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# Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

RoSPA's Response to the Department for Transport Consultation Paper

Date: 17 May 2016



Response to DfT Consultation Paper, "Cycling and Walking Strategy"

## Introduction

This is the response of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to the Department for Transport's consultation paper, "Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy". RoSPA thanks the DfT for the opportunity to comment on their proposed investment strategy and vision for a cycling and walking nation.

Our response has been produced following consultation with RoSPA's National Road Safety Committee, and supports the principles adopted by the Bicycle Association, British Cycling, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Cyclenation, Cycling UK, Living Streets, London Cycling Campaign and Sustrans. This recommends the following five tasks for ensuring the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy is successfully implemented.

### **1. A pathway towards achieving the Government's ambition for cycling and walking in England.**

Identify the necessary milestones for 2020, 2025 and 2040 for each of the stated objectives. More ambitious targets will be needed both for increased cycling and walking, and for improving their safety, across England by 2025. This means:

- Set out what success looks like for each of the three areas of the 2040 ambition: Better Safety, Better Mobility and Better Streets'
- Identify KPIs and requirements to monitor and secure delivery.
- Modelling to develop tangible milestones for 2020 and beyond are at least in-line with 2025 targets, and a reporting framework that shows expected progress at least every five years

### **2. A plan to at least to meet clear targets for both cycling and walking and other outcomes.**

This should 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 cycling and walking and improve the safety of these modes of travel.

### **3. A package of committed Government investment and other potential funding to deliver the Strategy.**

This should show the sums allocated by national Government to deliver the Strategy over the current parliamentary term, together with additional funding opportunities from local and non-government sources, and the means by which these will be secured. This means:

- Securing additional investment from other Government departments and other national sources, e.g. Highways England, Department of Health, Sport England
- Setting out the incentives and mechanisms for securing additional local and national investment to deliver the Strategy.

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This should enable greater transparency, accountability and engagement of not just the Government but also subnational bodies and local authorities, given their important role in delivery, and include

- Production of KPIs and requirements – such as those for the Road Investment Strategy that includes public perception of walking and cycling as well as objective measures of usage and safety.
- Production of a suite of open data on cycling and walking, including spend and Level of Service at local level.

**4. Independent governance that challenges and supports the preparation and delivery of current and future Strategies, in particular through monitoring and assessing performance.**

This means:

- Plans for a governance structure that ensures 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.

RoSPA's responses to the specific questions in the consultation paper are below.

**Question 1**

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

**RoSPA Response**

RoSPA strongly supports the Government's vision that walking and cycling should be a normal part of everyday life and the natural travel choice for shorter journeys. Creating a walking and cycling nation will have many health and environmental benefits and is something to which we all must aspire. The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy is a huge opportunity to transform levels of cycling and walking by 2040.

However, cycling in particular also carries a certain amount of risk, and so we need to ensure that more cycling does not lead to more cycling casualties. The key is to create a safe on and off-road cycling environment, improve driver and cyclist attitudes and behaviour towards each other, and to produce safer vehicles that reduce the risk to cyclists.

Improving the safety of cycling will reduce the number of cyclist casualties and encourage and enable more people to cycle more often. It will help people who want to cycle, but are deterred from doing so because they think it is not safe enough, and help to prevent the increase in cycling being followed by an increase in cyclist casualties. This, in turn, will increase the health and environmental benefits of cycling for those people who cycle and for society as a whole.

The proposed Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, the Cyclist Delivery Plan 2014<sup>1</sup> and British Road Safety Statement<sup>2</sup> clearly outline how the Government intends to make this vision a reality.

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## **Safe System Approach**

RoSPA strongly supports measures which encourage healthy and sustainable travel. The key to increasing cycling (and so gaining all the health and environmental benefits that result from cycling) is to create a safe on and off-road cycling environment, improve driver and cyclist attitudes and behaviour towards each other, and to produce safer vehicles that reduce the risk to cyclists.

The consultation paper states that the key to increasing both the numbers and safety of those walking and cycling is better safety, better mobility and better streets. However, there is very little mention of another key component namely the vehicle. The safe systems approach is a key part of the United Nations 5 Pillars of Action. Most crashes involve a vehicle, with driver/rider error a major contributory factor. Road users will make mistakes and it is vital that our roads allow people to walk and cycle in an environment where, when this happens, the forces involved are insufficient to kill or seriously injure them.

RoSPA recommends that the table on page 11 is expanded to include the following:

Under Better Safety, add

- Pedestrian training opportunities for all children
- Driver testing and training regime prepares new and experienced drivers to 'share the road' more safely with cyclists.
- Accelerate the adoption of cycle and pedestrian friendly vehicles
- Working with emergency services and the NHS to improve post-crash response and to ensure that collisions are effectively investigated.

Post Crash Response should be included because reaching the casualty within the 'golden hour' is vital and, therefore, working with the emergency services and NHS to ensure that collisions are effectively responded to and investigated is essential.

Under Better Streets, add

- Maintaining investment in local road safety activity and management that supports devolved local decision making leading to more walking & cycling, without compromising safety.
- Review the nation's road safety management capacity, to identify opportunities for strengthening joint working, local innovation and efficiency.

RoSPA also makes the following observations and comments In relation to the three headings: Better Safety, Better Mobility and Better Streets.

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## Better Safety

Paragraph 8.11 states that: 'We will continue to address cycle and pedestrian road safety issues as outlined in the Department for Transport's Road Safety Statement', with the Cycle Delivery Plan 2014 (paragraph 2.1) specifying funding aspirations, there still appears to be little mention of the importance of pedestrian training in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. It is good to see reference to Bikeability and the allocation of £50 million over the next 4 years. However, the objective to increase the percentage of children aged 5-10 walking to school MUST be supported by effective practical pedestrian training. Traditionally this was delivered by Local Authority Road Safety Officers.

The National Audit Office report Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities(2014) has estimated that in real terms there has been a 37% reduction in government funding to the local authorities between 2010/11 and 2015/16.<sup>3</sup> These cuts to local authority budgets have had a severe impact on the operational capacity of road safety teams across the country and their ability to organise and deliver practical pedestrian training which has been shown to have positive safety benefits<sup>4</sup>. It should not be a choice between funding bikeability and pedestrian training, both provide valuable life skills.

It is worth bearing in mind that in 2014 there were 6,481 child pedestrian casualties, compared to 2,005 child cyclist casualties. When allocating the £80 million revenue Access funding it would be prudent to encourage this area of work, a large proportion is directed at behavioural change work programmes aimed at adults, but there needs to be a balance with more practical training for children as they transit from Primary to High school.

Highways England is to be commended for stressing the importance of safety within their Cycling Strategy. The £100 million ring fenced funding for cycling, safety and integration is very welcome and will no doubt improve cycling facilities along the network. However, it is vital that Highways England co-ordinates this work closely with local highway authorities. If the new cycle routes and crossing facilities along the strategic network are not linked to local networks they run the risk of becoming white elephants, with little usage.

Segregated cycle routes where cyclists are separated from traffic play a vital role where cyclists and walkers feel safe. Concerns over safety are often cited as one of the main reasons why people do not cycle or walk. For example, from a 2013 survey of Manchester Sky Ride participants, over 80% said they would definitely be encouraged to cycle more often if there were safer streets / cycle routes / paths. The street environment can be a discouragement to walking and cycling with a real or perceived feel of speed, noise, poor air quality and threat.

The Commons Transport Select Committee in their report "Cycling Safety"<sup>5</sup> and the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's, "Get Britain Cycling"<sup>6</sup> report both recommended that no less than £10 pcpa should be invested. It would be helpful to see the funding outlined in Chapter 5 shown in this way and how much is actually going to be spent per head. £10 has been allocated to the Cycle Ambition Cities but for the rest of the country what is the actual estimated amount per head? Achieving the vision will need extensive road engineering with road space being reallocated for cycle use, which will require extensive capital investment and a political will to drive it through.

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In the short to medium term there will be a need for cyclists to ride on non segregated roads and therefore as stated in the Road Safety Statement, the driver testing and training regime must prepare drivers to better share space with cyclists. Businesses need to be encouraged to use resources such as the one which RoSPA has produced <http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/drivers/sharing-the-road-with-cyclists/>. THINK needs to highlight the 'look and fail to see' danger, making drivers more aware of the dangers associated with junctions and of cyclists' vulnerability.

**Better Mobility**

RoSPA supports and recognises the value of developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans as a vital strategic approach. Local Highway Authorities all too often have implemented schemes on a piece meal basis, based on where Section 106 funding allowed expenditure, with the result that cycle or walking provision is not consistent and continuous. Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), are a mechanism which make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not otherwise be acceptable. They are focused on site specific mitigation of the impact of development.

The DfT should encourage greater cross boundary working, where routes are better joined up. The Local Enterprise Partnerships have an important role to play in this. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) guidance and 'service tool' to help local bodies assess how well infrastructure meets cyclists' and pedestrians' needs will be a positive step forward.

RoSPA welcomes the desire to encourage greater use of electric cycles and the launch of a £700,000 pilot trial. We would urge that the safety implications be monitored as this has the potential to increase the cyclist casualty rate. Retailers should be encouraged to offer Level 3 plus Bikeability training to those returning to cycling when purchasing an electric bike.

It is good to see case studies such as Plus Bike and the recognition that it's important for train stations to have secure cycle provision, where commuters can leave their cycle confident that it will be there when they return. To further this RoSPA supports any measure, such as building this into franchise specifications for rail operators that will achieve this aim. However, in many smaller stations the picture below is the reality on the ground. Here the storage is badly maintained, insecure and in an isolated position away from the front of the station. Issues such as this need to be addressed as soon as possible.



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## Better Streets

RoSPA supports the introduction of 20 mph speed limits as lower speeds results in fewer collisions and less severe injuries. When implemented well they can increase walking and cycling rates as was the case in Edinburgh, which saw a trebling of cycling to school. However, we must also be mindful that 20 mph limits are most appropriate for roads where average speeds are already low; DfT guidance<sup>7</sup> suggests below 24 mph. The layout and use of the road must also give the clear impression that a 20 mph speed or below is the most appropriate speed. If implemented in isolation where speeds exceed 24 mph, it may result in many drivers ignoring the limit with little modal shift or safety benefit. RoSPA welcomes the DfT research into the effectiveness of 20 mph speed limits and looks forward to its findings in 2017.

## Targets

Targets are a useful tool in measuring progress and a number of targets have been set as outlined in Chapter 4. However, RoSPA would like to see more quantified targets now rather than waiting for the next strategy. For example, the Cycle Delivery Plan includes the following target: 'To increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 48% in 2013 to 55% by 2025'. This should replace the stated aspiration in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy to 'Increase the percentage of children aged 5-10 that usually walk to school'.

## Question 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 and what arrangements could best support partnership working between them.**

### RoSPA Response

We welcome the DfT's intention to share good practice from walking and cycling projects via a series of stakeholder events. The aim of working with the Department of Health and Public Health England by holding a summit to outline the Government's ambition for walking and cycling and the associated health benefits is a helpful start. As is the increasing amount of joined up thinking, illustrated by the publication of the 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation'.

However, there needs to be recognition within government of how top level policy decisions affect the ambitions stated within the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. For example, the growth in Free Schools, Academies and wider parent choice has the potential to increase catchments and the distance which children travel to school, therefore, making walking and cycling less realistic options for some children.

National government has a vital role to play if this strategy is to be achieved by setting clear quantifiable targets (see question 1) and by allocating sufficient resources revenue and capital resources to its partners to allow the development and implementation of effective delivery programmes.

## Question 3

**Government would be interested to hear suggestions and evidence of innovative projects and programmes which could be developed to deliver the objectives outlined in Section 4**

### RoSPA Response

We are not in a position to comment



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#### Question 4

**The Government would be interested to hear views on how to increase cycling and walking in typically under-represented groups (for example women, older people, or those from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds).**

#### RoSPA Response

Before answering this question it is important not to forget that cycling in particular is a minority mode of travel for the population as a whole. The National Travel Survey 2014 records that cycling makes up only 2% of trips, with, on average, 18 cycle trips per person per year, with 65% people never cycling. RoSPA in its 2015 UGov survey found that 73% of those surveyed said that safety concerns were putting them off from cycling.

This must be addressed at the same time as looking at specific programmes to encourage under representative groups to cycle. There may be specific cultural factors which account for some of this under representation, but personal safety will still be a barrier that needs to be overcome for all potential walkers and cyclists.

Finding a suitable champion or role model (such as Eritrean riders Daniel Teklehaimanot and Merhawi Kudus, the first black African riders to ride in the Tour de France) from the targeted ethnic background is critical. Birmingham City Council had success in training female Asians to cycle using peer to peer training.

#### Question 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 developments of ambitious and high standard Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.**

#### RoSPA Response

We are not in a position to comment on this.

RoSPA thanks the DfT for the opportunity to comment on their Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. We have no objection to our response being published or attributed.

#### References

<sup>1</sup> Cycling Delivery Plan, Department for Transport, October 2014

<sup>2</sup> Working Together to Build a safer Road System. British Road Safety Statement, Department for Transport, December 2015

<sup>3</sup> National Audit Office, Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities 13, para 1.6, 2014

<sup>4</sup> Whelan K, Towner E, Errington G and Powell J (2008) Evaluation of the National Child Pedestrian Training Pilot Projects, Centre for Child and adolescent Health, University of the West of England: Bristol

<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Transport Select Committee, Cycle Safety: Third Report of session 2014-15, 2014

<sup>6</sup> All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's, "Get Britain Cycling", 2013

<sup>7</sup> Setting Local Speed Limits, DfT Circular 01/2006, August 2006



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