

# **An inquiry on Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2: Call for evidence**

**Sustrans response, July 2021**

## **About Sustrans**

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates who work in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done. We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

## **Contact**

We are pleased to respond to the All Party Parliamentary Group inquiry calling for evidence on Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2.

If you require any clarifications or further information on this response, please contact Cat Leggat, Parliamentary Officer, Sustrans at [cat.leggat@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:cat.leggat@sustrans.org.uk).

## Summary Response

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (CWIS2) is an opportunity to deliver real change for walking and cycling. To ensure that active travel can be a normal part of everyday life for everyone and become the natural choice for shorter journeys, whether that is for education, commuting or seeing friends and family.

Walking and cycling don't just provide a way of getting from A to B, they also offer a way to get more people into work, fight the climate crisis, clean up our air and get more people more active.

To achieve these goals and be effective, the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy should:

- Set ambitious targets, including a new walking target
- Demonstrate long term funding plans to meet those targets and beyond
- Set out provisions for both capital and revenue funding, allowing local authorities to build the expertise and staffing capacity to deliver ambitious, effective schemes
- Promote a community led approach to local scheme design, ensuring that schemes meet the needs of communities and the opinions of those who are currently less likely to walk and cycle are heard
- Have reducing inequity at its heart
- Bring together departments across Government to embed walking and cycling solutions in all of their work with an aim of meeting net-zero and public health targets
- Link cycling and walking to the selection of wider measures required to decarbonise transport.

## Targets

Ambitious targets to increase walking and cycling, particularly amongst those who are currently least likely to walk and cycle, have a critical role to play in getting transport on course to reach net zero.

CWIS2 must maintain the cycling target of CWIS and set a new walking target of at least 365 stages per person per year. However, participation in active travel alone will not be sufficient to reach net zero and CWIS2 must sit alongside complementary policies which reduce car mileage travelled and end new road building.

### *Cycling targets*

In 2017, CWIS set out one cycling objective “to double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025”. We support this target and stress the need for sustained, increased funding if this target is to be met, given that in 2020 a DfT progress review set out that only “around 40% of the gap to double cycling by 2025 is forecast to be filled”<sup>1</sup>. Funding has increased since then, but the report highlights the importance of funding.

CWIS2 should retain this target and also consider how it can be achieved by addressing the differences in cycling rates between different demographic groups, and successfully widen participation, enabling more marginalised groups to get into cycling.

### *Walking targets*

CWIS set out two walking targets. The first, to increase walking stages per person per year, to 300 stages per person per year in 2025, has already been surpassed.

We believe a more ambitious target is necessary, at least 365 stages per person per year as data from 2018 illustrates results of 347 walking stages per person per year.

However, for this target to be ambitious it cannot be realised solely by considering average participation, through the calculation of the number of stages per person per year. It should be considered in terms of who is walking, what journeys they walk and what their experience is like when they walk.

The second target to increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025. We support keeping this target.

#### *Collection of new data*

While it is important to increase ambition in stages, alone it could just mean that active people are even more active. Additional targets, for example that examine the percentage of people walking a certain distance per week, would allow measurement of the number of people hitting a minimal level and drive targeted approaches to those who are the least active. We recommend that DfT and DHSC work together to determine the best measure to reduce inactivity.

The Gear Change mode share target of half of all journeys in towns and cities walked and cycled by 2050 is welcome, but to date no work has been done to establish a baseline of this data, measure improvement or determine if this target is ambitious. Additionally, as a national target, any results will mask inter and intra-regional differences. CWIS2 offers an opportunity to address some of these gaps.

#### *Impact of CWIS targets on net-zero*

Increasing walking and cycling in line with CWIS targets, or indeed significantly more than those targets, will not do enough to achieve net-zero without also reducing car mileage travelled and ending new road building.

IPPR's recent report<sup>2</sup> investigating how to fairly decarbonise transport reveals that the Climate Change Committee's recommended approach to decarbonisation could lead to an 11% rise in traffic between 2021 and 2050, and a 28% increase in car ownership, rising from 34 million cars owned today to 43.6 million in 2050. They anticipate this will largely be caused through the uptake of private electric vehicles.

While the carbon savings are positive, it is notable that even with a switch to a net-zero vehicle fleet, more ambitious traffic reduction and mode shift targets are required to meet net-zero. For example, even if all new cars are ultra-low emission by 2030, the level of traffic reduction needed by that point could be between 20% and 60%<sup>3</sup>.

Additionally, analysis has shown that RIS2 is predicted to drive up demand for car use and add 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (20 MtCO<sub>2</sub>) to UK emissions between now and 2032. These extra emissions, as a result of more road capacity, will negate 80% of

the benefit arising from the switch to electric vehicles on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) between now and 2032<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, any switch to electric-vehicles will not address other impacts of vehicle use such as road safety and air pollution, which have the greatest impacts on the communities least likely to own a car at all.

## Overall level of funding

We welcome the existing £2 billion in funding pledged by government. Research has shown that further investment, to reach £8bn, is required over the next 5 years to meet the initial CWIS targets and ensure funding prioritises reducing inequity. Crucially the plan for this funding should be transparent and multi-year, this will allow capacity building within Councils, allowing them to be ambitious in their planning.

### *Funding level required*

Walking and cycling requires a long term funding plan. CWIS2 should end stop-start funding and outline a long term financial settlement for active travel, to allow councils to deliver ambitious strategies with confidence that funding will not dry up.

The Walking and Cycling Alliance (WACA) calculate that sustained investment of £8 billion over a 5 year period, is needed to meet even the initial CWIS targets and ensure funding prioritises reducing inequity. This means a significant increase is required on the £2billion currently pledged by government.

This investment would give local authorities covering three-quarters of England's population funding to achieve transformative change.

### *Additional revenue raising schemes*

To raise the additional funds for investment in walking, cycling and public transport while reducing driving in line with the UK's greenhouse gas emission targets, the Government should end the fuel duty freeze.

Fuel duty has been frozen in the UK since 2010 and studies suggest this freeze has increased UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 5%. At the same time the freeze has cost the UK Government billions in lost revenue. Fuel duty is also used in England to pay for the

Roads Investment Strategy. This increases road capacity, inducing further demand and encouraging more car journeys.

## Capacity

Due to years of reduced funding to Local Authorities, they lack the capacity and up to date skills to produce bids and schemes that will help achieve the Government's targets. A gradual, but sustained, increase in funding and support from Active Travel England will be required to boost this capacity.

### *Historic funding issues*

Currently, many Local and Combined Authorities have issues developing enough pipeline schemes to be able to bid for the increased levels of capital funding available. It also means that schemes are delivered which don't meet best practice guidelines and therefore don't effectively make it easier for more people to walk and cycle.

This stems from:

- Years of reduced funding for Authorities meaning that internal resource to develop these schemes is low, and the recruitment of new staff is not straightforward.
- Authorities having skilled teams which lack experience in developing schemes of the ambition LTN1/20 calls for.
- Local Authorities relying on external consultants due to lack of in house resourced as a result of funding issues. Consultants are also struggling to recruit enough people who are skilled in highways engineering and especially walking and cycling.
- The disbanding of dedicated sustainable transport teams, meaning responsibilities for such schemes move around within authorities. As a result there is a lack of continuity both over time and geographically, the latter of which can result in schemes that aren't effectively joined up over a region.

### *Ratcheting-up funding*

Local and Combined Authorities will require a gradual but sustained increase in funding to build the staff resource, skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality schemes which meet the Government's targets.

To ensure that investment is effective the following are required:

- A long term funding plan – this will prevent a rush to plan and delivery of poor schemes, purely to meet sudden funding deadlines
- Network of Local Authority Cycling and Walking Champions, these are particularly important to overcome any lack of political will
- Building capability, capacity & skills in local authorities and the supply chain based on new design guidance
- Clear, high quality design guidance. Including LTN for walking and green infrastructure standards
- Stepping in to even out costings. For example in one Local Authority a Toucan crossing can cost £55,000 in in the next £100,000.

### *Active Travel England*

Active Travel England should:

- Provide training, good practice and knowledge sharing. This would be particularly useful to enable exemplar authorities to aid the work of Councils with reduced capacity
- Be responsible for allocating, and withholding walking and cycling funding
- Provide consistency for large scale behaviour change over time.

## **Breakdown of funding**

A mix of capital and revenue funding is required from CWIS2. Sustrans recommends that initial funding should be split 70% capital 30% revenue, moving to 80/20 as infrastructure is delivered, with additional support for local authorities that require capacity building.

### *Funding focus*

When considering what CWIS2 funding should be spent on, Sustrans recommends three focus areas:

- High quality infrastructure.
- Supporting revenue and capital programmes.
- Capacity building in Local Authorities.

### *High quality infrastructure.*

This should include:

- Protected cycle networks – prioritising infrastructure improvements in more isolated neighbourhoods, especially those which suffer from deprivation
- Low traffic neighbourhood treatments
- Public realm improvements benefitting both walking and cycling
- Junction safety improvements and road crossings
- Green walking and cycling routes.

### *Supporting revenue and capital programmes.*

A mix of capital and revenue investment is needed to achieve success. Sustrans recommends that initial funding should be split 70% capital 30% revenue, moving to 80/20 as infrastructure is delivered.

Capital programmes should include:

- Support for iconic routes, such as the National Cycle Network and National Trails
- Cycle-rail improvements and rail infrastructure improvements benefiting walking
- Support for public cycle hire schemes and e-cycle grants
- Cycle and pedestrian access along and across major roads and HS2 corridors
- Greenways and access to green space
- Street maintenance of cycling and walking infrastructure.

Revenue programmes should complement capital schemes, to increase their impact and spread the benefits more equitably. Programmes should include:

- Programmes for schools, workplaces and community settings
- Cycle training for all
- Support for uptake of cycle hire schemes in disadvantaged areas.

### *Capacity building in Local Authorities.*

This should include:

- Support package to address lack of technical capacity within local authorities to sit alongside investment
- Construction of wider supply chain skills (e.g. consultants, developers etc).

## Public and political acceptability

To build public and political acceptability Sustrans recommends:

- Looking at and referencing opinion data on schemes that are described as controversial to understand how local people genuinely feel about such interventions, rather than relying on the media
- Framing schemes in the range of benefits that they provide
- Ensure schemes are co-designed with the communities who live/work in the area
- Amplify the voices in favour of such interventions

### *Opposition overstated*

The media has portrayed certain schemes as highly controversial, this is often because they are listening to the voices, on both sides, that shout the loudest. The Department for Transport's report into Public Opinion Survey on Traffic and Road Use<sup>5</sup> illustrated that 78% of respondents supported the reduction of road traffic in their local area / neighbourhood.

Even when these results are disaggregated to cyclists/pedestrians and car/van drivers we still see significant support from drivers (76%). Notably only 3% of respondents strongly oppose the reduction of road traffic in their local area / neighbourhood. It is clear that this assumption of high levels of opposition is false.

### *Building consensus and support around schemes*

In order to change the narrative and build consensus around schemes such as low-traffic neighbourhoods we can do several things:

- Frame schemes positively
- Ensure schemes are community led and co-designed
- Amplify the voices in favour of such interventions.

### *Framing schemes positively*

Frame schemes in terms of what we stand to gain, not what will be lost. We need places where streets are for people, not dominated by traffic so children can play safely like many of us did growing up. Parents shouldn't have to fear traffic or air pollution damaging their family's health.

Children want change too. When asked as part of Big Pedal 2021<sup>6</sup>, 57% of children surveyed, said there were too many cars in the area around their school gates. And 49% of children said they were worried about the amount of air pollution near their school.

We want places where the most obvious, cheapest and convenient way to make short journeys is by walking and cycling for the majority. Places that feel safe and enjoyable to enter, pause and reconnect with your neighbours, friends and communities. These places are liveable neighbourhoods. Low traffic neighbourhoods or LTNs can contribute to liveable neighbourhoods.

Some of the many benefits include:

- Creating safer spaces for children walking to school, crossing the road, or playing near their homes
- Providing safe community spaces
- Helping neighbours get to know each other better
- Cleaning up the air we breathe
- Increasing access to open space (particularly important for people who don't have access to a garden)
- Increasing footfall for local business
- Reducing noise pollution in residential areas
- Reducing the number of car trips made

### *Community led design*

Schemes need to be well-thought out and co-designed with the communities who live/work in the area, so that they are designed to serve people's real needs, not just perceived needs.

It is essential to listen to all voices, not just the ones who shout the loudest. This ensures that the whole community is behind the scheme. It's also essential to give schemes time to bed-in, whilst carefully monitoring their impacts in the immediate and surrounding area, making changes to improve them as necessary.

For a scheme to be successful we must:

- Listen (to everyone)
- Learn (from what people are saying and what data is showing)
- Adapt (if necessary)

### *Amplify the voices in favour of such interventions*

These voices should represent the diversity of their communities and the broad spectrum of reasons that the schemes are beneficial to individuals.

## Behaviour change

In 2020, overall cycling levels in the UK increased by 50% compared to 2019, while every other transport mode saw a significant decrease in miles travelled<sup>7</sup> to levels which haven't been recorded since the 1960s.

However, 2020 can't be considered a normal year due to restrictions in travel introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning more people exercising locally to their home, far less vehicle traffic on the roads, and a spell of record breaking sunny weather.

This increase wasn't planned, it happened through circumstance, quickly falling away as more vehicles returned, weather worsened and restrictions were lifted; cycling use as of July 2021 remains similar to pre-pandemic levels. However, this mini-boom does indicate that there is potential for cycling to surpass 2020 levels in the medium-long term if there is significant, well planned and sustained investment in active travel and a real commitment to reducing vehicle traffic.

Indeed, Sustrans' Bike Life report reveals that 28% of residents of Bike Life cities don't currently cycle but would like to start and 48% feel that they should cycle more. However, they face barriers to adopting a new mode of mobility.

Bike Life asked residents would help them to cycle more. Percentages below indicate percentage of support each measure received from survey respondents;

1. Improved cycling infrastructure: including more traffic free cycle routes (79%), physically protected routes along roads (77%), more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets (74%) and better links with public transport (67%).
2. More support to cycle: including cycle training courses and social rides (54%), access to an electric cycle (49%), access to a cargo cycle (37%) and access to an adapted cycle (27%).

3. Traffic management measures: including fewer motor vehicles (63%), 20mph streets (56%) and restricted car parking (43%).

These measures demonstrate clearly the need for both capital investment in infrastructure and revenue investment to support their use, for example the provision of cycle training courses. Both should be targeted at groups and neighbourhoods that have lower levels of participation and would benefit the most from interventions that break down the barriers they face.

## Wider policy support

A joined up approach between and across departments will aid in maximising the impact of CWIS2 – investment and policy decisions across Government should be made on the basis of their impact on net-zero and public health, in line with the CCC’s call for a “net zero test” on policy making<sup>8</sup>.

### *Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)*

We know one of the major attractions of cycling and walking is the positive benefits for public health. Indeed, noted in CWIS: “walking and cycling for just 10 minutes a day can contribute towards 150 minutes of physical activity for adults per week, as recommended by the UK Chief Medical Officers<sup>9</sup>. Physical activity helps to prevent and manage more than 20 chronic health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, dementia, obesity and a variety of cancers. It is also linked to overall health benefits, such as reduced injury risk, improved quality of life, increased productivity and reduced absenteeism at work<sup>10 11</sup>”.

Analysis has indicated that the greatest benefits to health are seen from a shift from being inactive to doing some level of activity<sup>12</sup>. Notably, the pandemic has had a disproportionately negative impact on those with the lowest activity levels and as such the inequalities have widened. Therefore a joint objective between DHSC and DfT that supports increasing cycling and particularly walking (as one of the most accessible forms of activity) would increase the impact of CWIS2, particularly as we build back from COVID-19.

*Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG)*

Similarly, a co-ordinated approach with MHCLG will increase the impact of CWIS2. Planning should ensure developments are built in the right places to better building design standards, and ensure our neighbourhoods are attractive places to live and where there is a greater incentive to walk, cycle or use public transport, rather than drive. Creating places to walk and cycle to and spaces that are enjoyable to walk and cycle through are key to increasing both participation and experience.

In order to address this, we have three core recommendations for reforming planning:

- Adopt the 20-Minute Neighbourhood concept as a central principle of the planning system, including both the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plans.
- Produce updated planning guidance to create active neighbourhoods that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport and reduce demand for car use.
- Embed the National Cycle Network within the National Planning Policy Framework as a UK-wide network of national importance.

*Department for Transport*

Looking within the DfT, integrating walking and cycling with public transport is essential to making it easier for people to leave their cars at home. In order to create an integrated sustainable transport system, public transport hubs should:

- be easily accessible by foot and by cycle. Particular consideration should be given to the last mile which is often the most difficult part of any journey to a station by cycle or on foot<sup>13</sup>
- provide secure weather protected cycle parking
- create access to bike repairs and other cycle services
- include cycle share schemes linking primary locations across an urban setting.

In addition, ticketing should be integrated and allow users to make journeys which are multi-modal and across different operators with one streamlined ticket and payment service. Additionally, cycle storage on trains should be flexible, convenient and secure.

*Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)*

There are several ways in which a co-ordinated approach with Defra can maximise the impacts of CWIS2 and of other Defra priorities.

1. Defra has a key role to play in creating legally-binding, long-term targets to increase public access to, and enjoyment of the natural environment. Currently access doesn't have parity with the other priorities in Environment Bill meaning there is no obligation to set targets, which could address the inequity in access to the outdoors.
2. At present, there are few incentives for land owners to permit access or allow rights of way for cycling and walking. ELM potentially provides a fiscal incentive for land owners to allow access for new routes, and to encourage collaboration between land owners to form more coherent local rights of way networks.
3. As the department responsible for addressing air pollution, there is significant motivation for Defra to support increases in walking and cycling. Road transport is responsible for 80% of roadside NO<sub>2</sub> pollution where legal limits are being broken. Urgent and increased action is necessary to improve poor air quality, which is currently responsible for 36,000 early deaths in the UK each year. Providing viable alternatives to the car for everyday journeys, such by foot, cycle or on public transport must be part of the solution to tackling air pollution.

*Treasury*

All decisions on investment should be made according to their impact on net-zero, in line with CCC recommendations

Across all departments, to ensure approaches are supporting those most in need, all work should be planned to address, and be evaluated against, how it reduces inequity.

## Walking as much as cycling

Walking should receive as much attention as cycling, in some instances there may be opportunities which benefit both walking and cycling, such as sustained funding to traffic free sections of the National Cycle Network. However it is also important to recognise that there are specific interventions required to improve walkability and these should not be neglected as significantly more people walk than cycle.

### *Protected routes*

The National Cycle Network is open to all users; pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Despite its name, more journeys are walked on the Network than cycled. Providing sustained support for the Network, and in particular traffic-free paths, will therefore benefit both walking and cycling.

In spaces without off-road paths, protected cycle infrastructure should be created, as when there isn't space for cyclists pedestrians suffer, with cyclists who feel unsafe on unprotected roads using the pavement. Crucially protected space for cyclists should be taken from roads not from pedestrian space.

### *Safety beyond separation*

Creating safe spaces is not solely about protection from vehicular traffic it's also about place making that reduces vulnerability and makes spaces more welcoming. Schemes should seek out the input of for those historically left out of design and decision making to understand what would improve their experience. For example this could include: improving lighting, increasing active frontage and other natural surveillance, wide accessible pavements, clean litter free spaces and good connections to public transport<sup>14</sup>.

### *Focus on walking separately*

Reaching Gear Change's target of 50% of all journeys walked and cycled in towns and cities will not be achieved without dedicated, separate investment in walking. Walking for leisure and walking for travel are the two most popular forms of physical activity, according to Sport England<sup>15</sup>, indeed five times fewer people recorded that they cycled for leisure or travel.

Walking does not require the purchase of equipment and is therefore the most accessible form of transport for many people (though not all). It is also much more closely linked to public transport, with a worldwide study indicating that 94% of people access public transport by foot<sup>16</sup>.

There are also different barriers to creating positive walking experiences, such as pavement parking and pavement clutter. Therefore failing to consider walking as separate to cycling will fail to achieve the modal shift required.

CWIS set a bold and ambitious target to double the number of stages cycled. A similarly ambitious target is required for walking.

## Levelling up

Walking and cycling can play a significant role in the delivery of the levelling-up agenda. Making it easier for people to walk and cycle will help more people access employment, education, fresh food, green space, and healthcare. It will also enable people to see family, participate in their community and to have a voice in society.

To address this CWIS2 should:

- Prioritise isolated and deprived neighbourhoods
- Invest in the pedestrian realm and improving walkability
- Sustain support for the National Cycle Network.

### *Prioritise isolated and deprived neighbourhoods*

The UK's dependency on cars to travel to work and social events limits opportunities for people without access to a vehicle to fulfil their potential and travel freely. People are unable to access work, and in areas where there are a lack of alternative transport options, people can become isolated or forced to spend a significant amount of their income on running a car.

Areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to be much more likely to have fewer local amenities and poorer public transport provision<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, people from lower income households are also much less likely to have access to a car than those who are more affluent (40% have no car access), with female heads of house, children, young and older people, ethnic minorities and disabled people concentrated in this group.

However, we know that 30% of residents in socioeconomic groups D and E in Sustrans' Bike Life research cities would like to start cycling but don't currently feel able to for safety, cost or other reasons<sup>18</sup>.

In addition, there are considerable affordability issues with car ownership that can lead to a further risk of transport poverty; this can be emphasised particularly in rural areas where distances are greater and public transport links are even scarcer.

Simple transport solutions which make it easier for people to walk and cycle can have just as great an impact on helping people to travel without vehicles. Active travel is often framed as an urban transport solution, but the smaller size of many towns and villages mean that they are inherently more walkable or convenient to cycle across for every day trips than urban areas.

To achieve this, infrastructure improvements must be prioritised in more isolated neighbourhoods, especially those which suffer from deprivation. Infrastructure should also be backed up with programmes and support for disadvantaged and marginalised groups to make walking and cycling inclusive.

For example, Sustrans' jobseekers project in Nottingham and Derby works with local partners to remove travel barriers to employment and training such as cost, time and not knowing how to access timetables and travel information.

The project has helped more than 200 people with a bespoke personal travel plan specific to their needs, provided a range of cycle services to more than 150 people and handed out 80 free reconditioned bikes to jobseekers. This project is helping people get into work and training while enabling them to make healthy travel choices. In the longer-term, this project is likely to have a positive impact on local health budgets and is reducing out of work benefit payments.

To ensure councils who represent more isolated neighbourhoods, especially those which suffer from deprivation, receive a greater proportion of funding, the following are required:

- Ring fenced revenue funding for programmes which address this current gap
- Tailored support and capacity building for staff
- Revenue funding for councils to build capacity

### *Invest in the pedestrian realm and improving walkability*

Living Streets' report, the Pedestrian Pound<sup>19</sup>, illustrates the importance of walking and cycling for the local economy and the preservation of the high street. The report details how investing in the pedestrian realm and improving walkability increases footfall and consequently trading.

Evidence shows that:

- High street walking, cycling and public realm improvements can increase retail sales by up to 30%<sup>20</sup>
- People walking, cycling and using public transport spend the most in their local shops, spending 40% more each month than car drivers<sup>16</sup>
- People who cycle take more trips to the High Street over the course of a month (12 on average), than those who drive (8 on average)<sup>16</sup>
- Shop keepers overestimate the number of customers who reach them by car by up to 3x the actual number (63% estimated, 20% actual)<sup>16</sup>
- Cycle parking delivers 5x the retail spend per square metre than the same area of car parking<sup>16</sup>
- More retail space was filled by businesses in London following improvements to make cycling and walking easier, with a 17% decline in empty shops<sup>16</sup>
- The pedestrianisation of York city centre was found to help trade. Large stores such as Marks and Spencer noted that three months after, their turnover had increased by over 20%.<sup>21</sup>

### *Sustained support for the National Cycle Network*

The National Cycle Network is a strategically critical asset for partners, with local businesses having benefitted by an estimated £2.5 billion annually from people using the Network for leisure and tourism.

Areas reliant on tourism have suffered during COVID-19. Improvements to the network can play a key role in supporting tourism's recovery and the wider strategy by enhancing and diversifying accessibility to tourism destinations, introducing vehicle free access to areas at risk of physical degradation, and helping to reduce levels of traffic where people visit.

There is the potential for these benefits to be much higher if the Network is improved through sustained investment, the removal of barriers and the introduction of more traffic

free routes. By improving the Network, local people will also enjoy the benefits that come with making walking and cycling easier, including reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality and the health perks that come with more exercise.

### *Distribution of funding*

When considering what can be done to correct the pattern that councils with a strong track record in active travel receive disproportionately large shares of the funding it can be hard to find a balance between rewarding councils who have ambitious plans and supporting those who have a poor track record of delivery. But the pace of change shouldn't be set be the lowest common denominator. As such:

- Ambition should be supported in order to create exemplar places that demonstrate the kinds of change possible in the UK context
- Robust monitoring needs to be in place to provide the evidential value of investment
- A support programme needs to be designed that supports political and officer decision making through demonstrating the benefits to society that comes from active travel investment
- Government needs to work with local authorities and industry to ensure active travel is a core part of training courses for undergraduate courses in highways/transport planning fields, as well as supporting the development and implementation of mandatory CPD training for existing staff.

It is also important to remember that ambition can and does exist at city, region, town and village level and support should exist at all tiers of government.

## **Justice and inclusion**

Approaches adopted in CWIS2 should be supporting those most in need, and all work should be planned to address, and be evaluated against, how it reduces inequity. This should include:

- Prioritising schemes which breakdown barriers to participation in groups with lower levels of walking and cycling
- Improving access to places to walk and cycle, such as green space
- Collecting data to provide a fuller picture of active travel experiences.

### *Prioritise those who would benefit most*

Current cycling strategies and plans tend to focus too much on the numbers of people cycling, not who would benefit most. Approaches adopted in CWIS2 should be supporting those most in need, and all work should be planned to address, and be evaluated against, how it reduces inequity.

Bike Life data illustrates that, despite a large appetite from different demographic groups to start cycling, 85% of people aged over 65, 78% of disabled people, 76% of women, 75% of people at risk of deprivation and 74% of people from ethnic minority groups never cycle.<sup>22</sup> People want to cycle but we are not doing enough to address their needs. In fact, there is often a lack of data on who is cycling.

Research indicates measures which can begin to break-down the barriers that these groups face to cycling. However, when designing and implementing such measures, a community-led approach should be adopted to ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the issues that face the local community and that solutions are designed to meet their needs.

Examples of such measures include:

- Improving road safety, primarily through protected space for cycling, and low-traffic neighbourhoods. This can be achieved by:
  - Providing protected space as part of a cohesive cycling network
  - Implementing low-traffic neighbourhoods to cater for all journeys
  - Introducing a default urban speed limit of 20 mph for all streets.
  - Introducing more crossings for walking and cycling to reduce community severance.
- Addressing personal safety and harassment.
- Ensuring cycling infrastructure is fully inclusive.
- Better integrating cycling at home, at destinations and with public transport.
- Prioritising infrastructure where transport options are poor, especially where this coincides with multiple deprivation.
- Recognise cycling as an important transport mode for disabled people.
- Using inclusive language and imagery, and ensure cycling is welcoming and celebrates diversity.
- Ensuring cost is not a barrier to access a cycle.
- Offering free cycle training for all children and adults.

- Better understanding diverse trip patterns and needs. Currently, we over emphasise commuting and trips into and out of the city centre.

To ensure the priorities of justice and inclusion are followed through measureable targets relating to relating to the diversity of people cycling should be set and publically reported on each year.

#### *Improve access to green space*

Within walking, there is a divide between those who walk for travel and those who walk for leisure. Walking for leisure is connected to availability of somewhere pleasant to walk. For example local green space or the countryside.

When thinking about access to local green space, the Ramblers report that only 57% of adults questioned said that they lived within five-minutes' walk of green space, be it a local park, nearby field or canal path. That figure fell to just 39% for people from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background and 46% for those with a household income of under £15,000 (compared to 63% of those with a household income over £35,000 and 70% over £70,000).<sup>23</sup>

Similarly IPPR state that the 10% most deprived wards in England have five times fewer parks or general public green spaces than the most affluent 20%. Meanwhile, people who live in the greenest neighbourhoods experience the lowest levels of health inequality, including lower all-cause mortality and lower mortality from circulatory environments<sup>24</sup>.

When thinking about access to routes in the countryside it can also be more difficult for disabled walkers, horse riders and cyclists to access nature, and we need to do more to ensure that access is equitable for everyone.

#### *Collect walking data that reveals more than participation*

It is important to recognise in the case of walking that some individuals walk for travel because they have no other option, but have a negative experience. This may be for a variety of reasons, including a lack of public transport available, the cost of other modes of travel or feeling unsafe on other modes of travel.

Therefore participation targets alone will not address the differences in experience of walking. Bike Life 2021 will collect data on how people feel while walking including how safe, comfortable and welcome they feel. Generating similar data collection through CWIS2 would also be beneficial to ensure improved walking experience for all, not just increase participation levels.

## Decarbonising transport

Increasing active travel is just one part of a wider selection of measures that will be required to tackle the transport sector's contribution to the climate emergency. Core to this will need to be a shift away from private car journeys. Active travel will be necessary in this modal shift but will not account for all journeys; ensuring strong integration with public transport for longer journeys, and reforming planning policy to reduce the need for longer journeys will also be crucial.

### *Transport emissions*

To effectively reduce greenhouse gases from cars, we need to reduce the amount of vehicle trips made in the UK. Research illustrated that even if all new cars were ultra-low emission by 2035 (80% battery electric, 20% plug-in hybrids), a 58% reduction in car mileage between 2016 and 2035 would be needed for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to be in line with a 'well below 2°C' pathway<sup>25</sup>. This demonstrates that a like-for-like switch to electric vehicles will not be sufficient to address the climate emergency.

### *Active travel and transport emissions*

In line with this evidence, and as part of their own Active Travel report, the Transport Select Committee have stated: "We recommend that any revised Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy include targets for getting people to switch from driving to active travel. These targets should be based on the number of journeys made by car, foot or bicycle for journeys of less than 1, 2, 5 and 10 miles.

The Government should set modal shift targets for 2025 and 2040, to align with the targets it sets for increasing levels of walking and cycling. These should be at a level that ensures England meets—at the very least—the Committee on Climate Change's assumption that there will be a 10% transport modal shift by 2050."<sup>26</sup> We support these suggestions of modal shift targets.

### *Role of CWIS2 in wider transport and climate policy*

CWIS2 should be positioned to direct uptake of walking and cycling as alternatives to vehicle trips for making short, local journeys. As well as encouraging an integrated approach between active travel and public transport so that individuals are able to access longer journeys more sustainably. For example by delivering plentiful and secure cycle parking at transport hubs and safe routes for people walking and cycling.

Additionally, CWIS2 should acknowledge that other schemes, such as congestion charging and Clean Air Zones will be disincentivising people from journeys using private vehicles. Therefore it has the opportunity to provide that alternative and should position itself as such. For example improving cycle infrastructure will create better conditions for transition from diesel vans to cargo and electrically assisted cargo cycles.

## **The relationship between central and local government**

In order for local government to successfully complete on the ground delivery they require:

- Strong local leadership
- Funding consistency
- Clarity over long term funding
- Ring fenced revenue funding

### *Challenges for local authorities around active travel*

One problem facing Local Authorities is a lack of leadership around sustainable transport. This may be because they are unable to see the benefits from walking and cycling beyond transport and health.

One way that this can be addressed is to create funds that can be used to develop walking and cycling schemes but are framed in other terms, e.g. Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund, Transforming Cities Fund. Support from Active Travel England on highlighting the myriad of benefits of walking and cycling and providing local leaders with confidence to back walking and cycling schemes would also be beneficial.

Thinking again about funding, one issue is the inconsistency and immediate demands of funding, which can prevent Authorities from feeling confident in being ambitious with their plans.

*Supporting local authorities on active travel*

To address this future capital funding needs to be clearly set-out over multi-year timescales. Local Authorities also need ring fenced revenue funding to ensure the capital funds can be spent effectively. Active Travel England should audit the use of such revenue funding to ensure Authorities aren't using it to just offset existing staff costs.

An additional or alternative approach could be to provide Local Authorities with significant revenue funding up front, and work with them to design ambitious LCWIP schemes over a year or so. Then Active Travel England can choose which programmes should be funded, creating a very clear pipeline of work for Local Authorities and their delivery partners, such as Sustrans, and preventing a scramble to build up existing projects when capital funds are unexpectedly awarded.

## References

- 
- <sup>1</sup> [DfT, 2020, CWIS Report to Parliament](#)
  - <sup>2</sup> [IPPR, 2021. All Aboard. A plan for fairly decarbonising how people travel](#)
  - <sup>3</sup> Tyndall Centre has found that even if all new cars were ULEVs by 2035 (80% battery electric, 20% plug-in hybrids), a 58% reduction in car mileage between 2016 and 2035 would be needed for car CO2 emissions to be in line with a 'well below 2°C' pathway; Transport for Quality of Life also estimate that necessary mileage reduction could be as low as 20% or as high as 60% by 2030 (assuming a 2040 ban). Friends of the Earth, 2019, *More than electric cars*.
  - <sup>4</sup> [Transport for Quality of Life, 2020, The Carbon Impact of the National Roads Programme](#)
  - <sup>5</sup> [DfT. 2020. Public Opinion Survey on Traffic and Road Use](#)
  - <sup>6</sup> Big Pedal Survey conducted by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1305 children aged 6-15. Fieldwork was undertaken between 24th - 31st March 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK children aged 6-15.
  - <sup>7</sup> [Department for Transport. 2021. Road Traffic Estimates in Great Britain: 2020](#)
  - <sup>8</sup> [CCC, 2021, Progress Report to Parliament](#)
  - <sup>9</sup> [DH. 2011. Start active, stay active. A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers.](#)
  - <sup>10</sup> [DfT. 2014. Claiming the Health Dividend: A summary and discussion of value for money estimates from studies of investment in walking and cycling.](#)
  - <sup>11</sup> [PHE. 2016. Working Together to Promote Active Travel. A briefing for local authorities](#)
  - <sup>12</sup> [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Washington DC. 2018. Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report.](#)
  - <sup>13</sup> [Transport Scotland. 2010. Cycling by design](#)
  - <sup>14</sup> [Women Transport Planners. 2021. Getting home safely](#)
  - <sup>15</sup> [Sport England, 2020. Active Lives Adult Survey May 2019/20 Report](#)
  - <sup>16</sup> [Helge Hillnhütter. 2021. Walking and Public Transport - Benefits and impacts, Walk 21 Seoul.](#)
  - <sup>17</sup> [Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2013. The built environment and health: an evidence review.](#)
  - <sup>18</sup> [Sustrans, 2020, Bike Life](#)
  - <sup>19</sup> [Living Streets. 2018. The Pedestrian Pound](#)
  - <sup>20</sup> [TfL. 2018. Walking and cycling: the economic benefits](#)
  - <sup>21</sup> [Sustrans. 2017. Active Travel and Economic Performance](#)
  - <sup>22</sup> [Sustrans. 2019. Bike Life](#)
  - <sup>23</sup> [Ramblers. 2020. The grass isn't greener for everyone. Why access to green space matters](#)
  - <sup>24</sup> [IPPR, 2021. All Aboard. A plan for fairly decarbonising how people travel](#)
  - <sup>25</sup> Tyndall Centre, as referenced in endnote 2.
  - <sup>26</sup> [Transport Select Committee. 2017. Active travel: increasing levels of walking and cycling in England](#)