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Active travel: Trends, policy and funding

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Summary

Active travel means making journeys by physically active means, like walking or cycling. The [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), published in 2017, is the Government's strategy to promote walking and cycling in England. Given active travel is a devolved policy area, this briefing relates primarily to active travel policies in England.

Benefits of Active travel

Investing in active travel can bring environmental, health and economic benefits:

- Promoting active travel can result in reduced emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate matter (PM) and CO₂ helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.
- Active travel can contribute towards the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity for adults each week, which are hugely important for maintaining health.
- Walking and cycling can contribute towards economic performance by reducing congestion, supporting local businesses and more. The benefit to cost ratio of investments in walking and cycling are estimated at 5.62:1 (or 'very high' value for money).

Facilitating active travel

Not all towns and cities are designed to be conducive to active travel. Some 62% of adults aged 18+ in England agreed that "it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads" while busy roads may deter parents from letting their children walk to school. Thoughtful urban design, and creating integrated transport systems that promote walking and cycling, could encourage people to choose active means of travel.

Government policy: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, England

The Government published its [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) in April 2017. This Strategy sets out the Government's "ambition that cycling and walking are the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey." The Strategy:

- sets objectives for 2020 and 2025. By 2025, the Government wants to double cycling rates and increase the number of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% to 55%.
- commits £1.2bn that "may" be spent on cycling and walking between 2016-17 and 2020-21. £316m of this is ringfenced for cycling and walking. The remaining funding is allocated to local authorities to spend on its own transport priorities.
- introduced Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) which Local Authorities have been encouraged to develop to identify and prioritise investment for cycling and walking schemes (using the financial resources set out in the Strategy).

The ambitions in the Strategy were broadly welcomed by walking and cycling charities, but many felt that there were insufficient financial resources available. In particular, many groups felt more funding was needed to support Local Authorities implement their LCWIPs.

Devolved active travel policies

The Scottish Assembly and Welsh Assembly have legislative competence for active travel. The Scottish Government has published its [Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030](#) and is investing £80m on active travel in 2019-20. The Welsh Government passed the [Active Travel \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) published its [Active Travel Action Plan for Wales](#) in 2016.

1. Active travel

Active travel means making journeys by physically active means, like walking or cycling. These are usually short journeys: walking to the shops, walking the kids to school, cycling to work, or cycling to the station to catch a commuter train.

1.1 Current rates of walking and cycling

The majority of people in England do not cycle and while walking is common for short journeys, the rates of walking drop off when journeys are greater than a mile. The [2017 National transport survey](#) showed that almost two thirds of the population in England cycled less than once a year or never and just 14% of people cycled at least once a week.¹

The Department for Transport (DfT) publish an annual [statistical overview of walking and cycling rates in England](#). This publication draws on both the National Travel Survey and the Active Lives Survey. The 2017 figures show:

- Cycling made up just to 2% of all trips while walking made up 26%;
- 81% of all trips under a mile were walked, but just under a third of trips between 1 and 2 miles were walked;
- 67% of people walked at least 20 minutes or more at least once a week;
- 14% of people cycle at least once a week and the average distance cycled per person was 60 miles – a 54% increase since 2002;
- Men cycle more often and further than women, and adults in their forties cycle the most;
- Only 13 authorities had more than 20% of their adult population cycling at least once a week. The local authority with by far the highest prevalence for cycling at least once a week was Cambridge (54%).²

Importantly, two out of every three personal trips are within five miles, the government considers this “an achievable distance to cycle for most people, with many shorter journeys also suitable for walking.”³ This would suggest that there is considerable scope to increase the number of people choosing active means of travel, particularly when comparing walking and cycling rates in other European countries.

A [2013 report for European Commission](#) shows that the UK ranked 11th (out of 28) for rates of daily walking and 24th for daily cycling.⁴ The Netherlands and Denmark regularly rank as the two most cycle-friendly countries with cycling rates far in excess of those in the UK. The 2013 report shows that almost three quarters (71%) of the Dutch population cycle at

¹ DfT, [National travel Survey: England 2017](#), July 2018

² DfT, [Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2017](#), Aug 2018

³ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 1.16

⁴ European Commission, [Attitudes of Europeans towards urban mobility](#), Dec 2013

once a week and over half of Danes (56%). In contrast, just 14% of people in the UK reported cycling on a weekly basis.⁵

1.2 Benefits of active travel

Health and active travel

The benefits of physical activity are well-known. The former Chief Medical Officer has described it as a “wonder drug”, which can help to reduce obesity, diabetes and other illnesses.

Even small increases in activity levels can have marked health benefits. According to Public Health England (PHE), half of all women and a third of men in England are damaging their health due to a lack of physical activity.⁶ See box 1 for guidelines on physical activity. Over a quarter of adults in England are getting less than 30 minutes activity per week. Further, PHE highlights the wide differences across the country; some 38% of people in Bradford are living dangerously sedentary lifestyles compared with 17% in Cambridge.⁷ Active travel – walking and cycling – for 10 minutes a day can contribute towards the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity for adults each week.

Box 1: Public Health England physical activity guidelines

The chief medical officer recommends:

- all adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of ten minutes or more
- all adults should undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week and, for those at risk of falls, two sessions of balance and coordination exercise a week
- all children from age 5 and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours every day
- all children under 5 should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes (3 hours), spread throughout the day
- everyone should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods⁸

Promoting active travel can also have environmental health benefits. Emissions of (Nitrogen Dioxide) NO₂ and Particulate matter (PM) from vehicles on the road have been linked with a range of health conditions including respiratory failure, strokes, heart attacks, dementia and premature death. Getting people to travel by foot and bike rather than by car can also reduce CO₂ emissions and improve air quality. UK levels of NO₂ in some areas have breached European legal limits. Further, the UK’s continuing failure to meet air quality targets has led to ClientEarth, a UK

⁵ European Commission, [Attitudes of Europeans towards urban mobility](#), Dec 2013

⁶ PHE, [Working Together to Promote Active Travel: A briefing for local authorities](#), 2016

⁷ Department of Health, [Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries’ Chief Medical Officers](#), 2011

⁸ Department of Health, [Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries’ Chief Medical Officers](#), 2011

charity, taking the Government to court successfully several times since 2014 over the lack of an effective plan to reduce NO2 levels.⁹

The economy and active travel

The Department for Transport (DfT) has previously assessed spending on walking and cycling to be very good value for money. A [2014 DfT-commissioned report](#) found that for the UK the benefit to cost ratio of such investments was 5.62:1.¹⁰ Most of these benefits come from the positive health outcomes of active travel and the associated lower costs to the National Health Service (NHS). The DfT considers investments with a 4:1 cost: benefit ratio as being 'very high' value for money.

There is also evidence to suggest that walking and cycling can have broader positive economic impacts. Sustrans (a walking and cycling charity) says "walking and cycling contribute towards economic performance by reducing congestion, supporting local businesses and high streets, direct job creation and supporting the leisure and tourism industry."¹¹ These benefits were explored further in a report published by the Urban Transport Group (which represents the UK's largest urban transport authorities) in October 2016. The [report examined the economic case for investing in active travel](#)¹² and found five key economic benefits of investing in active travel:

- Health costs: physical inactivity is estimated to cost the NHS of £1.06 billion per year.
- Economic value of trips: ten billion annual journeys are undertaken in England every year by bicycle and on foot with an economic value of £14 billion.
- Economic benefits of an improved urban realm: city centres with an improved urban realm have been associated with as much as a 40% uplift in retail takings.
- Promoting inclusive growth: in England, 48% of households in the lowest income quintile do not have access to a car.
- Direct employment and spend: the UK market for cycling equipment and goods alone is now worth an estimated £3 billion a year.¹³

Transport for London (TfL) have also found active travel is good for business. [Research commissioned by TfL](#) in 2016 found that people walking (£370) spend almost a third more in town centres over the course of a month than car drivers (£283).¹⁴

⁹ Client Earth, [UK Government loses third air pollution case as judge rules air pollution plans 'unlawful'](#), 21 Feb 2018

¹⁰ DfT, [Claiming the Health Dividend: A summary and discussion of value for money estimates from studies of investment in walking and cycling](#), 2014, para. 3

¹¹ Sustrans, [Making the economic case for active travel](#) [accessed: 2 Jul 2019]

¹² Urban Transport Group, [The Case for Active Travel: How walking and cycling can support more vibrant urban economies](#), Oct 2016

¹³ Urban Transport Group press release: [New report identifies fivefold economic benefits of investing in active travel](#), 18 Nov 2016

¹⁴ Accent Report, [Town Centres: Final Report](#), April 2016, p. 68 (prepared for TfL)

1.3 Facilitating active travel

Active travel and the built environment

The physical or built environment plays an important role in facilitating physical activity for many people. However, not all our towns and cities are designed to be conducive to active travel. Cyclists may have to share the roads with Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and fast-moving traffic. While, busy roads may deter parents from letting their children walk to school.

Thoughtful urban design, and creating integrated transport systems that promote walking and cycling, could encourage people to choose active means of travel. The decisions taken by local authorities when making their local plans and approving new developments are important in this regard. The Government's planning policies shape how these decisions are taken. There are several references to active travel in these policies (see box 2).

There is good evidence that separated cycle infrastructure can encourage more people to cycle. The Netherlands and Denmark are often held up as good examples to follow, because of the widespread protected cycle infrastructure and road safety measures. A 2008 research paper by academics John Pucher and Ralph Buehler show how the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany have made bicycling a safe, convenient, and practical way to get around their cities.¹⁵ The paper shows among other things that the establishment of separate cycling facilities – cycling paths – along roads and at intersections, combined with traffic calming are ways to achieve higher levels of cycling. The paper also shows how extensive bike parking, integration with public transport, comprehensive traffic education, promotional cycling events generates enthusiasm and wide public support.¹⁶

Box 2: National Planning Policy framework (NPPF)

The [National Planning Policy framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It has several policies linked to active travel.

- Para 81 states planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which (amongst other things) encourage walking and cycling.¹⁷
- Para 102 states “transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that [amongst other things] opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.”¹⁸
- Para 104 encourages local authorities to draw on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (see section 2.2 below) to “provide for high

¹⁵ John Pucher and Ralph Buehler, [Making Cycling Irresistible: Lessons from The Netherlands, Denmark and Germany](#), *Transport Reviews*, Vol 28: 4, 2008

¹⁶ John Pucher and Ralph Buehler, [Making Cycling Irresistible: Lessons from The Netherlands, Denmark and Germany](#), *Transport Reviews*, Vol 28: 4, 2008

¹⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National Planning Policy framework](#), Feb 2019, para 81

¹⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National Planning Policy framework](#), Feb 2019, para. 102

quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking.”¹⁹

Safety concerns

Safety concerns may be deterring people from walking and cycling. In 2017, 62% of adults aged 18+ in England perceived that “it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads.”²⁰ However, the actual numbers of cycling casualties are falling. Since 1984 the number of cycling casualties each year has decreased from 345 to 102 in 2016 (a fall of 70 per cent).²¹ DfT statistics from 2017 showed that Pedal cyclists accounted for an average of 2 fatalities and 62 serious injuries per week between 2011 and 2016.²² Interestingly, cyclists themselves were less likely to think it was too dangerous.

Whether the number of casualties and injuries reported capture all of those fears are questioned by the ‘near miss project’. A study by academic Dr Rachel Aldred, who led the ‘near miss research project’, found near misses are an everyday experience for cyclists in the UK. In this study, over half the cyclists surveyed suggested that of the reported near misses most could have been prevented, particularly through separation from motorised traffic.²³ In June 2018, the DfT announced £1m of funding to help police forces across the UK crack down on close passing of cyclists by drivers, and to improve driving instructor training around cycling safety.²⁴

Shared spaces for walking and cycling

Active travel policy interventions may have prioritised improvements to cycle infrastructure over walking. For instance, Transport for London (TfL) told the Commons Transport Committee that while cycling in London had increased by 131% since 2000, walking trips have only increased in line with population growth, and mode share has remained largely static for the past twenty years.²⁵ Further, improvements to cycle infrastructure may be creating difficulties for people with visual impairments.²⁶ The Integrated Transport planning Group also told the transport Committee that “a significant number of urban and inter-urban cycle routes continue to be shared between walkers and cyclists” which they describe as “sub-optimal” for both cyclists and walkers.²⁷

Some groups are advocating for a [shared space design approach](#) that prioritises people over traffic and encourages different road users to

¹⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National Planning Policy framework](#), Feb 2019, para. 104

²⁰ DfT, [Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2017](#), Aug 2018, p. 16

²¹ DfT, [Pedal Cycling Road Safety Factsheet](#), March 2018

²² DfT, [Pedal Cycling Road Safety Factsheet](#), March 2018

²³ Rachel Aldred, [Cycling near misses: Their frequency, impact, and prevention](#), *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, Vol 90, Aug 2016, pp.69-83

²⁴ DfT, [Government focus on cycling awareness and training in boost to cycle safety](#), 29 Jun 2018

²⁵ Written submitted by evidence Transport for London ([ATR0098](#)), Nov 2018, paras 3.2 and 3.7

²⁶ Written evidence submitted by Ellen Watson ([ATR0103](#)), Dec 2018

²⁷ Written evidence submitted by Integrated Transport Planning Ltd ([ATR0038](#)), Oct 2018

interact with one another.²⁸ The charity Sustrans has called for an approach “that moves beyond shared space [into one] that creates people-prioritised streets and places.”²⁹ Sustrans says:

Streets and places designed to prioritise people should be inclusive and consider the needs of more vulnerable users above motor traffic. This may or may not use elements of shared space design or separate people and vehicles, depending on what best creates the most inclusive environment for people on foot, on cycles and vulnerable groups in particular.³⁰

Integrating active travel and public transport

Active travel can be incorporated into the wider transport network as a first mile/last mile solution. This requires towns and cities to be designed in such a way as to facilitate easy access to public transport. Researchers at Imperial College London on the [PASTA project](#) (Physical Activity through Sustainable Transport Approaches) told the Transport Committee:

Local authorities face big challenges in providing affordable, convenient and attractive public transport compared to private car use, while ensuring multi-modal mobility options to their citizens. Good quality and well-maintained access routes to public transport stops and transport hubs encourage people to “walk or cycle the last mile”, thus contributing to reaching those minimum levels of physical activity per day, reducing car traffic congestion and harmful pollutants emission.³¹

Docked and dockless bike hire schemes may be one way of the ways to promote this first/last mile active travel. Lime bikes, an e-bike hire scheme, believe there is a huge potential for e-bikes to provide such a service. They argue that the electric-assisted bicycles they offer riders a more comfortable cycling experience and can be used by people of all ages, fitness levels and physical builds.³² However, there have been issues in several cities with dockless bike hire schemes littering pavements causing a nuisance.³³

²⁸ Living Streets, [Shared Spaces](#) [accessed: 2 Jul 2019]

²⁹ Sustrans, [Our position on shared space and people-prioritised streets and places](#), Jun 2018

³⁰ Sustrans, [Our position on shared space and people-prioritised streets and places](#), Jun 2018

³¹ Written evidence submitted by EU PASTA Project 2013-1017 ([ATR0073](#)), Oct 2018

³² Written evidence submitted by Lime ([ATR0142](#)), Jun 2019

³³ [Life cycle: is it the end for Britain's dockless bike schemes?](#), *Guardian*, 22 Feb 2019

2. Government policy

2.1 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)

Part 2 of the *Infrastructure Act 2015* (Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies) states that the Secretary of State for Transport must set a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in England. Accordingly, from 27 March to 23 May 2016, the [Government consulted](#) on a draft strategy.³⁴ Around a year after the consultation closed, in April 2017, the DfT published its final version of the [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy \(CWIS\)](#).³⁵

This strategy sets out the Government's "ambition that cycling and walking are the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey." The Government has set four objectives it wants to achieve by 2020. These are to:

- increase cycling activity, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made
- increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person
- reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled
- increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school³⁶

Further to this, by 2025 the Government has set itself several aims and a target:

- We aim 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, and will work towards developing the evidence base over the next year.
- We aim to increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 300 stages per person per year in 2025, and will work towards developing the evidence base over the next year.
- We will increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025.³⁷

The strategy also sets out the financial resources available 2016-17 to 2020-21 to achieve these ambitions. The strategy identifies the five main sources worth £1.2bn that "may" be spent on cycling and walking.³⁸ £316m of this is ringfenced for cycling and walking. The remaining funding is allocated to local authorities to spend on its own transport priorities, some of which

³⁴ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Consultation document](#), March 2016

³⁵ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 1.1

³⁶ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 1.14

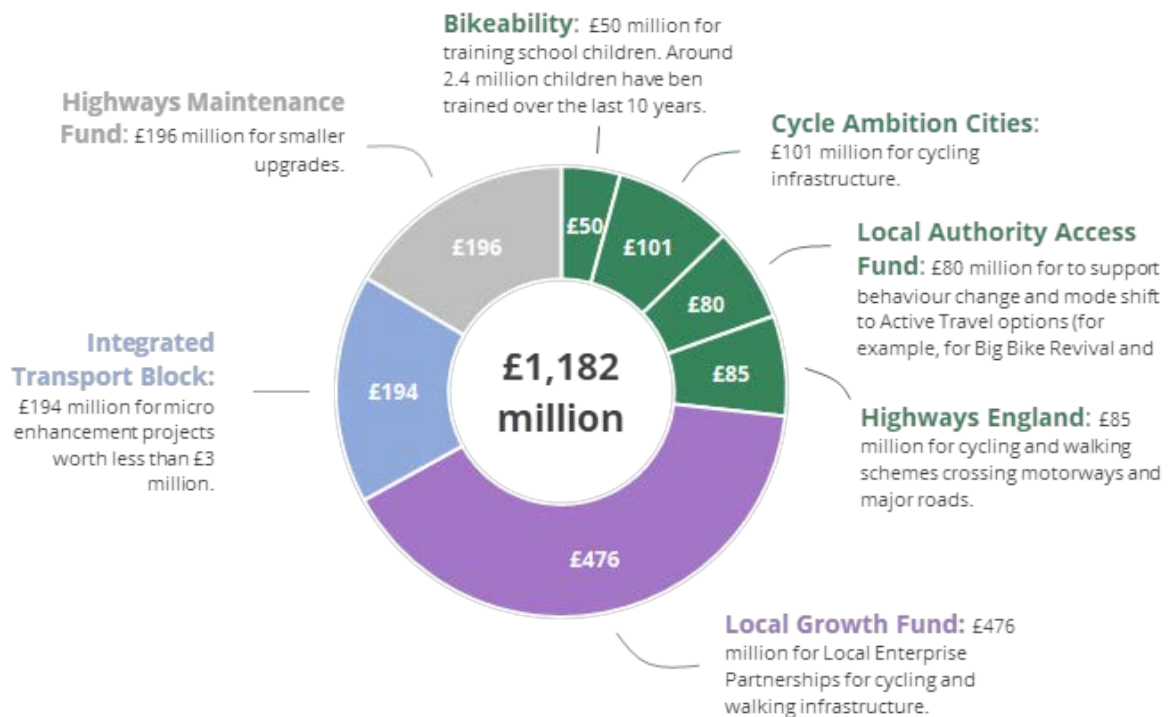
³⁷ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 1.15

³⁸ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 2.5

may include walking and cycling (see box below for information on how London and Manchester are investing in walking and cycling). For the local funding, the Government has invited local authorities to prepare Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) – see below for more information.

Funding from the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

In total £1,182 million of funding is available for cycling and walking initiatives through seven strands of the CWIS, four of which (Bikeability, Cycle Ambition Cities, Local Authority Access Fund, and Highways England) are ringfenced specifically for cycling.



Source: Department for Transport, Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

Responses to the CWIS

Many of the responses to the Government's CWIS welcomed its intent. Roger Geffen, Policy Director at Cycling UK said:

Cycling UK has spent years campaigning for a strong and well-funded Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, so we're pleased to see it finally published two years after it was initially announced. A big 'thank you' is due to the DfT officials who have put a huge amount of effort into it.

"Now the hard work begins. With national as well as local elections now looming, Cycling UK will be doing all we can to build the cross-party support needed to strengthen this investment strategy over time, while supporting councils in making best use of the resources available, as they start bringing this vision to life."³⁹

³⁹ ["Cycle strategy vision welcome, now the hard work begins", says Cycling UK](#), Cycling UK, 21 April 2017

However, there were also concerns that the funding would not be sufficient to achieve the ambitions and targets set. The Transport and Health Study Group commented suggested the levels of investment are “wholly inadequate.”⁴⁰ More recently, in June 2019, six city cycling commissioners wrote to the Secretary of State criticising the Government for wasting money painting “pointless white lines” on busy roads and calling them cycle lanes.⁴¹

There are also issues about the way funding has been provided. The Local Government Association told the Transport Committee (as part of its active travel inquiry):

Too often funding is provided in the form of short-term capital grants linked to bidding processes with strict criteria. This stop-start funding, developed for specific policy interventions, does not allow councils to develop long-term sustained plans.⁴²

Further, Dr Rachel Aldred, an academic researching issues around active travel, told the Committee that

“We need to know what will happen once authorities have produced LCWIPs. An obvious next step would be for DfT to make dedicated (match) ongoing funding available for plans reaching a certain quality standard. This will involve a substantial uplift in investment in active travel.”⁴³

The Government has said future decisions on “funding for cycling and walking will be made in the context of the forthcoming Spending Review.”⁴⁴

2.2 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

The strategy also introduced Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).⁴⁵ LCWIPs are used by Local Authorities (LAs) to identify and prioritise investment for cycling and walking schemes from local funds and relevant national funding streams.

To help local bodies interested in increasing cycling and walking in their local areas, DfT has published [guidance on the preparation of LCWIPs](#).⁴⁶ Adoption of these plans is not mandatory, but the [Government has said](#) that it is “keen that as many areas as possible do so”.⁴⁷

The DfT is supporting 46 LAs to produce their plans. According to Transport Minister, Jesse Norman, “the majority of [LAs] are on track to meet the

⁴⁰ Transport and Health Study Group, [Comments on DfT Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), May 2016

⁴¹ Helen Pidd, [‘Painted bike lanes are waste of money, say cycling commissioners’](#), *Guardian*, 17 Jun 2019

⁴² Written evidence submitted by the Local Government Association (LGA) ([ATRO066](#)), Oct 2018

⁴³ Written evidence submitted by Dr Rachel Aldred ([ATRO096](#)), Nov 2018

⁴⁴ [PQ 232649](#) [Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure] 20 Mar 2019

⁴⁵ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 3.32

⁴⁶ DfT, [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans: Technical Guidance for Local Authorities](#), 2017

⁴⁷ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), April 2017, para 7.1

deadline of November 2019” to produce a plan. This support includes spending £2m to support the development of the plans.⁴⁸

Box 3: Investment in cycling and walking in London and Manchester

Both London and Manchester’s Mayors have appointed walking and cycling commissioners with responsibilities to lead, deliver and promote active travel in their respective cities. Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, [appointed Will Norman](#) as the city’s commissioner. Mayor of greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, appointed former Olympic gold medal winning cyclist [Chris Boardman](#).

In Manchester, the [commissioner has called for £1.5bn](#) to be invested in cycling and walking initiatives over the next 10 years. Boardman has earmarked this money for more than 700 miles of safe cycle lanes and claims that the investment will result in a return of at least £8.3bn in public benefits.

In London, the walking and cycling commissioner has worked with the Mayor and TfL to commit a record £2.3bn to his [“healthy streets”](#) initiative. This initiative aims to increase the proportion of people walking, cycling and taking public transport to 80% by 2041, and cut the damaging impact of air pollution in the capital.

Implementing LCWIPs

A number of local transport authorities have complained that support for developing LCWIPs has been insufficient (see for instance [Kent County Council’s evidence](#) submitted to the Transport Select Committee active travel inquiry).⁴⁹ Further, there have been concerns raised that without specified funding for implementation, the plans risked gathering dust on a shelf. [Cycling UK](#) has argued that “The single most important budget-line that needs adding to a new CWIS is one for funding the implementation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).” They go on to say that “most councils currently lack any earmarked funding to deliver their plans – and this inevitably limits their ability to draw up ambitious long-term plans in the first place, given the lack of confidence as to whether they will be able to deliver them.”

2.3 Safety review

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy identifies improving the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users as key to delivering its broader aims and objectives. Since the strategy launched, the Government has held two consultations; one on [how to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety](#)⁵⁰ and a second [new cycling offences](#).⁵¹

Consultation on improving cyclist and pedestrian safety

From 9 March to 1 June 2018, the DfT invited individuals and organisations to submit ideas and evidence on how to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety.⁵² As part of this Safety Review Call for Evidence, the DfT received

⁴⁸ [PQ 232649](#) [Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure] 20 Mar 2019

⁴⁹ Written evidence submitted by Kent County Council ([ATRO030](#)), Oct 2018

⁵⁰ DfT, [Call for Evidence Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 2018

⁵¹ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy safety review: proposals for new cycling offences](#), Aug 2018

⁵² DfT, [Call for Evidence Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), 2018

over 14,000 responses from members of the public, local authorities, cycling and walking organisations, police forces and more.⁵³

The Government's response was published on 22 November 2018. The response sets out "several new measures and ideas, covering such areas as infrastructure design, law and guidance, enforcement, education, risk reduction and planning policy." Some of the key interventions include:

- Reviewing guidance in The Highway Code to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Encouraging local councils to invest around 15 per cent of their local transport infrastructure funding over time on safe and efficient cycling and walking infrastructure;
- Investing £100,000 to support the police to improve enforcement by developing a national back office function to handle footage provided through dash-cam evidence;
- Enforcement against parking in mandatory cycle lanes;
- Appointing a cycling and walking champion to raise the profile of Active Travel; and
- Engaging with key cycling and walking organisations to develop a behaviour change campaign fully aligned with our Action Plan.⁵⁴

In a [written statement to the House](#) announcing the publication of the response, the Transport Minister said:

All these measures are designed to support the continued growth of cycling and walking, with all the benefits they bring to our communities, economy, environment and society.

I recognise and value the tremendous amount of activity being undertaken nationally to keep vulnerable road users safe. The Department for Transport wants to provide effective leadership and support to the wide range of partners and other bodies who collectively work together with great commitment to make a real difference to cycling and walking safety. We look forward to continuing our close working with other government departments, devolved administrations, motoring agencies, local councils, police, cycling and walking organisations, motoring groups, road safety campaigners and wider stakeholders to take forward this action plan.⁵⁵

Consultation on proposals for new cycling offences

In September 2017, the DfT appointed independent legal expert, Laura Thomas to conduct an "urgent review into cycle safety, following a series of high profile⁵⁶ incidents involving cyclists." The review looked at whether a new offence equivalent to causing death by careless or dangerous driving

⁵³ [HCWS1099](#) [Government's response to the Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review] 22 Nov 2018

⁵⁴ DfT, [Government Response to Call for Evidence Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review](#), Nov 2018, para 1.13

⁵⁵ [HCWS1099](#) [Government's response to the Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review] 22 Nov 2018

⁵⁶ See for instance this September 2017 [BBC article](#)

should be introduced for cyclists, as well as wider improvements for cycling road safety issues.⁵⁷

Her report and findings were published in March 2018.⁵⁸ In this report, Laura Thomas concluded that in order to bring cycling into line with driving offences “there is a persuasive case for legislative change to tackle the issue of dangerous and careless cycling that causes serious injury or death.”⁵⁹

The Government consulted on how to make these changes from 12 August to 5 November 2018.⁶⁰ The consultation (amongst other things) proposed that there should be an offence of causing death by dangerous cycling and what the sentencing for such offences should be. The Department noted that it was conducting further work to understand the context of the law in relation to Scotland. A [supplementary report](#) was published on this in August 2018.

When the consultation was launched, Cycling UK told the BBC that both cyclists and pedestrians are regularly being failed by existing road safety legislation. Duncan Dollimore, Cycling UK's head of campaigns, said:

“Adding one or two new offences specific to cyclists would be merely tinkering around the edges.

[...]

The way the justice system deals with mistakes, carelessness, recklessness and deliberately dangerous behaviour by all road users hasn't been fit for purpose for years.”⁶¹

As of July 2019, the Government had not issued its response to this consultation. On 2 April 2019, [Transport Minister Baroness Sugg said](#):

The Department for Transport consulted on new cycling offences last year. The consultation period closed on 5 November and the Department is currently analysing the responses.

The specific purpose of the consultation was to consider the case for new offences of causing death or serious injury by dangerous or careless cycling, bringing such cycling behaviour more in line with those for driving.⁶²

⁵⁷ DfT, [Government launches urgent review into cycle safety](#), 21 Sept 2017

⁵⁸ Laura Thomas, [Cycle safety review independent legal report](#), Feb 2018 (prepared for the DfT)

⁵⁹ Laura Thomas, [Cycle safety review independent legal report](#), Feb 2018 (prepared for the DfT), para 17.2

⁶⁰ DfT, [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy safety review: proposals for new cycling offences](#), Aug 2018, para 1.3

⁶¹ ['Death by dangerous cycling' law considered](#), BBC, 12 Aug 2018

⁶² [HL14898](#) [Cycling: Road Traffic Offences] 2 Apr 2019

3. Active travel in the rest of the UK

3.1 Scotland: Active travel policy

The Scottish Assembly has legislative competence for cycling. In 2014, the Scottish Government published its [Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030](#). This vision foresees:

Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys.

This helps people make healthy living choices and assists in delivering places that are happier, more inclusive and equal, and more prosperous. Travelling by foot or cycle, or with a personal mobility aid such as a mobility scooter, is a realistic option for all local journeys as individuals.

People are confident to walk and cycle more often and they value and use their local transport networks (streets, roads and path networks), which offer safe, high quality, realistic and predictable journey options for active travel.⁶³

Linked to the long term vision are the [National Walking Strategy](#) and [Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2017-2020](#) and the [Active Travel Task Force report](#) which makes recommendations for overcoming barriers to the delivery of innovative and new walking and cycling infrastructure. Further, in December 2018 Scotland's first Active Nation Commissioner, Lee Craigie was appointed (see box)

Box 4: Active Nation Commissioner

Scotland's Active Nation Commissioner works independently of government to help ensure that walking and cycling are accessible and inclusive for all. As a national advocate for Active Travel across the country, her aim is to raise the profile of these inclusive and sustainable modes of travel while promoting their health, environmental, social and economic benefits to everyone who lives, works in, or visits Scotland.

Lee Craigie was appointed Active Nation Commissioner in December 2018. Lee Craigie is a former professional mountain bike rider and co-founder of the Adventure Syndicate. She reports to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson.⁶⁴

To enact its vision for active travel, the Scottish Government has allocated funding for walking and cycling investments. Much of this budget is allocated to the Scottish Government's active travel delivery partners "who work across Scotland to deliver projects that will get more people walking and cycling for shorter everyday journeys."⁶⁵ The 2019-20 budget for active travel is £80m, matching the 2018-19 budget which was double £39.2m budget for 2017-18.⁶⁶ £51m of the 2019-20 budget has been provided for

⁶³ Transport for Scotland, [Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030](#), 2014

⁶⁴ Transport for Scotland, [Active Nation Commissioner](#), [accessed: 5 July 2019]

⁶⁵ Transport for Scotland, [Active Travel investment in 2018 – 2019](#), [accessed: 5 July 2019]

⁶⁶ Transport for Scotland, [Active Travel investment in 2018 – 2019](#), [accessed: 5 July 2019]

travel infrastructure.⁶⁷ A [full breakdown of this expenditure](#) is provided by Transport for Scotland.

3.2 Wales: Active travel policy

Active travel is a devolved competence for the Welsh Assembly and policy in Wales is guided by the [Active Travel \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) (see box 5) and the [Active Travel Action Plan for Wales](#).⁶⁸

This Action Plan creates a vision for active travel: “For people in Wales, we want walking and cycling to become the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances.”⁶⁹ Further, the Welsh Government has published [statutory Design Guidance](#) to supplement on the planning, design, construction and maintenance of active travel networks and infrastructure.

Box 4: Active travel (Wales) Act 2013

The [Active Travel \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) requires local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. It also requires new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage. The Act focuses on walking and cycling as a mode of transport, i.e. for purposeful journeys. Purely recreational walking and cycling were not covered by the Act.

In terms of funding, in May 2018, Cabinet Secretary for Finance announced £60million to support active travel schemes as part of The Wales Infrastructure Plan Mid-Point Review. Transport Secretary, Ken Skates announced £10.36m to Local Authorities across Wales for schemes to promote Active Travel. Grant awards are detailed [here](#).

⁶⁷ Transport for Scotland, [£51 million for active travel infrastructure in 2019](#), 18 Jun 2019

⁶⁸ Welsh Government, [An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales](#), 2016

⁶⁹ Welsh Government, [An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales](#), 2016, p. 6

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