Reducing Cycle Theft in London: A Partnership Approach

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Summary

- Scanning: London and the “Cycling Revolution”
- Analysis of Cycle Theft in London
- The TfL and MPS Response
- Assessment and Results
- Next Steps
London: A Growing Capital

• Capital of England and UK
• Population of 7.5 million
• 11m+ daily journeys on public transport
• 2026: population of over 8.5 million
• Increasing demand on transport system
The Cycling Revolution

- A “Cyclised” City - the Mayoral Vision

- Currently 2% of all journeys by bicycle (500,000 journeys a day)

- Aim to increase to 5% of all journeys by bicycle by 2026

- Huge investment in cycling:
  - Cycle Hire Scheme
  - ‘Cycle Superhighways’
Cycle Theft in London

• Significant increases in cycle theft
• Potential for cycle theft ‘explosion’ due to increase in cycling
• Widespread media coverage & negative perceptions
Grassroots Demand for Action

Beat the Thief: tackling bike theft must be a priority
An estimated 100,000 bikes are stolen every year across Greater London, and two-thirds of victims don’t go out and buy another one.
So as well as being a huge problem for individuals, bike theft is a major barrier to cycling growth.

How to stop your bike being stolen

Rather than blaming the victims, shouldn’t the Met be doing something about this? A large number of bikes stolen in London are to be found for sale in and around Brick Lane every weekend. I know this, most cyclists know this. What is preventing the Met from acting on this and bringing charges against those people selling stolen bikes?
- Andy, Beckenham, UK, 05/10/2009 12:24

Report abuse

Reader comments

April 30 17:08
Ken Evans

EBAY and GUMTREE can spot regular sellers, trading patterns, etc.
Police can match lists of stolen bikes, to adverts of bikes online.
It should be easy to catch the criminals.
Any chance of the London Police actually doing something ??

dizzydale

Posted Wed 5 May, 3:02 pm BST | Flag as inappropriate

I lost all faith when a work colleagues’s bike that was stolen from the office appeared on Gumtree a week later. The police said there was nothing they could do to help us.
So even if I find my stolen bike, I’m supposed to buy it back?
Analysis – Victim

Problem:
Cycle Theft

Offender

Place

Victim/Target
Analysis - Victim

- Broadly reflects London cyclist profile (mostly male, 25-44 yrs, professional)
- Certain models more likely to be targets
- ‘Bad’ locking practice used
- Bikes not registered
Analysis - Offender

The “Lone Thief”

• Stealing and selling in low volumes
• Focus on easy targets
• Selling face to face

Street Markets
Analysis - Offender

The “Runners”
Stealing high volume bicycles

The “Sellers”
Receiving bicycles
Selling online

- 90% with previous criminal history
- Loose gangs – working together
Analysis - Location

Percentage of residents who cycle on at least 2 days a week by borough of residence
LTDS 2007/8

Count of Theft of Pedal Cycle offences by borough
MPS and CoLP 2008/9

Transport for London
Analysis - Location

- Areas with large numbers of bicycles
- Left unattended for long periods
- Concentrated around Central London
- Near workplaces and universities
Planning the Response

- Developed in partnership
- Responses:
  - Education
  - Enforcement
  - Engagement
  - Environment
  - Evaluation

www.tfl.gov.uk
Planning the Response – Cycle Taskforce

- TfL funded
- 30 officers dedicated to cycle security across London
- Centre of excellence
Response: Victim/Target

- Identify property: Visible bike marking
  - Record, register and report (the 3 R’s)
  - Single bike marking and registration supplier
  - Marking events
## Bike Record Summary

**Logbook Detail**
- Logbook No.: 79827
- Download Logbook: [Print Logbook](#)
- Last Updated: 20/04/2011
- [Order New Logbook](#)

**Bike Detail**
- Current Status: Normal
- Report this bike as stolen
- Model:  
- Main Color: -
- Second Color: Purple
- Make: Crystal
- Frame Number: UG01007063
- Other Electronic Tag: Frame Material:
- Frame Type:
- Purchase from:  
- Description: ripped saddle mountain bike
- [Edit bike description](#)

**Separate Component Detail**
- No Component Registered for this bike.
- [Register a component](#)

**Bike Marking Information**
- Marking Type: CYCNO
- CODE: MPS STC 07248
- [Order Datatag Kit](#)

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**How to modify your Bike’s Details**
To modify any of your bike’s details, simply click the "edit this bike detail" link.
You can also register any component details with us free of charge. If you have already registered component details, you can modify these by clicking on "edit this component".

**How to report your bike has been stolen**
To report your bike as stolen simply click on the "Report this bike as stolen" link. Your bike will then be flagged on our database as stolen.
If your bike is returned, you can also report that this bike has been recovered.

**How to order logbook**
Click on the "Order New Logbook" button and you will be directed to the payment page. The charge for this is £2.95.
Response: Victim/Target

Crime prevention advice & target hardening

• Bicycle parking stickers

• Improving locking practice

• Dedicated website pages
Keep your bike secure

- Park and lock your bike at designated parking areas. Make sure the locks catch the bike frame as well as both wheels and the post.
- Follow the three R's:
  a) Record - Keep a record of the frame number, make and any other marks that can identify your bike if it is stolen;
  b) Register - There are a number of websites where you can register details of your bikes;
  c) Report - If your bike is stolen you must report it to the police, which will enable them to check databases and contact the owner once the bike is recovered.

For more information on how to keep your bike secure, visit www.met.police.uk/transport or www.youtube.com/metpoliceservice

Record your bike

Bike record card
To increase your chance of getting your bike back — record the details below and keep your card safe. The police will need these details if your bike is stolen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make / Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size / Colour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date / Place of Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Distinctive Features</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copies of this leaflet are available from local police stations.
Locking your bike

- Lock both wheels and the frame to a bike stand or strong immovable object.
- Lock ‘tight’ so your bike is hard to manoeuvre when parked.
- Secure your lock so it does not touch the ground.

The above advice will protect your bike against the most common bike theft techniques. See overleaf.

Visit www.bikeoff.org for the latest information.

Register your bike*

Register your bicycle model, make and frame number. This will help the police to return any recovered bikes to the rightful owners. Contact your local police station for more information.

Security mark your bike:
A number of marking schemes are available. To be effective, the marking should:
- be clearly visible so it highlights the bike is security marked
- be secure so it makes it difficult for a thief to remove the mark
- give clear information which allows the police to identify the marking and registration company. In turn, this will help to identify the owner
- include a registration logbook, which proves ownership of the bike and records details in a central location.

Always ensure you use an ACPD approved marking scheme.
Visit www.securitybydesign.com or contact your local cycle shop for more information.

This is where you may find your bike frame number:
- Near the handlebars
- Below the seat post
- By the pedals
- Underneath the pedals
- Towards the back wheel

*Or this when you buy it. You’ll never get round to it otherwise.

Buy a decent lock (see tweet)

Before visiting a bike shop check www.soldsecure.com to see which locks are most secure. Expect to pay £40 upwards for a secure locking system.

Locks are not for life
Keep your security up to date.

Set insurance
Check if your home insurance already covers your bicycle when it is away from your home. Also, check that the total value of your bike is covered.

If you have an expensive bike it may be necessary to insure it separately.
See www.bikeforsafety.net for recommended insurers.
Response: Victim/Target

Safer Transport Command

Cycle Security Advice

A Cycle Security Plan produced by TFL, British Transport Police, City of London Police and Metropolitan Police Service sets out what we have done, and plan to do, to prevent and deter cycle theft and criminal damage. This supports the Mayor’s cycling revolution in London.

As part of the continuing campaign against cycle theft and the sale of stolen bikes, TFL and the MPS Safer Transport Command have produced a video that advises cyclists on how to protect your bike, available from the MPS and TFL YouTube pages.

Keep your bike secure

Follow these steps to protect your bike, and if it is stolen, increase the chances of having it returned.

As soon as you buy a bike you should:

- Buy a decent lock - preferably two
- Expect to pay at least £40 for a decent lock
- Lock your cycle securely
  - Lock tight so that your cycle is hard to move around when parked
  - Lock both wheels and the frame to a bike stand or other immovable object
  - Secure your lock so it does not touch the ground

Visit the London Cycling Campaign website for types of lock and Sold Secure for certified locks.

Get insurance

Safe Transport

- Home
- Safer Transport Teams
- Specialist Units
- Partners
- Publications
- Safety Advice
- Publicity Campaigns
- Current Initiatives
- Project Spiderweb

Related links

- Traffic
- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Reporting crime
- Metropolitan Special Constabulary
- Volunteer Police Cadets
- Employer Supported Policing
- Crime Stoppers
- British Transport Police
- Safer London Foundation
- Transport for London

Get cycling / Avoid theft

As soon as you get a new cycle, do the following:

Register it
Register model, make and frame number to increase your chance of getting it back if it’s stolen.

Frame numbers can usually be found:
- Near the handlebars
- Below the seat post
- By or underneath the pedals
- Towards the back wheel

Security mark it
Use an ACPO-approved marking scheme.

Make sure the security mark:
- Is clearly visible, highlighting that the cycle is security coded
- Is secure and difficult for a thief to remove
- Includes a registration log book, proving ownership

Visit securedbydesign.com for contact your local cycle shop.
Response: Offender

The ‘Runners’ and the ‘Lone Thief’:

• Increasing the Risk – ‘jump-on’ covert police operations

• Reducing the Rewards – improve magistrates awareness of impact of crime:
  – Cost per crime US$1000
  – Push for tougher sentences
Response: Offender

The ‘Sellers’

Increasing the risks

• Decoy bikes + surveillance

• Online Retailers tracking and Information Sharing
  – 2 way, fast time response
  – Developing software to link and track sellers/adverts
Response: Offender

Reducing the Rewards of Crime – ‘The Sellers’

- Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA)
  - Recover money gained through proceeds of crime
  - Looking at entire benefit of their criminality

- Push for tougher sentences
- Publicise good results: naming and shaming
Tackling bike crime

Bike thieves arrested — and CA was there

Matt Lamyspends a day with theMet Police’s Cycle Task Force and sees proactive, pro-cycling policing in all its high-adrenaline glory

In a year, Transport for London and the Metropolitan Police set up the Cycle Task Force with a handful of users to help enforce rules on the roads, and make Londoners’ more secure place to keep your bike.

Bicycle thefts are a scourge of the capital city, with police receiving thousands of reports each year. Many riders feel vulnerable, and often see their bikes being stolen by opportunistic thieves who take advantage of the bicycle parking facilities available to them.

As the police forces work to address this issue, they’ve been putting in place various strategies to combat thefts. One such strategy is the Cycle Task Force (CTF), which has been specifically set up to deal with bike thefts in the capital.

In this article, we’ll take a look at the CTF’s approach to tackling bike thefts and see how they go about their work.

The CTF’s approach to tackling bike thefts

The CTF is made up of police officers and support staff who work together to identify and prevent bike thefts. They use various techniques to catch thieves, including surveillance, foot patrols, and vehicle pursuit.

One of the key strategies of the CTF is to increase visibility and deterrence. By being visible and proactive, the CTF aims to send a clear message to potential thieves that the police are watching.

The CTF also works closely with local communities and organizations to raise awareness of bike theft and to encourage people to take steps to protect their bikes.

In this article, we’ll explore the CTF’s approach to tackling bike thefts and see how they go about their work.

The CTF’s success

The CTF has been successful in reducing bike thefts in the capital. Since its inception, the CTF has reported a significant reduction in bike thefts in the areas it covers.

In addition to reducing bike thefts, the CTF has also been successful in identifying and apprehending thieves.

The CTF’s future

The CTF is expected to continue their work in tackling bike thefts in the capital. As the demand for cycling increases, so too will the CTF’s efforts to keep Londoners’ bikes safe.

In conclusion, the CTF has been successful in reducing bike thefts in the capital. By increasing visibility and deterrence, they have sent a clear message to potential thieves that the police are watching. The CTF’s future looks bright, with a continued commitment to tackling bike thefts in the capital.

Next steps in fight against bike crime

Successful lobbying by the Metropolitan Police has contributed to the recent creation of a police unit specifically to tackle cycle crime. Mike Cavenett spent a couple of days with the new Cycle Task Force in central London.

Three of the people watching the bike think they’re going to catch it. One is the “hopper,” who’s standing on the bicycle and playing a key role in the lock breaking. The other two are members of the Cycle Task Force who are charged with breaking the lock and getting the bike to safety. The “hopper” breaks the lock, ready for the rider to disappear on a Jackson’s fixed bicycle. The whole process is fast and efficient, with the police officers working quickly to get the bike safely onto the back of the van.
Response: Offender

Increasing the risks

• Improve the quality of crime reporting
  – Encouraged victims to report
  – Trained all crime recording call centres
  – Improved crime recording system

• Sharing Best Practice
  – Extending guardianship throughout the police
Response: Location

• Targeting Hotspot Locations
  – Police activity in key locations
  – Location specific community engagement

• Increasing the effort
  – Cycle parking design
  – Environmental and Visual Audits
  – Natural surveillance
Assessment

Cycle theft in London

5.4% decrease in cycle theft:

- April 2009 to March 10: 23,317
- April 2010 to March 11: 22,064

(1253 fewer victims of cycle theft)

Year 2011/12: Continuing decreases

- April 2010 to August 2011: 11,721
- April 2011 to August 2011: 11,075
Cycle Thefts in London (MPS) 2007/08 to 2011/12 vs Cycle Journeys in London

- **2007/08**: 17184 (+6%)
- **2008/09**: 18216 (+6%)
- **2009/10**: 23317 (+28%)
- **2010/11**: 22064 (-5.4%)
- **2011/12**: 20847 (-5.5%)
Assessment

Cycle Theft by borough 2009/10 vs 2010/11

[Bar chart showing cycle theft by borough for 2009/10 and 2010/11]
Next Steps

• Enforcement: increase use of POCA powers and investigative skills

• Bike Register – income generation

• Gumtree – traffic light ratings

• Retailers marking at point of manufacture

• On-going ‘Cycle Revolution’
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http://www.met.police.uk/transport/cycle_security.html