



Transport Committee:
Active Travel Inquiry

Written submission
of evidence

October 2018



1. About ITP

- 1.1 [Integrated Transport Planning](#) (ITP) is a transport planning and research consultancy that provides advice on sustainable transport projects for a wide range of public and private sector clients all over the world. We are passionate about helping clients to create better-connected places that, through their design, encourage more sustainable travel behaviours. We have considerable experience of 'what works' (and indeed what doesn't) when seeking to encourage widespread uptake of walking and cycling across a range of trip purposes and contexts.
- 1.2 This submission of evidence responds to the specific questions posed by the Transport Committee's Active Travel Inquiry, but we would be pleased to offer further insights if required - for example, in relation to our more detailed understanding of 'influencing travel behaviour', which extends beyond the core questions of this call for evidence but is relevant when considering how best to promote active travel in the UK.

2. Inquiry submission responses

The benefits and risks of active travel, and the extent to which they are properly understood by the public and Government

Benefits

- 2.1 The wide-reaching benefits of increasing active travel are well known and have been set out in multiple research papers. We have not summarised these here, but direct you particularly to the work of Adrian Davis ([Professor of Transport & Health at Edinburgh Napier University](#) and [Visiting Professor at UWE](#)), and specifically his [Essential Evidence](#) series of publications (172 at latest count!) prepared for Bristol City Council and TravelWest. It draws on peer-reviewed research publications to succinctly identify the public health (for adults and children), demand management and behaviour change, public policy, air quality, safety, and wider benefits that are attributable to higher levels of physical activity that can be achieved through greater uptake in active travel.
- 2.2 ITP's work with Bath & North East Somerset Council, to develop a Joint Strategic Delivery Plan for Active Travel, summarised the key benefits as follows:

- **Traffic Reduction** – In 2015, 19% of trips were under 1 mile in length while 66% were under 5 miles¹. Although 76% of trips under 1 mile are walks, over 66% of trips 1-5 miles in length are by car. Encouraging people to walk or cycle for more of these trips will reduce traffic congestion and thereby improve the flow of traffic– particularly in more urban areas.
- **Sustainable Development and Placemaking** - More widespread uptake in active travel activities can both facilitate, and be encouraged by, new housing and commercial development². This accords with the National Planning Policy Framework³ and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on Physical Activity and the Environment⁴, which emphasise the need for new development to be allocated so as to manage patterns of growth and maximise the use of public transport, walking and cycling. It recognises that places where people choose to walk and cycle are also attractive locations to live and work.
- **Economic Growth** – Existing traffic congestion and further traffic from new development may hamper local economic growth, with journey times to important destinations increasing, if enhanced active travel and public transport connectivity are not prioritised. Widespread uptake of active travel reduces congestion, helping to increase the flow of traffic through an area, encouraging greater local shopping activity and increasing ‘retail density spend’ by around 2.5 times a typical urban centre⁵. In addition, reduced traffic can help to decrease infrastructure maintenance costs and enables larger employment sites to achieve full occupancy through reduced parking requirements⁶.
- **Tourism** - Cycle tourists spend around 9% more (£81 per trip) on average compared with people using other modes⁷. Reducing the impact of vehicle trips also preserves the character of the historic and culturally significant places in the District⁷.

The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge. If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a ‘wonder drug’ or ‘miracle cure’.

Chief Medical Officer, 2009

¹ DfT (2016) *National Travel Survey: England 2015*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2cl2cfz>

² Bath and North East Somerset (2014) *Core Strategy Part 1 of the Local Plan*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2fvaXa5>

³ MHCLG (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*. Available online at: <https://bit.ly/2Pn4q2o>

⁴ NICE (2008) *Public Health Guideline PH8: Physical activity and the environment*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2fXNKAO>

⁵ DfT (2016) *The Value of Cycling*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2bMDwjk>

⁶ DfT (2011) *Alternatives to Travel: Next Steps* (Pg. 29). Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2eCL7Pt>

⁷ West of England Partnership (2011) *Joint Local Transport Plan 3: 2011-2026*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2fyOviO>

- **Public Health** – 60% of men and 72% of women do not undertake a recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week⁸, and inactivity directly contributes to 1 in 6 UK deaths, costing businesses and society £7.4 billion a year⁹. Incorporating cycling or walking into people’s daily routines is recognised as one of the most effective ways to increase physical activity¹⁰. Journeys on foot or by bike deliver positive stress management and wellbeing experiences for commuters, who report improved concentration levels compared to those travelling to work by car¹¹.
- **Environment** – National air quality thresholds are being exceeded on most of the central Bath’s principal road network, the High Street and Charlton Road in Keynsham, and Bath Road in Saltford. This long-term public health risk is estimated to contribute to 40,000 early deaths each year in the UK. Widespread uptake of active travel, in place of motorised travel options, will help address air quality issues.
- **Productivity** – For each employee who takes up physical exercise for 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week as a result of a walking or cycling intervention, the annual benefit to employers is at least 0.4 days’ gross salary costs on average¹².

2.3 At the local level, ITP has also appraised and evaluated active travel projects for several Local Authorities. The post-implementation benefits of these schemes consistently yield Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR) between 4:1 and 15:1 – far higher than those achieved by road schemes.

Risk, and perceived risk

2.4 In terms of risk, public perception is that cycling in urban areas, on public highway is dangerous. Indeed, the [British Social Attitudes Survey 2016: Public attitudes towards transport](#) found that 59% of respondents perceive that roads are too dangerous to cycle on. Yet research by academics like Adrian Davis has empirically demonstrated that the benefits of cycling far outweigh the associated risks and that, as population-wide cycling levels increase, the risk reduces through a ‘[safety in numbers](#)’ effect. Hence there is a mandate to both provide more-visible, safer infrastructure to encourage uptake in walking and cycling, as well as better-promoting those facilities which already exist.

⁸ Department of Health (2011) *Start Active, Stay Active*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/1LmuPJJ>

⁹ Department of Health (2011) *Start Active, Stay Active*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/1LmuPJJ>

¹⁰ Cycling England (2007) *Valuing the Benefits of Cycling*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/M865I5>

¹¹ Mytton, Panter, and Ogilvie (2016) *Longitudinal associations of active commuting with wellbeing and sickness absence*. Published in *Preventative Medicine* 2016 Mar; 84: 19–26. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2eAjC9I>

¹² DfT (2014) *WebTAG: TAG unit A5-1 active mode appraisal*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2fQ2hiF>

- 2.5 ITP's view is that reported events, [high profile collisions between cyclists and pedestrians](#), often appear to be used by the media, and [to some extent the Government](#), to politicise the perceived safety of cycling and walking in a way that is unhelpful in the context of promoting more widespread uptake of these activities. This contrasts sharply with attitudes and perceptions of cyclists in particular (but also reflects pedestrian experiences in some locations) based on their [near-miss and collision experiences](#) resulting from irresponsible and dangerous driving. At the heart of this, the design and provision of walking and cycling environments – and the underlying factors that have resulted in less-safe behaviours becoming the norm – remain largely unchallenged.

Recent trends in walking and cycling and factors contributing to these trends

Trends

- 2.6 The DfT's [Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2017](#) outline the results of the National Travel Survey. They indicate that, across the whole of England since 2002, the number of walking trips has declined, although the distance travelled has remained roughly the same. The number of cycling trips has also declined since 2002, although the distance travelled has increased by more than 50%.
- 2.7 These national level statistics mask [modest increases in the numbers of people completing more journey stages on-foot, and significant increases in the numbers of cycling trips in major metropolitan areas](#). In London, for example, cycling remains the fastest growing mode of transport, with the [number of daily cycling journeys more than doubling in the Capital since](#) the year 2000.

Factors that contribute to these trends

- 2.8 Many existing UK towns and cities have not been designed with active travel in mind and most urban environments have been (re)engineered through the 20th Century to prioritise car-based access, which now directly conflicts with an aspiration to encourage more people to travel actively. In urban areas the majority of strategic pedestrian and cycling links that are traffic free, or offer some degree of segregation from traffic, remain poor in quality, are themselves unattractive and unappealing, and can seldom be combined across a genuine 'network' to provide direct journey options that are safe and quicker than car-based alternatives. A significant number of urban and inter-urban cycle routes continue to be shared between walkers and cyclists, which is sub-optimal for both users' needs.

- 2.9 There are isolated areas where cycling levels are higher than average; like London, Bristol, Oxford, Cambridge and Hull. Here there has been more widespread adoption, although it appears to us that this had been borne primarily out of:
- Public frustration at increasing levels of highway network congestion that are reducing journey times by both cars and road-based public transport – as evidenced by ITP’s recent research for TfL on [Understanding and Managing Congestion in London](#).
 - The rising costs of public transport in real terms, which the Trades Union Congress (TUC) reported in 2018 have [doubled relative to average wages since 2006](#), and worsening levels of crowding on peak hour public transport services (particular urban rail networks), which have combined to prompt increasing numbers of people to start cycling for their commutes to work.
- 2.10 The [Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme evaluation findings](#), and ITP’s own work for DfT summarising the effectiveness of personal travel planning interventions ([DfT, Making PTP Work, 2008](#)) both clearly demonstrate how community-based behaviour change interventions can encourage more walking and cycling. Impressive outcomes based on several large-scale projects, include overall:
- 4 percentage point decrease in the *mode share* of car driver trips (equating to an 11% reduction in car driver trips)
 - Corresponding increase in the *mode share* of walking trips (3 percentage points), cycling trips (1 percentage point) and local bus trips (1 percentage point). Importantly these represent significant percentage changes given the low mode share starting point, and are achieved at relatively low cost with high benefit to cost ratios exceeding 30:1 (i.e. a £30 return for every £1 invested)
- 2.11 For these outcomes to be secured long term, and built upon, there is a need to better ‘lock-in’ the benefits by tipping the infrastructure balance in favour of more active modes (i.e. as more people start to walk, to provide more green time at pedestrian crossings, and as more people start to cycle, increase the proportion of highway dedicated to cyclists). Ideally infrastructure would come first, but there is potential for both behaviour change and infrastructure to be delivered in parallel, and this is when the effects are likely to be most powerful (i.e. the behaviour change programmes are promoting high quality and fit for purpose infrastructure and active travel journey options).

The effectiveness of the Department for Transport in setting the strategic objectives for active travel and in working with other departments that have relevant responsibilities

- 2.12 Collaboration with other departments and cross department funding for active travel schemes will be essential in achieving the ambitious objectives set out in the DfT's [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#). From outside of DfT it is difficult to discern how much collaboration is truly being carried out with other Government Departments, but ITP's view is that the strategic objectives defined in CWIS are sound.
- 2.13 Regretfully, they do not yet appear to have been matched by similarly transformative funding commitments that will genuinely enable local authorities to re-shape their urban and inter-urban movement networks in a way that places much greater emphasis on active travel – embracing the [NHS's Healthy New Towns](#) and [Sport England's Active Design guidelines](#). We would supplement this by noting the lack of current national and regional commitment to urban travel demand management interventions that would both limit the attractiveness of private motorised travel into and around cities, address near-term air quality issues (which accelerated uptake in Ultra Low Emission Vehicles is anticipated to address over the longer-term), and unlock capacity for roadscape transformation interventions that promote more widespread uptake in active travel and help to accommodate employment and housing growth.
- 2.14 We accept these kinds of interventions cannot benefit everyone (since some groups in society are unable to cycle), nor will they be relevant everywhere. However, a Dutch approach to planning and delivering walk, cycle and public transport-focused connectivity would undoubtedly be applicable in all but the hilliest UK metropolitan areas, core cities, and large market towns.

The balance of responsibilities for active transport between central Government and local bodies and whether the current arrangements achieve an appropriate balance

- 2.15 The localism agenda has devolved more powers to Local Authorities but at the same time funding for all local transport activities has been significantly reduced. The funding that is available has become bid-based, and short-termist in nature.
- 2.16 Many of ITP's Local Authority clients are having to make very difficult decisions on what services they can offer their residents beyond those they have a statutory duty to provide. With limited funding available, investing in walking and cycling improvements (which also place pressure on dwindling asset maintenance budgets) is not a high

priority for many authorities – despite locally stated aspirations to increase active travel behaviours.

- 2.17 The forthcoming refresh of the Cycle Infrastructure Design will be of benefit to local authorities and help to ensure cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is well-designed and the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are considered in designing highway and traffic schemes and new developments, as well as during highway maintenance work. The lack of national guidance to-date has led many local authorities to develop their own walking and cycling infrastructure guidance, which has delayed the implementation of visible infrastructure improvements.

Implementation of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) so far, including in relation to the Cycling Ambition Cities

- 2.18 The release of CWIS is a step in the right direction to increase levels of active travel in the UK and the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) should help to provide a framework for the development of walking and cycling networks – but only if sufficient capital funding is made available to support the delivery of well-designed walking and cycling networks in urban areas. However, at present the production of LCWIPs is only a recommendation rather than compulsory, and local authorities had to bid for access to the DfT-funded consultancy support.
- 2.19 As an SME with specialist skills to help steer and develop effective LCWIP's we would be delighted to assist and support the LCWIP process, however this work was let through a framework dominated by major multinational, multidisciplinary consultancies. We would therefore strongly recommend that government reviews its procurement processes to better support SME engagement in the procurement process, with a greater focus on quality and transparency in how skills are procured.
- 2.20 The following blog from Summer 2017 summarises our thoughts on how local authorities could make the LCWIP process work for them:
<https://www.itpworld.net/news-and-views/2017/cracking-the-lcwip>

The adequacy of funding associated with CWIS and any concerns around a lack of ringfencing

- 2.21 ITP believes that current funding for active travel through CWIS is very low, and wholly insufficient to achieve the 2025 targets defined in the strategy. Those countries with high levels of cycling and walking have invested heavily over a long period to improve

conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, and as part of a genuinely multi-modal strategy for promoting sustainable travel

- 2.22 In [Designing for Cycle Traffic](#) (2018) John Parkin states that investment of up to £20/capita/annum, in line with Dutch and Danish levels of investment, is required over a number of years to increase cycling alone. The 'boom and bust' funding cycles which have been used to support sustainable transport initiatives in the UK over recent years are not conducive to achieving significant increases in active travel. Unfortunately, only a handful of areas receive the funding and once this runs out there is often a loss of momentum, as well as the valuable skills and experience built up by officers responsible for developing and delivering intervention programmes.
- 2.23 Echoing points made in relation to question one, there continues to be an unwillingness (or inability) at both central and local Government levels to effectively fund and implement measures that would reduce demand for travel by private cars, taxis/private hire vehicles driving into urban areas. If implemented in combination with significantly enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, secure cycle parking at major destinations and interchanges, and improved shower and changing facilities at workplaces, there is no reason to believe that cycling and walking trips could not significantly outnumber those completed by private cars over short distances – as they do in the Netherlands. To this end, achieving a Dutch transport mode share (up to 50% of all trips by bicycle and as little as 30% of all trips by car) in these locations requires a level of funding akin to that currently reserved for major road and rail investments like HS2 and Smart Motorways, and a clear long-term commitment that extends well-beyond political cycles.

Whether the current mix of initiatives to support active travel is appropriate, particularly with respect to safety

- 2.24 Safety concerns are the primary reason cited by many people we speak to (including our friends and families!) for not cycling, and more work needs to be done to address these genuine concerns. This anecdotal evidence is borne out by the fact that more than half of respondents (59%) of respondents to the British Social Attitudes Survey 2016: Public attitudes towards transport perceived that roads are too dangerous to cycle on. Clearly more needs to be done to make people believe that cycling is safe to make them consider making cycle journeys. One recent example of a positive scheme to address cycle safety is West Midlands Police's Close Pass road safety scheme which seeks to address dangerous overtaking manoeuvres by drivers. We are pleased that [DfT support is being given to roll this out to more police forces in England](#).

A review of all road traffic offences and penalties was announced in May 2014, which has not yet been carried out. However, a separate review is currently taking place to look at the introduction of new offences for causing death by dangerous cycling – seemingly prompted by [collisions between cyclists and pedestrians that attracted a mainstream media profile](#). Whilst there is clearly a gap in the law which needs to be addressed in relation to dangerous cycling, the vast majority of pedestrian deaths are caused by motor vehicles. [In 2016, 0.7% of the 438 pedestrians killed on roads were caused by cyclists whilst over 99% were as a result of motorists](#). While we acknowledge these proportions are not weighted by the total numbers of trips or distances travelled to determine an incident-rate, the ongoing review does appear to be reactionary and disproportionate.

- 2.25 There has been continued investment in Bikeability for school children in the last decade but the level of children cycling to school is very low - the 2016 National Travel Survey reported in [Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2017](#) indicates that only 3% of all children usually cycle to school. In the Netherlands nearly half (49%) of primary school children cycle to/from school, with the proportion of secondary school children cycling even higher ([Cycling in the Netherlands](#), 2009). ITP views the ability to cycle as being a key life skill, but suggest a better understanding of why continued investment in Bikeability (which has been preserved in relation to other potential cuts in transport funding) is not resulting in greater numbers of children cycling to school. Independent research evidence that explores this issue, and considers behavioural adoption rates in localities with differing socio-demographic, income, and cycle network factors would be beneficial in this regard.

What can be learnt from international approaches in supporting active travel

- 2.26 The UK has a lot to learn from approaches adopted by other countries, such as The Netherlands and Denmark, to increase levels of active travel. In June 2018 we celebrated 20 years of ITP with a study tour of Utrecht in the Netherlands, a city built around people and bikes, but which also prioritises public transport as a functional mobility service and a way of enhancing a sense of place.
- 2.27 Utrecht is a great example of a city that is thriving as a result of embracing active lifestyles. Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport over highways and parking has been incredibly successful at creating a pleasant place to live. Thoughtfully planned walking routes lead you to green corridors and fast, affordable public transport connections. Strategic cycling corridors also take you directly, safely and

easily to the places you want to be. Cycling has become a way of life for all. The young, old, men and women all cycle alongside each other considerately. Cycle parking is 'incredible' in both its sheer scale and user-centred quality of design.

- 2.28 People on bikes do not wear any dedicated 'cycling gear', hopping on and off bikes to make every day journeys. National and local governments have invested considerably, and purposively, in the infrastructure necessary to make cycling a safe and pleasant experience. There is little interaction with the highway, and when there is, people on bikes get priority. At public transport interchanges the provision of high quality wayfinding signage, footpaths, cycle routes and plentiful bike parking makes it easy for travellers to complete the final mile in a calm, efficient and sustainable way.
- 2.29 To achieve similar results where people of all ages make walking and cycling their default choice for short everyday journeys will require continuous, long-term investment in walking and cycling facilities. It can be achieved in the UK but demands a very different approach as to how strategic budgets are allocated towards different modes of travel, and a clear vision of how we want our future towns and cities to look and feel. In summary, if you plan for cars you get cars, if you plan for people you get people.

Whether there are fundamental planning issues which need to be addressed as part of an any approach to active mode travel

- 2.30 Retrofitting new infrastructure into existing towns and cities can be difficult due to constraints on available space. The construction of new towns, residential developments and new infrastructure provides an opportunity to ensure that high quality facilities for active travel are provided from day one, helping to ensure short journeys on foot and by bike are actively encouraged. The principles of designing for active travel are set out in the 2015 [Active Design: Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity](#) which we contributed to along with our sister company, town planning and urban design consultants [David Lock Associates](#). Strategic planning of cycling and walking networks for new developments needs to dovetail with the LCWIP process so that new developments are connected to an improving network of existing routes (often through otherwise impermeable edge-of-town residential and commercial developments) and contribute to the wider network. Ideally, Central and Local Government would work with major development partners and agencies, such as Homes England, to ensure that new growth delivers a walking and cycling network dividend well beyond the 'red lines' of the new development areas.

The issue of poorly maintained local authority roads and the impact that this has on cyclists

- 2.31 The poor condition of roads can pose a danger to existing cyclists, as well as preventing non-cyclists from considering making short journeys by bike. A [2018 survey on cycling](#) by Cycling UK found that 56% of 2,024 respondents reported that poor road conditions, such as roads with potholes, put them off cycling. The survey also found that the top two suggestions which respondents reported would encourage them to cycle more were to provide separate cycle paths away from the roads (45%) and provide segregated bike lanes (45%).
- 2.32 Whilst improving the condition of roads will benefit existing cyclists, and may encourage some new cycling activity, we believe that funding for active travel needs to focus on creating new, high quality, dedicated cycling infrastructure that connects key destinations along segregated or quiet routes. These should improve the quality of the places they pass through by introducing a more filtered level of permeability (essentially, requiring private cars, taxis and private hire vehicles to take the longer route options at the expense of walking, cycling and public transport modes) that supports wider adoption of more active travel modes.

Submission of Evidence: Active Travel



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