APPGCW: Inquiry into meeting active travel potential
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Summary

To achieve the desired gear change in active travel it will be necessary to develop a COHERENT STRATEGY which goes beyond transport by considering land use planning, health & wellbeing and the involvement of local people, with appropriate BESPOKE SOLUTIONS which take into account the local CONTEXT and involves a combination of 'Hard and 'Soft' measures designed around how PEOPLE really are rather than how it is thought they should be:

Figure 1: key elements of an effective active travel strategy

Reason for submitting evidence

My ambition is to ensure that the money spent on active travel is used as cost-effectively as possible. My research into past spending has highlighted that it is all too easy to waste money and effort by not taking the time to plan properly and implement effectively. However, value can still be obtained from less successful projects by learning the lessons from them and applying these lessons now.

Underlying this ambition is the fact that I am greatly concerned about climate change and also aware of the need for people to be more active for health reasons.

My credentials

I have been working in transport for over thirty years and involved in many projects concerning active travel. This has included helping to develop TfL's strategy to achieve a 5% mode share for cycling, then later (between 2014 and 2019) I had overall responsibility for the monitoring of TfL's strategic cycling infrastructure while Head of Insight at Steer.

Also, while at Steer I was responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of their behaviour change projects many of which involved increasing walking and cycling. This gave me important insights into the effectiveness of different approaches to behaviour change, and also highlighted the value of taking into consideration the emerging evidence from the field of behavioural economics / behavioural science.

I left Steer in 2020 to pursue my interest in behavioural science and more widely, the use of evidence to inform transport strategies, policies and behaviour change programmes. Of particular relevance to this Inquiry is the research I have undertaken into the effectiveness of measures to increase active travel. This involved a thorough review of the available literature, both academic and more practical. For this I reviewed 71 papers and reports many of which were themselves were systematic reviews, meaning that the results of hundreds of individual studies were taken into consideration (the sources are listed here: **active travel sources**).

On the back of the evidence found I prepared a practical guide to encouraging active travel with a summary available here **how to get people to walk and cycle more** with further details also available.

This research and my practical experience has placed me in an exceptionally strong position to make evidence-based recommendations to the Inquiry.

Response to questions

Q1 Targets

The targets lack ambition and if achieved will have no noticeable impact on carbon, partly because without any 'push' factor the increase in active travel won't be at the expense of private car. The Inquiry should therefore consider:

- a more ambitious headline target such as 50% of trips by active modes by 2035;
- devolved targets set at a local level;
- specific targets for mode shift from private car.

Q2 Overall level of funding

A properly costed long term strategy is needed to determine the required level of funding to achieve the target set. It is noted that the 18 cycling towns and cities cost an average of £15 per person per year and achieved average increases of 25% BUT with very variable results, which ranged from a 6% to 62% increase over the length of the programmes (Sloman L, Cope A, Kennedy A, Crawford F, Cavill N and Parkin J (2017) Summary of

outcomes of the Cycling Demonstration Towns and Cycling City and Towns programmes).

Ideally, a national road pricing scheme will be used to raise some of the funds (as well as create mode shift).

Q3 Capacity

Insufficient resources is a barrier and authorities should be encourage to form partnerships and pool resources. Funding should not be released until there is confidence that money will be spent effectively and without waste. One option would be to require authorities to submit a bid for the funding using RADAR (Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment, Review) or a similar format. This would be used to assess the impact of the programme, its value for money, and its deliverability.

Q4 Breakdown of funding

It is important that the funds are spent based on a coherent long term strategy which as a minimum takes into account:

- The local context;
- An appropriate mix of 'hard' and 'soft' measures such as infrastructure, training, information, incentives, gamification, marketing, personalised travel planning and some measures which push car drivers to walking and cycling rather than driving (car parking management, pricing);
- An approach which reflect the real nature of people and not how they are usually assumed to be (rational, time rich, utility maximising), i.e. based on the application of Behavioural Science (see a selection of concepts in Table 1);
- Policy areas adjacent to transport including land use planning, urban design education and health;
- Involvement of local people in the design of schemes, and effective engagement with stakeholders;
- On-going monitoring and periodic evaluation.

Table 1: Selection of behavioural science concepts and their implications

| Behavioural concept	Short description	Implications for travel behaviour change
Being seen to be good	People like to be seen to do the right thing for society.	It's worth promoting the beneficial impacts of people switching from car to active modes so that people who are walking and cycling can feel good about themselves
Default	People will tend to choose the default option in order to make their lives less complicated, even if this is not the best option.	Making the active option the default can encourage people to use that option. For example, a journey planner can default to the walking option.
Easy	People are generally looking to make their lives easier and reduce the hassle factor.	Simplicity and convenience are essential and to facilitate a behaviour any friction should be reduced.
Empowerment	People need to feel they can succeed in order to be motivated to try.	This affects the messaging and imagery used. For example, when promoting cycling it's important to show that anyone can do it.
Endowment effect	When we own something we put greater value on it and don't like to give it up.	This is a challenge when looking to encourage someone to give up their car, while the effect also applies to giving up road space which is regarded as being theirs.
Framing	Choices are heavily influenced by the way they are presented and, for example, which (and how many) options are shown.	For example, when showing the price of something (cycle parking, bus fare) a commonly used (and often effective) tactic is to make sure that more expensive options are shown alongside the option you expect to be used.
Habit	Most (90%+) behaviour is habitual with little reflective thought given to it.	To change behaviour, the very first thing that needs to be done is interrupt the current pattern. Life events (such as moving house or starting a family) are good habit breakers, as are major roadworks or events.
Internal consistency	People like to be internally consistent.	This concept is sometimes utilised in behaviour change programmes by encouraging participants to make a commitment which they then feel compelled to be consistent with.
Loss aversion	People are more affected by losses than gains.	The impact of losses helps to explain why car drivers can react so negatively to roadspace re-allocation (and a loss of space for them).

Messenger	The impact of a message can be as much about the messenger as the message itself.	Even if a celebrity cannot be used, it is important to consider where the message is coming from, as well as the message itself.
Need for self esteem	People need to have self-belief and a positive self-image.	Image is an important factor in car ownership, and conversely can be a deterrent to public transport use.
Present bias (or Short termism)	Things occurring imminently are given far more importance than those occurring in the future.	One challenge this can present is where there is an upfront cost, such as a season ticket, a bike purchase, or joining a hire scheme. This is typically addressed by using a monthly payment plan and underpins the success of PCP[1] which accounts for around 80% of new car purchases.
Primacy of emotion	Brain scanning has shown that our emotions are triggered in advance of rational thought and there is good evidence that emotions drive decision-making.	As David Ogilvy the advertising guru put it: "Customers need a rational excuse to justify their emotional decisions. So always include one".
Relativity	People think in relative rather than absolute terms.	This relative way of thinking can be a disadvantage where the walk, cycle or bus journey time is longer than for car. This is an even greater challenge as people generally perceive the car journey time to be the uncongested time, and excluding the time taken to park. It is a particular challenge for bus as the costs of car use tend to be massively under-estimated making bus fares seem very expensive.
Social norm	Unwritten societal (or group) rules which influence an individual's behaviour.	This can be utilised by showing the desired activity as normal and popular.

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[1] Personal Contract Purchase – a method of financing a car based on a monthly payment

Alongside effective engagement, using a transparent evidence based approach such as The Beyond Logic Circle of Understanding (see below) can help garner support.

The "Circle of Understanding" approach to behaviour change

A. Understand

B. Design

C. Test

D. Implement

E. Learn
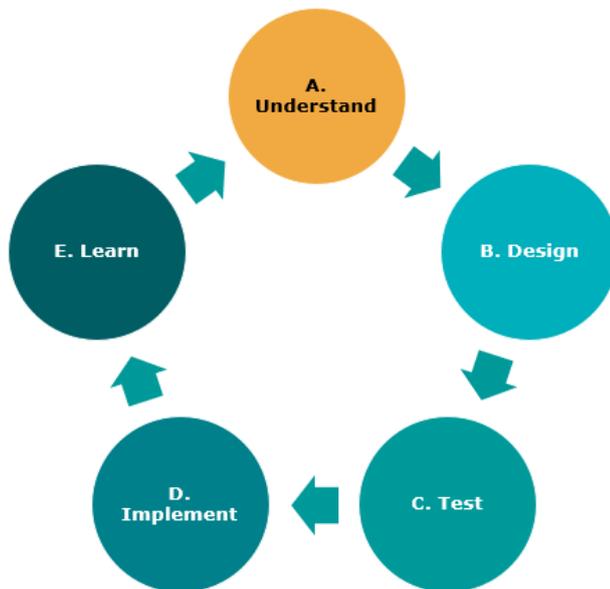
Q6 Behaviour change

The Covid-19 pandemic did show that behaviour can be changed, but it took a global disaster and severe government action to achieve and even then it appears to have been temporary with traffic volumes now back to where they were (albeit with some different characteristics). The evidence shows that really substantive long term change will require tough action (that is, 'sticks' as well as carrots) and this needs to be recognised. In practice, it will be appropriate to start with the more palatable measures while laying the groundwork for tougher measures.

Q7 Wider policy support

A coherent strategy needs to include land use planning, public realm, health and education (for travel to school).

Q8 Walking as much as cycling

The active travel strategy needs to consider transport in the round including, for example, walking and cycling as ways of accessing bus, rail and tram stations. New mobility modes like e-scooters also need to be taken into account.

Q9 Levelling up

The initial funding allocation should be on the basis of a simple £ per head calculation, possibly adjusted on the basis of current active travel using the Active Lives survey. However, funds should only be released on the achievement of agreed milestones, the first of which would be the production of a coherent long term strategy. Ideally the draft strategies would be evaluated by independent expert evaluators who would provide constructive feedback as well as a score/rating (the process here may be similar to that used to evaluate bids for funding from the LEPs).

There will need to be a mechanism to reward success and address weaknesses, and this may be via the amount of DfT involvement and oversight required.

Q10 Justice and inclusion

The Monitoring & Evaluation Plans for the local CWIS 2 strategies should include indicators relating to justice and inclusion.

Q11 Decarbonising transport

CWIS 2 cannot on its own have a noticeable impact on carbon emissions and the reality of this needs to be recognised so time isn't wasted. However, it can contribute as part of a national road pricing scheme by providing attractive alternatives to car and hence making road use pricing both more effective and more acceptable.

Q12 Relationship between central and local government

Central government should take on a 'support and challenge' role. As far as possible the detailed design and implementation needs to be left to local government and local people, but where necessary central government will need to be in a position to step in to ensure money is not wasted (and is not diverted to another purpose). A bidding process is likely to be needed, but it is vital that this is not a competition between authorities, but simply a process for giving local authorities access to active travel funds, and a means of ensuring these funds are spent effectively.

An important additional role for central government is to provide a repository of data, information and tools as part of their support function.

Q13 Programme and project management

One important element of programme management will be a Monitoring & Evaluation process which is both proportional and effective. It will need to include an element of external oversight, and initiate central governments 'challenge' role if targets and milestones are not met. This will be crucial for keeping the general public and stakeholders on-side – they need to see that money is not being wasted and that any negative effects represent a sacrifice worth making.