

Transport Committee

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

Wednesday 3 April 2019

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 3 April 2019.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Lilian Greenwood (Chair); Jack Brereton; Ruth Cadbury; Daniel Zeichner.

Questions 194 - 265

Witnesses

I: Vicky Fraser, Head of Transport Planning and Strategy, Cornwall Council; Alison Kennedy, Principal Transport Policy Officer, Inclusive Growth Directorate, Birmingham City Council; Rupert Thacker, Head of Highways Strategy and Implementation, Environment and Infrastructure Department, Hertfordshire County Council; and Laura Wells, Principal Transport Planner, Policy & Strategy, Brighton & Hove City Council.

II: Katie Edmondson, Programme Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator, CityConnect, West Yorkshire Combined Authority; Mark Lynam, Director of Programme Commissioning, Sheffield City Region; Dr Ben Still, Managing Director, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and lead board member on active travel, Urban Transport Group; and Claire Williams, Cycling and Walking Development Manager, Transport for West Midlands.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- Cornwall Council ([ATR0041](#))
- Birmingham City Council ([ATR0047](#))
- Brighton & Hove City Council ([ATR0060](#))
- Hertfordshire County Council ([ATR0037](#))
- Urban Transport Group ([ATR0042](#))
- Transport for West Midlands ([ATR0058](#))

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Vicky Fraser, Alison Kennedy, Rupert Thacker and Laura Wells.

Q194 **Chair:** Welcome, and thank you for coming along today. Can you introduce yourselves for the record of our proceedings?

Vicky Fraser: I am Vicky Fraser, head of transport planning and strategy for Cornwall Council.

Rupert Thacker: I am Rupert Thacker. I am head of strategy and implementation at Hertfordshire County Council.

Alison Kennedy: I am Alison Kennedy from the transport policy team at Birmingham City Council.

Laura Wells: I am Laura Wells. I am principal transport planner from the transport policy and strategy group at Brighton & Hove City Council.

Q195 **Chair:** We have about an hour with your panel and we have a lot of questions to ask you. First of all, I want to know from each of you what ambitions your councils have for increasing levels of walking and cycling. How have those been shaped by the Government's cycling and walking investment strategy?

Vicky Fraser: Cornwall is ambitious in its move towards improving active travel and sustainable travel. We have a strong local transport plan, Connecting Cornwall 2030. There is a clear policy in it that we are less about new road building and more about connectivity through sustainable modes. There is a pledge by our Cornwall sports partnership to get 50,000 more people active in Cornwall by 2020. Our members have recently declared that Cornwall will become carbon neutral by 2030. We have a strong air quality action plan as well. All of those plans rely on a modal shift towards active travel to make a difference and meet those targets.

Q196 **Chair:** Did that start with the Government's cycling and walking investment strategy or were they plans that you already had in place? How do the two interact?

Vicky Fraser: The Connecting Cornwall plan has been of long standing. It has been in publication since 2011, but the Government's local walking and cycling strategy is running in parallel. We need that reference at national level to help strengthen the plans at local level, so it is important that we have that strategy to help to guide and make our local plans stronger.

Q197 **Chair:** Thank you, Vicky. Rupert, tell us about Hertfordshire.

Rupert Thacker: It is very similar. We adopted a new transport plan last year that focuses much more on trying to ensure that we deliver sustainable transport that makes a difference. It moves away from our traditional predict and provide investment strategies of the past. It puts



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more emphasis on ensuring that we get new development right. As a two-tier authority, we need to work very closely with the local planning authorities to ensure that that can happen. It was in development before the new strategy from Government, although we very much welcome the support that they provided through its adoption process. When we go out to public consultation, it is very good to be able to have Government documents that you can point to, to say, "Look, we are in line with where we want to go."

It is driven as well by the growth agenda. Hertfordshire through the mid-'20s and '30s gets an extra 100,000 new homes in the current round of local plans that are being developed. Key to that, our network cannot cope with the traditional methods by which we have dealt with growth in the past, with just capacity increases. We recognise that to retain Hertfordshire's character we have to make a shift.

The plan includes a new transport hierarchy that very much places the needs of sustainable and active transport at the top, and the users of private vehicles lower down. We are not disregarding them, but we recognise that our primary focus should be on enabling people to move about sustainably and actively.

Q198 Chair: Alison, Birmingham has a tradition as a car city, so tell us how you are changing things.

Alison Kennedy: It has a tradition of being a car city. We put together a Birmingham Connected transport strategy a few years ago. We had a rethink about transport, and we are definitely thinking more about sustainable and equitable transport as well as healthy modes of transport. That is still our main transport strategy for the city.

Since then, we have adopted the Birmingham development plan. Within that, we have key policies on walking and cycling. With our housing and other local growth policies, like Hertfordshire, we are planning for major growth in the city. We are looking to provide for 50,000 new homes and 150,000 new residents by 2031, so sustainable transport is key within those wider policies.

On specific active travel policies, since the cycling and walking investment strategy was published by Government, we have been looking at what we have in terms of cycling and walking. We are looking at a cycling and walking strategy at the moment, and our own local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, as well as the wider West Midlands local cycling and walking infrastructure plan.

Q199 Chair: Last but not least, Laura, Brighton has a tradition of excellent public transport. I have seen some of the cycling provision there because we have all been at conferences, no doubt. Tell us about your plans.

Laura Wells: Certainly. As you mentioned, we have had lots of good examples in the past, not just of cycling schemes but wider, sustainable transport schemes. Active travel is a primary thread in achieving all of



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our local transport plan objectives. LTP4 is from 2015, and we are likely to have an update on that starting in the next year or so.

The objectives cover lots of things, from the economy to carbon reduction, safer streets and health and wellbeing, all of which are moving towards better quality of life for residents. A key theme is that it is not just about providing for active travel; it is about promoting it as well. We do not just build it and assume people will come. A lot of what we do is around promoting what is there and promoting what has just been put in.

To summarise another key thread, we like to mainstream active travel in everything we do. It is not just about active travel on its own. It is about how we weave and thread that into other projects and other policies. We always take a holistic view. Particularly in the LTP, it is a key theme. It is not just about what is a walking project or what is a cycling project, but about how we can consider them as part of wider modes—for example, as part of a bus journey. It is also how other schemes and policies impact on people's ability to walk and cycle—for example, parking restraints, good bus service provision and that kind of thing. We have ambitions to make walking and cycling the first choice for local journeys or as part of a longer journey, as stated in the Government's CWIS document.

Q200 Chair: All four of you have the word "transport" or "highways" somewhere in your job title. As all of you have alluded to, these are things that touch other parts of the council's work, whether it is education, air quality or health. To what extent have you found it possible to make sure that it is something that is properly owned by the whole council rather than being just for transport? Does that make sense? How have you found that?

Laura Wells: I cannot speak for others, but for us, as a unitary authority, it is easier when all the functions are in the same place. We have some common strategic partnerships, both internally and externally, working with other key departments. For example, we have a sustainable transport and public health partnership. We work very closely with colleagues in public health for delivery, particularly on the revenue side, promoting healthy lifestyles.

More broadly, we have our transport partnership, where we involve stakeholders from across the city, not just to do with active travel but encompassing different modes of travel to make sure that anything we discuss at that forum is quite broad and incorporates active travel. It means that we get a bigger stage to discuss those kinds of things, whereas if we had just a walking forum it might be quite niche. We have taken a broad partnership approach.

Q201 Chair: Does anybody want to add anything about how you make sure it is understood?

Alison Kennedy: In Birmingham, we have been working very closely with public health, particularly on air quality. I do not know if you are



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aware that we have a clean air zone coming forward early next year. We did some joint consultation work over the summer. We have a Birmingham Breathes programme and scheme, and we are working very closely on the health agenda with them.

We work with colleagues on physical activity and wellbeing. We now have a new active wellbeing service, which has become a community benefit society. It was previously in-house and is a new partnership approach to physical activity. They are delivering lots of the revenue-funded activities, such as cycle training, community cycling and walking support in Birmingham.

In house, there are still lots of partnerships. Because of the cutbacks, we are working more widely with other partners. We work with schools and academies, and with the local police. Because we are part of West Midlands, we work with Transport West Midlands and the West Midlands combined authority in a wider context.

Rupert Thacker: We work with lots of partnerships. Bringing public health back into the authority a few years back was really good for us. It made transport practitioners think slightly differently about the wider consequences of the sorts of projects they were looking to implement. We have been working with them, and we are in the process of adopting a new air quality strategy that very much looks at how transport and air quality are inextricably tied together.

We have done some good work with public health around promotion. We had a year of cycling and a year of walking, where we have been out across the county raising awareness of those. Public health helped to support the health walks that our countryside and rights of way team lead. They are voluntary walks across the county that help to engage people and get them out and about. Our local transport plan highlights that inactivity probably costs Hertfordshire something like £16 million a year, so we are tying the two very closely together.

Equally, we have been working with our new police and crime commissioner team on the sorts of things that look at the behavioural aspects of drivers and areas, to try to tie all those different things together, so that it is not just about traditional policing methods. There are things that we can do around behaviour to get people to think differently and to understand how environments change people's willingness to be active and undertake walking and cycling activities.

Q202 **Chair:** Vicky, is there anything from Cornwall?

Vicky Fraser: Likewise, we are working much more closely with public health partners. We have a good relationship with our Cornwall sports partnership. It is less that the ownership falls to transport, although a lot of the funding is still looked for from transport for the core infrastructure delivery. The impact of that infrastructure on other partners' targets and



what they are trying to achieve is much more broadly recognised, and we work together with partners to share those messages.

Q203 **Chair:** What are the particular challenges that you think you face in your authorities and areas in increasing levels of walking and cycling? Thinking about the geography, Cornwall is pretty hilly and Brighton is too. Birmingham is very busy, with a network of major strategic roads. In Hertfordshire, you have some good cycling infrastructure in Stevenage.

Rupert Thacker: Indeed, but no higher usage than some other places.

Q204 **Chair:** It is really interesting. What are the big challenges you face?

Vicky Fraser: Cornwall is a rural county and has a very dispersed population. It is dispersed to the main towns. It has a large rural population and it is difficult to compete with metropolitan areas when you are making the case for funding for certain types of infrastructure. It has a hilly terrain, but in recent years the explosion of e-bikes has taken some of those hills out of the equation. That is certainly the approach we want to take in Cornwall.

We have health issues; 64% of Cornwall's adult population is obese, which is higher than England's average. There are high levels of inactivity. The misconception is that Cornwall, with a beautiful environment, has a very outdoors lifestyle, but people are often chained to having to use their car for a lot of trips. We have the challenge of air quality management areas. We have nine in total in Cornwall. There is also a wealth and inequality issue around transport and access. Almost 20% of people in Cornwall do not have access to a car, which is surprising. The average vehicle age is about 10 years.

Those are challenges that have to be overcome. We think that being able to promote active travel, or to make it an easier option for people, will meet all of those issues. The huge opportunity for us is that about a third of trips in Cornwall are less than 5 km. Even though we are a large county, with a large dispersed population, there are a lot of short trips happening within some of our more urban areas, so that is a huge opportunity for modal shift.

Q205 **Chair:** Who wants to go next with their challenges?

Rupert Thacker: We are a shire authority rather than a metropolitan area, and we are securing significant funding to try to implement measures through a more holistic approach rather than by individual projects that tend to be delivered in various areas across the county and are then quite hard to either publicise or engage on with residents; they may not tie right into their neighbourhood or link them to exactly where they want to go. Large-scale investment would enable us to undertake transformative investment in an area.

We have something called sustainable travel towns highlighted in our local transport plan, which sets out the ambition to invest significant



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sums in a town where we have lots of opportunity to increase active travel. Much like Vicky, 63% of journeys in Hertfordshire are less than 5 miles on average, but cycling and walking probably make up no more than about 6% of mode share overall for that kind of trip. There are lots of opportunities, but it is implementing infrastructure that really makes a difference rather than little bits and pieces that we can afford in certain areas or that are tied to certain new developments.

New developments are another challenge. You can start at the outset in discussions with the developer with a very good set of measures that you would like implemented, but ensuring that they actually end up being put on the ground at the end of the development is quite tricky. There are viability issues around the development. We are not the planning authority, and our members are not necessarily the ones sitting on the planning committees that have to make the decisions about levels of parking provision included in a development. Those sorts of things are particularly challenging, to make sure that we drive the right behaviours going forward.

Q206 Chair: Can you tell me a little bit about Stevenage? It is interesting that it has a lot of segregated cycling infrastructure, but it does not seem to work. Do you know why that is?

Rupert Thacker: It is very easy to drive in Stevenage as well, because it has a big network of dual carriageways that link neighbourhoods together in the town. The cycleways, whenever I have used them, are quite hard to navigate if you are not massively familiar with them. There has obviously been a decrease in employment in the town, although it is still a large-scale employer. The numbers of people who live and work in the town are not quite as high as they used to be. Maybe journeys to Stevenage are still quite difficult for people, for them to be able to get on to that network and then use it to get to their place of employment.

Parking charges and things like that tend to drive behaviour. It is not massively expensive to drive into the town and park. A large-scale regeneration project is under way that has at its core sustainable transport, and the use of the cycle and bus network helps to make sure that it can be delivered. There is a bit of a renaissance coming for it, but it is being able to maintain the network to a state where people feel safe using it. It is not lit around a lot of it; it just relies on carriageway lighting to back-spill on to it, so there are concerns about safety.

It lacks critical mass, like a lot of cycle networks. People think, "Well, I don't want to be riding home from my work at the hospice at 9 o'clock at night on my own in an underpass, where nobody is going to be able to see me if anything happens." There is that sense about security. There are measures we could put in, but it is quite costly to undertake a transformative approach to the way those places look and feel.

Q207 Chair: That is really interesting. There is a lot to be learned from what is not working. Alison, tell us about Birmingham.



Alison Kennedy: There are various city challenges and there are various transport challenges, and funding runs throughout those. In terms of the city challenges, we are the largest council population in the country; we have 1.1 million people in Birmingham. The challenge is accommodating the increase in the numbers of new people and new homes in the city. There is also the challenge of our young population, because half of our residents are under the age of 30. We have the challenge of deprivation. We are the sixth most deprived English local authority. There are wide inequalities in the city itself in life expectancy.

In terms of the corporate challenges, you are probably aware that most local authorities have had cutbacks. We have had 48% staff reductions over the last eight years. There are further cuts to come, and budget reductions. That sometimes limits what we can do corporately and in-house. As regards our structures, public health has come into the council, which is a benefit. We have issues with maintenance structures. The wellbeing service has moved out, but new partnerships are being created all the time.

A lot of the transport challenges are opportunities for active travel as well. The key ones have already been mentioned. There are too many short journeys by car. Within the city, about a quarter of journeys are less than a mile. There are about 1 million car trips each day in Birmingham. Walking a mile would take about 20 minutes and cycling a mile takes about six minutes, so that is the opportunity. We have fairly low walking levels and low cycle use at the moment. We have some cycle routes. We have been improving them through the Birmingham cycle revolution programme over the last few years, but we are still working hard to scale up because of the size of the area and the amount of investment needed.

In some areas we have limited travel choices; 36% of households do not have access to a car. We are trying to improve the wider transport network. It is not just about walking and cycling; it is about the bus, the rail and the metro. We are looking at bus rapid transit in the city at the moment. A lot of walking active travel is the short journey to the next public transport connection, to go on a longer distance journey.

Social isolation is a challenge. By 2020, about 57,000 people aged 65-plus will be living alone in the city, 37% of that age group. That is something we need to look at in terms of transport, although it does not always appear as one of our transport priorities. It is a key factor, and active travel—walking, cycling and the presence of people on local streets moving about rather than in vehicles—improves social isolation.

Inactivity is a key thing, and issues of obesity. Around a third of adults in West Midlands are currently inactive and spend less than 30 minutes per week on physical activity. The estimated cost of that is £147 million a year. That is from our 2017 report, "West Midlands on the Move".



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Inactivity obviously has impacts on various diseases and illness, particularly on mental health as well as physical health.

Q208 **Chair:** If you can get more people walking and cycling, it sounds like it could have a huge impact, not least because they are very cheap to do.

Alison Kennedy: Yes. Poor air quality is another challenge and has been mentioned already. We are looking at a clean air zone being introduced in early 2020 in Birmingham. Each year, 900 early adult deaths occur due to long-term exposure to air pollution, which is unacceptable. We have been mandated to improve air quality, but that is something we want to do as a city anyway because it is better for our residents, visitors and people working in the city.

There is the actual cost of congestion. We have limited capacity on our current road network. We cannot build our way out of it any more. We have to look at other solutions. We have to look at public transport and active travel. There is a real opportunity to reduce congestion.

Q209 **Chair:** Are there any particular challenges, Laura, that you face in Brighton that are different from the general ones that people have talked about?

Laura Wells: We will discuss funding at more length, but that is a key challenge across the board, particularly for us. It is important to acknowledge the good starting position that we in Brighton are lucky to be in. From the 2011 census travel to work data, for example, we have 21% walking to work, which is more than double the south-eastern England figures. We have 5% for cycling compared with 3% for south-eastern England. We have 14% by bus compared with 5% in the south-east and 8% in England. We only have 37% driving to work compared with 61% in the wider south-east. We have a very good starting position, although obviously that data is increasingly historical.

That is not to say that we do not have challenges and issues to address. Generally, there is good uptake of active travel modes. However, there is a need to reach out, particularly to more minority groups. While Brighton and Hove residents are more active than nationally as a whole, among black and minority ethnic groups, in deprived wards and among older people, physical activity levels are a lot lower. There are challenges with particular groups in the city.

There are topographical challenges, as with other places. We are quite a compact city, which lends itself well to walking and cycling generally, but 40% of the city is in the South Downs national park and that has its own challenges. We need to ensure that there are linkages between the national park and the city to open up access to residents to enjoy the open space. There is a topographical challenge with hilly areas in some key parts of the city. We are starting to see a lot of e-bike usage in the city, which is looking to address that.



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We have similar challenges to elsewhere in accommodating growth, particularly among quite a young population. There are two universities and a lot of colleges with a transient population, and we have a lot of visitors of course. That is a key challenge for our city, particularly in the summer months when the numbers in the city, especially on a very sunny Bank Holiday weekend, as we saw last May, put us under more pressure.

Air quality is a big challenge in some key areas in the city. We have air quality management areas in the city, and we are looking to address those. We have a low emission zone focused on reducing emissions from public transport, which has been successful. Another key challenge for us is around highway maintenance. It is quite a basic one, but maintaining what we have to a standard that is fit for active travel, and keeping up the good levels of active travel, is quite a challenge in itself, rather than building new infrastructure.

Chair: The subject of another inquiry by the Committee is local roads funding and governance. Thank you very much.

We now want to move on to talk about the support you have had from central Government and what does and does not work.

Q210 Ruth Cadbury: I have a question on challenges. As a London MP and resident, something I notice when I leave London—Birmingham being one of the places I often spend time walking around; sorry, Alison—is that junction priorities and the use of crossings and so on seem to be designed to favour the vehicle rather than people walking or cycling. Is there a cultural issue, or is it a funding issue that tends to create that sort of environment? That is not about additional funding; it is about how resources are used.

Rupert Thacker: I think it is a cultural issue. Certainly it is in Hertfordshire; I do not know about elsewhere. There is very much the expectation that you keep traffic moving, because the majority of our traffic, and 60% of travel to work, is by car. The consensus among users is that that is the most important mode. That is based on a political cycle, where certain people have their say on the direction we are going. It is very hard to move public perception of active modes. If you say to somebody, "Why don't you cycle to the station?", they say, "Well, there isn't a network and I don't feel safe doing it," so they get dropped off.

It is hard to break that cycle of primary use, or the direction we have taken in the past. If you said, "We are going to make these signals a priority focus for pedestrians; we are going to hold up traffic for longer and we are going to make them more responsive when you press the button so that you can cross more quickly," we would get lots of letters. I do not doubt that we would get lots of people saying, "Why have you done this? You have made the traffic longer and the air quality is going to get worse as a result." We would be challenged on it, but we have slowly been making those adjustments. We have put in measures that look to favour pedestrians, but to do it across the board takes time and



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investment. You need different technical equipment to make it happen more easily and to be able to monitor it.

Q211 **Ruth Cadbury:** Even things like stop lines and the way a junction works. Obviously, I accept that signal crossings are expensive.

Rupert Thacker: To minimise the pain of those changes, it often takes investment to sit alongside them, so that you are trying to mitigate the disbenefits to some users while maximising them in line with our LTP for active modes. It still would take investment to do it.

Alison Kennedy: Historically, it has been about keeping the traffic moving, and pedestrians are the last to be thought of. Even in engineering guidance, it is all about traffic flows. When we did traffic modelling, pedestrians were not always factored in. It is for us and national Government to rebalance that and communicate to drivers that there are other users of the road, and it is about moving people around.

In Birmingham, we are starting to trial new crossings and new improvements. As part of the Birmingham cycle revolution, we have two key new routes on the A38 and A34 that are currently putting in new cycle and pedestrian crossings. There is going to be some disruption to traffic flows, which is inevitable, but we are trying to manage traffic. In fact, we are changing it slightly to improve the signals and some of the turning movements so that we can balance all modes as far as possible.

Q212 **Ruth Cadbury:** Are the Government helping you to realise your ambitions to increase cycling and walking levels, or hindering you?

Vicky Fraser: There could be some help, particularly around planning. The current guidance around planning is very much weighted pro-developer. The onus is to get homes built, but there is very little commitment on the developer to make sure that their sites are truly sustainable and accessible. There could certainly be some help and powers in that area to make it easier to secure the contributions of developers and make sure that those things are considered from the outset rather than being an add-on. That was one of the key things I wanted to raise.

Rupert Thacker: There are mixed messages from Government. CWIS is a great document, and as an authority we are fully supportive of its direction. Equally, other investment opportunities come up that do not necessarily seem to reflect active modes terribly well. The MRN guidance that has just come out does not explicitly state that it is there to enable and support active modes. It is much more about capacity and the traditional predict and provide-type infrastructure. Yes, the Government help, but there is certainly more they could do to have a more joined-up approach in putting sustainable and active travel right at the forefront of what they are seeking to achieve, and leading by example.

Alison Kennedy: There is a lot of help and support from Government towards active travel, but further help would be great; obviously more



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funding, and wider recognition among different Government Departments that a cross-sector approach is needed and that there are shared outcomes, particularly in health.

In terms of support, we have had quite a lot of technical design guidance over the years, but we are looking forward to some new guidance on cycle-friendly infrastructure and tactile surfaces, which is coming out in the next year. That will be really helpful. Something that is quite robust, with dimensions on it, is useful for us, not just internally but when we are talking with developers about how to lay out new developments.

We have had some support for local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, which is welcome. In terms of wider help, things like the national legislation that is coming forward—intelligent speed assistance—will help with wider traffic management in our cities. There are other things like 20 mph speeds. We need support on that through national legislation. We need pavement parking enforcement. I think that is a separate inquiry, but it is a key point for us.

We need help in monitoring. We have a lot of data on cycling, but in the last few years we have less data on school travel because the school census is no longer compulsory. Some guidance between different authorities on how we consistently measure walking would help as well.

Laura Wells: I share a lot of the comments that have already been made. To highlight a few key ones from our end, cross-departmental working at central level could be better in terms of active travel being recognised across multiple Government Departments. It is not just for Transport to address, after all.

The monitoring point is a good one. We have a lot of good examples of schemes from around the UK and beyond. Perhaps there could be some help or assistance in disseminating that and bringing together case studies and monitoring, and learning from them as a whole, across the country. There could be consistency of monitoring across the UK so that we could all have a common benchmark.

We broadly welcome the CWIS document, the LCWIP and the technical guidance. We found that there has been some support for the development of LCWIP, but we have not had the technical support from DFT, although we applied. More support in that regard would be welcome. While we welcome the vision, and we totally recognise it locally, and have made local priorities to develop that area of work, funding is a real issue in delivering that. We certainly see the vision from DFT, but, if there is no support, realising it at local level can feel quite detached.

Q213 **Ruth Cadbury:** For those of you who have had funding for local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, how helpful has it been and what difference would it have made if you had not had that funding?



Vicky Fraser: We are fortunate to have LCWIP funding focused on Truro. It has been helpful in terms of the technical guidance. It has highlighted for us some areas where we are thinking about putting cycling and walking access improvements through, where there are different needs, and we need to look at cycling in one area and pedestrian needs in another. It is not just an active travel link.

Looking forward to the outcome and having a prioritised network for Truro, the key thing for us will be ensuring that we get the funding to deliver that network, but it has been a useful exercise. It has given some of our officers greater technical expertise and design guidance, so it has been useful.

Rupert Thacker: It helps to give focus as well. If you get funding, it gives you the drive to make the plan happen and enables you to focus your resources on it, rather than its being one of a number of things that you would like to do. It is the catalyst for you starting to make changes and to work more closely with the groups and bodies that exist, to understand the network and to get a good set of connections and understanding between local government and people who use the network. That is really valuable and helps you to engage and have something positive to work towards.

Alison Kennedy: We received regional support for local cycling and walking infrastructure plans. We are one of seven metropolitan authorities, plus the West Midlands combined authority. We received support in a grant and we then commissioned consultants to do some work on the regional view. We also did some training for officers, which was really useful, both on walking and cycling development.

From that, we now have a regional cycle priority network, which has been very useful. That has gone forward to the West Midlands combined authority board, and has helped us to draw down some funding from the Transforming Cities fund. In Birmingham, it has given us a kind of structure, but we need to put in a detailed network plan. We are working on that at the moment for our own LCWIP.

Q214 **Ruth Cadbury:** Some of you touched on the various guidance on infrastructure design. You are waiting for some more. How helpful is the current guidance and what are its limitations? How could it be improved?

Rupert Thacker: The current guidance is a mixture of best practice. TfL and some other metropolitan authorities are ahead of where the Government's guidance is. In Hertfordshire, we have created our own hybrid of best practice that we seek to ensure that we use ourselves, and we try to encourage developers to work with us to make sure that it happens. Something that brings best practice thinking together and is applicable to England as a whole would be much better than what we currently have. Some of it is quite dated in its thinking.



Alison Kennedy: Things are moving on very fast. We had a walking summit with Living Streets in Birmingham last week. There are a lot of new initiatives. A lot of new schemes are going on in London and in Manchester, as well as in other cities around the country, and that needs to go into the new guidance. We have developed a West Midlands cycling design guidance as well. The current guidance is useful, but we need up-to-date guidance, with the best practice from current schemes, and particularly more on walking because that always gets left behind a bit.

Laura Wells: It is about staying up to date with current developments, which often move quite quickly. We have often been an early adopter of some of the previous amendments to guidance. We were one of the first authorities to put in advance stop lines and cycle contraflows on one-way streets, which are now done as standard. We were early adopters of those. It is about the guidance moving quickly enough to recognise any difficulties with previous versions and any innovations coming through.

I am looking with interest at the trials they are doing in Manchester of side road pedestrian crossings, and how other places might benefit from the research they are doing there; and how that then might go into guidance. It is about keeping up to date with everything that is going on in different areas.

Vicky Fraser: We would prefer the guidance not to be too prescriptive. In a truly place-shaping approach, and taking a holistic approach in town centres, it is less about geometry and engineering design and more about general principles about who is the most important user in the street, with principles around the more vulnerable users. We acknowledge that there was a pause on shared space schemes, but that has left a gap and we are looking for advice on how we treat public ground schemes, where there is sharing of space between various users. We do not want prescriptive design guidance; sharing best practice and some key principles is most helpful.

Q215 **Daniel Zeichner:** It was said a couple of years ago that the Welsh Government's advice on active travel was trendsetting and ahead of the UK Government. Is that something you are aware of? I think it has also been said that, despite being ahead of the game, some of the results were not as good as people had hoped. Are you aware of that? Do you have any reflections on that? Are there any lessons to be learned?

Alison Kennedy: We used some of the design drawings from that in our West Midlands guidance, feeding into future guidance. Dimensions are quite important in guidance, as well as general principles. When you design a scheme, the detail is critical. Often for active travel it is how deep a refuge is; can you accommodate a pushchair or a bicycle without overhanging the road? Are the dropped kerbs and ramps at the right sort of gradients? That is important, if we are trying to make it more inclusive. Active travel includes a lot of people with disabilities. The detail in guidance is important.



Q216 **Chair:** We have all seen examples where the principles were followed but they were compromised to such an extent that they did not really work. Is that what you are saying, Alison?

Alison Kennedy: Yes.

Rupert Thacker: Sometimes it is on difficult parts of the network that you need guidance to help support the proposal you are putting forward; where you potentially need to remove capacity from the network to get sufficient width of cycle lane to enable users to feel safe, or to make sure that you get a pedestrian crossing refuge at a width where you are happy to use it in a wheelchair or a disability vehicle.

The guidance helps you, when you are at a public consultation, to stand up and say, "Look, we need to make this difference, and, if we are going to do it properly, we want the investment to work. This is the Government guidance that supports us in doing it," rather than something that is quite open so that they say, "Well, if you just made it a bit narrower, you can still get through there, or I can still park there." We know that is not going to work because users will not be comfortable doing it, so the guidance is very important.

The Welsh document and their more joined-up and holistic approach to active travel, and how it fits in with their longer-term aspirations, is ahead of where we are at the moment. It is a good set of documents that help to drive the agenda in the right direction.

Laura Wells: A lot of it comes back to case studies and monitoring. It is about taking out capacity for traffic from a junction. Who else has done it, where was that, how well did it work and what does the evidence show? The more we can gather that from case studies around the country, put it into guidance and use it in the schemes we are doing, the more weight it will have in decisions being made positively.

Q217 **Chair:** I do not want to take up too much time, but following on from what you were saying, Rupert, to what extent is road user acceptance, or motorists giving up road space, a real challenge in improving active travel?

Rupert Thacker: It is a huge challenge. As I said, one of the biggest barriers to people choosing active modes is their feeling of safety and security. You need to provide a network where they feel that they want to use it rather than that they have to use it. In some of our historic towns like St Albans, the network is at capacity or over-capacity already, so coming along to put in a network that will encourage active modes is very challenging. It is getting people to be accepting of the fact that it is not going to be as quick to get through a junction in the first instance, until people choose to use the new facilities.

It is much like the Embankment here. You face a similar set of challenges. It is getting people to understand that what we are trying to provide is a more efficient network, because more people can use it if you



provide more ability for active modes to be seen as the first option. It is around enabling people to make the right choice of mode for the right journey. As we have all said, we have an awful lot of short journeys where people could walk or cycle, but at the moment they do not.

Chair: We will look in a little more detail at some of the specific things you have collectively done around that.

Q218 **Jack Brereton:** You have already touched on some of the plans you have been developing to increase active travel. Could you touch a bit more on some of the specific plans in your areas to encourage more walking and cycling?

Laura Wells: For us generally, it goes back to the local transport plan from 2015, as well as our city plan for the development planning side of things. We do not have mode-specific strategies. It was a deliberate decision not to separate modes; for example, we are working on things like the interchange strategy, looking at the active interchange and how we can improve that. That impacts on all modes and all users rather than being a walking strategy or a bus strategy. Again, we are looking at taking a holistic view of active travel in everything we do.

Alison Kennedy: In Birmingham, we have three key objectives. It is about enabling active travel, developing a city that has opportunities for active travel, and inspiring active travel. The practical stuff we are doing is not just about infrastructure; it is about the enabling side, providing skills and confidence for people to walk and cycle.

We have done a lot of work through the Birmingham cycle revolution programme and the active wellbeing service, with other partners, to train people to have the confidence to cycle. We are giving out 7,000 Big Birmingham bikes so that people have a bike they can use. As part of developing the city, we have been putting in infrastructure for cycle parking and cycle routes. We have resurfaced 30 miles of canal towpaths and 20 miles of green routes through our city parks. We are currently finishing off two key main corridor schemes on the A38 and A34 corridors, south Birmingham and north Birmingham to Perry Barr, which is one of the Commonwealth Games venues.

There is a lot going on in developing infrastructure. A lot of it has been focused on cycling because we have had money recently for cycling through the cycle city ambition grant. We are working on wider projects to manage demand and reduce transport emissions through things like the clean air zone.

In inspiring active travel, we work closely with a lot of partners. We are working with schools, businesses and communities. We work very closely with the West Midlands police on things like the close pass campaign and other enforcement, which helps people to get the message out that we take cycling and walking seriously.



Rupert Thacker: Off the back of LTP4, we have a new generation of growth in transport plans. They are geographically focused plans for areas of Hertfordshire where we know, through our transport modelling, that there are a lot of interconnected trips either within towns or between towns that are close to each other. The growth in transport plans set out priority investments to cater both for new development as it comes forward and to ensure that we make the best use of the networks we have. Going forward, they form an investment strategy and priority list for the measures we are looking to fund either through Government bids or when development comes forward through the CIL lists that local planning authorities create through their local plans and their implementation plans.

We have a rolling programme of those across the county; there are five in total, and we are developing them along with key corridor strategies, like the A414, which is our key east-west link in the county. It is primarily good north to south, but is lacking in east to west connectivity. That is a multimodal strategy that looks to ensure, through assessment of place and movement, that we enable people to undertake the right journey with the right choice of mode. We have got them and we can bring in some funding to deliver them, but the ability to increase that level of funding to drive changes that would support both existing communities and new ones as towns grow would be very welcome.

Vicky Fraser: In addition to identifying walking and cycling networks on the back of our development plans, we are developing supplementary planning documents and updating highway design guidance to prioritise active travel, slow speeds and sign permeability in new neighbourhoods. I do not think we can underestimate, certainly in Cornwall, the impact of experiential tourism and leisure cycling, and how that can often be a trigger for people to include cycling as part of their everyday trips. We have been fortunate to secure funding, through Highways England designated funds, in the region of £17 million to deliver five off-road, high-quality cycle trails connecting central Cornwall and some key destinations.

Primarily, a lot of those routes will be viewed as leisure trips. Given the success we have had with some of our leisure cycle trails, the draw will be huge. They also draw communities, and we hope that people who try them as families at the weekend will be encouraged to use those links for work and for school. They are all off-road, they are very safe and they are segregated. They are going to be of high quality, and the maintenance will come with those links. We are really pleased to have that ambition and the money secured for delivery.

There is general excitement at the moment around Cornwall. The Tour of Britain grand depart has been announced for 2020. Events like that are really something. It may be a one-day event, but there is a real legacy for us. We have to make the most of it to get active travel and cycling talked about. People are getting excited about it, particularly in schools



and other communities. It is an exciting time, and we are looking at leisure cycling as a trigger for more everyday cycling.

Q219 **Jack Brereton:** Rupert, you mentioned ensuring that people choose the right mode of transport for their travel. Has there been active encouragement in your plans to ensure that people move away from using their cars and towards cycling and walking?

Rupert Thacker: We have some very good programmes of cycle training that help with that. We carry out publicity to make people aware. As part of the development of the packs, we have introduced data reports that provide key evidence for towns, districts and boroughs, and for residents to understand the impacts of their choices. We can point to the fact that a huge proportion of journeys within a town are less than three miles, but maybe 60% of those journeys are undertaken by car, and link that to the public health aspects—what it can do for your physical and mental wellbeing—and the air quality impacts.

Tying that all together is the message we are trying to get out to communities, and we are trying to understand where we need to make changes to make it an attractive option for them. The growth in transport plans and sustainable travel towns, as they come forward, will seek to highlight, “Well, we have made this change in response to these challenges that we have identified and the opportunities that we believe exist for you to do things slightly differently, particularly to ease the pressures on the network.”

Q220 **Jack Brereton:** What other views are there on encouraging modal shift? Has that been something you have focused on to ensure that there is encouragement for people to leave their cars at home and use cycling and walking more effectively?

Alison Kennedy: Regular communication is key. We have connected updates that go out, but we are also working with West Midlands combined authority on wider demand management. There are a lot of exciting plans in the city, but that is going to cause quite a lot of disruption. We have things like HS2, the Commonwealth Games and the clean air zone coming forward. Active travel is the alternative for a lot of journeys, so the communication and behaviour change ideas coming forward, and the West Midlands communication of that, is key. It has to be reinforced regularly, not just locally but regionally and nationally as well.

Laura Wells: I share that view. The behaviour change element of active travel projects has been key for us, certainly over the last 10 years or so. For us, it really goes together with the infrastructure projects. We do not just build something and disappear. We actively promote it, and that is a big part of increasing uptake.

We have seen real success with our bike share scheme, which only launched a year and a half ago. There has been huge uptake of that, with



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over 1 million journeys, 68,000 members and 600,000 unique journeys in just a year and a half. A big part of that was not just putting in the docks themselves, for which we got capital funding, but using revenue funding support through the access fund. We got staff working with schools, with workplaces, with jobseekers and in the community, along with public health staff, to promote the facilities and increase uptake. They did a lot of events and had engagement in the community about how it all worked. The two go hand in hand quite nicely. We need to make sure that that continues in projects supported by revenue.

We have had quite sustained involvement with travel planning-type activities with workplaces and schools over the last 10 years. That has been through things like the local sustainable transport fund, sustainable travel transition year and now the access fund. We have done a lot of work with early years' education. It is not just primary and secondary but going into nurseries and doing a lot with them, as well as the more traditional areas. We have been able to gain momentum over that time. That has been quite a key feature. It has not been stop/start. We have been fortunate to gain various pots of revenue-based funding, but they are all quite competitive pots. This time next year, we do not know what the future is for that kind of funding area. The momentum and sustained activity in that area is key to increasing active travel.

Q221 **Jack Brereton:** Vicky, do you want to add anything?

Vicky Fraser: I echo that. Sustained revenue funding is critical. We have been fortunate to link with Sustrans, and they have done a lot of our behavioural change work for us. They build relationships in workplaces and schools. They need that relationship to keep going to see a change.

We are looking at how Bikeability training is delivered. In Cornwall, we are keen to have the ambition that every child has the offer of Bikeability training before they go to secondary school. At the moment, it is quite patchy in terms of the number of children who are able to take up that offer. We think that is key, but it needs commitment of revenue funding along with the delivery of the infrastructure.

Q222 **Jack Brereton:** In terms of the powers that local authorities have, we touched earlier on planning policy and how that can help to influence. Are there other powers that local authorities could or should have that would help to improve active travel?

Alison Kennedy: I mentioned earlier the default 20 mph and pavement parking. They are two of the key ones for us.

Q223 **Jack Brereton:** Does anybody else want to add any particular powers that they think they should have to improve active travel?

Rupert Thacker: There are things around traffic regulation orders that sometimes seem very challenging when you are trying to implement measures to support active modes. The traffic regulation order process obviously needs to be transparent and clear for the public to be able to



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understand what we are doing. It can hold up or delay, or even mean that you cannot deliver the projects.

I do not know whether there is a balance that can be reached that enables you to demonstrate that you are delivering improvements for active modes. It should have some sort of weighting in the consideration of where you are going; otherwise you could get to a point where you want to deliver something but it becomes impossible because of a small amount of resistance from certain groups. To go through the processes that are tied to traffic regulation orders is very challenging, and very costly for authorities to overcome in terms of resource.

Laura Wells: Pavement parking is the subject of a separate inquiry, which was good news yesterday. On a broader note, there are moving traffic offences and having the option for local authorities to enforce those if they so wish. Enforcement of those locally and the resourcing of that is quite an issue at the moment. It goes against encouraging people to take up walking and cycling if it is perceived as dangerous, with activities like that happening.

Q224 **Jack Brereton:** Are there examples of specific projects in your areas that have encouraged more people to walk and cycle?

Vicky Fraser: With our local enterprise partnership, we secured growth deal funding. We delivered walking and cycling infrastructure along the main corridor coming into Truro, and we have seen an increase in walking and cycling in the years since that was put in. We continue to monitor that.

We have delivered quite an ambitious scheme in the centre of Bodmin. Bodmin sits between some world-class cycling trails—the Camel trail and the Lanhedrock cycle trail. Bodmin sat in the centre of that but did not benefit directly, so we did an ambitious scheme in the centre of the town where we removed a lot of the pedestrian crossings and delivered a low-speed environment. It was a tricky scheme to deliver. The town was very patient with us while we closed the town off to traffic, but we have some incredible results. Air quality has already improved; monitoring is showing significant improvements. We are waiting for our walking and cycling figures to come through after a full year, but there are already some good signs. Traffic speeds have slowed on average by about 15%, so the scheme is delivering what we set out to do.

Rupert Thacker: We have delivered a number of what I think are very good schemes across Hertfordshire. Monitoring is an issue for authorities, so that they have the resource and capability to undertake it before, during and after projects are delivered, and to carry it on for a long enough period of time to actually understand the long-term effects, rather than the short revenue funding you get to promote it for a period after the scheme is delivered. Once that stops, everything stops and the monitoring becomes a little bit more ad hoc, and maybe is only in one or



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two places, rather than being a comprehensive understanding of the area you have tried to influence. There are challenges around it.

One of the schemes we delivered was the Royston rail underpass. That was a new link, linking two parts of the town together. It was a hugely successful project resulting in increased active travel uptake. It was a significant investment that was town-changing. You can promote it and sell it to people in a much more positive way than an individual toucan crossing upgrade or a short section of cycle track that may be quite easy to implement but where you have not been able to tackle the harder bits of the network that are the barriers to people's choices.

Alison Kennedy: We have had a variety of behaviour change and infrastructure initiatives recently. We had a walk to school outreach project with Living Streets, working with a wide range of schools in the city. We had some of the WoW champions at last week's Living Streets summit from Benson Community School in Handsworth. That is very focused support in part of the community, but it has shown results in improved walking levels to school.

In terms of big infrastructure projects, we obviously have the Birmingham cycle revolution programme that I mentioned before. We have upgraded canal towpaths and green routes, and created new main corridor routes. There is a whole host of other measures supporting that. We have done 20 mph speed limits in a huge area of the city as a part of that. Big Birmingham Bikes has just given 7,000 bikes to deprived areas. That has now developed into community cycling clubs. There are 22 of those around the city, which continue to support people who have bikes or can borrow bikes to use the new routes and get out to explore them for leisure and for daily travel.

The Birmingham cycle revolution has been over the last five years. We are still monitoring results and trends from that, but so far the indications are very positive. For example, the Birmingham and Worcester canal, which is our link from the city centre to Birmingham University, was improved in terms of the surface and we have widened a section through a canal tunnel at Edgbaston. We have put in a new access at Fiveways and new wheeling ramps at two or three places along the route. Levels of both cycling and walking along the canal have increased.

Safety in numbers was mentioned earlier. Social safety is an issue. We have a lot of good green routes and canal routes, but they are not lit at night and perhaps are not usable all year round. Where there are numbers of people using them in the daylight, it feels much safer. One of the things we would like to do in the future is to look further at how we can improve the social safety of our walking and cycling routes in the city.

Laura Wells: I mentioned our very successful bike share scheme. To add a couple more stats, from a recent survey undertaken across the country by CoMoUK, a third of the users of our scheme do not actually own their



own bike, so taking away the barrier to bike ownership is a key way to get people using bikes. An additional 7% no longer own a bike since joining the scheme because there are barriers to bike ownership in the city as well, with storage and so on. That is really positive.

Some other projects have been undertaken. The Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor has some key bus and cycle improvements as part of the LSTF. Again, that went hand in hand with revenue support. It led to a 14% increase in cycling and a 7% increase in bus use within two years of the project. Seven Dials was a mainly pedestrian focused scheme, removing traffic signals and a mini-roundabout in favour of public realm improvements and pedestrian crossings. It improved the public realm and the sense of community in the area and has been very well received by residents. There is the school travel plan and the Bike It scheme that we run with Sustrans, with sustained work over the last 10-plus years. We have seen reductions in the number of pupils being driven all the way to school over that time, which is great.

Going back to our holistic view of active travel, we have done a lot with local bus companies. There have been bus-based active travel-type interventions. We have a quality bus partnership that is very successful. We have introduced the KeyGo smartcard with rail and bus providers, which helps people who are walking and cycling as part of their journey. There is also a very successful initiative called "Breeze up to the Downs", which is about the provision of bikes on buses. That is quite a rare example, and there has been very positive feedback from users. It allows cyclists to take their bikes on a bus up to the South Downs to go for a bike ride, when previously they might have driven or cycled the whole way. That has been very positively received.

Q225 Jack Brereton: You have all given some great examples of projects that work really well. Are there any projects that did not go quite so well and which, with hindsight, you would have done differently?

Rupert Thacker: If you go back through the catalogue of projects that have been implemented over the years, with every authority there is one you can look at now where you think, "Well, if we were doing it today with our current understanding we wouldn't have done it like that." More recently, I do not think that is the case so much, but there is still the challenge of making sure that we deal with the complete network rather than avoiding the difficult bits. Connectivity and completion of networks is what makes the difference to users. Sometimes, it is the bits we do not deliver that are the challenge rather than the bits that we do.

Alison Kennedy: We had a review a couple of years ago of the Birmingham cycle revolution programme and we had a refocus. Formerly, lots of the highway schemes were not fully segregated, or there was no priority for walking and cycling across junctions. The refocus has meant that we have invested in two very high-profile routes instead of maybe a multiple number of other routes. We have the A38 route and the A34 route, which are being completed in the next couple of months. They are



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very expensive, high-quality new routes for Birmingham. We would like to see more of those in the future, but from lessons learned we looked back and felt that we needed to step up the quality and priority of the schemes.

Laura Wells: As Rupert says, it is a constant process of learning from what you have done in the past and what you can improve, particularly thinking about the whole journey and not just the stretch that has been improved. For whatever reason, that section might have been chosen, but what about either end? It is about linking up the whole journey. That is where the more strategic approach to networks that has come through the LCWIP process has been welcome, looking at whole journeys rather than just the small section that can be improved at one time.

Chair: That is really helpful. I am conscious of the time. We definitely want to touch on the thorny issue of funding, to which a number of you have alluded.

Q226 **Daniel Zeichner:** Yes, you have alluded to some of this so I will try to keep it brief. Do you know, and can you tell us, how much and what proportion of your local transport budgets is spent on active travel? That may not be a very easy question to answer, but do you have any sense of that?

Rupert Thacker: It is a difficult question to answer. It depends on how our budgets are sliced and diced and where they sit. Roughly 4% to 5% of our current transport spend is on schemes that directly involve active modes. It is probably higher if you look at the broader range of projects that we implement, and some of the measures that we tie to them to try to get a more holistic approach to the projects. That is the direction we have been going in to make sure that we recognise active and sustainable modes as part of most of the projects we deliver, and that, where possible, we are improving some footway alongside a carriageway resurfacing and things like that. If you look at our core budgets, it is probably about 4% to 5% maximum.

Q227 **Daniel Zeichner:** Is that the same for others?

Alison Kennedy: We are slightly different. We have had funding from the cycle cities ambition grant for the last few years. In the financial year just gone, 2018-19, our total transport capital budget was about £60 million, and 38% of that was active travel because of the spend on cycling projects. That is about £19 per head in Birmingham.

Looking at the current financial year, 2019-20, again it is about £60 million for our capital transport budget. About 21% is for active travel, and that is about £12 per head. It fluctuates year on year and it depends on what other funds are coming in. We have quite a lot of local growth funds in some years, but not in other years. We have had a lot of funding for the Birmingham cycle revolution in the last few years. That has been great, but the future is not looking so rosy at the moment.



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Laura Wells: It is a very difficult question. Walking and cycling are so ingrained in lots of different areas of our funding that it is very difficult to say. Upgrading signals and maintaining footways and carriageways can benefit pedestrians and cyclists, so it is very hard to say. For us, it is across the board. Certainly for major projects like Valley Gardens, which is a key city centre project at the moment, there is at least a 30% to 40% minimum spend on the active travel element part of that. If we had to estimate a figure, it is that, or higher.

Vicky Fraser: A lot of our local transport plan funding is dedicated to walking and cycling. It is a real benefit to us that we dedicate funding there. As I said, we have been fortunate to get £17 million of designated funding through Highways England, so there is a huge investment in dedicated walking and cycling in Cornwall, but you still have to put that in the context of about £500 million investment in major road schemes in Cornwall. It is still very short of being a balanced picture. It is hard because obviously you design walking and cycling as part of those major road schemes, but that is not the core focus of the funding.

Q228 **Daniel Zeichner:** One of the puzzles for many of us is the variety of local government structures and so on. I think we have four different kinds of local government before us. One thing that I found puzzling in my area, which has a combined authority, is that at one point money was coming through the local enterprise partnerships for cycling and walking. When you talk about the amount of money that is spent locally, is that all the money that is being spent locally, or are there others doing stuff as well?

Vicky Fraser: The money I referred to is coming through another route—designated funds through Highways England. We have been successful in securing in the region of £15 million through our local enterprise partnership, through growth deal funding, previously. There are other routes and avenues, but in our core transport block of funding we rely on the local transport plan integrated block funding to deliver local improvements for walking and cycling.

Q229 **Daniel Zeichner:** I suspect the conclusion we are going to come to is that this is complicated. In local decision making and prioritisation, are the amounts that are spent on roads, buses or active travel something you consciously think about, or is that not the kind of process that you or your members are going through?

Alison Kennedy: We are regularly challenged on what we spend on different modes so, yes, we think about it.

Q230 **Daniel Zeichner:** Are you able, because of the complexity, to make choices, or does the fact that it comes down some particular bidding route mean that you cannot do very much about it?

Rupert Thacker: You are limited in your ability to move the funds around because of how they are allocated from Government in the grant awards. The other thing worth noting is that, through the planning



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structure, things like CIL are retained by our local planning authorities in a two-tier system. We then need to bid and be successful in those bids to get the funding to deliver some of the projects that we would like to see happen.

Q231 **Daniel Zeichner:** You bid to your districts as well as to Government.

Rupert Thacker: And to our LEPs and to our police and crime commissioners, and to other bodies like Highways England.

Q232 **Daniel Zeichner:** This came up in Manchester. In a combined authority, there is potential, presumably, to shift funds from some devolved health budgets and so on. It is a very complex mix of processes. This is a simple question: how difficult is it for you to access funds? Is the system too complicated to do what you are trying to do? Are you spending a lot of time bidding?

Rupert Thacker: Yes. It is very hard to get enough foresight to be able to develop a consistent programme with a clear direction and buy-in that you can then sell to communities. You are saying, "We are doing this here, and in four years' time we would like to get to that community," but you do not know that the funding is going to be there. It is too complicated at the moment. It is also too inconsistent in terms of the level of funding that you know is going to be there.

Alison Kennedy: And in the criteria for different funding and how they are assessed. For the local growth fund, you might have to achieve a certain number of homes or jobs. For other funding it might be a health outcome or different outputs. Sometimes the window for applying for funding is very short and you have to be ready for that.

Rupert Thacker: It is often quite resource intensive to be able to submit the bid.

Laura Wells: Being able to frontload the bidding process can be quite complex in terms of having the revenue funding for officers and/or wider support to develop the bid in the best way possible, usually in quite a short timescale, to fit the criteria for whatever competitive fund is available. The ability to plan for that can be very difficult. Funding tends to be increasingly piecemeal, increasingly competitive and increasingly has different criteria and so on. The ability to plan long term, particularly for revenue streams, is very difficult. Looking to just a year's time for our successful revenue-based travel planning work, the future is not known as to what that will be. Being able to plan for that is really difficult.

Q233 **Daniel Zeichner:** Is the revenue/capital split a real problem? It has been coming through in your comments throughout. You would all like more flexibility, presumably.

Alison Kennedy: Yes.

Q234 **Daniel Zeichner:** That was fairly obvious. Given all that you have said, if



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there is one single thing that should come back as a message about what would be better in terms of the funding, other than just more, what would it be?

Alison Kennedy: Certainty in funding for the long term and being able to plan long term. A lot of us are now planning local cycling and walking infrastructure plans for the next five or 10 years. We have our plans ready. We have ideas and guidance coming through, but we would like some certainty on funding, so that we can take them forward.

Laura Wells: It is consistency as well. I mentioned a lot of the competitive pots that are coming through, but we need consistency of funding devolved to local authorities for what they know they need to do in their areas, to be able to learn from all the examples, evidence and case studies over the last 10 or 20 years and successfully apply that locally. Consistency in being able to do that would be welcome.

Q235 **Daniel Zeichner:** Are there any views on ring-fencing?

Vicky Fraser: There should be dedicated funding, to be able to develop a business case that really appreciates the value of walking and cycling and does not try to fit it into a roads investment business case. At the moment, when we submit business cases the value is still more on the car user, and more geared towards roads. The benefits of walking and cycling are clear. We need the guidance to reflect that.

Q236 **Chair:** Sorry to interrupt your questions, Daniel, but I want to follow something up. It was suggested to me that because of the way plans are currently developed, in terms of benefits and costs, the emphasis is always on journey time savings for cars. I have heard examples that, where you try to put in active travel measures, it slows down car journeys and therefore you cannot get your cost-benefit ratio. Have any of you experienced that?

Vicky Fraser: Yes. That is absolutely right. It is absolutely the case. At the moment, the value is such that making a journey more reliable for a walker or a cyclist and encouraging active travel will put such a disbenefit on the car user that your business case falls over.

Q237 **Chair:** Is that to do with the Treasury guidance on how you measure benefits?

Vicky Fraser: Yes, the WebTAG guidance.

Rupert Thacker: At the moment, in a lot of our authorities, so much travel is by car that when you put a measure in that is going to affect it, within the current traffic modelling arrangements, you are disbenefiting a huge proportion of users. That is when you get a skewed result. It is very difficult to predict how many of them would be getting out of their cars to use the network that you are providing.

Q238 **Chair:** Sorry, Daniel. You were in the middle of asking about ring-fencing.



Alison Kennedy: I would argue the case for caution with ring-fencing because it can be inflexible. It can actually concentrate too much on a single mode, a specific area or a specific scheme. In an urban area, we need to be looking holistically at particular corridors, because we have some funding for the bus, the metro or cycling. We should have them all on the same corridor, and we would like to combine that in those areas and work to reallocate transport more efficiently and more effectively for sustainable uses.

Daniel Zeichner: I think that is sufficient.

Chair: That is a bit of a yes and a no. Thank you very much for giving evidence. That concludes our questions to our first panel today.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Katie Edmondson, Mark Lynam, Dr Still and Claire Williams.

Q239 **Chair:** Welcome. Thank you for coming along today. Can I ask you to introduce yourselves?

Katie Edmondson: I am Katie Edmondson. I work for the West Yorkshire combined authority. I am the comms and engagement lead for our CityConnect cycling and walking programme.

Dr Still: I am Ben Still, managing director of West Yorkshire combined authority. I also lead for the Urban Transport Group on active travel, which is probably my capacity this morning.

Claire Williams: I am Claire Williams. I work for Transport for West Midlands as the cycling and walking development manager.

Mark Lynam: I am Mark Lynam, director of programme commissioning at Sheffield City region, responsible for transport, housing infrastructure and planning.

Q240 **Chair:** This will mirror in many ways the questions we asked the earlier panel. I am conscious of time, so we will have to try to keep things tight.

In each of your areas—Ben, I appreciate that you are speaking with an Urban Transport Group hat on—what is the ambition? What are you hoping to achieve in terms of better levels of walking and cycling? To what extent is the Government's CWIS helping you to do that?

Dr Still: May I make an opening comment?

Chair: Of course.

Dr Still: I have obviously taken soundings from across the membership of the Urban Transport Group. Metropolitan areas have a set of outcome level objectives around health, improving air quality, inclusive growth and economic productivity and efficiency. In all the places where the Urban Transport Group is represented, active travel is central to all of those things. An opening statement would be that it is both a mode of transport



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and an activity whose time has come in the renaissance of our city regions.

Q241 **Chair:** What is the level of ambition? Let's start in West Yorkshire. What are you hoping to achieve, Katie, and what are the challenges you face in doing it?

Katie Edmondson: As our ambition, we have adopted targets in our transport strategy. We have objectives as a combined authority around improving air quality, through our 21st century transport strategy, and everything that goes with that, such as widening participation. Within the transport strategy, we want to increase trips by bike by 300%, and we want to increase trips by walking by 10% by 2027, and we are delivering the infrastructure that goes with that commitment.

We have the benefit of being a cycle city ambition grant area. We are moving towards seeking funding from our local growth deal as well. We have a wide supporting behaviour change programme that goes along with that, so we have the ambition to deliver on that and the political support to do it, as well as growing public support. We have done research into how much support there is, even if you are not a cyclist or a walker. People see it as an important part of the greater mix of what goes on in West Yorkshire.

Q242 **Chair:** Let me make sure I have got that right. A 300% increase in cycling?

Katie Edmondson: Yes. We are starting from a low base.

Q243 **Chair:** I appreciate the difference. A 10% increase in walking?

Katie Edmondson: Yes.

Q244 **Chair:** How does that compare with Claire in the West Midlands? Where are you at?

Claire Williams: The West Midlands combined authority has a vision to make people healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous, which fits with what Ben was saying just now about active travel in particular, recognising that it can be a benefit in all of those themes.

We have a West Midlands cycling charter that has been adopted by all our seven local authorities. Our aim is to increase cycling to 5% of all journeys. We too have a very low baseline, so that is looking at a 400% increase. We are committed to increasing spending to £10 per head of the population. Although we do not have specific targets on walking, we would like to see more walking trips by our residents and to increase the number of walking journeys that are under a mile, of which there are many at the moment by car. We want to work with schools to increase the number of children who walk to school.

Q245 **Chair:** Claire, is there any particular reason why you did not go for a specific target around walking?



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Claire Williams: At the time of the cycling charter, which was formed in 2014, we had a very specific focus on cycling. We did a lot of work looking at cycling on its own. At the moment, we are looking more holistically at active travel—at more of a healthy streets approach. We are revisiting walking targets, and in the future we will probably be looking at setting some of those. At the moment, around 20% of trips are walking, but we will probably shift that to around 25%. We have done some work to look at trips that we could potentially convert. If we were looking, say, at converting seven in 10 of those one-mile trips, we could hit those targets.

Q246 **Chair:** Mark, I know things have been happening in South Yorkshire. We have heard about the appointment of a cycling champion.

Mark Lynam: An active travel commissioner.

Q247 **Chair:** Tell us about what you are aiming to do.

Mark Lynam: This is really good timing. On Monday, Mayor Dan Jarvis announced that Dame Sarah Storey was going to be our active travel commissioner. It is very much following the model that Manchester set up with Chris Boardman. London has a similar active travel commissioner. On the back of that, we have significant ambitions for active travel over the coming years.

Dan was elected the first Mayor of the city region in May last year. Part of his manifesto commitment was to put cycling and walking at the heart of our transport plans going forward. That was captured as part of a Mayor's vision for transport in December, which was then built on as part of our new transport strategy, adopted in January. That set quite ambitious targets, not dissimilar to what you have just heard.

At the moment, only 2% of journeys in the city region are by cycle, and 10% of people walk. The intention is to increase cycling by 350%. Obviously, as you have just noted, that is quite a big target, but when you start from a low base it is probably still a relatively low proportion of the overall transport modes. The target for walking is a 21% increase over the next few years. We will be examining that in more detail as the active travel commissioner starts to set out their active travel plan over the coming months.

Q248 **Chair:** We heard from the previous panel about some of the challenges in promoting, enabling and encouraging people to walk and cycle. I do not intend to ask you all to go through that again because I think we would get exactly the same responses.

What I would be interested in hearing is how you work with the local authorities in your areas on promoting active travel. Claire, you have already mentioned some of the things you do with the seven local authorities in West Midlands. Are there any challenges where your priorities diverge? If so, how do you resolve those conflicts? Ben, perhaps you can talk about it with an overview of the issues between a combined



authority and constituent local authorities.

Dr Still: I will start with some opening remarks and others can pick up the detail. You do not get more local than planning walking and cycling. As you heard from the last panel, the devil is in the detail of making these things work sensibly. That does not remove the need, as Mark has just said, for a degree of strategic leadership. We might come on to the importance of Government in that regard. Across city regions, Mayors and combined authorities can bring that joining-up across places.

There is a role for combined authorities in acting as the conduit for funding from Government. You have heard what a merry-go-round the current bidding environment is. It is providing that conduit of funding through to authorities that can then deliver on the ground. Part of that is about ensuring that the benefits are felt across the whole of the combined authority's area and part is about the balance between capital and revenue. There is also the issue of consistency of application across the piece. Generally, combined authorities represent either overlapping or single labour market areas. You expect people to travel over the boundaries, and you do not want big differences in standards or approach when you cross them. The combined authorities play a joining-up role.

Because combined authorities come out of strong partnerships with local authorities, there does not tend to be a big divergence of opinion, but of course combined authorities are quite new as institutions, so finding exactly the boundaries for who does what and who is responsible for what is still maturing.

Katie might be able to say a bit more about West Yorkshire. Authorities often have different resources to do Bikeability and other things at different levels. Combined authorities sometimes play a role at infilling, where other authorities do not have some of the resources.

Q249 **Chair:** Katie, take us through what is happening in West Yorkshire.

Katie Edmondson: Inherently, we are a partnership organisation as a CA. In our role on behaviour change activity, we work very closely with our partners in local authorities, and with public health and other supporting organisations such as Sustrans, Living Streets and Cycling UK. There is a lot of initial planning. Where we focus as a combined authority is through the infrastructure that we are delivering. That is where we target our behaviour change.

The local authorities have their own programmes, and we try to make them complement each other. We all then see the wider benefit. That works well in West Yorkshire, particularly when we involve our public health colleagues. They supported our CityConnect programme right from the very beginning, and that is why it is where it is.

Q250 **Chair:** Are there any challenges? Is there ever a sense that a particular local authority is getting more than another? Is there competition between them, and is there a way of using that positively rather than its



being a point of conflict?

Katie Edmondson: We are always conscious of that when we are working across the geography we cover. One of the benefits of having us where we are and doing what we are doing is that it targets specific infrastructure and helps the authorities that have less resource than others. They appreciate that. We work closely with them on where they want to target. We also make sure that we are not duplicating work in other areas.

It has been quite a long process. At the minute, we are in a good place, but that is because through the programme there has been a lot of engagement with different stakeholders, understanding who is working where and who is doing what, and what works and what we can add to that—for example, with our Bike Friendly schools programme. We know that all the different partner councils deliver Bikeability, so we work with specific schools to make sure that the kids in those areas are able to partake in Bikeability. We teach kids how to learn to ride initially, or we do Balanceability. We have worked with 27 schools so far, so it is quite specific. What that means is that those kids can be part of the wider programme that is being run.

Dr Still: May I come back on the point you made about whether the combined authorities foster competition, Chair? The situation I see is that combined authorities have to have a set of strategic objectives, and the funding they receive and that is then allocated needs to be on the basis of need rather than on a fair shares for different local authorities basis. That is the way that all the combined authorities we have engaged with tend to work. It does not drive a level of competition as such, but every authority wants to put their best case forward and do the best for their area. That drives up standards and breeds a stronger sense of collaboration between authorities.

Q251 **Chair:** Claire, how do you manage things in West Midlands? Does politics ever get in the way? You have an elected mayor who doesn't have the same politics as perhaps some of the constituent authorities. Is that an issue or a problem?

Claire Williams: In West Midlands, as I said, we have the cycling charter, which is at the heart of all the work we are doing on active travel. As a CA, we convene people across public health, physical activity, disability cycling, the charity sector and the lobbyists and so on, and we deliver on an action plan.

The good thing is that we have the backing of all seven leaders. We always have since its inception. We have Andy Street as our Mayor. He is very keen on cycling and walking, but, as you say, there are different politics across the board. It is a challenge but it is not insurmountable. We have worked closely with local authorities, and in turn we work closely with leaders. Yes, there are particular pockets of issues to overcome in various areas, but overall we have a collective agreement



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across West Midlands that this is the right thing to do for our people. We follow the governance processes that are in place and it is a great time.

Across the seven local authorities, it is very similar to what Katie was describing. You heard this morning from Alison and all the great work that Birmingham is doing. They have had quite a lot of investment from the cycling cities ambition grant. In other parts of the west midlands, there are varying levels of funding that local authorities have been able to commit. It is definitely a shared vision and one that the combined authority and Transport for West Midlands are able to guide in a strategic way moving forward, echoing what Ben was saying.

The structures are there. We have regional common approaches that are agreed by all on things like cycle design guidance. Our bike share scheme is a regional scheme. We have an agreement that we will apply for regional funding as a collective. We have consistent branding because we know that a lot of people take trips that are cross-boundary. Of course, as you heard earlier today, we have had a group working on our strategic LCWIP. There is lots of work coming together. Obviously, there is lots of great local stuff going on, recognising that that is where it is being delivered. Hopefully, Transport for West Midlands is able to set the strategic direction.

Q252 Chair: It has been helpful to hear the benefits of getting local authorities working together at combined authority level, and some of the potential tensions. Mark, do you have anything to add from the Sheffield City region about what value it adds working through a combined authority, or what challenges it brings?

Mark Lynam: To add to the points that have already been made, strategic leadership can provide at combined authority level a more coherent approach rather than taking a piecemeal approach in each authority. As Ben was saying, it is recognising that combined authorities are set up largely as functional economic geographies, and the workforce tends to commute primarily within that geography.

If that geography in itself is made up of multiple local authorities, each of which takes a slightly different approach to this, or to road or rail, it creates a very piecemeal approach across the system. The role that combined authorities can take is in providing strategic leadership. The benefit we have is that we can now also provide direct political leadership with the Mayor. It is really that point.

In the Sheffield City region, we have varying levels of political priority around active travel, but that is not to say that politicians in each respective area do not think it is important. It is just perhaps not quite as important as something else in their area, so how can the combined authority play a role to perhaps change the relative priorities for their area, using the devolved funding we have in a carrot and stick approach?

Chair: We want to turn now to look at the role of the Government in



supporting you.

- Q253 **Ruth Cadbury:** Perhaps you could add to what was said in the earlier round. Are the Government helping you to realise your ambitions to increase levels of cycling and walking? If so, how?

Dr Still: Government have an absolutely essential role in encouraging walking and cycle policies across the country. They are the primary funder because of the funding regime in which we all operate. They have the ability to set minimum standards. They should provide both organisational and political leadership. They control some of the regulations, so they have an absolutely essential role.

The question is how well they are doing in that space. You have probably heard from the previous panel that, particularly in terms of strategy, huge leaps and bounds have been made. In terms of funding, however, there are challenges over the constant stop/starts and the many and varied programmes that exist for short periods of time and then disappear. Officers, local authorities and CAs do a fantastic job trying to piece together a level of coherence over successive policies, but it is not easy.

One of the biggest things that Government could do is to simplify that. It is worth asking why active travel funding is not treated in the same way as road maintenance funding, for example, and why there isn't simply a clear allocation year on year that can enable local partners to plan better and develop longer-term programmes. There is also the issue of capital and revenue funding that you touched on. There are some areas where Government are doing well and there are some areas where we could do with a little bit more clarity and coherence.

- Q254 **Ruth Cadbury:** You have all got funding to support your local cycling infrastructure plans. How helpful has that been?

Claire Williams: In West Midlands, we worked together on a regional LCWIP as part of the grant funding. We also undertook training as a region on both walking and cycling, which was immensely valuable. The support that was given to us was very useful. There are some limitations in some of the tools that are available and the level of up-to-date data. Generally, we value that, and we would value more support in the future. One area that we would like to strengthen is around walking. We would look to Government for more guidance on LCWIPs in relation to walking.

- Q255 **Ruth Cadbury:** On the guidance on infrastructure design, do any of you have anything to add to what was said by the earlier panel about the limitations of the current guidance and how it could be improved?

Dr Still: On our website, the Urban Transport Group has collected together all the various design guidelines. To some extent, that allows different places to look at the kinds of issues that were discussed in the last panel.



I reiterate the point that guidelines or standards that command wide support would be fantastic. Equally, guidelines that are seen as not getting the balance in the hierarchy of modes right, or as being too prescriptive in all circumstances, would be quite detrimental. It is a difficult game to play.

Q256 **Chair:** Katie or Mark, do you want to add anything about the support you have had from central Government and how helpful it was with your LCWIPs?

Katie Edmondson: To echo a lot of what Claire said, it reinforces the point about being able to disseminate expertise through our local authorities, enabling them to do the things that we have been able to do as a combined authority on different projects through the cycle city ambition grants. We have been able to hold productive and positive stakeholder workshops focusing on key areas for us. A big part of that has been bringing our local politicians with us. That is one of the key benefits we have had.

Q257 **Chair:** Mark, do you have anything to add?

Mark Lynam: To build on that, in the Sheffield City region, LCWIP has been an extremely useful process to enable us to get to a finer level of granularity in our understanding of cycling and walking movements in the city region, and what the key corridors are. As the active travel commissioner looks to develop their own active travel plan, and we combine hard infrastructure interventions and understanding with the softer behavioural change interventions, it has enabled us to get ahead of the game in our understanding of what hard infrastructure is required.

To follow a point Ben was making, the LCWIP, the active travel plan or whatever you want to call it, is a lovely process, but if it does not actually result in any subsequent interventions, because the funding is not there from Government, what was the point of the process? A nationally led process such as LCWIP is good, but it has to be followed up with something.

We are looking at the moment at mechanisms such as the Transforming Cities fund as ways we can help. That will enable us to deliver some of the infrastructure interventions, but it is not an ideal fit because it is not focused just on active travel; there are a number of other priorities around transport. The way Government currently model and prioritise transport interventions, particularly with their WebTAG model, does not give us confidence that, when we put forward active travel schemes in that process, they are naturally going to perform highly against road or rail schemes.

Chair: Thank you for that. We are now going to look at specific plans and projects that have been done. You heard the previous panel telling us about some of those things. We want to explore them from the perspective of the combined authority rather than individual local



authorities.

Q258 **Jack Brereton:** First, could you go into more specific detail about the plans you have been developing, particularly how they are going to encourage more cycling and walking, and encourage modal shift, so that people leave their cars at home.

Mark Lynam: We are in the relative foothills of where we are going with our interventions. We have delivered a number over the last few years. When you look at the data, there is a particular scheme in the Lower Don Valley in Sheffield that has in itself delivered a 150% increase in cycling journeys. There are elements of good practice we want to learn from and build on, but, as I said earlier, they are very piecemeal at the moment. Our challenge going forward is how we can roll out a more coherent network across the city region.

The city region is polycentric; it is not one single contiguous urban geography. It therefore makes planning around active travel and intervention planning rather more challenging than in Manchester, for example, which is a relatively contiguous urban area. It is about how we plan properly and integrate that with our public transport aspirations. At the moment, we are undertaking a bus review led by Clive Betts. Among other things, that will look at how we can integrate our bus network, using the powers the Mayor has to encourage bus companies to invest in their fleet, to accommodate cycles, for example.

Those are some of the interventions we want to focus on going forward, but, as I said, that is alongside softer behavioural change activity. Through our passenger transport executive, we have already started some of that, particularly travel planning with some businesses in the city region to help them understand how they can support their employees to change their travel habits and travel plans, and what businesses need to do on site in order to accommodate that.

Claire Williams: The West Midlands cycling charter has four themes, recognising that you need a package of all of them. The first thing we are doing is looking at leadership. We have recently announced Shanaze Reade as our cycling and walking ambassador for the West Midlands. We work very closely with the Mayor's office and with leaders across the region. We are looking for leaders within our business community, our education establishments and the community itself. We are looking at a tiered approach to championing active travel and wellbeing in the region.

The next theme is networks and building a network, not only for active travel, as everyone has said today, but as part of a coherent way for our people to get around and live healthy and happy lives. As a combined authority, we have delivered some infrastructure improvements to managing short trips in the Black Country. We have improved both highway and canal networks.



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Working on the LCWIP is obviously a big part of network planning for the region. We have got to the point where we have a prioritised list of strategically important routes. We have local authorities working on the finer mesh networks to connect communities. We have seven core walking zones that we have strategically chosen to concentrate on. We have designed guidance ensuring that all of it is implemented in a high-quality way. We are also looking at regional wayfinding and branding for our network and rolling out our bike share scheme.

The third theme is promotion—the marketing behaviour change piece. It is absolutely vital and really important. That is why we need revenue funding to back up a lot of the capital schemes. We do that across the region. At Transport for West Midlands, we host Cycling UK and Living Streets, our partners, to work with grassroots cycling and in our schools. There is lots of great work in that space very locally, delivered by our local authorities.

We look after the cycle parking and facilities on our train network, thinking about multimodal journeys and last mile. We are looking at some emerging projects as a region, including social prescribing. How can we regionally, at scale, roll out a great cycling offer for social prescribing? There is a bigger focus on the community in our Better Streets fund proposal, which is putting the pen in the hands of the community as to what they would like to see in their local area. There is lots going on. It is very much a partnership effort in the west midlands.

Katie Edmondson: As I mentioned before, we had the opportunity to be a cycle city ambition grant area, across West Yorkshire. We are delivering that infrastructure. We have delivered flagship schemes such as the Leeds Bradford cycle superhighway. We are coming to the end of phase two of those schemes. By the end, we will have delivered 70 km of cycling and walking infrastructure; half of that is on the highway in segregated routes. We are delivering that with all our partners across West Yorkshire, and in York. It then moves into wider programmes such as the Connecting Leeds programme, which is the public transport scheme in Leeds. There will be increased benefits for cycling and walking as part of that. That links directly with the CityConnect programmes we are delivering.

Currently, we are working on our next phase of schemes through the local growth fund. That will include cycle superhighways going out to the south of Leeds, as well as improving our off-highway network. Through our LTP, we are delivering five demonstration healthy streets projects. There will be one of those in each district. It is going to be very district led, but it will come through the combined authority at key milestones. It is filling in the things that we think we have missed as part of cycle cities. That is around the actual network and the neighbourhoods that support the big corridor schemes we are focusing on.



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We support all those schemes with a broad behaviour change programme. We focus on businesses. We have our Bike Friendly business accreditation. We have moved away from the travel planning side of things and are working more on how employers themselves can become more bike friendly by delivering facilities in businesses and encouraging employees to cycle to work. Through that, we have worked with over 250 businesses in the past year and a half. There has been a 25% increase in people cycling to work who have gone through that scheme, so we are seeing effective schemes coming through in our behaviour change programme.

In partnership with Cycling UK, we have delivered our cycle for health project. That has seen the positive outcomes we are all looking for from the hard infrastructure that we are delivering. We have positive mental health and physical health outcomes; 33% of people who go through that scheme say that they feel closer to people and are more confident in themselves. They have also increased their physical activity. All of that supports the physical stuff on the ground. Part of our ambition and plan is to take that forward.

Q259 Jack Brereton: Are there any specific powers that you think would improve or help, so that combined authorities can do more to increase cycling and walking?

Dr Still: Combined authorities generally are not the highway authority. As you heard earlier, the key needs, particularly through enactment of the Traffic Management Act 2004 powers, are for the highway authorities. Because most combined authorities have a general power of competence, that allows them to act in this space. I do not think there are particular powers that require legislative change. However, being allocated properly devolved funding, rather than what you might call decentralised funding, which genuinely moves accountability away from a permanent secretary to the combined authority, to elected members, is the big change we need to see. That will allow longer-term planning and greater flexibility of funding.

Q260 Jack Brereton: Do others agree? Are there other powers that anybody thinks should be improved?

Mark Lynam: I completely echo what Ben has just said, for the very reasons he said it. I completely agree with the points that the previous panel were making about the respective local authority powers. Picking up the earlier point about where combined authorities can add value in terms of overall strategic leadership, the combined authorities, currently and going forward, provide the ability for Government to properly devolve responsibility and funding down to the appropriate geographical level, in order to provide more localised strategic leadership over priorities.

That has to come with proper devolved funding, not funding that is half devolved through some kind of programme level arrangement, where we still have to report outcomes or outputs to Government. It has to be



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properly devolved funding, which gives us the ability and the flexibility not only to fund activity that Government currently fund but redesigns that and frees us from the shackles placed on us by the conditions for the current funding.

Q261 **Jack Brereton:** In terms of the projects you talked about a minute ago, have those demonstrably increased the number of people who are willing to cycle and walk around your areas?

Chair: We are going to have to be really brief because we have limited time and we want to talk about funding as well.

Katie Edmondson: We run a monitoring and evaluation programme across all our projects. With the cycle superhighway scheme we delivered last summer, there was a 25% increase through May, June and July on the May, June and July before that, so we see that people are using the infrastructure. On the canal network in particular, we have had a 105% increase. If you build it and then you help them, people want to come out and do this.

Dr Still: If time is tight, we are happy to send in a note on the impacts of some of the programmes.

Chair: That would be helpful.

Q262 **Jack Brereton:** That would be useful, yes. The final thing I want to ask is about sharing good practice. Obviously, there is an important role for combined authorities to ensure that it is shared more widely across your areas. Is that something you see happening, or do you think that more could be done to share good practice around different authorities?

Chair: Does the sharing of good practice happen through the Urban Transport Group, or are there other ways in which that takes place?

Dr Still: There are probably three things. First, the *raison d'être* of the Urban Transport Group is sharing good practice and collective learning. We have an active travel group that meets regularly, and that is about sharing things that are going well, as well as things where we can learn from the experiences.

Combined authorities are also convening bodies, and they act across their boundaries to do the same thing at a city region level. We are all in a place where we interact very closely with the authorities on our boundaries, so that there is a larger number of authorities involved in that space.

The Department for Transport often brings together steering groups for its various funds, again with the intention to share good practice. There are various mechanisms by which that happens.

Q263 **Chair:** Are those ways of sharing good practice effective? Do they work?

Dr Still: Yes. I certainly do not hear people asking for different ways of doing that. It seems to be very effective, yes.



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Q264 **Daniel Zeichner:** You probably heard the previous discussion about funding. What are your reflections on how it could be done better? Do you have any different comments from the previous colleagues on how it could work better for you? How much time are you spending on bidding versus the points Mark just made about genuine devolution of funds?

Dr Still: That is the backdrop. We want to see genuine devolution of funds. The UTG position is that we are not huge fans of ring-fencing. We prefer there to be general pots, and allowing local areas to decide exactly what the right balance should be.

Longevity is absolutely critical; you get much better efficiency through planning longer term. I do not think we can reinforce sufficiently just how important capital revenue is. You heard previously some of the figures for spend per head. Those figures vary between £5 and £20 per head, depending on the area. The Government have a target of about £10 per head. Most UTG member authorities are ahead of that in the amount we spend, but two points come from that.

First, remember that this is trying to address a legacy. There have been decades upon decades where cycling and walking have not been modes that have been prioritised. It is trying to retrofit that, and it is an expensive job to retrofit that kind of segregated and sensible infrastructure in existing urban areas.

Secondly, if you look at the proportion of revenue funding per head—I only have the figure for West Yorkshire and it is very tentative, so we will probably come back to you with a better estimate—we think it is about 24p. Even if you are spending £10 a head on the infrastructure, the behavioural change elements and the revenue interventions that are critical in encouraging and sustaining participation, as well as the broader health and education benefits that others have talked about, need to be there as well.

Daniel Zeichner: That is a really powerful point. Thank you.

Q265 **Chair:** It certainly is. I am sorry that we have run out of time. It would be helpful if you want to send us further written information with examples of things that have demonstrably increased the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists. We would be very interested in that. It is sometimes difficult to talk about projects that did not work, but there is huge learning to be gained from things that have not quite worked out as you planned, so if there is anything to share on that, it would be really useful.

Daniel Zeichner: Could that be something that we did not choose to publish?

Chair: If there was something you wanted to send to us for information but not have in the public domain, we would certainly look at that.

Dr Still: That would be very helpful.



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