

An inquiry on Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2: Evidence submitted by ADEPT

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What is ADEPT?

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) represents place directors from county, unitary and combined authorities across England, along with directors of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), sub-national transport boards and [corporate partners](#) drawn from key service sectors. Our current membership is [here](#).

The key to unlocking economic recovery and renewal lies with local leadership. Place directors create the strategies, run the services and lead the projects that shape local places for their communities. The whole country benefits from investment in local place. Tackling inequality and climate change, while promoting health and wellbeing, supporting business and maintaining critical infrastructure is most successful when national investment is locally led.

ADEPT represents members' interests by proactively engaging central government on emerging policy and issues, responding to consultations and enquiries, creating national guidance, and promoting initiatives aimed at influencing government policy. ADEPT also represents public sector interests across all its key areas in national and regional sectoral organisations. For more information see the [website](#).

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Response

Targets. *Are the existing targets for cycling and walking consistent with getting transport on course to reach net zero by 2050? More specifically, do we need a new walking target for 2025, and do any other targets need to be revised or added?*

- A new national walking target should be established. The walking targets in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) are already being met. The CWIS target is 300 stages per person per year in 2025. In 2019, the DfT reported that 332 walking stages were made per person¹.
- The CWIS cycling target is low in comparison to countries such as the Netherlands. The current target is to double total number of cycle stages made each year from 0.8 billion in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025. However, in 2016 the Netherlands, with a population approximately one third of that of England, recorded 4.5 billion bicycle trips².

¹ Department for Transport, 2020, *Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2019*. Department for Transport. [Online]. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906698/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2019.pdf [Accessed 7 July 2021].

² Harms & Kansen, 2018, *Cycling Facts: Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis*. Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/reports/2018/04/01/cycling-facts-2018/Cycling+facts+2018.pdf> [Accessed 7 July 2021].

- The COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of social distancing has resulted in ‘unprecedented levels of walking and cycling across the UK’; in some places and for specific journeys there has been a 70% rise in the number of people cycling³. Previous targets did not account for a shock event of this magnitude. As such, short-term targets for 2025 must be reviewed and more ambitious targets established.
- It is important that any new targets align with annual statistical releases (e.g. stages per person per year). The current CWIS cycling targets do not align with the data reported in DfT’s annual walking and cycling statistical release. Aligning the target with statistics reported in the DfT walking and cycling statistical release would enable greater public visibility and accountability on how well future CWIS 2 targets are being met.

Overall level of funding. *What level of funding is required to meet the Government’s targets for increased cycling and walking by 2025 and 2030, and/or any new targets we may propose?*

- ADEPT supports the Government’s recent announcement (May 2020) of a £2 billion funding package for walking and cycling. However, to deliver transformational changes, both in terms of walking and cycling infrastructure and travel behaviour, a firm commitment from central government to provide long term funding beyond 2025 is required. This will support the development, delivery and (critically) maintenance of active transport initiatives, such as those associated with the LCWIP programme. Long term funding is also required for training and other behavioural activities associated with making active travel accessible to all. This could be achieved by bringing together various funding streams into a single, integrated active travel fund and by considering the current balance of funding between the various transport modes. The fund should equate to the per capita funding levels seen in countries such as the Netherlands.

Capacity. *Do local authorities and other bodies have the capacity and skills needed to spend the funding allocations required to meet the Government’s targets (or any new ones)? If not, how can this capacity be boosted, and how quickly can CWIS spending be ramped up? What should be the role of Active Travel England? What resources will it need to fulfil this role?*

- Local authorities face significant capacity and resource constraints. The continual need to prepare funding bids, usually with tight timeframes, limits their ability to deliver new walking and cycling schemes (i.e. funding bids requires officer time and can also require expenditure on third party consultants). To maximise available resources, larger long-term funding allocations covering multi year periods should be considered.
- Active Travel England’s role should be to review and provide expert advice on new walking and cycling infrastructure designs developed by local authorities and other bodies. This advice should be free and easily accessible by local authorities and other bodies. Active Travel England should also be available to support and guide local authorities who do not necessarily have the skills, experience and historic success in securing funding for new walking and cycling schemes.

Breakdown of funding. *What should CWIS 2 funding be spent on – i.e. what programmes or initiatives should be funded? How much capital and how much revenue? How much of this capital and revenue should go to transport/highway authorities, to Active Travel England, to the voluntary sector, to Highways England and HS2 Ltd, etc, and how much should be spent by government*

³ Moran, M, 2020, *Government launches £250m active travel fund to promote cycling and walking*. [online] Transportxtra.com. Available at: <https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/65398/government-launches-250m-active-travel-fund-to-promote-cycling-and-walking/> [Accessed 7 July 2021].

directly? How can government maximise the opportunities for its funding allocations to leverage in additional funding from other sources?

- It is important that a significant proportion of all funding is directed towards local authorities, particularly those in areas where walking and cycling schemes may not have been prioritised in the past. It is considered that walking and cycling schemes are most likely to succeed when a user centric, locally led approach is adopted. Local authorities have a much better understanding of the needs and travel patterns of residents and workers.
- There must be consistency in the funding of active travel schemes, both essential revenue funding and capital investment. This will enable longer-term capacity expansions, as well as stronger advocacy for effective active travel elements alongside new transport schemes and developments.
- Funding, along with expertise and the provision of good practice guidance, must be made available for monitoring and evaluation so that local authorities can understand the potential outcomes of interventions at a more granular level.

Public and political acceptability. *The extensive and widely reported opposition to schemes such as low-traffic neighbourhoods emphasises that interventions promoting walking and cycling are often controversial. How can consensus be built both nationally and locally to support the action required?*

- To improve political and public buy in to walking and cycle schemes at the earliest possible opportunity it is important that effective, timely and well thought out community and stakeholder consultation is undertaken. To support this, central government should provide best practice guidance on community and stakeholder consultation specifically in relation to walking and cycling schemes.
- New walking and cycling schemes must adopt a user centric approach to their design. Walking and cycling schemes must take account of the needs of the people that will use these schemes and the place(s) where these schemes are located. The delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure that does not reflect the needs and travel patterns of residents is likely to result in low public acceptability.
- There is a need for a more unified political position on walking and cycling policy at local and national levels. Walking and cycling schemes are on occasion poorly supported by local councillors who have other, shorter-term transport priorities (e.g. resolving traffic congestion). This position often conflicts with national policy.

Behaviour change. *The pandemic has shown how flexible people's travel behaviour is in certain circumstances. What combination of schemes and policies will provide the basis for a substantial and lasting shift towards active travel?*

- New walking and cycling schemes must be safe and connect with existing infrastructure. Often walking and cycling infrastructure provided as a part of new developments does not connect with existing infrastructure or connect with local services and facilities.
- A range of walking and cycling schemes must be provided. This includes schemes that provide medium and long-distance connectivity between settlements / parts of an urban area and schemes that provide local connectivity to local services and facilities. To maximise the potential for mode shift for short and medium length journeys, there must be good connectivity between local, medium and long-distance routes.
- Measures to encourage the uptake the use of walking and cycling must sit alongside measures that reduce the attractiveness of the private car (e.g. by not providing additional capacity on the road network in congested urban locations).
- Policies must acknowledge and recognise the value of the broadening array of active first / last mile modes and technologies (e.g. e-scooters and e-bikes) and review the current

legalities around their usage. These should recognise the relative impacts, benefits and disbenefits of electric micro mobility technologies (such as electric scooters and e-bikes) compared to traditional active travel modes. For example, e-bikes have the potential to significantly increase the proportion of short and medium length journeys undertaken by active travel modes. E-bikes also have the potential to appeal to users who may not otherwise have travelled by pedal cycle.

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

- The Government response to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in many more people using active travel than prior to the lockdowns. Alongside the UK Parliament's declaration of a climate emergency and growing public concern about climate change, there is now an opportunity to push the active travel agenda and its wider contribution to the economy, environment and society.
- DfT must assess and publish progress on CWIS and in future CWIS 2 to develop best practice guidance. This will ensure consistency and enable more effect cross-boundary working.

Walking as much as cycling. *The differences between the two modes are significant and cycling has been shown easier to "cater to" than walking. How can CWIS 2 exploit the shared characteristics of walking and cycling whilst at the same time ensuring that both modes receive appropriate attention and emphasis?*

Levelling up. *How can CWIS 2 assist with the delivery of the levelling-up agenda? In particular, 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?*

- Active travel can generate health, economic, environmental and social benefits, contribute to improved wellbeing and help to prevent or manage a range of chronic health conditions. It can also contribute to economic performance by reducing congestion, and through reducing emissions, tackle climate change and improve air quality.⁴ Furthermore, active travel has a key role to play in aiding the UK's Covid-19 economic recovery, potentially boosting local town centres, levelling up benefit in deprived areas, reducing congestion and increasing productivity.⁵⁶
- New walking and cycling infrastructure can improve the accessibility of jobs and other local facilities and services (e.g. by addressing issues of severance or improving existing routes that are unattractive for walking or cycling). This can provide new economic opportunities for people living in areas with high rates of unemployment and high levels of deprivation.
- It's positive to see resources going into active travel provision. However, LAs' ability to deliver is compromised by competitive bidding, unrealistic timescales, skills and capacity shortage, inability of the supply chain to deliver. LAs with more capacity are better placed to bid for funds when they become available. To resolve this issue councils need devolved, multi-year funding, realistic timescales for development and delivery (including community consultation) and the opportunity to develop and sustain markets and local economies.

⁴ Hirst, D, 2020, *Active Travel: Trends, Policy and Funding: a briefing paper*. [online] London: House of Commons Library. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8615/> [Accessed 9 July 2020]

⁵ Sustrans, 2020, *What Are The Economic Impacts Of Making More Space For Walking And Cycling?*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/opinion/2020/may/what-are-the-economic-impacts-of-making-more-space-for-walking-and-cycling> [Accessed 15 July 2020].

⁶ Transport for London, 2019. *Walking & Cycling: The Economic Benefits*. [online] London: Transport for London. Available at: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/walking-cycling-economic-benefits-summary-pack.pdf> [Accessed 15 July 2020].

Justice and inclusion. *Walking and cycling are the most accessible modes of transport but the profile of those travelling by these modes does not reflect this. How can the priorities of justice and inclusion be “baked in” to CWIS 2?*

- Place more emphasis on transport inclusivity, with access to active travel being prioritised in marginalised communities and areas of low employment, as well as rural areas where low carbon transport services are less frequent.
- A people and place-based approach to the design and implementation of walking and cycling schemes must be adopted. New walking and cycling schemes must consider the end user, their needs and their travel characteristics.
- Walking schemes must consider the needs of all users, including: People with mobility impairments, wheelchair users, visually impaired users and hearing-impaired users. Cycling schemes must consider all types of cycle (e.g. hand cycles, family and cargo cycles, wheelchair friendly cycles, tricycles and recumbents).

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

- The forthcoming transport decarbonisation plan should be closely aligned with CWIS 2 and be at the forefront of transport and wider climate policy. This will ensure that the strong positive momentum generated around active travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is maintained.

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

- Set up a new independent body to advise local government on how to institute a transformational change programme for low carbon transport and encourage local authorities to update their local transport plans to prioritise decarbonisation and active travel. This could potentially be delivered via Active Travel England.
- Make expertise available, potentially via Active Travel England, to support local authorities in developing new high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Improve communication with local councillors to ensure that there is a coherent political policy position on walking and cycling at a national and local level. Often, local councillors are not supportive of walking and cycling schemes.
- Central government should provide good practice guidance, potentially via Active Travel England, on the monitoring and evaluation of active travel that helps local authorities understand the outcomes of programmes, alongside what is and isn't working so that they can make the best use of available funds and resources.
- Central Government should review the existing planning process to strengthen user hierarchies to establish active travel as a cornerstone in the planning process and promote a user-centric approach to developing mobility options tailored at a local level.
- Central Government should actively encourage and fund local authorities to make temporary walking and cycling measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic permanent.
- Central Government should champion active travel and provide leadership at a national level. With Covid-19, the UK Parliament’s declaration of a climate emergency and growing public concern about climate change, there is a golden opportunity to push the active travel agenda and its contribution to the economy, environment and society.

14 July 2021

Programme and project management. *Complex programmes require skilled management and certainty about funding. How can CWIS 2 help to create a culture of successful planning and delivery of investment?*

As referenced above, LAs' ability to deliver programmes is compromised by competitive bidding, unrealistic timescales, skills and capacity shortage, inability of the supply chain to deliver. LAs with more capacity are better placed to bid for funds when they become available. To resolve this issue councils need devolved, multi-year funding, realistic timescales for development and delivery (including community consultation), and the opportunity to develop and sustain markets and local economies.