

Policy Position Statement

Active Transport

Purpose

This policy position statement identifies the key issues for consideration in determining the appropriate support and investment in the development of Active Transport (methods of travel where the user contributes all or most of the propulsion directly from their own efforts leading to significant environmental, health and well-being, social and economic benefits).

CIWEM calls for:

- A single national initiative, with ministerial sponsorship, to make Britain's streets and roads safe for walking and cycling as a matter of urgency.
CIWEM calls for the Department for Transport to promote a safe roads initiative.
- Government to commit a nationally held budget for Active Transport on a par with European per capita levels of funding, over a period of years.
CIWEM calls for HM Treasury to allocate and secure funds for active transport, and to encourage cross-departmental co-operation to maximise benefit from investment.
- A national body to establish professional skills, standards and policy for the development of Britain as an everyday cycling and walking nation.
CIWEM calls for the Department for Business Innovation and Skills to sponsor the development of an active transport knowledge repository, advisory and professional development centre.

CIWEM's Vision for Active Transport:

1. The safety and personal security of users of our roads is vital. Demonstrable improvement in personal safety is critical to the success of any campaign to increase walking and cycling irrespective of other benefits such as health, economic and social.
2. Cycling and walking are everyday activities that enhance and complement the built and rural landscape and living environment. They offer convenience and social travel with very low impacts. Active Transport learning and experience, including participation and benefits should be included in the schools National Curriculum.
3. The cost of cycling is between 6 and 10 pence per mile depending on the capital value of the bicycle. Walking is even cheaper. Costs are particularly low for short walking and cycling journeys relative to motor travel, and these can be converted to Active Transport. Additionally all charging mechanisms should be reviewed to ensure they support Active

Transport. E.g. Town Centre car parking and season public transport tickets should be priced to allow intermittent active transport without penalty.

4. CIWEM's position is that, given the expected levels of urban living (60% of the world's population by 2030), investment and commitment is needed now to secure cities and towns where walking and cycling are primary transport options: i.e. they are the modes that should be the first option considered. Additionally some rural journeys are amenable to these modes and those routes require prioritisation.
5. Current infrastructure, facilities and motoring laws and protocols do not support routine cycling and walking. Retro-fitting policy, legislation and infrastructure (including for example trip-end parking) is a vital skill and should be included in engineering and sociology study and skills development courses.
6. Cycling and Walking are 'vulnerable' modes - physically vulnerable because the traveller does not have the supremacy and protection of a vehicle, and also vulnerable to intermittent investment and underfunding generally, inside the transport market. On both counts, investment and commitment to vulnerable modes is required to maintain and increase their levels of use.
7. Streets are for people, not motor vehicles and though some trunk routes may of necessity be environments where walking and cycling are less enjoyable, it should nevertheless be possible to walk and cycle safely and without threat, at all locations except where pedestrians and/or bike riding are banned.
8. Carriageways are built to accommodate a range of vehicles, of differing scale and at different speeds. Similarly, all highways must safely accommodate cyclists and walkers as part of the traffic on that route. For cyclists that means being able to be on the carriageway (where good off-carriageway facilities are not provided) without undue risk, and for the pedestrian that means having an even, hard and drained surface following the route.
9. Cyclists should have regard to other users and be competent and experienced appropriate to the route they are using. For example a young child may make a journey in a Park or Quietway, but would need to be further trained and experienced to use a major road.
10. Walking and cycling routes in use at night should be lit or safe to pass by torchlight. There should be no debris, trips or potholes on cycle lanes, cycle tracks or footway that might expose the user to additional risk.
11. Town centres, trip destinations and business and home premises, should all cater for walking and cycling as the principal mode of arrival. Facilities should be provided comfortably to accommodate anticipated demand, and those facilities should be comprehensive, located at a prime convenient location for the destination, and should be well maintained with clear instruction.
12. There should be comprehensive information available, including: mapping of routes, location of cycle parking, hygiene facilities for routine and special events, personal and bike security advice, training and awareness for all ages, and repair and support centres.

CIWEM is the leading independent Chartered professional body for water and environmental professionals, promoting excellence within the sector.

Context

Active Transport includes methods of travel where the user contributes all or most of the propulsion directly from their own efforts. While methods may include skating, scooting or even sailing, for the purpose of this PPS the modes under consideration are walking and cycling (including electrically assisted bikes).

Active Transport is also of a human scale, and does not impact on built and rural environments to the extent of powered transport.

Only 1/3 of people in the UK are active enough. All health advice is that a more active lifestyle is required for the population to avoid growing obesity and poorer health.

It is accepted that Active Transport is good for the environment and for our wellbeing, but previous emphasis on other modes (principally road transport) has led to their dominance to such an extent that those modes are chosen habitually and often subconsciously.

Transport is a large contributor to pollution (through particulates, CO₂ and NO_x). Most people accept that a reduction in emissions is required to combat climate change. People generally want to change their lives to reduce their environmental impact and Active Transport is one very simple way to make that change. However, help and support to change is needed.

Successful Active Transport promotion generally depends upon a number of interventions being delivered through an integrated and diversified programme. Much is discussed about the proportionate investments necessary to achieve good take-up. Ultimately a range of interventions is required and emphasis is a matter for local judgement.

The Government has allocated some immediate monies (totalling £82m total for cycling over 2 years and £560M sustainable transport fund over 4 years). The Mayor of London has earmarked £913m over 10 years. A long-term national fund, separate from transport funding, could secure the broad benefits for Active Transport.

However, most business cases for investment cannot yet properly value the broad range of benefits. Typical benefit ratios for Active Transport investments are quoted as c. 3 or 4 to 1. However, even without full inclusion of economic benefits real returns are exceptionally good compared to other transport investments. But, transport managers often undervalue the benefits of cycling and walking because no tickets are sold.

It is difficult to change the car-based status quo due to issues of habit, uninformed population and fear of change.

Key Issues - Strategic Direction

Governance

A national body (bodies) for everyday walking and cycling is required. This body should report annual usage and safety data, analysis and publish performance tables by region and authorities. This would be the 'National Account'. A national project with high level government support (similar to HS2) is required if Government is committed to developing a 'cycling and walking culture' in the UK.

Centre for Active Transport

A national institution is needed to be established to research, study, analyse and recommend on all aspects of cycling and walking in our everyday lives. It should be the obligation of this body to form partnerships with overseas institutes to derive agreed good practice.

Addressing Immediate Safety Concerns

The numbers of cyclists and pedestrians killed and seriously injured is disproportionately high. As the number of cyclists rises, the death rate per km cycled is falling. However, this does not resolve the anger felt by users and stakeholders, as it is unacceptable that there is danger in activity as benign as cycling and walking. Though the number of pedestrian deaths is falling, it is high (particularly among children) compared to better performing countries.

Each Authority should have a road safety plan and a Director with responsibility to embed safe cycling and walking (similar to Health and Safety obligations). This must include targets for vulnerable user collision reduction and a clear strategy to achieve this. Safety improvements must not be jeopardised by other traffic performance imperatives. There should be twice yearly regional and sub-regional reports and an annual statement (within the 'National Account') by Government on walking and cycling.

Attitudes and Behaviours

One of the biggest deterrents to travelling actively is cultural prejudice and deference to motor travel among the population, authorities and media. Even against the known threats to the safety of bike riders and walkers (approx. 30% of pedestrian road deaths occur when a pedestrian is on the footway, not in the road), it is still perceived that taking a child to school by car or driving to the local shops is safer than to travel actively. Notwithstanding real and perceived safety threats, active travel is shown to increase life expectancy.

This dilemma of health vs safety arises because public policy on healthcare and the environment (for example) are all based on population statistics (showing that it all makes macro -sense) yet the travel choice at the point of engagement for the individual is made based on a personal view. It is clear that for somebody not engaged in travelling actively, and not of that habit, they simply do not identify with the population benefits on offer. It makes more sense for the individual not to engage because of perceived short-term safety threats and other detractors.

Building every-day Active Transport requires policy and investment deference towards walking and cycling. Hence roads at 20mph, legal changes to favour these modes and road designs that favour and support these users are all pre-cursors. These changes, together with increased numbers of cyclists will modify behaviours of all roads users, bringing tolerance and compassion to the streets.

Planning Policy

Planning policy does not explicitly encourage walking and cycling.

Good practice includes:

- The identification of desirable routes for Active Transport and these routes should be safeguarded in the Local Plan.
- Section 106 monies should be kept aside for use on the development of these safeguarded routes, and should be excluded from upgrades to public and private transport. At least, there should be deference towards Active Transport so that these modes may be encouraged.
- The Spatial Planning Guidance for development zones should include the obligation to provide for walking and cycling in the buildings and on the routes to and around the development. Again there should be deference towards building Active Transport to go beyond the status quo, aiming for levels of use and safety in line with the best in Europe.

Legacy from the 2012 Olympics

There are two principal legacies from the Games. These are the inspiration from the athletes to be fitter and healthier, and the experience of using Active Transport to get to and from the events.

At the 2012 games there was high provision for walking and cycling to the games for spectators. This experience and the increasing interest of the public to cycle to major events, can build awareness and expectation that cycling and walking is a viable alternative to mass transit.

Other legacy from the Games can include alternative arrangements for freight and delivery, traffic management alternatives as used for the Olympic Route Network and Local Area Traffic Management around the venues. These can all benefit cycling and walking.

Implementation

Active Transport requires concerted effort to secure take-up by the public. It is usual to segment the market to identify people who may be more easily attracted to walking and cycling. These people form the 'near market'. Active Transport campaigns use techniques based on the philosophies outlined in the Government's 'MindSpace' publication.

The promotion of safety and increases in the number of people walking and cycling may be initiated by transport authorities, but require integrated partnership working across the public, private and third sectors. National and regional co-ordination is required and some support and public investment priming will be necessary to develop innovative deliveries including the private and third sectors. Cycling and walking activity bring a range of benefits, including for

operators and users of other transport (e.g. congestion relief). Successful delivery will depend on articulating and realising the comprehensive benefits.

Walking and Cycling Initiatives and Reading

Influencing Behaviour through Public Policy

<http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/our-work/better-policy-making/mindspace-behavioural-economics>

Active Transport in Wales

<http://wales.gov.uk/legislation/programme/assemblybills/active-travel-bill/?lang=en> Wales has prioritised walking and cycling for shorter journeys through the Active Travel (Wales) Bill.

Go 20 Campaign

<http://go20.org/> Calls for a legacy of safe walking and cycling.

All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group

<http://allpartycycling.org/inquiry/> The Cross - Party Inquiry named "Get Britain Cycling" is due to report in late April.

European Cycling federation

<http://www.ecf.com/> "The European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) is pledged to ensure that bicycle use achieves its fullest potential so as to bring about sustainable mobility and public well-being." A series of cycling routes across Europe are shown on the ECF sites.

Dutch Cycling Embassy

<http://www.dutchcycling.nl/> Cycling is at the heart of Dutch culture and society. Quality bicycle facilities make cycling safe and attractive for all and cycling makes Dutch cities healthy, liveable and accessible.

Danish Cycling Embassy

<http://www.cycling-embassy.dk/tag/copenhagen/> The bicycle share in Denmark is 19 % which is the second highest in Europe.

Walking for health

<http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/> Managed and organised by The Ramblers and MacMillan Cancer.

Living Streets

(Formerly the Pedestrians Association and the Pedestrians Association for Road Safety)

<http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/> is an organisation which advocates for the rights and interests of pedestrians and aims to 'create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk'.

Walk England

<http://www.walkengland.org.uk/> Aims to reduce the barriers to walking and ensure that people have access to high quality information.

Walking Routes (UK)

<http://walkit.com/> The urban walking route planner.

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Note: CIWEM Policy Position Statements (PPS) represents the Institution's views on issues at a particular point in time. It is accepted that situations change as research provides new evidence. It should be understood, therefore, that CIWEM PPS's are under constant review, that previously held views may alter and lead to revised PPS's. PPSs are produced as a consensus report and do not represent the view of individual members of CIWEM.