is really important.” (James)*



Additional activities enhanced the experience:

“By the walk the day before and we had drinks as well, you've kind of got to know people. 'What's your name? Where are you from?' and I think that's helpful from a design point of view.” (James)



Water walk



Group cycle



Social activities

Research develops through conversation:

“It's now going to a conference in Belgium that has come out from meeting someone...” (James)

Long-term impacts are difficult to measure:

“We're only just understanding that at the moment and there might be stuff even in the future that comes into it... the actual outcomes of the symposium are harder to get your head around. (Nick)



THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART



GCU
Glasgow Caledonian University

University of Strathclyde

University of Glasgow
VIA VERITAS VITA

CONCLUSIONS AND INSIGHTS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

- A symposium can shine a light on a city's progress towards being cycling friendly
- Glasgow does show a lot of promise, which was reflected on by visitors and newcomers
- Many suggestions focused on infrastructure
- The symposium contributes to a long-term collective project
- Knowledge transfer between hosts (past, current, future) is important
- Alternative and side events build relationships, as well as provide forums for knowledge sharing and future projects.
- Networking, community building and new ideas are powerful outcomes

