

Helping people through the cost of living crisis and growing our economy

The role of walking, wheeling and cycling.



Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Helping people through the cost of living crisis and growing our economy: the role of walking, wheeling and cycling.

Published October 2022.

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is a registered charity in England and Wales (number 326550) and Scotland (SC039263).

Photos: Kois Miah (cover; Serena, p11; Jamie, p19). Jonathan Bewley (Leon, p10; Alina, p12; Claire, p14). Chris Foster (Julie, p13; Carol, p21). Brian Sweeney (Mary-Kate, p15; Clive, p16; Noelle, p17; Edna, p19; Claire, p20). Sustrans (Martha, p17). Denis Oates (Vivienne, p18).

Defining wheeling

We recognise some people, for example wheelchair or mobility scooter users, identify with the term wheeling instead of walking. Therefore we use the terms walking and wheeling together throughout this report.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

The need to keep investing in walking, wheeling and cycling

Walking, wheeling and cycling benefits people and the economy

Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index showed that in 2021 walking, wheeling and cycling created £6.5 billion in economic benefit for individuals and society across the areas surveyed.*

Extrapolating these figures to the whole of the UK, assuming similar walking, wheeling and cycling levels, equates to an overall annual benefit in the region of £36.5 billion.



People who walk to the high street spend up to 40% more than those who drive (TfL, 2013).



People on low incomes want greater investment on walking (58%) and cycling (50%), than driving (36%).



Recommendations:

The upcoming autumn fiscal plan provides an opportunity to help people through the cost of living crisis and promote economic growth.

Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel including dedicated funding, as set out in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.



Implement a package of measures over the next 3–12 months to support people on low incomes through the cost of living crisis.



* This is based on modelling the economic benefits of walking and cycling as well as benefits from reducing car use, for example reducing the cost of traffic congestion, running a car, healthcare, and the number of sick days at work. See appendix for more detail.

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Summary

The UK is facing the worst cost of living crisis for many years. Rapid increases in the cost of energy, food and transport mean many people are struggling to get by. The situation is predicted to get far worse over the coming winter. At the same time inflation is increasing and the UK is on the tip of entering a recession.

The new UK Government is prioritising growth, through its growth plan and making deep changes to economic policy to support this. However, the UK Government, must also prioritise the cost of living crisis. The fuel bill rescue package is a step in the right direction, but we need to provide even greater support to people, especially those on low incomes or at risk of poverty.

There are many measures that can simultaneously help promote growth and support people during the cost of living crisis, including walking, wheeling and cycling. The upcoming autumn fiscal plan will provide an opportunity to ensure budget decisions across government better reflect the current challenges and needs of the UK.

Unless specified, this report uses data from the Walking and Cycling Index, a representative survey of over 23,000 residents in 17 UK urban areas in 2021.

The importance of walking and cycling

As of October 2022, it now costs on average around £90-£100 to fill up a car¹ and a recent survey found the total annual cost to run a car would be £3,500.² The cost of running a car is becoming unaffordable for many people putting them at risk of transport poverty.

At the same time, new data from Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index in 2021 found that only 56% of people on low incomes felt they could get to places easily without having to drive. This is despite over a third of people on low incomes (38%) not owning or having access to a car.³

It is vital that we do more to help people on low incomes walk, wheel or cycle to access the things they need, and for those that own a car, to save money through being able to leave their cars at home and walk, wheel, or cycle more.

Data from Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index showed that in 2021 walking, wheeling and cycling created [£6.5 billion](#) in economic benefit for individuals and society across the 17 urban areas surveyed. Extrapolating these figures to the whole of the UK, assuming similar walking, wheeling and cycling levels, equates to an overall annual benefit in the region of £36.5 billion.

Evidence clearly shows the benefits from walking and cycling for the economy, including increasing spending on the high street and town

Summary

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

centres, benefits to employers, reduced costs for the NHS from greater physical activity, and reducing congestion.

Making it easier to walk, wheel and cycle is therefore important to both help people through the cost of living crisis and grow our economy.

Greater investment for walking and cycling is also popular with the public and supported by most people. The Walking and Cycling Index found 56% of residents wanted more funding on walking and 53% on cycling in 2021. This compares to only 32% who wanted more funding for roads and driving.

There is a huge potential for many more trips to be walked or cycled, but only if barriers are addressed

Many people want to walk, wheel or cycle more. 35% of residents on low incomes, for example, do not cycle but would like to start. However, barriers stop them from doing so, for example access to a cycle, pavement accessibility, or safety concerns.

While walking, wheeling and cycling is typically cheaper than driving, for many people the initial purchase of a cycle or suitable mobility aid is prohibitively expensive. The Walking and Cycling Index found only 37% of residents on low incomes have access to an adult cycle in comparison to 60% of residents in managerial and professional occupations. 70% of residents on low incomes would find access to a cycle useful to start cycling or cycle more.

Road and personal safety are also significant barriers. Only 41% of people on low incomes rated their local area as good for cycling safety and only 61% of people on low incomes rated their local area as good for walking or wheeling safety, in comparison to 74% of people in managerial or professional occupations.

Finally, we need to make our pavements more inclusive. 78% of residents on low incomes would like more accessible pavements, while 84% of residents on low incomes would like nicer places along streets to stop and rest.

Recommendations

The upcoming autumn fiscal plan will provide an opportunity to ensure budget decisions across government work better to help people through the cost of living crisis and promote economic growth.

Removing barriers and giving people a genuine choice to walk, wheel or cycle are proven to do just this. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to work towards the Government's aims set out in the Cycling and Walking

Summary

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Investment Strategy 2 of 50% of all journeys in towns and cities should be walked or cycled by 2030, and ensure funding reflects this.

Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel including dedicated funding

Continuing multi-year investment for walking, wheeling and cycling will help ensure our transport system is more sustainable and resilient for the longer term, reducing the impact of climate change, the burden on the NHS, while contributing to the economy.

To be successful we will also need to see greater investment from the UK Government for walking, wheeling and cycling in the future as recently suggested by the Government's own executive agency, Active Travel England.

Implement a package of measures over the next 3–12 months to support people through the cost of living crisis

In addition, the UK Government, alongside devolved nations, and local authorities, needs to develop a package of measures implemented over the next 3–12 months to reduce car dependency and encourage walking, wheeling, and cycling:

1. Introduce a payment scheme to help people walk, wheel or cycle
2. Create a dedicated pavement fund to improve accessibility and quality
3. Prohibit pavement parking, outside of London
4. Roll out secure storage for cycles and mobility aids
5. Embed walkable neighbourhoods into planning policy across the country
6. Make 20mph the default speed in urban areas
7. Explore other options to support people, such as equipping local community hubs to offer travel advice and support, increased provision of cycle training, and walking and cycling school buses.

Introduction

The UK is facing a cost of living and wider economic crisis

The UK is currently facing the largest cost of living crisis for many years. Significant rises in the cost of home energy, food and petrol are to blame and things are likely to get worse over the coming months with inflation currently at 8.8%⁴ and the onset of winter when people use more energy. The energy price cap, which is set quarterly by the energy industry regulator, Ofgem, was at £1,400 in October last year, and has been set to rise to £3,549 this October.⁵ The Government's recently announced support package for households will limit the price households pay per unit of gas and electricity they use, with a typical family paying around £2,500.⁶ This support is welcome but it is widely expected that many people won't be able to pay energy bills this winter.⁷

Transport costs rose at an annual rate of 15.1%, with fuel prices up by 43.7% in the year to July, the highest rate recorded.⁸ Food prices have also risen quickly with prices in food shops rising by 5.1% in August 2022, levels not seen since the global financial crash in 2008.⁹

At the same time inflation is driving the fastest fall in real pay on record and the UK economy is stagnating.¹⁰ This is against a backdrop of heatwaves, fires and droughts across the UK and Europe resulting from the climate crisis, and nations still in recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The need to help reduce the cost of transport

The UK Government needs to urgently do more to help people at risk of rising bills and poverty, including measures that reduce the cost of transport and increase people's choices. The UK average price per litre for unleaded petrol at the start of October was 163p. This compares to 116p in January 2021, an increase of 40%.¹¹

Reducing fuel duty is not an effective solution. Reductions in fuel duty in May 2021 did little to reduce prices at the pump. Rising charging costs as well as the upfront costs of electric vehicles also mean they are currently out of reach for most households. Too often we plan neighbourhoods around the car. This reduces alternative options for transport leaving many people over dependent on their vehicles and the associated cost. This can cause transport poverty. We need to help people out of car use, not encourage more.

Public transport has been under funded for many years in most parts of the UK and in most areas is already expensive, especially for people on low incomes and young people.¹² The extension of Bus funding¹³ and recent price cap in England for bus use¹⁴ is welcomed and important to making public transport cheaper whilst continuing services.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

The role of walking, wheeling and cycling

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

The role of walking, wheeling and cycling

To help people through the cost of living crisis

In addition to public transport there are also lots of opportunities to help people save money by giving them the choice to walk, wheel or cycle for more journeys. This is especially important for people struggling to afford to run their car. Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index found 45% of people on low incomes did not own a car across the 17 urban areas studied.

The Walking and Cycling Index also found 35% of residents on low incomes do not cycle but would like to start. People on low incomes want greater investment on walking (58%), cycling (50%) and public transport (65%), than on driving (36%).

Walking and cycling are intertwined with public transport – most journeys by bus and train have a walking or cycling stage to reach the bus stop or train station. Walking, wheeling and cycling are not just important for short journeys. Investment in walking, cycling and public transport is the backbone of an inclusive, resilient and sustainable transport system for the future. However, policy, investment and current plans do not reflect this. The cost of living crisis is an opportunity for Government to reshape how we travel and benefit millions of people now and for the future, helping to tackle our carbon emissions, climate and health crisis.

To boost economic growth

Importantly walking, wheeling and cycling doesn't just help individuals save money but is a key contributor to economic growth. Walking is now the most frequent mode of transport in the UK, and investment in walking, wheeling and cycling will underpin the UK Government's growth plan in many ways.

Overall economic benefit

Data from Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index showed in 2021 walking, wheeling and cycling created [£6.5 billion](#) in economic benefit for individuals and society across the 17 urban areas surveyed. Extrapolating these figures to the whole of the UK, assuming similar walking, wheeling and cycling levels, equates to an overall annual benefit in the region of £36.5 billion.

In 2018-19, 41% of short journeys in towns and cities were walked or cycled.¹⁵ If the Governments stated aim of 50% of all journeys in towns and cities should be walked or cycled by 2030 (and 55% by 2035) were realised the economic benefits would be far greater.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

The role of walking, wheeling and cycling

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Furthermore, Sustrans' economic modelling on the National Cycle Network found the Network was worth £2.1 billion to the UK in 2019 and local businesses benefited by an estimated £1.7 billion in 2019 from people using the Network for leisure and tourism.¹⁶

Benefits for high streets and town centres

Better environments for walking, wheeling and cycling are shown to encourage people to spend more time in local high streets and town centres working, shopping, and socialising. Walking and cycling improvements can increase local retail spend by up to 30%¹⁷ and improving London high streets led to a 216% increase in people stopping, sitting and socialising.¹⁸

Transport for London found in 2013 that over a month, people who walk to the high street spend up to 40% more than those who drive.¹⁹ Furthermore, Transport for London also found retail vacancies were 17% lower after improvements to high streets and towns centres for walking and cycling, while retail values rose by 7.5%.²⁰

A survey of Business Improvement District leaders in 2017 showed that 9 in 10 felt walking and cycling created vibrant areas and 83% said it attracts more customers.²¹

Benefits to businesses and employers

Walking, wheeling and cycling either on their own or as part of a longer journey alongside public transport helps people access employment and education. And businesses see walking and cycling as key to attracting and retaining the staff they need to thrive.

People who are physically active take 27% less sick days each year than their colleagues, and 73% of employees who cycle felt it makes them more productive at work.²²

According to the British Council of Offices, there has been a 20% increase in secure bike parking at offices and two out of three landlords are improving on or adding completely new cycling facilities to their properties, with 87% also wishing to improve accommodation capacity for e-bikes.²³

Areas that are attractive for people are also attractive for business. Businesses will invest in areas that are seen as walkable and cyclable and in cities and towns designed for people as opposed to cars as these are places their colleagues want to live. Over 85% of responding BIDs said a good environment for walking, cycling, and spending time in is important for business performance.²⁴

Finally building cycle infrastructure is great for job creation. Research from the US showed spending on bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure create far more jobs than road construction.²⁵

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

The role of walking, wheeling and cycling

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)



Leon Bentley, Greater Cambridge



I am a 19 year old welder/fabricator/blacksmith and without the ability to cycle to work I never could've even considered applying for my job. My commute is 11 miles each way. I take full advantage of the cycle infrastructure in and around Cambridge. The benefits of cycling permeate every part of my life and I really do owe that to growing up in a true cycling city.

Reducing the burden on the NHS

Walking, wheeling and cycling is one of the most popular forms of physical activity. According to the Walking and Cycling Index active travel prevented over 24,500 serious long-term health conditions in the 17 UK cities in 2021. This saved the NHS over £162 million equivalent to the cost of over 5.4 million GP appointments.

Reducing congestion

Data from the Walking and Cycling Index in 2021 showed that 2.3 million return walking trips and 260,000 return cycling trips were made every single day from people that could have used a car. If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back 7,763 miles. In comparison the Strategic Road Network across England is 4,500 miles long.²⁶

Why focus on residents with low incomes

This report uses aggregated data from the Walking and Cycling Index, a representative survey of over 23,000 residents living in 17 urban areas across the UK in 2021.²⁷ A summary report can be found at: www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index

The Walking and Cycling Index uses the Socio-economic group classification which is based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

Groups D and E are most likely to be households with low income levels at greatest risk of poverty and at greatest risk from the cost of living crisis. In this report we focus on the behaviours, attitudes, and needs of people from groups D and E and use people on low incomes as a shorthand. We also make comparisons with Groups A and B who are least likely to feel the impact of the cost of living crisis.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

The role of walking, wheeling and cycling

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)



Serena Dang, Tower Hamlets



Many people think you can't cycle in London because of the traffic. It's understandable that people are nervous. It can also be because they don't own a bike or can't afford one. It is important to put things in place that overcome these barriers.

The Chrisp Street Market cycle hub is a great example of how partnerships like this can provide people with the opportunity to borrow a bike for free. Learning to cycle six years ago has been so liberating. I feel I can conquer the world when I'm on my bike.

Intersectionality

People on low incomes are also more likely to belong to other disadvantaged groups including women, especially single mums, people of colour and disabled people. Intersectionality often compounds barriers further, including transport barriers and those to walk, wheel or cycle.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible

An overlooked way to reduce everyday transport costs is to leave the car at home and walk, wheel and cycle more.

71% of all journeys made in England are under five miles and 25% are under a mile²⁸ – these are distances that can be walked, wheeled or cycled if other barriers do not exist. And when coupled with public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling has an even greater role to play.



Alina, Bristol



I didn't think the changes (pedestrianisation) to Cotham Hill would benefit my business at all. But I've not had one bit of negative feedback from customers – everyone has been positive.

What I didn't expect was new customers coming through the doors saying "I've never noticed you before, have you been here long?" I'd love to see these changes made permanent – now there are fewer cars around, our windows are cleaner!

Many barriers, however, stop people being able to choose to walk, wheel or cycle, for example the upfront cost of a cycle or mobility aid, the need to transport children, and concerns around both road and personal safety.

These barriers are almost always concentrated amongst existing disadvantaged groups. For example, only 68% of people on low incomes thought their local area was good for walking or wheeling in comparison to 77% of people in managerial or professional occupations. And only 43% of people on low incomes thought their local area was good for cycling.

The Walking and Cycling Index found 56% of residents on low incomes drive at least five short car journeys (3 miles or less) each week. This means there is good potential for many of these to be walked or cycled if barriers are addressed.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Solutions for making walking, wheeling, and cycling the first choice for journeys

The upcoming autumn fiscal plan provides an opportunity to help people through the cost of living crisis and promote economic growth. Removing barriers and giving people a genuine choice to walk, wheel or cycle are proven to do just this.

We believe a twin-track approach is required that continues to build momentum for the long term while providing urgent support to help people cope with the cost of living crisis over the coming months.

Over the long term we must continue to increase investment, improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and put walkable neighbourhoods at the heart of planning. These long-term investment and policy changes will build more resilience into transport to respond to the backdrop of economic crises – the economy, climate and health – akin to ‘building back better’.

At the same time, it is imperative that governments across the UK introduce a number of immediate actions that can help people through the next few years. Immediate actions should be designed to reduce household transport costs by making walking, wheeling, and cycling more desirable and accessible for everyday journeys.

However, we also need to learn the lessons from implementing trial infrastructure during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure responses are inclusive, supported by the community, and successful.



Julie Hall, Tyneside



Since we moved to Gosforth we've really benefitted from recent infrastructure changes. The council closed the road to through traffic, and there were additional temporary bridge closures during Covid-19 to help with walking and cycling.

We need to get rid of pavement parking. My mum is in a wheelchair. So many times we've gone out and we can't get her past the parked cars.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel

We need to continue working towards the Government's aim of 50% of all journeys in towns and cities walked or cycled by 2030.²⁹

To do this, it is imperative that the UK Government honours the commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment for active travel. This includes £2 billion of dedicated funding, as set out in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

This needs to start with the launch of Active Travel Fund 4 which will see multi-year revenue and capital investment in walking and cycling.

The Walking and Cycling Index found 58% of people on low incomes would like more funding for walking and 50% would like more spent on cycling. Only 36% would like more funding for driving.

Only 41% of people on low incomes thought their local area was good for safety when cycling. And only 61% of people on low incomes thought their local area was good for safety when walking or wheeling, in comparison to 74% of people in managerial or professional occupations. Continuing to invest in walking, wheeling and cycling will help to address safety concerns amongst low income groups.

Increase future investment

To be successful we need to see greater investment from the UK Government for walking, wheeling and cycling in the future. The Government's own executive agency, Active Travel England, recently suggested up to £18 billion investment is required if we are to be successful in making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for short journeys across England.

This will ensure our transport system is more sustainable and resilient for the longer term, reducing the impact of climate change, the burden on the NHS, while contributing to the economy.



Claire Lordan, Cardiff



I walk to many places out of necessity. We enjoy walking. There is a difference in the condition of the roads between areas in Cardiff, the east side of the city is especially poor. I'd like to see this balanced out with more green space, trees and better pavements for less affluent areas.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

The UK Government, devolved governments and associated transport authorities must develop an immediate programme of activity to help people reduce their transport costs through encouraging a modal shift to walking, wheeling and cycling. This programme will simultaneously help to promote economic growth.

We recommend the UK Government explores the following options.

1. Introduce a payment scheme to help people walk, wheel or cycle

We call upon the Government to introduce a voucher scheme to buy, subsidise or repair equipment for walking, wheeling and cycling.

The scheme should be open to people on universal credit and those eligible for other benefits, for example if you are disabled or have a health condition and people looking for or temporarily unable to work. The scheme should be designed to ensure households at risk of financial difficulty are provided with targeted support to access the scheme.



Mary-Kate O'Reilly, Edinburgh



Lockdown and getting a bike through an initiative for frontline workers gave me the push I needed to start cycling. Once I actually had a bike it felt like a lifeline. I'm a Social Worker so once home visits were allowed again, I could safely get to my clients by bike.

The 'Fix Your Bike' voucher scheme³⁰ rolled out during the pandemic is a useful model of delivery that could be built upon to ensure a voucher scheme can be rolled out quickly. The vouchers, redeemed with retailers, would benefit the UK economy and could contribute towards to the cost of:

1. Clothing and equipment to help people walk, wheel or cycle more, including walking shoes, waterproofs, cycle lights, locks and helmets.
2. Cycles, including bicycles, electric bikes, cargo cycles and adapted cycles.
3. Cycle and mobility aid maintenance, such as wheelchairs and mobility scooter and cycles.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

4. Financial support towards mobility aids, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters and canes should also be considered.

This support should be made available for both children and adults.

The Walking and Cycling Index found only 34% of residents on low incomes have access to an adult pedal cycle. Many of which have no existing financial support to buy a cycle. This compares to 58% of residents in managerial and professional occupations which already have access to financial support through the cycle to work scheme.

Overall, 70% of residents on low incomes would find access to a cycle useful to start cycling or cycle more. This compares to just 61% from people in managerial and professional occupations.

The Cycle to Work scheme provides financial support for people to purchase cycles. However, as it is an employer salary sacrifice scheme it excludes people not in employment, on low incomes or anyone who is self-employed. Many of these people are most likely to be at risk of financial difficulty and we need to ensure everyone has access to a cycle.



Clive Potter, Aberdeen



I have been volunteering for Community Foods Initiative North East (CFINE) since October 2020, delivering food bank parcels on a cargo bike. During lockdown I would deliver boxes with provisions such as fruit and bread to those who need them. Using a cargo bike is really helpful to get around the city quickly in an environmentally friendly way.

2. Create a dedicated pavement fund to improve accessibility and quality

Many people find it challenging to walk or wheel around their own neighbourhood, or even reach the end of their road. Our pavements, especially away from high streets, city and town centres have been neglected for many years.

The Walking and Cycling Index found only 55% of people on low incomes felt welcome or comfortable walking, wheeling, or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood. This compares to 74% of people in managerial or professional occupations.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)



Martha Lavery, Belfast



I find some footpaths are a bit up and down. There can be trip hazards. I can be a bit of a klutz so it can be easy to fall. I think there could be more seating around town. I have a hard time going up hills. If I could just rest for a few minutes that would be a big help.

There are many ways to make our pavements more inclusive and accessible, but we need more investment to make this happen. The Walking and Cycling Index found 58% of residents on low incomes would like more government spending on walking and wheeling in comparison to only 36% on driving. UK Government budgets typically include a pothole fund, but why do we ignore pavements? Recent research showed that with the money allocated in 2021 to fix potholes (£500 million), almost 840,000 new dropped kerbs could be installed across the UK.³¹ We should be investing more to fix both roads and pavements across the UK.

We need to create a pavement fund to help local transport authorities to improve pavements and make them more inclusive. This should maintain and improve pavements for everyone.

Local transport authorities require greater support for vegetation management, improving lighting, fixing damaged pavements, managing pavement clutter, and gritting pavements to ensure parity with road gritting. We also need to improve pavements, making them inclusive, accessible, and safe. It is not right that while almost every driveway includes a dropped kerb for vehicle access, very few dropped kerbs exist in residential street corners to allow a disabled person to cross their own road.

The Walking and Cycling Index in 2021 found 78% of residents on low incomes would like more accessible pavements, e.g. level surfaces, dropped kerbs at crossing points to walk or wheel more, while 84% of residents on low incomes would like nicer places along streets to stop and rest, e.g. more benches, trees and shelters.



Noelle O'Neill, Inverness



My partner is a wheelchair user and therefore I see the challenges in moving around Inverness through a completely different lens. Potholes, narrow and uneven pavements, and inappropriate pavement surfaces can make it very difficult for a wheelchair user to navigate the city.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

3. Prohibit pavement parking outside of London

Pavement parking has been prohibited in London for many years. The Scottish government is set to introduce a ban on pavement parking in 2023,³² and Wales are also taking action in this area.³³ The UK government is now considering prohibiting pavement parking across England and consulted on this in August 2020.³⁴

The Walking and Cycling Index in 2021 found 72% of residents on low incomes felt fewer cars parked on the pavement would help them to walk or wheel more.

People wish to feel safe and welcome while walking and wheeling, and without parked vehicles getting in their way. Pavement parking is discriminatory against wheelchair and mobility scooter users, other disabled people, those with visual impairments, and many more. We need the Government to act in England prohibiting pavement parking immediately.



Vivienne Formby,
Liverpool City Region



During lockdown my husband and I started to go for longer walks. I lost a stone. Walking helped reduce my blood pressure and improved my wellbeing. One thing we notice is cars parked on the pavement. We can't get the pram past them. I have to go out on the road to check for cars so she can come around.

4. Roll out secure cycle storage for cycles and mobility aids

A recent report found up to a third of Scottish households do not have access to somewhere safe and secure to store a cycle.³⁵ In addition almost half (46%) of social housing residents are unlikely to have somewhere suitable to store a cycle. Many disabled people also find it hard to store mobility aids including wheelchairs, mobility scooters and adapted cycles. We need to roll out secure cycle hangars and secure storage units for mobility aids across the UK. This should prioritise low income areas as well as flats and multiple occupancy buildings, ensuring they are free or affordable for residents.

The Walking and Cycling Index in 2021 found 60% of residents on low incomes would find access to secure cycle storage at or near home useful to start cycling or cycle more. There were 20,286 reported cycle thefts in UK Walking and Cycling Index cities in 2020/21.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)



Jamie Lawson, Tower Hamlets



Bikeworks' inclusive All Ability Cycling Club has been brilliant for me. I have Cerebral Palsy and started cycling as a child using adapted cycles. They're expensive and need considerable space for storage. Bikeworks provides me with access to a fleet of different cycles and knowledgeable instructors.

Cycling has supported me through life's ups and downs. When I was made redundant, it gave me a routine and kept me socially active.

5. Embed walkable neighbourhoods into planning policy across the country

We need to put walkable neighbourhoods at the centre of national and local planning policy in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and in upcoming updates to the National Planning Policy Framework. Our recent walkable neighbourhoods report³⁶ demonstrated we often build new developments in the wrong places, too far away from existing communities and services and at densities too low to support everyday services or public transport routes within them.

Everyone should have the right to choose to live somewhere where they can access most everyday services by walking and wheeling, including public transport stops to travel further afield.

The Walking and Cycling Index found 76% of residents on low incomes support the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods where everyday amenities and services are within a 20-minute return walk of your home. Yet only 56% of people on low incomes felt they could get to places easily without having to drive.



Edna, Glasgow



I moved to Glasgow from Ghana in 2015 to study and walking has become a huge part of my daily life. It is my primary means of transport and main form of exercise. Walking gets me where I need to be, stimulates my mind with all sorts of interesting ideas and fills my lungs with good fresh air.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

6. Make 20mph the default speed in urban areas

Everyone across the UK should have access to safe streets and rolling out default 20mph limits in our communities will help to reduce the dominance of motor vehicles. It is great to see Wales recently choosing to restrict speed limits in built-up areas across the country, however other UK nations need to follow.³⁷

People living in disadvantaged areas tend to live in greater proximity to high volumes of fast-moving traffic and high levels of on-street parking. Consequently they have higher levels of exposure to road traffic risk.³⁸ In fact young people, aged 11–15 years from disadvantaged areas are more likely to experience traffic collisions than their counterparts living in other urban areas.

The Walking and Cycling Index found 64% of residents on low incomes agree that speed limits should be reduced on local roads in built-up areas to 20mph. Most local authorities simply do not have the funding to implement 20mph individually and a national default scheme is much more cost effective while also giving clear signals to drivers that speeds need to be lowered everywhere.



Claire, Dundee



Walking around Perth Road can be difficult with two children. The footpath is very narrow, especially when I walk with a buggy. I think one of the solutions to improve walking on Perth Road would be to widen the pavement and reduce car speed and traffic.

7. Explore other options to support people

Many other options exist to help people reduce their travel costs which should also be explored by national and local governments. We believe the following could be helpful and quick to roll out or scale up:

- 1. Equip local community hubs to offer travel advice and support** – Local community hubs, such as food banks, Citizens Advice and community centres or Travel centres (including Active Travel Hubs) could offer support to individuals who require advice around reducing the cost of travel and accessing support and training for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 2. Increased provision of cycle training** – Increasing provision of cycle training, for example through the Bikeability scheme to adults and children. The Walking and Cycling Index found 54% of residents on low incomes would find access to cycle training courses and organised social rides useful to start cycling or cycle more.

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

[References](#)

3. Support primary schools to introduce walking and cycling buses – The school run is a key journey type and helping adults and children to walk, wheel or cycle to and from school is important. Walking and cycling buses are one quick answer to this although schools will require support, especially when fuel costs are increasing.



**Carol Hutchinson,
Greater Manchester**



During lockdown I went to the park more with my son. One day we met two mechanics from a local project called Bike Hive. They invited me to a social ride that Friday. I said I don't know how to ride a bike. I never thought I could learn to cycle. But within five minutes I was riding by myself. I had learnt to ride a bike at 54!

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

Calculating the economic benefit of active travel

[References](#)

Calculating the economic benefit of active travel

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model** to calculate the economic benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling based on levels of participation in each city and peer reviewed economic studies available in the UK and Europe.

Please note all adult trips are estimated through our survey, however we only estimated school and leisure trips for children. These are from other available sources. Our resident's survey does not survey children under 16 years of age. [The Walking and Cycling Index Methodology Report](#) includes more detail on all aspects of data collection and analysis through the programme.

Modelling economic benefit is broken down as follows:

The number of and lengths of walking, wheeling and cycling trips in each city is estimated based on an independent survey of over 1,100 residents by social research organisation NatCen. In total in 2021 we surveyed 23,232 residents across the 17 areas which have a combined population of 11,947,997.

The net annual economic benefit for individuals and society from all walking, wheeling and cycling trips is comprised of three parts:

1. the annual monetary benefit to individuals and society from people with a car choosing to walk, wheel or cycle for transport (see below), plus
2. the value of similarly purposeful trips but walked, wheeled or cycled by people without access to a car, plus
3. the value of leisure walking, wheeling and cycling trips made by everyone.

Modelling the net annual economic benefit includes:

Main contributory factors:

- operating costs of walking/cycling/running a car
- travel time of walking/cycling/driving
- traffic congestion
- the value of additional life years
- medical costs
- work absenteeism.

** This methodology is based upon that used for the Copenhagen Bicycle Account, which has been established for 20 years and was one of the main inspirations for the Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life).

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

Calculating the economic benefit of active travel

[References](#)

Other factors also modelled included:

- infrastructure costs (e.g. path and road maintenance)
- economic environmental factors, such as local air quality, noise, greenhouse gases, soil and water quality
- environmental costs of fuel production
- taxation.

Based on the above modelling, Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Index demonstrated in 2021 walking, wheeling and cycling created £6.5 billion in economic benefit for individuals and society across the 17 urban areas surveyed: Aberdeen, Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greater Cambridge, Greater Manchester, Inverness, Liverpool City Region, Perth, Southampton City Region, Stirling, Tower Hamlets, Tyneside, West Midlands Combined Authority.

Extrapolating these figures to the whole of the UK, assuming similar walking, wheeling and cycling levels, equates to an overall annual benefit in the region of £36.5 billion. This is based upon ONS mid-year 2019 UK population estimates,^{***} which were used to calculate the economic benefit for the Walking and Cycling Index in 2021.

Walking, wheeling and cycling also contributes other economic benefits, for example high street spending, supporting the walking and cycling retail industry, tourism and attracting staff for business. Robust data is not yet available for many of these areas and therefore we believe the £36.5 billion estimate is very conservative.

^{***} For Belfast, 2020 mid-year estimate were used. These were the most recent population estimates available at the moment of modelling for the Walking and Cycling Index city boundaries.

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

References

References

1. RAC Foundation, 2022. The cost of filling up. www.racfoundation.org/data/cost-of-filling-up-average-car-uk-chart
2. NibleFins, 2022. Average Cost to Run a Car UK 2022. www.niblefins.co.uk/cheap-car-insurance/average-cost-run-car-uk
3. DfT, 2022. National Travel Survey 2021. www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts02-driving-licence-holders#vehicle-availability
4. ONS, 2022. Inflation and price indices. www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices
5. Ofgem, 2022. Ofgem updates price cap level and tightens up rules on suppliers. www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/ofgem-updates-price-cap-level-and-tightens-rules-suppliers
6. UK Government, 2022. Government support for energy bills begins for households and businesses. www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-for-energy-bills-begins-for-households-and-businesses
7. The Independent, 2022. 'Households will get poorer' even if energy bills frozen, economists warn MPs www.independent.co.uk/business/households-will-get-poorer-even-if-energy-bills-frozen-economists-warn-mps-b2160821.html
8. ONS, 2022. Via Guardian Live Blog www.theguardian.com/business/live/2022/aug/17/higher-food-energy-costs-expected-push-up-uk-inflation-july-business-live
9. The Guardian, 2022. UK food price inflation hits highest level since global financial crash. www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/31/uk-food-price-inflation-hits-highest-level-since-global-financial-crash
10. BBC, 2022. UK not in recession, new figures suggest. www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63086562
11. RAC, 2022. Petrol and diesel prices in the UK | Latest fuel price data from the RAC. www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/fuel-watch
12. UWE, 2022. Fair Bus Fares for Young People Policy Briefing. <https://blogs.uwe.ac.uk/research-business-innovation/fair-bus-fares-for-young-people-policy-briefing>
13. UK Government, 2022. £130 million to protect bus services across the country. www.gov.uk/government/news/130-million-to-protect-bus-services-across-the-country.
14. DfT, 2022. £2 bus fare cap across England to save passengers money www.gov.uk/government/news/2-bus-fare-cap-across-england-to-save-passengers-money

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

References

15. DfT, 2022. Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament 2022. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1087946/Cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-report-to-Parliament-2022-large-print.pdf
16. Sustrans, 2022. Paths for Everyone Three Years On Report.
17. Living Streets, 2018. The Pedestrian Pound. www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf
18. Carmona et al, 2018. Street appeal. UCL for Transport for London. <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/street-appeal.pdf>
19. TfL, 2013. Town Centres 2013 <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/town-centres-report-13.pdf>
20. Carmona et al, 2018. Street appeal. UCL for Transport for London. <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/street-appeal.pdf>
21. Aldred and Sharkey, 2018. Healthy Streets: a business view. University of Westminster for Transport for London. <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-a-business-view.pdf>
22. TfL, 2018. Walking and Cycling: The economic benefits. <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/walking-cycling-economic-benefits-summary-pack.pdf>
23. BCO, 2022. The Market Cycles 2.
24. Aldred and Sharkey, 2018. Healthy Streets: a business view. University of Westminster for Transport for London. <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-a-business-view.pdf>
25. https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/PERI_Natl_Study_June2011.pdf
26. DfT, 2022. Road lengths in Great Britain: 2021. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-lengths-in-great-britain-2021/road-lengths-in-great-britain-2021
27. Sustrans, 2022. Walking and Cycling Index. www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index
28. Department for Transport, 2021, National Travel Survey 2020. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020/national-travel-survey-2020.
29. DfT, 2022. The second cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS2) www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-cwis2
30. UK Government, 2020. Fix Your Bike Voucher Scheme www.gov.uk/guidance/fix-your-bike-voucher-scheme-apply-for-a-voucher

Jump to:

[Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The role of walking, wheeling and cycling](#)

[Making walking, wheeling, and cycling desirable and accessible](#)

[Honour the Government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel](#)

[Implement a package of measures to support people through the cost of living crisis](#)

[Calculating the economic benefit of active travel](#)

References

- 31.** Possible, 2022. Nobody Left Behind. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d30896202a18c0001b49180/t/620bd77ea6a7065a0dec6fe1/1644943920058/Nobody+Left+Behind+Envisioning+inclusive+cities+in+a+low+car+future.pdf>
- 32.** LTT, 2021. Scottish pavement ban delayed until 2023. www.transportxtra.com/publications/parking-review/news/69037/scottish-pavement-ban-delayed-until-2023.
- 33.** Welsh Government, 2021. Llwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021. gov.wales/llwybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021
- 34.** Department for Transport, 2022. Managing pavement parking. www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking
- 35.** Pettycur Consulting Ltd , 2022. Residential Cycle Storage. www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/Residential-Cycle-Storage-Report-final.pdf
- 36.** Sustrans, 2022. Sustrans is calling for the government to incorporate walkable neighbourhoods into planning laws in England. www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/news/2022/june/sustrans-is-calling-for-the-government-to-incorporate-walkable-neighbourhoods-into-planning-laws-in-england
- 37.** Welsh Assembly, 2022. UK first – Welsh Senedd gives green light for 20mph legislation. gov.wales/uk-first-welsh-senedd-gives-green-light-20mph-legislation
- 38.** Foresight, Government Office for Science, 2019. Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784685/future_of_mobility_access.pdf