

Reducing Cycle Theft in London: A Partnership Approach

Sgt Titus Halliwell, Metropolitan Police Service Cycle Taskforce
Sophie Brown, Transport for London

Summary

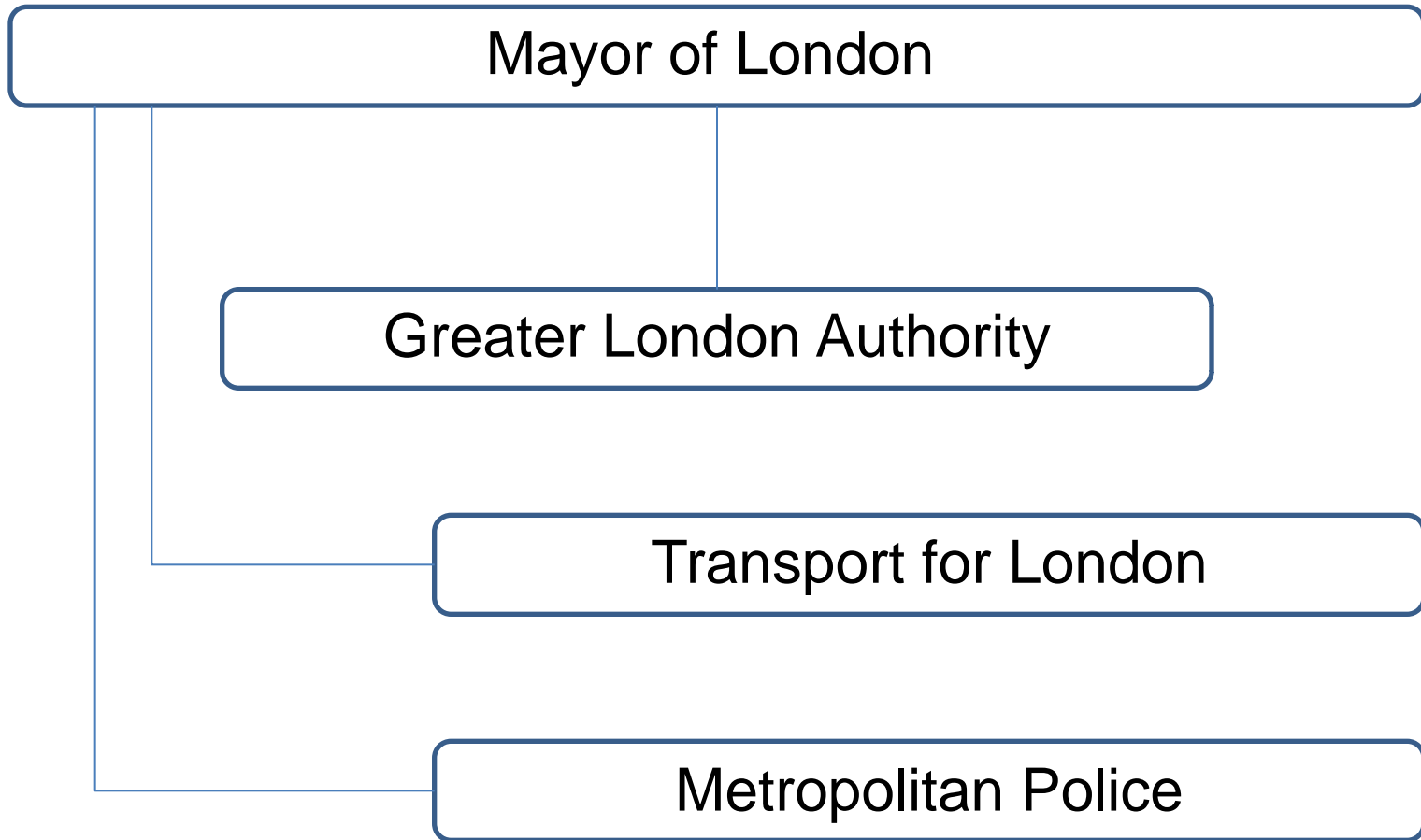
- Scanning: London and the “Cycling Revolution”
- Analysis of Cycle Theft in London
- The TfL and MPS Response
- Assessment and Results
- Next Steps

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

Governance



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

Cycle City

Have your say on London's biking forum

«Turn your commute into a workout on wheels | Main | Back on track»

CYCLING NEWS

Cyclists should be allowed to run red lights, says Boris

Cyclists call for car-free Sundays in the capital

£5m scheme gets 50 per cent more on their bikes

Boris: Cripes, I've been caught cycling inside City Hall

Boris insists on safe cycling for bike hire scheme

BMX girl 'will win in 2012'

One-way rule to be waived for cyclists in City streets

Six parks in running for Boris's £2m grant

17/02/2009

My battle with the bicycle thieves

As the Standard launches Cycle City, your online guide to London on two wheels, Andrew Gilligan reveals the steps he takes to outwit anyone with a boltcutter....

NOT long ago the Mayor, Boris Johnson, wrote a heart-rending column about his "shock," "rage" and "grief" after discovering, for "the seventh time in as many years", that some "cowardly little fiend" had stolen his bike.

One explanation for the Johnsonian theft epidemic is suggested by a picture published in the Standard last week. Boris leaves his house with his latest steed. On his bike, as on those of so many Londoners, sits a lock that looks expensive, tough and macho... that may even



LONDON TODAY: News Mobile What's On Weather: MORNING: 20°C AFTERNOON: 22°C E-Edit

Evening Standard

BT Total Broadband & Calls FREE for the first four months. Then £13 a month. Excludes certain offers.

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NEWS

HEADLINES: billion profit 2012 inspectors begin London visit

Bike thefts soar by 75% as crime gangs move in

Martin Bentham, Home Affairs Editor
12 Aug 2009

Cycle theft in central London has risen by 75 per cent in four months as criminals exploit the growing popularity of riding to work.

Among the worst hit areas are Cavendish Square, just off Oxford Street, Soho Square and the streets between Covent Garden and the Strand

Sitting target: some cyclists fail to take proper crime prevention measures and many employers are not supplying safe storage



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Also in the news

Sharp rise in London bike theft

There has been a sharp rise in bicycle thefts in Westminster in the past four months, police figures have shown.

A total of 426 bikes were stolen in Westminster between April and August this year compared to 244 in the same period in 2009 - a 71% rise.

The West End was the worst-hit area in the year 2008/2009 with



Police have advised cyclists to register their bikes

Grassroots Demand for Action



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LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN Your voice for a cycling city

Home About us Blog **Campaigns** Forum, rides and local Advice Products and services Membership and benefits Press

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
Life is too easy for thieves looking to steal a bike in London but cyclists, companies and government can make it much harder

Theft is a major barrier to people cycling

LCC communications officer Mike Cavenett said, "Bike theft is cited as the most common reason for people giving up cycling. In 2008 there were over 17,000 bikes reported stolen in London.

"It must be tackled more seriously by the police. The costs to Londoners and to the city are phenomenal."

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

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Reader comments

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April 30 17:06
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 ??

dizzydane

Posted Wed 5 May, 3:02 pm BST | [Flag as inappropriate](#)

I lost all faith when a work colleague'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



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

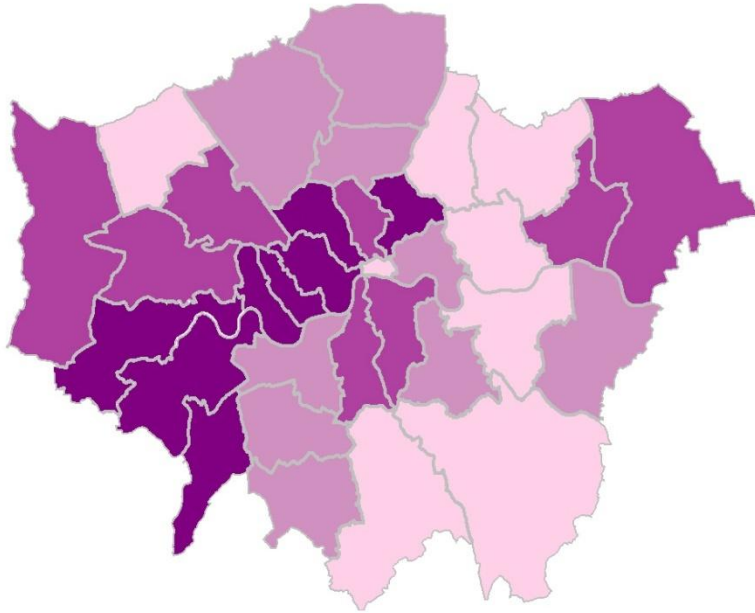
Analysis - Offender



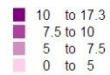
- 90% with previous criminal history
- Loose gangs – working together

Analysis - Location

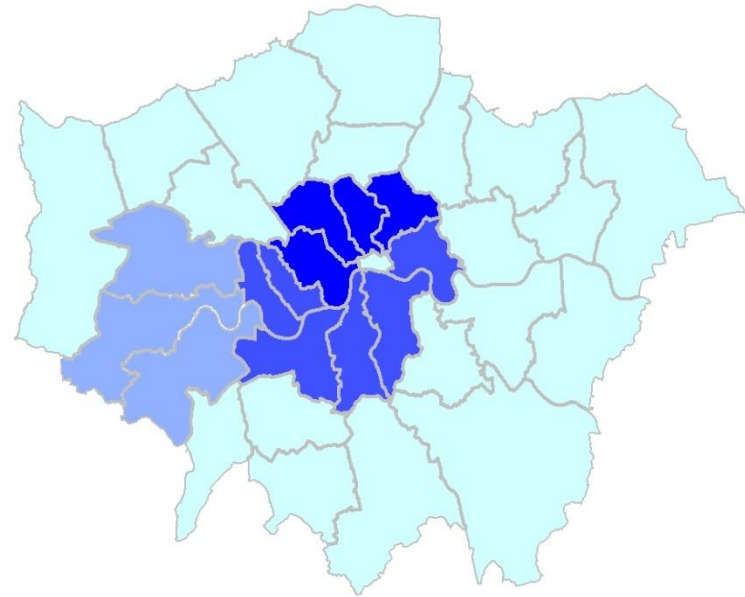
Percentage of residents who cycle on at least 2 days a week by borough of residence LTDS 2007/8



Percent of residents



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



Count of pedal cycle theft
Equal ranges



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

MAYOR OF LONDON



Transport
for London



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

Response: Victim/Target



Ultimate Bicycle Security

- HOME
- ABOUT US
- CONTACT US
- HOW IT WORKS
- HELP
- STANDARDS
- MY ACCOUNT
- REGISTER
- REPORT STOLEN

POLICE SITE

MY ACCOUNT MY DETAIL MY BIKE LOG OUT Sophie

Bike Record Summary

Logbook Detail
Logbook No: 79827
Download Logbook [Print Logbook](#)
Last Update: 20/04/2011
[Order New Logbook](#)

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

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

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

[Back](#)

How to modify your Bike's Details
To modify any of your bike's details, simply click the [Edit this bike detail >>](#).
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.

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Response: Victim/Target

Crime prevention advice & target hardening

- Bicycle parking stickers
- Improving locking practice
- Dedicated website pages



Response: Victim/Target

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



✓ Good locking practice



✓ OK locking practice



✗ Bad locking practice



✗ Bad locking practice

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.

Frame Number -----

Make / Model -----

Size / Colour -----

Date / Place of Purchase -----

Value -----

Any Distinctive Features -----



Working together for a safer London



Response: Victim/Target

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.



It is always best to use two locks.

Go for different types of lock, for example, a strong D-lock and a sturdy chain lock. This means that a thief will need different tools to break each lock, making theft less likely.

Lock it or lose it!

A short guide to protecting your bicycle



MAYOR OF LONDON



Transport for London

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.securedbydesign.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



*Do this when you buy it. You'll never get round to it otherwise.

Buy a decent lock (or two)

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.

Get 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.bikeforall.net for recommended insurers.

Lock options include:

D-Lock



Extension cable



Heavy chain lock



Response: Victim/Target

The screenshot shows the Metropolitan Police website. The header includes the Metropolitan Police logo and a 'NEW SCOTLAND YARD' sign. The navigation menu contains: Home, Your Borough, Contact Us, News & Appeals, About Us, Advice, Careers. The main content area is titled 'Safer Transport Command' and features a 'Cycle Security Advice' section. This section includes a video player showing a police officer with bicycles, a 'Keep you bike secure' section with a list of steps, and a 'Get insurance' section. A sidebar on the right lists 'Safer Transport' services and 'Related links'.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

NEW SCOTLAND YARD

Home Your Borough Contact Us News & Appeals About Us Advice Careers


Home > Safer Transport Command

Safer Transport Command

Cycle Security Advice

A **Cycle Security Plan** produced by TIL, 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, TIL and the MPS Safer Transport Command have produced a video that advises cyclists on how to protect your bike, available from the **MPS** and **TIL** YouTube pages.




Keep you bike secure

Follow these steps to protect your bike, and if 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
- Locking your cycle securely:
 - Lock tight so that your cycle is hard to move around when parked
 - Lock both wheels and the frame to a cycle 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

Safer 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
- Crimestoppers
- British Transport Police
- Safer London Foundation
- Transport for London

The screenshot shows the Transport for London website. The header includes the Transport for London logo and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Get cycling' and features a 'Cycle Journey Planner' form. The page includes sections for 'Get cycling / Avoid theft', 'Register it', 'Security mark it', and 'Make sure the security mark:'. A sidebar on the right contains the 'Cycle Journey Planner' form.

Transport for London

Search: Search

Get cycling

catch up with the Bicycle


Cycling home Barclays Cycle Hire Routes & maps **Get cycling** Events & offers Photos

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 or contact your local cycle shop.

Cycle Journey Planner

From

To

Take my bike on rail

Advanced options

Leave now →

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

Response: Offender

CAFE Cycling Active Front End Tackling bike crime

Bike thieves arrested — and CA was there

Matt Lamy spends a day with the Met Police's Cycle Task Force and sees proactive, pro-cycling policing in all its high-adrenalin glory

A year ago, Transport for London and the Metropolitan Police set up its Cycle Task Force with a twofold aim: to help enforce safer roads in the capital, and to make London a more secure place to keep your bike.

On the point of safety, there are a number of initiatives the CTF has undertaken, from patrolling city streets on bicycles themselves — issuing tickets to offending cyclists and motorists alike — to staging schemes like 'Exchanging Places' where people can jump up in the cab of an HGV and see exactly where the driver's blind spots are.

But it's the second point — bike security — that Inspector Graham Horwood, the CTF's lead, is keen to show us when we are invited up to the big smoke to see the team in action. They've set an operation up especially for us to experience — although Inspector Horwood is at pains to point out that there's no guarantee of a result.

"A lot of our work comes from people who see their bikes on eBay or Gumtree and want us to get them back," he says. "We love taking on those jobs, but we can't just be reactive, we have to be proactive too. So over the summer months we try to run twice-weekly operations with decoy bikes where we can arrest bike thieves."

The plan for today is unbelievably simple. We'll head to Islington with two of the Task Force's decoy bikes, which will be locked to a public bike stand with a name-brand but, I am told, easily defeated cycle lock. Then the casually-dressed Task Force officers — and me — will be dotted around the place, inconspicuously waiting for the bait to be taken.

With everything set up and the officers in place, Inspector Horwood and I retire to a coffee shop. All the team is in constant contact with one another via radios, and messages are relayed each time there is some interest in one of our bikes.

But patience is the name of the game and we end up spending two hours with no excitement.

beyond choosing what cable to eat. With coffee time exhausted, we stroll on, getting a sandwich, and relocating to the park. Gradually it becomes obvious there is some interest in one of our bikes. Three oaks are hanging round it, and a youth known to our team has turned up on his scooter.

Quickly lunch is discarded as Inspector Horwood orders me to move. By the time we reach the bikes — which are rather close by — two low-lives are in cuffs and the moped chap is hollering as two plain-clothed cycle-mounted officers hold him still.

I'm shown the lock — sliced straight through — and the rather weedy cable cutters that did it. "That's how quickly and easily it can be done, and how quickly we have to react," Inspector Horwood says. "You enjoyed that, didn't you?" I have to admit, I did. It was a rush, and three more bike thieves are stopped, at least temporarily. But it was also a rude awakening: this is how easy it is to get your bike stolen. Even on a Sunday in busy Islington.



LOCK IT OR LOSE IT

4 things to do to keep your bike safe

- Get your bike security marked and registered. Record the frame number and any identifying features. The CTF holds bike marking and registration sessions every Thursday in a range of London venues. Visit www.met.police.uk/transport/cycle_marking.html.
- Buy a decent lock — preferably two. Leave as little 'wiggle' room as possible between bike, lock and what it's locked to. This will restrict a thief's ability to get the tools into a gap and break the lock.
- Park your bike in an open and public place, not up a quiet side street.
- Make your bike appear the least attractive to thieves you can! Keep your peepers peeled because we'll be looking at the CTF's advice for cycle commuters and how to keep you and your bike safe on city roads in upcoming issues of *Cycling Active*.



Keep your bike under lock and key

CYCLE TASK FORCE

Five months for bike thief

Matt Lamy

LAST month we reported on the success of the Metropolitan Police's Cycle Task Force and how it had managed to reunite 12 stolen bikes with their owners (CW, February 24). Now the boys and girls in blue have another feather in their cap, recently securing a 'decoy' bike to a cycle rack by some traffic lights in Bethnal Green and then watched and waited.

Eventually a silver car with two occupants — David Benjamin driving and passenger Christopher Griffiths — pulled up at the lights. Griffiths got out of the car, cut through the bike lock and attempted to ride off, but before he could escape police sprang into

action, stopping both men. In Benjamin's car they found a veritable smorgasbord of bike-stealing tools: bolt cutters, angle grinders and bike lock keys. A further search of his house revealed even more items connected to cycle theft.

Both men were charged and appeared at Stratford Magistrates Court, where it was revealed that Benjamin had a history of stealing and handling stolen bikes.

That meant that while Griffiths — the man who actually stole the decoy bike — was given a conditional discharge, Benjamin was sentenced to five months' imprisonment. And the Cycle Task Force has also worked with the Met's Safer Transport Command's Payback Unit to secure a forfeiture order from the court, permanently seizing Benjamin's tools.

So well done the Met — keep up the good work.

Photo: Dave Calverley



CAMPBELL

Next steps in fight against bike crime

Successful lobbying by LCC 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

On a summer's evening somewhere in London there's a black mountain bike, nearly new, secured to a stand with a medium-weight cable lock — at least 10 people are watching it. The bike belongs to the Metropolitan Police's new Cycle Task Force.

Three of the people watching the bike think they're going to steal it. One is the 'spotter', who selected the bicycle, and has just used his mobile phone to describe its lock and location to a pair of accomplices. Seconds later, two others arrive together on a single BMX. The 'currier' breaks the lock, ready for the 'rider'

to disappear on the newly-freed bicycle. The whole process, from identification to theft, can take less than a minute.

This time, however, the thieves aren't the only ones on the scene: five members of the Cycle Task Force are strategically located around this particular bicycle, as well as a

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



Ph: Nigel Howard



- 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

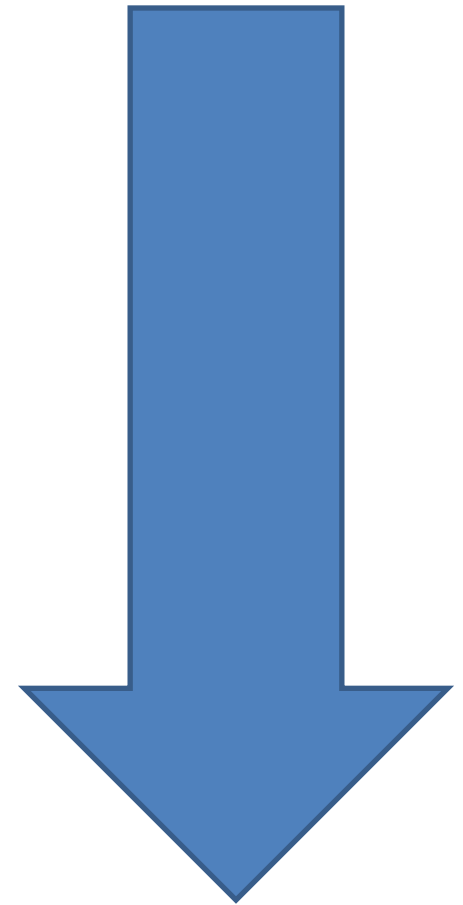
5.4% decrease in cycle theft:

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

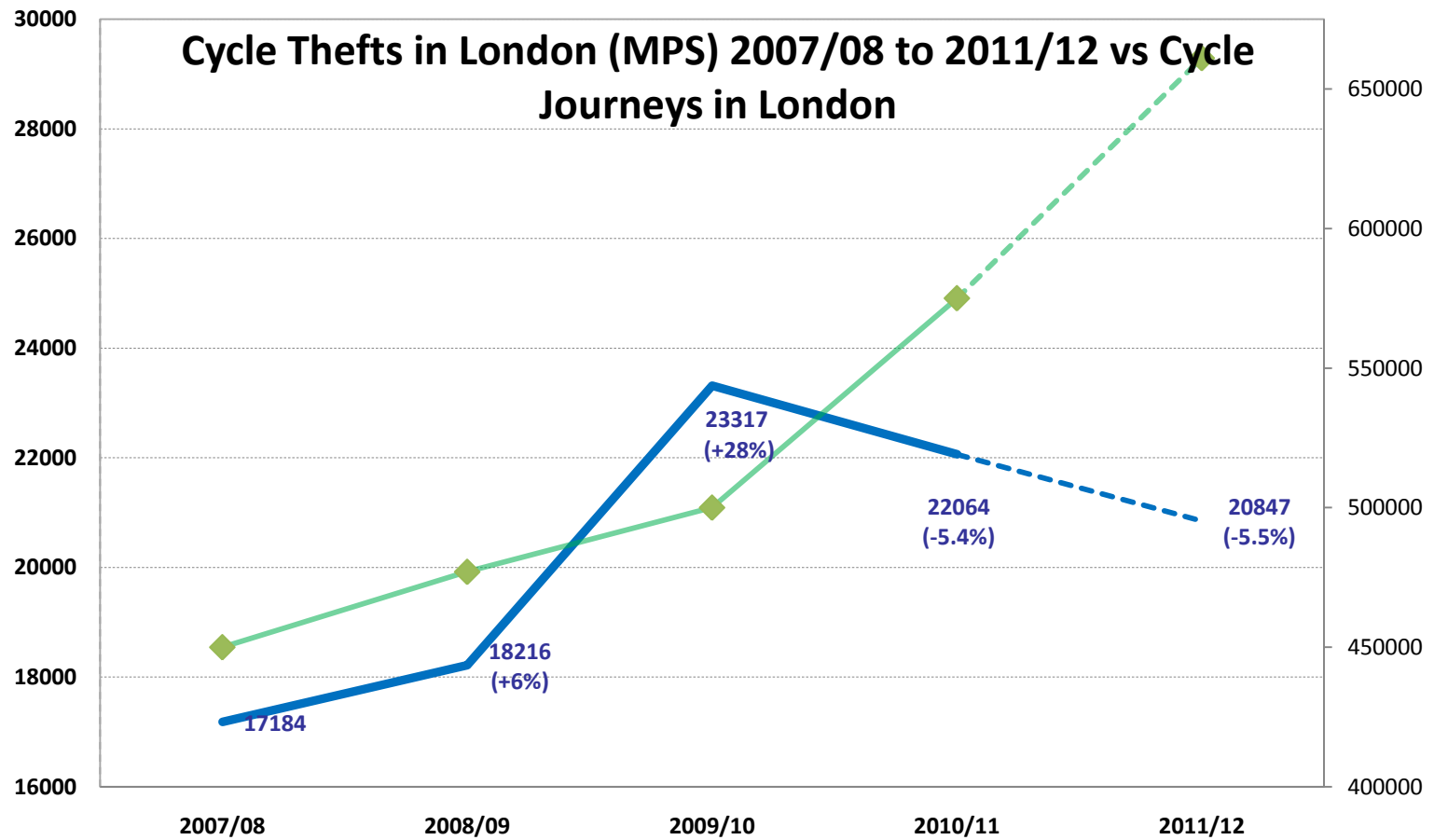
(1253 fewer victims of cycle theft)

Year 2011/12: Continuing decreases

- April 2010 to August 2011 11,721
- April 2011 to August 2011 11,075



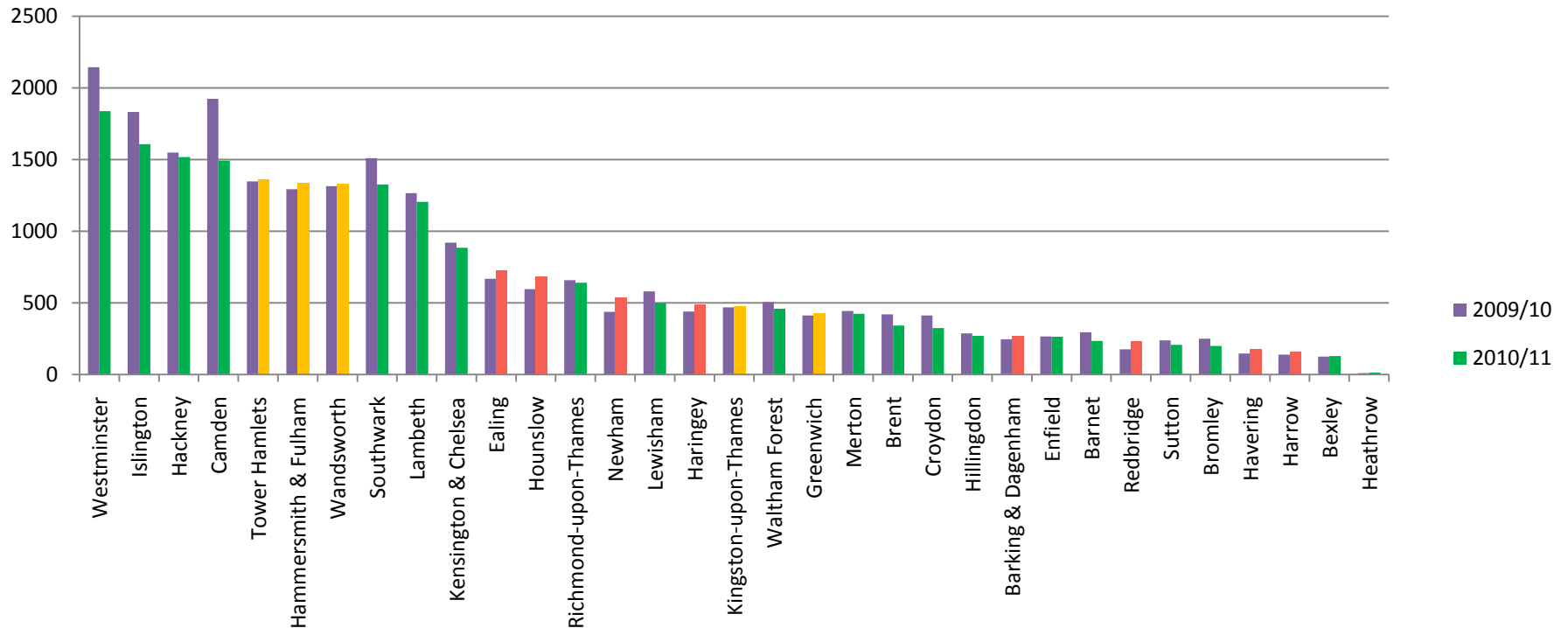
Assessment



— MPS Cycle Theft — Cycle Journeys

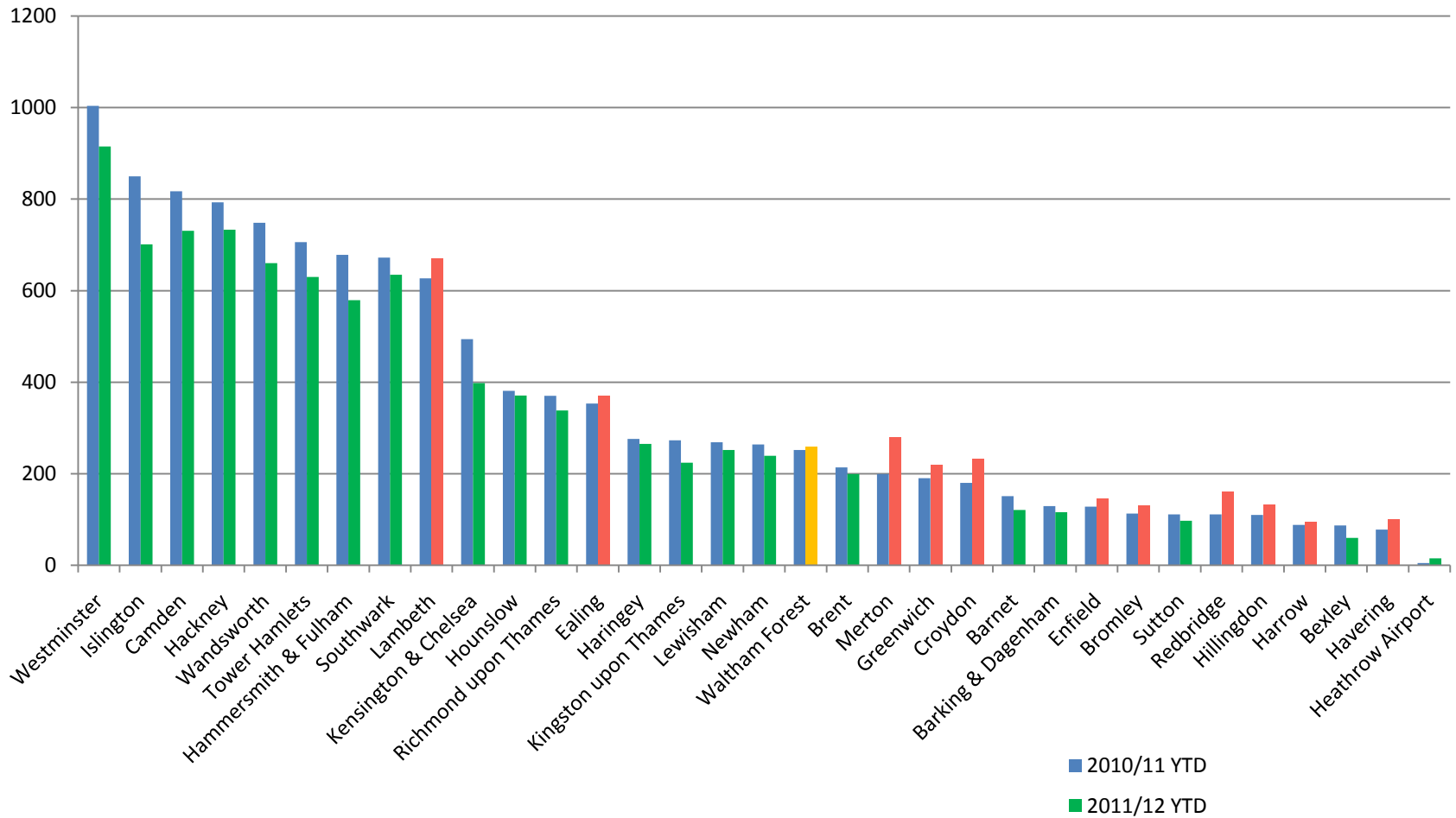
Assessment

Cycle Theft by borough 2009/10 vs 2010/11



Assessment

Cycle Theft by borough YTD 2010/11 vs YTD 2011/12



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’

Titus.Halliwel@met.police.uk

Sophie.Brown@tfl.gov.uk

http://www.met.police.uk/transport/cycle_security.html

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/11688.aspx>