

All Party Parliamentary Group for Cycling & Walking
House of Commons

2 July 2021

Dear APPGCW

Call for Submissions re. inquiry on Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2

This submission is in a personal capacity as someone with an interest in active travel. In this response I am addressing your questions of:

Wider policy support. *What else do DfT and other government departments need to be doing in order to maximise the impact of CWIS 2?*

Decarbonising transport. *Given the extraordinary contribution active travel can make to tackling the climate emergency, how should CWIS 2 be positioned within transport and wider climate policy? More specifically, how should CWIS 2 fit with the anticipated transport decarbonisation plan?*

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The relationship between central and local government. *Given that most “on the ground” delivery will fall to local government whilst funding and oversight will lie at the centre, how can CWIS 2 provide successful mechanisms to support this? What can be done to support transport/highway authorities that may not have a strong record in promoting walking and cycling?*

The focus of this submission is to ask the APPGCW to not overlook the challenges raised by the push to convert the country’s motor vehicles to electric propulsion and the, often inadvertent, impact this may have on cycling and walking.

The Government’s push to electric motor cars (EVs) has been accompanied by various incentives. Local authorities provide further subsidies on ownership, e.g., in the form of lower parking permit fees¹, exemptions from congestion charges or – as being trialled in Cambridge – permission to drive in bus lanes.

While it is undeniable that EVs are less polluting at the tailpipe than conventional internal combustion engines (ICEs), they are by no means a zero-carbon form of transport. Regardless of the issue of the energy mix which produces the electricity required to charge them and their carbon-intensive manufacture in the first place, these cars produce particulate pollution from brake and tyre dust. More significantly, many SUV-style EVs are extremely heavy compared to their ICE counterparts. A Tesla Model S for example weighs

¹ In Hackney for example an annual EV parking permit is £10 compared to up to £369 for an ICE car, or £42 for a space in a cycle storage locker.

about 2.5 tonnes. Large EVs have the potential to do a lot of damage to cyclists and pedestrians in any collisions. Any exemptions that permit EVs to mix with vulnerable road users are illogical and highly undesirable.

More generally, the success and support for traffic reduction measures in urban areas, such as LTNs, contribute to a better quality of life for these areas as a whole, e.g., in increasing cycling and walking to schools in safety and by reducing particulate pollution. These benefits would not be achieved by making exceptions that would allow EVs to make journeys banned or disincentivised in ICE vehicles.

I also would ask the APPGCW to highlight and address the issues that charging infrastructure present to cycling and walking. Charging points should not be sited at the expense of space for walking and cycling. Unfortunately, there seems to be little regulation of where public charging points are located, as shown in the examples below.

The first picture is of a recently installed set of charging points in Routledge Street, Widnes. Shockingly, these are bang in the middle of the pavement with no apparent consideration for the blind, users of wheelchairs or parents pushing buggies. The second picture is a typical charge point, again located on a pavement taking up space from active travel. In both cases the charging leads stretch across the pavements making a trip-hazard.

In contrast, the final picture shows a charging point fully on the road, showing some thought and consideration to the needs of pedestrians. There is no good reason why this type of arrangement should not be the design standard for locating charge points.





In summary, **decarbonising transport** via good cycling and walking infrastructure should be at the forefront of all transport and planning policy over and above any moves to promote the shift to EVs. As noted in the 2017 CWIS, 2/3 of all journeys in urban areas are less than 5 miles. Installing quality cycling infrastructure that meets LTN 1/20 standards in all new developments and during any renovations of existing road networks will should be a priority over any policies that might incentivise shifting those journeys into EVs. **LTN 1/20** should also be reviewed and revised to strengthen it against any encroachments by policies promoting EVs, e.g., at least to proscribe charging points on pavements or in cycle lanes.

Wider policy support outside the DfT is critical. EVs – which have their part to play – should not be seen as a universal panacea to all our needs, nor different from any other motor vehicle (given that by 2030 they are likely to be the predominant form of cars on the road in any case). Any departmental policy that mentions or promotes the use of EVs should be reviewed against CWIS and LTN 1/20. This is particularly the case for new housing or other building developments. Any conflicts between CWIS and LTN1/20 on the one hand, and EV policies on the other, should be resolved in favour of the former.

The relationship between central and local government is critical. As the pavement charge points shown above illustrate, local implementation of good infrastructure to encourage and enable active travel varies widely. Central government should set clear planning guidelines that ensure active travel is not adversely impacted by promoting the shift to EVs. Local government should be required to review any proposals to park, charge or drive EVs against CWIS and LTN1/20 and ensure that safe active travel is prioritised.

I look forward to reading the results of your findings.

Yours faithfully,

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Cambridge.