

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

14 March 2023

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Cuts to active travel funding

We are writing to you as a diverse coalition of charities, professional organisations and businesses representing millions of citizens, asking you to reverse the proposed cut to active travel funding.

In a written statement on 9 March, the Transport Secretary announced that overall active travel funding for the current parliamentary term is being reduced from £3.8 billion to £3 billion. This includes a two thirds cut to promised capital investment in infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling, from £308 million to only £100 million for the next two years.

We were disappointed to see vital active travel budgets wiped away in England, at the exact time when they are most essential to the UK's economic, social and environmental prospects.

We believe these cuts are a backward move for the economy, the climate and health. This cut will counteract the tremendous progress we've seen in recent years, driven in part by the commitments to cycling made in the 2019 Conservative Party manifesto, the active travel funding you announced as Chancellor, your ongoing commitment to Net Zero and the commitment to cycling you made in the 2022 Conservative leadership race.

We are concerned that the Department for Transport appears to have varied the financial resources for its second statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2), without considering its own and Active Travel England's ability to meet the objectives defined in that strategy.

Indeed, this cut will mean the Government will not be able to achieve its target of 50% as set out in CWIS2 of all journeys in English towns and cities being walked or cycled by 2030. These cuts call into question the Government's commitment to this statutory strategy, especially given their relatively small impact on overall spending versus their benefits and significance.

These cuts will also leave England lagging far behind other UK nations and London, where per capita investment is many times higher, at a time when we need to be raising the bar everywhere.

The benefits of supporting active travel far outweigh the costs. People walking, wheeling and cycling took 14.6 million cars off the road in 2021. This saved 2.5 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, prevented 138,000 serious long-term health conditions and avoided more than 29,000 early deaths. Active travel routes also provide green corridors to help cool our cities and allow people to access nature.

Overall, we estimate that active travel contributed £36.5 billion to the UK economy in 2021, with a relatively modest investment from Government when compared to other transport modes.

More than ever, people want and need support to walk, wheel or cycle. These cuts will impact those that would have benefited most and limit choice to travel healthily, cheaply and emissions-free.

Over a third of people on low incomes and a similar proportion of disabled people do not have access to a car. For many that do, it is becoming prohibitively expensive to run. In the current economic climate, this funding is more important than ever to help everyone walk, wheel or cycle to access the things they need.

In light of the clear need to support active travel at this critical time, we urge you to commit to maintain the funding set out in CWIS2 back in July 2022. Furthermore, we seek your reassurance that revenue funding levels will remain at the levels promised.

Yours sincerely,



Xavier Brice
CEO, Sustrans



Phillip Darnton OBE
Chairman, Bicycle
Association



Emily Cherry
Chief Executive, Bikeability
Trust



Caroline Julian, External
Affairs Director, British
Cycling



Sarah Mitchell
Chief Executive, Cycling UK



Stephen Edwards
Chief Executive, Living
Streets



Ross Maloney
CEO, Ramblers



The Walking and Cycling Alliance

The Bicycle Association, Phillip Darnton OBE, Chairman
Bikeability, Emily Cherry, Executive Director
British Cycling, Caroline Julian, External Affairs Director
Cycling UK, Sarah Mitchell, CEO
Ramblers, Ross Maloney, CEO
Living Streets, Steven Edwards, CEO
Sustrans, Xavier Brice, CEO

And

Action Vision Zero, Jeremy Leach, Co-founder
Active Travel Academy, Dr Harrie Larrington-Spencer, Research Fellow
Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport, Mark Kemp, President
Association of Directors of Public Health, Professor Jim McManus, President
Asthma + Lung UK, Sarah Woolnough, CEO
British Medical Association
Brompton Bicycles Ltd, Will Butler-Adams, CEO
Campaign for Better Transport, Paul Tuohy, CEO
Canal Rivers Trust, Richard Parry, CEO
CPRE, Tom Fyans, Interim CEO
Cycle to Work Alliance, Adrian Warren, Chair
Disabled Ramblers, John Cuthbertson, Chair
Faculty of Public Health, Professor Kevin Fenton, President
Frog Bikes, Jerry Lawson, Founder
Medical Women's Federation, Professor Scarlett McNally, President-elect,
Modeshift, Ross Butcher, Chair
Mums for Lungs, Jemima Hartshorn, Co-founder
Town and Country Planning Association, Fiona Howie, Chief Executive
Transport and Health Science Group, Dr Stephen Watkins, Co-Chair
Transport for All, Caroline Strickland, CEO
Trek UK, Nigel Roberts, General Manager
UK Health Alliance on Climate Change, Dr Elaine Mulcahy, Director
Urban Transport Group, Jonathan Bray, Director
Voi Technology, Jack Samler, UK General Manager
Walk Ride GM, Cazz Ward
Wheels for Wellbeing, Isabelle Clement MBE, Director
Women in Transport, Sonya Byers, CEO
+118 cycle training providers employing over 3,000 staff