



Policy Position:

ACTIVE TRAVEL

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ADEPT

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

POLICY POSITION: ACTIVE TRAVEL

KEY MESSAGES

- 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.¹
- There is a need for Government to play a central role in championing active travel and provide leadership at a national level. ADEPT welcomes the funding to prioritise and encourage active travel, however Government needs to go further by putting the right policies and long-term funding (both capital and revenue) in place to enable local authorities to develop, deliver and maintain the supporting infrastructure.
- The government response to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in many more people using active travel than before lockdown. 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.
- Integrating active travel as part of the wider transport network as a first / last mile solution is essential to facilitate easy access to public transport and reduce reliance on the private car.
- Provide long term, dedicated funding to support the development, delivery and (critically) maintenance of active transport initiatives, such as those associated with the local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) programme.
- ADEPT will work with members to weave active travel and climate change agendas together, highlighting the co-benefits and opportunities to deliver climate emergency action plans.
- ADEPT encourages its members to develop LCWIPs in order to achieve national consistency, enable more effective cross-boundary working and embed LCWIPs into wider local authority travel plans.

¹ 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]

Introduction

Active transport traditionally refers to non-motorised forms of transport that involve physical activity, such as walking, cycling and manual scooting. It can also include public transport for longer distance trips, as they generally include walking or cycling components as part of the whole journey. Evidence shows that active travel generates health, economic, environmental and social benefits.

Active travel gives people an opportunity to be physically active as part of their daily routine, which can contribute to improved wellbeing and help to prevent or manage a range of chronic health conditions. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has also identified active travel as an essential element of the transition to a net zero carbon economy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.² Economically, active transport brings significant benefits by boosting local town centres through modal shift away from the private car, increasing productivity and reducing health and environmental damage expenditure.³

The 2018 National Travel Survey for England indicated that the number of walking trips has been increasing over the past three years. Despite the number of cycling trips remaining constant over this period, cycling miles travelled increased by 50% between 2002 and 2018.⁴

In terms of overall mode share, the 2018 National Travel Survey reported that active transport only contributed to 29% of total trips compared to 61% of trips taken by car. This is despite 60% of journeys between 1-2 miles being undertaken by vehicles, which shows the significant potential for higher levels of active travel.⁵ However, less than 2% of England's transport budget is spent on facilitating walking and cycling.



The implementation of social distancing measures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic 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 cycling.⁶ Ongoing measures restricting travel and activity participation to reduce social contact have changed daily travel patterns substantially compared to pre Covid-19 levels. These could have lasting impacts on the number and types of out-of-home activities and how they reach these activities. Active travel, whether recreationally or utilitarian, has the potential to relieve capacity restrictions on public transport, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst also providing important ways to maintain satisfactory levels of health and wellbeing. 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.^{7,8} Consequently, now more than ever, active transport is and should continue to be a top priority for policymakers and planners.

² Committee on Climate Change (2019) *Behaviour change, public engagement and net zero* <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/behaviour-change-public-engagement-and-net-zero-imperial-college-london/>

³ Sustrans (2017) *Active Travel and Economic Performance* <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4472/4472.pdf>

⁴ Defra (2019) *National Travel Survey: England* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/823068/national-travel-survey-2018.pdf

⁵ House of Commons Transport Committee (2019) *Active travel: increasing levels of walking and cycling in England* <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmtrans/1487/148702.htm>

⁶ 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 16 June 2020].

⁷ 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].

⁸ 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].

Context - government policy and activity

The Government has stated that it is committed to increasing cycling and walking and making our roads safer for those who walk or cycle, stating that “public transport and active travel will be the natural first choice for our daily activities” within its 2020 *Decarbonising Transport Strategy*.⁹

Both the 2019 *Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy*¹⁰ and the 2019 *Clean Air Strategy*¹¹ outline that a key action in achieving a reduction in congestion and transport emissions is by facilitating modal shift towards low and zero emissions options, particularly through active modes that have associated health benefits. New technologies, such as the intelligent use of real-time data in journey planning tools, also have the potential to make active travel a more desirable option for multi-stage journeys, helping people to make smarter, greener and healthier travel choices.

The first statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)¹² was published in 2017. It outlined the Government’s aim to make cycling and walking a normal part of everyday life, setting out specific actions to support delivery of the ambition. The CWIS identified £1.2bn of potential central government funding for investment in cycling and walking between 2016 to 2021. However, interest was so great that as of March 2020, the total amount had already been invested. An additional £1.2billion for infrastructure and other active travel projects has been projected over the next two years, bringing the total to £2.4billion.

Final decisions on future funding for cycling and walking to 2025 were initially expected in late 2020. However, due to Covid-19, a £2billion walking and cycling package was announced in May 2020 in order to promote alternative ways to travel that could relieve pressure on public transport networks. The first stage of the £2 billion investment package will be a £250 million emergency active travel fund to create pop-up bike lanes with protected space for cycling, wider pavements, safer junctions, and cycle and bus-only corridors. The package includes fast tracked statutory guidance, rental e-scooter trials, cycle repair vouchers and an active travel marketing campaign.

Despite there being a strong rationale for promoting active travel and many players from the public, private and third-party sectors working to implement policies, the extent of delivery is patchy across the UK. Consistency of funding - both essential revenue funding and capital investment- to enable longer-term capacity expansions is crucial, as well as stronger advocacy for effective active travel elements alongside new transport schemes and developments. Access to expertise, the provision of good practice guidance and associated funding for monitoring and evaluation is also necessary to help local government understand the potential outcomes of interventions on a more granular level.



⁹ Department for Transport (2020) *Decarbonising Transport: Setting the challenge* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878642/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf

¹⁰ Department for Transport (2019) *Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/846593/future-of-mobility-strategy.pdf

¹¹ Defra (2019) *Clean Air Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf

¹² Department for Transport(2017) *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603527/cycling-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

What ADEPT has done to date

The Transport and Connectivity Board has been actively engaged in the promotion of cycling and walking, particularly through its Public Rights of Way Group and its involvement in supporting regional transport strategies. It also provides a community of best practice for the development of local transport plans which are the main strategy tool for local authorities. The Board actively engages with key stakeholders in this arena such as the Department for Transport, Public Health England, Sustrans and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH). More generally, ADEPT has published a policy position on clean and green growth (June 2020)¹³ and commented on air quality and planning issues.

What ADEPT will do:

- Encourage members to implement new guidance and make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians.
- Strengthen ties between local authorities, Public Health England and ADPH, for example through knowledge sharing and co-authoring papers.
- Advocate what 'good' looks like, using our evidence base and case studies.
- Provide a community of best practice, collective thinking and options appraisal, including through our partnership with Proving Services.
- Promote the trialling / piloting of new ideas such as those within the DfT / ADEPT Live Labs programme.
- Work with members to weave active travel and climate change agendas together, highlighting the co-benefits and opportunities to deliver climate emergency action plans.
- Encourage members to develop LCWIPs in order to achieve national consistency, enable more effective cross-boundary working and embed LCWIPs into wider local authority travel plans.
- Help articulate the different active travel issues between densely populated urban areas and more sparse rural areas, as well as the issues relating to transport poverty.
- Encourage members to review their active travel, street lighting and maintenance policies to prioritise and incentivise travel by more sustainable modes.
- Lobby government to ensure that public sector spending decisions recognise both capital and revenue spending equally, so that the focus is not primarily on building new infrastructure over typically revenue-funded activities around supporting active travel, e.g. for enduring grass and hedge cutting, line and sign maintenance, active travel promotion and training.
- Encourage members to embed the Local Transport Note (LTN) on cycling and walking standards, as this is likely to be a requirement for future cycling and walking scheme funding.

¹³ The link is: ADEPT (2020) *Policy Position: Clean and Green Growth* <https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/adept-policy-position-clean-growth>



Key asks of Government:

- Play a central role in championing 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.
- In the short term / current pandemic, continue to stress the urgency of rapid rollout of walking and cycling infrastructure and support with quick release of funding. Actively encourage and fund local authorities to make temporary walking and cycling Covid-19 measures permanent.
- Develop more ambitious national targets for walking, cycling and modal splits in new developments that are clearly tied into the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 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.
- Update policies to acknowledge and recognise the value of the broadening array of active first / last mile modes and technologies (e.g. scooters) and review the current legalities around their usage. These should recognise the relative impacts, benefits and disbenefits of electric micromobility technologies (such as electric scooters and e-bikes) compared to traditional active travel modes.
- Provide long-term, dedicated funding to 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.
- Support LAs looking to introduce workplace parking levies (WPL) and encourage them to allocate a significant proportion of revenue for investment in workplace focused active transport initiatives.
- Empower LAs to introduce road pricing/eco-levy with a substantial proportion of funds protected for active travel schemes.
- Assess and publish progress on the Cycling and Walking Strategy, including the outcomes of the LCWIP pilot, then work with LAs to develop guidance. Require and fund all local authorities to develop LCWIPs in due course in order to ensure consistency and enable more effect cross-boundary working.
- Provide good practice guidance 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.
- Set up a new independent body to advise local government on how to institute a transformational change programme for low carbon transport and update local transport plans guidance to prioritise decarbonisation and active travel.
- 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.

Case Studies

The Healthy Streets Approach (London)

The Healthy Streets Approach is a system of policies and strategies aimed at making London a healthier, more inclusive city where people choose to walk, cycle and use public transport. It supports active travel and a modal shift away from private car use to reduce the number of non-essential car, freight and servicing journeys on London's streets. This in turn frees up space, reduces congestion, improves air quality and creates more pleasant environments for the remaining essential journeys.¹⁴ The approach has 10 key indicators considered to be the essential ingredients for a healthy street environment:

1. Pedestrians from all walks of life
2. Easy to cross
3. Shade and shelter
4. Places to stop and rest
5. Not too noisy
6. People choose to walk, cycle and use public transport
7. People feel safe
8. Things to see and do
9. People feel relaxed
10. Clean air



Health Walks Programme (Hertfordshire)

The Hertfordshire Health Walks Programme has been running since 2001 and is co-ordinated by the County Council's Countryside & Rights of Way Service (CRoW) in partnership the county Public Health Department, district councils and the NHS. The programme coordinates free, local, health-focused walks across the county in order to encourage residents to get more active. The walks are led by trained volunteers, with approximately 80 walks organised each week and over 68,000 participations a year.¹⁵ Users register online or at their first walk and fill in a short questionnaire relating to health and wellbeing in order to receive a reference number, which they provide at the beginning of each walk. Users can view local walks on the county council website as well as search for walks based on their location and / or difficulty.¹⁶



¹⁴ Greater London Authority (2019) *Healthy Streets Explained* https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/healthy_streets_explained.pdf

¹⁵ Figures for Financial Year 2019/20 provided from HCC Key Performance Indicator Report

¹⁶ Countryside Management Service (2020) *Find Hertfordshire Health Walks* [https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/countryside-management/walking-events/hertfordshire-health-walk-events.aspx?searchKeywords=&page=1&resultsPerPage=10&view=list&distance=0&when=0&nocache=.](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/countryside-management/walking-events/hertfordshire-health-walk-events.aspx?searchKeywords=&page=1&resultsPerPage=10&view=list&distance=0&when=0&nocache=)

- ADEPT members are the place-making strategists and policy shapers across top tier local authority areas
- ADEPT members are specialists, delivering services and sharing best practice across key sectors including environment, planning, housing, transport and economy
- ADEPT members design strategies for the future, taking communities beyond 2035
- ADEPT members operate in networks, cutting through boundaries to work with partners across the political, public, private and community sectors
- ADEPT members provide opportunities to develop new talent, supporting the Place Directors of tomorrow

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