

All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group (APPCG) inquiry – Get Britain Cycling. Response from CTC, the national cycling charity

About CTC

CTC, the national cycling charity, was founded in 1878. CTC has 70,000 members and supporters, provides a range of information and legal services to cyclists, organises cycling events, and represents the interests of cyclists and cycling on issues of public policy.

Summary

- There must be a strong, cross-departmental action plan to improve conditions for cycling through a wide range of policies. The action plan should have political backing from the highest levels of Government, with adequate revenue and capital funding to make a significant difference. Evidence from abroad suggests that expenditure of at least £10 per head annually is required to generate significant shifts towards cycling.
- Road safety policy must acknowledge the health benefits of cycling. Perceived and actual danger are the biggest barriers to increasing cycle use and action must be taken to overcome these, in particular, badly designed road networks, high speeds, poor driving behaviour and the specific threat posed by large vehicles.
- The current road network is a major deterrent to getting more people cycling. Lower speed limits, measures to reduce motor traffic, better designed roads and junctions and traffic-free routes are crucial to establishing a more cycle-friendly environment.
- Both national and local Government should aim to maximise the funding opportunities for cycling improvements from the planning system and from road maintenance budgets.
- Road traffic policing has disintegrated in recent years and, with significant threats to future police force levels, looks set to worsen. Roads policing is highly effective both for improving road safety and tackling other crimes. Cuts in this area may already be eroding the past decade's progress on reducing cyclist and other road user casualties.
- Integration with public transport is crucial for cycling to offer a realistic alternative to car travel. In particular, good parking and access to stations should be provided, together with adequate provision on trains for those who still need to carry their cycles with them.
- Legislation and operation of Rights of Way should be reformed to enhance access to cyclists. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides a model for how a rational and effective system for dealing with access issues should operate.
- National and local government should improve the collection of data relating to cycle use, cyclists' safety and how the latter is addressed by the legal system.
- Local authorities, employers, health bodies, schools and other organisations each have a role to play in encouraging and incentivising more people to take up cycling. Some of the measures these organisations can take often prove to be the most cost effective means of increasing cycling levels in the short term.

Action plan for more and safer cycling

Cycling's economic, environmental, health and other benefits are well documented. CTC's "New Vision for Cycling" leaflet¹ contains key facts and figures, as does CTC briefing on cycling and local transport policy² (the latter also contains references). These documents also outline the measures needed to maximise those benefits. CTC's "Cycletopia" campaign³ illustrates these measures, using UK-based good practice examples which could be adopted more widely.

Since the launch of the Times's "Cities fit for cycling" campaign (which CTC strongly supports), we and other cycling groups – under the umbrella of the UK Cycling Alliance (UKCA) – have been working both through Parliament⁴ and through the Government's "Cycling Stakeholder Forum" to press Government for a strong cross-departmental action plan for more and safer cycling. This in turn will require cross-organisational and cross-party backing to deliver the actions and long-term funding commitments required for its successful implementation. We have recently seen signs of progress, with a joint statement from Norman Baker MP and Anna Soubry MP launching the additional £20m at a cycling conference in Leicester in November.⁵ There is also a suggestion that the Prime Minister will make a statement on cycling and walking early in 2013.⁶

CTC believes that nationally an action plan needs commitment from each of the departments, for instance, commitments to promote cycling in schools (e.g. incorporating cycle training into the school curriculum (Department for Education); improving the workings of the criminal justice system to enforce bad driving (Ministry of Justice/Home Office); strengthen planning policy to ensure that journeys are within the range suitable for cycling (Communities); improve countryside access (Defra); promote cycling among employers and employees (BIS) and strengthen the engagement of Public health Directors and other players in the health sector (Department of Health).

While the announcement of additional funding of £42m dedicated to cycling in the Autumn Statement is welcome, it remains a fraction of what is required to achieve the sort of long-term improvements in cycling infrastructure and the changes to major junctions to enhance conditions for cycling.⁷ Over two financial years this equates to around 40p per person in England, yet the evidence from elsewhere in Europe suggests that funding of at least £10 per head of population – sustained for many years – is required for a 'cycling revolution' to occur.

Road safety strategies and the communication of road safety

Road safety strategies, nationally and locally, should recognise that:

- Cycling is a safe activity, posing little risk either to cyclists themselves or to other road users⁸
- The health benefits of cycling far outweigh the risks involved⁹
- Cycling gets safer the more cyclists there are: the 'safety in numbers' effect¹⁰.

The aim of cycle safety policies and initiatives should be to encourage more as well as safer cycling, in order to maximise its health, environmental and other benefits, and to improve overall safety for all road users. This in turn involves tackling the factors that deter cycle use. These include high traffic volumes and speeds; irresponsible driver behaviour; the unfriendly design of many roads and junctions; and lorries.

The provision of cycle training to the 'Bikeability' national standard can also help people to cycle more, to ride more safely, and to feel safer and more confident while doing so. It can also help parents feel more confident about allowing their children to cycle.

Increases in cyclist casualties may still mean cycle safety is improving, if cycle use is increasing more steeply than cyclist casualties. Therefore targets and indicators for the effectiveness of road safety strategies should adopt 'rate-based' measures for improvements in cycle safety, e.g. cycle casualties (or fatal and serious injuries) per million km cycled, or per million trips. Simple casualty reduction targets should be avoided.

'Perception-based' indicators, which show whether public perceptions of cycle safety in a given area are getting better, can be used alongside 'rate-based' indicators, or as an interim substitute for the latter if necessary. The Government has taken welcome steps in publishing rate-based and perception-based data nationally, but should now seek to encourage the adoption of these indicators locally. Local rate-based indicators or targets will require improved cycle use data – see page 6 of this submission.

Care should be taken to avoid cycle safety awareness campaigns that make cycling appear dangerous. These deter people from cycling or allowing their children to cycle and are counter-productive because they erode the 'safety in numbers' effect, as well as undermining the activity's wider health and other benefits.¹¹ Given the degree to which cycling's health benefits outweigh the relatively low risks involved, it can be shown that ill-judged 'road safety' measures which reduce cycling by even just a few percentage points would shorten more lives than they could possibly save, however beneficial they might be for the remaining cyclists.¹²

Cycle friendly road design and infrastructure

62% of people surveyed recently agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads', while only 19% disagreed.¹³ In part this is due to poor driving behaviour or a lack of confidence, however, for the most part it is the layout of roads that are the greatest deterrent to increasing cycle use.

CTC's vision is to see a massive step-change in cycle use, so that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities feel able to cycle safely and confidently for all types of journey.¹⁴

Our neighbourhoods, town centres and road networks should be fundamentally redesigned to be 'people-friendly', with cycling not only contributing to a reduction in car dependence, but also benefiting from it. Through-traffic should be channelled onto a limited network of main roads – which should have dedicated cycle provision on or alongside them – while traffic volumes and speeds are kept low on other streets or lanes. A recent overview of the evidence concluded that the most effective means of increasing active travel resulted from measures to deter motor traffic.¹⁵

Dedicated cycle routes and cycle-friendly access restrictions (e.g. limiting motorised access to town-centres or rat-runs) can encourage people to choose cycling over motorised travel for day-to-day journeys.

The cycle network should include the whole road network, supplemented by high-quality cycle routes away from the road network, e.g. through parks and open spaces, or along canals, waterfronts and disused rail corridors. Dedicated cycle provision should be safe and feel safe, showing that society positively values those who choose to cycle, and avoiding any impression that they are a 'nuisance' to be 'kept out of the way of the traffic.'

In general, CTC advocates:

- 20 mph limits for most built-up streets (including villages), and the widespread adoption of 40 mph or lower limits for rural lanes;
- Some form of dedicated space on busier urban roads, particularly where higher speed limits are retained; and
- Parallel off-road facilities for dual carriageways and inter-urban roads.

However, decisions on appropriate solutions will also need to reflect local factors, such as junctions and junction layouts, and demand for parking or loading. In particular, we support quality segregated facilities on main roads where they involve reallocation of road-space (i.e. not simply placing cyclists on pavements), avoid pedestrian conflict (especially at bus stops and pedestrian crossings), are of adequate width, are well maintained and (vital) where they ensure adequate cycle safety and priority at junctions (this being where 75% of cyclists' injuries occur). This last factor may need changes to traffic law and driver awareness for segregation to work as well as it does in countries like Denmark and the Netherlands. Where these criteria cannot be met, an on-carriageway solution may be preferable.

In most places, the main priority for significant capital spending in the years ahead will be to redesign larger junctions to be cycle-friendly, or to open up links for cyclists across (or avoiding) major barriers to safe and convenient cycle travel.

The planning system should support the aim of encouraging cycle use and other sustainable transport choices. It should avoid locating new developments in locations which exacerbate car-dependent journey patterns.

Opportunities should also be sought to maximise the funding for cycling improvements both from the planning system and from road maintenance budgets. New York City has delivered some major cycle schemes at relatively marginal cost by integrating their cycling and road maintenance programmes. In the UK, Plymouth City Council is also pursuing this approach.

Traffic law and the criminal justice system

Proper enforcement of road traffic law must have a higher priority in national policy. We are deeply concerned that there has been a wholesale collapse of road traffic policing. Nationally road traffic police levels have fallen by 29% over the last ten years – whilst all police levels remained constant over the same period.¹⁶

It is perhaps linked to this that convictions for both serious and slight motoring offences have fallen concurrently, at a rate faster than the overall decline in road casualties, suggesting that more bad driving is going unpunished or receiving light sentences which fail to reflect the gravity of the offences. The proportion of drivers sentenced to immediate custody following a conviction for death or bodily harm fell from 92% in 2006 to 53% in 2011¹⁷. Disqualifications for bad driving have fallen by 48% over the last 10 years – and even more steeply than that in the last 7 years. Dangerous driving and careless driving convictions have fallen by 48% and 44% respectively from 2001-2011, whereas all road casualties have fallen only 35%¹⁸. The new offence of “Causing death by careless driving”, introduced in 2008, may also have ‘lowered the bar’ between ‘dangerous’ and ‘careless’ driving, despite no change in the legal definitions of these terms (even though it has also increased the total number of ‘causing death’ convictions)

CTC believes that the combination of inadequately resourced traffic policing and inadequacies in other areas of the criminal justice system means that many bad drivers are failing to be punished adequately, with their access to the roads restricted. There are many examples highlighted on the website of CTC’s “Stop Smidsy” campaign¹⁹.

Integration with public transport

It is important to ensure that cycling can be easily integrated with public transport provision. Doing so reduces dependency on cars, promotes realistic alternatives for long distance travel, improves access to employment and leisure activities while gaining the benefits of cycling – such as improved health and reduced congestion and pollution.

A whole package of improvements is necessary in order to improve the integration of cycling with public transport. It is no good simply focusing on only one aspect of provision – for example: there is little use in providing cycle parking provision at a station if access to the station feels unsafe and deters people from cycling there in the first place. Furthermore, provision of parking should not be used as an excuse to reduce carriage on trains. Currently a higher proportion of users take their bikes on trains than choose to park them at the station.²⁰

While CTC applauds the additional funding that has been granted in recent years to enhance parking (and, in some cases access) to stations, we fear that under new franchising regimes, train operating companies are losing the incentive to provide adequate space for cycles to be carried on trains. CTC believes that all new and refurbished rolling stock must be equipped with both dedicated space for cyclists (which can be reserved) and some flexible space which can be used to accommodate cycles, push chairs, and in peak hours, standing passengers.

Countryside access

There should be a presumption that cyclists should be able to use all rights of way in England and Wales, with exceptions only when there are overriding reasons not to allow this.

Cycling is legal on 22% of the Rights of Way (RoW) network in England and Wales. However, the legality of cycling on a RoW is not related to its suitability. There is no right to cycle on footpaths, even though many of them are perfectly suitable; whereas bridleways, which cyclists are allowed to use, may be unusable. Creating a coherent, logical, off-road network for cyclists therefore requires a fundamental reform of RoW law and political will.

England has 146,000 km of public footpaths, and Wales over 26,000 km, most of them rural. If opened up to cyclists following Scotland's example, cyclists in these countries would benefit from more choice for both leisure and utility travel.²¹

Even within current laws, there are many ways in which local authorities could open up more paths for both recreational and day-to-day cycling. CTC supports the Welsh Government's plans to require local authorities to map and plan improvements to their walking and cycling networks.²²

Local schemes to increase cycling levels

Recent guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence sets out the best ways in which local authorities, schools, businesses and other organisations can encourage and incentivise people to take up cycling.²³

Measures that provide encouragement, incentives and opportunities to try out alternatives to the private car are known as 'smarter choices'. Smarter choices to encourage cycling must go hand-in-hand with improving cycling conditions on the highway. If anything, however, smarter choices are more cost-effective in terms of congestion, yielding on average £10 of benefits to every £1 spent.²⁴

Smarter choice measures include: elements of travel plans, advertising and promotional campaigns, cycle maps, marketing directly to individuals, tax incentives, cycle training, rides, events and activities for specific groups in society. CTC has also produced guidance for schools and colleges, workplaces and the health sector, summarised below.

Schools and colleges

Cycling to school or college helps pupils develop their physical health and fitness; their confidence, independence and sense of self worth; and their navigational and roadcraft skills. It also helps tackle local congestion, pollution and road danger created by the school run.

Travel for education contributes significantly to peak time traffic at about 29% of trips between 8 and 9 am in Great Britain, with an additional 18% escorting others to education. Only around 1% of trips for education purposes are cycled.

Involving pupils, parents, teachers and school governors in constructive joint action to make the trips they generate more sustainable can unite a school community and provide a learning experience in social and environmental responsibility and project management.

Cycling is a skill for life. Encouraging as many children as possible to see it as viable transport helps ward off car dependency later in life, and contributes to reducing future traffic volume.²⁵

Cycle-friendly employers

Encouraging employees to commute by cycle and to cycle on business, can result in a healthier, more productive workforce and lower transport costs. Dutch research has shown that employees who cycle to work take on average one day less in sickness absence than non-cyclists. Aggregated, this has the potential to offer huge productivity savings.²⁶

Workplaces that encourage cycling help mitigate their negative impact on the local and wider environment. If employees are encouraged to cycle rather than drive, congestion is less severe at peak times, which is good for business and the economy. CTC's Workplace Challenge programme has proved successful at increasing take up of cycling over a short period, with behaviour change maintained in 3 month follow up surveys.²⁷

The role of the health sector

The move of public health directors to local authorities presents an opportunity to strengthen partnership working between transport and health. Under their leadership, local health sector bodies potentially have roles to play in shaping local transport and planning policies, and promoting active travel both for health patients and their populations more generally. As a major employer, the NHS also has a role in promoting active travel for its own employees²⁸.

Standards, policy and monitoring

It is critical that national Government provides policy, standards and funding to enable local authorities to provide good quality provision for cycling. This ranges from basic guidance on best practice for the design and layout of roads and cycling infrastructure, to regulations covering signs, road markings and traffic signals – areas where Britain lags far behind our European neighbours.

Action is also needed to boost awareness and skills of those involved delivering cycle-friendly policies and schemes. This includes councillors as well as council officers and others responsible for promoting cycling, or delivering cycling and other highways or traffic schemes.

Both local and national authorities should ensure that cycling levels are monitored to ensure that safety is measured in terms of risk (per mile or hour travelled) rather than numbers of casualties. Local authorities should also seek to assess the perception of how safe the road network is for cycling – this already forms part of the target for improvement in Copenhagen.²⁹

The Government should ensure adequate monitoring regimes are in place locally and nationally to determine what measures have proved successful. This is important for informing future funding priorities, and to facilitate the spread of best practice.

Further information

For further information, readers are referred to the CTC brochures entitled *A New Vision for Cycling* (www.ctc.org.uk/newvision) and *Safety in numbers* (www.ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers), together with our series of fully referenced campaigns briefings. We particularly refer the inquiry panel to our "overview briefings" on cycle-friendly planning and design, road safety, and smarter choices; and our topic-specific briefings on local transport, roads policing, cycling and the law, goods vehicles, cycle-friendly schools, cycle friendly employers, cycling and health, and the health sector's role as an employer. References are given in the footnotes below.

Other forthcoming briefings include those covering cycling and the economy, planning policy, the prosecution and sentencing of bad driving offences, and an update to our briefing on road traffic policing.

The full series of CTC campaigns briefings is accessible from www.ctc.org.uk/campaignsbriefings.

References

- ¹ CTC. *A new vision for cycling* (2009). See www.ctc.org.uk/newvision.
- ² CTC campaigns briefing, *Cycling and local transport* (revised 2012). Downloadable from www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycling-and-local-transport.
- ³ See <http://www.ctc.org.uk/cycletopia>.
- ⁴ See <http://www.ctc.org.uk/all-party-parliamentary-cycling-group-launches-get-britain-cycling>.
- ⁵ DfT. *Cash boost to get England cycling*, 28th November 2012, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cash-boost-to-get-england-cycling--2>.
- ⁶ Transport Minister Norman Baker told a cycling conference (in Leicester on 28th November 2012) that the Prime Minister and/or Deputy Prime Minister would be giving public support for promoting cycling and walking in the New Year. See <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/article3615903.ece>.
- ⁷ HMT. *Autumn Statement 2012*. p 64.
- ⁸ Mindell JS, Leslie D, Wardlaw M. 2012. *Exposure-Based, 'Like-for-Like' Assessment of Road Safety by Travel Mode Using Routine Health Data*. PLoS ONE 7(12): e50606. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0050606 <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0050606?imageURI=info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0050606.t003>.
- ⁹ CTC campaigns briefing, *Health and cycling*, (revised 2012) downloadable from: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/health-and-cycling>.
- ¹⁰ See CTC's "Safety in Numbers" brochure and report (2009): www.ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers.
- ¹¹ CTC's overview briefing *Road safety and cycling* (2011), downloadable from: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/road-safety-and-cycling-overview>.
- ¹² See <http://www.cyclehelmets.org/1249.html>. Although the paper described here relates to cycle helmets, the underlying mathematical argument would apply equally to other road safety measures which deterred cycle use.
- ¹³ DfT. *British Social Attitudes* (March 2012). Table ATT0332.
- ¹⁴ CTC's overview briefing *Cycle friendly planning and design* (2012), downloadable from: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-friendly-design-and-planning-overview>.
- ¹⁵ Mackett RL and Brown B, *Transport, Physical Activity and Health: Present knowledge and the way ahead*. 2011. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/pdf/transportactivityhealth.pdf/>.
- ¹⁶ HC Debates, 7 Sep 2012 : Column 489W.
- ¹⁷ Ministry of Justice. *Criminal Justice Statistics: Motoring Tables 2011*. Table 8.7.
- ¹⁸ Ministry of Justice. *Criminal Justice Statistics: Motoring Tables 2011*. Table 8.1 and 8.8.
- ¹⁹ See www.stop-smidsy.org.uk/case-studies.
- ²⁰ From figures obtained by CTC from the National Passenger Survey for the period 2006-2010, 1.1% of passengers carried a bike with them, while 0.9% parked their bike at the station.
- ²¹ CTC campaigns briefing *Scotland's Land Reform Act 2003 and Outdoor Access Code*, (2011), downloadable from: www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/scotlands-land-reform-act-2003-and-outdoor-access-code.
- ²² Welsh Government. *Consultation on Active Travel (Wales) Bill*. 2012 <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/transport/activetravelbill/?lang=en>.
- ²³ NICE, *Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation*. Public Health Guidance 41 (2012). <http://www.nice.org.uk/PH41>.
- ²⁴ CTC's campaigns briefing *Smarter choices* (2011): <http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/smarter-choices>.
- ²⁵ CTC's campaigns briefing *Cycle friendly schools and colleges* (2012), downloadable from: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-friendly-schools-and-colleges-ctc-views>.
- ²⁶ TNO Quality of Life. *Reduced sickness absence in regular commuter cyclists can save employers 27 million euros*. 2009. www.tno.nl/downloads/reduced_sickness_absence_kv1_1_09_02_978Em_laag.pdf.
- ²⁷ CTC's campaigns briefing *Cycle friendly employers* (2012), downloadable from: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycle-friendly-employers-ctc-views>. 3 months after the Workplace Challenge, of the participants who had responded to the survey, 37% of people who did not cycle before the survey were cycling to work at least once a week, while 35% of occasional cyclists were cycling more than before the Challenge.
- ²⁸ See reference 3. A specific briefing on the health sector's role as a cycle-friendly employer is at http://146.101.137.229/resources/Campaigns/1104_Promoting-Cycling-in-the-Health-Sector_.pdf
- ²⁹ City of Copenhagen, *Bicycle Account 2010*. <http://www.cycling-embassy.dk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Bicycle-account-2010-Copenhagen.pdf>.