

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk.

## **Living Streets' response to Department for Transport's Cycling Delivery Plan: informal consultation**

### **Introduction**

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. We started life in 1929 as the Pedestrians Association and have been the national voice for pedestrians throughout our history. In the early years, our campaigning led to the introduction of the driving test, pedestrian crossings and 30 mph speed limits. Eighty five years on, we continue to influence decision makers nationally and locally, run successful projects to encourage people to walk more, and provide specialist consultancy services to help reduce congestion and carbon emissions, and improve public health. We want to make sure that every community can enjoy the benefits of walking.

### **About our response**

As the consultation provides no questions to respond to we have created questions which relate to each of the four themes of the plan in order to provide a narrative and clarity to our response.

The four questions are:

- 1) Do you think the leadership and role of central Government is adequately outlined in theme one?**
- 2) Do you think the funding proposals outlined in theme two will deliver the Government's walking ambitions?**
- 3) What are the infrastructure and planning barriers to walking and are these addressed in theme three of the plan?**
- 4) Do you think the actions outlined in theme four will improve safety for pedestrians and achieve behaviour change? What else should be included?**

### **Key Messages:**

1. We welcome the ambition to increase the percentage of children aged 5-10 that usually walk to school to 55% in 2025 but believe this should be a target;
2. In order to deliver this ambition a clear commitment from the Government is needed to invest both revenue and capital funding for walking from existing Government funding streams;
3. In order to deliver a 55% target by 2025 investment would need to be built up to £100 million per annum between now and 2025. Government also needs to have an equivalent figure for walking to the proposed £10 per head investment for cycling.

## 1) Do you think the leadership and role of central Government is clear in theme one?

We welcome the ambition to increase the percentage of children aged 5-10 that usually walk to school to 55% in 2025. However, we believe that this should be a target rather than aspiration and should refer to children walking all or part of the way to school. Furthermore the 48% figure referred to in paragraph 1.1 is incorrect as the National Travel Survey (NTS) 2013 reveals that 46% of trips to and from school by primary school children (aged 5-10) were made on foot compared to 53% in 1995/97.

Over the same period the proportion of trips by car for these children increased from 38% to 46%. Among secondary school children (aged 11-16) walk to school rates are even lower with 37% of school trips being undertaken by foot compared with 42% in 1995/7.

There are multiple policy implications if the decline in walk to school rates continues against a projected 18% increase in the number of children attending state run primary schools and nurseries by 2021 compared to 2012<sup>1</sup>. In terms of congestion currently 23 per cent of cars on the road at peak traffic times are taking children to school<sup>2</sup>, contributing to congestion and carbon emissions. 14 per cent of school journeys under a mile being driven, a distance that could be walked within 20 minutes<sup>3</sup>.

Increasing the number of children walking to school will also deliver public health benefits. The latest child obesity figures from Public Health England reveal that one in three children in Year Six is overweight or obese (boys 34.8 per cent, girls 31.8 per cent)<sup>4</sup>. Whilst the latest Health Survey for England research, reveals that only 21 per cent of boys and 16 per cent of girls were achieving at least one hour of moderate intensity physical activity per day<sup>5</sup>. A number of studies have highlighted the impact of school transport mode on physical activity levels with the majority concluding that children who actively commute to school are more physically active than those who do not<sup>6</sup>. More recent research highlighted significant positive associations between walking to school and physical activity and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for both boys and girls. The results revealed that on an average weekday those who walked over one kilometre accumulated at least 40 per cent more minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity during journey times than those who do not walk to school<sup>7</sup>. This is crucial as the Chief Medical Officer recommends that children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day<sup>8</sup>.

There is also significant public support for increasing the number of children walking to school as recently testified by almost twenty thousand people signing a petition to the Prime Minister calling

<sup>1</sup> National Pupil Projections: Future Trends in Pupil Numbers (Department for Education Statistical Release, 21 March 2013) pp 2-3 [Accessed 4 October 2013]

<sup>2</sup> Department for Transport, National Travel Survey, Table NTSO615, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport, National Travel Survey, Table NTSO614, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Public Health England (2013) Patterns and trends in child obesity, [http://www.noo.org.uk/slide\\_sets](http://www.noo.org.uk/slide_sets)

<sup>5</sup> Health and Social Care Information Centre (2013) Health Survey for England – 2012

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/searchcatalogue?productid=13887&returnid=1685>

<sup>6</sup> Panter J, Jones AP, van Sluijs E, Griffin S (2011) The Influence of Distance to School on the Associations Between Active Commuting and Physical Activity, *Pediatric Exercise Sciences*, 2011; 23 (1): 72-86

<sup>7</sup> Ibid Panter et al.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection (2011) Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers

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on him to make the walk to school safer and easier which we delivered to No.10 Downing Street in late October.

Whilst we support the concept of the Government setting up partnerships with local authorities to deliver '*ambitious changes in cycling and walking*' we are concerned by the lack of clarity regarding additional revenue and capital support for local authorities as part of the partnerships described in paragraph 1.4 of the document other than that already dedicated through existing funding streams and the lack of detail regarding new funding streams described in paragraph 1.7. These issues are considered further in our response to theme two.

The opening section of the plan fails to take a strategic approach to increasing active travel. Instead of considering walking and cycling together, the Government's approach is to focus on cycling in the first six paragraphs. The title of the plan is also misleading as it is clearly a cycling **and walking** plan as highlighted in the very first line of paragraph 1.1 and by the two headline ambitions, one for cycling and one for walking. and therefore should refer to both travel modes in the title. This may appear a semantic debate but should be seen in the context of both Departmental Ministers referring to publishing a cycling and walking delivery plan at the party conferences and ensuring both walking and cycling are considered as both separate and mutually supportive modes of active travel in their own right.

We are surprised that the role of business in supporting walking is not further developed following a reference in paragraph 3 of the introduction. Employers have an important role in encouraging active travel both to and from the workplace but also during working hours and breaks. Living Streets' 'Walk to Work' activities and projects engages with adults in employment to encourage more walking to, from and at work. The project has raised awareness of the benefits of walking to over 63,000 individuals since 2009, through walking pledges, regular digital campaigns and the annual Walk to Work Week challenge. Since participating in Walk to Work Week, 57% of respondents felt that their overall level of walking had increased and individuals achieving 30 minutes or more physical activity on five or more days per week increased from 29% at registration to 50% at follow up<sup>9</sup>.

The Government is devolving more power and funding to Local Economic Partnerships (LEPS), but analysis suggests only 5% of the funding for LEPs in 2014 went to walking and cycling schemes<sup>10</sup>. We believe it is essential that the Government outlines its leadership expectations for the LEPS in delivering the actions contained within the plan. For example, we would welcome clarity regarding the support Government expects from LEPs for local authorities described in paragraph 2.7 of the plan. Similarly, paragraph 1.4 should refer to the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships in increasing both walking and cycling.

Finally, in terms of Government leadership we believe that Government should develop a rolling programme of activities and ministerial engagement to raise awareness of how the best places are becoming walking and cycling friendly and break down barriers to effective delivery and implementation of the plan.

In addition to the broad points above regarding leadership and the role of Government we wish to make the following points regarding specific paragraphs:

<sup>9</sup> Sustrans Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. 2011. *Living Streets – Walk to Work Week 2011 – Follow-up Survey Results*

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/roads-nowhere/local-transport>

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- Paragraph 2 should talk about making both walking and cycling the natural choice for short journeys and the introduction rewritten to ensure that it is more integrated and cohesive between both walking and cycling;
- Paragraph 1.6 (bullet point one) can be strengthened by ensuring when local authorities set a '*clear and specific vision for their area which outlines how cycling and walking will be increased and supported in a defined area over a defined period*' this links with other relevant local authority strategies such as public realm strategies;
- Paragraph 1.6 (bullet point two) needs to include a reference to local authorities developing their local walking and cycling delivery plan in consultation with local communities and businesses;
- Paragraph 1.6 the addition of a new bullet point two which references the need for local authorities to engage and highlight joint work with Public Health Teams within local authorities and engagement with Public Health England to increase levels of physical activity through walking.

## 2) Do you think the funding proposals outlined in theme two will deliver the Government's walking ambitions?

As explained above we welcome the ambition to increase the percentage of children aged 5-10 that usually walk to school to 55% in 2025 but believe this should be a target rather than an ambition. However, in order to deliver this ambition a clear commitment from the Government is needed to invest both revenue and capital funding for walking from existing Government funding streams. We calculate that in order to deliver a 55% target by 2025 an investment would need to be built up to £100 million per annum between now and 2025. Government highlights its commitment to increasing cycling and cycling investment at £10 per head. Walking is just as important and needs the same demonstration of the Government's commitment to invest an equivalent amount in getting more people walking.

This investment must be seen in context of the wide range of economic benefits which can be achieved by increasing the number of people walking and creating walking friendly streets. Investments in walking can increase economic value and economic activity in the local area, for example, research has shown that people on foot tend to linger longer and spend more and shows that making town centres better for walking can boost trading by up to 40%<sup>11</sup>. High quality public realm in high streets and town centres can encourage increased levels of walking. Successful high streets and town centres are more than just a shopping destination. They provide important public space, civic facilities, transport, employment and leisure opportunities. The Living Streets' Step Out in London project promoted a range of activities to complement and publicise public realm schemes, by encouraging people to spend more time walking in their local town centre. Surveys carried out after the activities found that people reported walking more (47%), shopping more (52%), feeling safer and more part of a community (both 58%)<sup>12</sup>.

Investments in walking environments can help alleviate the significant economic and societal costs related to poor health such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, obesity and mental health. For example, a recent *Lancet* study revealed that increased levels of walking and cycling has the potential to save the National Health Service over £17 billion pounds, over the

<sup>11</sup> TfL <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/walking/2896.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/professionals/working-with-communities/step-out-in-london>

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course of 20 years, through reductions in the prevalence of type 2 diabetes, dementia, ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and cancer because of increased physical activity with further costs would be averted after 20 years<sup>13</sup>. In contrast, the recent Public Health England document *Everybody Active, every day* estimates that a lack of physical inactivity is costing the UK an estimated £7.4 billion a year<sup>14</sup>.

The role of walking friendly streets and behaviour change interventions are highlighted in a range of public health guidance notes not limited to: *NICE Quality Standard* (in development) – *Physical Activity: encouraging activity in all people in contact with the NHS (staff, patients and carers)*; *Obesity prevention and lifestyle weight management in children*; *NICE public health guidance 41- Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation*. Furthermore, the plan as described in paragraph 5.1 is a *key component of a cross-government strategy to promote physical activity...Moving More, Living More* and will also be an important component in delivering Public Health England's physical activity framework - *Everybody Active, Every Day*.

Walking interventions also deliver significant returns on investment. Living Streets has been funded to deliver walk to school interventions across England through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund since 2012. At the end of year two, the Walk to School Outreach project has already engaged 532 primary and 112 secondary schools from across thirteen local authority partner areas. Project coordinators work with schools to identify barriers to walking, deliver awareness events and implement incentive and reward schemes. The result has been an average **23 per cent increase** in the number of children walking at participating primary schools (equating to almost nine million new walking journeys per year by children and accompanying parents and carers) and over £140,000 of capital investment on physical route improvements. A separate independent study commissioned by Living Streets revealed that **for every £1 invested, the walk to school programme is expected to return £7.64 in benefits**.

We welcome the Government's stated national support for walking (paragraph 2.4) through a *long-term funding commitment* but there is a need for further details on the nature, scale or type (capital, revenue or both) of the funding commitment. Further clarity is also required regarding the nature and form of the support described in paragraph 2.4 for local authorities. This paragraph also needs to include a reference to walking networks in addition to *developing and managing a successful cycling network*.

As well as commissioning more evidence on the returns to business of walking friendly places we want a commitment from the Government – in partnership with LEPs, LAs and third sector organisations – to also look at the return on investment to the public purse of investment in walking friendly places. Benefits should include savings across public sector budgets lines such as health and transport. It's about joining the *best use* of limited funds, not thinking in the usual silos. This is in addition to commissioning further research on the economic benefits of investment in walking friendly places and behaviour change interventions such as the walk to school project funded by the LSTF described above. We would like to see the Government support evaluations of small scale walking projects to recognise the full range of economic benefits arising from such projects using tools such as WebTAG and HEAT.

<sup>13</sup> The Lancet, Volume 379, Issue 9832, Pages 2198 - 2205, 9 June 2012 [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(12\)60766-1/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(12)60766-1/fulltext)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/366112/Framework\\_23\\_Oct.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366112/Framework_23_Oct.pdf)

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In addition to the broad points above regarding funding we wish to make the following points regarding specific paragraphs:

- Theme 2 should make reference to the Government exploring the opportunity for relevant government tenders to include requirements for contractors to work with the third sector to incorporate walking and cycling measures;
- Paragraph 2.6, in addition to cycle-proofing parts of the strategic road network it must also be pedestrian proofed;
- Paragraph 2.1 – an aspiration to explore funding for cycling is not strong enough and should go much further than merely aspiring to explore;
- Paragraph 2.7 – We would welcome clarification of the term '*local journeys*' in the context of '*Nearly all cycling and walking journeys are local journeys*. The paragraph makes no reference to the role of walking in connecting multimode journeys or walking for business purposes;
- Paragraph 2.7- This sentence should be strengthened by replacing *will do what it can*' to '*will commit*'.

### 3) What are the infrastructure and planning barriers to walking and are these addressed in theme three of the plan?

We welcome the commitment of the Department of Health *working with the eight English Age-Friendly Cities to pilot mechanisms to create physical and social environments conducive to older people walking*. This is vital at a time when the number of people in the UK aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 9.9million in 2008 to 16.4million by 2033 (ONS, 2009). We also believe such an approach will help to deliver public health interventions referred to in guidance such as the *NICE Public Health Guidelines - Dementia, disability and frailty in later life - mid-life approaches to prevention* which is currently in development and highlights importance to promote walking and improve environments for walking to tackle dementia, disability and frailty in later life through mid-life interventions. However, we believe such an approach should not just be restricted to cities it should be extended to towns and villages.

The reference in paragraph 3.2 (bullet point 4) to *building on best practice guides* should be rewritten and refer to the Government creating a set of good practice guidelines for England based on the cycle and pedestrian design standards from the Active Travel Design Guidance from Wales and other guidance from around England.

Paragraph 3.2 (bullet point 5) should seek to encourage new developments to increase walking. Furthermore, the review should be expanded to not only review planning issues but also include a review of legislative barriers to pedestrian proofing. In particular we would like such a review to consider three of the most pressing legislative barriers. The review should include at least an evidence review and economic impact assessment of any resulting policy changes:

- 1) **The adoption of a 20 mph national default in the places where we live, work and shop:** a pedestrian struck at 20 mph has a 97 per cent chance of survival. This falls to 80 per cent at 30 mph and 50 per cent at 35 mph<sup>15</sup>. The Department for Transport's Speed circular 01/2013 encourages local authorities to 'proactively consider' 20 mph speed limits

<sup>15</sup> According to Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

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on residential streets and streets with high pedestrian footfall but there is a need for a national default to break down road safety barriers to walking;

- 2) **Prohibiting pavement parking across England and Wales unless specifically permitted, as currently in place in Greater London:** pavement parking is dangerous because it can obstruct the footway and force pedestrians into the path of oncoming traffic. Vulnerable pedestrians, for example, those with reduced mobility, wheelchair or mobility scooter users, parents with young children or buggies and people with sight loss who are unable to see moving vehicles, are placed at even greater risk of accidents and injury. 78% of councillors support the introduction of a national law to prohibit pavement parking. They say that the powers they already have are insufficient to tackle the problem effectively<sup>16</sup> and a YouGov survey found 69% of the public support the proposed legislation<sup>17</sup>;
- 3) **Decreasing the assumed walking speed for pedestrian crossings:** A new literature review by Transport Research Laboratory on behalf of Living Streets found that the current assumed walking speed is not fit for purpose, particularly for older people and highlights that older people are unable to walk at 1.2m/s<sup>18</sup>. We are asking for the current assumed walking speed to be reduced. Given this latest research it is necessary to review the assumed walking speed and for the Department for Transport to update pedestrian crossings guidance as part of the Traffic Signs policy review.

In addition to the broad points above regarding funding we wish to make the following points regarding specific paragraphs:

- Paragraph 3.1 both cyclists and pedestrians should be considered at the outset of the design stage of any new and improved road infrastructure;
  - Paragraph 3.1 (line 4-7) as there is no clear evidence yet on how the Highways Agency have pedestrian proofed the SRN this paragraph should refer to the Highways Agency committing to doing so;
  - Paragraph 3.1 (line 9-10) – this line should be strengthened to ensure all cycling interventions always benefit both walking and cycling environments. Therefore, replace *'wherever possible'* with *'always'*;
  - Paragraph 3.2 (bullet point three) should be expanded to ensuring professionals also understand how to improve pedestrian provision;
  - Theme 3 action table box (page 12) beginning *..cycle proof the Strategic Road Network...* in addition to cycle-proofing parts of the strategic road network it must also be pedestrian proofed.
  - Theme 3 action table box (page 13) after reviewing the training needs of transport professionals there needs to be an action plan and training provided
  - Theme 3 action table box (page 13) replace *where possible* any new cycling infrastructure projects... with *'always'*.
- 4) **Do you think the actions outlined in theme four will improve safety for pedestrians and achieve behaviour change? What else should be included?**

<sup>16</sup> GUIDE Consultancy survey of 407 councillors from England and Wales, February 2014 for Guide Dogs

<sup>17</sup> Guide Dogs 2014

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/make-a-change/urgent-actions/crossings/a-review-of-pedestrian-walking-speeds-and-time-needed-to>

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We welcome the action to *develop a series of behaviour change projects to promote cycling and walking as a normal, accessible activity available to all* and to engage the Department of Health, Public Health England and Health and Well Being Boards (page 14). However, we are concerned that the theme 4 action table box (page 14) *promotion of safe and sustainable school travel* only refers to cycling and bikeability and not the role of Living Streets' walk to school programme. Furthermore, no reference is made to the Department of Education's as yet unpublished home to school travel and transport guidance within the theme four section. There is also no reference to the role of road safety training.

## 5) Governance and Monitoring

We look forward to working with the Government and local authorities to share our experiences of monitoring our full range of walking interventions in order to show the impact of the actions outlined in this action plan. We believe the Department for Education should introduce national data collection methods to ensure consistency of information and to assist both Government and local authorities in monitoring progress towards increasing the percentage of children aged 5-10 that usually walk to school to 55% in 2025 and to corroborate the National Travel Survey data.

In addition to the broad points above regarding funding we wish to make the following points regarding specific paragraphs:

- Paragraph 5.1 is a little unclear of the relationship between this Cycling Delivery Plan and Moving More, Living More. Does the Cycling Delivery Plan directly support or indirectly complement Moving More, Living More?
- Paragraph 5.2 notes that '*This Delivery Plan will be monitored regularly to ensure actions are on track, and that relevant **outcome measures** are showing the impact of these actions.*' However, the plan does not mention any outcome measures.

### For more details please contact:

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