




Birmingham

Walking and Cycling Index 2023

Published March 2024

 Birmingham
City Council


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Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Birmingham



As Birmingham's Cabinet Member for Transport, my hope is that we can genuinely be a city where cycling, walking and wheeling are for everybody, everyone feels safe and

all citizens can experience the sheer fun and enjoyment of getting outside and incorporating active travel into their everyday lives.

We have a vision for our city which puts walking, wheeling and cycling first for shorter journeys and to link to public transport for longer trips. We want to move away from car dependency and embrace the benefits to health, emissions and the economy which a genuinely sustainable transport network affords.

It's for these reasons that we are working hard to ensure the infrastructure in Birmingham makes walking, wheeling and cycling easy and attractive – reducing traffic in local neighbourhoods and the city centre (especially around schools) and providing safe, high quality routes on the main road network are vital parts of our transport plan and our ambitious response to the climate crisis.

Making these changes to reshape the city is not always easy, and I want to make sure that we are taking communities with

us on the journey, so I am pleased to see that in this report's independent survey three times as many people support creating low-traffic neighbourhoods as oppose them (57% compared to 19%).

We are also pursuing creative solutions which enable more people to take up cycling and will be running a trial of on street cycle hangars to provide secure cycle storage for people without the space to keep a bike at home, and have allocated money from the Clean Air Zone revenue to give away more bikes to citizens who would not otherwise have access to one. Seeing in this report that 45% of survey respondents would be helped to cycle more with access to a cargo bike, 35% with access to an adapted bike and 50% with access to an electric bike, I am also keen to look into how we can incorporate these into our offer.

We are all facing a tough future at the moment with an increasing cost of living, climate change and air quality all presenting immediate threats which cannot be understated, but, with walking, wheeling and cycling offering such perfect ready-made solutions I am optimistic about the future of active, people centric travel and transport in Birmingham and beyond.

Councillor Liz Clements, Cabinet Member for Transport

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The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 23 cities and urban areas. Each city reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This report and those for 2015 and 2017 cover Birmingham and are produced in partnership with Birmingham City Council. The 2019 and 2021 reports cover the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, including Birmingham. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,176 residents aged 16 or above in Birmingham. The survey was conducted from March to June 2023. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Our thanks to the people of Birmingham who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all reports can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index. For more data, see the [Index Data Tool](#).



Defining wheeling

We recognise that some people who use wheeled mobility aids, for example a wheelchair or a mobility scooter, may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. We use the terms walking and wheeling together to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

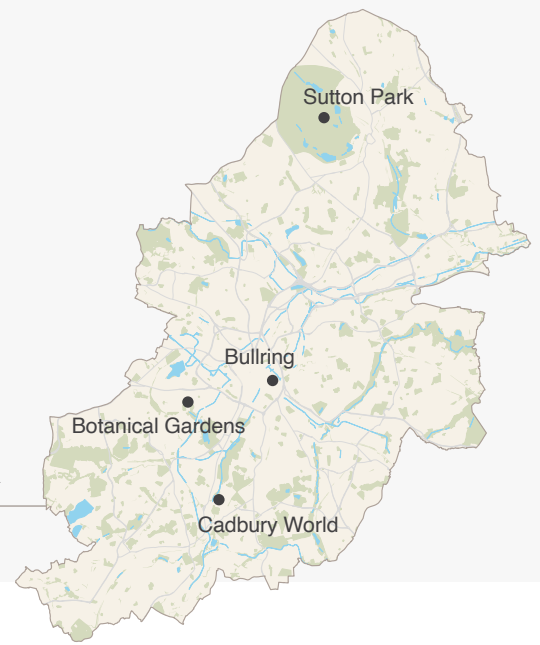
Headlines

Birmingham

Populationⁱ

1,145,009

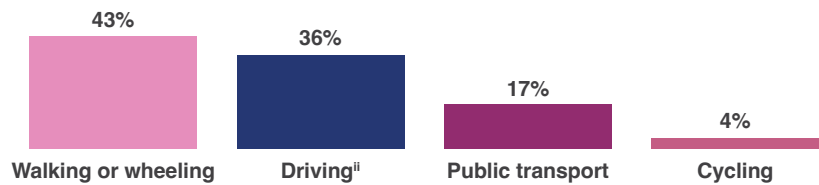
Survey area



Walking is the most common mode of travel

More people walk five days a week than travel that often any other way.

Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Birmingham



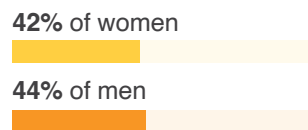
43%
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

12%
of residents cycle at least once a week

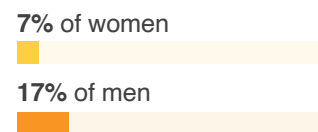
Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

Residents' travel choices and their perceptions of walking, wheeling and cycling sometimes vary widely between different groups.

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a weekⁱⁱⁱ



Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

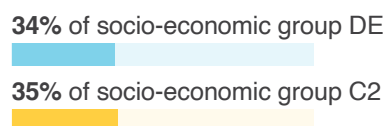


Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

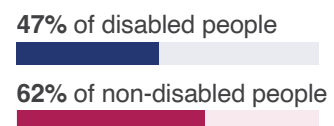
Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good



Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good



Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood



Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

i. ONS Census 2021. This is the most recent available for Birmingham. ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. iii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Every day, walking, wheeling and cycling in Birmingham take up to **220,000** cars off the road^{iv}. Each year in Birmingham these three modes combined:

+ Prevent

1,438

serious long-term health conditions



Create

£454.5 million

in economic benefit for individuals and Birmingham



Save

37,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions

Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less

Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

22% of residents want to drive less, yet 33% of residents often use a car because no other transport options are available.

Walk or wheel

52% more

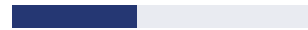


5% less



Cycle

41% more



5% less



Take public transport

32% more

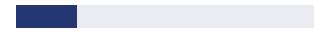


15% less

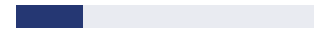


Drive

20% more



22% less



Residents want more funding for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending in their local area:

58% on walking and wheeling



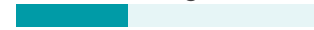
47% on cycling



71% on public transport



37% on driving



Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Birmingham residents:

56% support



21% oppose



more cycle paths along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

72% support



11% oppose



the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods^v

57% support



19% oppose



the creation of more low-traffic neighbourhoods^{vi}

61% agree



16% disagree



that increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

66% support



15% oppose



banning vehicles parking on the pavement

55% support



16% oppose



shifting investment from road building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

iv. Based on walking, wheeling and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking or wheeling trips.
v. See definition on page 14. vi. For definition see [Methodology document](#).



Walking in Birmingham

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

Walking and wheeling participation

Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport. This is despite being an efficient use of space, good for our health and having no environmental impact.

A brisk 10-minute walk every day provides many health benefits.ⁱ More needs to be done to encourage people in underrepresented groups to share in the benefits of walking and wheeling every day.

93%
of all residents walk or wheel

43%
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

Genderⁱⁱ and sexuality

42% of women

44% of men

49% of LGBTQ+ people

42% of non-LGBTQ+ people

Ethnicity

43% of people from ethnic minority groups

43% of white people

Age

50% of people aged 16–25

39% of people aged 26–35

46% of people aged 36–45

51% of people aged 46–55

36% of people aged 56–65

30% of people aged 66+

Disability

39% of disabled people

44% of non-disabled people

Socio-economic groupⁱⁱⁱ

44% of AB

47% of C1

31% of C2

43% of DE

i. Walking for health, NHS, July 2019.

ii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

iii. Socio-economic group is a classification 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.

Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

54%

of residents think the level of safety for walking or wheeling is good

44%

of residents think the level of safety for children walking or wheeling is good

64%

of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

Gender and sexuality

52% of women



57% of men



55% of LGBTQ+ people



54% of non-LGBTQ+ people



Ethnicity

58% of people from ethnic minority groups



51% of white people



Age

57% of people aged 16–25



57% of people aged 26–35



53% of people aged 36–45



53% of people aged 46–55



52% of people aged 56–65

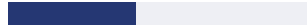


51% of people aged 66+



Disability

42% of disabled people



58% of non-disabled people



Socio-economic group

59% of AB



53% of C1



54% of C2

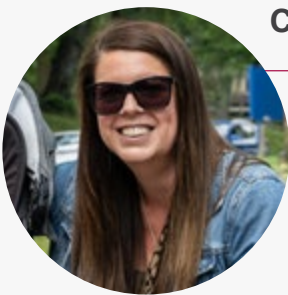


48% of DE



19%

of residents often felt anxious or unsafe while walking or wheeling over the last year



Claire



I've got a side-by-side pushchair because the kids like to be next to each other. People who park on pavements create a whole lot of problems which you don't think about until you've got a double pushchair. If there's a car on the pavement near a lamppost, a bin, a fence or a hedge, you just can't get through; it's a nightmare.

Charlie has spina bifida; for him, the dropped kerbs are essential – he can't necessarily navigate the fact that there's a kerb and he needs to step up onto it, so a dropped kerb is what he'd use. As he's getting older, he's learning this, but nine times out of ten he can't use the dropped kerb because there's a car parked over it anyway.

We've got a blue badge, both twins are registered disabled, but we still don't park inconsiderately; it's safety before anything else.



Cycling in Birmingham

Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

Cycling participation

Despite a much larger potential for cycling, only **12%** of people cycle regularly.ⁱ

Cycling participation, however, is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.ⁱⁱ

32%
of all residents cycle

12%
of all residents cycle at least once a week

Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

Gender and sexuality

7% of women

17% of men

14% of LGBTQ+ people

12% of non-LGBTQ+ people

Ethnicity

11% of people from ethnic minority groups

13% of white people

Age

16% of people aged 16–25

12% of people aged 26–35

17% of people aged 36–45

14% of people aged 46–55

6% of people aged 56–65

4% of people aged 66+

Disability

7% of disabled people

14% of non-disabled people

Socio-economic group

15% of AB

11% of C1

19% of C2

7% of DE

Cycling safety and satisfaction

35%

of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good

30%

of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good

40%

of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good

Gender and sexuality

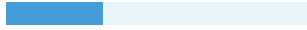
32% of women



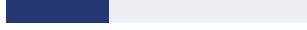
38% of men



32% of LGBTQ+ people



34% of non-LGBTQ+ people



Ethnicity

44% of people from ethnic minority groups



26% of white people



Age

41% of people aged 16–25



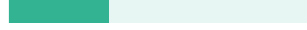
36% of people aged 26–35



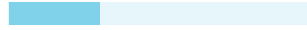
37% of people aged 36–45



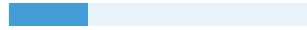
33% of people aged 46–55



30% of people aged 56–65



26% of people aged 66+



Disability

27% of disabled people

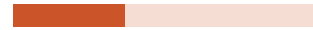


37% of non-disabled people

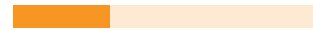


Socio-economic group

37% of AB



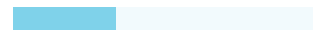
32% of C1



35% of C2



34% of DE



Andrew



When I came out of the forces, my leg was all in bits because of several operations. I wanted to get back into cycling, but I couldn't. Then when I went to college, I put weight on. I got to the point where I was 26 stone, and I thought I can't do this, I really can't. I was already in a wheelchair, so I bought a clip-on cycle which clipped to the front. But the NHS told me to sell the clip because it would break the wheelchair.

So then I had to look for something else suitable, but needed some funding or something like that where I could purchase a proper handcycle.

I went to the Royal Engineers Association, Dusk till Dawn, and also did crowd funding, raised some money, and bought a handcycle.

It was a proper thing, which was all steel, and really heavy, but it did the job. Most days I'd do somewhere between 20 to 25 miles. It's got me down from 26 stone to 19 and a half. So I've gained longevity on my life by losing weight. And who said you can't lose weight by exercising?



Benefits of walking

Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

The large numbers of walking and wheeling trips in Birmingham produce important health, economic and environmental benefits for everyone.

Birmingham residents walk or wheel 34 times around the world every day

372.9 million

walking and wheeling trips were made in Birmingham in the past year, which adds up to

312.8 million miles

= 860,000 miles a day.

This equates to each resident spending

3 days

walking or wheeling continuously in the past year.

Annual walking and wheeling trips by purposeⁱ

Enjoyment or fitness – adults and children (including running):
144,000,000

39%

Destination – adults only (like work, school, shopping):
202,100,000

54%

School – children only:
26,800,000

7%



Walking and wheeling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and walking. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

69p is saved

for each mile walked or wheeled instead of driven in Birmingham.

Over a year this adds up to

£63.7 million

from adults with a car in their household walking or wheeling to work, school and other destinations.

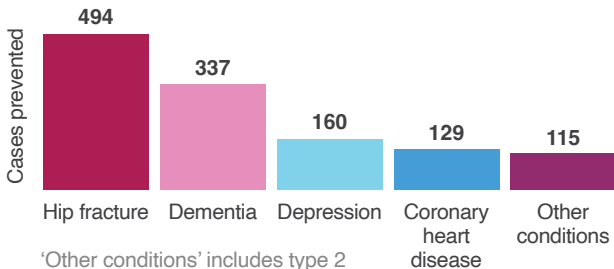
The total annual economic benefit from all trips walked and wheeled in Birmingham is

£359.8 millionⁱⁱ

i. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. ii. This includes trips walked or wheeled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Walking in Birmingham prevents 1,235 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Birmingham

£15.8 million per year



equivalent to the cost of

380,000 GP appointments

Based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Birmingham the physical activity benefits of walking

prevent 330 early deaths annually

which is valued at

£1.2 billionⁱⁱⁱ

Please note wheelchair or mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

62,000 kg of NO_x

and

8,900 kg of particulates

(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

38% of residents agree the

air is clean in their local area



Walking and wheeling in Birmingham helps mitigate our climate crisis

25,000 tonnes

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



59,000 people taking flights

from Birmingham to Tenerife

In 2021 transport accounted for **26%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2021 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures

Walking and wheeling keeps Birmingham moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^{iv} This helps to keep Birmingham moving for all road users.

200,000 return walking and wheeling trips

are made daily in Birmingham by people that could have used a car.

iv. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

603 miles

equivalent to the distance from Birmingham to Edinburgh and back.



iii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking.



Benefits of cycling

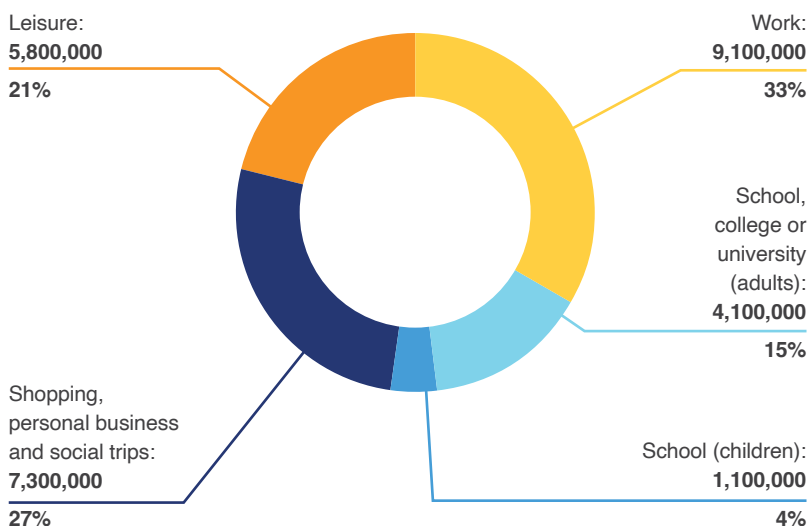
Why everyone gains when more people cycle

Birmingham residents cycle 9 times around the world every day

27.4 million cycling trips were made in Birmingham in the past year

This adds up to **85 million miles** = 230,000 miles a day

Annual cycling trips by purpose in Birminghamⁱ



Cycling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

£1.63 is saved for each mile cycled instead of driven in Birmingham.

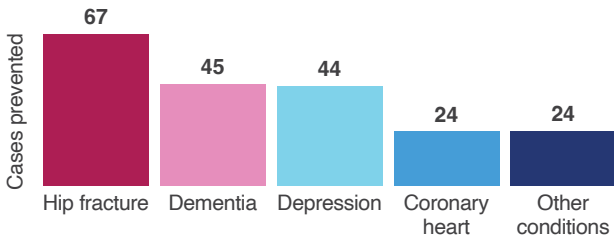
Over a year this adds up to **£72.6 million** from adults with a car in their household cycling to work, school and other destinations.

The total annual economic benefit from all trips cycled in Birmingham is **£94.6 millionⁱⁱ**

i. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). Education trips are shown separately for adults and children. All other trips are just adults.
 ii. This includes trips cycled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

Cycling in Birmingham prevents 203 serious long-term health conditions each year



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Birmingham
£2.9 million per year



equivalent to the cost of
70,000 GP appointments

Based on Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Birmingham the physical activity benefits of cycling
prevent 29 early deaths annually

which is valued at
£106 millionⁱⁱⁱ

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

21,000 kg of NO_x
and
3,400 kg of particulates
(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

38% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area



Cycling in Birmingham helps mitigate our climate crisis

12,000 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



28,000 people
taking flights
from Birmingham to Tenerife

In 2021 transport accounted for **26%** of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, of which the main sources are the use of petrol and diesel in road transport.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2021 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Final Figures

Cycling keeps Birmingham moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.^{iv} This helps to keep Birmingham moving for all road users.

22,000 return cycling trips
are made daily in Birmingham by people that could have used a car.

iv. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

64 miles
equivalent to the distance from Birmingham to Milton Keynes.



iii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling.



Walking solutions

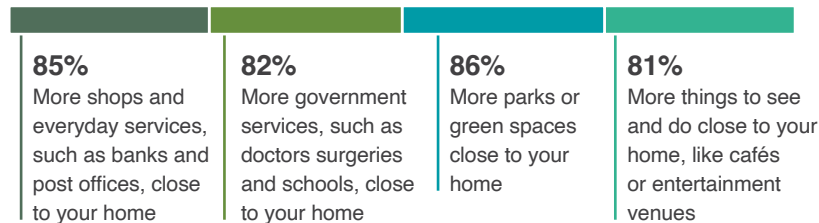
What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Ideally, walking or wheeling should be the most attractive option for short journeys. An area can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The environment should be safe, comfortable and welcoming.

20-minute neighbourhoods are places where you can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis. Based on a 20-minute return journey this is around 480 metres each way for the majority of people.ⁱ

What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?



64%

of Birmingham households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.

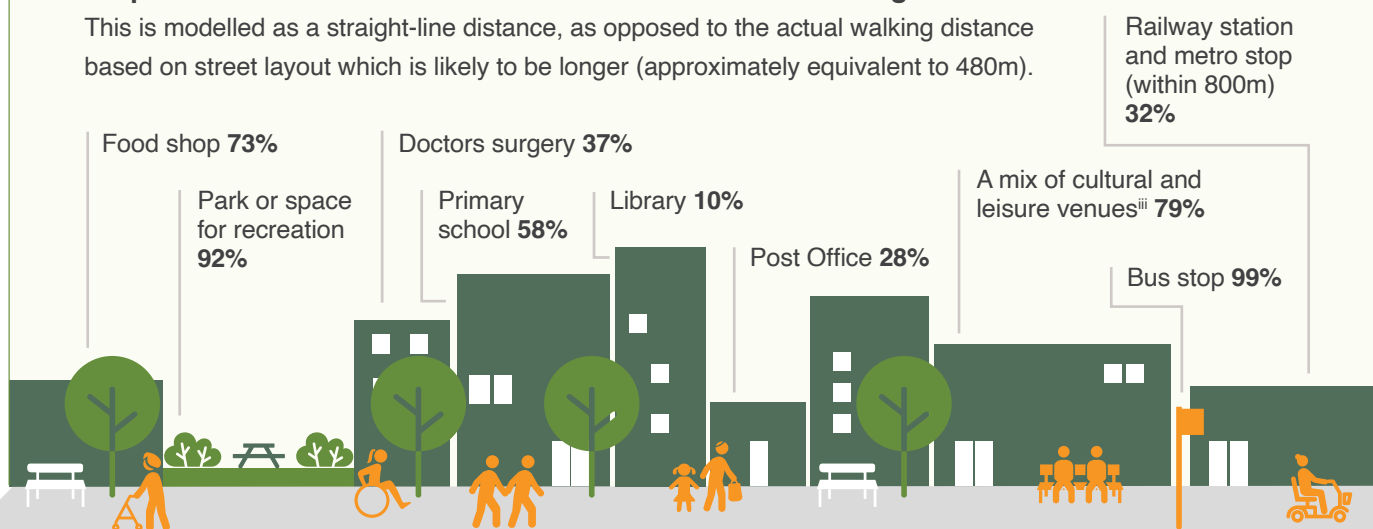
These higher-density neighbourhoods with more people can sustain local businesses and public transport routes.ⁱⁱ

54%

agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

Proportion of households within a 400m radius of the following amenities

This is modelled as a straight-line distance, as opposed to the actual walking distance based on street layout which is likely to be longer (approximately equivalent to 480m).

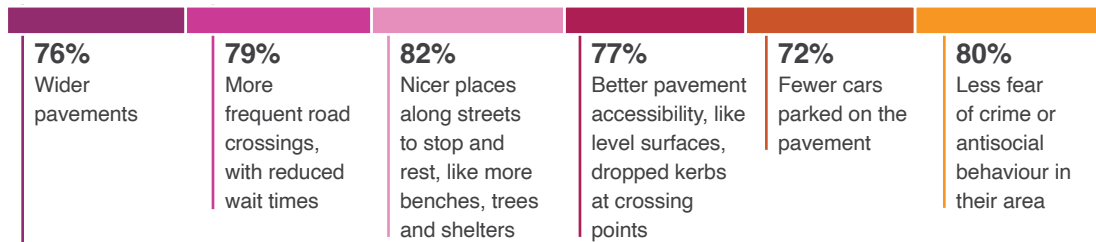


i. Asher et al, 2012. Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study. Age and Ageing.
 ii. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.
 iii. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, like cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums.

Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk or wheel in.

What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?



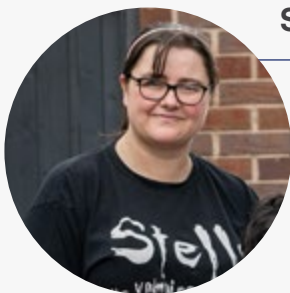
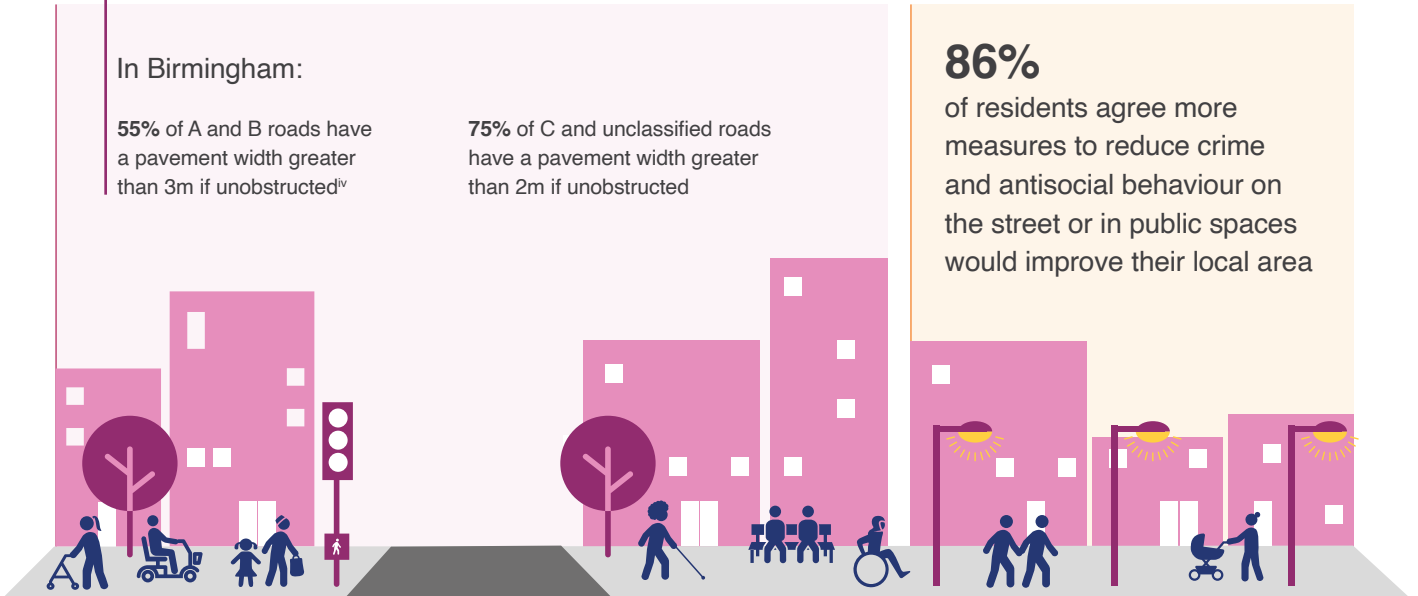
In Birmingham:

55% of A and B roads have a pavement width greater than 3m if unobstructed^{iv}

75% of C and unclassified roads have a pavement width greater than 2m if unobstructed

86%

of residents agree more measures to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour on the street or in public spaces would improve their local area



Stella



It's mainly the school run that's the problem when walking with the double pushchair. We had one which sat one child in front of the other; that was a nightmare to push, it was so awkward, but at least it was narrow. Then we got this pushchair, which is wider, and cars parked on the pavement are a particular problem with that – people don't park very considerably, there's never enough space on these little pavements.

I do wraparound care for one of my friends, so I've got one more child plus my three. When my eldest was little, we almost got run over; ever since then I changed the route we take out of our little area, and this one has the narrowest little walkway you could possibly find. I'm constantly bumping the pushchair into the wall, the babies' arms could get stuck, it's such a hazard. And on bin day, it's like Tetris! I constantly have to move people's bins around to get through, they're just everywhere.

We also live near an expressway; there is no safe place to walk or cross the road, and there are roundabouts everywhere, which I didn't realise until the first time we went that way.

iv. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets.



Cycling solutions

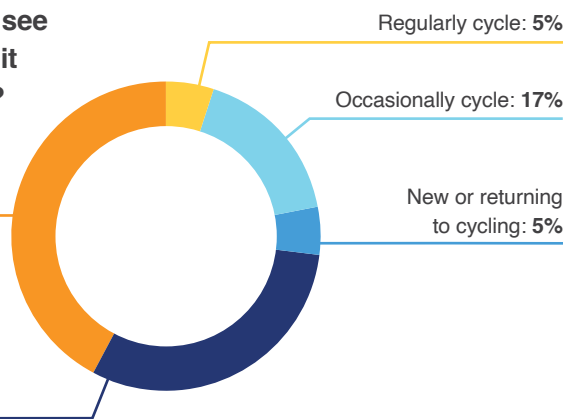
What would make cycling better?

Many Birmingham residents want to cycle

How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?

Do not cycle and do not want to: **42%**

Do not cycle but would like to: **31%**



What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'?

32% of women

38% of people from ethnic minority groups

28% of disabled people

Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

What percentage of residents would be helped to cycle more by better facilities?

66%
More traffic-free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways

Birmingham has:ⁱ

71 miles
of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road

63%
More cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

18 miles
of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

56%
of residents support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic

64%
More signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets

68%
Better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at railway stations

There are **849** cycle parking spaces across all **47** railway stations and metro stops and no dedicated cycle parking spaces at the only bus station in Birmingham.

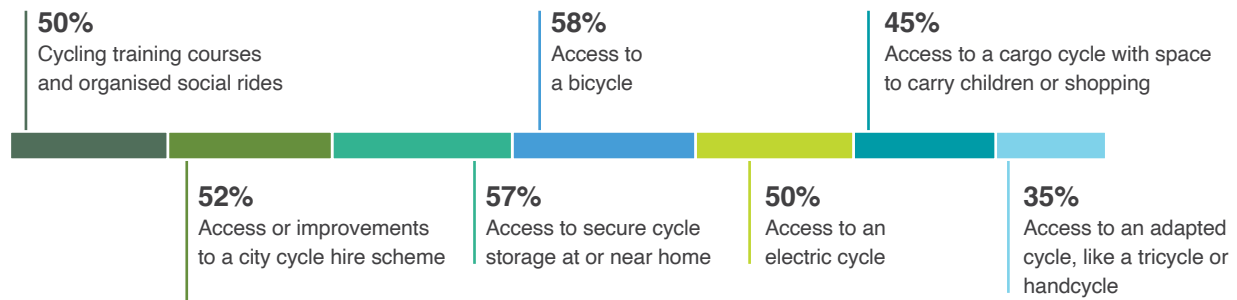
11%
of households within 125m of these routes



i. To ensure comparability, these figures are correct as of 31 May 2023 for all city reports.

Residents want more support to cycle

What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them cycle more?



WM Cycle Hire scheme in Birminghamⁱⁱ

450
hire cycles
(approximately)

133
cycle hire
stations

There is a public cycle parking space for every **47** people who cycle in Birmingham.

Reported cycle thefts

There were **1,013** reported cycle thefts in Birmingham in 2022/23.

1,091 in 2021/22

For every **409** people who own an adult cycle in Birmingham, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

47% of residents

33% of socio-economic group DE

58% of socio-economic group AB

59% of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

30% of households are within 800m of a cycle shopⁱⁱⁱ



James



Every school day, I use the Priory Road and A38 cycle routes to get to and from school, unless the weather is bad, when I'll go by bus.

Riding my bike gives me a sense of freedom, because I know when I should leave to get to school on time, and I don't have to worry about the buses being on time.

The protected cycle lanes give me a safer environment to cycle along than the road, without the risks of cars passing too closely, especially with the designated crossings. On traffic light systems at the big junctions, I would prefer priority for the cycle lane, to encourage more people to cycle.

When I pass under the cycle counter sign on the A38 route, it really makes me happy to know that there are lots of other people cycling to and from work and school instead of taking the car.

Maintenance is almost as important as putting in these new cycle lanes. In the winter, it gets clogged up with lots of leaves which block the drains; then it'll be really slippery to cycle over, especially on corners, and it'll be completely flooded.

ii. Data covers July 2022–June 2023.

iii. Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered.

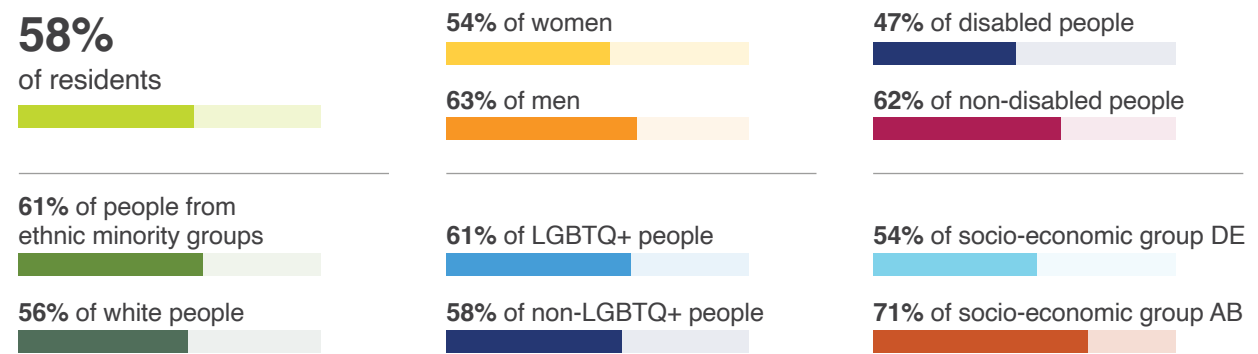


Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

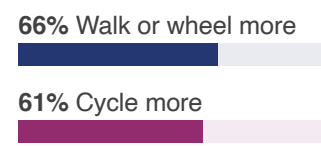
Proportion of residents that feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood



The dominance of motor vehicles can discourage walking, wheeling and cycling

Only **32%** of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:

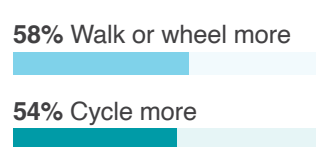


Unclassified roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in Birmingham **33%** of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.ⁱ

50% agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place.

11% of Birmingham's streets have 20mph speed limits.ⁱⁱ

Residents would find more streets with 20mph speed limits useful to:



Residents want local streets to be better spaces for people to spend time in

61% agree increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

47% agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

57% support low-traffic neighbourhoods

i. Based on analysis by CycleStreets www.lowtrafficneighbourhoods.org. Unclassified roads are all public roads that are neither motorways, A, B nor C roads. ii. Excludes motorways.



Evan



Originally I'm from Dallas, Texas; I moved here a few years ago. I'm a barber; my shop is Queens Avenue Barber in Kings Heath. By offering 10% off to any customers who get here without a car, I thought it would be a nice small incentive that makes people feel appreciated for walking, cycling or getting the bus. One customer and his son walked here; he gave the pound off his son's haircut to his son – if kids get into the habit when they're young, there's no need to relearn when they're older.

Last year, after getting back from the Netherlands with my Dutch wife, I thought I'll try getting back on my bike; I hadn't ridden in decades. It took a little while getting used to it, but my commute went from about 40 minutes on the bus (the inconsistency was incredibly annoying) to 20 minutes cycling. It boils down to that cycling needs to be made an attractive option.

An issue here is navigating around bad driving and parking, like on pavements or near crossings; there's a lack of enforcement. I think shared-use pavements are great for walking, wheeling and cycling, but not when cars are parked on them – it shows selfishness and a lack of compassion for people who need to use it.

Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Increasing independence, providing space to play and socialise, and improving the journey to school are all important.

If we design neighbourhoods with children in mind they will then work better for everyone else too.

12 years old

average age when people living with children would let them walk, wheel or cycle independently in their neighbourhood.

80% of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school.ⁱⁱⁱ

48% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play



43% of households are within 400m of a children's playground

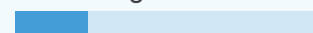


Among Birmingham residents:

50% agree



24% disagree



closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

These are known as 'School Streets'.

12 schools

in Birmingham have School Streets schemes^{iv}



iii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. iv. Figure given is correct as of 31 May 2023.



Developing Birmingham

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

A lot has happened over the last two years, including the UK leaving the final stages of COVID restrictions, Birmingham playing host city to the incredible 2022 Commonwealth Games, a cost of living crisis and an ever sharper focus on the impact of climate change and the need to drastically cut carbon emissions.

In this time we have begun to see the patterns of post-COVID travel and, sadly a return of traffic congestion to urban streets. It is therefore especially important to continue investing in sustainable modes of transport, and especially of low cost, active travel. The Birmingham Transport Plan was adopted in October 2021 and sets out a bold vision for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere network in which safe and healthy environments will make walking and cycling the first choice for people making short journeys.

Especially important to delivering this vision are improving active travel in local neighbourhoods and reallocating road space. The transport plan sets targets to reallocate a third of the city's road space away from general traffic to more sustainable modes, and to have a third of neighbourhood streets under low traffic conditions, where dedicated cycling facilities are not needed.

In addition to investment through Active Travel England, we have been pleased to allocate income from the Clean Air Zone to a number of future projects, including development of our cycle network, providing citizens with more free bikes, reducing speed limits and delivering more school streets initiatives.



The Birmingham Transport Plan was adopted in October 2021 and sets out a bold vision for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere network in which safe and healthy environments will make walking and cycling the first choice for people making short journeys.



School Streets

In late 2023 Birmingham boasts 20 car free school streets (including 8 that are being made permanent or are on trial), where the road outside a school is closed to motor vehicles at the start and end of the school day. This means that over 7000 children and their carers arrive at school in a healthier and safer space.

Cycle Route Extensions

We continue to expand Birmingham's network of segregated cycle routes. These are really important facilities for the 63% of residents who say they would be helped to cycle by physically separated tracks alongside roads.

In the north of the city, the A34 cycle route has been extended though Perry Barr local centre to the redeveloped station and One Stop shopping centre.

In the south, a spur off the A38 cycle route links to Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Cannon Hill Park and the popular Rea Valley cycle route, part of National Cycle Network Route 5. This work also improved safety for cyclists and pedestrians at the junction of Pershore Road and Priory Road, a location which had historically not had dedicated crossing facilities due to outdated policies which prioritised the movement of motor vehicles.

To the west, a major scheme on Dudley Road is ongoing and has already delivered parts of the planned segregated cycle route which will link the city centre with the current City Hospital site and the Birmingham Canal.

Space for Pedestrians

We are determined to reclaim space from motor vehicles and to deliver Healthy Streets where people want to spend time and to walk, wheel and cycle.

Following successful trials during COVID, footways have been permanently widened in Sutton Coldfield. The same will be completed in King's Heath in 2024.

The prohibition of motor vehicles on York Road in Kings Heath remains the most popular aspect of the Places for People scheme. Hospitality venues now offer outdoor seating for customers and several events have taken place in the space, including a new monthly Artisan Market.



Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

The Birmingham Transport Plan, adopted in 2021, sets out a bold vision for transport in Birmingham, responding to the needs of a growing population and an ambitious target to reach net zero carbon by 2030, or as soon as is possible with a just transition.

The vision for Birmingham's transport is to have a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere network.

Safe and healthy environments will make walking, cycling and active travel the first choice for people making short journeys.

A fully integrated, high-quality public transport system will be the go-to choice for longer trips.

A smart, innovative, carbon neutral and low emission network will support sustainable and inclusive economic success, tackle the climate emergency, and promote the health and well-being of Birmingham's citizens.

Walking, wheeling and cycling play a crucial role in delivering this vision: people need essential amenities close to their home and welcoming streets on which active travel feels natural and comfortable.

To deliver these safe and friendly streets, we are planning to use the Healthy Streetsⁱ approach, designing streets on a human scale, where cars are guests and people are the primary users. In particular, significantly reducing traffic on neighbourhood streets will provide space to walk and cycle without needing to segregate cyclists from motor vehicles.

On main route corridors the focus will be on re-allocation of road space away from private motor vehicles. In some cases, this will mean segregated cycle routes alongside bus lanes and general traffic, while in others cycling routes on quieter streets will be preferable.

We continue to develop new projects and routes to deliver our Walking and Cycling Strategy.



The vision for Birmingham's transport is to have a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere network.

Safe and healthy environments will make walking, cycling and active travel the first choice for people making short journeys.

Main route corridors

Development work is underway on schemes to deliver cycle routes on the A45 Coventry Road, and the A38 between Selly Oak and Longbridge. In the next two years, we expect to have progressed designs and be mobilising for construction.

City Centre

Work is ongoing to remove circulating traffic from the city centre while enhancing links for people walking and cycling and for public transport. We are also developing a programme of active travel connections in the city centre, while investing in the current, ongoing public realm work in Southside and around Victoria Square.

Major Neighbourhood Schemes

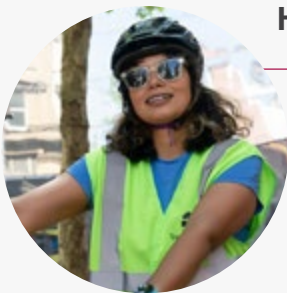
We will begin to deliver Healthy Streets in neighbourhoods, incorporating existing ideas to reduce traffic (including car free school streets) and increasing our ambition to create liveable and sustainably connected places for people.

Bike Hangars

We are preparing a trial of on-street bike hangars, providing cycle storage where people may not have room in their home to keep bike(s) securely. This should open the possibility of bike ownership to a wider range of citizens, particularly those living in flats and older terraced houses. Should the trial be a success, we will look to expand the project across the city.

Big Birmingham Bikes

Money generated by the Clean Air Zone is being used for another round of Big Birmingham Bikes, where free bikes, including adapted bikes and trikes, are provided for people who may not otherwise have been able to access a bike.



Humera



Cycling was never available to me as a child. My mum didn't cycle, my aunt didn't cycle, my nanny didn't cycle. So naturally I was never taught to cycle. Fast forward 25 years, and I decided I needed to learn to ride a bike. At the time, I was working at Sandwell Primary Care Trust, they told me about cycling lessons that were available. So I took the plunge and the teacher had me peddling for the very first time! I remember screaming all the way down the path. I don't think I'll ever forget that first feeling of just complete freedom. It was amazing.

I kept on with the lessons for a few weeks, but life got in the way. Fast forward another 12 years, and my two-year-old was learning to cycle. This spurred me on to get back on my bike, with the support of my husband, Mark. It took a while to build my confidence again, but after that I've just kept going.

Now I want to create a city where my little boy, Esa, can grow up safely. And where his first choice to get around the city is by walking, scooting, or cycling and not by jumping into a car.

Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2023 by independent social research organisation NatGen.

The survey is representative of all Birmingham residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

All other data is sourced from our city partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Sustrans.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Sustrans. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys travelled by journey purpose.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information and a detailed methodology are available at www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index

Sustrans makes it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

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