



Briefing

Parliamentary debate on the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's Report 'Get Britain Cycling'

Key points:

Since the publication of the 'Get Britain Cycling' report in early 2013 little progress has been made to implement the recommendations.

The Government's committed to publishing a Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan in early 2014 but a plan has not yet been published.

For a Cycling and Walking Plan to be meaningful it must contain:

- Long term consistent funding for cycling and walking – at least £10 per head for cycling and an appropriate increase in funding for walking – both delivered through existing government funding arrangements.
- Consistent revenue funding alongside capital funding
- Support, development and training for Local Authorities

Without these vital elements we will not see a transformation in cycling and walking for shorter journeys.

Time and date

Backbench Business

Thursday 16 October, 9.30am (debate starts 11.30am approx.)

Overview

This debate has been tabled to discuss progress towards implementation of the 'Get Britain Cycling' report published in early 2013. The Get Britain Cycling inquiry was an initiative of the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group (APPCG) with the aim "to enable more people across the UK to take up cycling, cycle more often and cycle more safely".

The vision set out in the report was for a dramatic increase in the number and diversity of people who cycle, because they see it as a safe and normal activity. The report sets out a long-term ambition to increase cycle use from less than 2% of journeys in 2011, to at least 10% of all journeys in 2025, and 25% by 2050.

To do this the report recommended:

- Strong political leadership, including a national Cycling Champion
- For the Government to set out an action plan for more and safer cycling with support from the Prime Minister down
- A new priority for investing public funds into cycling of at least £10 per person annually
- Redesigning our roads, streets and communities
- Safe driving and safe speed limits
- Training and education

A further All Party inquiry was set up and published its findings in early 2014. The All Party Physical Activity Commission took a new approach to investigating physical inactivity in this country with a cross-sector group of parliamentary experts. Its recommendations mirrored and built on the 'Get Britain Cycling' recommendations calling for a National Action Plan (to be reviewed every year and reassessed every 5 years)

Briefing: Debate on the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's Report 'Get Britain Cycling'

against its goals and objectives) and an independent body to oversee and be accountable for the development and implementation of the National Action Plan at both a national and local level.

Despite these calls from members of parliament, we are still waiting for a national plan for cycling to be published a year after it was promised.

A meaningful national plan

For a Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan to be meaningful it must contain:

Long term consistent funding for cycling and walking

As a minimum, government should commit at least £10 per head for cycling to transform roads, junctions and communities to make them safe, convenient and desirable for cycling short journeys and an appropriate increase in funding for walking – both delivered through existing government funding arrangements.

Consistent revenue funding

A key element of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) has been the inclusion of both capital and revenue elements, to enable streets and routes to be transformed alongside programmes to support and encourage people to change their travel behaviour. Further commitment to both types of funding for active travel is urgently needed, particularly given the scarcity of revenue funding for transport in local authority budgets. The Local Growth Fund, which replaces LSTF, overseen by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), is purely capital funding.

Support, development and training

To assist delivery by local authorities support is often needed. This is to learn from best practice and act as part of wider programmes, which enable cultural change within LAs to move from a car based approach to a place based one.

Current spending levels on cycling and walking

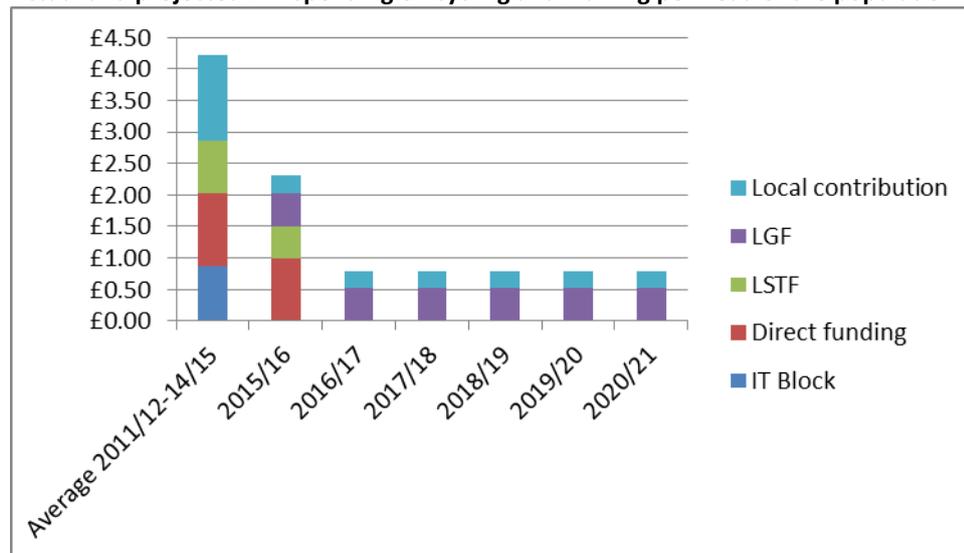
In response to a recent parliamentary question [199232] the government calculated that spend on cycling in England is equal to £5 per person a year, including London. Of this around 80% is directly or indirectly attributable to dedicated funding from government, the largest component of which is the LSTF.

With the LSTF coming to an end in 2015/16, bringing to a close six years of dedicated funding for cycling and walking, there is now no guarantee that money will be spent on cycling and walking – and in fact no budget line for cycling and walking. The extension of LSTF revenue funding into 2015/16 has attracted some local investment in cycling through the Local Growth Fund, but when this ends, there will be no ongoing revenue funding, reducing investment and weakening the incentives for local investment.

Analysis of major scheme bids to the £2bn Local Growth Fund shows that less than half (46 per cent) of LEPs have put forward any projects for walking, cycling or public transport, with road building making up three quarters of the bids from some LEPs. Without sustained and substantial investment from government, total spend on cycling and walking will fall sharply after 2015/16, to a fraction of current levels and far below the £10 per head per year target.

Briefing: Debate on the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's Report 'Get Britain Cycling'

Actual and projected DfT spending on cycling and walking per head of the population:



How does this compare?

In The Netherlands where there is spending of at least £25 per head on cycling, 27% of journeys are made by bike. This is followed by Denmark with 19% of journeys by bike and spending of at least £20 per head. England languishes towards the lower end of the European league table, with less than £5 per head spent on cycling, which is set to decrease.

Where would the money come from?

A substantial increase in investment in cycling could be delivered within existing spending plans in the next parliament. There are a number of potential ways to do this:

Topslicing the Local Growth Fund - HM Treasury has committed £2 billion annually to the Local Growth Fund in England 2015/16 – 2020/21, only half of which has been allocated.

Extending existing LSTF revenue commitments beyond 2015/16 - Extending the existing LSTF revenue (£78.5m in 2015-16) element would leverage and support further investment and revenue from other sources, notably the Local Growth Fund; existing local authority spending on school travel (around £1 billion per year); and road safety (averaging £600m per year 2005-11).

Include walking and cycling in the Infrastructure Bill - Investment in road infrastructure is at present very high. Government is proceeding with a £24 billion investment plan for the road network and has committed to tripling the amount spent on road improvements to over £3 billion a year by 2021. As part of the Infrastructure Bill, six national organisations (Campaign to Protect Rural England, Campaign for Better Transport, Sustrans, Living Streets, CTC and British Cycling) have proposed an amendment, which would require government to publish a binding Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy to compliment the Road Investment Strategy which is at the heart of the bill.

Briefing session

Thursday 16 October, 9.30-11.30am, Room W2

Ian Austin MP, Co-Chair of the APPCG, will lead the drop in briefing session (9.30-10.30am)

The session will also be attended by CTC, British Cycling, Sustrans and Living Streets

RSVP Adam Coffman, coffmana@parliament.uk

Contact details

Claire Francis

Head of Policy and Campaigns, 020 7553 4464, Claire.Francis@sustrans.org.uk