



## ***Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Consultation***

**18 May, 2016**

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### **About Living Streets**

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking.

We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illnesses and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone.

Our ambition is to get people of all generations to enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings and to ensure all our streets are fit for walking.

### **1. Key recommendations**

- A credible Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) must include quantifiable targets for walking as there is for cycling.
- There needs to be a more ambitious programme of investment to achieve transformative change.
- The CWIS is a chance to introduce bolder policies that would really make a difference to the places where people walk and cycle including: control of pavement parking; a 20mph default national speed limit; more time to cross at controlled pedestrian crossings; and planning controls to ensure new developments are less car-dependent.

### **2. General Comments**

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) is a major milestone for walking in England. It marks an important step towards government recognising walking as a serious transport mode worthy of long term planning and investment. We support the Government's overarching ambition, that is:

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Charities Evaluation Services

*“We want to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey”.*

Living Streets has championed a Strategy for both walking and cycling. They are both effective ways to reduce traffic congestion, boost local economies and improve the nation's health. And we are pleased this Government acknowledges the significant benefits of a walking and cycling nation:

*“If we can increase levels of walking and cycling, the benefits are substantial. For people it means cheaper travel and better health. For business, it means increased productivity and increased footfall in shops. And for society as a whole it means lower congestion, better air quality, and vibrant, attractive places and communities.”*

As the first of its kind, this Strategy presents a unique opportunity to set the country on a course that could transform participation in walking and cycling in England. But the Strategy is only credible if government ambition is matched by clear quantifiable targets for both walking and cycling by which progress can be measured.

## **2.1 Quantifiable targets for walking**

We support the draft strategy's objectives to reverse the decline in walking and increase the percentage of children walking to school.

However we are disappointed the draft strategy lacks any quantifiable targets for walking as there is for cycling.

**It is incomprehensible that quantifiable targets are seen as appropriate for cycling but not for walking. The published CWIS must address this.**

Living Streets is disappointed that the opportunity hasn't been taken to restate the Government's existing ambition for 55% of children to walk to school by 2025. It's an achievable, impactful and popular goal which Ministers in this Government have repeated

numerous times. It would also help the government deliver their 2015 Election Manifesto commitment to tackle childhood obesity.

Alongside clear walking targets, the Strategy should identify necessary milestones for 2020, 2025 and 2040 for each of the stated objectives to increase walking and cycling and improving safety.

## **2.2 A plan to meet the target**

The Strategy must set out the measures proposed, together with the evidence that these are sufficient to deliver the Strategy's targets and milestones for more and safer walking and cycling.

This means producing modelling to show how the Strategy's proposed actions can deliver its targets and milestones to increase walking and cycling and improve the safety of these modes of travel.

## **2.3 Government investment to deliver the Strategy**

The dedicated funding for this Strategy is disappointing and demonstrates a lack of cross-government buy-in (compared for example with the £15bn being spent on England's motorways and trunk roads between now and 2020-21).

The Government should be matching the ambition of the CWIS with a clear and appropriate long-term budget which reflects the importance of walking and cycling as serious transport modes and with a specific objective to 'invest to save' as part of managing demand for private and public transport travel and reducing health costs.

There needs to be a national and local cross-government investment plan that sets out the dedicated and potential investment available to deliver the CWIS over the next term of Parliament together with details of how cross-government funding will be secured. This should include securing additional investment from other Government departments and national sources (e.g. Highways England, Department of Health, Sport England).

Walking and cycling schemes consistently show much better value for money at much smaller cost than most schemes for motor traffic<sup>1</sup>. Measures that lead to higher levels of walking have significant health benefits, in terms of cost savings to the NHS, improved productivity and longer lives, as well as traditional 'transport' benefits such as reducing congestion, travel costs and road casualties.

Sufficient funds could easily be found by cutting the worst-value road schemes and reallocating this investment to active travel.

## **2.4 A framework for assessing performance**

The consultation document promises to produce a range of metrics in the summer. These should enable greater transparency, accountability and engagement of not just the Government but also sub-national bodies and local authorities, given their important role in delivery.

We would support the production of Key Performance Indicators - such as those for the Roads Investment Strategy - that include public perception of walking and cycling facilities as well as objective measures of usage and safety.

## **2.5 Governance structure**

The governance structure must ensure government departments and other delivery bodies are held accountable by an independent expert body for the effective delivery of the Strategy. It should: oversee implementation, review progress, make recommendations and be able to recommend the sanctions and incentives necessary for the delivery of the Strategy.

## **3. Consultation Questions**

***Q1. The Government would be interested to hear views on the approach and actions set out in section 8 of this Strategy.***

If walking and cycling are to become the 'natural choice', the Strategy must set out clear quantifiable targets for both walking and cycling with regular milestones in this CWIS. This

should include quantifiable targets for the whole population and for children walking to school.

The policies and actions set out in section 8 currently lack sufficient ambition to deliver transformative change. The CWIS provides the opportunity for the Government to deliver bolder action on a range of policies which will deliver the Government's objectives. Many are at little or no cost. These include: legal control of pavement parking throughout England as exists in London; making 20mph the default national speed limit; providing more time to cross at controlled crossings through the review of the Traffic Signs and General Directions and; working across Government and local bodies to encourage walking and cycling through supporting infrastructure and the provision of local services accessible by walking and cycling.

We would also like to see more priority given to traffic law enforcement and justice including the re-launch of the Justice for Vulnerable Road User Working Group.

**Better Safety:**

The Government should adopt a long term vision for streets free from fatalities and serious injury, with the CWIS containing challenging national quantitative targets for pedestrians killed and seriously injured. This would help galvanise a shared responsibility for pedestrian safety results. Whilst UK road safety has improved, vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, children and cyclists are disproportionately at risk.

We believe the Government should introduce a national 20mph default speed limit and enable local authorities to increase compliance through engineering, enforcement and education (see 'Better Streets').

There must also be investment in infrastructure projects based on safe systems principles and targeted towards areas of high or perceived risk that are acting as a barrier to walking and cycling (the 'Better Junction' programme in London focusing on the 'worse' junctions is a good example of this type of approach).

We would like to see the greater use of smart road pricing in order to reduce the volume of motor vehicles in urban centres and eliminate unnecessary traffic. The greater use of Low

Emission Zones in some UK's cities provides an opportunity to reduce not only the most polluting vehicles from urban centres, but also some of the most dangerous.

The Government could take on a greater role in enforcing appropriate behaviour (e.g. speeding vehicles). Police will be integral to this but there are also many innovative ways that the Government can support (for example the increased use of average speed cameras, appropriate signage, installing Intelligent Speed Adaptation systems on vehicles).

We welcome the phasing out of pelican crossings as part of the new Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD). However, the current 1.2m/s walking speed used to calculate the time given for pedestrians to cross the road remains unfit for purpose. A cross-sectional study<sup>ii</sup> found that for those over the age of 65, 76% of men and 85% of women have a walking speed slower than that needed to use a pedestrian crossing. This must be addressed in the forthcoming Traffic Signs Manual that will include a new chapter on traffic signals and pedestrian crossings.

We support Highways England's commitment to upgrade and increase the number of safe crossings on the strategic road network in the interests of the safety and convenience of more vulnerable customers and will continue to work with them as part of the Vulnerable Road Users Committee.

These and other road safety measures need to be backed by clear and appropriate funding allocation for road safety.

### **Better Mobility:**

We support the ambition to deliver better routes and networks with better links to schools, workplaces and transport hubs supported by behaviour change interventions.

The draft Strategy promises to help local bodies wanting to increase walking and cycling by issuing guidance and support for local bodies to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The guidance is not yet published but in principle we support such plans and the inclusion of a level of service tool to help local bodies assess how well infrastructure meets the needs of people walking and cycling.

We are pleased the DfT will continue to engage with Local Enterprise Partnerships, building on the existing Sustainable Transport Delivery Excellence Programme in order to build capability and understanding. With DfT's very limited capital budget, it will be essential that mechanisms are in place to encourage LEPs to follow best practice and invest in better places to walk and cycle.

The Strategy is right to recognise the importance of ensuring a seamless transition between public transport and active travel as a key to increasing the number of walking and cycling stages as part of longer journeys. We would like the Strategy however be more explicit in exactly what this Government will do beyond 'explore opportunities' for promoting cycling and walking in rail franchise specifications and in refurbishments of stations.

We are pleased that the Strategy commits to continue to invest in behaviour change projects through the Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund and the Access Fund. However, these funds represent a significant reduction in revenue from the previous Local Sustainable Transport Fund and will limit the ability of the Strategy to deliver on its objectives (see 2.3).

Behaviour change programmes are crucial to getting more people walking and cycling. A 2014 report<sup>iii</sup> produced for the DfT revealed that the best overall value for money is achieved from programmes offering both revenue and capital, with flexibility for local authorities to choose what is right for their particular circumstances (typically 30-50% revenue and 50-70% capital of investment is required). The report highlighted that where capital investment is married with investment in behaviour change programmes; the behaviour change element yields a disproportionately high return on investment, and as such greatly improves the overall BCR of the intervention.

We are pleased the Government will continue to support initiatives such as Walk to Work and national Cycle to Work day and we is committed to working with employers and local bodies to support the delivery of such behaviour change programmes through the Access fund. We will continue to work in partnership with government to support walking and cycling messages, for example through the annual Living Streets National Walking Month and Walk to School Week.

We also believe there is scope for government to more effectively work across departments to build walking and cycling messages into national behaviour change campaigns (for example, Change for Life and One You campaigns).

We agree technological interventions have a role to play in encouraging more people to walk and cycle. A number of apps already exist that allow people to plan more easily a walk or link up with public transport. The Living Streets Travel Tracker Smartboard Technology is leading the way in recording real time information of school travel data. We will continue to work with partners to innovate and introduce new technologies in the programmes we deliver.

Equally, we will continue to support research to increase the evidence base on walking and help government and others assess the case for investment.

### **Better Streets:**

We are pleased to see that the draft Strategy recognises the importance of walking not only as a transport mode, but as essential in creating better places for people to live, work, shop and play. As the draft Strategy points out, well-designed, accessible streets encourage people to walk and also encourage people to linger and spend time resulting in economic benefits for local retail.

The draft Strategy recognises that ‘20mph zones and limits can make a difference to both actual and perceived levels of safety in our cities, towns and villages’. The evidence is already very clear and the Government should delay no further by introducing a national default 20mph speed limit. This would make streets safer and more inviting places to walk, give those driving consistency and reduce costs and bureaucracy for local authorities. Power would remain in the hands of local authorities to have higher speed limits on appropriate streets.

Pavement parking is a major barrier to many people walking and enjoying their local streets. The Strategy is right that local authorities have the powers to introduce pavement parking restrictions through Traffic Regulation Orders. However, local authorities tell us these powers are not sufficient, making dealing with pavement parking expensive and bureaucratic and often ineffective (e.g. pushing the problem onto the neighbouring streets). We will continue to support the Department for Transport in their work examining the legal and financial

implications of an alternative pavement parking regime and the likely impacts on local authorities.

In many places, walking has been 'engineered out' of our everyday lives through poorly connected, impermeable street layouts and the moving of important services - schools, doctors' surgeries, banks, shops etc - away from where people live. We are pleased the Government is committed to work with local bodies to ensure new housing projects are designed using the principles developed from *Manual for Streets* and subsequent design guidance to encourage cycling and walking.

However, we would like the Strategy to give more detail on how Government will set about this and what mechanisms they have in place to improve the quality of design going forward. *Manual for Streets* has been around for a number of years and yet many of its principles continue to be ignored by developers.

We would welcome the opportunity to feed into the work of the Cycle Proofing Working Group's six month review into how the planning system supports cycling and walking provision to ensure the walking element is fully considered.

Positive measures to promote walking and cycling should be backed by interventions to discourage short car journeys. These measures should include reallocation of road space to walking and cycling, 20mph default speed limit and road user charging. We would like to see the reduction of vehicular traffic as part of Low Emission Zones (as proposed in the Government Air Quality Plans) in designated areas and reallocation of space to walking and cycling, as is being proposed in some of the Mayor of London's Air Quality Neighbourhoods.

***2. The Government would be interested to hear views on the potential roles of national government departments, local government, other public bodies, businesses and the voluntary sector in delivering the Strategy.***

To create a walking and cycling nation the Government will need to make walking and cycling for short journeys a central theme of national transport, planning, education and health and wellbeing strategies to encourage complementary policies and actions. There are opportunities for this type of cross-departmental coordination in the Government's new Sports Strategy, Air Quality plans and forthcoming Child Obesity Strategy.

A cross-departmental working group with the aim to promote walking and cycling might provide a useful mechanism for achieving this goal.

Central Government must also provide a clearer steer than present that promoting walking and cycling is something that is every local authority and LEP is expected to do.

There is a wide range of NGO bodies working in health, active travel and the environment that are committed contributors to active travel policy and practice. Living Streets will continue to provide support to DfT and local government to deliver the ambitions of the Strategy. Partnership could be promoted by encouraging local authorities to partner with voluntary organisations and possibly businesses in the forthcoming Access Fund.

***3. The Government would be interested to hear suggestions and evidence for innovative projects and programmes which could be developed to deliver the objectives.***

Living Streets has been running innovative and effective behaviour change programmes regularly updated over the past 20 years. Behaviour change projects like these backed by proper investment in our streets and places are effective ways to increase walking and cycling.

A 'test and learn' approach such as 'no vehicle days' in city centres or temporary, low cost changes to street layouts, can also be useful in verifying the effectiveness of new ideas.

***4. The Government would be interested to hear your views on how to increase cycling and walking in typically under-represented groups.***

Walking is the most 'democratic' of transport modes and physical activity, with the smallest variation among different groups in terms of gender, race or socioeconomic status.

However, people in deprived environments are disproportionately affected by the poor quality of their street environment – for example children from the lowest socio-economic groups are more likely to be killed in traffic incidents and suffer the effects of poor air quality.

People in less walking friendly neighbourhoods also tend to be less active, increasing health risks. Better walking environments and wider scale interventions such as slower speed limits address the social inequalities of health because they benefit everyone but especially deprived communities, which suffer greater levels of road danger, air pollution and noise.

One category for whom walking is not universal is people with disabilities. This is also true of older people especially the over-70s. With an ageing population more thought and effort needs to go into street design to be amenable to people with disabilities and older people, e.g. more time to cross at controlled pedestrian crossings and restrictions on pavement parking.

Importantly, delivering the population-scale behaviour change we need will require area-wide infrastructure and cultural changes rather than simply programmes targeted on specific groups.

***5. The Government would be interested to hear views on what type of assistance Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships would find beneficial to support development Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.***

Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships have a substantial but variable expertise in walking and cycling. The Sustainable Transport Delivery Excellence (STDE) Programme shows how external expert advice can benefit LEPs and improve value for money. Such advice could be made available to local authorities on a similar model. The new 'expert committee' could facilitate such advice.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> DfT (2014) Claiming the Health Dividend: A summary and discussion of value for money estimates from studies of investment in walking and cycling.

<sup>ii</sup> Asher L. *et al* (2012). Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study, *Age and Ageing* 2012; 41: 690–694

<sup>iii</sup> Transport for Life, Sustrans, WSP (Dec, 2014) Finding the Optimum: Revenue/Capital Investment Balance for Sustainable Transport