

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander
Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR

5 December 2025

Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy 3 (CWIS3)

Dear Secretary of State,

Active travel directly advances all five of the Government's missions — improving health, creating opportunity, delivering safer streets, driving economic growth and meeting our decarbonisation commitments. To realise this potential, the forthcoming Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy 3 (CWIS3) must move from good intentions to a clear, long-term, fully deliverable national plan comparable to other strategic transport programmes. Currently, CWIS3's proposed objectives, "ensuring people are safe to travel actively" and "ensuring people feel it is an easy choice", are open to interpretation and not measurable.

At its inception, the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was designed to be transformational. By moving away from stop-start funding to a long-term, national framework for ambition and funding, active travel would achieve a similar level of status to the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). CWIS3 represents an important opportunity to deliver on that original ambition, which has not been achieved in earlier Strategies.

Long-term, realistic and measurable milestones and targets

To put active travel, which makes up about a third of all journeys, on an equal footing with roads and rail, CWIS3 should include a comprehensive vision to 2050, with clear, measurable outputs and outcomes to 2030 - the period this CWIS covers. Other transport modes operate with predictable five-year cycles and transparent progress reporting; active travel can and should match that level of maturity.

Key national targets should include:

- a) By 2030, 50% of short journeys (less than 5 miles) in towns and cities should be walked, wheeled or cycled and 55% by 2035, as in the legally-binding Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (October 2025), supported by regular progress updates from local transport authorities.
- b) For 2030, an ambitious target to reduce the number of pedestrians and cyclists killed or seriously injured, aligned with the ambition of the forthcoming Road Safety Strategy.

Long-term targets, with interim reviews, will give local leaders the confidence to plan networks, support larger projects, unlock private sector investment and demonstrate how devolved investment and progress contribute to national missions.

An ambitious national plan for a 'Network-of-Networks'

Active habits can last a lifetime, and walking, wheeling and cycling in childhood can help reduce the risk of physical inactivity-related illness and obesity, while setting the scene for lifelong health. Without reliable, safe, joined-up routes to walk, wheel and cycle, people cannot reasonably be expected to travel actively - impacting health, opportunities and independence from childhood to older adulthood. England needs coordinated national leadership to turn local ambition in our towns, cities and rural areas into a connected whole.

In July 2025, 13 Metro Mayors backed plans for a National Network for walking, wheeling and cycling. Alongside the National Cycle Network and hundreds of local and strategic authorities' Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, there is now significant political momentum. CWIS3 should clearly bring these elements together, with established and emergent networks, by setting an objective for a genuine 'Network-of-Networks' that transcends boundaries.

Networks need to be designed and delivered by those who know their areas best, but they also need to be coherent, connected, consistent and accessible to all. A network-of-networks gets the best of devolution and national coordination. By the end of this Parliament, **CWIS3 should ensure a comprehensive plan for a national active travel network** that joins these disparate networks. It will be fully delivered by 2050, through a combination of devolved investment and national-level schemes, complete with interim milestones, including mileage targets every five years.

The strategy should commit to connecting the country's key trip attractors and public transport interchanges with measurable targets, including rail stations, bus and tram stops, ports, airports, hospitals, primary care sites, schools and leisure destinations. Active travel needs to become a seamless part of integrated journeys and will boost public transport usage.

The strategy should also make clear that new housing and major infrastructure projects must embed active travel from the outset, ensuring every home has safe access to green and blue space within a short walk, wheel or cycle. Above all, CWIS3 should commit to world-class, fully accessible standards, including routes built to LTN 1/20 and Inclusive Mobility best practice guidance.

By setting bold, measurable and achievable targets, backed by transparent reporting, CWIS3 can improve population health, increase access to nature, reduce air pollution, strengthen public transport and finally put England on course to a genuine national mission on active travel - one that delivers for every part of the country.

Yours sincerely,

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Living Streets

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The Bikeability Trust

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Emeritus Professor John Parkin
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Will Butler-Adams OBE, CEO, Brompton
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Pete Dyson, Doctoral Researcher, University
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Jon Dutton OBE, Chief Executive
British Cycling

Jemima Hartshorn, Founder Director
Mums for Lungs

Alice Ferguson, Co-founder, Playing Out

Sarah Mitchell, CEO, Cycling UK

Simon Blake OBE, CEO, Stonewall

Sarah Javaid, Founder, Cycle Sisters

Ben Plowden, Chief Executive, Campaign for
Better Transport

Nick Butler, Chief Operating Officer,
Modeshift

Karen Creavin, CEO, The Active Wellbeing
Society

Richard Dilks, Chief Executive, CoMoUK

Beccy Marston, West Midlands Active Travel
Commissioner

Jeremy Leach, Co-founder, Action Vision
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Professor Scarlett McNally, past-President
Medical Women's Federation

Tom Fyans, CEO, London Cycling Campaign

Ansaf Azhar and Darrell Gale, Healthy Places
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