

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR

18 October 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Active travel is worth £36.5 billion to the UK economy and multi-year investment must be protected to secure local economic growth.

In the run up to the medium-term fiscal plan on 31st October, and with all Government Departments being asked to find savings, we write to you to ask you to honour and build on the government's commitment of £3.8 billion multi-year investment to active travel including dedicated investment, as set out in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

We are a group of organisations representing business, industry, motoring, the environment and active travel including the AA, Federation of Small Businesses, Bicycle Association, Brake, British Cycling, CPRE, Cycling UK, Living Streets, Ramblers, Road Safety Foundation, Sustrans, The Bikeability Trust and Urban Transport Group. Together, we believe that we need to stop pitting motoring against walking, wheeling and cycling. We need to realise the benefits that long-term investment in active travel can have for the country's economic growth and to support people on low incomes through the cost of living crisis.

Sustrans' comprehensive [Walking and Cycling Index](#) showed that in 2021 walking, wheeling and cycling created £6.5 billion in economic benefit across the 17 urban areas surveyed in the UK, which equates to an overall annual UK benefit of £36.5 billion to individuals and the economy. Cycling and walking infrastructure unlocks housing developments giving people more choice in how they travel and connecting them to work and education.

Walking, wheeling and cycling also invigorate the high street with people walking on average spending 40% more than those who drive.

Those that are physically active also take 27% fewer sick days each year than their colleagues, which is good for business and productivity.

In short, if investment in active travel is cut, opportunities to stimulate economic growth are removed, as our report [Helping people through the cost of living crisis and growing our economy](#) shows.

Whilst it is clear that active travel creates huge economic benefits, it also helps people hit hardest by the cost of living crisis. Over a third of people on low incomes (38%) do not own or have access to a car and for many that do, it is becoming prohibitively expensive to run.

We have to continue to invest in active travel programmes and infrastructure to give people a genuine choice to leave the car at home for shorter journeys and better connect them to public transport, saving fuel costs for when they really need it whilst also ensuring access to jobs and services for those without access to a car.

Walking and Cycling Index data shows that it is also politically popular, with people wanting greater investment in walking (56%) and cycling (53%) than driving (32%). With more people walking and cycling short journeys we also free up road space for those that need to drive, helping them to get to their destinations more efficiently.

To provide better value for taxpayers, investment in active travel needs to be set out and committed to over several years, as happens for every other mode of transport. Without it, stop-start single year investment results in poor quality infrastructure, patchily delivered with expensive short-term contracts and inefficient supply-chains, unable to plan for growth. This wastes public funds and reduces the effectiveness of what does get built.

Everyone benefits when there is investment in walking, wheeling and cycling. It is good for business, the high street, individuals facing hardship and the UK economy as a whole.

We appreciate the scope and scale of the issues which the government currently faces. Nevertheless, at a time when economic growth is vital for the whole nation, we ask you to please write to us and publicly recommit to multi-year investment in walking, wheeling and cycling's future across England.

Yours,



Xavier Brice
CEO, Sustrans



Edmund V King OBE
President, AA



Phillip Darnton OBE
Chairman, Bicycle
Association



Emily Cherry
Chief Executive, Bikeability
Trust



Brian Facer
CEO, British Cycling



Tom Fyans
Interim Chief Executive,
CPRE



Sarah Mitchell
Chief Executive, Cycling UK



Craig Beaumont
Head of External Affairs
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Stephen Edwards
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Ross Maloney
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Dr Suzy Charman
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