

Transport Planning Society

Transport Planning Society - Evidence to Walking and Cycling APPG Enquiry into CWIS 2.

Transport Planning Society, formed in 1997, is the professional home for transport planners working in the private and public sector across the UK. The society has long called for a different approach to be taken to the planning and funding of transport infrastructure across the country, noting in particular that the trend of planning for ever more cars on our roads is a self-fulfilling prophecy with many undesirable outcomes. We therefore welcome this enquiry from the APPG for walking and cycling and provide the following comments under the key lines of enquiry we were asked to comment on.

1. 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 manage this?

a) Move towards a universal 5-10 year funding settlement – Active Travel RIS for LAs

Providing sufficient guaranteed funding, with certainty over a long enough period to allow local authorities, and their supply chains, to grow their capacity to deliver active travel schemes. This is the single most important thing government can do to support this agenda.

We must avoid perpetuating boom and bust funding rounds that absorb huge amounts of resource and officer capacity in both councils and the DfT - and end up delivering outcomes benefitting relatively few people and often at a cost/intervention that is impossible for authorities who don't win bids to really benefit from any learnings.

The atmosphere doesn't care if the CO2 is being produced in a Brighton or Bognor, Halifax or Hackney. All areas need resources to help decarbonise and efforts should be taken to ensure a certain level of universality of provision to do this. It's not tenable to say that no action will be taken on this agenda in area x simply because there was a lack of capacity to make a compelling bid by a particular (likely under-resourced) council at that particular time. This is the practical outcome of the current arrangement though.

It is likely that there may be diminishing returns from investing in a handful of locations repeatedly. In some authorities where action on this agenda may have been minimal to date, positive engagement could lead to significant gains in a relatively short space of time and very cost effectively.

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To draw an analogy with education, schools that require improvement get significant attention from their LA and DfE to help support them on that journey, recognising that every child matters. In transport, LAs that are struggling on this agenda are too often left in their ruts and receive very little help to improve and build capacity. 'Outstanding' authorities benefit time and time again for large slugs of cash that help them achieve ever greater successes – successes that can then seem ever more difficult to replicate in less successful authorities.

Some supporters of active travel schemes too often see such authorities as lost causes who have no capacity or appetite to challenge the status quo. The reality is that such authorities more often than not simply reflect the attitudes of the majority of their constituents in their decisions and prioritisation of road space. They need to be carefully supported to help bring them on this journey, not castigated as pariahs or dinosaurs. The delivery of good quality public realm and active travel infrastructure can help win arguments for the cause for many years to come – many authorities simply haven't had a chance to demonstrate that to their residents and so have no positive local examples to point to. Local examples will always carry more weight in local decision making than national case studies so it's really important that every authority has a standard bearer scheme for this agenda to point to.

In terms of the nuts and bolt of this, a good approach to build on may be the system of indicative allocations put forward under the Active Travel Fund programme. In this system the funding at set level is effectively earmarked for LAs (using a formula) on the basis that they put forward programmes of work that are compliant with the relevant funding framework.

Whilst there is some suggestion that the assessment of the first couple of tranche of bids was unnecessarily stringent – with some good schemes not being funded for sometimes unclear reasons, it is undeniably a more efficient way of working than having an open uncapped bidding round where there is huge wasted effort to overbid in the hope that some funding is secured. This was how TfL ran their first 'streetspace' programme and that produced massive over-bidding with consequent wasted effort on all sides.

A similar approach has been used for highway asset maintenance for many years (which can be topped up if authorities demonstrate particularly efficient behaviours that aligns with DfT policy, judged via a resource-lite self assessment process). It has also been used for integrated transport block funding associated with Local Transport Plans and TfL LIP funding for boroughs. It demonstrates trust, provides space for local flexibility and allows for robust and sustainable supply chains to develop to efficiently deliver an ambitious pipeline of schemes. Checks and balances are retained in that the funding must be used in compliance

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with the overarching plan or strategy, and must comply with relevant guidance (e.g. LTN1/20).

Giving a realistic ceiling for local authorities to build an annual programme around is therefore a great start, but the approach that should be taken is for a RIS for LAs - a minimum 5 year or even better indicative 10 year settlement, 2nd tranche awards perhaps linked to performance in the first half. Annual settlements are highly sub-optimal (though better than London's recent 10 day settlement I guess...).

b) Take a pipeline approach to major schemes

It is recognised that separate specific funding pots for the very largest interventions may be necessary. Dispersing all money via formula may not allow for the most significant barriers to be tackled in some locales. As a consequence there is some ongoing need for a larger pot of funding, along the lines of TfL's liveable neighbourhoods, or the DfT's Local Major schemes.

Rather than having discrete bidding rounds though, these funding streams should take a pipeline approach so that authorities are continually developing ideas and bringing them forward for consideration for funding on an ongoing basis, rather than having to stop-start feasibility work for projects dictated by arbitrary deadlines set by central government (e.g. as proposed in the national 'mini-holland' programme).

The presumption should be that transformational infrastructure that delivers on active travel outcomes will receive funding – so undue effort is not spent examining the strategic case for each project of this nature. The focus should be on welcoming the ambition shown by the local authority and working collaboratively with them to ensure it delivers the best possible quality scheme.

LEPs may have a useful role to play here – particularly cross boundary cooperation where there isn't combined authority in place. They have been engaged in delivering active travel schemes to date, sometimes to a surprising degree. Giving them more support to coordinate in this space may be helpful and this could be fed into the current review of their purpose.

The LCWIP process has generally been well received, the hope being that these plans would help support an ambitious bid from the Department to the treasury for a long term funding settlement to make these plans a reality. This approach has much to commend it, and is also the model used in respect to the new bus strategy. LCWIPs could benefit from additional funding to progress the costings of interventions beyond concept design to more detailed feasibility. Costs of schemes can vary by a factor of 100% or more depending on the impact on

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statutory utilities. Too often that is not defined at bid stage and so leads to cost and implementation overruns.

Supporting the development of local expertise - from appropriate emphasis on training and capacity, alongside the continuing development and provision of high quality guidance, is the next highest priority. LTN1/20 is a great start. In general there is huge enthusiasm in the sector for the agenda, however for some, the development of a proactive focus away from catering for motorised vehicles will represent a departure from the way they have worked previously.

Public support – government messaging is really important in helping to win local arguments about space allocation. This needs to be strong, persuasive and, more importantly than anything else perhaps, consistent. Council's need to know that government is ambitious in this space and has their back on this agenda. Some of the recent experience with LTNs is worrying in this regard, however the broad mood music from DfT around gear change, and bus strategy is undeniably positive.

2. How should targets be set and what form (e.g. input, output, outcome) should they take?

Professor Phil Godwin reflected on this recently when the secretary of state for transport announced: "We want 50 per cent of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030."

- In round terms, conurbations and large cities had average shares of walking and cycling of 30 per cent, public transport trips of 15 per cent, car 54 per cent.
- Smaller towns and cities had walking and cycling shares of 29 per cent, public transport only 5 per cent, and car 63 per cent.
- London had walking and cycling of 35 per cent, public transport 27 per cent, and car 25 per cent.
- It follows that to reach the targets, in each year until 2030 about three per cent of car trips in towns and cities would need to be transferred to walking and cycling.

Whilst Phil was pretty bullish about this, the challenge is herculean to say the least. In London, walking and cycling mode shares have stayed pretty static over last decade. Cycling has grown the most from 2% in 2010 all the way to...2.5% in 2019. That bald statistic hides lots of interesting local variations, however even if it is

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underestimating the numbers significantly it is still a huge jump to get us to 50% in 9.5 years. For other areas even more so.

Targets are therefore useful to highlight the scale of the challenge and check credibility of the actions plans that are developed to achieve them - and of course there is the old adage about if you reach for the stars you may make the moon....

To be plausible though we really need both national *and* local targets. Tools such as the propensity for cycling toolkit would be a valuable place to start in developing local targets. TfL also looked at potentially walkable trips and this could be replicated nationally. TfL used models like this to help develop appropriate local targets for each borough in the last round of LIP, an approach that wase widely (though not universally) supported.

It has been calculated that to meet carbon emission reduction cycling mode share needs to grow from 2% to 8%. This is another way of looking at the setting of targets but some care needs to be taken to the applicability of a universal target to individual LAs.

It could be that a local traffic reduction target may also be worth revisiting. More motor traffic means less walking and cycling, particularly among those groups who do not like mixing with traffic. We have seen during lockdowns that as traffic reduces, people emerge onto their streets to walk and cycle.

A note on scheme evaluation

To date, local authority evaluations have measured cycling using methods such as automatic traffic counters and A.I. camera sensors. These methods can, however, only capture total numbers of bicycles, providing little or no information as to the type of people or bicycles involved. From an equity perspective this is unfortunate. Most low-cycling settings have hitherto seen cycling disproportionately undertaken by adult men, whereas in high-cycling settings cycling is much more equal by age and gender. Examining cyclist diversity can therefore be valuable in assessing how far new measures are making cycling more inclusive. It may also deepen understanding as to how and why cycling is changing at a given site.¹

We need rigorous, accessible, national data for child travel to school or other child travel with a much more research on children and how they negotiate streets (side roads, pedestrians refuges).

¹ Anna Goodman, Claire McDonald, Anthony A. Lavery The value of measuring cycling diversity as well as cycling volume: a case study from South London. June 2021.

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- 3. What can be done to support transport/highway authorities that may not have a strong record in promoting walking and cycling?**
- 4. Local authorities and other bodies will need significant capacity and skills to spend the funding allocations required to meet the Government's targets (or any new ones). If they lack the capacity and/or skills, what can be done to assist them?**
 - Provide training to all transport officers and portfolio holders responsible for transport or the environment on the new cycle design guidance LTN 1/20.
 - Increase the awareness of authority's liability and responsibility to remove/reduce road danger, enable walking and cycling and provide clean air to their residents (as they must clean water).
 - Increase the awareness of their duty to ensure those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act – who are most likely to benefit from less traffic and they tend to make shorter 'cyclable' trips.
 - Ensure any new roads spending enables walking and cycling – the government's current proposed spending on roads undermines the message of CWIS.
 - Ultimately, if the authority is struggling, (failing to increase active travel or reduce motor traffic) then government should provide additional support and assistance, as government would in if an authority fails in other areas (such as NHS trusts, or schools).
 - Increase awareness that EVs are not a panacea and should not be viewed as 'the solution'
 - Support much, much greater sense of urgency. Over the last 20 years cycle use in the UK has hovered at less than 2% of all trips. We must start building for pedestrian and cycle traffic and cutting motor traffic at a pace and scale not yet seen. As noted above, in London cycling mode share was 1.2% in 2000 rising to 2.4% in 2019. If cycling levels continue to rise at that rate, it will take over 500 years to reach the levels of cycling now seen in cities such as Amsterdam (where cycling mode share is 36%).
 - We need a tool like ActDev but for existing roads which model traffic reduction and space reallocation. This tool should account for traffic displacement/evaporation, air pollution, physical activity benefits, as well as age, gender considerations so that the model produces an equitable outcome (not just about adult commuters, but trips to school, the park, shops etc)

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- For younger transport practitioners coming through the system, there needs to be a re-shaping of highways engineering and transport planning courses with involvement from Institutes (ICE, CIHT, TPS etc) and academics.
- For current generation of transport planners, the institutes should ensure compulsory top-up traffic reduction, cycle and walking design training (as GPs and medics have to do to retain their right to practice medicine) for people to retain their 'CEng' or other post-nominals.

5. What should be the role of Active Travel England and what resources will it need to fulfil this role?

- It should be involved in reviewing local transport plans/5 year plan of schemes, all major cycle schemes and crucially this must include reviewing traffic reduction schemes on neighbourhoods (or we will continue to fail people making short, local trips). TPS thinks there is particular need for support around land use planning for major developments to ensure cycling is locked in, and ATE should be able to block schemes that don't maximise this outcome in the same way HE can in terms of impact on the road network.
- To be plausible and relevant it should have regional or even local ambassadors/commissioners who can assist over time in driving up quality and raising ambition for this agenda in individual LAs.
- In general though it should be a Critical friend more than enforcement inspector. Cycling England was a good model to follow.

6. What should CWIS 2 funding be spent on – i.e. what programmes or initiatives should be funded?

- There is certainly a role for behaviour change campaigns, Look at SUVs, they make very little practical sense for most consumers but marketing has successfully sold them to us as an aspirational choice. The key to their success however is sustained funding and ongoing commitment to the messaging – a feast to famine approach to LA funding does not allow for this and therefore is likely to significantly reduce impact of behavior change initiatives.
- However studies suggest that revenue schemes on their own won't achieve change – there needs to be the environment in place that makes this behaviour attractive. Removing traffic, and/or providing segregation is therefore key. Experiments are a good way to proceed here, but come at a resource cost. Given the need to bring community along with you that may

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be unavoidable. Speed reduction is important but also unlikely to enough on its own to change behaviour.

7. Are there funding models or mechanisms that can give delivery agencies the necessary confidence to act without limiting unacceptably central government's room for manoeuvre?

See answer above.

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

- Planning processes and powers are important too, ensuring there is very strong links between planning frameworks and transport. Very little mention of the role that transport plays in shaping land use in the new white paper for example, albeit the NPPF has been strengthened slightly in this regard in it's most recent refresh.
- A key concern is the need to tackle car ownership – this opens up co-modality opportunities that allow more space for cycling as a mode choice. Shared mobility hubs are an agenda worth pursuing, but we need to get people to opt in from their own self-interest for example by making it far more cost effective to sign up to a travel wallet than use your own car.
- Highway Code must ensure priority to those on foot or cycle, and responsibility is with those driving / who cause most harm.

In summary

Put in place frameworks of high quality guidance, set expectations high and get money to the frontline as quickly as possible and provide it year after year at a consistent level. Support LAs, don't bash them. Help bring people along with the conversation and praise ambitious schemes.

On behalf of TPS board,

Mark Frost, Chair Transport Planning Society

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