

Cycling UK – Written evidence (NPS0129)

Cycling UK was founded in 1878 and has over 70,000 members and supporters. Our central mission is to make cycling a safe, accessible, enjoyable and 'normal' activity for people of all ages and abilities. Our interests cover cycling both as a form of day-to-day transport and as a leisure activity, which can deliver health, economic, environmental, safety and quality of life benefits, both for individuals and society.

Summary of key points

- Cycling is almost unique, in being a form of activity that can be either a competitive sport, a non-competitive form of informal recreation, or a way to make day-to-day journeys (e.g. to work, education shopping etc). It is a highly accessible, cost-effective and time-efficient way for people of all ages, abilities or economic circumstances to embed moderate physical activity into their day-to-day lives.
- Being both a means of transport and an outdoor activity, the benefits of cycling go well beyond those of improved mental and physical health and well-being. They also include reducing car-dependence (and hence congestion, road casualties and the emission of greenhouse gases, pollution and noise); strengthening rural and tourist economies; and enhancing people's connection with nature (and thus their willingness to protect it, as well as the health benefits associated with 'green' environments).
- These benefits are of huge economic value and span many different policy areas. Boosting cycling therefore requires partnership working across several government departments and sectors (e.g. transport, planning, health, recreation and sport, environment and rural affairs, education, business and climate change), at both local and national levels. Cycling UK warmly welcomed the Government's recent publication 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking'. It now needs stronger buy-in from several key Government departments, notably the Treasury.
- Cycling levels in the UK are low compared with many continental countries – for instance, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland all have far higher levels of cycle use and much better safety. By comparison, the UK suffers from lack of provision for cycling in safe environments free from fast or heavy traffic.
- The Government's recent Planning White Paper and the resulting legislation must aim to create new housing and other developments which support active travel and access to green open space, while reducing car-dependence. Similarly the current Environment Bill, currently before Parliament, could provide funding to open up more opportunities for off-road cycling (and indeed for other forms of outdoor recreation).
- As well as creating better cycling conditions (which requires capital funding), action is also needed to boost the diversity of those who cycle in the UK (which requires revenue funding). Compared with the UK, several of our neighbouring countries have much more diverse cycling populations in terms of their age range, gender balance and ethnicity. Cycling UK runs a number of programmes which have proved highly effective at boosting cycle use by women, health patients, people with disabilities, people from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or black and minority ethnic communities, helping them to

overcome the fear that “cycling is not for people like me”. We are eager to run these programmes in a much wider range of locations and communities throughout the country.

Q1 How can local delivery, including funding structures, of sport and recreation be improved to ensure that people of all ages and abilities are able to lead an active lifestyle? For example, how successfully do local authorities and other bodies such as Active Partnerships, Leisure Trusts, local sports clubs and charities work together, and how might coordination be improved?

Cycling is almost unique, in being a form of activity that can be either a competitive sport, a non-competitive form of informal recreation, or a means of day-to-day journeys (e.g. to work, education shopping etc). It therefore enables people to gain moderate physical activity while going about their day-to-day lives. Unlike gym membership or other sporting activities (which often require substantial investment in time and/or money), cycling can save time and money, avoiding petrol and parking costs or public transport fares. Moreover, it is often quicker than either driving or public transport for many urban journeys.

Cycling is widely available to almost everyone, regardless of their age, economic status or abilities. As a non-weight-bearing activity, cycling is well suited to the needs of older and frailer people, and those seeking to increase their physical activity as a means of achieving weight-loss, without placing them at risk of skeletal damage. It also requires only a relatively modest investment in equipment (entry-level bicycles are relatively inexpensive) and no special clothing (with either the costs or the associated stigma for people who are overweight or obese). There are a range of non-standard pedal cycles that can be used by people with almost all disabilities.

Cycling has huge benefits, for our health and well-being, for the environment and for the economy, and specifically for rural and tourism economies. For instance:

- Spending in the UK’s tourist economies by cyclists and mountain bikers is estimated at £520m annually, while the National Cycle Network contributes £650m to the UK economy, supporting 15,000 jobs.¹
- People who cycle regularly in mid-adulthood typically enjoy a level of fitness equivalent to being 10 years younger² and a life expectancy two years above the average.³ Regular cycle commuters have a 45% lower chance of developing cancer and a 46% lower chance of developing cardiovascular disease,⁴ and a 29% lower overall mortality rate.⁵ Employees who cycle regularly take fewer sick days and arrive at work feeling less stressed. These benefits are worth £83m annually to UK businesses.⁶

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www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2020/07/benefits_of_cycle_tourism_factsheet_fin_al10738.pdf

² <https://oem.bmj.com/content/oemed/43/11/733.full.pdf>

³ www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3945246

⁴ www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456

⁵ <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/160/11/1621.pdf>

⁶ www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/info/economy1fbrf.pdf

- Government estimates of the benefit-to-cost ratios (BCR) for active travel investment range from 5.62 : 1 (Department for Transport)⁷ to 13:1 (Department of Health)⁸. DfT regards any BCR above 4:1 as “very high value for money”.⁹
- The London School of Economics estimated that even current levels of cycle use were delivering economic benefits worth £3bn a year in 2010.¹⁰ Leeds University researchers estimated in 2015 that, if cycle use were to increase from 2% of all journeys (current levels) to 10% by 2025 and to 25% by 2050 (as recommended by the parliamentary Get Britain Cycling inquiry report¹¹), the cumulative benefits would be worth £248bn over that period.¹²

However, maximising all these benefits requires input across several different departments of government, both nationally and locally, and between partners from a variety of sectors:

- *Transport*: the Department for Transport (DfT) is the national lead body for cycling policy and funding. Similarly, at the local level, it is highways authorities (i.e. county councils in 2-tier areas, or unitary authorities) who typically lead on cycle network planning and promotion.
- *Planning*: the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), planning authorities (district councils or unitary authorities) and developers also have a role to play. At present, too many new developments take place in car-dependent locations, with poor cycling or walking access to public transport and other key facilities (e.g. schools, shops, workplaces, health and leisure facilities). The resulting focus on car parking rather than pedestrian and cycle facilities, or green space, reinforces this by lengthening journey distances and creating an unsafe and unpleasant environment for cycling and walking. The Government’s current planning reforms are an opportunity to reverse this – see our answer to question 2.
- *Countryside access and rights of way* is led by DEFRA at the national level, supported by a seriously under-resourced Natural England, National Park Authorities and the Boards of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Locally, local rights of way (RoW) departments sit within highway authorities. However different authorities situate their RoW departments in a range of different directorates, from highway planning to leisure and recreation. Much better coordination is needed, both nationally and locally, between the policy frameworks and funding streams aimed at delivering ‘active travel’ networks (i.e. routes to which support day-to-day cycling and walking, predominantly in urban areas) and the rights of way network (whose focus is more rural and recreational). The Environment Bill, currently before Parliament, is an opportunity to address this – again, see our response to question 2.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371096/claiming_the_health_dividend.pdf

⁸ <https://bikehub.ca/sites/default/files/valueformoneyaneconomicassessmentofinvestmentinw.pdf>

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http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160812125511/https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255126/value-for-money-external.pdf

¹⁰ <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/38063/1/BritishCyclingEconomy.pdf>

¹¹ <https://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling1.pdf>

¹² http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/83048/1/CrawfordF-LovelaceR%20cycling%20benefits_Jan2015.pdf

- *Education* policy (a DfES responsibility nationally, and a County Council responsibility in 2-tier areas) needs to do more to ensure curriculum time is available for cycle training, for pupils of both primary and secondary school age.
- *Health*: The Department of Health (DH) has national responsibility for promoting public health, with public health directors leading at the local level. It is supported by Public Health England (soon to be replaced by the National Institute for Health Promotion) and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), both of which produce [useful guidance](#)¹³ covering the role that cycling and other transport or road safety measures can play in tackling various public health challenges (pollution, road danger, physical inactivity, social isolation, noise, and their associated mental and physical health conditions). At the local level, some public health directors (who now sit in local authorities) are very keen to promote cycling. Yet DH itself has done very little to support cycling over the years. This is a missed opportunity to make really substantial reductions in the resulting NHS costs, particularly among more disadvantaged communities who are disproportionately affected by these impacts. The Government's '[Gear Change](#)' [vision for cycling and walking](#)¹⁴ promises, among other things, a programme to engage NHS practitioners in piloting a programme of cycling as exercise on referral. Regrettably the Department for Health remains unengaged in this and other initiatives.

Our response to Question 3 below provides further discussion of the role of cross-organisational and cross-sectoral partnerships in enabling Cycling UK to run projects to boost cycle use among under-represented groups, e.g. women, health patients, people with disabilities,

Q2/3 How can people of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups, including women and girls, ethnic minorities, disabled people, older people, and those from less affluent backgrounds, be encouraged to lead more active lifestyles? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.

Before discussing separately the measures needed to increase cycling among children and adults respectively (i.e. questions 2 and 3), we start by identifying some measures that are vital for boosting cycling among people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Cycling and walking networks: overview

The most important element in any strategy to boost cycling is to create comprehensive networks of routes that meet the criteria of being, safe, coherent (i.e. the routes cross and link up sensibly), direct, comfortable (avoiding poor surfaces and gradients) and attractive. To be safely usable by people of all ages and abilities (including children), roads or streets either need to have low traffic

¹³ E.g. see www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-a-briefing-for-local-authorities and <https://tinyurl.com/y3m7jo2n>

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

volumes and speeds (e.g. 20mph speed limits in built-up areas), or there need to be protected cycle lanes alongside roads with faster or busier traffic. Cycle routes can also make use of parks, open spaces canal and riversides, or the rights of way network (particularly in more rural areas). Off-road cycle routes intended for both recreational and day-to-day use (including for instance journeys to school) need to be lit, surfaced and maintained to standards that make them useable in all weathers, at all times of year. The design of junctions and crossings is also crucial, as around three quarters of cyclists' injuries occur at or near junctions. Secure cycle parking and storage is needed at destinations, reflecting the needs of both visitors to a destination (who will prioritise convenience) and those who need to leave their bicycles regularly in the same place (e.g. in multiple-occupancy housing or at workplaces) and/or for long periods (e.g. at stations).

Cycling UK has strongly welcomed DfT's recently-issued guidance on cycle friendly planning and design,¹⁵ as it represents a massive step-change in the quality of cycle provision which councils are now expected to make. Professional training is now needed to ensure that the new guidance is understood and consistently applied by transport planners, traffic engineers and developers.

Integration with planning: opportunity for the Planning White Paper

It is now essential to integrate the above principles into planning policy. For decades, the planning system has tended to support housing and other developments in locations that make it hard to travel to or from them other than by car. This necessitates large areas of parking space, which in turn increases journey distances, while also creating unsafe and unattractive cycling and walking conditions.

If we are to tackle the crises of physical inactivity, pollution, and climate change, the Government's current reform of planning policy and ensuing legislation need to ensure that new housing and other developments are located and designed according to the principles of '20 minute neighbourhoods'¹⁶ (or '15 minute cities'¹⁷), with safe and convenient cycle and pedestrian access to public transport and other key facilities (schools, workplaces, shops, health and other amenities), as well as to green open space. Access to green-space has proven benefits for health and well-being.¹⁸

Integration with RoW networks: opportunity for the Environment Bill

There is also a need for greater integration between the planning and funding of 'active travel' networks and rights of way networks. The former are more concentrated in urban areas and aim primarily to support day-to-day journeys, whereas the latter are more rural and more recreational in their usage. However this distinction is not clear-cut, nor should it be. Indeed, the blurring is particularly important in 'urban fringe' areas and other locations where rights of way can support both 'active travel' and recreational cycling and walking (e.g.

¹⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120

¹⁶ www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/planning-for-melbourne/plan-melbourne/20-minute-neighbourhoods

¹⁷ www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-build-back-better-with-a-15-minute-city

¹⁸ www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494419301185

where they can help school pupils in rural villages to cycle safely to schools in nearby towns, as well as families in those towns wishing to go for weekend walks or cycle rides in the nearby countryside, without having to jump in the car). In these locations, it is particularly important that rights of way should be lit and surfaced to standards which allow their use in all weathers and at all times of year.

Unfortunately, there are rights of cycle access over just 22% of England's rights of way network – and this 22% is not necessarily the most suitable or useful sections. Whether a way is a footpath, a bridleway or a byway is determined by the quirks of historic evidence, rather than any assessment of suitability or need. The result, as documented in [Cycling UK's 'Rides of Way' report](#),¹⁹ is a network that is frustratingly fragmented, with perfectly suitable routes being unavailable, while many legally available routes are unsuitable in practice.

The Covid pandemic has reminded us of the importance of access to green open space, for our mental as well as our physical health. The Environment Agency recently [reported](#)²⁰ that "Equality of access to, and connection with, a healthy natural environment would save billions of pounds in healthcare costs and reduced economic activity every year." The Government-commissioned [Landscapes review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) (AONBs)²¹ urged the Government to "Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes". Meanwhile the Welsh Government is [considering proposals](#) to open up most footpaths in Wales for cycling and horse-riding, with exceptions where this would cause undue danger, environmental damage or conflict.²²

We are therefore concerned that opportunities are being missed to take similar steps in England. When former Environment Secretary Michael Gove was developing the laws that would govern a post-Brexit replacement for the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), he proposed that its replacement should adopt the principle of public subsidies for public goods, and that these goods should [include public access](#).²³ [Section 1 of the Agriculture Act](#)²⁴ cites "access to the countryside" as a purpose for which funding can be allocated. However it does not appear in [Clause 1 of the Environment Bill](#)²⁵ as a 'key priority', for which the Government must set at least one long-term target. Moreover, the latest documentation for the Government's [Environmental Land Management \(ELM\) scheme](#)²⁶ (which will apportion the funding) also says very little about improving access as a criterion for ELM funding.

Long-distance trails

¹⁹ www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2019/02/ridesofwaycyclingukoffroadreport.pdf

²⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/state-of-the-environment-health-people-and-the-environment

²¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review

²² <https://gov.wales/written-statement-government-response-taking-forward-wales-sustainable-management-natural-resources>

²³ www.gov.uk/government/speeches/oxford-farming-conference-2019-address-by-the-environment-secretary

²⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/21/section/1

²⁵ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0220/200220.pdf>

²⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-environmental-land-management-scheme-an-overview

To exemplify both the opportunities but also the frustrations of off-road access, we point to Cycling UK's work during the past 2 years, in developing and launching two major long-distance off-road cycling routes:

- The Great North Trail (www.cyclinguk.org/great-north-trail) – 21 years after plans were first proposed to connect the Pennine Bridleway to Scotland (and thence to either Cape Wrath or John O'Groats), Cycling UK created our own off-road route; and
- King Alfred's Way (www.cyclinguk.org/king-alfreds-way) - a 350km multi-day loop starting and ending at Winchester (where Alfred is buried), connecting Stonehenge, the Avebury stone circle, Iron Age hill forts, Farnham Castle and the cathedrals at Salisbury and Winchester.

Both routes mostly use bridleways, though in places we have negotiated permissive access. Yet both routes also suffer a few frustrating detours where we have been unable to secure access to entirely suitable footpaths.

These highlight the frustrations of rights of way law in England. In 1947, the [Hobhouse Committee](#) (whose report laid the foundations for our National Parks) set out a vision for "long distance paths and bridleways in and between National Parks and Conservation Areas. There should be continuous routes which will enable walkers and riders to travel the length and breadth of the Parks, moving as little as possible on the motor roads". Yet today, only two of England's 15 National Trails can be cycled end-to-end.²⁷

This fragmentation of access rights causes innumerable local frustrations, making it hard to create sensible day or half-day loops for local cycle rides in many parts of the country. Action to address this is long overdue.

We urge the Committee to recommend action to remedy these deficiencies, and more generally to take steps to improve "public access to and enjoyment of nature". The benefits could be worth billions of pounds annually.

Q2 How can children and young people be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation both at school and outside school, and lead an active lifestyle? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.

Cycle training

In the Netherlands, around [two thirds of primary school aged pupils cycle to school, increasing to three quarters of pupils at secondary school age](#).²⁸ In Britain, the figures are just [1-2% and 3% respectively](#), even though many pupils wish to do so.²⁹

Besides creating safe cycling environments, the next most important action to boost cycling among children and young people is to make cycle training widely available, both at primary and at secondary school age. Cycle training has well-

²⁷ www.cyclinguk.org/blog/70-years-has-national-parks-act-achieved-its-purpose

²⁸ <https://bicycledutch.wordpress.com/2013/12/05/arriving-at-school-by-bicycle>

²⁹ www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/12/schools-and-colleges_7c_brf.pdf

documented benefits,³⁰ not just for children's safety but also their confidence and that of their parents to allow them to cycle. This in turn boosts their health and well-being, and indeed their educational attainment, as well as helping tackle congestion and pollution relating to the school run.³¹

The Department for Transport has backed the national standard for cycle training, which has now replaced the old 'Cycling Proficiency' scheme.³² It has three levels, starting with basic cycle control skills at level 1, with level 3 providing the skills needed to handle busy roads and junctions. Levels 1 and 2 are currently offered to around a half of all pupils at primary school age. However, few children progress to level 3, with cycle training rarely being available in secondary schools. This prevents teenagers from gaining the confidence they need as their independence and travel distances increase.

In February 2020, the Government announced its intention to make cycle training available to all children,³³ and its '[Gear Change](#)' vision then went further in promising to "ensure that every adult and child who wants it can be trained how to ride a cycle safely." However the Department for Education now needs to ensure that curriculum time for cycle training is made available for all pupils, at primary both and secondary school age.

Families cycling together

Alongside formal cycle training, the role of parents and guardians should not be overlooked. Growing numbers of people of parenting age never gained the confidence or skills to cycle on roads (let alone to accompany their children), and many never learnt to cycle at all. Without parental accompaniment, children may lack the opportunities to develop and maintain the skills and experience gained through formal cycle training, preventing them from cycling regularly as they then progress through their teenage years into adulthood.

Cycling UK has developed a successful project in Birmingham, delivered through our Community Cycle Clubs programme (see our response to Q3) in partnership with British Cycling's 'Go-Ride' coaches, to offer family cycling sessions during weekends and holidays. Although Community Cycle Clubs are traditionally an adults-only initiative, we have extended it in Birmingham to include family riding, with parents receiving basic training to support their children to continue to cycle confidently. We urge that this approach should be adopted more widely, to complement the 'national standard' cycle training programme.

Q3 How can adults of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups, including women and girls, ethnic minorities, disabled people, older people, and those from less affluent backgrounds, be encouraged to lead more active lifestyles? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.

³⁰ www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2018/07/cycletraining_6a_brf.pdf

³¹ www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/12/schools-and-colleges_7c_brf.pdf

³² www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standard-for-cycle-training

³³ www.gov.uk/government/news/every-child-in-england-to-be-offered-cycle-training

The key point to make here is the value of simply 'normalising' cycling. [Aldred et al](#) provide a useful overview of evidence showing that countries with good cycling infrastructure and high levels of cycle use also have greater gender and age equality in their cycling populations.³⁴ In Britain (where cycling accounts for just 2% of trips), women make around a quarter of cycle trips, whereas in countries with very high cycle use (e.g. the Netherlands, where cycling accounts for 27% of trips), women make more cycling trips than men. Similarly, high cycle use countries have a flatter age profile, with a greater proportion of cycling trips being made by children and older people.

Yet even in high cycle-use countries, there are perceptions among some groups (e.g. health patients, people with disabilities, people from immigrant populations) that cycling is "not for people like me." This can be overcome, as Cycling UK's programmes show.

Health, inclusive cycling and other community-based behaviour-change programmes

Behaviour-change programmes, in schools, workplaces and community settings can be highly cost-effective ways to boost cycle use, particularly among groups such as women, older people, BAME communities, health patients and people with disabilities.³⁵

The Government's '[Gear Change](#)' vision document includes a very welcome commitment to work with the NHS on incentivising GPs to prescribe cycling, starting with pilots in areas with poor health and low physical activity rates. However we believe more could be done to boost the diversity (as well as the number) of people taking up cycling.

Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival (BBR), Community Clubs and Cycle for Health projects have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness– and cost-effectiveness – in boosting cycle use particularly among groups which are under-represented in cycling participation:

- The *Big Bike Revival* (www.cyclinguk.org/bigbikerevival) has been run since 2015 in conjunction with local bike-recycling projects and similar social enterprises, with support from DfT. It involves open days where people are encouraged to bring along bikes that have lain unused, which often need a simple fix. They are offered free cycle checks, servicing, cycle maintenance workshops, cycle training and accompanied rides. 46% of participants in *Big Bike Revival* events in England were non-regular cyclists, almost half were women and 46% were from the top 30% most deprived areas in the country.
- *Community Clubs* (www.cyclinguk.org/community-cycle-clubs) are run in partnership with a wide variety of community groups, whether for women, health patients, people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups. They offer longer-term support for people interested in taking up cycling, for whatever reason. They can often be formed in the aftermath of a Big Bike Revival project. We have set up over 200 clubs in England and Scotland, which have attracted 50,000 participants. Half of them were women, 53%

³⁴ www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01441647.2015.1014451

³⁵ www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/migrated/info/smarterchoices7abrf.pdf

are from the most deprived three deciles of neighbourhoods, 56% are from BAME backgrounds and 50% of attendees are non-regular cyclists on joining. 20% of participants have a disability or long-term health condition and 30% are inactive, meaning they were not doing 30 minutes of exercise per week prior to joining the club.

- Our *Cycle for Health* project (www.cyclinguk.org/community-outreach/health) is a potential prototype of how the Government's 'social prescribing' scheme could work. It has been run through 8 'cycling hubs' throughout West Yorkshire, with support from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. It enables people with inactivity-related physical and mental health conditions to take up cycling as part of a sociable and supportive group. The majority of participants are now referred to the programme by local health professionals. Of the programme's 270 direct beneficiaries in its first year, 56% were from recognised areas of deprivation with 31% coming from the highest decile of deprivation. 78% were female and 28% identified as being of non-white ethnicity. 90% were previously non-cyclists, yet 68% were still cycling regularly (i.e. more than once a week) 6 weeks after the programme had ended. Participants said they felt more confident, more relaxed, closer to other people, better able to think clearly and deal with problems, and more optimistic about the future.

Collaboration and partnerships

In addition to our earlier points about national cross-sectoral collaboration at the national level, Cycling UK's behaviour change projects demonstrate numerous successful examples of local partnership working. These highlight the value of understanding what different partner organisations can offer and how funding streams can work together.

In Essex and Norfolk, for example, there is a positive relationship between the Access Fund delivery, the Active Partnership and Cycling UK, to provide community cycling opportunities that are informal and free. By collaborating in a way that works with community groups, we can reduce the risk of duplicating an offer and ensure the offer provided is relevant and valued.

Cycling UK's Community Cycle Club and Big Bike Revival programmes are designed with community integration at the heart of their delivery. This has been well received by local authorities and Active Partnerships, who can otherwise be wary about programmes being 'parachuted' into their communities, without research being done or buy-in secured from the intended beneficiary groups. By working together, we are learning about the non-cycling communities whose activity levels we are aiming to increase, and can also share valuable data and information to enhance project reporting.

In Birmingham, we have seen long lasting success from a truly collaborative, local approach. The Active Well-Being Society, Cycling UK and Birmingham City Council have worked together on the Big Birmingham Bikes programme to enable more people to choose the bike for short journeys and leisure activities. Through the work with Cycling UK alone, 22 community cycle clubs have been established, and thousands of beneficiaries have been reached. By working with local community champions and providing cycling-specific training, we can ensure clubs are self-sustaining and will continue to thrive following initial

investment from local organisations. While a high value project, it has clearly demonstrated the returns possible when bikes, infrastructure, training and on-going support are all provided to key stakeholders. To build on this success, a similar format has recently been adopted by Essex County Council, where this type of partnership working will continue to support deprived communities to be more physically active, choosing the bike for leisure and short journeys.

In Greater Manchester, a slightly different approach was taken, with differing levels of success. In this instance, eight organisations (focusing on walking and cycling) from across the region attempted to create a consortium which would provide a streamlined and coherent approach to delivery of behaviour change projects. These organisations ranged from NGB, charity, Active Partnership and Combined Authority, all of which had a common goal to increase walking and cycling levels across Greater Manchester. In this instance, while the will was evident and activity happening in parallel rather than partnership, access to funding was not, creating an obstacle to significant progress.

A key lesson from Cycling UK's experience across the country is that the greatest progress can be made, and the most impact on behaviour change seen, when a central funding pot supports collaborative working and cross-partner communication, to mitigate risk of duplication or unnecessary competition.

Q10 Should there be a national plan for sport and recreation? Why / why not?

Cycling UK does not have a view on whether there is a need for a new national plan for sport and recreation, beyond what was already set out in DCMS's Sporting Future strategy³⁶ and Sport England's newly launched strategy 'Uniting the Movement'.³⁷

However, if a wholly new national government strategy is to be created, we urge that its preparation and delivery should place significant emphasis on cross-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration, as follows:

- *DCMS and Sport England* should have lead responsibilities for policy and delivery respectively in relation to the formal sports and recreation sector.
- *DH, the NHS and Public Health England* (which will supercede Public Health England) should lead on involving the health sector's promotion of physical activity, including exercise on referral schemes and the promotion of the NHS itself as a cycle-friendly employer.
- *MHCLG* should be responsible for ensuring that new developments support active travel, by ensuring they are designed with include cycle-friendly connections between key destinations (including good public transport connections), and good access to green space.
- *DEFRA, Natural England, the National Park Authorities and the boards of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty* should give greater priority to increasing access to and enjoyment of the natural environment, building on the recommendations of the Glover review, particularly by including this as a

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf

³⁷ www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement

priority area in the Environment Bill and the ensuing Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. *DEFRA* should liaise with the *DfT* on ensuring better integration of Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) with Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

- *DfT* should retain its responsibility for promoting cycling and walking, both through the planning design and regulation of our road and path networks (and particularly through the LCWIP process), as well as by supporting cycle training and other behaviour change measures to boost active travel.
- *DES* should ensure the promotion of cycle training within schools.
- The strategy should be put in place arrangements for similar cross-departmental, cross-organisational and cross-sectoral collaboration at the local level.

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