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Left: Alamy

Towards the end of each year, I'm always asked about Cycling UK's campaign plans and priorities for the year ahead. My response for 2024 is starting to sound a bit like a Donald Rumsfeld answer.

For the former US Secretary of Defence there were known knowns, known unknowns and unknown unknowns. In the world of cycling policy and campaigning, the 2024 known known is that, legally, there has to be a general election before 28 January 2025. That almost certainly means an election in 2024. The known unknown is when, and the unknown unknowns include whether Cycling UK and others passionate about the benefits of getting more people cycling will be able to make this relevant to politicians and candidates in an election year.

That's our big challenge for 2024. Spoiler alert: we're not going to do that by talking about more people cycling as an end in itself. To get wider political support, we need to talk about the benefits of more people cycling, and to show how that's relevant to the cost of living, the environment, public health and other issues that are on the political and public agendas. We need to frame cycling as a solution or, as journalist Peter Walker so eloquently describes it in his book, a miracle pill.

Of course, many decisions relating to cycling, including funding, are taken by devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, so some of you might be wondering how relevant a Westminster election is in those nations. The answer depends on whether you're looking purely at manifesto commitments or more broadly at the wider political support for cycling and the context in which cycling, active travel, speed limits and transport policies are discussed.