

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: [Active travel](#), HC 1487

Monday 17 December 2018

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Lilian Greenwood (Chair); Ruth Cadbury; Robert Courts; Ronnie Cowan; Huw Merriman; Grahame Morris; Graham Stringer; Daniel Zeichner.

Questions 1 - 73

Witnesses

I: Dr Rachel Aldred, Reader in Transport, University of Westminster; Susan Claris, Transport Planner, Arup; and Phil Jones, Chairman, Phil Jones Associates.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Dr Rachel Aldred](#)
- [Phil Jones](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Rachel Aldred, Susan Claris and Phil Jones.

Q1 **Chair:** Welcome, and thank you very much for coming along today. Would you introduce yourselves for the record of our proceedings?

Dr Aldred: I am Rachel Aldred. I am a reader in transport at the University of Westminster.

Susan Claris: I am Susan Claris. I am a transport planner working for Arup. I am also a trustee of Living Streets.

Phil Jones: I am Phil Jones. I am a consultant with my own company, PJA.

Q2 **Chair:** Thank you very much. For everybody who is watching, I bumped into Susan earlier and she has her trainers on, perfect for walking. I know she walked here today.

We want to start by looking at the benefits of active travel. Why should policy makers be trying to increase active travel? Is anybody opposing or promoting active travel?

Dr Aldred: There are so many benefits of increasing active travel and reducing car use. Health is one of the most obvious. We know that we are an increasingly sedentary population. Most people do not get the physical activity they need to stay healthy. We now know that sedentary time is actively bad for you. It is not just that sitting in a car means you are not walking or cycling; you are actively getting less healthy.

Increasingly, health stakeholders, the chief medical officer and so on, are saying that we cannot realistically expect most people to spend time and money they do not have going to the gym several times a week. What they need to do is to build exercise into their daily lives, which means, for instance, walking to work, cycling to the shops and so on.

One of the problems we have is that for decades transport planning has got very good at planning for more and more car trips. It is like turning a tanker around. We have to learn to plan for walking and cycling.

Q3 **Chair:** Phil or Susan, would either of you like to add to that? What are the reasons for promoting active travel, and is there any opposition to it?

Susan Claris: There are two main reasons. As Rachel has just outlined, the positives cross a whole variety of areas for the individual, for public health and mental health and for businesses and the economy. It is across the way. Active travel mitigates the harmful impacts of the really short journeys that are still undertaken by car. One in four trips is less than a mile, and 20% of those are still undertaken by car so they tend to be the very polluting journeys. They are often in local communities. They add noise and pollution. Many could be walked instead. There are the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

benefits on one side and the fact that it actually prevents damage on the other side. There are very strong benefits.

You are entirely right that most people say, "Yes, more walking and more cycling is a great idea." Where there is disagreement is on the stick side of the argument—the disincentives to discourage short trips by car. That is where there is opposition. People do all the nice things but they do not want to be seen to do what could be seen as the negative things.

Q4 Chair: Phil, it is good for our health, for our cities and for the places where we want to live. Is there anything we have missed in terms of why we should be doing more walking and cycling?

Phil Jones: Transport efficiency and space efficiency is important—the physical size. Think of it like people coming into cities wearing a car. With the amount of space being taken up by motorised transport, it is so efficient to walk and cycle in terms of the space that is used. That is really important.

Health seems to overcome what might be seen as the negativity of investing in walking and cycling. It is quite interesting that Transport for London used to run the cycling level of service tool to measure how good a route was for cycling. That drove decision makers, if they were interested in cycling. Having moved over to the healthy streets tool and approach, it seems to capture people's imagination more. Who can argue with being healthier? Even in areas where cycling is not culturally seen as important, they are saying, "Do you want your streets to be healthier places?" That attracts everyone's attention because of air quality, activity and so on.

You asked whether people disagree. I think they do when something is done to make driving less convenient or to take space away from the car. Many times, cycle routes have been planned, but then, for a handful of car parking spaces that might have to be moved, the scheme is shelved. Decision makers find it very hard to do anything that is seen to impact on the willingness of people, perhaps voters, to remove a very small element of provision for cars.

Q5 Chair: I am sure we will want to explore further how you persuade people that it is a good idea and how you deal with that sort of opposition.

Cycling and walking trips across the country have only a very slight increase or are actually on the decrease. Are there differences in those trends in particular locations, or types of location, and are there any clear reasons behind those sorts of trends? Rachel, I am guessing that you might have an insight to offer us.

Dr Aldred: Yes. As you say, Lilian, walking has seen a slight increase, but it is still in the context of longer-term decline. Cycling stages are flat; the number of trip stages by bike has been flat since 2002, despite a



HOUSE OF COMMONS

distance increase. There is not really that much good news in the national picture.

What is interesting is that across the country the trends are quite different. If you take cycling, for instance, there are successes where investment has been made, alongside declines elsewhere. In Bristol, Brighton, Cambridge, London and so on, where there has been political will and money has gone in, we have seen success. But in other places, even small market towns where a lot of trips are conducive to cyclable distances, there is no investment, so the cycling environment is not inviting and decline has continued. Negatively, on a national level it is flat, but positively we have seen that where investment has gone in and changes have been made there has been an increase.

Q6 Chair: Are there any places where change has been made but it has not really worked?

Phil Jones: Stevenage is often cited as a new town that was planned around the cycle, but it was also planned to be extremely convenient to drive around. You have to think of a hierarchy of needs. Why would someone make a trip by walking and cycling? First of all, the place they want to get to has to be within walking and cycling distance. There is a really strong link to land use planning.

Susan can perhaps confirm that one of the reasons we have seen a decline in walking is that, although people are about as likely to walk a trip of a mile as they always were, there are fewer trips of a mile. It is about the additional distance that people travel in their day-to-day journeys to get to shops and schools and for health and employment. It is just less feasible to make those journeys by active travel. With the mixed-use density of cities, it is possible to make short trips to get things you need.

Susan Claris: The other aspect is that so much of the design over the last few decades has been towards the car that we end up with really horrible gyratories and the severance that causes. There are unpleasant crossings, whether they are subways or overbridges. All of those take away from the ability to make trips by active transport.

Q7 Chair: In my own city I can think of quite a few places where uninviting subways have been taken out and replaced with better things. Is that happening across the country, or are we still building things that you would not want to walk through or even cycle through?

Susan Claris: It is getting better in certain places. Generally, it is the devolved authorities and where you have someone to champion walking and cycling; you have someone who really makes the case for it. For example, TfL is doing a lot of great work in removing some of the gyratories and some of the awkward junctions, to improve walking and cycling, but we are still seeing that at a smaller scale.



This year, I have been horrified by the amount of electric vehicle recharging infrastructure that has gone in on the footway. London has good policies—great walking policies and action plans—but at borough level so many boroughs are putting electric vehicle recharging posts almost in the middle of the footway, with trailing cables. That has been one of the worst things to happen for the walking environment, and it has been happening this year. We are still getting it but at a different scale.

Q8 Chair: Every time we say it, we say walking and cycling in the same sentence. Of course they are not the same. Are places that are good for cycling necessarily good for walking? Are there places where improving cycling is decreasing the likelihood of people walking? Are there conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians? I certainly see potential for conflict.

Dr Aldred: One of the things that is quite good about the way policy is developing in London is that where the cycling environment improves there is an aim to improve the walking environment too—for instance, by taking the opportunity to change crossings from staggered crossings to single-stage pedestrian crossings, and vice versa. Where you improve things for walking, you try also to do so for cycling. I do not think it necessarily has to be the case, but it is quite natural for it to be.

We want to give people more choices about how they travel. Sometimes people might make a journey on foot, by bike or by public transport. It is about enabling all those things so that people have more choice of sustainable modes.

Phil Jones: It depends on how it is done. Clearly the last resort should be to take space away from pedestrians to provide for cycling. It should be about road space reallocation and taking space from motorised transport, which is politically difficult in some places. In some places, there may be over-provision of pedestrian space and it may not be unreasonable to take an element of it for cycling, but clearly it would not be desirable to do that.

In the earlier conversation, I was thinking about the reasons why people cycle. If you go to cities like Copenhagen and look at surveys as to why they cycle, they cycle for entirely practical reasons. People do not cycle for the good of the planet. They cycle because it is quicker, cheaper, more convenient and more pleasant. People are inherently selfish. We need to get those things right and make it easy to do the right thing, not difficult. It should not be a challenge to make a journey on foot or cycle; it should be a pleasure. That is what we need to move towards.

Q9 Grahame Morris: I am fascinated by hybrid electric bicycles. Have they made much of a difference in usage? Phil, you mentioned the viability of journeys of a mile or so and I wondered whether they would be practical. They are a fairly recent innovation in terms of the numbers on the market.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Phil Jones: There is evidence that people are quite happy to make longer journeys once they have electric assist.

Dr Aldred: There is increasingly good evidence from Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and so on. We are talking about pedelec bikes where people have to pedal but they get a boost. They can really help people to make longer trips, but also for older people, disabled people and older women, in particular, they expand people's range of what is possible.

With colleagues, I did some work for the Department for Transport looking at the potential for cycling in this country. There is strong potential for cycling. We found that in some areas that are more rural and hillier it will make a large difference potentially, but it is important that we get the infrastructure and the cycling environment right because e-bikes have not taken off here yet. The kind of people who might be cycling on e-bikes are older people or women—people who are currently under-represented in cycling. It is really important that they feel comfortable. They want to be in a safe cycling environment, so we need both, but I think they will be helpful.

Q10 **Chair:** We have lots more questions, but to give us a bit of a feel for where we are going, could each of you, speaking from your different backgrounds, give us three key messages you would like the Committee to come away with at the end of today's session?

Susan Claris: For me, it would be the importance of walking. We said that walking and cycling are different. The challenge is that, when people talk about active transport or think about it, they tend to think more on the cycling side and not the walking side. People think they understand cycling more because you need infrastructure. They can understand cycle lanes, or parking at offices or whatever. It needs kit, whereas with walking you already have the footwear and you just put one foot in front of the other, so what is the big deal?

Walking tends to be very much neglected both as a mode of transport in its own right and as a component of virtually every other mode. It can provide the important last mile/first mile for public transport. People driving walk at some point as well. My message would be the importance of walking and the fact that it actually needs prominence.

Q11 **Chair:** You can have two more if you want.

Susan Claris: I will stick with just one for the time being.

Dr Aldred: I might have three, if that is all right. First, and we are going to get on to this, we have a process for producing local cycling and walking infrastructure plans in England outside London, which is pretty good but it needs to be backed with investment. If there is no investment, it will die a death, which is a real shame because it is a good technical process.



The second point is that we are getting updated guidance on cycling infrastructure soon, and we need updated guidance on walking. In particular, following Susan's point, some of the research I have been doing has shown that reducing motor traffic in neighbourhoods, which was done more as a cycling intervention than a walking intervention, had a stronger impact on walking. There are things we can do that will lead to a noticeable increase in walking and benefit both modes.

Finally, we need more active travel expertise at DFT, to share information and ensure that we know what the process for local cycling and walking infrastructure plans is across the country, and to create a centre for monitoring and evaluation so that we can share good practice. We often struggle because one of the political problems is that we do not know if it will work here; it works over there in the Netherlands or in Germany, but what about here? There are good examples here, but people do not necessarily know about them yet because expertise is not shared. Those are my three points.

Q12 **Chair:** Phil, what are your three?

Phil Jones: I managed to put in some written evidence late in the day. I put three points in there, so I had better talk to those. One is about the need for consistent funding and support. I have tied it to the LCWIP process we are involved in as a company. It is working quite well but it is early days.

Investment has gone into supporting local authorities to produce those plans, and that is all well and good, but there is a danger that, if all we do is plan, we get paralysis by analysis and nothing ever happens. There is a real opportunity to provide some funding to make the schemes coming out of the LCWIP process, which are evidence based. Where are the interventions that will get more people walking and cycling, and get the schemes funded and demonstrate that they actually achieve that?

We only have one chance to do those schemes for the first time. What I have found when talking to local authorities that are engaged on them is that sometimes officers have had to make quite a strong case internally to get their senior officers to allow them to spend time producing these things. If, at the end of it, there is no actual money that comes out for them, the view might be, "Well, that was a tremendous waste of time and resources."

From the profession's point of view, if I can speak to my own profession, asking people to invest time in skilling up and learning about this is only going to happen if they can personally see a future in it. If a young civil engineer thinks, "I can see a future in traffic signal engineering," we can all be pretty confident that there is going to be investment in traffic signals for the next 50 years. If cycling and walking is very much a short-term thing, why would I invest my time and improve my skill levels to do that?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The second point is new developments. As a practice, we do quite a lot of work for new developments. Certainly for cycling, the level and quality of provision that goes in is pretty poor. Local highway and planning authorities do not have the skills to know what good looks like, so we have to deal with that.

My third area is to think about changes to rules and regulations. We can look at infrastructure in the Netherlands, Denmark or Germany and say, "Of course, we can make that here," but the infrastructure is designed around a set of rules and behaviours. We have to be willing to think about the Highway Code, regulations and the law. Sometimes, we might have to tweak those things to get efficient infrastructure designs that work as well as they do in other countries. Being open-minded to that is an important step.

Q13 Chair: It would be the case in a lot of places that the transport authority will not be the same as the planning authority. Is there lack of knowledge and expertise in some planning authorities, particularly when they do not have a highways and transport function?

Phil Jones: Even in unitary authorities the planning authority is legally quite different from the highway authority, and they often do not talk to each other very well. It is more difficult in two-tier authorities, but even in unitaries it is not always perfect, although it is probably better. Highway and transport authorities are multi-headed, so sometimes there is a very good section in a highway authority that may be responsible for active travel, and gets it, but an entirely different set of staff is dealing with development control and may have a different mindset and a different skillset. We see that internal conflict in some authorities.

There is a huge levelling up that needs to be done around new developments. Of course, the development industry might be lobbying against spending additional money on good active travel. I made a point in my note about transport assessments and what drives the investment that is required or the public sector ask of developers. It is driven by the transport assessment, and there is now no national Government guidance on transport assessments to speak of. It was withdrawn in 2014, and there is a huge gap. What tends to happen is that decision makers are mostly concerned about traffic congestion from new developments, and the standard answer is to make roads bigger so that they can be satisfied that there will be no congestion.

If you overestimate the amount of motor traffic from a development, to err on the side of caution, you are less likely to have the room to put in decent cycling and walking infrastructure. There is a huge issue around new developments. In my view, the whole system needs careful attention.

Chair: Thank you. We are now going to look at some of the obstacles to active travel.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q14 **Huw Merriman:** I will start by looking at travel for short distances. It tends predominantly to be the domain of public transport and the car. What is stopping people travelling by cycle or walking? I am sure there is lots of potential, but is the key to make the car less attractive or cycling and walking more attractive; or is it a bit of both?

Dr Aldred: In the research evidence, people are generally agreed that a mix of carrot and stick is needed. You must consider the need to combine them as well, because potentially if you just use sticks people will feel it is unfair that they do not have a decent opportunity to make other choices.

The positive side, at least, is that it is quite hard to provide carrots without also providing sticks in this regard. If you put in a bus lane, the space has to come from somewhere. If you provide new formal pedestrian crossings, the time has to come from somewhere. In practice, when we make things better for walking and cycling, we are often taking space or time away from other modes, as was mentioned, ideally the car. Every time walking and cycling is made more attractive and the car is made less attractive, it will potentially make people start considering using those other modes.

Susan Claris: The real challenge is car ownership. Once you have a car, the tendency is to use it for every journey, particularly if your car is parked on your drive or right outside your house and you have your car keys in your pocket. It takes quite a lot to not drive the car. It is interesting and depressing that we are now buying more cars and using them less. The average car does 7,800 miles a year, which is 21 miles a day. It used to be 10,000 or 12,000 miles. We have more cars on the road but we are using them less, which means that they are spending more time parked, largely on residential streets, taking away precious space that could be used for walking and cycling.

The fixed costs of motoring are so high that once you have gone to the expense of buying the car, and paying the depreciation and all the annual costs of insurance and maintenance, you are going to use that car as much as possible to justify its purchase. For me, that is the real barrier. If there was road pricing, particularly in urban areas for short journeys, it would obviously have to cover its cost, but maybe the cost would not have to be that high to nudge people to think about it.

If you look at the example of the tax on plastic bags, 5p as a percentage of the cost of the food shopping you are putting in the bag is hardly anything, but it has had a really dramatic impact. As long as the fixed costs of motoring are so much higher than the variable costs, once you have a car you will use it. That is the big challenge.

Phil Jones: Increasingly in many cities, driving is pretty unattractive anyway. If you can provide a good alternative, people could cycle. In London, it is the fastest way to get around the city. If we could allocate some space so that people feel comfortable making those journeys, on



HOUSE OF COMMONS

foot as well, you would naturally see that. We do not have to disincentivise driving. Congestion does that anyway but in a very inefficient way. It would be much better to price out congestion, but, in the absence of that, that could happen.

With some authorities we see renewed willingness to think about road pricing, but for air quality reasons and health reasons. Again, that seems to be the motivation to rethink that.

- Q15 Huw Merriman:** I will use a personal example. I spent the weekend in Cambridge. I took my bike down in my car. It is a joy to cycle around Cambridge. It is an absolute nightmare to drive around it. That worked quite well for me because I was there to cycle. Is that the sort of model? Effectively, do we need to design badly for the car and then people will not be able to tolerate it and they will switch to a bike?

Phil Jones: Let it naturally happen. You must stop trying to design or build your way out of congestion, which is impossible. People will just fill up to intolerable levels of congestion again. If we stopped doing that and began to increase the capacity and quality of active travel, naturally people would begin to do that.

Susan Claris: It is congestion and parking. People will only drive their car if they have somewhere to park it at the other end. To use another example, Oxford has had very strong policies to remove parking from the centre of the city. In conjunction with that, it introduced its park and ride scheme and other measures. Most people would not even think of driving into Oxford; they know that they will not be able to park their car because parking is prohibitively expensive.

- Q16 Huw Merriman:** I want to ask about road safety. Again this comes down to perception. It is often said that people are not cycling because of road safety, but when we look at the national travel survey, yes, road safety as a common barrier to cycling was at 18%, but too much traffic and traffic going too fast was 12%. In the middle was not owning a bike, at 18%, which is pretty tragic. Quicker to go by car was at 16%. Being too busy was at 15%. Got a car was 14% and general lack of interest was 14%.

That would seem to suggest that people are either too lazy to do it and cannot be bothered, or actually that the car is very convenient. It is not safety, but if we dress it up as safety we could end up making it worse. We are almost saying to people, "Unless you have lovely cycle lanes everywhere it is not safe to cycle." To me, that is counter-intuitive to getting people out on their bike.

Dr Aldred: I would not necessarily place too much weight on the kind of survey evidence that gets people to separate things in that way. There is a lot of evidence looking at people's everyday experience of cycling. The problem is that the everyday experience of cycling makes people scared. I do not think that is something we are making up.



The injuries are the tip of the iceberg. The national travel survey also shows us that there are seven times as many injuries to cyclists as get reported in the police injury statistics. Looking at near misses, I found that somebody who cycles on a regular basis might have a very scary incident once a week. I do not think that is acceptable, even if they do not actually get injured in those incidents. There is a road culture of everyday incivility towards people cycling, and towards people walking, that puts people off. It does not feel safe or protected; it does not feel attractive. I think that is a real feeling.

Q17 Huw Merriman: I would just challenge you there, Dr Aldred. You talked about market towns. I lived in a village on the outskirts of a town. I cycled to school every single day from a very early age. There was no cycle lane—just down the hill, bombing off. I cycled around in London for years before it got put into cycle lanes.

Do you feel there is a danger in more cycle lanes, in that if you see a cycle lane you can cycle, but no cycle lane means do not cycle because it is not safe? That is what I am getting at.

Dr Aldred: I am glad you felt able to cycle. Me too. It is a shame that most people did not, though. We were the outliers; most people did not feel safe and able to cycle. Some people worry that putting in cycle tracks will make driver behaviour worse. I would say try cycling in the Netherlands where there is no cycle track. It is much pleasanter than cycling here. One of the benefits of putting in good cycling infrastructure—the analogy works for walking too—is that it says cyclists matter and that we care about cyclists. It says, “We do not expect you to mix with the motor traffic on the Embankment. We have put in something to keep you safe and make you feel comfortable.” To me, that is effective in helping to change driver perception and create a message that cyclists matter and that you should treat cyclists better. It will be a long cultural process, but we have started.

Phil Jones: In terms of the segregation of a population, there are some people who will never be interested. They would never choose to make a bike journey and have no interest in it. They love driving their car and they are the outliers. Then you have people like us who are unusual because we are willing to cycle in traffic. We are completely unrepresentative of the majority. Then there is a huge block in the middle—probably 60% of the population—who are interested but scared.

At the moment, they would say, “Yes, I quite like the idea.” If they go to Center Parcs with their family, it is beautiful and pleasant, or maybe they go to Cambridge or hire a bike to go round Hyde Park, and that is lovely, but to go out to Marble Arch, absolutely no way. They would never do that. The target market is people who are interested but scared. That is where infrastructure to reduce traffic danger, or the perception of danger, which is probably more important, is the biggest win in getting an increase in take-up.



Susan Claris: The perception side is hugely important. If you talk to a lot of people about cycling in London, for example, they will say that it is dangerous. Their view that it is dangerous is because every time there is a cyclist fatality it is on the front page of the *Standard*. It is big news, whereas, thankfully, the numbers who die from cycle collisions in London are relatively low. People perceive it as very unsafe, in the same way as people perceive a car journey as much quicker than walking or cycling, whereas actually it is often not the case. Unless people have the evidence in front of them, they think, "Oh, it is quicker or safer," and that is why they make the choices they do.

Q18 **Huw Merriman:** It comes back to the survey. My concern is that experts say there is a real perception of danger. The statistics I mentioned seemed to suggest that that was not the key driver. It is actually that the car is more convenient: "I don't have a bike so I don't have an interest." It is whether we are perpetuating that perception by talking it up too much.

Phil Jones: It varies from journey to journey. Clearly I do not make all my journeys by bike; I make some of them by bike and sometimes I drive. It depends on the journey you are making and its length. Sometimes it is clearly too far, and sometimes it is at just the right level for a walking journey. Just to have a snapshot and say, "That is the evidence," is not right. It is very much about the experience of making a particular journey and the right mode for that journey. For the moment, many people would not even consider cycling even though it would be the right mode for the journey.

Dr Aldred: We have to make it comfortable for them. There is no point saying to people, "You're unlikely to get killed cycling in a bus lane or cycling with HGVs." People do not want to do it, so we have to create a cycling environment where they want to do it, and they feel safe and they are happy to let their kids cycle.

Q19 **Huw Merriman:** Working on that basis, if we promote and see an increase in more active travel, is there a danger that the consequence will be more casualties?

Dr Aldred: Not if we do it right. If we follow the model set by Copenhagen, and Denmark more broadly, they had a substantial increase in cycling, and cycling casualties fell. We have not got that right yet, but if we look to the good examples and to places that have a lot of cycling and where cycling is safe, in places like Copenhagen and the Netherlands, we can do that. There is no reason why we cannot.

Phil Jones: There is the so-called safety in numbers effect. It is a little bit controversial, but some people feel that safety in numbers means that, if you have more cycling, the safer it gets per journey. There is a perception that sometimes that argument might be made to say that you do not need the infrastructure and all you need to do is get more cyclists. For me, it is linked. You will get more cyclists if you provide the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

infrastructure. Once you provide the infrastructure, the fact that there are more cyclists means that drivers are more aware of them. More drivers will be cyclists and will see themselves as that person. It generally raises the perception.

Cambridge is a very safe place to cycle, and there are high levels of cycling. There is evidence to show that, as the proportion of cycle journeys increases, the risk per trip goes down. We have to be alive to that. It is well attested.

Q20 Ruth Cadbury: Phil, you have just answered my question. Is there evidence for that? I have heard it anecdotally, but are you saying there is evidence that the more people ride bikes, the more considerate the driving culture is?

Dr Aldred: I do not think there is necessarily evidence for that. There is evidence that, in places where there is more cycling, cycling is safer. The mechanisms for that happening, as Phil was hinting, are still not totally clear.

Phil Jones: Back in 2013, with John Dales of Urban Movement, we did a piece of work for TfL on international benchmarking. We went to lots of different cities to experience the cycling culture and it helped Transport for London to produce its current cycle design guide. This is a personal view, but both John and I took the view that, in the places we went where cycle levels were higher, we felt safer. We felt that drivers were more courteous. That is very much a personal view. I have not seen any evidence, and it would be quite a hard thing to test, but I feel that is true. Oddly, I feel safer in central London than outer London.

Dr Aldred: It is not oddly; you are safer.

Phil Jones: Yes, because cycle levels are lower and drivers are not used to seeing people on bikes.

Q21 Ruth Cadbury: And traffic speeds are slow.

Phil Jones: Yes.

Q22 Chair: Everybody always talks about Copenhagen and Amsterdam. Obviously they are very good examples. I do not know Portland, Oregon very well, but obviously it is in the States, which, as a generalisation, has more of a car culture. What is the experience of how they have changed the culture and got more cyclists? Are there the same things as in Europe, or is it different? Is there anything interesting to learn from their culture that we could import and that might be different?

Dr Aldred: I get particularly inspired by some of the examples from all over the world where they have some of the political policy and past dependency challenges that we have. Examples of the infrastructure in Copenhagen or the Netherlands are very inspiring, but in how we get there, some of the struggles that places have had to go through to get



stuff in is more similar to what we experience. We have more challenges than the Netherlands.

Portland is quite specific. It has a specific alternative history and culture. I would give the example of Seville, which does not have a tradition of cycling. It was 2%, and they got it up to around 8% or 9% within a few years by building infrastructure really quickly, putting in a bike hire scheme and slowing down or restricting traffic in the centre. They did that stuff quickly.

We talk about rain and being a bit cold, but if you have been to Seville in the summer you will know that it is really hot. In that context, people said, "People won't cycle in Seville—it's too hot; we've never cycled," but they have tripled or quadrupled cycling in just a few years. The infrastructure they put in works. It is not the best infrastructure in the world but it keeps cyclists away from motor traffic. They took space from parked cars, and what they did was good enough. That is inspiring.

Phil Jones: That is right. Seville was one of the cities we went to in the study. We also went to New York. New York had done so-called light segregation where, instead of just a painted lane, you put in some very cheap obstacles such as planters or reflective poles—something physical that gives an extra degree of comfort. Studies we have done for TfL show that cyclists value that, even if it is a rubber block. It is something physical that means that drivers are much more likely to keep out of their space. It can be done at a tenth of the cost and much more quickly than the kind of infrastructure that has been done in Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Of course, once you have claimed the space, as happened in New York, when you have the money you can come back a few years later and do something permanent and attractive.

Dr Aldred: Some of those interventions have worked quite well for walking too. They have reclaimed public space, squares and so on.

Q23 **Chair:** That is what I was going to ask. Where are the great examples of places that have been designed, or changed, to make them much more walking friendly?

Susan Claris: In a lot of the places it shows that they have been doing it for a long time. One that is held up is Pontevedra in Spain. It is not a huge city, but large parts of the centre were pedestrianised in about 1999, so they have 20 years' experience. It is taking cars out and giving the space back to people. Now they have things like increasing numbers of children there, whereas areas nearby are suffering population decline, particularly of the young population.

Whether it is the Copenhagen or the Amsterdams, they have not just started doing it. There is often the quote, "But we are not like Amsterdam." Well, Amsterdam was not like Amsterdam in the 1970s. It



HOUSE OF COMMONS

is the same with Freiburg in Germany. A decision was taken 30, 40 or 50 years ago to go in the other direction, at a time we were making decisions to plan more for cars and for cars to be dominant in town centres. Pontevedra is small but great for walking. Zurich is always regarded as one of the most walkable cities, despite the weather conditions, and has been doing it for a long time.

There are some newer examples of what can be achieved. Leicester, for example, is doing a lot for active travel, for walking and cycling. There are changes happening, and inevitably when it involves removing certain parts of highway infrastructure it takes quite a bit of time.

Q24 Chair: That prompts a question about trade-offs. Coincidentally, we went to Leicester as part of our buses inquiry. One of the things we heard was that the park and ride services do not go into the city centre. I know Leicester a little bit, and one of the concerns about pedestrianisation is that, if you push the buses further out, you make it more difficult for people who perhaps cannot walk very far and want to be able to get off the bus and be right in the city centre. Is that a problem?

Phil Jones: There is a tension. Someone spoke about Liverpool. When Liverpool ONE, the shopping centre, was created, they said that because of concern about ram-raiding they could not have any streets with motor vehicles on them, so, in quite a large chunk of the city, there is no access for buses or taxis. There is concern that that has led to loss of accessibility for people with disabilities.

It is clearly an issue. We did some work in Oxford recently. Oxford now has a bus traffic problem. It has so prioritised the bus that it has bus congestion, and because of lack of regulation it cannot control the number of buses coming in. That is a really difficult nut to crack as well.

Susan Claris: It is a question of balance. There will never be a single mode that answers everybody's transport needs in a place. It is having an amount of balance. If vehicles are allowed in, it is about restricting the types of vehicles and making sure that they travel at a slow enough speed. That way, people and traffic, whether bicycles, cars or buses, can mix. It is a question of balance.

Chair: We have talked a lot about specific places. I suppose the hint is at local authorities, but now we want to look at the role of central Government.

Q25 Robert Courts: I remind the Committee that I am a Cycling UK member. I want to ask about the role of central Government, which the Chair has alluded to. In particular, what evidence is there that central Government can increase rates of cycling and walking? We have talked about local authorities, but what about central Government?

Susan Claris: They can do a lot in terms of overarching policies. DfT can do so in a number of ways, such as in the advice it gives local authorities. It could give advice or guidance on travel plans as to how they can make



HOUSE OF COMMONS

transport assessments, and how they can promote and look more at using active transport. It has a role in policy setting. It has a role in guidance. It has a role in just setting an example. DFT has a lot to do. The trouble is that it is not perceived as having that role.

Q26 Robert Courts: It has a role, but what about evidence that it has worked in the past? Do you have examples here or elsewhere of something where that has happened?

Dr Aldred: There is evidence from the cycling cities and towns programme that the cities that were successful over a couple of rounds, with a concentrated amount of funding delivered through a ring-fenced funding stream over a longer period, were the ones that succeeded in increasing levels of active travel. There were a lot of problems with that programme, but it was effective in places that got a sustained amount of money over a sustained amount of time. That is a good example of what Government could be doing.

Phil Jones: As I mentioned, having a ring-fenced fund is important. It is interesting that Highways England has a designated fund for cycling, and that is beginning to have an effect. Highways England is getting its policies in line. The latest policies from DFT talk about freeing up that investment so that Highways England can begin to use its funds not just on the narrow corridor of the strategic road network but can engage with local authorities in their LCWIP programme to see where investment can be spread beyond the trunk road network and into the wider area. But that is happening because there is a designated fund, and Highways England is required to spend it on cycling. In road investment period two, the indication is that the cycling label on that will be lost and it will become an integrated fund. There is a danger that it is going to go slightly backwards, so we have to be careful.

For me, continuity of funding is the biggest thing DFT can do. When the cycle city ambition grant cities were given a second round of funding by the then Deputy Prime Minister, there were squeals from cities outside those eight. But it was the right decision because of continuity. In the case of Birmingham, their first round of money was spent on canal towpaths, which had some effect, but Birmingham spread their money very thin, whereas other authorities focused on some key routes to make a difference. In the second round, Birmingham said, "Okay, now we're going to do a couple of cycle superhighways." They are on the ground being built, and we will see that begin to make a difference.

Dr Aldred: But only eight cities are getting funded, and it will not feed through into a national change.

Susan Claris: The DFT also has a role on speed limits. It could be by setting 20 mph speed limits in urban built-up areas and, particularly for walking, banning pavement parking. It is absolutely crucial that those things actually happen.



Q27 Robert Courts: A lot of that is direct central Government funding. What about other ways the Government might influence? The cycle to work tax exemption scheme is one example that encourages people to shift. It is modal shift from cars to cycles. I am also thinking about what other slightly out-of-the-box things we can think about. For example, I live eight miles outside Oxford, and until I was elected here I used to practise what we are all preaching. I used to cycle from where I live to the centre of Oxford, where I used to practise as a barrister.

A lot of people did that, but it is very much reliant on things like having somewhere secure to store a bike, because cycle theft is very high in Oxford, or employers co-operating with providing changing areas, shower facilities and things like that, so that the entire process is possible, otherwise you are forced off cycling and back on to buses. That is something else—looking at tax exemptions to get people out of cars and on to bikes. What about employers co-operating with making it possible to live your working life with a bike at the beginning and end of each day?

Phil Jones: That is important. Of course, in new employment developments, the planning system has a role to play to make sure that showers and cycle parking are delivered as part of the new development. That is all really important, but primarily Government have the role of setting the policy framework, as Susan said. It is not just direct funding. It is also political leadership.

The Government have talked about a cycling and walking champion, which is a good thing. In Manchester, Chris Boardman has made a huge difference. Political leadership to take the tough decisions is important. Anything that Government can do to encourage that, and demonstrate that cycling and walking are completely valid and normal means of transport, should be supported. Anything that can be done to achieve that and to remove cycling from the sports arena into the everyday transport arena is important.

Susan Claris: It is about sharing information and good practice as well. Recent evidence from TfL was that people who travelled to work by active means have 27% fewer absenteeism days, which is a really convincing argument. If you said to most businesses, "I could reduce your absenteeism by a quarter," they would want to know how to do that, but it is not part of their decision making when they are thinking about maybe putting in some cycle lockers, some parking or a drying area. One of the 50 actions included in the cycling/walking investment strategy that has just come out is to have meetings with businesses.

It is important to share information like that and to show that if your employees travel by active modes they will be healthier, happier, more creative and more productive. There are sound business reasons why businesses should cater for that. It should not be seen as negative.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Phil Jones: In terms of knowledge sharing and technical leadership, for a few years the Government have had the Cycle Proofing Working Group, which I sit on, but I have to say that it has not had a huge impact. We have done our best and we meet every three or four months. We make recommendations and we produced a web page a few years ago with some good case studies, but it has not had huge investment put into it. There could be a much stronger role for people on that, and it could be a wider group.

One of the things I have suggested in the past is a Design and Review Panel. I do not know if people understand how design review works, but Highways England has a design and review panel, which is an independent set of people. It is quite a common process around new developments. CABE supports it. It has been supported for many years. The expertise is not there at the moment in the profession, so we have a pool of people who can review schemes, whether or not they are just general highway schemes.

An important point is that we have to embed the requirement to design for walking and cycling not just when we do cycling and walking schemes but every time we do a set of traffic signals or a roundabout. Any new road has to be cycle-proofed. That is the term that is used. I am not convinced it is the best term. If something is waterproofed, you are trying to shed water.

If cycle proofing is to be taken seriously, we need to embed it in everyday decision making and the designs that highway authorities do, or consultants working for developers, and there needs to be technical leadership. The bones are there with the Cycle Proofing Working Group, but a bit more investment and support to do outreach work would make a big difference.

Q28 **Robert Courts:** You mentioned the cycling and walking investment strategy; thank you. Let us look at that a bit more. Do you think the targets are ambitious enough? Would you like to see more?

Susan Claris: For walking, the targets are not ambitious enough. There were more ambitious targets for cycling. I said at the start that I am a trustee of Living Streets. Living Streets has campaigned for more ambitious targets for walking. The view is that they are made too low so that they can be met. The main target was around children walking to school and was actually to halt the decline in walking. Halting a decline is not a cry to get out there and do more. There could be more ambitious targets for walking.

Dr Aldred: The ambitious target for cycling is in grave danger of not being met. As I mentioned, cycling journey stages have been flat since 2002, so we are aiming to double them by 2025 after being flat for a long time. To put that into context, it is the kind of increase in cycling we have seen in London with all the leadership, all the investment and so on. To be honest, we need that across the country to be able to deliver the



target, rather than just funding eight major cities. We do not currently have the dedicated investment to go with the target.

Q29 Robert Courts: If the strategy is reviewed, what would you like to see? You have made comments about walking, but how would you like to see the strategy laid out if it is reviewed?

Susan Claris: It is a balance. You do not want a target that you stand no chance of meeting, but it would need to be more ambitious than just halting the decline. I would like it to look particularly at the number of short journeys, so that it increased the percentage of short journeys done by active modes. The other side of the coin would be decreasing the number of short trips done by cars. They are one and the same, but it is realising that those two go together.

Phil Jones: We could have more intelligent targets as well. It is interesting that the Mayor's transport strategy in London has a headline figure for motorised journeys, but the targets differ between outer London and inner London. They have analysed what the potential is. Obviously, it is difficult for the DFT to do that, but the heart of the LCWIP process is looking at potential journeys. It is not looking at where existing journeys are being made by cycling and walking; it is looking at the short car trips that could be made by cycling. That will identify the potential.

By aggregating those things, it might be possible to inform some more intelligent targets. What would be a reasonable target for a market town with a certain population? What would be a reasonable target for an inner-city location? Then we could build up something based more around evidence.

Dr Aldred: The Propensity to Cycle Tool will do that.

Phil Jones: Yes, absolutely.

Q30 Robert Courts: What about the partnership between local government and national Government? What is the set of tools that national Government have given local government to encourage them in cycling and walking investment strategies and infrastructure plans—those sorts of things? What more could we see there?

Phil Jones: Rachel can speak to the Propensity to Cycle Tool, which has been a fantastic thing. A set of tools has been given and they are being trialled now on the first round of LCWIPs. There is a learning process going on and they will be improved.

Through that process, if it continues and if the funding is there to make sure that it continues, we will begin to get a virtuous circle of trying things, learning from them and doing better. The LCWIPs are not meant to be one-off things. They are not meant to be one study that covers a whole area. It could be done for a market town; it could be done for a village; it could be done for a segment of a city. We might invest some



HOUSE OF COMMONS

money in a scheme, monitor it and learn from it. Then, in another few years, we will refresh the plans.

Dr Aldred: We have some quite good technical guidance now. Phil's point about looking at cycling and walking potential is really important. It is looking at where trips could increase and not just where trips are currently being made. The gap is the funding gap. The local cycling and walking infrastructure plans need to be tied to funding being available for those that meet certain quality thresholds.

We can learn from the process in London with the mini-Hollands. It is quite interesting. Transport for London made funding available for mini-Hollands for outer-London boroughs. Suddenly, outer-London boroughs were interested in walking and cycling, and all but one of them put in a bid. Okay, not all of them were amazing, but it started getting the interest going. They started to plan; they started to say, "This is what we would like, cycling and walking." Now we have three mini-Holland boroughs.

A number of other outer-London boroughs have upped their game for walking and cycling and are now putting in bids to other funding streams, and you have that virtuous circle there. It was not just about making plans; it was also that funding was available. If funding is available for local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, it will encourage a lot of authorities to get the process finished. The guidance came out 20 months ago. I am not sure what point many local authorities are at.

Phil Jones: I can answer that because we were involved in it. We will start to see some plans coming out in 2019 through the spring and summer. The crucial thing is what happens to the plan. If it is just a plan and sits on the shelf, it has been a complete waste of time. It has to lead quickly into actual schemes on the ground. That will build confidence that these things are worth doing and spending time on.

Q31 **Ruth Cadbury:** If Government policy is permissive and encouraging, is there a risk that we get a bigger and bigger differential between the cities and towns that are actively pursuing funding and going for competitive bids and those that are not? Is there something Government policy could do to change that?

Dr Aldred: I agree; it is a tension. The trouble is that one problem we have historically had in this country is that sometimes funding for cycling and walking has not been spent well. It has been spent on things that have not improved walking and cycling. We do not want to do that. We do not want to give money to authorities that are not necessarily going to spend it well.

On the other hand, I am very worried that there is a three-tier or more situation developing, where metropolitan authorities have more money and so on, down to market towns. That is why making a generous amount of ring-fenced funding available through the LCWIP process is the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

answer. It encourages authorities to plan. They know that funding is available. They know that support is available, but they also know that they need to meet a certain quality threshold and they will not get it if they just say, "Oh, we're going to do something for cycling and walking," but in practice it does not meet any of the standards. It is finessing that and making money available, but also making it clear that you have to do something good.

Susan Claris: I agree, but the flip side is the DFT's role in looking at things like speed limits and national road pricing. That would be an absolute game changer in increasing active transport. Those are decisions that cannot so easily be devolved to local authorities. The DFT should take a real leadership role in achieving them, otherwise you will get a differential between the larger metropolitans and the smaller market towns.

Q32 **Ruth Cadbury:** Is it just that one layer of local government is much better at it than others, or is it that actually it does not matter which level of local government it is or which size of area, but that some are up for it and others are not? That is what I was trying to get at. Is there a role for national Government policy to be more overt?

Phil Jones: Absolutely, there could be. You see it in Wales, which has the Active Travel (Wales) Act, whereby they require every local authority to produce a plan. Interestingly, again because of lack of funding, that has not been as transformative as you might imagine. A lot of people have gone through the plan-making process and nothing has come out at the other end. That has been recognised by the Welsh Government. They are now beginning to put some ring-fenced funding in, and, hopefully, we will see that happen.

The political will needs to be there to force local authorities to produce an LCWIP in the same way as it is not an option for a local authority not to provide schools or hospitals; they have to do those things.

Dr Aldred: It is both. There is both a political will issue and a capacity issue. Some of the smaller authorities struggle; the fact that there have been funding streams for larger cities for some time means that they struggle more.

Susan Claris: With the large authorities, particularly London, it is having responsibility for all aspects of transport. As soon as you get to smaller areas where there is far less influence over bus services, for example, which are also an important part of active transport, it is much harder to plan. In London, where Transport for London has responsibility for all aspects of transport, it is possible to look at it in a joined-up way. In smaller areas, there are two-tier authorities, and private bus operators and train services as well. It makes it very difficult to plan to bring all those things together.

Q33 **Daniel Zeichner:** Apologies for missing the earlier part of the meeting.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Prime Minister was speaking for quite a long time.

I have two questions. One is on walking. People sometimes say to me that public seating is an issue, especially the lack of it in some shopping centres and the privatised areas of public space. Similarly, how much of an obstacle is cycle parking, or the lack of it, do you think?

Susan Claris: On the walking side, the provision of seating is phenomenally important, as are other facilities such as drinking fountains and public toilets. They are all part of what is needed to make a civilised town or city, and to promote active transport. With an increasingly ageing population, if people are to get to local shops and local neighbourhood centres, they quite often need somewhere to rest, whether it is young children or an ageing population.

One of the challenges is that as soon as you start talking to people about seating they start talking about public order—"You will encourage loitering"—and it is seen as a negative, which is sad. There are instances of seating being taken away for that reason. It is a very important part of local journeys and an asset for people.

Dr Aldred: There are different aspects to cycle parking. Residential cycle parking can be a problem for people, particularly in shared housing and flats. Maybe repurposing cycle parking or pram sheds on estates, or building new communal cycle storage, would be helpful.

Q34 **Chair:** Phil, could you say a bit more about the Welsh experience and what the lessons are? Where is it in the process and are there any lessons at this stage that we can learn from Wales?

Phil Jones: The first time round having a fund was lacking. Interestingly, the LCWIP process was largely modelled on the active travel guidance that had been brought forward in Wales. There is a process whereby England and Wales inform each other as it goes on.

The process for producing the maps, which are statutory, was made over-complex. The LCWIP guidance is much less prescriptive. To some extent, perhaps the Welsh made it too bureaucratic and legalistic. That is the downside, but obviously the advantage is that it is comprehensive so we can learn from it.

The other thing about Wales is that one of the things that was made a statutory responsibility of highway authorities was that, when they discharged their general duties of building new roads and maintaining roads, they were meant to take every opportunity to make things better for walking and cycling. That was trying to drive the idea of cycle proofing, so that it is not just that when you have some money you spend it on walking and cycling. It is that whatever you do, you try to make things better. That is something the profession and decision makers have struggled with. There are some slightly embarrassing examples where the Welsh Government themselves brought forward trunk road schemes, yet cycling and walking groups have objected to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

them because they have not made proper provision for walking and cycling, in direct contradiction of their own statutory guidance and an Act of the Welsh Government.

We have learned that the sheer task of overturning the inertia of the profession is hard. People who design roundabouts have been designing roundabouts for the whole of their career. They do it in a certain way with certain radii and widths and all the rest of, it based on national guidance. They are awful for cycling and walking.

Large roundabouts are the most dangerous form of junction for people on a cycle because of the speed of traffic and the difficulty of merging and all the rest of it. Yet up and down the country, day in, day out, people are designing roundabouts in the same way as they have done through all of their career. How do we challenge that? How do we change the profession? That is a tough thing. What we have learned is that just passing a law is not enough. Even publishing statutory design guidance that says it is not how you should do it has not proved enough. The task of changing the common practice of the engineering profession is a big thing. I have to work very hard at it.

Chair: We want to move on to the difficult question of funding.

Q35 **Ronnie Cowan:** The Department for Transport said that £1.2 billion will be provided over the course of five years. That is £250 million a year, which is 1% of UK public expenditure on transport. Looking at that figure and thinking about giving it out to local council groups, they are going to have planning procedures they have to go through; they are going to be working up reports. Do we know how much money actually filters down to physically building cycle lanes and facilities? That 1% is going to get smaller and smaller. Do we know how much?

Phil Jones: I think Cycling UK has published some numbers on that. I do not have them to hand. The £1.2 billion is quite a large figure of potential. The money was there to be spent on local transport. As I said, if you were doing a highway improvement scheme—a new road or a changed junction—you could spend some of it on cycling and walking, but there is not much evidence about what it actually comes down to on the ground.

Q36 **Ronnie Cowan:** Earlier, you spoke about Bristol, Brighton, Cambridge and London, and said there were good examples there. Do we know how much money has been spent there?

Dr Aldred: Yes. In terms of cycling cities and towns, the reported spend was much more like £15 a head. That was focused on cycling alone. The amount of money London has been spending is similar. That is not really enough, though, when you look at it. When you look at what the Netherlands spends just on cycle infrastructure, it is around £25 per head, and it already has a substantial network of cycle lanes and tracks. We really need to be spending a lot more on walking and cycling to meet the targets and get a substantial increase in active travel.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Susan Claris: That demonstrates a really important thing. The expenditure will come from the Department for Transport or the local transport department, but the benefits accrue elsewhere. When the benefits are in health, for example, it is in a different budget.

I worked for the Department for Transport back in the 1980s in the area of transport for disabled people. There were discussions then about how you deal with cross-sector benefits. If having a bus service accessible for disabled people means that people stay out of residential care for longer, how do you match those costs? It seems that 35 years on we are having the same conversations about what to do if the spending is in A but the benefits are in B.

Q37 **Ronnie Cowan:** I presume there are health benefits in the cities we mentioned earlier. We can play it back and say, "Well, look at the increase in people's health; therefore there is less expenditure on the NHS, so give us that money back for cycling and let's reinvest it."

Dr Aldred: You have to be a little bit careful with that though, to be honest, because the health economic benefits of active travel are calculated in terms of the economic value of people living longer. That does not necessarily mean less cost to the NHS. I think people living longer and more healthily is a good thing, but it does not necessarily mean a financial saving. We have to be a bit careful about that. It is a good thing, but it does not necessarily mean that you can then claw back money. It is also the case that in a large bureaucratic organisation you get some savings in one place but they often get reabsorbed. It sounds like you should be able to do that, but you cannot necessarily.

Phil Jones: Catching benefits as best we can is important. The Copenhagen plan for cycling talks about every kilometre travelled by bicycle having something like a 79 cent benefit to the public purse; and for every kilometre travelled by car there is a deficit.

I have done quite a lot of work with Professor John Parkin. He talks about the way we do benefit-cost ratios for highway schemes. Susan made the point that more driving makes us less healthy. At the moment, we do not put a health disbenefit on building a road. We know that, if we build a road, more people will travel by car and therefore they will be less healthy. We should be putting a health disbenefit on building new roads, but we do not do that. We somehow try to put the health benefit on to cycling and walking schemes, but the disbenefit is through encouraging more people to travel by car. We need to think about that.

There was a stat that came up the other day on Twitter. It was a Scotland thing. They were talking about the Aberdeen bypass that has just been built. It said that that single bypass cost 12 times the entire active travel budget for the whole of Scotland. Roads are pretty expensive things and we spend really quite small amounts of money; the mini-Hollands in London cost £25 million.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dr Aldred: They were £30 million each.

Phil Jones: It sounds like a significant amount of money but it is the cost of one major road junction. That is what we are talking about. The difference in scale of cost between investing in motorised transport and investing in active travel is in an order of magnitude.

Susan Claris: The active travel can be done far sooner. Those big schemes take such a long time in the planning, whereas a lot of the benefits for active travel can be done far more easily in a shorter timeframe.

Q38 **Ronnie Cowan:** Do you know how old that tweet is?

Phil Jones: It was a few days ago.

Q39 **Ronnie Cowan:** Before the Scottish Budget, when there was an extra £80 million for active travel in Scotland. Interestingly, I was wondering which interventions are most cost-effective. Huw mentioned building routes. Is that a good idea? Robert talked about having facilities at companies where people can get showered and changed. Which is most cost-effective—building a route to get me from A to B, or allowing me to get to my workplace, have a shower and lock up my bike more safely?

Dr Aldred: I know something about the evidence on active travel uptake. It is surprisingly difficult to get evidence on active travel uptake. Often the studies you have to design are quite expensive and time-consuming. If you want to look at change over time, you have to have a control group and so on.

There has been some quite good evidence coming out about routes, on the Cambridge busway/cycleway, some of the Sustrans schemes and the mini-Holland schemes. There is some good evidence that building routes increases active travel. There is also evidence from a study that I led recently around what are called modal filters or making neighbourhoods impermeable for motor traffic so that they become much quieter in terms of cars and so on. That seems to have an impact in reducing driving and increasing walking particularly, but also cycling.

Two things stand out as quite good at the moment: building routes, particularly helping cycling, and reducing motor traffic in neighbourhoods, which particularly encourages short walking trips. That does not mean that it is not a good thing to provide cycle parking and so on, but there is no amazing evidence that we can show that if you put in this amount of cycle parking you will get that per cent more cycling. Maybe you would not expect to be able to find that.

Phil Jones: There are two approaches: route based and area based. That is talked about in the LCWIP guidance. You can do those two things. The area-based approach relies on the fact that if you block off a few routes for motor cars, there will be some reasonably direct routes for walking and cycling. That is true in Victorian grids, in inner cities, in Waltham



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Forest and other places and much of London. Once you get outside London, in much of the rest of the country, places that have been planned and built since the second world war are much more based around loops of roads and cul-de-sac systems.

Apart from the main roads, there is no other way of getting from place to place. We have huge problems with car dependency in our suburban areas. There are impermeable road networks, and only the main roads link places. Look at a map of Warrington, for example. If you do not go on the main roads, there is no way of getting to the town centre, so we have to put those facilities on the major routes. In more permeable areas, in places that were developed before the advent of motorisation, filtering is a perfectly valid way of dealing with it. It depends on the network.

Q40 Ronnie Cowan: We have not talked at all so far about the environment. Are there measured benefits from active travel for our environment?

Phil Jones: Air quality, yes, absolutely.

Susan Claris: Noise, air quality, climate change; all of those, yes.

Q41 Ronnie Cowan: There are Government targets to reach, so does investment in this form of active travel go far enough towards accommodating those targets or is it just a small percentage?

Dr Aldred: It depends how much of the new walking and cycling comes from car travel. It varies. Some of the work we did with the Propensity to Cycle Tool looked at that. It is not surprising that in places that are currently particularly car dependent you get more bang for your buck in CO₂ benefits because more of the new cycle and walking trips are likely to come from the car, whereas more of the trips in places with currently high public transport mode share will come from public transport. There are particularly high CO₂ benefits if it is an existing, very car-dependent place.

Susan Claris: Going back to the role of the Department for Transport, it is putting a lot of energy—no pun intended—into electric vehicles at the moment, on the basis that they are emission free. It is important to focus on the fact that they are only emission free at the tailpipe, and there are some studies that show they could be more polluting and worse for the environment in the long run due to wear and tear from the brakes and from other particulates. I would like the Department to give as much prominence and attention to active travel as they do to electric vehicles or to autonomous vehicles. That would make a big change.

Q42 Ronnie Cowan: That takes me nicely to project appraisal guidance. Do you believe that project appraisal guidance captures all the benefits of active travel?

Dr Aldred: No, but there is also a fundamental problem that at the heart of our transport appraisal are time savings for drivers. Very often, the



largest benefit or disbenefit from any scheme will be adding up very small amounts of time lost or gained for people in motor vehicles. Often, that relates to sheer seconds, but because you add it up over a number of people over days and years it becomes a very large figure. Sometimes, even the calculated health benefits do not compete because we place such high weight on time savings for drivers. That is part of it.

There have been many critics of it because fundamentally people spend a certain amount of time a day travelling. On average it is an hour. That has been the same for decades. Wherever the time-saving benefits go, they do not seem to go to us. What happens is that people move further away if journeys get quicker, so it does not make sense. For me, there is a fundamental problem at the heart of cost-benefit analysis.

I also think there is a problem in that we seek to quantify and monetise everything. It is like the health benefits. People often think that the health benefits are in savings to the NHS, but actually they are the monetary value of people living longer. I wish we were a bit more honest about some of these things and talked a bit more about what the benefits actually are. You could have people living this much longer or you could have 100,000 drivers saving 20 seconds every day. When we talk about the specifics, it becomes clear what we care about.

Fundamentally, there are problems with our appraisal process. The DFT has done a lot to try to improve it. Its active mode appraisal is not bad, to be honest, but fundamentally the process is problematic, and many other European countries place less weight than us on cost-benefit analysis.

Phil Jones: It makes life difficult. I know that Highways England, when it has been looking at schemes on designated funds, is very driven by BCR and its quite rigid process for doing that. If you have a motorway roundabout and there is no safe way of getting across, and the answer is to put in a pedestrian and cycle crossing, inevitably it will cause some delay to motor traffic. That will attract a huge economic disbenefit. There have been schemes that failed at the project appraisal stage because they got negative BCR so they could not possibly proceed under the rules. Yet that is absolutely what Government policy is meant to be about. As Rachel said, there is a broader issue about how we decide what is the right thing to do.

Susan Claris: The other thing about the appraisal guidance is that it is geared around very large infrastructure schemes. What it does not take into account, and what it is not good at recognising, is the incremental benefit of lots of small measures. I am a big believer in the fact that you can do relatively small things quite quickly. You can do them over time, and all those schemes together will have a much greater benefit, but, as I said, the appraisal guidance system does not cope with those very small schemes.

Q43 **Ronnie Cowan:** But surely infrastructure like the Aberdeen city bypass is



HOUSE OF COMMONS

going to take a lot of traffic away from Aberdeen city, so it will make it more appealing for cycling.

Phil Jones: It depends what you do with the space you have created. That is always the question. Years ago, the Department for Transport had a 'bypass demonstration town', a set of schemes. When the bypass was built, additional money was given to the local authority to make the centre of the town much pleasanter and friendlier towards walking and cycling. That was a good thing but it is not done everywhere. The danger is that congestion just rises again and people make additional journeys.

New roads generate more traffic. That has been known since the SACTRA report of 1994. We have known for a long time that, given the choice, people will make a journey if it is convenient and cheap to do so. That is fine if road space reallocation is done as part of a bypass scheme. Equally, people who currently are faced with a journey that takes them X minutes and can now make it in a shorter time will move house further away and use the time saved to live somewhere a bit cheaper further out, so there is no time saving.

Susan Claris: That is what the data show. We make the same number of trips and we spend the same amount of time travelling. That is since the 1970s. All that has happened is that we are travelling much further.

Phil Jones: It goes back to my point. One of the reasons that people are making fewer walking journeys is—

Susan Claris: It is a complete flat line for the number of trips and the time spent travelling, and the distance is the other way round; it is steeply going upwards.

Phil Jones: It is a transport supply thing. If people are making longer journeys, there is less opportunity for people to make journeys on foot and cycle because they are travelling further for their jobs, shopping or whatever it is.

Q44 **Ronnie Cowan:** We keep on talking about walking and cycling as if they are the same thing. I cannot cycle to work because I live 500 miles away, but I cycle recreationally in my constituency. I continually have to swerve because there are pedestrians on my cycle track and sometimes people with babies in buggies that require a wider space. Are we not getting it wrong? Should we not be having dedicated cycling routes and designated walking routes?

Dr Aldred: Absolutely, but there might still be a pedestrian on your cycle track every now and then.

Susan Claris: Or a cyclist on your walking track.

Phil Jones: I touched on that in my evidence. For many years, the default has been the shared-use path, which is really not suitable for anybody. There is not much evidence to say they are unsafe, but they



HOUSE OF COMMONS

are uncomfortable. Once you mix people moving at 12 mph with people moving at three mph, it is not comfortable for either party. What we need are proper cycle tracks.

We are working on the new piece of guidance from DfT. There is a really odd term used by DfT—the segregated shared-use facility. It is an oxymoron. You cannot have segregated shared. We are saying let's dump that and instead talk about a cycle track and a footway. They are different things. They may be side by side and they may even be at the same level, but they should be seen as two things and not one thing that has been divided into two.

If they are two things, they are designed differently. Maybe the footway is paving blocks, so it is a bit grippier and easier to walk on, and the cycle track is paved with something nice and smooth and is black asphalt. They can clearly be seen by people as two different things.

Dr Aldred: That would show that pedestrians and cyclists matter and are not just being lumped together. Shared-use paths are often terrible for walking and cycling. They are often too narrow. You do not have any priority over side roads. You look at it and think, "Why would people cycle here?", because it is sending a message that you do not matter and we are just lumping you on to the footway.

Phil Jones: Shoving you out of the way.

Dr Aldred: Yes. It also stresses pedestrians, so it is not good for either.

Susan Claris: We are talking about walking and cycling not because they are the same thing but because they are both important and vital elements of active transport.

The third element of active transport is public transport. People using trains or buses are far more active than people travelling by car because they walk to the bus stop or the train station, and they walk at the other end. Just moving around stations is active. People who use public transport are using active transport as well.

Q45 **Chair:** I have a couple of questions before we move on to Grahame's questions. First of all, are Highways England spending their designated funds?

Phil Jones: Apparently no, I believe they are not. It could be because of the problems we were talking about of making the economic case for doing schemes.

Q46 **Chair:** Some places are being required to tackle poor air quality. One of my disappointments with "Road to Zero" is that all the focus seems to be on electric vehicles and there is almost nothing said for public transport or active travel. Are any of the places that have to tackle air quality doing interesting things on active travel, and, if so, where is good?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dr Aldred: Interestingly, I was just talking about plans in London as part of the Mayor's air quality framework. It has not been done yet. They are putting forward pedestrianisation and motor traffic reduction as part of meeting the air quality targets. It is going beyond a car-free day once a year and actually doing things like school streets, removing motor traffic when children are going to and from school. It is removing motor traffic from residential and shopping streets and so on. It is happening.

Phil Jones: We are doing some work in Greenwich at the moment. They have low-emission neighbourhood funding, which is funded by TfL as well as the liveable neighbourhoods. They previously had a low-emission neighbourhood. Some of the interventions they are doing there are filtering. The only possible slight difference is that they are taking a slightly greener approach. As well as the modal filters going in, there is planting and the greenery will also improve air quality.

I heard the other day about a local authority that is tackling the problem of air quality by trying to smooth traffic flow and taking out a cycle lane so that they can widen the road, because it will reduce congestion, in theory. Of course, if it just leads to more people choosing to drive a car, within a few years it will effectively be just as congested, with a higher level of traffic. It seems rather short-sighted.

Q47 **Chair:** My last question is on permeability for vehicles. One of the areas in my constituency is built on the Radburn design, which is probably pretty familiar to those in planning. One of the things it tried to do was to separate pedestrians from cars. What it led to was a lot of pedestrian ways that nobody wanted to use because they did not feel very safe. They were poorly lit and there were no passing cars. Some people quite like walking alongside a well-used street. Do we have the answer on separate places for pedestrians where people also feel safe to walk?

Dr Aldred: That is the great thing about modal filtering. It uses the existing streets and you are not sending people down a side alleyway. They are the existing streets where people live. Hopefully, there is cycling and plenty of walking activity. What I have been finding from the mini-Hollands, from the filtering in Waltham Forest, is that there is an increase in walking. It is not necessarily yet all coming from the car but people are happy to be out and about. Children are happier to play on the streets. It is all part of creating pleasant neighbourhoods. It is not some alleyway off down there; it is actually the neighbourhood where you live.

Phil Jones: That speaks to new developments again or post-war developments that are not based around a grid, and you cannot do that filtering. The only way to provide the walking/cycling-only connection is by a link at the end of the cul-de-sac. No one knows it is there so it is always little used, and it is quiet and feels quite hostile.

If we are planning new developments, maybe we need to get back to grids of streets, as *Manual for Streets*, that came out in 2007, said. It is not new, but there are still some highway authorities and developers who



do not sign up to it. Once we have a grid, maybe we need to learn lessons from the mini-Hollands and other schemes. We should put in modal filters, but, as Rachel said, it is filtering on a grid of legible streets that everyone shares, where you can continue your journey on foot and cycle but not by car, and it still feels like a continuation of the street rather than a back alley.

Q48 Grahame Morris: You have covered some of the questions I was going to ask, but perhaps you might elaborate. We know that the Department for Transport's approach to funding active travel has been largely based on a competition approach for pots of funding. You mentioned earlier the cycling ambition cities. Dr Aldred said there were eight cities that had done very well out of that, and there was a kind of hierarchy of areas that maybe had not. Do you want to go through some of the strengths and weaknesses of that competitive funding approach?

Dr Aldred: The competitive aspect at least ensures that places know that they are going to be judged. They are not necessarily automatically going to receive funding for whatever they put in. There are advantages to competitive funding. The disadvantages, of course, are that some places lose out. Sometimes, a lot of places lose out, depending on how much funding is allocated and how it is judged. Some places have less capacity than others.

There are the issues that Phil talked about, such as losing capacity and expertise if people think they are only going to be employed for two years and then not wanted. Probably what we need is a combination of competitive funding but longer-term competitive funding. For instance, the mini-Holland schemes take five or six years to deliver. I imagine that, if we had funding attached to the local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, we might have five to six-year funding tranches where areas would put forward their first two routes: "These are our neighbourhoods. These are what we want to do," and then they would have five or six years to do that. Then you would work with authorities that had not quite made the grade and encourage them to do better. They would get more money once they had done that.

That has happened in London with, for instance, Newham and some of the other local authorities that did not get mini-Holland funding. They were encouraged to work up with TfL what they had done for other funding streams. They were still able to do some of what they wanted to do. Having some competition is good, given that we need to get standards up, but we also need to spend a lot more money and make sure that it is definitely not just eight cities.

Phil Jones: That is absolutely right. Ideally, you would say that any authority that wants to do one, and demonstrates sufficient commitment to quality in their schemes, by passing some kind of quality test, should receive the funding. Whether that can work in a Treasury world where there has to be some kind of limit, I do not know, but it should be a



quality threshold rather than capping them at a certain number of authorities almost arbitrarily.

Susan Claris: The downside of any competition is that an authority that is not interested probably has the worst facilities, so how is it going to break that cycle? The authorities that are doing the most or have an interest in the area tend to apply for it, and, yes, you want to work with keen authorities, but for authorities where it is not really on their radar, so they would not apply for the funding, how do you actually get them on the first step?

- Q49 **Grahame Morris:** You identified earlier that consistency and continuity of funding are quite important. Looking at the evidence that you have submitted, and the oral evidence you are giving, in relation to the funding to achieve a step change, and given that we have heard the Government say they have a broad ambition and aim to get 1% of public transport spending into active travel, how much more would we need to spend to achieve that step change? Are there any other methods that we could tap into? I was thinking about when the Sustrans cycleways were developed. Was that millennium funding from the lottery?

Phil Jones: Yes.

- Q50 **Grahame Morris:** Robert mentioned employers. I am certainly aware that the police and the fire authority, as part of a desire to achieve their own fitness standards, offer a lease-lend scheme for employees to take advantage of. Is that something we should be looking at?

Phil Jones: Some employers might be willing if they saw an advantage. I mentioned the development industry earlier; that is really important. There is a huge push for garden towns and villages. The Government have huge ambitions for the number of dwellings that are going to be created. If we are building settlements of 3,000 or 4,000 homes on the edges of our cities, usually within relatively easy cycling distance of the centre, there could be a real focus from Government, through the transport assessment process, in guidance and planning policy to say that those developments do not just have to provide for walking and cycling within their boundary. Even a settlement of 2,000 or 3,000 people might only be a mile across. It is a trivial cycle journey.

To make a meaningful cycle journey, it must be well beyond the boundary of the development and therefore into existing urban areas. Capturing some of that increase in land value and requiring it to be spent on active travel could be transformative. It requires firm policies, so that highway authorities can insist on it and refuse planning permission if the funding is not there, and it will not be overturned at appeal.

- Q51 **Grahame Morris:** Are you advocating a levy on new development for that specific ring-fenced purpose?

Phil Jones: It could be a Community Infrastructure Levy, or it could be through the transport assessment process and linked to the LCWIP. The



developer might have to come forward with those studies, or it could be the LCWIP; part of the DfT's guidance could say, "Look at where your new developments are, look at the additional trips that could be made from new developments and identify up front, before planning applications come in, what you will want from those new developments, to feed into the cycle network of the existing place and not just within the boundary of the site itself."

Susan Claris: For me, part of the opportunity of active transport is that a whole range of organisations can be involved. DfT definitely has a role. Local authorities have a role. Businesses can do a lot with very direct results for their employees. We can all as individuals have a role as well in doing this. Things can be done through planning and through the development process. It is about recognising the legacy of the existing built environment. If you go back long enough, it was all designed around active transport because streets were for walking, cycling, and horse and carriage. It is only over the course of the last 50 or 60 years that they have become dominated by the car. A whole range of players can be involved in improving active transport.

Dr Aldred: Those things are important, but we must not forget that funding active travel must be seen as the core. It must not be seen as something that we are running round all those different organisations to get, cap in hand. It should be absolutely the core. For instance, the motorways and major trunk roads network is having £3 billion per annum, or £50 per person. To be honest, that is the kind of ballpark we need for active travel.

I would worry if we became too dependent on developers. In hierarchies and two-tier systems, local authorities are in a very different position in relation to developers. Compare Hull with the City of London, for instance. While we should do all we can to get additional help from them we cannot be reliant on it. We must have core, ring-fenced national funding as well.

Susan Claris: Living Streets, in their submission, suggested that that 1% should go up to 5% and ultimately up to 10% of the total budget.

Q52 **Daniel Zeichner:** It is not always just Government funding, is it? We have had the extraordinary phenomenon of dockless bike schemes, with bikes being, I would say, dumped on cities in a rather unplanned way. Has there been any analysis of the impact that has had for good or ill in terms of active travel?

Dr Aldred: It is difficult. First, it is quite early days, but those schemes have proved very unstable. Some of them have been introduced and then been removed. I have not seen great evidence. I have seen one or two reports commissioned by dockless bike share operators, but I have not been able to see the methodology of what exactly was done, so I am unsure about the evidence. I am unsure how stable those systems are



HOUSE OF COMMONS

going to be. Many of them have been withdrawn. There does not seem to be a great deal of evidence at the moment.

Q53 Daniel Zeichner: The all-party group has pressed Government Departments for some regulatory system to try to manage them in a more effective way. Would you have a view on that? The Government have been resistant so far to actually doing anything, in my experience.

Dr Aldred: Like car-sharing schemes, the worry is that they will not necessarily go where there is the greatest need, or where they will be most use. With many of these new forms of mobility there is a data issue. Schemes like these could provide some really useful data, but very often the data is held by private operators. It is not necessarily available to cities. Given that we often have such a lack of data on active travel, it could be useful. There should be regulatory frameworks and thinking as to how we organise that.

Q54 Ruth Cadbury: We have talked a lot about public sector funding. The assumption is that we have been talking about capital schemes. We have not really covered revenue spending. To what extent and to what level is there a need for revenue spending to encourage people to cycle more, certainly through Bikeability? I do not know whether there is an equivalent need for revenue spending that works to encourage people to walk more.

Phil Jones: Maintenance of the infrastructure is the principal revenue spending that is required, so that when schemes go in with capital funding there is money to maintain them.

Q55 Ruth Cadbury: You are right about money to maintain. Do we also need soft encouragement around things like cycle training and Bikeability, to make a difference?

Dr Aldred: I do not know if you are having Transport for London to speak later as part of this inquiry, but they would say their view is to put in that kind of programme in tandem with the infrastructure, along the superhighways, for instance. They think it is more effective done alongside infrastructure. You get more benefits from the infrastructure if you also go into workplaces and do complementary schemes. The problem that we had in London for many years was that we had bicycle parking because it was easy to put in and nobody complained about it. We did not have the infrastructure, but, now that the infrastructure is going in, complementary measures are proving useful alongside it. I think that is their view.

Susan Claris: Some of the information side is as much to do with the negative impacts of car travel. The general perception is that, if you are going along a congested street, walking or cycling, you are suffering far more from pollution, but studies show that actually it is people sitting in the car who have the highest levels of pollutants. Most motorists would not be aware of that, or would not realise it, and might even use pollution



as a reason for not walking and cycling. There is definitely a role for improving people's information and awareness.

Phil Jones: For quite a long time, soft measures was the term. Personalised travel planning, effectively going into employer or residential development travel plans or green travel plans to explain to people how they can make a journey on foot or bike or use public transport, is fine, but it is a kind of marketing exercise, which was Rachel's point. Unless you have something to market—in other words, that there is a new cycle or walking route or you can now cross the bridge—you are selling the same old, same old.

The Department for Transport economic guidance used to talk about a decay effect; you spend a lot of money on promoting active travel and you assume that the effect declines by 10% every year. It is a kind of one hit, and then it declines. If infrastructure is maintained, it is there forever. We do not have to apply the decay factor, which is a rather odd thing. Soft measures have their place, but they are much more powerful if they are tied to infrastructure.

Q56 **Ruth Cadbury:** To put it another way, are there examples where infrastructure goes in and has not been used because soft measures have not gone in, or do they always go together?

Dr Aldred: It is hard to put a negative like that. There are certainly examples across the world of infrastructure going in and there not being an increase in use, but often that is to do with where the infrastructure has been put in. If you built a road in the middle of nowhere and it did not go anywhere, people would not drive on it. It is hard to disentangle those things. If you were putting in infrastructure, I would add some extra budget for soft measures; it is fairly small compared with the infrastructure costs.

Q57 **Chair:** Are there examples where infrastructure has been put in and it was not in the right place?

Dr Aldred: Yes. I did a review and there are examples from various countries, which is why it is important to put infrastructure in the right place, but, to be honest, it is not that difficult in many of our towns and cities, certainly with cycle routes. In my home town of Preston, the A6 goes into central Preston and that is how people make their trips to work, so it is not that difficult.

Susan Claris: Some of the early examples we talked about at the beginning, in new towns such as Stevenage, have good-quality provision, but it is not used, partly because it tends to be at a lower level than the road and people do not even know it is there, and because there is so much road capacity that people drive instead. Sadly, there are quite a lot of examples of infrastructure that is not being used.

Phil Jones: Putting it on main roads is important. If people are making those journeys by car, they see the infrastructure. If it is one block back,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

or if it is a wiggly road, they will not know it exists. The presence of the infrastructure itself is a marketing tool; if it is visible and high quality and you can see people using it, you think "Maybe tomorrow I'll try it."

Susan Claris: Ideally, when you are stuck in congested traffic and you see people walking or cycling by.

Phil Jones: And they are going past you. Yes.

Q58 **Chair:** If there are examples of things built in the wrong places, why do they get built in the first place?

Dr Aldred: Often, traditionally, it has been easier to build stuff in places where you are not getting in anyone's way and it is not in the way of important motor vehicles. It is often out of the way. It often gives up at the most important places; when there is a big roundabout, there is a sign saying "End." Where are cyclists and walkers meant to go? They don't know: end, finished. It is often to do with the fact that we have built that kind of thing not really thinking about what pedestrians and cyclists want, but thinking about getting them out of the way of the more important people using motor vehicles.

Phil Jones: The fundamental change in Welsh active travel and in our LCWIPs is that it is demand led. In the past, there was a supply-led approach: "Where can we fit this stuff in? We've got a canal towpath or a green route, so let's put some money in there." It was not about where the trips were or where the demand was. The LCWIP approach is demand led. Where would people walk and cycle if the infrastructure was better? Let's put it there.

It should not be revolutionary. It is how we plan other modes of transport. We would not build a bus route or a railway line by saying, "Wouldn't it be great to put it from here to there?" We spend a fortune on modelling it and assessing demand, but we have not done that for active travel in the past. We have just done it by saying, "Oh, it can go down there." Maybe not.

Q59 **Chair:** We have talked quite a lot about new infrastructure. To what extent is failure to maintain our existing infrastructure, both roads and pavements, acting as a disincentive to people to walk and cycle?

Susan Claris: It is footway maintenance in particular. Attention normally seems to go on roads and potholes, which are important, but equal prominence needs to be given to footway maintenance. Particularly for an ageing population and vulnerable groups, there is fear of tripping and falling. I am sure we all know bits of footway where you have to know where to look and where to go because the surface is so uneven. That is an area that has suffered in recent years. There is encroachment on to the footway of virtually everything, whether waste, traffic signs, electric vehicle recharging or advertising boards. Everything goes there and the small space that is left is not well maintained.



Phil Jones: There is winter maintenance and de-icing as well—slips and trips in the winter. The road is cleared and gritted, but the footway isn't.

Dr Aldred: Even authorities that are relatively good for cycling often do not give priority to cycle routes in winter. They just grit the main roads and do not prioritise major cycle routes, even though arguably it is more important for cycling; cars melt the ice but bikes do not.

Phil Jones: In the TfL study, we went to Malmö and Lund in Sweden. The first thing they prioritise is the motorway around the town and the next priority is the cycle routes that go into the town centre. That is their No. 2 priority for winter maintenance. It is a snowy place and they want people to continue to cycle all year round.

Chair: Our final few questions are about best practice. What works?

Q60 **Ruth Cadbury:** Are there examples of transport plans or types of intervention that have been particularly successful?

Dr Aldred: The mini-Holland research I did found a measurable change, which I was surprised to find. In the literature, you do not normally find a measurable change, with a good study design, after one year, but we did. We found a 41-minute-a-week increase in active travel, just from one year of mini-Holland interventions, and three quarters of that was walking. Ambitious interventions that initially were mainly modal filters or road closures but also built routes had a noticeable impact. For me, that is particularly important in that we are talking about suburban outer London, not Hackney and Camden.

I firmly believe that the mini-Holland model of ambitious interventions with area-based schemes is important for pedestrians, as well as routes. It is about the public realm. You can close a road fairly cheaply by putting in a bollard, but, if you want buy-in and public support, putting in a more expensive pocket park will help a lot. I think that model has shown itself to be effective.

Susan Claris: It is not just what is done but how it is done, with the increasing use of trials to have demonstrations to show people what the impact might be. That gets away from the fear of taking away a parking space, or three or four parking spaces. The language often goes from, "Where will the cars go?" to, "Where have all the people come from?" If more trials can be used and implemented quickly, it is a far better way of involving people in the planning process. It moves away from the public consultation where only certain types of users are involved.

When you can show people what the impact is, it makes it more like market research and people come forward far more. The problem with consultation at the moment is that only certain groups get involved; people are not normally out there campaigning for improved walking, although they sometimes campaign for improved cycling. The trials are a much better way of involving people so that they see what the impact will be.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Phil Jones: In London, TfL in particular has done some great work over the last five to 10 years, and we look to that. Perhaps it is testament to the powers they have, but the political leadership was there and it has been fantastic. It has continued under three different Mayors and it has led change in the organisation. I used to do some training for TfL on design for cycling. Early on, there was reluctance: "Why am I here learning about this stuff?" Within a relatively short period, people were really enthusiastic and you could see a changed attitude. TfL is to be commended for what it has done.

Dr Aldred: I was pleased to see the £15 a head allocated in Scotland on a national basis. That seems to be generating a lot of interest, not just in Edinburgh and Glasgow but in smaller towns and cities.

Q61 **Chair:** Can you give an example of somewhere that does not have London powers? Powers in London are very different, whether for pavement parking or the ability to control other forms of public transport. Where else should we be looking?

Phil Jones: Manchester?

Dr Aldred: Yes. The schemes under way in Greater Manchester are very exciting. Leicester and Nottingham have done some interesting stuff too. An increasing number of places are doing things. In London, much has gone in on the ground, but other places have some interesting plans.

Phil Jones: The Castle Boulevard scheme in Nottingham is really good. They have ambitious plans as a city. Good practice is coming.

Q62 **Ruth Cadbury:** Why have some local authorities been successful and others have tried and failed to get walking and cycling rates up? Are there examples?

Dr Aldred: Very often when they have tried and failed it is because we have not put much money in or changed much. Some of the cycling towns and cities are interesting. Overall, a positive effect was shown, but it tended to rely on several places, as I think I alluded to earlier. Some of the places that spent a lot of money on signage and promotion and did a lot of soft measures, sometimes quite well, but did not actually change much in the way of infrastructure, may have been less successful.

As Phil mentioned, the demonstration effect of the infrastructure gives extra bang for your buck from the soft measures; you are putting in something that says, "Yes, active travel is important. Look at this stuff we are doing for you." That helps to overcome some of the cultural barriers. Sometimes, there is a tendency to see infrastructure as an engineering effect and behaviour change promotion as a cultural effect, but they should work together. If we are making the conditions better, so that people feel safe when they cycle and comfortable when they walk, it helps change the culture and helps to encourage people to feel, "No one is going to think I'm poor if I'm on a bike and I'm just doing it because I've got no choice."



Phil Jones: There is evidence that where authorities, particularly in London, have invested heavily in shared-use facilities, by converting pavements to cycling paths, it has had very little effect.

Q63 **Ruth Cadbury:** Where?

Phil Jones: When they have simply converted footways into cycle routes.

Susan Claris: White lines down the middle of the path.

Phil Jones: That has had very little effect. There is evidence on that. Where authorities put in really good cycling infrastructure, I am not aware of anywhere that has been judged a failure.

Q64 **Ruth Cadbury:** We touched on people with different mobility issues. Are there risks that making it easier for some groups like cyclists can create additional barriers for others? How can the needs be balanced?

Dr Aldred: Those kinds of issues are general. If you are talking about the needs of different groups of pedestrians, there are often tensions and trade-offs as well. Transport for London has been working through some of the issues—for instance, bus stop bypasses and zebra crossings. That was another case where the regulations needed changing, because they said there had to be Belisha beacons on zebra crossings, which does not work so well on a cycle track. That has been got rid of, and Transport for London decided that having zebra crossings across cycle tracks is a good thing and gives pedestrians priority. Those things are being worked out.

It is worth remembering that a lot of people use cycles as a mobility aid, and more would if they could. Potentially, cycling is easier for some people than walking. They are not separate groups in that sense. There is a lot of overlap potentially, but there are issues that need to be worked out.

Phil Jones: When writing the local transport note, we found an interesting stat. I cannot remember the full details, but it pretty much said that, if you take a cohort of pedestrians and a cohort of people on bikes, about the same proportion have a registered disability. The idea that disabled people are walking and cyclists are non-disabled is completely wrong. Cycles are very good mobility aids. There are many people who ride even a standard bicycle but find it difficult to walk, and a lot of people ride an adapted cycle or a tricycle. Inclusive cycling is powerful and important.

In redrafting the guidance, we have taken great steps to portray that message. We use inclusive images and so on in the document. A cyclist is not just a young male. They can be any age, with different abilities. It is just another form of transport that the whole population can use.

Q65 **Chair:** We had some evidence from blind and partially sighted pedestrians about zebra crossings across cycleways. Is there good



HOUSE OF COMMONS

evidence that they work well in places? There is particular concern about island bus stops where there is a road on one side and a cycleway on the other. Can they meet the needs of all pedestrians?

Dr Aldred: First of all, a safety issue has not been shown with island bus stops. It is primarily a comfort issue. That said, a comfort issue is still important. We also have to remember that allowing cyclists to mix with buses and HGVs is definitely a safety issue, so there are trade-offs to be had.

Transport for London found that zebra crossings were generally seen to be much better at meeting the needs of pedestrians than the alternatives they looked at, so they settled for that. It is not 100% perfect for everybody; there are trade-offs for everybody as we get more cycling. People who cycle and people who walk are still not necessarily used to interacting, so I am not saying that the crossings are a perfect solution. Transport for London decided that they are workable and that they generally meet the needs well enough of people who cycle and people who walk, while not being perfect.

Q66 **Ruth Cadbury:** What could the Department for Transport do better to share best practice, both in designs and in policies and plans?

Phil Jones: As I mentioned earlier, I could see a stronger role for the cycle proofing working group. People will give their time free, or for very little money, to do that, because they believe in it. If the Department could provide a little more support to a set of technical experts who could help to lead and encourage sharing of knowledge, and provide facilities to authorities on the journey to shared knowledge, a lot could be done for very little money.

Q67 **Ruth Cadbury:** Picking up where Cycling England has dropped off.

Phil Jones: Exactly. It is such a shame that Cycling England ever went. We are reinventing Cycling England under another guise. In some ways, you could argue that it is better that it is not some kind of separate body. We do not have Motor Cars England; we have the Department for Transport. We do not have Trains England; so why do we need Cycling England? In a sense, it is probably better that it is in the mainstream of DFT, but perhaps there should be an expert group within it to provide leadership in the short term, and help to oil the wheels.

Working with local authorities, I see that they do not find it easy to communicate. They do not have the budgets to go to conferences. Sharing knowledge between local authorities is hard, and the DFT could do a lot more to help that to happen.

Susan Claris: TfL is a good example. TfL is very good at sharing information about what works or what does not work, and putting information out there and making it freely available for everybody. The DFT could have a similar role for local authorities.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dr Aldred: It can be very hard to get an overview of what is going on when you have to go to hundreds of local authority websites to track something down. The DFT should be doing more to bring them together, with the local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, to see what stage different areas are at. It should be a proper funding stream: who has bid for funding, who has funding, and what stage are all the schemes at?

We need more monitoring and evaluation. I suppose I would say that, but I get very frustrated when there are funding streams, and local authorities are told to do their own bespoke monitoring and we never hear the results. It disappears; it is on local authority websites and then it goes away. It needs to be shared centrally. That would be really helpful. Potentially, we could do meta-analysis; if we had a load of data from different local authorities, we could analyse it together and it would have more power.

Chair: Are you done, Ruth?

Ruth Cadbury: I was going to go straight to the last question unless you want to keep it for yourself.

Chair: No. That's fine. Go ahead.

Q68 **Ruth Cadbury:** What are the top three things you would like the Department for Transport to do to support and increase active travel?

Susan Claris: My focus is more on walking, so it would be to do with lowering speed limits, with a maximum of 20 mph in built-up urban areas. It would be banning pavement parking. I'll come back to you on the third one.

Dr Aldred: If I am to get another three, I would say funding again. Funding is so important: ring-fenced, guaranteed funding. It would also be increased prominence for and increased focus on reducing motor traffic in neighbourhoods, modal filtering; doing the kinds of local neighbourhood things that are so important for walking.

Something we spoke about at the start may not be what everybody wants to hear, but, as Phil alluded to, one of the things that encourages people to travel actively and sustainably in many of our cities at the moment is the fact that travelling by car is quite unpleasant. Maybe we need to be a bit more honest about that in policy terms. If congestion is reduced in many of those contexts, more people will choose to drive.

The infrastructure you create tends to fill up. Crossrail will fill pretty quickly. We build bypasses and they fill up. We need to be more honest about that and think about how we disincentivise car use in a fair way, and increase active sustainable travel.

Susan Claris: My third one was road pricing.

Q69 **Ruth Cadbury:** Road pricing and/or a car parking levy.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Susan Claris: Ideally, both. It is recognising that there has to be discouragement for car trips, particularly short car trips.

Phil Jones: To pick up on the point about leadership, for me it would be about stronger support for authorities when they want to put in mode share targets. The Mayor's transport plan in London says that we want a future where more people will be walking and cycling and using foot transport, and we are planning for a future of less car use.

Few if any local authorities outside London have taken that step. I think it is transformative. Official DFT forecasts are that we will have more cars, so the pressure is that, if we do not keep increasing road capacity for motor traffic, there will be gridlock. The other way to reduce gridlock is to get more people out of their car and give support for a different way of planning for the future we want, rather than being prisoners of—

Q70 **Chair:** How should they support it? How should local authorities be incentivised or rewarded for doing that?

Phil Jones: It could be around targeting. Maybe the DFT could have targets not just for increases in walking and cycling but for reductions in car use. Would that be a way? Why not? It is quite a radical idea, but if we know that more driving is not actually good for us in all kinds of ways, and not very good for cities, maybe we should have some official targets for that. It is transformative.

If my company, or any other transport planning company, is planning a new roundabout, we do not design it for now; we design it for traffic in 15 years' time. The working assumption is that there will be more traffic, so we make the roundabout bigger than it needs to be for today's traffic because we are future-proofing it. But what if the future was different? What if the future was that in 15 years' time there would be less traffic? How would we design the roundabout then? It would be a smaller roundabout and we would have more space for walking and cycling. Having an eye to the future we want rather than a future that just happens to us could be quite transformative.

That is where political leadership comes in. What do we want our future to be like? What do we want our towns and cities to be like?

Q71 **Ronnie Cowan:** This is what we would term a topical question. Does Geraint Thomas winning sports personality of the year filter down to kids cycling today? Do they take inspiration from that? Do we see more kids, fortunately, getting bikes for Christmas or are they still stuck on their PlayStations?

Dr Aldred: I do not think there is great evidence, sadly, that sporting success leads to an increase in everyday cycling. There is an argument that some of the problem around the image of cycling is its association with sport. That said, certain sporting figures have been quite useful in saying that they want more everyday cycling.



Phil Jones: It raises the profile, but would it actually encourage a parent to allow their child to cycle to school? Probably not. If the parent looks out of the window and decides it is too dangerous, the fact that we have won the Tour de France would not change their view of the relative risk.

Q72 **Ronnie Cowan:** If Geraint Thomas's parents had had that attitude, would he have won the Tour de France?

Phil Jones: Maybe. They would probably have taken him to a velodrome.

Susan Claris: Driving.

Phil Jones: They would probably have driven him to a velodrome to become a sports cyclist, but they would not let him cycle to school.

Q73 **Chair:** To go back to the example you gave Phil, I appreciate that not everybody will know where Castle Boulevard in Nottingham is, but if I asked my constituents if it was a success, they would say, "Oh no, no one uses it and there's nobody on it." Is there evidence of its success and, if so, do you need to tell people that something is a success or will they see it for themselves? I am not sure that they do.

Phil Jones: That is interesting. When I have been there, it has been quite busy. The paradox is that when infrastructure is inefficient, it looks very well used. When we see roads full of queuing traffic, we say the road should be wider because it is full. If we see a cycle track with just a few cycles whizzing up and down, it is because they are not being held up and it is being used efficiently.

One route on its own will not transform a city. You need a network, because people make complex decisions. As Rachel said, if you live on the Cambridge guided busway, there is lots of evidence to show that you are much more likely to use it. If you live a mile away, it is of no value to you, but if you had a route that got you to it and then you could make use of it, you would get a step change. As the network builds up and you get connectivity, you will see step changes in use, because suddenly a facility is of value to a greater range of journeys. At the moment, the Nottingham example is suffering because it is not part of a wider network, but it is a good start. It needs to go down Canal Street and round there.

Chair: Thank you all very much for giving evidence. That concludes our public session.