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ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR
CYCLING & WALKING

**A MANIFESTO FOR
CYCLING AND WALKING**

**MORE PEOPLE IN THE UK CYCLING AND
WALKING, MORE OFTEN AND MORE SAFELY**

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ABOUT THE APPGCW

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Cycling and Walking group (APPGCW) is a cross-party group of parliamentarians that work together to champion cycling and walking in the context of the growing importance of all forms of active travel. Our main aim is to get more people cycling and walking in the UK, more often and more safely. To address this goal, we work collaboratively with other groups, including over 80 member organisations, a list of which can be found on our [website](#).

This manifesto sets out the key funding and policy priorities that we believe are needed to significantly increase the number of people that cycle and walk in all parts of the UK. We call on the UK Government, local authorities and all political parties to commit to bold, ambitious action on active travel.

THE BENEFITS OF CYCLING AND WALKING

Cycling and walking make an important contribution to tackling many of the key policy challenges facing the UK. They **address climate change, support healthy lifestyles, improve mental and physical health, reduces the risk of cancer, and increases life expectancy.**

Cycling and walking **save money for the NHS, and deliver health benefits.** Public Health England has reported that physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking), and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone). A Green Alliance report stated that “switching just 1.7% of car journeys to walking and cycling could deliver £2.5 billion in health benefits, by reducing problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease”.

Cycling and walking for local journeys helps to **improve air quality and combat climate change.** Transport is the highest carbon-emitting sector of the UK economy. The Committee on Climate Change cited the need for “action...to cut emissions in every sector”, and stated that this need “is especially acute for those sectors such as transport...”. As cycling and walking are non-polluting, increased active travel is part of the solution for a low-carbon future, and one of the simplest lifestyle choices that individuals can make to reduce their carbon footprint. Savings of nearly £6bn in improved air quality could be realised if the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) targets were met. This could result in over 8300 premature deaths being avoided over a ten-year period.

Cycling **contributes £5.4bn to the UK economy and provides 64,000 jobs.** Walking and cycling **saves employers money and increases the productivity** of workforces – because exercise improves cognitive ability and overall health, those who walk or cycle to work take fewer days off sick per annum. Cycling also supports mobility and clean growth.

In addition, increased cycling space, when linked effectively to public realm improvements, can bring **significant economic and other benefits to town and village centres, and other urban areas.** Investing in better streets and spaces for walking and cycling can provide a competitive return compared to other transport projects, and walking and cycling projects can increase retail sales by 30% or more.

Few other activities provide benefits so cost-effectively across such a range of policy areas as cycling and walking. However, in Britain **cycling currently accounts for less than 2% of trips.** This leaves us well behind countries like Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark (where 9-19% of trips are cycled), let alone the Netherlands (26%).

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While walking has increased in recent years, it is still low by historic levels. In England in 2018, 60% of car trips were between 1-2 miles. 42% of the public say they are willing to switch these shorter car journeys to walking, and 37% say they are willing to switch them to cycling.

Increased investment and a progressive, coherent policy framework are required to increase the levels of both cycling and walking.

INCREASED AND TARGETED INVESTMENT

The case for increased investment in cycling and walking is clear, and is supported by substantial health and economic evidence from across the world. Creating safe, convenient and attractive conditions for cycling and walking is a hugely cost-effective way to deliver improved lifestyles for people of all ages in communities across the UK.

Investment in active travel delivers a good return. Department for Transport figures state that investment in cycling and walking brings benefits of £5.50 for every £1 invested, a far higher return than for many large road and rail schemes.

Much has been done in recent years to support active travel. The trebling since 2010 of investment in cycling and walking in England (excluding London), from around £2 per person annually to around £7.50 is welcome. However, **investment remains low compared with other European countries** - the Dutch, for example, invest around £26 per person annually on cycling alone, and have been spending at this level for over 40 years.

There is clearly scope, and a need, to do more to fully realise the benefits of cycling and walking for people and places across the UK. **We therefore seek a significant funding increase for cycling and walking infrastructure so that the UK at least matches, and ideally exceeds, funding levels in other European countries.** Manchester is showing the right level of ambition by proposing funding of £50 per person annually. Other cities and authorities should seek to match this commitment. More funding, and freedom to invest in vital infrastructure, will give people the confidence and safety to change the way they get around towns and cities.

Increased funding should be accompanied by additional new targets to increase cycling's modal share (the percentage of journeys made by cycling) from its current level of 2% to 10% (close to German levels) by the end of the decade and to 25% (close to Dutch levels) as soon as possible thereafter.

Increased capital funding would support the implementation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, and strengthen the National Cycle Network (NCN), which supports over 15,000 jobs, and directly contributes £650 million to the economy each year. It would also support Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes which would benefit both walking and cycling, and contribute to other public realm improvements, junction safety and crossing improvements, and green walking and cycling routes.

Increased capital funding would also enable **better alignment and integration of cycling and walking with public transport.** It would support better links across and along major transport corridors; improve access for cycles at railway stations and other public transport interchanges; increase secure cycle parking at stations, and commercial and residential developments; integrate rail stations and bus stops with walking networks; enable better wayfinding to encourage more walking; and provide better cycle hire and storage facilities. Walking and cycling links should be created that reduce severance by major roads and link with green corridors. Many of these issues can be addressed through planning policy.

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More capital funding would also **support British companies producing world-leading e-bikes** by promoting their uptake. E-bikes can have broader appeal than conventional bikes, particularly to older people, women, and those who are less active. They could therefore contribute substantially to improving the nation's health and reducing car dependence. E-cargo bikes are growing in popularity and could carry approximately 30% of goods in towns and cities. **The DfT's eCargo Bike Grant Fund has been successful, and we believe this should be extended to all e-bikes.** Where e-bike grants have been introduced by our European neighbours, take-up has been significant - Germany sold 1 million e-bikes last year, compared to only 60,000 in the UK.

Increased revenue investment should support targeted behaviour change programmes, such as cycle training and walking programmes in schools, workplaces, and community group settings for people of all ages. **All schoolchildren should have access to cycle training up to Bikeability Level 3, and cycle training should also be available and free for adults. All school children should also have the opportunity to walk part or all of the way to school**, contributing to meeting the CWIS target of 55% of primary school children in England walking to school by 2025. Walk to school behaviour change and accreditation programmes should be rolled out, with improved routes to school and School Streets schemes. Revenue investment should also address training and awareness campaigns for drivers and cyclists.

It is essential that funding is spread across the UK, so that the brilliant cycling infrastructure that exists in London and some other towns and cities can be replicated more widely.

We recognise there is strong competition for funding from other policy areas, and that striking the right balance is challenging. However, the case for investment in walking and cycling is powerful. As stated above, **few other activities can provide benefits so cost-effectively across such a range of policy areas.** We therefore urge increased investment be made available to enable more people and communities across the UK to enjoy the many benefits of walking and cycling.

A COHERENT AND PROGRESSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Increased funding must be complemented by national government and local authority policies that aim to reduce car use and enable more people in the UK to cycle and walk more often. **This policy framework should include the implementation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans**, and the strengthening of the National Cycle Network (NCN). **The tax system should continue to support cycling.** This would be achieved by adhering to the principle that 'the polluter pays' as the basis of taxation of transport users, and by maintaining both a tax-free mileage rate that makes cycling on business financially worthwhile, and the policy of not taxing cycles for use of the road.

Safety and justice issues must also be addressed. **We seek a review of road traffic offences and penalties to ensure that the law delivers just and safe outcomes for all road users.** The role of the justice system in deterring irresponsible road use and removing unsafe drivers from the roads, needs to be strengthened. This would support the Government's ambition "to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys". The Highway Code should also be amended to improve safety for walking and cycling and include a clear hierarchy of responsibility for road users, where pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised.

A default 20mph speed limit should be introduced in built-up areas. The majority of pedestrian casualties occur in built-up areas, many of which have 30mph speed limits. **Slower speeds save lives.** If someone is struck by a vehicle at 20mph, they have a 97% chance of survival. This reduces with every mile driven faster.

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Greater priority should be given to roads policing, and more police forces should adopt 'close passing' enforcement activities. We also want to see a revision of the driving test to help improve driver behaviour towards more vulnerable road users.

Government should look to reduce the barriers to walking. Pavement parking, in particular, can restrict the independence of many vulnerable people, especially parents, older people and those with disabilities. The presumption should be that pavement parking is not allowed, with exemptions to this rule where safe and necessary to do so. This is already the case in London and legislation has recently been passed in Scotland.

TOWARDS A HEALTHIER AND CLEANER NATION

Delivery on the actions outlined above would make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys, and for part of a longer journey. They would **enable walking and cycling to be seen as an activity for all**, rather than a 'niche' activity for some. The time is right for bold action - the benefits for citizens and communities across the UK would be profound.