

**Appendix L:  
Scrutiny Report  
Changing Gear: Transforming Urban Movement  
through Cycling and Walking in Birmingham**



**BIRMINGHAM  
CYCLE REVOLUTION**



**Birmingham City Council**





# Changing Gear

Transforming Urban Movement through  
Cycling and Walking in Birmingham



A report from Overview & Scrutiny







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# Preface

**By Cllr Victoria Quinn, Chair, Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee**



Birmingham sits at the very centre of national transport infrastructure and our city has provided much of the manufacturing means that has empowered many forms of transport in the UK for centuries.

Despite major challenges, Birmingham is once again in an important national driving seat for growth through our transport agenda as our city prepares for very significant new infrastructural change in terms of airport expansion, HS2, a new City Centre station gateway and improved metro connections. Key to delivering the potential of these opportunities will be our plans to set a strategy for sustainable urban mobility. Underpinning this must be a transformative ambition for getting around and connecting people to opportunities in our city. This must include a strong, cross party political commitment to modal shift and improving choice, affordability, safety and connectivity across the whole of our city for all of our citizens.

As the Committee began the work to inform this report, many doubted the credentials of our city to seriously address cycling. As other cities across the country embrace the post Olympic and Tour de France legacy for cycling, they seek to transform themselves into cycling cities. The volume of evidence received and degree of interest and enthusiasm expressed by witnesses to our Inquiry, demonstrated that the potential for cycling in Birmingham must be more than just a "bolt-on" to our transport ambitions. Cycling must sit at the very heart of our strategy for urban mobility and alongside consideration of walking and our canal infrastructure as a key to unlocking all of our city ambitions for leveraging economic growth, improved public health, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

I would like to thank Members of the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability Committee for their engagement in this Inquiry: Councillors R Alden, Davis, J Evans, Hartley, Hughes, Hussain, Huxtable, J Jones and O'Shea. Members also deserve thanks for considering getting on a bike themselves during this Inquiry.

The Committee received a staggering volume of evidence and level of engagement from witnesses throughout the Inquiry especially in relation to cycling. Guiding our work and focus through this agenda was the exceptional professionalism of Yvonne Gilligan of Sustrans, Professor David Cox of CTC, the national cycling charity and the team of committed cyclists from Push Bikes to whom the Committee owes particular thanks.

*Victoria Quinn*



# Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R01	<p>That a transformative ambition for movement is set out, which is responsive to the person, place, growth, health and cohesion objectives of the city.</p> <p>This must include an ambitious, target-driven strategy for improving cycling and walking in Birmingham detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lines of co-responsibility across directorates, portfolios and partners;</li> <li>• Milestones against which progress can be clearly measured and improvements driven;</li> <li>• Mechanisms to facilitate behaviour change;</li> <li>• Targets which are as, or more, ambitious than other core cities.</li> </ul> <p>This ambition should have the effect of putting cycling and walking on a par with cars and public transport movement in the city.</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	March 2014
R02	<p>That facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists are continuously improved and new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.</p> <p>This must include the user hierarchy (set out in Chapter 4) as the guiding principle to ensure appropriate design to enable the ambition set out in Recommendation 1.</p> <p>This requirement should be delivered through appropriate enforcement mechanisms and planning guidance, including the Birmingham Development Plan.</p>	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	March 2014





	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R03</b>	<p>That the Birmingham Urban Mobility Plan explicitly set out the role that the canal network can play in improving sustainable movement for pedestrians and for cyclists in and around the city; using the potential of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing blue and green corridors within the city as highlighted in the Green Living Spaces Plan;</li> <li>Regeneration ambitions, particularly around the Enterprise Zone and economic areas;</li> <li>Existing partnerships in the city.</li> </ul> <p>The Plan must also reference how barriers such as surfacing, safety, capacity and lighting of canals will be overcome.</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	March 2014
<b>R04</b>	<p>That the potential to improve digital connectivity in the city using Birmingham's canal network is explored, taking advantage of any regeneration or resurfacing projects.</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	October 2013
<b>R05</b>	<p>That a cycling champion is appointed from elected members, to ensure join up to promote and drive forward cycling ambitions across all portfolios and directorates.</p> <p>That s/he is supported by a senior officer, with capacity to work with all partners, to deliver the ambitions set out in this report.</p>	<p>Leader</p>	October 2013
<b>R06</b>	<p>That the terms of references for the Cycling and Pedestrian Task Force and Cycling Forum are examined, giving users a new consultative role to allow user led scrutiny of policies and applications from pedestrian and cycling perspectives.</p> <p>The Leader should consult on whether separate cycling and walking task forces would better serve both interests.</p> <p>The Task Force should be chaired by the cycling champion appointed under Recommendation 5.</p>	<p>Leader (in conjunction with the cycling champion)</p>	October 2013



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R07</b>	<p>That the Cabinet Member explore how local Councillors can engage more actively in canal management and improvements as part of the implementation of the Green Living Spaces Plan. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building in local representation on current strategic partnerships such as the West Midlands Regional Board, Canal and River Trust;</li> <li>• Ensuring local planning and democratic structures are made best use of.</li> </ul>	Cabinet Member, Green, Safe & Smart City	December 2013
<b>R08</b>	<p>That the public health programmes inherited by the City Council are analysed at early stage to drive and resource opportunities to develop cycling and walking dimensions within the urban mobility plan.</p> <p>A report on how these will be joined up should be reported to the Transport, Connectivity &amp; Sustainability O&amp;S Committee.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Health &amp; Wellbeing</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p>	October 2013
<b>R09</b>	<p>That the resourcing of cycling in schools is explored as a means of delivering the national curriculum physical education requirement.</p> <p>That Bikeability training is encouraged across all schools.</p> <p>That a target level of cycles is made available in schools.</p> <p>That bike building and maintenance options are explored as additional opportunities in schools and colleges.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Children &amp; Family Services</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Health &amp; Wellbeing</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	October 2013
<b>R10</b>	<p>That Birmingham adopts the Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance, and where possible exceeds them.</p> <p>That all relevant Highway and Transportation officers are appropriately trained (using Sustrans' "Better by Design" training programme, based on Manual for Streets 1 &amp; 2, LTN 2/08 and LTN 1/12).</p>	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	October 2013



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R11</b>	As part of Recommendation 3 above, land use and ownership along the canal network should be mapped to enable a full understanding of the asset and its stakeholders.	Leader  Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	March 2014
<b>R12</b>	That the City Centre is made safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, and that public transport hubs are connected by cycling and walking routes.  That existing cycle routes are assessed and improved to join up the cycle network around the city.  That there is a focus on improving cycling and walking within local centres and key economic areas (as listed in section 2.4 of this report).  An annual update report should be made to the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee, beginning April 2014.	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	April 2014
<b>R13</b>	That the Council's commitment to roll-out 20mph zones is linked to those areas highlighted in Recommendation 12 and their feeder routes, and that the city's 20mph zones are explicitly linked to our cycling and walking ambitions.	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	October 2013
<b>R14</b>	That there is a single, simplified, instantly recognisable map of cycle routes for the city.  This must use the knowledge of all partners. This should be developed and expanded in its level of detail using "app" technology.  This map should be consistent and of a very high design quality which helps mark out a Unique Selling Point for the city and its commitment to mobility.	Cabinet Member for Development, Jobs & Skills	April 2014



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R15</b>	<p>That access to cycling is improved through working with third sector and social enterprise organisations.</p> <p>That local councillors actively facilitate these links.</p> <p>That opportunities are explored to encourage start up manufacturing enterprise linked to cycling in Birmingham.</p> <p>This should be reported back through the revitalised Cycling and Walking Task Force.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Social Cohesion &amp; Equalities</p>	December 2013
<b>R16</b>	<p>Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Transport, Connectivity &amp; Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee no later than November 2013. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p>	November 2013



# Glossary

Organisation / Programme	Description
<b>Birmingham City Council</b>	<p>The City Council is the Planning Authority, Highway Authority, Traffic Authority, Street Works Authority, Technical Approval Authority and Land Drainage Authority for Birmingham.</p> <p>The last year has seen Districts given greater powers under devolution arrangements, with constitutional and structural changes.</p>
<b>Bikeability</b>	<p>Bikeability is 'cycling proficiency' for the 21st century, designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads.</p> <p>There are three Bikeability levels. A child will typically start Bikeability lessons once they have learnt to ride a bike, with 10-11 year olds progressing through to Level 2, and then Level 3 at secondary school (11-18 year olds).</p> <p>Bikeability was developed by more than 20 professional organisations including the Royal Society for Prevention against Accidents and is supported by cross-Government departments including the Department for Transport, Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families.</p> <p><a href="http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/">http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/</a></p>
<b>Birmingham Development Plan</b>	<p>The Birmingham Development Plan will set out the statutory planning framework to guide decisions on development and regeneration in Birmingham until 2031. The Plan will be formally adopted by the City Council in 2014.</p> <p><a href="http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/plan2031">www.birmingham.gov.uk/plan2031</a></p>
<b>Canal and River Trust</b>	<p>The Canal &amp; River Trust was created in July 2012 as the successor to British Waterways. They are one of the largest charities in the country, the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic inland waterways in England and Wales. They have responsibility for canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs – along with historic buildings, archives and three waterways museums, including the National Waterways Museum.</p> <p><a href="http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/">http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/</a></p>
<b>Centro</b>	<p>Centro is the Local Transport Authority (LTA) and works with Local Highway Authorities on modal shift and sustainable travel. This is primarily through providing public transport information, promoting public transport and supporting businesses, large trip generators and educational establishments implementing Travel Plans. Centro also promotes cycling, walking and car-sharing and their integration with public transport to facilitate a door-to-door approach for people's travel choices.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centro.org.uk/">http://www.centro.org.uk/</a></p>



Organisation / Programme	Description
<b>CTC, the national cycling charity</b>	<p>CTC, the national cycling charity, was founded in 1878. CTC has 70,000 members and supporters, provides a range of information and legal services to cyclists, organises cycling events, and represents the interests of cyclists and cycling on issues of public policy.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ctc.org.uk/">http://www.ctc.org.uk/</a></p>
<b>Cycle Chain</b>	<p>Cycle Chain is a social enterprise whose role is to deliver a service that has primarily learning and skills outcomes as well as transportation and environmental outcomes. Cycle Chain is concerned with the creation of sustainable and realistic employment for disadvantaged individuals, in particular those with a visual impairment and those recovering from mental health problems.</p> <p><a href="http://www.cyclechain.org/">http://www.cyclechain.org/</a></p>
<b>Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)</b>	<p>The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) was set up in October 2010 to help strengthen local economies, encourage economic development and enterprise, and improve skills across the region.</p> <p>The Partnership is formed of Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Redditch, Solihull, Tamworth and Wyre Forest. The Partnership is one of the largest in the country, encompassing a population of over two million people, and 840,000 jobs.</p> <p><a href="http://centreofenterprise.com">centreofenterprise.com</a></p>
<b>Green Commission</b>	<p>Birmingham City Council launched a Green Commission in 2012 to support the aspiration for Birmingham to become one of the world's leading green cities. Initial focus has been on reviewing the whole of Birmingham's carbon reduction targets. A vision statement was published in March 2013.</p> <p><a href="http://birminghamnewsroom.com/2013/03/green-commission-vision-statement-is-published/">http://birminghamnewsroom.com/2013/03/green-commission-vision-statement-is-published/</a></p>
<b>Green Living Spaces Plan</b>	<p>A Green Living Spaces Plan has been produced to help preserve and enhance the green spaces and networks across the city. This includes trees, woodlands, allotments, public open spaces, green roofs and walls, wetlands, canals and rivers. After recent consultation, work is on-going to finalise the plan.</p> <p><a href="http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/greenlivingspaces">http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/greenlivingspaces</a></p>
<b>Integrated Transport Authority (ITA)</b>	<p>The Integrated Transport Authority is responsible for all transport policies led through its role of coordinating the Local Transport Plan. In addition, the ITA promotes and improves public transport across the West Midlands Metropolitan Area. The ITA's policies are implemented by the Passenger Transport Executive (PTE). Both organisations are corporately known as Centro.</p>



Organisation / Programme	Description
<b>Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)</b>	<p>The Centro led Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme is the largest single resource currently available for walking and cycling in Birmingham (2012-15). The West Midlands secured £33.2m for Smart Network, Smarter Choices through LSTF, and this will be boosted by another £19m from local public and private sector contributions.</p> <p>The overall package of over £50m will deliver a range of sustainable transport initiatives and projects by March 2015.</p> <p>The project involves carrying out a wide range of sustainable travel schemes along key corridors in the West Midlands to help underpin economic growth, job creation and meet tough carbon reduction targets. Work will be aimed at improving public transport services, walking and cycling routes and the general flow of traffic. Schemes aimed at influencing people's travel behaviour, especially in favour of green choices for short trips, will also be carried out.</p>
<b>Marketing Birmingham</b>	<p>Marketing Birmingham, the city's strategic marketing partnership, operates the city's leisure and business tourism programmes - Visit and Meet Birmingham - as well as its inward investment programme, Business Birmingham.</p> <p><a href="http://www.marketingbirmingham.com/">http://www.marketingbirmingham.com/</a></p>
<b>Push Bikes</b>	<p>Push Bikes was set up in Birmingham in 1979. Push Bikes works with the Council where possible to put the case for good cycling infrastructure etc.</p> <p><a href="http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/">http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/</a></p>
<b>Sustrans</b>	<p>Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. Sustrans are a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys made every day. They work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sustrans.org.uk/">http://www.sustrans.org.uk/</a></p>
<b>Urban Cycles</b>	<p>In the last six months Urban Cycles have trained nearly 200 people (largely from Birmingham's most socially and economically deprived wards) to be safe confident cyclists. The courses have equipped local people with the tools required for a life of utility and recreational cycling.</p>
<b>West Midlands Local Transport Plan</b>	<p>The West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026 (LTP), Making the Connections, is a statutory document which looks at the transport needs of the Metropolitan Area and sets out a way forward to deliver those needs through short, medium and long term transport solutions.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centro.org.uk/LTP/LTP.aspx">http://www.centro.org.uk/LTP/LTP.aspx</a></p>







# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Review

- 1.1.1 One of the key priorities for the newly established Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been to consider how Birmingham, at the heart of the nation's transport infrastructure, can set an appropriate ambition which befits this status. For the Committee, this meant examining the challenge of improving connections and mobility for individuals within and between: neighbourhoods; places of and opportunities for work; and opportunities for leisure and health improvement. The challenge is to ensure a safe, welcoming and sustainable transport system with a choice of safe, affordable, quality transport options that would also support our visitor economy.
- 1.1.2 Council transport policy remits are evolving and there are considerable overlaps between many different levels of strategic governance (including the Integrated Transport Authority, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, the Council's strategic centre and its newly devolved District and Ward structure). The Committee therefore felt that one of the most effective ways in which it could contribute to shaping the Council's priorities involved a stock-take of work and initiatives already developed by new and former Cabinet Members and officers, and to consider these in light of the Policy Statement published by the Leader of the Council in June 2012. In this, it was undertaken to:
- Publish an Action Plan for Urban Mobility that will identify priorities for public and private investment in transport infrastructure in the city. We will ask the Government for the power to manage central government transport funds directly, so that Birmingham has the means for developing a sustainable urban transport network.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.1.3 The Committee perceived that there were a number of forms of transportation which would feature firmly within such a city action plan, but that requirements for walking, cycling and use of corridors that are not for motorised transport may not necessarily be afforded as significant a role as required within a fully "multi-modal" urban mobility strategy, or at least not at initial planning stages. This was why the Committee agreed a wide ranging terms of reference designed to be flexible and reactive to the multiplicity of different partners, the interconnectivity of funding streams and person and place considerations that would be involved in setting an Urban Mobility Action Plan. The Committee also sought to ensure that the opportunities presented by the new Council structure of cross-cutting Cabinet portfolios, Directorate responsibilities, devolved Districts

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<sup>1</sup> Leader's Policy Statement to the City Council, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012



and the Green and Smart Commissions were actively included through the terms of reference and evidence gathering process.

## 1.2 Birmingham's Urban Mobility Plan

- 1.2.1 Little detail of the ambition or structure of the Birmingham Urban Mobility Plan was available to the Committee before preparing this report. Nevertheless, the Committee understood that the plan will be inter-related to the forthcoming Birmingham Development Plan (due to be formally adopted by the City Council in 2014). Resulting changes to land use in terms of housing, and areas with opportunities for work, leisure, health and education, will bring significant pressures and opportunities for patterns of movement in, out and around the city.
- 1.2.2 These changes are likely to be assessed and a set of principles established within the Urban Mobility Plan to govern what we want our transport system to achieve in terms of connectivity, carbon reduction, fuel and energy prices, major infrastructural requirements, affordability and optimising health, educational and growth objectives. The Urban Mobility Plan will therefore have to set out the "layers" of existing transport provision and those which will have to be developed further in order to be responsive enough to the city's objectives for people, places, growth, health and cohesion. The result has the opportunity to set out a transformational map of how people, vehicles, growth and opportunity can be best moved in, out and around the city.

## 1.3 Cycling, Walking and Canals

- 1.3.1 As it was presumed that much of the work on urban mobility planning would focus on the higher volume modes of transport, such as cars and public transport, the Committee felt it was appropriate to open its evidence gathering with sessions focussing on cycling and canals. By looking at these areas the Committee set out to recognise the interconnectivity of cycling, walking and canals, in terms of a transport infrastructure that is capable of providing modern and creative responses to the challenges of sustainability, public health, social inclusion and economic growth. Addressing cycling also offered the Committee an opportunity to recognise the wave of commitment which other cities around the country and the Government are giving to cycling.
- 1.3.2 The Committee's call for evidence received a staggering level of response, interest and feedback, especially in relation to cycling. This only underlined our need to ensure that this report examined cycling in detail. As work commenced however, it became evident that recognition was also required of pedestrians with different needs (e.g. buggies, scooters, those with partial sight) and pavements; "*green corridors*" (e.g. network of parks and green spaces) as well as "*blue corridors*" (e.g. network of canals, rivers, reservoirs); drivers and freight considerations. Although it was with regret that we were unable to speak to motoring organisations as part of our work the Committee feels that, such was the interest in our sessions, we would expect this to be a step in improving



the reputation for dialogue and engagement between the City Council and all partners, existing and potential, involved in walking, cycling and using canals in our city.

- 1.3.3 Therefore, while this Committee's first report on urban mobility has a clear focus on cycling, walking and the canal network, we are committed to ensuring appropriate follow up work developing aspects around road safety, shared use and infrastructural requirements within our response to the urban mobility proposals later this year.

## 1.4 Conducting the Inquiry

- 1.4.1 We invited a number of people and organisations from across the city to send us their views on the role that cycling and canals can and should play in meeting the mobility needs of people and businesses in Birmingham. Public meetings were held between October 2012 and January 2013, supplemented by written evidence. The key lines of enquiry discussed were:

- Cycling
  - How can we encourage cycling in the city that is efficient, safe and practical, encouraging connectivity between areas and more sustainable urban mobility?
  - What are the barriers to this? Which partners can help us to do this and what resources do we need?
- Canals
  - How can we fully exploit canals as transport networks and economic assets?
  - How can we encourage use of canals to maximise the health and leisure benefits?
  - What are the barriers to these? Which partners can help us to do this and what resources do we need?
  - How can the community and local businesses/organisations be more involved in looking after canals?

- 1.4.2 The Committee is very grateful to all those individuals, organisations and enterprises who gave their time, ideas, creativity and enthusiasm to support us in this Inquiry. The volume, detail, frankness and passion of exchange indicated the importance of the public interface with the Council's policy development and accountability mechanisms that Birmingham City Council's Overview and Scrutiny process offers. Many who attended our evidence gathering sessions to present or to listen, felt it necessary to demonstrate this to the Committee by applauding our evidence gathering sessions at their conclusion. The Committee seeks here to return the applause in recognition of the evidence and engagement which we received. A full list of contributors is set out in Appendix 1.

- 1.4.3 Such was the range and depth of issues presented and explored in evidence gathering sessions and submissions, in the interests of focus, this report has deliberately not sought to attempt to



capture it all in one single document. The evidence we received can however be consulted in our "evidence pack" which is available on our website ([www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny)).



## 2 Cycling, Walking and Canals

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Committee believes that there has never been a better time, with better incentives, to improve the cycling and walking offer in this city. There is a wealth of evidence of the multiplicity of benefits that can be levered up by having a better ambition for, and more joined-up thinking in regard to the way we use, develop and maintain our existing corridors for cycling and walking throughout the city.
- 2.1.2 This chapter briefly summarises this evidence and sets it within a context which the Committee was alarmed to find to be the pervasive, current attitude of decision makers in Birmingham: that, despite acknowledgement of walking and cycling and their infrastructural potential, cycling and walking sat as a “bolt-on” in terms of behavioural and financial commitment compared to the importance and priority given to other vehicular and public modes of transport within the city’s transportation strategy.
- 2.1.3 In many respects, because of Birmingham’s geographic position at the heart of national road and rail infrastructure and because of our legacy as the motor manufacturing hub of the country, it is understandable that the transport agenda in Birmingham has been dominated by road, the car and rail. With new large scale national and international opportunities for transportation in terms of airport expansion, HS2, New Street Gateway and the metro extension, this focus continues. This chapter seeks to set out why the Committee believes cycling and walking are conterminus with these agendas and ambitions, both for our citizens and for our economy, and should be given equal weighting to road and rail within our transport strategy.

### 2.2 Who Cycles?

#### The National Picture

- 2.2.1 The national cycling charity CTC provided data from the National Travel Survey on cycling:
- Nationally cycling has increased by around 20% over the last 10 years. However most of that increase has been amongst adults, with an overall decline in child cycling, amongst whom there has been a substantial fall in cycling over the last few decades.
- 2.2.2 Further figures from Friends of the Earth indicate that cycling on the road in the UK has (using a three year rolling average), increased by 12% over the last 10 years and last year alone 40 million



more journeys were taken by bicycle than in 2011.<sup>2</sup> Other indicators demonstrating the rise in cycling included an increase in the membership of British Cycling, rising to 33,000, with an increase of 16% in the past 12 months and the highest level of membership since the organisation formed in 1959. CTC, the largest cycling membership organisation in the country, founded in 1878, is experiencing a membership boom, the likes of which has been unknown since its previous peak in the pre-car era at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, as a country, despite these rising trends, Britain still lags behind countries with similar weather, population density and geography in terms of the percentage of trips for which a bicycle is used:

- Holland – 27% of trips, 848 km per person per year;
- Denmark – 19%, 936 km pp/year;
- Germany – 10%, 291 km pp/year;
- UK – 2%, 75 km pp/year.<sup>3</sup>

2.2.3 Evidence from a range of sources suggests that the average cyclist in the UK is aged 25-44, white and with an above average income. Sustrans notes that there are a disproportionately *“higher number of cyclists among ‘professional and managerial’ and ‘routine and manual’ occupations, than among those in ‘intermediate’ occupations”*,<sup>4</sup> indicating definite trends in social and economic exclusion amongst core groups which becomes all the more apparent in terms of ethnic profiles of those who are cycling. Further research conducted in 2008 demonstrated that cycling levels amongst black and minority ethnic groups tended to be significantly lower than rates amongst all other groups: amongst Asian men and women, cycling is under 5% (ranging from between 5% for Pakistani men to 0% for Bangladeshi women), an alarming statement of social exclusion in access to choice in transportation, when compared to figures of 16% amongst men and 8% for women across all ethnicities in the UK population.<sup>5</sup>

## Cycling in Birmingham

2.2.4 In 2011, the City Council produced a report on Cycling Trends in Birmingham, based on analysis conducted by Sustrans. This showed an increase in cyclists counted in key locations across Birmingham over time. Data recorded demonstrated that:

- Counts of cyclists across eight locations in the city increased by 73% compared to levels in 2003;
- The rate of growth in cycling has been more rapid between 2008 and 2011 than in all previous years – on average, the daily count of cyclists increasing by 11% per year during 2008 – 2011,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/article3448897.ece> Cited by Friends of the Earth in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E07

<sup>3</sup> <http://cyclinginfo.co.uk/blog/2636/cycling/stats-uk/> Cited by Friends of the Earth op.cit.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts07-car-ownership-and-access>

<sup>5</sup> Bowles Green Ltd. 2008. Engaging Ethnic Minority Communities in Cycling – Consultants’ Report. Cited by CTC in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E02



compared to 7% per year in previous periods. However the Committee noted that this rate of increases is still slow and rates are small;

- The number of cyclists counted each day ranges, on average, from around 25 to 260, with the greatest numbers being counted on the popular Rea Valley route.<sup>6</sup>

2.2.5 The Committee heard that, although there is a rising trend in cycling, cycling in Birmingham still only accounts for 1% of commuter trips and less than 3% of all trips. Whilst trip rates are generally low across all core cities (see Table 1 below), some of Birmingham's key comparator cities are reporting significant large increases. For example, in Manchester, whilst cycling levels stand at a relatively modest 2% of journeys in the city as a whole and 3.24% for trips to work, cycling into the regional centre has gone up by 59% since the base year of 2005.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 1: Cycling in the Core Cities (source: DfT, provided by Sustrans)**

Local Authority	Sample size	Cycle at least (%)				95% Confidence Intervals			
		1 x per month	1 x per week	3 x per week	5 x per week	1 x per month	1 x per week	3 x per week	5 x per week
Birmingham	593	11	7	3	2	-2.6 , +3.3	-2.0 , +2.7	-1.3 , +2.2	-1.0 , +1.8
Newcastle upon Tyne	503	12	7	3	1	-3.2 , +4.1	-2.4 , +3.5	-1.4 , +2.6	-0.7 , +1.9
Manchester	503	13	7	3	2	-3.6 , +4.8	-2.6 , +3.9	-1.6 , +3.0	-1.0 , +2.6
Liverpool	2,501	11	7	3	2	-1.4 , +1.6	-1.1 , +1.3	-0.8 , +1.0	-0.6 , +0.8
Sheffield	496	10	6	3	2	-2.9 , +3.9	-2.2 , +3.3	-1.3 , +2.4	-0.9 , +2.1
Leeds	504	11	7	3	2	-3.0 , +3.9	-2.3 , +3.3	-1.5 , +2.6	-0.9 , +2.0
Nottingham	537	13	8	3	2	-3.3 , +4.2	-2.5 , +3.5	-1.4 , +2.5	-1.0 , +2.1
Bristol, City of	500	24	14	10	9	-4.4 , +5.1	-3.5 , +4.4	-2.9 , +3.9	-2.7 , +3.7

Source DfT, Sustrans presentation

2.2.6 The Active People Survey 2012 also demonstrates the increased national trend towards cycling, but here again, the West Midlands lags behind other regions with one of lowest levels of regular cycling (3.7%) and only 2% of commuter trips in the West Midlands as a whole being made by bike. Moreover, whilst indicators demonstrate that cycling amongst individuals with disabilities is increasing at very encouraging levels,<sup>8</sup> there is also alarming evidence that participation in cycling among Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations in the region is in decline.

<sup>6</sup> Sustrans in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E01

<sup>7</sup> Manchester City Council and Salford City Council Cycle Centre Proposals, Cycling England, October 2009

<sup>8</sup> Karen Creavin, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Birmingham City Council in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E10.





2.2.7 Perhaps most alarmingly of all however, within overall Birmingham statistics are the rates of cycling to school in the city which are significantly lower than rates across England as a whole. In Birmingham, only 0.4% of primary school pupils cycle to school compared to 1% of pupils across England. While marginally more secondary school pupils cycle to school in Birmingham, at a rate of 0.6% this is even more alarming in terms of its comparative rate amongst all pupils across England of 3%. Critically, despite hearing evidence from policy makers and deliverers in terms of initiatives put in place between 2007-2010 to improve the uptake of cycling to school, the Committee was left incredulous at the fact that over the course of this period, overall levels of pupils cycling to school remained at a staggeringly low 0.4%. The Committee noted that by improving uptake of cycling in this core group alone, it could be possible to exponentially improve numbers of people cycling within the city and may be one of the easiest of all groups to access and engage.

## 2.3 Modal Shift

The city's road system is congested and there is a need to promote greater use of public transport, cycling and walking.<sup>9</sup>

2.3.1 This quote from the draft Birmingham Development Plan, the city's key planning document, recognises the role that cycling and walking can play in reducing congestion and sits with the fact that the majority of journeys to work made in the city are currently made by car. Whilst we know from 2001 Census data that almost two thirds of journeys to work in Birmingham were made by car compared to under 2% by bicycle, and 7.57% on foot, there is very little signal from ONS data in 2011 that this pattern has changed much in the last ten years (see box opposite).<sup>10</sup>

2.3.2 Projecting future public transport use is core to achieving improvements in modal shift. The 2011 Census data (see overleaf) shows that nine out of the ten local authorities with the largest percentile point decrease in public transport use, also saw an above average increase in the percentage of people driving to work. This indicates that modal shift away from public transport does not mean users of public transport are walking or cycling instead. It is of note here that Bristol was the only local authority within the top ten which bucked this trend and saw a decrease in use of public transport and increasing rates of cycling and walking.

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<sup>9</sup> Birmingham Development Plan, draft, page 17

<sup>10</sup> 2011 Census Analysis - Method of Travel to Work in England and Wales Report, Office for National Statistics, 13 February 2013.





## Data from 2011 Census on Travel to Work

Compared with the 2001 Census, the most significant trends for England and Wales in the 2011 Census were:

1. A slight fall in the percentage of commuters driving to work: 55.2 % (2001) to 54.2% (2011). This coincides with a decrease in the proportion commuting to work as passengers in cars or vans: 6.3% (2001) to 5.0% (2011). However, driving to work was still the most common form of commuting in England and Wales (57.5% of the working population).
2. A slight increase in the percentage of commuters to work by public transport: 15.0% (2001) to 16.4% (2011). The proportions of people commuting by train and light rail increased between 2001 and 2011 but there was a slight decrease in the proportion of workers commuting by bus or coach.
3. The City of London topped the list of local authorities with the greatest proportion of commuters who walked to work in 2011 (45.8%). While it does not have a large resident population, the City of London does have a large number of workers. It is likely, therefore, that many of the borough's inhabitants work nearby.
4. The proportion of commuters cycling to work stayed roughly constant at 2.8%. The highest rates amongst local authorities in 2011 were: Cambridge 28.9% and Oxford 17%.
5. Data available for Birmingham showed that whilst cycling and walking increased by 0.7%, so did driving, with bus and coach travel falling by 3.3%. In contrast to Bristol as the best performing comparative Core City, cycling and walking has increased by 5.8%.
6. Figures specifically relating to adults aged 16-74, in employment, who usually travel to their main work location by bicycle, show that Birmingham has now fallen behind other core cities – see below.

### Percentage of residents aged 16 – 74 in employment who usually travel to their main work location by bicycle

Core City	2001 census	2011 Census	Relative change (%)
Bristol	4.58	7.50	64
Manchester	3.24	3.94	22
Nottingham	3.67	3.39	-8
Newcastle upon Tyne	1.75	2.67	53
Liverpool	1.73	2.00	15
Leeds	1.30	1.74	34
Sheffield	1.08	1.68	56
Birmingham	1.40	1.44	3

Source: 2011 Census Analysis - Method of Travel to Work in England and Wales Report, Office for National Statistics, 13 February 2013; and Sustrans evidence to this Inquiry



## Achieving Modal Shift

2.3.3 There is significant evidence to show that modal shift can be achieved in major cities. Sustrans provided evidence in their report *Cycling in the City Regions*, which addresses the potential for increasing cycling in English conurbations:

Close to 50% of all metropolitan trips are of less than 5km and could be made within 20 minutes by an average cyclist. Yet, at present, more than half of all such journeys are made by car. Lower average operating speeds for motorised traffic, chronic congestion levels, high population densities, high parking charges and the substantial cost of alternative interventions all mean that cycling measures could be both highly cost effective and deliver substantial change in travel behaviour across the city regions.<sup>11</sup>

2.3.4 Sustrans' evidence suggests that three in every ten car journeys could potentially be shifted to cycling, walking and public transport without significant infrastructure changes or restrictions to car use and that the greatest potential for changing travel behaviour lies in increasing cycling as a safe, speedy and economically more viable alternative for nearly one in three local car journeys.

2.3.5 When thinking about journey times and distances in terms of different kinds of trip generators, figures like these reveal how different modes of transport correspond to different kinds of trips, and how cycling is a core part of improving multi-modal offers within transport planning.

2.3.6 Re-thinking connections and connectivity in transport design is also core to modal shift and facilitating cycling as a viable option, for example by including the possibility for effective and safe bike storage, showers and hire points at different transport hubs and within rail and bus stations. Modal shift is not a concept which can be addressed only in terms of thinking about complete journeys, or even trip distances, but crucially must include behavioural responsiveness and consider how people can be better encouraged and facilitated into accessing different modes of transport. This is about a step change which recognises the viability of walking and cycling as inter-changeable with public transport and the car.

2.3.7 The Committee received evidence which demonstrates that there are a wide range of practical and inexpensive interventions which have been proven to increase cycling levels, and there is a growing body of evidence on the most effective of these approaches to modal shift notably from the Department for Transport funded Sustainable Travel Towns (STT) and Cycling Demonstration Towns (CDT) programmes.

2.3.8 In the STTs, car driver trips per resident fell by 9% between 2004 and 2008, whilst cycle trips increased by 26-30% with an investment of about £5.65 per person per year in 'smarter choices' to enable such interventions. In the CDTs, over a comparative period cycling levels increased by

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/rmu/110411\\_Cycling\\_in\\_the\\_city\\_regions\\_Sustrans\\_PTEG\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/rmu/110411_Cycling_in_the_city_regions_Sustrans_PTEG_report_final.pdf)



27% to 2009. Of note is that when the programme initiatives were combined in Darlington, cycling rates more than doubled.<sup>12</sup>

2.3.9 In terms of inter-relationships with addressing local authority objectives, reducing congestion is not the only justification for improving participation in cycling. There is substantial research to underpin the sustainability gains which are to be made nationally from encouraging a shift in private transportation from cars to cycling:

The report *Cycling Revolution* calculated that ... if all journeys made on the network last year had been made by car, an additional 760,363 tonnes of carbon dioxide would have been emitted at a cost of £40 million to the economy.<sup>13</sup>

2.3.10 The potential for modal shift extends beyond commuter cycling. The Committee received evidence from *Cycle4U* which operates courier and distribution services in Birmingham using walking and cycling as the only means of transport. They are a founding member of the European Cycle Logistics Federation and their example represents one of the most creative and forward thinking economic advantages of encouraging step change into modal shift.<sup>14</sup>

2.3.11 The advantages to education and social cohesion were similarly flagged up to the Committee in evidence which shows the benefits and potential of encouraging children and young people to take up cycling. Sustrans told us that, nationally:

48% of children *want to* cycle to school, but nationally only 2% do.

2.3.12 Sustrans told us that the percentage of children aged between 5 and 10 cycling to school is 11% fewer than in 1995, and the concern that numbers of children being driven the average 1.5 miles to primary school, is increasing each year. We have already noted the comparatively low numbers of children cycling to school in Birmingham (see section 2.2).

2.3.13 Evidence relating to children, young people and cycling demonstrates that there could be potentially no greater singular win than through actively directing schools and colleges towards strategies into driving the uptake of cycling. With one of the youngest populations amongst all core cities, this represents one of the most significant 'wins' in any potential encouragement of behavioural change to encouraging modal shift.

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<sup>12</sup> Sustrans in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E01

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/article3448897.ece> "Cost-effectiveness of Bicycle Infrastructure and Promotion to Increase Physical Activity – The Example of Portland" by Thomas Gotschi, PhD

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cycle4u.co.uk/> - Cycle4u are a bicycle courier service operating in Birmingham



## 2.4 The Economic Case

2.4.1 The economic case for driving modal shift through improving rates of cycling has a number of strands. In part this concerns cost:benefit ratios for cycling schemes, but it also relates to viable economic opportunities that are inherent in driving major increases in cycling and in making better use of Birmingham's canal infrastructure.

### Cost:Benefit of Cycling Schemes

2.4.2 The cost:benefit advantages of encouraging small scale cycling and walking projects were emphasised throughout the Committee's evidence gathering. Cost benefit ratios for this sits at around 1:20, far higher than larger public transport schemes. While there are obvious resource implications in a step change improvement of cycling and walking infrastructure across the city, benefits are likely to be far greater than for other larger modal scale projects.<sup>15</sup> Push Bikes cited the following evidence to underpin this assertion:

- Evaluations commissioned by Cycling England showed that investment in cycling produces very high returns. A study of both urban and rural situations found that £10,000 invested in cycling needs to generate just one extra cyclist over a 30-year period for the monetised benefits to equal the costs;
- Benefit to cost ratio (BCR): Government guidance on the evaluation of major projects says that a 'medium' value-for-money project will have a BCR of between 1.5 and 2, and a 'high' value-for money project a BCR of at least 2. An estimation of returns on the investment in the six first CDTs suggests a BCR of between 2.6 to 3.5 (over 10 years, in terms of reduced mortality, decongestion, reduced absenteeism, amenity and road casualties). A case study of cycle training in London funded by Transport for London found that the overall BCR was 7.44, which is very high indeed. London Cycling Network has calculated a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 3.94.<sup>16</sup>

### Supporting Growth

2.4.3 The Government has stated that it sees more and safer cycling strategies as important tools for cities to unlock a range of cross cutting economic and social benefits to enable growth. These benefits include:

- a. Unlocking capacity on road and public transport networks through large scale shifts to more active commuting patterns;
- b. Better linked communities enabling more choice for getting around within and between neighbourhoods;

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<sup>15</sup> CTC in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E02

<sup>16</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03



- c. Higher productivity through improved fitness and consequently reduced absenteeism and better workforce performance;
- d. Improved public realm capable of attracting high value business;
- e. Direct savings to NHS through better health;
- f. Better access to jobs for disadvantaged groups;
- g. Revitalising streets through encouraging more spending on high value services and retail through improved access by foot or bike;
- h. Magnifying within city agglomeration benefits;
- i. Creation of new social enterprises and businesses to create new services in support for more cycling.<sup>17</sup>

2.4.4 Our evidence gathering drew out a number of these arguments, particularly around the opportunities for cycling, walking and canals to drive tourism and enterprise.

### **A 'Liveable City'**

2.4.5 The Committee received evidence to support the view that increased participation in cycling creates more 'liveable cities', strengthening an economic case for using cycling to help develop Birmingham as an attractive place to live and work. While the benefits of increased cycling was obvious in relation to the effects of reduced air and noise pollution, this evidence also signalled the importance of less, slower and safer traffic, and the effect this has in generating more pleasant streets and more reliable journey times.

To city authorities mainstreaming cycling and walking offers a cost effective way to relieve congestion and improve the quality of life within the city.<sup>18</sup>

### **Tourism**

2.4.6 Evidence provided to the Committee by Marketing Birmingham, the Birmingham Canal Navigation Society and Friends of the Earth highlighted the importance of exploiting the potential role canals play in attracting people to Birmingham – whether as destinations and attractions in their own right, or because of the unique infrastructure upon which a wide range of leisure businesses are dependent. The canal network already makes a significant contribution to Birmingham's visitor economy, evidenced by the most recent Birmingham visitor survey which demonstrates that the canals are one of the top attractions and also generate the highest satisfaction rating of all city attractions (4.7 out of a maximum of 5).<sup>19</sup> There may consequently be good potential here for

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<sup>17</sup> City Deals - Guidance on Applications for Cycle City Ambition Grants, Department for Transport, February 2013

<sup>18</sup> City Deals - Guidance on Applications for Cycle City Ambition Grants, Department for Transport, February 2013

<sup>19</sup> Marketing Birmingham in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E09



connecting the offer and desirability of our canals to a new approach to urban transport planning and encouraging modal shift through improved facilities for walking and cycling alongside them.

- 2.4.7 The Committee heard of similar opportunities to drive tourism through cycling and how across the country cycle tourism, which has always enjoyed a significant history, is presently seeing significant rises in growth and popularity. Research from the European Cycling Federation demonstrates that cycling is a significant source of business opportunity. In Birmingham, with more strategic and better connected use of the “*green corridors*” of park and green space and the “*blue corridors*” of canals and waterways linking different villages that have made up the city, we have a number of unique gateways through the city and into much appreciated cycling countryside in Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire. Local lanes and cafes in these areas already see large numbers of half and full day rides, whether amongst groups of friends, organised clubs or individual riders which all help to strengthen local economies. The Committee heard evidence of how mass rides like the annual charity MacRide from Stratford and the recent Stourbridge Ride 4 Diabetes have helped attract significantly larger numbers of visitors.<sup>20</sup>
- 2.4.8 Marketing Birmingham are aware of the potential of connecting Birmingham to these links and are actively interested in working with small businesses which seek to launch cycle hire, particularly aimed at visitors into the city which might be seamlessly integrated into the city’s wider tourism and visitor promotion.

## Enterprise

- 2.4.9 The potential of developing the enterprise opportunities for ‘backing the bike’ in Birmingham was made all the more obvious to the Committee from hearing about the history of the West Midlands as a centre for cycle and cycle part manufacture. The “*first recognisably modern bicycle*” was manufactured in Coventry<sup>21</sup>, and by 1900 Birmingham had the largest number of bicycle and bicycle accessory manufacturing firms in the UK.<sup>22</sup> The now internationally desirable Pashley Cycle was founded over 80 years ago in Birmingham, manufacturing some of the first bikes in the UK and now based in Stratford-upon-Avon. Brooks, the world renowned manufacturer of saddles, at the highest end of cycling, is a firm based in Smethwick. Brompton bike wheels are assembled in the West Midlands (one of the UK’s biggest cycle exports). Reynolds, the major UK recognised manufacturer of high quality steel, carbon fibre and titanium tubing for bikes is based in Birmingham’s Hall Green Ward.
- 2.4.10 Red Kite Cycles, based in Birmingham gave evidence regarding the opportunities they believe exist within the city to generate private enterprise from initiatives that focus on bike manufacture, making use of our region’s historic association with both manufacturing and the bicycle. In particular Red Kite Cycles highlighted their experience that there was a real market opportunity for

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<sup>20</sup> CTC in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E02

<sup>21</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicycle>

<sup>22</sup> <http://oldbike.wordpress.com/8-bicycles-manufactured-in-birmingham/>





the city to back an ambition to build bikes in Birmingham. They indicated how this practice is being looked at elsewhere in the UK and described how Portland in Oregon (U.S.) recently experienced major economic renewal because of its city commitment to incubating bicycle manufacturers. The organisation emphasised how they believed that stimulating private enterprise around the bicycle could forge markets, drive demand and infrastructural change and they also stressed how they believed that post-16 educational modules including bike building and related aspects of design, marketing and maintenance had the potential to create cycle manufacturing enterprise, address skills gaps and help get young people into cycling.

- 2.4.11 Evidence received by the Committee indicates that bike retail is booming. Sales of cycles grew by more than 15% in 2010-11 and across the country people have been spending exponentially more on bikes than cars, where comparative spending has fallen in this same period.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.4.12 Witnesses giving evidence to the Committee were quick to support the notion of setting up Bicycle-Friendly Business Districts to encourage the use of bicycles in the daily running of businesses, and make use of the city's manufacturing associations with cycling as well as attracting cyclists of all levels and types of interest through special offers and services as a means of encouraging the business community to support the shift to cycling.
- 2.4.13 The Committee also heard evidence about the growing number of innovative voluntary and social enterprise programmes that are growing up around cycling in Birmingham. An example of this include the highly creative, Cycle Chain's refurbishment workshop located on the City Centre canalside, linking both cycling and canals as opportunities. The organisation provides cheap refurbished bicycles sourced from Household Recycling Centres and the Police and offering skills development, in particular for people with learning disabilities.
- 2.4.14 The Committee also heard evidence supporting the interest for Birmingham in giving more consideration to the link between cycling and the wider economic potential of using the city's extensive canal network.
- 2.4.15 Enabling the canal network to provide optimum opportunities to incentivise shift towards sustainable travel options between new developments of housing and work is quite obvious within the example of the City Centre Enterprise Zone. Here, for example, a number of already well recognised housing, and innovation hub sites have canal frontages, such as Eastside Locks, Aston Science Park, Newhall Square, Warwick Bar, Typhoo Wharf and Arena Central and there remains potential to join these up into a bigger City Centre offer. The Committee heard the extent to which Birmingham has already been recognised internationally for the Brindley Place development which 20 years ago, recognised the value of using and enabling canal side development to lever growth and create desirability of place. Re-thinking and joining up patches of already developed canal side renovation into larger and more viable stretches of "*blue corridor*" presents a real opportunity for additionality into new areas of growth that could bring greater desirability for housing, leisure and

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<sup>23</sup> Friends of the Earth in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E07



workplace investors alike when presented in a joined up offer. This fact has recently been recognised within the Icknield Port Loop development, as the potential for creating desirable walking and cycling connections into Brindley Place and the centre of Birmingham were built into early design stages.

2.4.16 Almost all of Birmingham's newly proposed Economic Zones are located within close proximity to these canal networks:

- The Advanced Manufacturing Hub at the Aston Regional Investment Site is close to the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal;
- The Tyseley Environmental Enterprise District is adjacent to the Grand Union Canal;
- The Life Sciences Campus at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and University of Birmingham in Edgbaston are adjacent to the Worcester and Birmingham Canal;
- Longbridge ITEC Park is close to Cofton Reservoir and Upper Bittell Reservoir.

2.4.17 When re-thinking the potential of canals as part of improved modal shift and opportunities for driving the uptake of cycling and walking in the city, the Committee also considered evidence for joining this up with other infrastructural opportunities arising in the city. This included the improvements in digital infrastructure and connectivity. Digital connectivity in the city, with the capacity for high speed optical fibre telecoms and broadband could sit within canal towpath re-development and cabling laid beneath them. This is current practice to some extent, but crucially offers a real opportunity for exploiting connectivity potentials within the development of Birmingham's 'Digital Districts' infrastructure because the canals network runs through the Jewellery Quarter and Digbeth areas, which are set to be amongst the first of the city's new Digital Districts.

## 2.5 Transport Poverty and Social Inclusion

2.5.1 There is no official definition of 'transport poverty' yet, but a recent report from Sustrans recognised that it is a daily reality for millions of people across England:

Our transport planning system penalises people who cannot afford a car, who struggle to cover rising public transport fares and who lack access to public or private transport because of age, disability or where they live.<sup>24</sup>

2.5.2 The difficulties of being able to move from home to access work, to interact socially, to gain opportunities for learning or developing is transport poverty and can be seen as one of the most malevolent forms in its capacity to disenfranchise and dis-engage people within place. Encouraging step change to facilitate more and safer opportunities for cycling and so alleviating transport

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<sup>24</sup> Locked Out: Transport Poverty in England, Sustrans, September 2012





poverty has to some extent been recognised most recently by the Department for Transport in its Cycle City Ambition Grant. The application pack acknowledges:

Across the OECD ambitions for cycling are growing to move cycling to the mainstream offering it as a realistic choice for quick, reliable and convenient short journeys within cities. At a time of levelling or even slowing real per capita incomes, rising real costs of motoring and public transport mean there are strong financial incentives to cycle.<sup>25</sup>

- 2.5.3 Making cycling an easier, safer and viable choice of movement for people between places can release multiple social, economic and health benefits. Over a third (35.8%) of Birmingham's population do not have a car or van in their household<sup>26</sup>. These figures for Birmingham contrast starkly with the 25.8% national average of households without access to a car.
- 2.5.4 The potential for the rate of transport poverty to rise becomes very apparent when considered alongside the trend of other national figures which demonstrate that rail fares have increased 15% in real terms in the past ten years to 2011, and bus and coach fares by 19%. Running a motor vehicle has become ever more expensive for the majority of car owners with vehicle maintenance rising in the same period by 25%, petrol and oil prices by 30% and tax and insurance by 43% relative to RPI. Although the initial cost of purchasing a vehicle has fallen in this time by 41%, the other costs are clearly a major disincentive.
- 2.5.5 For those without access, or unable to run a second car, or for those who are struggling with ever rising petrol costs, better, safer cycling can offers a choice and provide accessibility that otherwise may not be possible.
- 2.5.6 Recent work undertaken as part of the Social Inclusion Process in Birmingham, led by the Bishop of Birmingham, underlined the fact that transport poverty is a significant and growing issue for Birmingham where there are over 408,000 people living in some the most deprived households in the country.

For many in the city, public transport is too expensive, meaning that residents often can't afford to connect with the rest of the city, even if this is where education and employment opportunities are based.<sup>27</sup>

- 2.5.7 The report identified the cost of public transport as prohibitive to some families, resulting in a feeling of lack of connection and feeling of isolation from the city centre. His observations included the recognition that this has:

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<sup>25</sup> City Deals - Guidance on Applications for Cycle City Ambition Grants, Department for Transport, February 2013

<sup>26</sup> Census 2011, Office for National Statistics

<sup>27</sup> Giving Hope Changing Lives, Birmingham Social Inclusion Process, Green Paper, October 2012



... translated into a feeling that the opportunities being developed in the City Centre and other areas of Birmingham are not for them. It has led in some cases to resentment about inner city communities, manifesting itself in feelings of ‘us against the rest’.

- 2.5.8 The Social Inclusion Commission recommended that, as part of a targeted reduction in the cost and access to safe transport, more safe cycling routes should be established, to improve the mobility of people in particular parts of the city to accept jobs.
- 2.5.9 This supported other evidence the Committee heard regarding the importance of sourcing low cost recycled bikes from social enterprises and creating an improved network of safe cycle routes. These could help bring the city’s diverse neighbourhoods closer together, engender greater identification with the City Centre and build familiarity and belonging with near, but unexplored surroundings. Cycling is also a cheap and practical way of getting to casual, part-time work; it can work for unsocial hours of work, low paid work and to balance multiple jobs. It could be encouraged as part of work programmes and apprenticeship schemes. CTC, the national cycling charity, told the Committee about the example of cycling in the London Borough of Hackney, which has shown that cycling can assist the mobility of *“generation rent”* young people, helping to drive growth.<sup>28</sup>
- 2.5.10 One example of this is Centro's WorkWise scheme, which in addition to supporting unemployed people with public transport tickets and journey planning to find, start and stay in work, will also offer tailored cycling support (including bike loans/hire, training, route planning and cycle buddying) to unemployed people from April 2013.

## 2.6 Health Benefits

- 2.6.1 Cycling is an ideal low-impact form of exercise which allows anyone, at whatever level of fitness, to build-up gently fitness levels and improve health and wellbeing. Building cardio-vascular fitness through exercise is more effective at reducing risk of death than losing weight through dieting and the health benefits of cycling greatly out-weigh the risks of injury from cycling. Utility cycling – to work, shopping, visiting friends – is one of the easiest ways to build exercise into daily routines.<sup>29</sup>
- 2.6.2 The Committee was provided with a great deal of evidence demonstrating how cycling regularly, can improve physical and mental health. As well as helping the individual, this has obvious effects on working to reduce health costs and contribute towards key public health outcomes.

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<sup>28</sup> CTC in evidence to this Inquiry (“Generation rent” reference explained at <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/politics/2013/01/introducing-generation-rent>)

<sup>29</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03



2.6.3 Whilst there is limited evidence on the cost:benefits specifically attributed to cycling and health, the Department of Health suggests that physical activity interventions generally cost around £20-£440 per Quality Added Life Year. Other studies show or suggest positive links:

- Research from Finland provides strong evidence that journeys to and from work by cycling provide sufficient intensity to improve health and fitness;
- A UK study shows that compared to someone sedentary, a person cycling 4 days per week would have significant impact on reducing obesity;
- Cycling can address absenteeism: the UK leads the number of sick days taken each year in Europe, costing £170 billion;
- Evidence indicates that regular physical activity reduces the risk of all cause mortality, coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, some cancers and depression, as well as bringing many positive benefits for psychological health and well being;
- An analysis of the cost-benefit analysis for investments in bicycling by a US city showed that relatively modest investments of \$137 million in bicycling will produce health care cost savings of \$470 million by the year 2040.<sup>30</sup>

2.6.4 Evidence submitted to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cycling took evidence from health and transport specialist, Dr Adrian Davis, who said: *“For every £1 pound spent on cycling initiatives they can generally return up to £4 in saved costs to the NHS and value to the economy. The health benefits of cycling outweigh the risks by 20 to one.”*<sup>31</sup>

2.6.5 Nationally the health benefits of cycling and walking have been recognised by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, with their publication of guidance to set out how people can be encouraged to increase the amount they walk or cycle for travel or recreation purposes.<sup>32</sup> It suggested that *“effective support”* from local authorities play a key role in increasing the rate of cycling and walking.

2.6.6 Most recently, the Department for Transport Cycle City Ambition Grant application pack also notes the importance of linking cycling and walking with health:

At times when all OECD countries are facing declining levels of physical activity together with a range of public health impacts, influenced in part by car dependency and sedentary lifestyles, support for mainstreaming walking and cycling is growing. The transfer of public health to local authorities in England from April provides a significant opportunity to improve integration of transport

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<sup>30</sup> “Cost-effectiveness of Bicycle Infrastructure and Promotion to Increase Physical Activity - The Example of Portland” by Thomas Gotschi, PhD, cited by Friends of the Earth – E04

<sup>31</sup> <http://allpartcycling.org/news/>

<sup>32</sup> Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation, NICE, November 2012



and health. There is a growing need to work across organisational boundaries to promote personal and public health and reduce the costs of physical inactivity, particularly among older people and women.<sup>33</sup>

2.6.7 Within Birmingham these links are also apparent: for example in the draft Birmingham Development Plan, where in SP51 it is recognised that:

Obesity has been identified as a particular health issue in Birmingham and there are particularly high levels of childhood obesity in some areas. While this issue cannot be addressed through planning policies alone, the provision of an environment which encourages people to take exercise, for example by walking and cycling, can help reduce the incidence of obesity.

2.6.8 The context of Birmingham's health situation underlines the seriousness of this challenge for the city. We have 1.1 million people where life expectancy at birth is lower than the national average<sup>34</sup> and the latest surveys show only 20% of the adult population participate in sport or any form of active recreation in Birmingham.<sup>35</sup> Such alarmingly low levels of physical inactivity are known to be the fourth leading risk factor for mortality<sup>36</sup> and nationally, this is costing the NHS an estimated £1.06 billion per year.<sup>37</sup>

2.6.9 A recent report on Public Health in the city, by the Director of Public Health, was submitted to the Health and Social Care O&S Committee in January 2013 and this provided a stark warning that:

- Obesity rates in children are rising year on year. The national programme measures children in Reception (aged 4 – 5) and Year 6 (aged 10 – 11);
- Currently the rate of clinical obesity in Reception aged children is currently 11%, but just 5 years later, in Year 6, amongst 10-11 year olds, this is almost double, rising to 24.4%;
- This is now one of the highest rates in the country and the rate of acceleration in obesity between Reception and Year 6 is greater than many other places in the country.
- It should be noted that obesity and overweight combined is over 40% in Year 6.

2.6.10 This problem is driven by an imbalance between dietary intake and calorific expenditure – or to put it bluntly, our children eat too much and are not active enough.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> City Deals - Guidance on Applications for Cycle City Ambition Grants, Department for Transport, February 2013

<sup>34</sup> Figures from 2007-2009: average age at death for males in England: 78.3 years, 76.4 years in Birmingham; for females 82.3 years in England and 81.9 years in Birmingham; cited by Karen Creavin, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Birmingham City Council in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E10

<sup>35</sup> Active People Survey, April 2010-April 2012; cited by Karen Creavin, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> WHO, 2010; cited by Karen Creavin, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> DofH, Let's get moving; cited by Karen Creavin, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Public Health in Birmingham, Public Health in Birmingham, Report of the Director of Public Health, to the Health and Social Care O&S Committee in January 2013



2.6.11 In evidence to this Committee, the Director of Public Health noted that the scale of this problem is such that interventions to mitigate this trend must be universal and best started in early childhood where encouraging exercise through cycling and walking for children could be a core factor in helping to drive this trend down.

2.6.12 The potential health and wellbeing benefits from improving rates of cycling amongst these key age groups in Birmingham cannot be indicated more forcefully than through comparison of data in Table 2 below with the data we have on levels of children's cycling we have already seen in section 2.2 above: that only 0.4% of primary school pupils and 0.6% of cycle secondary school pupils to school in Birmingham compared to 1% of pupils across England.

**Table 2: Public Health Outcomes Framework for Birmingham**

Indicator	Local Number	Local Value	England Avg	England Worst	England Best	Birmingham position relative to England average
Road injuries and deaths 2008–10	1270	41.2	44.3	128.8	14.1	Significantly better than England average
Year R obesity rates 2010–11	1454	10.9	9.4	14.8	4.6	Significantly worse than England average
Year 6 obesity rates 2010–11	2788	23.3	19.0	26.3	10.3	Significantly worse than England average
Obesity rates in adults 2006–08 (estimated)	n/a	26.2	24.2	30.7	13.9	Significantly worse than England average
% of adults physically active	n/a	10.1	11.2	5.7	14.4	Not significantly different from England average



## 3 Cycling, Walking and Canals in Birmingham Today

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Committee's initial evidence gathering sessions focusing on cycling in Birmingham received a wealth of evidence about what it was like to cycle in Birmingham and how it compares with other cities. In the main, experience was drawn from two perspectives: that of users/cyclists and the perception of policy makers and deliverers (primarily Birmingham City Council and Centro).

3.1.2 This report has already set out the extent to which Birmingham is lagging behind many other cities of comparable size and prominence in levels of cycling. Exploring this, the parallel between this lag, the under-exploitation of the city's canal network and in-built infrastructural and design barriers to walking and cycling, became only too apparent.

3.1.3 The following chapter seeks to provide a summary of this, outlining views of users and activities which have been commenced with the intention of addressing such blockages and barriers to development. This includes consideration of:

- Physical Infrastructure: how to manage competing demands for space;
- Signage, mapping and wayfinding: to encourage people into cycling and walking for more journeys of all kinds;
- Cycle facilities: for improving the take up of cycling and walking as both a commuter and leisure option;
- How to encourage participation through culture and confidence: to address behaviour, attitudes and perceptions.

### 3.2 Physical Infrastructure

You can cycle throughout Birmingham but facilities and infrastructure are very mixed, of indifferent or poor quality, poorly maintained and not linked up. This is enough to discourage new cyclists, reluctant urban cyclists (who might be happy and confident touring in non urban settings or abroad) and visitors alike. Other cities like Bristol, Leicester, London and Manchester definitely “do” cycling much better. If they can, there is no reason why Birmingham can't. But actually Birmingham should be aiming to do it a lot better. Birmingham shouldn't just be



“Going Dutch” we should be Better than Dutch with our heritage of transport infrastructure.<sup>39</sup>

3.2.1 The majority of initial responses to the Committees call for evidence came from people who cycle regularly and one of their top concerns was the quality of cycling infrastructure and simple lack of thought for design in road infrastructure in Birmingham. Further concerns related to the importance of creating a network of cycle routes, the need to address the vulnerability of road users and particular issues around the use of towpaths for cycling.

### The Importance of Design

3.2.2 The lack of good, simple, logical design was cited as the single most critical of all aspects in the physical infrastructure amongst those giving evidence to the Committee. Design governs the interactions of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Design both permits and precludes accessibility to cycling and walking as a means of transport and lies at the centre of any ambition to encourage modal shift or intelligent, creative urban transport planning.

3.2.3 Evidence to the committee considered a number of different routes for cycling, including roads (on the carriageway or in cycle lanes), shared pavements and walkways, canal towpaths and dedicated cycle routes. In emphasising the importance of good design, more segregated bike lanes with well designed junctions were cited as the thing that would most help encourage cycling and keep those who cycle safer. Poorly designed cycle lanes were said to be *“worse than useless”*. Key elements in these design inadequacies within existing lanes, include:

- The amount of street furniture (poles and signs) on the cycle lanes;
- The number of stop/start junctions along the route;
- Lanes simply stopping with sometimes no drop kerb to get on/off the road;
- Lack of any thought provided to obvious conflicts for cyclists in terms of with parking spaces and crossing cycle lanes (for example where there are access roads or driveways);
- Width of the lanes (which was cited as being of importance because width is the core indication to drivers of vehicles of the amount of space to leave when overtaking a cyclist on the road).

3.2.4 Poor infrastructure and lack of thought in design was cited by some cyclists as being one of the main reasons for a number of cyclists feeling that it is simply easier and safer to ride on the pavement.

3.2.5 The quality of cycle lane surfaces is important and the Committee was assured by Amey in evidence gathering that the current BCC Highways contract with them includes infrastructure improvements for bicycles in the rolling highway repairs programme. However again, cyclists

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<sup>39</sup> Professor David Cox, CTC, submission to the Inquiry





indicated that these should not be to minimal standards but instead conceived to efficient and optimum designs. It was noted that there is no dedicated facility for cyclists to feed into Highways and Lighting upgrade programmes.

- 3.2.6 Junctions can prove particularly challenging for cycling and were repeatedly cited in evidence as presenting amongst the most considerable safety related risks, taking cyclists across the paths of motor vehicles. There were understandable calls to the Committee for more consistent and efficient options for cyclists at junctions, capable of improving conditions for both cyclists and motorists by enabling motorists to predict cyclist behaviour and helping cyclists to improve behaviour.
- 3.2.7 It was noted that retro-fitting existing roads is extremely difficult, and may be an in-effective use of scarce resources – the cyclist requires optimum design right from the start.
- 3.2.8 Physical infrastructure should be properly supported by enforcement and a number of cyclists indicated that illegal parking, speeding, use of phones and other activities which put all road and pavement users at risk, should be properly prosecuted.

## Sharing Road Space

- 3.2.9 The Committee received a strong message from witnesses that those in charge of our highways do not like to *“give up”* road space to cycle lanes.

Road space re-allocation is always a challenge as capacity for traffic is consistently the highest priority for engineers. Design of on-highway cycle route can be compromised by the need to keep the traffic moving at all cost. Re-allocating road space needs a robust stance to be taken by the highway authority and can work as high quality infrastructure that is visible, attractive and safe and will increase cycle journeys.<sup>40</sup>

- 3.2.10 Any idea of reducing a cyclists right to ride safely on the highway was widely felt by witnesses to be short sighted and unfair: with a few exceptions (like motorways) cyclists felt strongly that they have the right to ride on the entire road network. Furthermore, improving the numbers of people cycling safely on the highway network would improve congestion and road safety for all road users. Similarly, there was a strong view expressed by witnesses that *“the city can feel like it is designed for cars and not people”*.<sup>41</sup> For example, concern was expressed about the length of time that many pedestrian crossings provide to allow pedestrians to cross the road safely, and about ill thought out attempts by highway engineers to channel pedestrians around cars, rather than cars around natural pedestrian and cycle routes.

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<sup>40</sup> Sustrans in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E01

<sup>41</sup> Cllr Bedser, Cabinet Member, Health & Well-being, in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E10





- 3.2.11 This emphasised the requirement for improved prioritisation for cyclists and pedestrians in road design, and a re-balancing of inequalities in favour of the more vulnerable user of the highway.
- 3.2.12 Evidence received from City Council Highway Engineers in relation to these recommendations, reminded the Committee of the Council's statutory duty to *"keep the traffic moving"* and balance all traffic needs within finite space. The Committee observed that there seemed to be a perceived underlying assumption on the part of officers that to give cyclists more space would only increase congestion. However, above and beyond these concerns, Highway Engineers, cyclists and pedestrians all recognised the over-riding importance of facilitating behavioural change and achieving *"better balance"*.

### The Importance of a Network

- 3.2.13 The Committee heard evidence that the creation of a single dedicated (and inspiringly mapped – see section 3.3) cycle network across the city would considerably improve and encourage cycling and walking. Whilst the Committee received evidence of a number of excellent examples of dedicated cycle routes in Birmingham, it was apparent that there is often no join-up between routes. The degree of this disjoint was particularly evident from one map example received by the Committee detailing traffic free cycle routes published at [www.toptubemap.com](http://www.toptubemap.com).

### Addressing Vulnerability

- 3.2.14 A strikingly obvious yet often un-perceived factor which the Committee became aware of, through the evidence gathering process related to the vulnerability of both pedestrians and cyclists in the transport hierarchies and the concept of built-in transport inequalities between car, cycle and pedestrian that prevented vulnerabilities from being protected and addressed.
- 3.2.15 Our witnesses on walking round the city, felt that safe places to walk were being eroded. The Committee heard how pavements were being increasingly crossed by numbers of access points (side roads and dropped kerbs into private driveways) which exacerbate vulnerabilities and inequalities of movement. The Committee also heard concerns relating to continuing use of *"shared space"* where motor vehicles, cycles and walkers all use the same space and the degree to which this also encroaches on pedestrians' safety above all other "movers" and presents a particular concern for anyone with visual impairment.
- 3.2.16 Crossings are one of the measures which are used to assist and protect pedestrians and cyclists. Our discussions focused on the need to ensure the right sort of crossing (pelican, puffin, zebra etc) is chosen in each location. Failure to do so can result in pedestrians using crossing facilities wrongly or crossing the road in dangerous places, which is a common contributory factor relating to pedestrians involved in traffic accidents.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Road Safety Education Report 2011 / 2012, A Report of the Work Delivered By The Road Safety Education Team – see evidence pack E10



3.2.17 Improving road safety is one of the most important factors in improving the physical infrastructure to promote cycling. Cyclists' vulnerability comes from the fact that they are often forced to share space with motor traffic. The Committee heard extensively from witnesses that with the right physical infrastructure interventions, cycling is statistically no more dangerous than other forms of transport, yet, this is contrasted by a strong perception that that it is very dangerous. Push Bikes told that the Committee:

This fear has many roots: none more so than through the way cycling is presented in the media which confirms bias and really influences the way in cycling is perceived in terms of road conditions not being safe enough and this affects the decisions that potential cyclists and pedestrians make, not to get involved.<sup>43</sup>

3.2.18 The Committee received evidence of how people feel particularly afraid of cycling on main roads in busy traffic, and despite the statistics, we heard opinions such as:

The experience of large lumps of metal passing within 1 metre of you at a speed differential of 20 or 30mph is not pleasant. The distinction between the emotions of fear and aversion to unpleasant experiences is not easy to pin down. Presenting solutions to the fear of cycling is not an easy task, and needs to take into account the nuances of the multiple factors feeding into that emotion.<sup>44</sup>

There exists a very significant perception that cycling is not safe, that cyclists are unusually vulnerable and that their safety is not the concern for traffic or law enforcement officers.<sup>45</sup>

3.2.19 The Committee touched on the issue of 20mph in its evidence gathering, and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Support for 20mph zones came up time and again from a wide range of sources – including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled users of roads – as a crucial element of road safety for all road users. The Committee also noted that the provision of new cycling infrastructure must be subject to safety assessments both at a strategic level (e.g. risk assessing of policies to determine which types of infrastructure are preferable in safety terms) but also at individual project level (e.g. Road Safety Audits, Cycle Audits, Quality and Place Audits).

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<sup>43</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03

<sup>44</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03

<sup>45</sup> Urban Cycles in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E08



## Good Examples in Birmingham

3.2.20 Despite the number of concerns a number of our witnesses had, they were also keen to emphasise where the infrastructure works, it has had a positive impact on cycling in the city.

### South

3.2.21 The River Rea route is part of the National Cycle Network (NCN) route 5 that was completed over ten years ago and is now very well established as *the* major cycle commuter corridor in South Birmingham. The route is off-road and moves through Selly Oak, Kings Heath, Moseley and Balsall Heath. Cycle counters along this route in Canon Hill Park regularly record over 500 cyclists per day. This route is popular because it is safe, logical, and convenient and has plenty of linkages between areas with important local shopping centres and the city centre. The Committee heard, that with just minimal improvements in terms of road crossings, this route could be further improved as both a leisure and commuter route.

### South East

3.2.22 The Cole Valley route (NCN route 53) is currently under construction with completion set for February 2013. This is a joint project between the City Council and Sustrans, wherein Sustrans are contributing £350k to the overall £500k scheme through Birmingham's successful award of the DfT Linking Communities Fund. This project will provide 4.5km of new routes linking Stechford with Solihull's border at Babb's Mill.

### North

3.2.23 In 2008 Birmingham became a partner in the Sustrans national Connect2 programme, leading to the development of the North Birmingham walking and cycling route, including an investment of £350,000 from Big Lottery. In April 2011 Birmingham City Council bid to the Government's new Local Sustainable Transport Fund for Bike North Birmingham, building upon the foundations laid by the Connect2 programme. In July 2011 £4.1m was awarded for a four year programme of new cycle routes and supporting cycling activities aiming to take cycling to a new level and help improve the environment, the local economy and health and fitness in the process.<sup>46</sup>

3.2.24 The Bike North Birmingham initiative has been a flagship project in the city, achieving real behavioural change and increased take up of cycling.

### Centre

3.2.25 Improvements to the cycling within the City Centre have been the subject of a recent exercise by Adrian Lord, engaged by the City Council to see how cycling around Birmingham City Centre could be improved.

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<sup>46</sup> Bike North Birmingham – [www.birmingham.gov.uk/bikenorthbirmingham](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bikenorthbirmingham)



## Transport Hubs

3.2.26 Centro has worked closely with Birmingham City Council, London Midland and local neighbourhoods, to improve links with cycling and public transport. One example given to the Committee was the Kings Norton Station Travel Plan – one of the first such pilots in the country. This initiative is aimed at encouraging more local residents to use the station and increase the numbers of passengers travelling to the station by foot, bike, bus and car-sharing. The Committee heard how improvements have been made as part of this to local walking routes to the station, cycle parking, signage and way-finding, CCTV and lighting and about the introduction of car-share bays and real-time bus information as key parts of this.

## Towpaths for Walking and Cycling

3.2.27 Where the above sections have focused on highway infrastructure, the Committee recognised that waterways and towpaths play an important role in widening travel options for people to be able choose cycling and walking. The towpath network across Birmingham provides a motor vehicle free environment in which it is possible to travel to work, school or home. We were told that 100 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) are saved per every kilometre of towpath that is upgraded.

3.2.28 There are many parts of Birmingham's canal network that are well used by cyclists with several canals in Birmingham having parts of the National Cycle Network running along them. The City Council have recently installed cycle counting devices into the towpaths around Birmingham in order to monitor cycle use and the Committee heard how early results show that some canal locations have around 500 cycle trips per day indicating safe sites for developing the leisure cycle infrastructure further.

3.2.29 From this useful evidence submitted by the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT), the Committee heard how towpaths and sections of the Birmingham Canals infrastructure, can be used for:

- Commuting to and from many of the city's principle areas of work, schools, colleges and universities by either foot or bicycle. The Committee recognised here the close proximity of the canal network to many of the City's main university and hospital settings at City and Queen Elizabeth Hospitals and the unique health and transport opportunities for important populations that are key to Birmingham's future vitality and growth potential, when needing to access these areas which are well known large trip generators;
- Travelling to and from shops and other facilities. In the City Centre, many destination businesses and services, fronting the canal are heavily dependant on access from the canal towpath. The BBC, Ikon Gallery, Core Banking sectors as well as the bars and restaurants at the Mailbox and Brindley Place are examples of this;
- Using the canal for leisure purposes: the CRT and other organisations including the Ackers Trust have recognised the potential and interest which exists in facilitating the canals and their towpaths for angling, canoeing, walking and cycling, running, dog walking.



- 3.2.30 These potentials of the canal network notwithstanding, the Committee knows that there are considerable sections of canal that are poorly used and which are positively hostile areas within the city, because they are difficult to access, in states of disrepair, dark and people are both uninterested in using them and feel unsafe doing so.
- 3.2.31 Obstacles to effective canal development and use relating to accessibility partly stem from the historical use of canals when public access to the canal network was actively prevented. However, the Committee heard that new opportunities to open up access to the canals are nevertheless not always being taken by planners and developers when occasions present. Evidence was cited in this regard to the Committee in relation to recent plans for the re-development of sites in Selly Oak where accessibility to the Birmingham and Worcester Canal from the Selly Oak triangle site seems to have been overlooked.
- 3.2.32 Other obstacles were related to the Committee in terms of the general physical state of access points down to the canals and the towpath, for pedestrian, pedestrian with a buggy or disability, scooter user or cyclist alike. The Committee also heard concerns relating to the cleanliness of the water, extent of litter, fly-tipping and graffiti which preclude feelings of safety and are known challenges to rise to, as all too often canal sites sit within areas of unadopted land. The Committee heard how many witnesses felt that towpaths can be threatening places, and that even when they feel safe in daylight, this changes at night due to poor and inadequate lighting. Yet, with creative and joined-up thinking about development potentials along the canal, these perceptions can be overturned. By working to ensure new developments face the canal, this can facilitate *"natural surveillance"* and ensure the towpaths are physically overlooked, vegetation tended and surfaces maintained improving sightlines, providing generally more creative and inspiring access points to developments via towpath and canal. Significantly, the Committee heard how, by simply increasing the numbers of people using canals, perceptions of insecurity are decreased.
- 3.2.33 The Committee heard from policy makers and deliverers that many of these issues and concerns are taken into account when improvements to canals are made, though the opportunities for these are often too few. The Canal and River Trust outlined some examples of their current work which is addressing these matters in relation to:
- Selly Oak: hospital site and other development links to the canal;
  - Birmingham University station: improving access to the towpath;
  - Cycling along the canal: development of a safe culture of use of the towpath;
  - Heartlands Ring project: working with the local community.
- 3.2.34 Crucially however, in resource terms, the CRT relies almost entirely upon harnessing local volunteer capacity to activate change. Birmingham City Council does not have a specific remit or budget in relation to canals, nor, the Committee heard, does the City Council have a strategy for the overall canal network in the city. Involvement and improvement opportunities to date have



been piecemeal and only come with relevant planning applications relating to properties and sites adjacent to the canals.

### 3.3 Signage and Wayfinding

Most regular cyclists are used to finding convenient, fast and more enjoyable routes to cycle. Experienced cyclists can spot cut-throughs and routes that will make their journey more efficient. However someone who drives a car or takes public transport may have no awareness of alternative routes to the main roads between their home and their preferred destinations. They will not be aware of quieter back streets and off-road cycle routes that are more welcoming to novice cyclists. Where people do not have the ability to plan better routes, this can be a significant barrier to utility cycling.<sup>47</sup>

- 3.3.1 The Committee recognised that part of encouraging those who are less confident about cycling is to do with improving information about cycle routes, signage and co-ordinating the plethora of information which only generates confusion.
- 3.3.2 This was emphasised in particular by those involved in cycling at the universities in Birmingham. Students reported how hard it was to get around Birmingham, to explore the city and how to engage with it. For students, it was crucial for the image of city to be seen as cycle friendly.
- 3.3.3 The Committee heard and received evidence that there are many sources of information about cycling in Birmingham (Bike North Birmingham website, Sustrans, CTC (the national cycling charity), City Council, Centro, Canal and River Trust etc) but crucially there is no single “Birmingham” portal for information. Websites provide different levels of information and there is plenty of room to improve these and co-ordinate them. Indeed, of all information sources, the Committee found it necessary to particularly criticise the Birmingham City Council website in terms of providing cycle and transport information or links to it. Indeed, the comparison of the poverty of this offer shocked Committee Members when comparisons were drawn with offers of other cities. In contrast, the Bike North Birmingham website, another Council owned website, was praised as a very good and clear example of how to present this information.
- 3.3.4 The issues of maps and mapping were discussed, in both physical and digital forms. Wayfinding across the city and in particular for those entering unfamiliar neighbourhoods can be difficult. There were many suggestions made as to how maps and information/signage could be co-ordinated in a Birmingham specific transport brand.
- 3.3.5 The Committee was very encouraged to learn of one significant improvement that has been brought forward in regards to mapping, through the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and Google

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<sup>47</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03





corporate partnership (along with The People's Postcode Lottery and the Cooperative Bank). This joint project will enable people to find their local towpaths for the first time using the website Google Maps.

3.3.6 Furthermore, the potential of "apps", which people can use when out and about on web enabled mobile devices, was also discussed (and could even help harness revenue generation for the city). The technology exists, the talent and the need exists. The challenge, as explained to the Committee is simply about integrating with back end systems and using this to build intelligent plans that are able to evolve in real time as routes and use evolves.

3.3.7 The Committee noted that many people do not have internet access or ability to read maps and so signs for people to follow routes are extremely important:

Cycle routes are poorly signed and unlike car routes they use numbers and offer no other clear indication where they go. Current signage is inadequate and confusing. Cycle routes rarely connect with densely populated urban communities. Good route planning requires significant prior knowledge. Upon arriving at one's cycling destination knowledge of where to access safe locking facilities in places they are actually required is difficult to obtain and often impossible to access. The city council could assist by:

- i: Improving signage to clearly indicate destinations in both directions.
- ii: Improving the number of easily accessible cycle locking facilities.<sup>48</sup>

3.3.8 The Committee also heard from CRT that during the late 1980's and 1990's Birmingham City Council and British Waterways undertook an extensive programme of waymarking and distance marking across many of the principal canal access points in the City. Much of that signage is now in desperate need of upgrading, refurbishment or replacement and the font, used to indicate points and destinations needs review and to be made uniform.

## 3.4 Cycle Facilities

3.4.1 The third element of encouraging cycling in Birmingham is to address cycle facilities – in other words, the availability of secure parking, lockers, showers and changing facilities.

### Secure Parking

3.4.2 Secure and convenient bicycle parking is needed for cyclists both at home and at key transport hubs and shopping areas.

3.4.3 Centro stated in their evidence that they provide over 1,000 cycle parking spaces at train stations, Metro stops and bus stations across the Network West Midlands area and have invested over

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<sup>48</sup> Urban Cycles in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E05



£0.25m in improving cycle parking across their network. This year, in conjunction with rail companies, they plan to introduce more cycle parking facilities. They told the Committee how they ensure that all new cycle parking is well signposted, situated in a location accessible to cyclists, sheltered against the weather, and in an area of good natural surveillance and covered by CCTV to reduce the risk of cycle theft. Centro highlighted how they are developing two pilot Cycle Hubs at Selly Oak and Stourbridge Junction rail stations, which will provide secure, Smartcard accessed cycle storage, covered by CCTV and that these hubs will be installed in Spring 2013.<sup>49</sup>

3.4.4 In addition, in partnership with British Transport Police, Centro is working to reduce cycle crime at stations by implementing a range of initiatives including Cycle Surgeries, where passengers can have their bikes security marked free of charge, safe cycle parking posters, reduced price D-Lock offers and are offering a trackable decoy bike to deploy at stations where cycle theft is a problem. Results from this, to date indicate a positive reduction in cycle crime at stations, with a 32.7% reduction in cycle crime from April 2012 to June 2012 compared to the previous year.

3.4.5 The Committee was told how cycle parking is included in Birmingham City Council's parking policy.<sup>50</sup> This is an overarching strategic policy document, which sets out how parking management in the city should progress over the short to longer term and was developed taking account of current transport policy and related policy agendas. The strategy acknowledges:

Whilst cycling accounts for a relatively small percentage of journeys, the difficulty of finding a safe and secure place to park can often undermine measures to increase the take up of cycling.

3.4.6 This policy sets out a number of cycle specific actions including:

- The City Council will seek to ensure that appropriate and secure public and private cycle parking is provided to support cycling in the city;
- Provide public cycle parking which is appropriate and secure. In new developments this will be in accordance with the City's parking guidelines;
- Encourage transport operators, Centro/ITA and Network Rail to provide cycle parking facilities at transport hubs and rail stations;
- The City Council will facilitate better access by walking and cycling to all stations and the development of station travel plans.

3.4.7 Guidelines for cycle parking facilities, including minimum standards for the level of cycle parking to be provided in new developments, were adopted as part of the Car Parking Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) within Birmingham's Local Development Framework.

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<sup>49</sup> Evidence presented by Centro – see evidence pack E11

<sup>50</sup> [www.birmingham.gov.uk/parkingpolicy](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/parkingpolicy)





3.4.8 Yet, once again the Committee found it necessary to question both the lack of ambition and visibility of this policy as it is translated into practice. In evidence, the Committee heard from witnesses' examples where they believe the policy is being disregarded. On further investigation it transpired that the policy was used to emphasise best practice and act as a basis from which to engage with developers. It alone could not be used to determine planning applications and could not fetter a decision made by Planning Committee. As such, the Committee recognised the requirement this signalled for wider behavioural shift and awareness of cost-benefit potentials in assuring its application through all Council policy areas.

### Cycle Hubs

3.4.9 The Committee heard how several new developments in Birmingham City Centre are looking into the provision of 'Cycle hubs', offering a variety of services such as staffed, secure cycle parking, showering and changing facilities and basic bicycle maintenance. Yet, across the board, users giving evidence to the Committee signalled how many other cities do this better, more systematically and more creatively in ways that are not just responding to need but forging behavioural change. Birmingham has a lot to learn here.

3.4.10 In Manchester, Virgin Trains in partnership with Brompton Dock has recently launched a small-scale hire scheme at Piccadilly Station using 40 folding bikes. Northern Rail have secured funding from the DfT to offer cycle hire at a number of stations in the city.<sup>51</sup> Manchester has also opened its first-ever underground 'bike-park' in November 2012. The £500,000 facility has secure parking for 200 bikes as well as lockers, showers and a bike-repair shop. The underground bike-park will be open from 6am-8pm on weekdays and from 8am-5pm at weekends and bank holidays. It can be accessed by a swipe-card for a standard membership fee of £100 a year. That includes a guaranteed space and use of a locker. National cycle retailer Edinburgh Bicycle Co-operative will be based at the hub and will provide members and non-members with bike repair and servicing, maintenance training and a collection point for internet bike shopping.<sup>52</sup> Sheffield City Council is also proposing to install the Sheffield City Centre Bike Park. Nottingham has recently launched a cycle hire. Across Europe this has been common practice at highly cheap and accessible costs for as long as 20 years.

3.4.11 The Committee was also excited to learn that:

We [Centro] are seeking funding to implement a Brompton Dock pilot in Birmingham City Centre in 2013/14, which will provide a fully automated, sustainable cycle hire scheme that allows members to hire Brompton folding bikes. The dock will house 20 Brompton bikes within a secure locker facility accessed via mobile phone texting technology – enabling local residents,

<sup>51</sup> Manchester City Council Interim Strategy for Cycling 2012-13

<sup>52</sup> [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/underground-bike-park-to-open-as-part-801223](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/underground-bike-park-to-open-as-part-801223)



commuters and visitors to the City Centre to hire bikes for their journeys via a fast, flexible, convenient and secure system.

- 3.4.12 While exciting, once again the Committee was disappointed in the scale of this ambition, feeling that a mere 20 bikes was less than transformational in terms of offer and that the location of this pilot in terms of proximity to metro/ Moor Street / Snow Hill and New Street gateway developments would be crucial and needs to be joined up and aspirational in order not to be seen as another “bolt on”.
- 3.4.13 The plans for the re-developed New Street station appear similarly unambitious in terms of the volume of travelling public and potential for forging inter-operability of transport modes. Proposals include provision of 160 cycle parking spaces with improved lighting, security and accessibility. 40 of these spaces will open in April 2013 in the area off the Moor St bridge link and the remaining 120 will be provided in 2015 in the area off Stephenson St. The possibility of setting up a 'Cycle Point Hub' is being considered.

## 3.5 Encouraging Participation

Cycling is an unknown to many people – they do not have the skills to successfully integrate cycling into their lives. Because Birmingham has a low level of cycling, individuals do not always know someone who does cycle and can assist them with starting to cycle. This lack of knowledge can be a barrier in several ways.<sup>53</sup>

- 3.5.1 A lot of what we have described so far concerns how cycling and walking could be made more attractive to those who do not currently participate. However, our witnesses emphasised time and again that to really increase the numbers, people need to be positively encouraged to take up cycling. The key areas to address here are cost, training and the opportunities for group activities to increase confidence.
- 3.5.2 Bike North Birmingham (also mentioned in 3.2.23) is Birmingham’s biggest cycling participation project and was often quoted by our witnesses as an exemplar. It combines physical infrastructure changes with offering *“everything cyclists need to get bike smart and confident”*, including
- Free bike hire for individuals, families, friends, including free long term loans;
  - Free cycle training- from complete beginners to improvers;
  - Free led rides and cycling groups;
  - Free cycle maintenance classes;

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<sup>53</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03



- Grants for social enterprise;
  - Route planning.
- 3.5.3 The Bike Work team have delivered over 150 workplace events to over 1700 employees, focusing on recruiting new cyclists, whilst promoting healthier and more affordable journeys to work.
- 3.5.4 The Bike School team have worked with 18 schools in Sutton Coldfield and Erdington, including five secondary schools. Bike North Birmingham has funded £100k of new cycle storage at 14 schools and are issuing another round of funding at the time of writing. Amongst other activities, the team gave 32 assemblies to nearly 8500 children; provided 21 Dr Bike maintenance events, checking over 850 bikes; and held 25 bike rides with over 430 children and 60 adults (staff and parents).
- 3.5.5 The Bike Everyone programme included establishing two Bike Hubs (at Wyndley and Erdington Leisure Centres). Around 350 adults and families have taken part in leisure rides; 112 learners went through the Learn to Ride programme; and over 120 adults attended one of the cycle maintenance courses. The long term loan bike scheme has proved popular with over 100 bikes loaned out. There are now 15 volunteers trained to be ride leaders.<sup>54</sup>

## Training

- 3.5.6 The Committee received extensive evidence about the importance of training as a catalyst for cycling, to give confidence and make cyclists more assertive in using the traffic lanes, more definite in signalling intentions, much more aware of the traffic around them, and crucially, safer.
- 3.5.7 Push Bikes told the Committee that there is *"evidence that children who receive bicycle training at school are more likely to cycle as adults, and in the Netherlands all children receive cycle training and broader road safety training. Providing cycle training to all children is an important part of long term building of a broad (and safer) cycling culture"*.
- 3.5.8 In Committee discussions, there was considerable focus on the need to inspire and excite children and young people about bicycles. The Committee also learnt how cycling based educational projects are being used to re-engage children with school and learning, outside of simply thinking of cycling as a means of movement. Examples of this include opening up interests in mechanics, reconditioning bikes, coaching and above all, in the art of the possible and enabling space for discovery and adventure (including BMX and mountain biking).
- 3.5.9 Training available within school settings is critical to addressing participation:

The easiest time to reach large numbers of people with cycle training is when they are at school. On its own, cycle training will not create a mass cycling culture, but it is pivotal in creating a safer cycling culture... Currently not all schools and head teachers are keen to provide cycle training, so political

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<sup>54</sup> <http://bikenorth.birmingham.gov.uk/about-us/one-year-in/>



leadership by BCC is necessary to ensure the comprehensive provision of this vital service<sup>55</sup>

- 3.5.10 Bikeability<sup>56</sup> training for children is offered across Birmingham, but is not accessed by all schools. The Committee felt that Bikeability provision remained significantly under ambition in terms of targets to ensure cycles and training are available for all years, in all city schools.
- 3.5.11 Over the past year Sustrans staff, as part of the Bike North Birmingham School team have worked with 18 schools in Sutton Coldfield and Erdington, including five secondary schools. From January 2013, they told the Committee that they would begin work with an additional six schools and that new cycle storage (worth £100k) has been installed at 14 schools with another round of funding currently underway. While the Committee praised this work, it was felt that the project and provision remained significantly under ambition or target to ensure cycles and training are available for all years, in all city schools.
- 3.5.12 The Committee has noted the efforts to improve this which have been achieved through the Bike It project. The Bike It project is delivered by Sustrans and in Birmingham is funded by the Big Lottery, Health & Well Being Fund and the City Council. The aim of the project is to encourage as many children, parents and staff to cycle to school by understanding the barriers to cycling and offering as many practical solutions to overcome these barriers. It has been delivered in Birmingham for six years and there are now 22 Bike It schools across the City.
- 3.5.13 The Bike It programme in Birmingham is about creating a cycling culture in schools and it has been a great success. The excellent results demonstrate that it is possible to increase numbers of children walking and cycling to school, but again this should target all schools.
- 3.5.14 The Committee was informed by Council Officers that most, but notably not all, Birmingham schools have School Travel Plans (by 2010, 99% of Birmingham LEA schools had produced a travel plan), but the Committee was aware that there is considerable discrepancy in the utility of these plans, between different schools across the city. The primary reason for a travel plan is to encourage walking, cycling and public transport journeys to school. A regular review and update process is in place for all Birmingham school travel plans. However, a report to the former Transport, Environment & Regeneration O&S Committee highlighted questions around the resource implications of these plans, particularly given the withdrawal of Central Government funding for travel plan staff.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03

<sup>56</sup> Bikeability is 'cycling proficiency' for the 21st century, designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads. There are three Bikeability levels. A child will typically start Bikeability lessons once they have learnt to ride a bike, with 10-11 year olds progressing through to Level 2, and then Level 3 at secondary school (11-18 year olds). AT <http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/> (20th February 2013)

<sup>57</sup> Overview and Scrutiny Reports on Schools Expansion Programme - Response to Actions Relating to School Travel Plans; report to the Transport, Environment & Regeneration O&S Committee, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011



3.5.15 Bikeability training is also offered to some adults in Birmingham and is proving invaluable in reaching and motivating people who have never ridden a bike or have not developed their skills. It is equally being found just as useful and popular amongst relatively experienced cyclists who have never had any formal training or who have developed bad habits. Push Bikes, however, told the Committee that adults may be less likely to accept the need for cycle training and that some adults have commented that *“if they have to think about cycling, instead of just enjoying it, they won't do it”*. It may be that formal bicycle training may alienate some adults – in which case the Committee recognised the need for a multiple offer capable of responding to different needs in order to ensure people can be reached and encouraged into cycling, sometimes through non specifically cycle related activities, such as group rides or maintenance workshops, which include advice about riding skills as asides.

## Cost

3.5.16 Cost is really important and a significant barrier in getting children started and making bikes available within school settings. It was also heard by the Committee to be one of the major barriers to getting adults involved in cycling. One witness drew attention to the difference between prices for bikes for sale on the British and Dutch Halfords websites:

British cycle retailers survive by their profit margins on low-volume, high-value specialist bicycles. Dutch cycle retailers deal with high-volume, low-value utility bicycles. This is not a criticism of British cycle retailers – they sell to the British market. However the effect of this does impact the availability of cheap bicycles in the UK.<sup>58</sup>

3.5.17 Yet the Committee heard how cheap and affordable options into cycling are available, albeit that some witnesses expressed concern about the quality and durability of such cycles. It was pointed out that the cost of a cycle is relative, and about how much resource is ever needed in one go. Push Bikes told the Committee:

... bus tickets for one year cost a minimum of £576.00 for one year, while a second-hand bicycle plus accessories can cost as little as £200, and be used for many years. However a monthly direct debit of £48.00 for bus tickets may be easier to manage than spending £200 at one time on a bicycle, especially if the person is unsure of whether they will like cycling or not.

3.5.18 The Committee acknowledged the additional disincentive to cycle ownership of the additional costs incurred when bicycles are stolen – unlike bus passes, they are not replaced for free: *“Many people who have their bicycle stolen do not buy a new one – they just stop cycling”*.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03

<sup>59</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03



3.5.19 But above all, the Committee heard suggestions that making cheaper bicycles available could be facilitated through work with the charity and voluntary sectors. There are also real economic interests in driving uptake through bicycle retailers and potential for start up manufacturers. Push Bikes told us that there was definite and identifiable demand for incentivising these potentials, but the supply of old bicycles (generally either from private donations of unwanted bicycles or from police auctions of unclaimed bicycles) would not meet this demand alone. Push Bikes told the Committee:

It might be worthwhile investigating the economics of mass orders of cheap utility bicycles, with pre-orders put in through employers and educational institutions, to compensate for this problem with the British cycle market.<sup>60</sup>

3.5.20 Finally the option of Cycle to Work salary sacrifice schemes were promoted as a good way of enabling people to buy bicycles – whereby employees get in effect a loan from their employers which is paid back through their salary (not paying any tax and national insurance on the deduction, as it is taken from gross pay). Nationally, such schemes have been a significant factor in bike sales. The Committee heard how Birmingham City Council operates such a scheme for its employees, but was dismayed at how few people knew about it.

3.5.21 Pushbikes underlined to the Committee however that obstacles to cycling is not just about buying a bike:

From Push Bikes' experience this summer with Dr Bike, many bicycles are unused simply because of flat tyres. Other simple repairs that prevent people cycling are misaligned wheels and brakes, rusty or worn-out chains and seized-up cables.

3.5.22 The Committee learnt how these repairs are easy and low-cost to sort out, but un-economic for most bicycle shops to deal with:

As a consequence, the price that bicycle shops charge for these minor repairs (in order to make them economically viable) discourages people from having the repairs carried out. In a community with a high volume of cyclists, everyone would know someone who had the tools and capability to carry out these minor repairs. But at the moment those conditions do not exist in the UK.<sup>61</sup>

3.5.23 Push Bikes have offered provision of basic maintenance for bicycles through the “Dr Bike” sessions at leisure centres, which were very popular and they suggest that cycle retailers (who would benefit from the advertising opportunity and referrals for more complex repairs), voluntary and

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<sup>60</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03

<sup>61</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03





charity sector work with leisure centres, through any potential partnership for growth initiatives the City Council could inspire should be used to develop and encourage similar programmes.

3.5.24 The Committee was equally inspired by evidence from Birmingham Bike Foundry and Cycle Chain, who both offer refurbished bicycles. Cycle Chain's successes include:

- Bike North Birmingham project: where bikes have been provided at no cost to people on low incomes;
- Bike sales at Aston University over the last few years, which has significantly increased the amount of cycle journeys made by students to the University. This has led to Aston University's extensive provision of covered bike stands being used to their maximum capacity;
- Securing an additional supply of discarded bikes through the Re-use Centre that Jericho Foundation will be running at Norris Way Household Recycling Centre, an operation that could be replicated at each HRC in the city.
- The Cycle Chain Bike Boat, Carina (part funded by Centro's Transport Regeneration Fund) located at Cambrian Basin at the heart of Birmingham's canal network in the city centre, is the first cycle hub in what will be a network of cycle hubs around the city. In addition to creating learning opportunities for people with learning disabilities, recycling abandoned and donated bikes, Carina will be a place where cyclists can leave their bikes securely while they are in the city centre, get a repair done, or buy a bike.

## Cycle Hire Schemes

3.5.25 In response to a recurring suggestion for overcoming a number of the barriers to participation outlined above, the Committee did look into evidence from witnesses for a Birmingham specific bicycle hire scheme, like the Barclays Cycle Hire Scheme in London. There are similar schemes for medium-term cycle hire already in existence in many core cities and towns across the country, and indeed within Birmingham (as part of Bike North Birmingham and also in Castle Vale).

3.5.26 Manchester is looking at introducing a city-wide cycle hire scheme and have produced a blueprint document with British Cycling and working with Transport For Greater Manchester. The Liverpool City Cycle Hire Scheme was agreed by the City Council Cabinet on Friday 21 December.<sup>62</sup>

3.5.27 However, the Committee recognised early on, that there are crucial economic and sustainability considerations which are vital to any consideration of the viability of such schemes ahead of any consideration to roll out a dedicated city-cycle brand as the means to get a city cycling. An article in the Telegraph noted that Barclays Cycle Hire scheme in London, will:

... cost TfL £140 million over six years, yet generated only £323,545 in revenue from journeys in the first 96 days ... TfL estimated in October 2009 that the

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<sup>62</sup> [www.dalestreetnews.com/2012/12/13/city-gears-up-for-cycle-hire-scheme/](http://www.dalestreetnews.com/2012/12/13/city-gears-up-for-cycle-hire-scheme/)



scheme would “break even” within three years, based upon the assumption of £110 million revenue from journey and membership fees.<sup>63</sup>

3.5.28 In relation to the London scheme, the Committee noted that Barclays' sponsorship of the scheme, amounts to £25 million over five years but only accounts for 18% of the scheme's total cost.<sup>64</sup> It also received evidence of smaller initiatives in other local authorities where roll out has placed a real and unsustainable burden upon the local authority. Before Birmingham ever considered this option it would be crucial to have driven behavioural and infrastructural changes that would underpin the sustainability of such an initiative.

### Widening Participation

3.5.29 The Committee heard from a number of organisations working to encourage people to cycle from across the city, throughout evidence gathering. We have already reported the very successful Bike North Birmingham, and a further example is outlined at the end of this chapter (Handsworth Health and Well-Being Group). These projects underline the point that to get some people to cycle requires more focused efforts that goes beyond offering training

3.5.30 Other successful initiatives have been aimed at the “*non-typical*” cyclist including the Breeze Network, CTC's Cycle Champions and bike hubs provided as part of Be Active. These projects show that engagement and one to one support can really work. However, the crucial point, which the Committee recognised was not to assume a greater level of ability than exists, nor focus on those who already have some ability. To really increase cycling numbers, there should be credible, direct investment to support those who are training and building cycle confidence and safety and do so in a way that the offer is continuous, and sustainable.

Birmingham is a diverse city, and cyclists in Birmingham reflect that diversity. Push Bikes' experience with holding Dr Bike sessions this summer has been that there is an interest in cycling across all demographics in Birmingham – there is no typical cyclist in Birmingham. Given the right conditions, most people in Birmingham can be encouraged to cycle.

3.5.31 Other ways which were identified to the Committee to get people involved were to help local residents, or employees in businesses, set up Bicycle User Groups (BUGs).

3.5.32 Cycling clubs, which were until recently kept going by riders around retirement age or older (the graduates of the cycling booms of previous years), are now seeing a resurgence of activity. There are significant opportunities for mixing age ranges and skill sets with an influx of younger riders as

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/transport/8245610/London-bicycle-hire-scheme-in-uphill-struggle-to-make-money.html>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/transport/8245610/London-bicycle-hire-scheme-in-uphill-struggle-to-make-money.html>





the popularity of cycling and especially road cycling (as against mountain biking which boomed in the 1980s/90s) spreads. Media exposure and sporting success in the Olympics has been widely recognised as an important contributing factor in this trend across the country, and one which cities such as Birmingham cannot ignore.

3.5.33 Community cycling and structured interventions can help get more people cycling, and recent examples in Birmingham have included:

- *Skyride* and *Skyride local* (where local skyrides in Birmingham have proved more popular than in any other location – 10% higher). The event is organised in partnership by British Cycling and Birmingham City Council – Sport and Events Team, and is part of a small national series of events starting in Birmingham in 2010. The 2012 event attracted 20,000 cyclists to Birmingham and smaller led rides known as Sky Ride Local events take place throughout the summer. Losing this potential alongside other cultural sports and leisure pressures facing the Council in current budget pressures, would singularly undermine the momentum there is for achieving step change into cycling in the city.
- *Birmingham BMX Club* was completed May 2011 and is based in Perry Park. It is one of the biggest clubs in Europe. And the Committee noted its brilliant offer within the city in engaging young people into cycling. It currently has 60 members ranging from 2 years old to Olympic level Athletes, but the Committee appreciated the potential for this to be expanded and developed as a real city offer. The track facility is regarded by world BMX teams as one of the best for racing and training (rated in top 10% internationally by ASA BMX). Open sessions run by the City Council and BMX club are held weekly and attract 150 riders. There is potential to market this offer and grow awareness.
- CTC (the national cycling charity) recognised the importance of getting the 'nearly' cyclists extra reasons to get on a bike (which Bike North Birmingham has succeeded in doing for mainly leisure purposes). Leisure cycling can be an important first step and so CTC plan over the next year to put on themed bike tours to explore Birmingham's heritage, wildlife and artistic potential. As one of the primary bidders to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF), they also aim to provide training, buddying and mentoring to people who are beginning to cycle to work.
- *Be Active by Bike* is funded by Public Health teams as part of the city's free Be Active offer for leisure and commissioned to British Cycling to manage and deliver. This project has set up six community cycling hubs in priority wards: Sparkbrook, Nechells, Lozells and East Handsworth, Washwood Heath and Erdington where each hub has a minimum of four mapped rides, access to free hire bikes, organised led rides by trained ride leaders, 1-2-1 training, adult cycle proficiency training and bike maintenance courses, Ride leader training and volunteer opportunities. For every £1 spent on Be Active, the Committee heard that there are £21.30 of benefits to the overall system. Results for April-July 2012 show:
  - 761 bikes used across the hubs for free hire;



- 291 people went on led rides;
- 78 people received cycle training;
- 305 women went on women only rides;
- 87 people took up the group hire.

3.5.34 While the Committee recognised the potential of these schemes, there did appear to be a lack of awareness from residents within these priority wards. This underlines the importance of linking these up through local Councillors, Wards and Districts to help achieve a seamless cycling commitment and offer across the city.



### **Case Study: Handsworth Health and Well-Being Group (HHWBG)**

This morning I led a group of adults around Handsworth Park, as I have been doing recently nearly every Thursday morning. The bikes used are available for the community to use, and this new group complements the more 'advanced' rides organised by a member of staff at the Leisure Centre. Participants in these very informal, friendly, community led rides have joined in only after:

1. Work was done empowering Handsworth Health and Well Being Group to organise the rides
2. Contacting a Be Active coach to teach beginners
3. Participants trusting leaders and having a group to join in with
4. Feeling welcomed to the group by the 2 leaders and by other members
5. The rides are local and easily accessible
6. The park is a wonderful park, and staff at the Leisure Centre are very helpful
7. Seeing others riding around the park
8. Receiving help, teaching, support and guidance from myself and a Be Active coach
9. Participants understanding they do not need specialist cycling clothes
10. Finding Velcro strips (very cheap) can fasten loose clothing
11. Having bicycles available (Handsworth Leisure Centre has a bicycle hub)
12. There are toilet facilities at the Leisure Centre
13. Knowing the rides will be done at the speed of the participants
14. Knowing the rides will be in a safe environment
15. A focus on fun, rather than skills
16. Acceptance of the reality of invisible barriers such as lack of confidence in physicality (VW)

Nurturing is more important than provision. This involves skilled, passionate leaders who in turn need recognition and support for their work whether paid or voluntary. The greatest challenge for leaders is reaching out to those who perceive barriers to cycling in their lives. This is an important part of a healthy, active civil society. Providing bikes and rides does not, in itself, do this. Other Breeze leaders (in red jackets) have enthusiastically joined in rides, with participants from so called difficult to reach communities, which they had not felt able to organise themselves. My experience shows that all groups, including those with currently very low participation rates, can be fairly easily encouraged to join in, if the right approach is adopted. However, for cycling to become a widespread acceptable leisure activity and mode of transport, it needs to be part of the everyday lives of potential participants. Therefore partnerships should be forged with community groups and community sector organisations that already adopt a 'bottom-up' approach (such as HHWBG and the CRBH project at WEA).

**Source: Val Woodward, Breeze Network, in evidence to this Inquiry**



## 4 Our Ambition

### 4.1 Where do we want to be?

- 4.1.1 This Inquiry was driven by our belief that cycling and walking are fundamental modes of transportation within modern urban mobility. However, it soon became clear to the Committee that walking and cycling are about so much more than transport – both modes have a key role to play in the health, wealth and belonging of our citizens.
- 4.1.2 Yet, despite much good work in this area by the City Council and partners, and a wide-spread belief amongst some that these drivers are being adequately addressed through current transport policy, the truth is that we are well behind other UK cities, let alone our European sister cities or where we as a city could deservedly aim to be in terms of a walking and cycling offer and uptake that drives modern urban mobility.
- 4.1.3 The Committee believes that so much more could be done to take advantage of the benefits and opportunities offered by cycling, walking and canals in Birmingham, and that starts fundamentally with what must be a transformational ambition.
- 4.1.4 It appears from our evidence gathering that decision-makers and deliverers have yet to be persuaded that the benefits of walking and cycling should be considered with as much commitment as has traditionally been given to mobility through private vehicles and public transport. This report seeks to be one of the first steps in correcting that notion, but our work must not by any means be seen as sitting in isolation. Following on from British successes at the Olympics and *Tour de France*, and with key stages of the *Tour* coming to the UK in 2014, cycling is experiencing an upsurge in popularity<sup>65</sup> and these are real catalysts propelling cycling onto national agendas and shifting attitudinal and behavioural change in ways that policy makers ignore at their peril. The most recent and notable indication of this has been the recent announcement by the Department of Transport's (DfT) Cycle City Ambition Grants, aimed specifically at City Deal areas, and the DfT's repeated reference therein to the need to "*mainstream*" cycling and walking.
- 4.1.5 There are also now some real success stories in the UK – London being the obvious one. As Members finalised this report, the Mayor of London published his "*Vision for Cycling in London*", which promises "*substantial – eventually transformative – change*":

Cycling will be treated not as niche, marginal, or an afterthought, but as what it is: an integral part of the transport network, with the capital spending, road space and traffic planners' attention befitting that role.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Friends of the Earth in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E07

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Cycling%20Vision%20GLA%20template%20FINAL.pdf>



- 4.1.6 Core Cities are making moves to improve cycling too. Bristol has recently been rated as the best large UK city for cycling and Manchester has expressed their ambition to take this title and become Britain's No 1 city for cycling by 2017.<sup>67</sup>
- 4.1.7 Birmingham is at the heart of the transport network in this country and should be in a position to set out equal if not bigger ambitions, which must be both realistic and sustainable. Beyond specifically cycle based aspirations, Birmingham needs to build a modern and sustainable transport system that also actively underpins and helps deliver our social, health, environmental educational and economic challenges for growth. And in examining all of these challenges and the elements the City Council has already put in place to help meet them, we are led back again and again to cycling and walking as catalysts and enablers.

## 4.2 What do we need to get there?

- 4.2.1 Birmingham's transport and land use strategies do refer to the importance of cycling and walking and the benefits both can bring. However, whilst there have been many successful schemes implemented and cycling rates have started to increase, the Committee has observed throughout all its evidence gathering the extent to which there has been a consistent lack of join up between schemes, and a lack of acknowledgement of the potential to share resources between transport and other policies to meet city agendas.
- 4.2.2 The opportunity provided by the forthcoming urban mobility plan for the city and its challenges cannot be underestimated, especially when set alongside initiatives such as the Cycle City Ambition Grant and the opportunity to demonstrate real change achieved through successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) funding and other potential Department for Transport bids to address pinch points. The Birmingham Urban Mobility Plan needs to provide a strategic vision to facilitate and empower our city's diversity of transport infrastructure and connectivity potential so that the city really can achieve its international ambition.
- 4.2.3 For Members of this Committee, delivering this starts with a clear declaration of intent, which we propose can be achieved in two ways. Firstly, to set out a transformative ambition which is responsive to the person, place, growth, health and cohesion objectives of the city. This must include an ambitious, target-driven strategy for improving cycling and walking in Birmingham. This strategy needs to have:
- Clearly identified lines of co-responsibility across directorates, portfolios and between partners;
  - Milestones against which progress can be clearly measured and improvements driven;
  - Mechanisms to facilitate behaviour change;

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.futureplc.com/2010/04/06/bike-experts-crown-bristol-%E2%80%9Cuk%E2%80%99s-best-cycling-city%E2%80%9D/>; <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/article3437777.ece>; Making Manchester a World-Class Cycling City with More People Cycling More Often



- Targets for that which are just as, or more, ambitious than those of the other core cities, including those for increasing:
    - Commuting by cycle;
    - Travelling to school by cycle;
    - Training offered to schools;
    - Participation and access via Be Active, in particular for marginalised groups;
    - The number of cycle parking spaces.
- 4.2.4 Birmingham City Council has had a cycling policy since 1987, and the current strategy, launched in 2011, was considered to be a step change by our witnesses. Nonetheless, it is clear that despite that strategy, cycling and walking are far from embedded in transport strategies in the city or the region. They are seen as an addition when they are considered at all and rely on a few dedicated officers to push activity through and make maximum, sustainable returns from “one-off” pots of funding.
- 4.2.5 Therefore it is vital that this renewed declaration of intent for cycling and walking has the effect of putting cycling and walking on a par with vehicle and public transport movement in the city, giving them greater prominence within wider agendas. Strategic transport strategies all too often do not contain the same level of detail or commitment in regards to cycling and walking that they do on private vehicle or public transport schemes. The most recent example of this was Centro’s draft consultation strategy, *Towards a World Class Integrated Transport Network*.
- 4.2.6 The strategy needs to cross the many agendas we have identified within this report and which improving cycling opportunities naturally support. It is important to recognise that if real change is to be achieved, long term planning is critical and the evidence from other cities shows what a long term commitment this is.
- 4.2.7 The next step is to ensure the strategy and its outcomes are embedded in what we do. Currently, most transport policies talk about cycling and walking but it remains no more than lip service if this is not translated though planning and design into local transport and engineering schemes. And this requires cross party political commitment to deliver and maintain.
- 4.2.8 The Welsh Government is currently pursuing an Active Travel Bill (introduced to the Welsh Assembly in February 2013) which requires its local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. This Bill will also require new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.<sup>68</sup> Birmingham could and should make a cross-party commitment to doing the same. This level of

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<sup>68</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/splash?orig=/legislation/programme/assemblybills/active-travel-bill/>



commitment would ensure that current opportunities for cycling and walking do not get any worse in the city but should also ensure that opportunities improve.

- 4.2.9 Over the course of the evidence gathering, the Committee heard many examples of developments and infrastructure changes that have made cycling and walking more difficult in Birmingham. These have included too many conflicting, non uniform, signs and other street clutter; business parks without pavements and cycle routes interrupted by difficult junctions and furniture precluding movement. This culture should shift and the commitment to cycling and walking be made more explicit across planning and development portfolios.
- 4.2.10 It also seems counter-intuitive to this Committee that the most vulnerable in our city's transport system are also those who most often appear to be considered last in design terms. The Committee suggests that all designs not only take account of the desirability of cycling and walking but that the user hierarchy (taken from the City Cycle Ambition Grant application) becomes Birmingham's guiding principle, not just those with "transport" in their title.
- 4.2.11 The adoption of this hierarchy (or very similar ones) was common practice when the first Local Transport Plans and Unitary Development Plans were written in about 2000. However, as noted in relation to other matters in this report, it has been poorly observed and without commitment, is all too often left as a "bolt on".

**Table 3: The User Hierarchy**

<p>Consider first</p> <p>Consider Last</p>	Pedestrians
	Cyclists
	Public Transport Users
	Specialist Service Vehicles
	Cars

- 4.2.12 Adopting this model could be achieved for example, by incorporating cycling and walking considerations in all planning, transport and development decisions. This is already done in some cases, for example, the City Council's Local Pinch Point Fund bid (see chapter 5) which cites the positive impact the schemes will have for the users of the highway, including pedestrians and cyclists. However it needs to be done systematically.
- 4.2.13 In terms of specific consideration of canals, the Committee heard early on in our evidence gathering that the City Council does not have a strategic oversight or stated commitment as to how make best use of and improve our canal infrastructure. This is mostly because the money the





City Council has access to is piecemeal and directly linked to certain stretches of the canal. There development is rarely predictable as it depends on developers coming forward, and relies upon the potential of section 106 funds.

4.2.14 There is a real need for a vision for Birmingham's canal infrastructure which recognises limitations upon resources and empowers the range of partners. While the work overall is in its early stages, there are some extremely positive signs for real progress in the future, particularly in the partnerships being forged at a regional and city level. And this Committee was delighted that as a direct result of our evidence gathering work for this report, Birmingham was invited to contribute evidence to the recent All Party Parliamentary Group inquiry on canals.

4.2.15 The Committee also recognises the opportunities and benefits which could arise from taking advantage of any infrastructural changes along the canal network to support other agendas, such as using canal towpaths for ducting for digital cabling.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R01</b>	<p>That a transformative ambition for sustainable transport is set out, which is responsive to the person, place, growth, health and cohesion objectives of the city.</p> <p>This must include an ambitious, target-driven strategy for improving cycling and walking in Birmingham detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lines of co-responsibility across directorates, portfolios and partners;</li> <li>• Milestones against which progress can be clearly measured and improvements driven;</li> <li>• Mechanisms to facilitate behaviour change;</li> <li>• Targets which are as, or more, ambitious than other core cities.</li> </ul> <p>This ambition should have the effect of putting cycling and walking on a par with cars and public transport movement in the city.</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	<p>March 2014</p>





	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R02</b>	<p>That facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists are continuously improved and new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.</p> <p>This must include the user hierarchy (set out in Chapter 4) as the guiding principle to ensure appropriate design to enable the ambition set out in Recommendation 1.</p> <p>This requirement should be delivered through appropriate enforcement mechanisms and planning guidance, including the Birmingham Development Plan.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p>	<p>March 2014</p>
<b>R03</b>	<p>That the Birmingham Urban Mobility Plan explicitly set out the role that the canal network can play in improving sustainable movement for pedestrians and for cyclists in and around the city; using the potential of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing blue and green corridors within the city as highlighted in the Green Living Spaces Plan;</li> <li>• Regeneration ambitions, particularly around the Enterprise Zone and economic areas;</li> <li>• Existing partnerships in the city.</li> </ul> <p>The Plan must also reference how barriers such as surfacing, safety, capacity and lighting of canals will be overcome.</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	<p>March 2014</p>
<b>R04</b>	<p>That the potential to improve digital connectivity in the city using Birmingham's canal network is explored, taking advantage of any regeneration or resurfacing projects.</p>	<p>Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	<p>October 2013</p>



## 5 Delivering the Ambition

### 5.1 Leading the Ambition

- 5.1.1 The ambition set out in Chapter 4 needs champions to take it forward. Currently, cycling and walking policies are not embedded or joined up across Directorates, Cabinet Portfolios or in strategies and are often simply never considered as an area that could or should be a focus for partnership working. Within the City Council, there is a need for one individual to co-ordinate service areas within City Council policies and to co-ordinate this between the City Council and its partners in order to ensure that **all** Birmingham City Council officers know and are signed up to the cycling and walking policy, not just a sub department within Transportation.
- 5.1.2 This idea of a senior leader or “Champion” for cycling and walking has found echoes across so much of the evidence the Committee received in the course of this inquiry. The Times’ *“Cities Fit for Cycling”* campaign, which was launched to promote cycle safety, says that signatory cities (of which Birmingham is one) should appoint a commissioner with the authority to make case, marshal evidence and talk to most significant decision makers, and that this individual needs to have influencing skills. The NICE guidance for cycling and walking also seeks to ensure that a senior member of the public health team is responsible for promoting walking and cycling.
- 5.1.3 Political leadership is key as changes to regional transport policy and funding come in and to drive a common vision for cycling with other key organisations including Centro, business organisations and the local NHS. This should be at the heart of this “Champion” role. For example, Centro plans to work with stakeholders in 2013 to develop a joint Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan between member authorities in the region. How will Birmingham help drive this, particularly from a cycling and walking perspective, without a “Champion” that decision making table?
- 5.1.4 The cross cutting nature of Cabinet portfolios is both an opportunity and a risk here. Strictly it is the Cabinet Member for Development, Jobs and Skills who has the remit for transportation strategy. However, the Cabinet Member for Green, Safe and Smart City has constitutional responsibility for sustainable transport; and there are core intersects with portfolios and responsibilities of the Leader and Executive Members for Local Services. We believe it is therefore necessary for the Executive to clearly identify one Cabinet Member to be given specific responsibility for the cycling and walking elements of the urban mobility plan with the emphasis on ensuring the join up of delivery, guarding against replicating “silos” of delivery.
- 5.1.5 At our first evidence gathering session, it was suggested that political leadership needed to be supported by strong executive management. A senior officer, with the organisational ability and authority to implement actions, is needed to support this champion. It is also important to ensure that the City Council has the capacity, capability and knowledge within all appropriate parts of the City Council to implement the strategy.



- 5.1.6 The role of this “Champion” should also extend more widely than out to just our statutory and institutional partners. Success in this role will be determined by the extent to which we are able to not only adjust the traditional emphasis of planning and development from the perspective of the car to the users of roads as cyclists and pedestrians, but by how we involve individuals who have a stake in their local area and joining it up to their interaction with the space around them. Under Birmingham’s new devolved governance structures there is an imperative driving role for District Chairs to lead and champion this ambition, to explain and ensure join up at these new devolved levels in order to ensure the success of any city-wide ambition or strategy.
- 5.1.7 To deliver this ambition the City must ensure it is better and more effectively engaging with and using the potential, creativity, resources and ideas of its people and organisations about the city they live in. There are so many knowledgeable and willing organisations and individuals in the city who have been identified both during the course of this report and who continue to come to our attention. The Committee feels strongly that there is a genuine interest and willingness which could offer incredibly constructive and realistic guidance as well as invaluable scrutiny potential in monitoring, checking and re-adapting this ambition, from pedestrian and cyclist perspectives, working in tandem with officers to set realistic and challenging targets and milestones for its achievement.
- 5.1.8 There are currently some structures in place which the Committee feels could be easily adapted and re-invigorated to fulfil this function, and crucially in a way which precludes the need to set up any new network or representational structure. The Pedestrian and Cycling Task Force was originally set up to complement the congestion task force and identify “quick wins,” predominantly around the city centre. Other groups look at rest of city and region, including the Cycling Forum and user networks such as the Bike West Midlands Network (a web and social media based vehicle to link local campaign groups and to consult with Centro and support local campaigns). Throughout evidence gathering, the Committee heard how some of these groups and structures are real arenas for change but others feel their role and how they interface with the Council is unclear. There is a real opportunity here for championing best practice in some of these structures and streamlining this City Council interface, using the consultative body potential of these.
- 5.1.9 An example of how this is done elsewhere was provided in the form of the Manchester Cycle Forum, which meets every quarter and is chaired by the Member Champion for Cycling. This raises awareness and promotes the opportunities for cycling in Manchester while providing a useful link between the Council, individuals and organisations interested in cycling. It allows cyclists to meet regularly with Council officers, councillors and other interested parties to exchange views and ideas that can help make cycling safer on our roads. It also helps the Council to develop and improve its cycling policies and has had success in influencing positive outcomes for cyclists in the city.



5.1.10 In looking at ways whereby Birmingham could empower a similar body, providing some encouragement of access and reaction into planning processes and regional agendas for transport would seem a useful method of ensuring Birmingham's forum could go further than Manchester's.

5.1.11 As with the example of walking and cycling, the Committee has acknowledged the need for strategic and local level direction for the canals infrastructure within the city. There is already a strong regional structure in place – we were told that the West Midlands Regional Board is an exemplar in this area and that the City Council is very engaged. Whilst we heard promising accounts of the partnership working around canals there are still many under-exploited opportunities to take this further. For example, and again as with cycling and walking agendas, the move of public health responsibilities to the local authority could be the starting point for a renewed strategic vision for canals joining up with the considerable potential of the Canal and River Trust in terms of it engaging residents and business with their proximity to and interest in the infrastructure.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R05</b>	<p>That a cycling champion is appointed from elected members, to ensure join up to promote and drive forward cycling ambitions across all portfolios and directorates.</p> <p>That s/he is supported by a senior officer, with capacity to work with all partners, to deliver the ambitions set out in this report.</p>	Leader	October 2013
<b>R06</b>	<p>That the terms of references for the Cycling and Pedestrian Task Force and Cycling Forum are examined, giving users a new consultative role to allow user led scrutiny of policies and applications from pedestrian and cycling perspectives.</p> <p>The Leader should consult on whether separate cycling and walking task forces would better serve both interests.</p> <p>The Task Force should be chaired by the cycling champion appointed under Recommendation 5.</p>	Leader (in conjunction with the cycling champion)	October 2013



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R07	<p>That the Cabinet Member explore how local Councillors can engage more actively in canal management and improvements as part of the implementation of the Green Living Spaces Plan. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building in local representation on current strategic partnerships such as the West Midlands Regional Board, Canal and River Trust;</li> <li>• Ensuring local planning and democratic structures are made best use of.</li> </ul>	Cabinet Member, Green, Safe & Smart City	December 2013

## 5.2 Financing the Ambition

There are always a number of competing transport priorities for boroughs to consider. It is imperative that schemes are chosen which demonstrate value for money, maximising the return for every pound invested. The low costs and significant benefits of cycling schemes mean that their benefit-cost ratio can be as much as 20:1, far higher than some other types of transport investment.<sup>69</sup>

5.2.1 One of the things that the Committee recognised as being a disincentive for examining walking and cycling or canals in meaningful terms to date, has been widespread and general impressions regarding the lack of funding streams associated or available for them. This viewpoint has been challenged both in our Inquiry and in the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on cycling. Yes, considerable investment is required to achieve meaningful multi-modal shift towards more sustainable urban mobility and in a paper submitted to the APPG, *“Rachel Aldred, a London academic specialising in cycling, estimated a cost of just over £1.1bn a year for cycling to even begin the process of catching up with other nations, seemingly a lot but marginal set against the £16bn cost of just one rail project, Crossrail”*.<sup>70</sup> A similar comparison was made with local public transport infrastructure schemes, such as the extension of the Metro to reach New Street Station.

5.2.2 From our evidence this Committee believes that there is not a necessarily an investment obstacle to making this happen. Firstly, it is about encouraging and accommodating behaviour and culture change in organisations, and on streets which in turn engenders behaviour and culture change on our highways. Secondly, investment *is* being made in transport and health outcomes; and access to these funds can often be as simple as rethinking how their funding objectives can be even more maximised and better directed. It is a question of how these are directed. The city needs to be in

<sup>69</sup> Transport for London, cited by Sustrans in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E01

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/jan/20/cycling-in-britain-government-inquiry>



a strong position to bid for what it wants. As Norman Baker MP, Minister for Transport, said at a recent conference:

If the West Midlands want better cycling infrastructure, they are going to have to ask for it<sup>71</sup>

5.2.3 As part of this “ask”, the City Council must demonstrate our potential to drive ever bigger and better returns from every £1 of investment potential, and part of the urban mobility planning process is about:

Ask[ing] the Government for the power to manage central government transport funds directly, so that Birmingham has the means for developing a sustainable urban transport network.<sup>72</sup>

5.2.4 There **is** money being spent on transport infrastructure, including cycling and walking. The Centro led Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme is the largest single resource currently available for walking and cycling in Birmingham (2012-15). The West Midlands secured £33.2m for *Smart Network, Smarter Choices* through LSTF, and this will be boosted by another £19m from local public and private sector contributions. The overall package of over £50m will deliver a range of sustainable transport initiatives and projects by March 2015.

5.2.5 The project involves carrying out a wide range of sustainable travel schemes along key corridors in the West Midlands to help underpin economic growth, job creation and meet tough carbon reduction targets. Work will be aimed at improving public transport services, walking and cycling routes and the general flow of traffic. Schemes aimed at influencing people’s travel behaviour, especially in favour of green choices for short trips, will also be carried out.

5.2.6 The LSTF programme is just one example; and Birmingham has to respond to different investment priorities from many sources and the stated ambition of the City Council is to try to do this differently.

5.2.7 This is, of course, about a wider and more holistic consideration of how we spend the money we have got as much as how we go about accessing new sources of funding. For example we were told that there was a view in some quarters of the City Council that LSTF was for cycling and walking, so pots such as the Integrated Transport Block were seen as being for the larger infrastructure projects. This lack of creative join up means opportunities for much bigger returns are systematically being missed and again signals the extent to which cycling and walking has sat outside of the mainstream in our city’s transport thinking. This is all the more concerning given the time limited nature of LSTF and highlights the very real potential we face in Birmingham that if

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<sup>71</sup> Norman Baker MP, Love London Go Dutch Conference, October 2012

<sup>72</sup> Leader’s Policy Statement to the City Council, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012



LSTF opportunities are not continued, funding for cycling and walking within the city could dry up altogether.

- 5.2.8 In addition, there is a realistic and affordable opportunity to increase participation in cycling through the transfer of Public Health responsibilities to the City Council in April 2013. The public health contracts which the City Council inherits (published as part of the Cabinet decision on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013) should be analysed and connected up to the Council's Urban Mobility Plan, bringing together the totality of public health and transportation strategies for the City.
- 5.2.9 Another opportunity lies in working with schools and joining up of public health and transportation strategies to drive cycle training into all Birmingham schools. The Committee heard in evidence from the Smarter Choices team within the Council and many other groups how cycle training in schools does exist in Birmingham. There is an incredible untapped potential for the city to join its responsibilities for facilitating physical education within the national curriculum at times of cuts to wider leisure offers across the city, by putting cycles and cycle training into each and every one of its schools.
- 5.2.10 The other element is to ensure that the city is ready for any future funding scheme and recent examples have shown how ill-prepared we can be where cycling is concerned. For example, the city's initial bid proposal to Cabinet in February 2013 for the Local Pinch Point fund, which concerned City Centre connectivity, did not include any reference to cycling and walking at all until this Scrutiny Committee intervened.
- 5.2.11 The Committee also notes that bids for external funding to support new cycling schemes need to include commuted sums for maintenance implications – otherwise there is a risk of the infrastructure falling into disrepair.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R08</b>	<p>That the public health programmes inherited by the City Council are analysed at early stage to drive and resource opportunities to develop cycling and walking dimensions within the urban mobility plan.</p> <p>A report on how these will be joined up should be reported to the Transport, Connectivity &amp; Sustainability O&amp;S Committee.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Health &amp; Wellbeing</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p>	October 2013





	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R09</b>	<p>That the resourcing of cycling in schools is explored as a means of delivering the national curriculum physical education requirement.</p> <p>That Bikeability training is encouraged across all schools.</p> <p>That a target level of cycles is made available in schools.</p> <p>That bike building and maintenance options are explored as additional opportunities in schools and colleges.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Children &amp; Family Services</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Health &amp; Wellbeing</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	October 2013

## 5.3 What will change look like?

5.3.1 Our conclusions and recommendations so far have focused on the high level decisions and processes needed to realise ambitions and make change happen. The key guiding principles for what will practically happen on the ground will be guided by the Urban Mobility Plan and driven by funding opportunities. And largely it is for partners and communities to decide what specifically should be done in neighbourhoods, through existing, but ever more enhanced democratic and engagement processes.

5.3.2 However, we have chosen four key areas to demonstrate what the changes we are looking for might look like:

- Physical infrastructure;
- 20 mph zones;
- Signage and wayfinding;
- “Softer” measures to increase cycling and walking – “smarter choices”.

### Physical Infrastructure

5.3.3 It became quickly apparent to the Committee in evidence gathering that any serious attempt to increase cycling should address physical barriers and invest in physical infrastructure. If improvements are aimed at increasing modal shift then more commuter routes need to be opened up. Unanimous opinions expressed to the Committee held that Birmingham performs relatively poorly in this area and that the majority of cycle trips in the city are made despite the infrastructure, not because of it.

5.3.4 In considering what specific physical infrastructure changes would have a real impact, our witnesses responses broadly fell into three categories.





- 5.3.5 Firstly there was the proposal that Birmingham should invest in a “*showcase*” or “*flagship*” on-road cycle route along a major route, to demonstrate what could be achieved and how easy cycling could be in Birmingham. The idea here is to physically “mainstream” cycling in people’s minds, to make it a more attractive and possible choice. For some witnesses, this meant looking at re-allocating road space. Physically segregating cyclists from motor vehicles in this way addresses one of the key concerns of our users – that of their vulnerability. However, the Committee recognised the competing demands on traffic managers, and the argument that resources would be best spent on improving and joining up the infrastructure and network we already have before any major decisions are made about dedicating existing road space to cycle use, unless and until there is a real turnaround in uptake.
- 5.3.6 Improving and joining up what we already have was the second proposal made by our witnesses. In particular, this would focus on linking local areas:
- if cycling is to be a mainstream form of transport the cycle route network has to connect residential areas with busy transport interchanges, shopping areas, employers, schools and colleges all of which will attract motor traffic<sup>73</sup>
- 5.3.7 A third suggestion was to focus on the city centre, or an area around it, where anyone of a designated standard of cycling (e.g. Bikeability level 2) could cycle safely and easily into the city centre. This would entail addressing issues around junctions and other “*pinch points*” for cyclists. It was suggested that this could also help in deciding where improvements are most appropriate to be made, for example where there are instances of roads or junctions that require level 3 Bikeability standards to negotiate. Encouraging this step change through improving junctions to at least level 2 standard could actively help increase the numbers of cyclists able to use those routes.
- 5.3.8 Improvements to cycling within City Centre have been the subject of a recent exercise by Adrian Lord, engaged by the City Council to see how cycling around Birmingham City Centre could be improved, covering associated infrastructure and access from routes around the city.
- 5.3.9 Again this Committee is clear that these physical infrastructure ambitions should not be asking for anything new. The West Midlands Local Transport Plan already includes the aim to make all journeys cycleable with Level 2 skill:
- In the long term, Level II will be sufficient for all journeys, but in the meantime training to Level III skills will enable more people to use the existing highway network<sup>74</sup>
- 5.3.10 Alongside these suggestions sits the requirement to provide cycle hire, hubs and storage in local centres as well as the City Centre on an appropriate scale for the city’s ambitions. As yet, the

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<sup>73</sup> Adrian Lord, It’s not (just) about the bike!

<sup>74</sup> West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3, Appendices, p.94



Committee regrets that there has been no clear strategy on how these will be delivered and that the scale of plans so far is a little unambitious. Clarifying a single, City Centre cycling strategy is critical for future proofing our future developments (such as HS2 stations) to ensure they meet not only meet minimum standards at design stage, but crucially prove able to fit transformational transport ambitions. What is designed and built now should be fit for transport needs in years to come.

5.3.11 Improved and more creative design standards to ensure better and safer routes with improved availability of facilities are also core to ambitions and delivering physical infrastructure change. The Cycle City Ambition Grant insists that

any new cycle infrastructure is fit for purpose and designed to a high standard as set out in the Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance ... There should be an emphasis on inclusive, high quality design that enhances the public realm to the benefit of all.<sup>75</sup>

5.3.12 Birmingham should adopt this level of design for all cycle infrastructure.

5.3.13 To support a strategic vision, as described in Chapter 4, an understanding and commitment to championing the assets we have is required, including better mapping of land use and ownership alongside the canals to facilitate a more strategic corporate response to supporting their use. Links should be made to other open spaces/public realm opportunities though encouraging more formal strategic channels for this in policy making and canals should form part of the core leisure and wellbeing offer for the city.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R10</b>	That Birmingham adopts the Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance, and where possible exceeds them.  That all relevant Highway and Transportation officers are appropriately trained (using Sustrans' "Better by Design" training programme, based on Manual for Streets 1 & 2, LTN 2/08 and LTN 1/12).	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	October 2013
<b>R11</b>	As part of Recommendation 3 above, land use and ownership along the canal network should be mapped to enable a full understanding of the asset and its stakeholders.	Leader  Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	March 2014

<sup>75</sup> City Deals - Guidance on Applications for Cycle City Ambition Grants, Department for Transport, February 2013



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R12</b>	<p>That the City Centre is made safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, and that public transport hubs are connected by cycling and walking routes.</p> <p>That existing cycle routes are assessed and improved to join up the cycle network around the city.</p> <p>That there is a focus on improving cycling and walking within local centres and key economic areas (as listed in section 2.4 of this report).</p> <p>An annual update report should be made to the Transport, Connectivity &amp; Sustainability O&amp;S Committee, beginning April 2014.</p>	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	April 2014

## 20mph Zones

- 5.3.14 Road safety generally has been a major theme running throughout this Inquiry and the Committee acknowledges that it has been unable to do it justice as part of this work, crucially in terms of taking on board motorist and freight considerations. Therefore the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee is proposing to examine the road safety landscape and specifically highlight evidence in relation to motorists and freight transport uses of highways within the city, as part of the Committees work on the Birmingham Urban Mobility Plan.
- 5.3.15 However, in touching on the importance of addressing the vulnerability of cyclists and pedestrians, the Committee heard how one of the most significant means of the improving this is through the introduction of 20 mph limits. The physical infrastructure changes talked about in the section above could focus on fast feeder routes into the city centre, but these routes are all fed by local routes and this is where the potential for the City Council's commitment to rolling out 20 mph zones, most naturally and seamlessly comes in.
- 5.3.16 Support for joining 20mph zones up came up time and again from a wide range of sources – including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled users of roads. Furthermore there was clear support at the City Council meeting in November 2012 where a motion was passed in relation to 20 mph zones and limits. A policy is being drafted (at the time of writing) which should reflect the demand expressed at that meeting for:

A phased programme of introducing 20mph limits or 20mph zones in residential roads, giving due consideration to the revenue, capital and enforcement



implications of such a programme, and the Department for Transport emphasis upon self-enforcement.<sup>76</sup>

5.3.17 The Committee received impressive evidence from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) and Sustrans indicating how there is a real synergy between the introduction of 20mph zones and improving walking and cycling. Bristol, which is recognised as the leading UK city for city cycling and walking, has recently introduced a 20 mph zone across the entire city following research which demonstrated widespread support among residents for 20mph in their own streets and neighbourhoods (although this did not always extend to driving outside their own streets and neighbourhoods!). The research emphasised that drivers and residents wanted :

- Education – why 20 matters;
- Encouragement – rewards for driving at 20;
- Enforcement – warnings and penalties;
- Engagement – help in changing their streets;
- Enlightenment – a vision for a 20mph city.

5.3.18 Benefits of this are also being recognised elsewhere – Liverpool City Council resolved, in November 2011, to adopt 20mph speed limits, using signs only, on appropriate residential roads in Liverpool.<sup>77</sup> This was introduced with the help of a grant from Liverpool Primary Care Trust, recognising the public health benefits to be had in 20 mph limits.

5.3.19 There are however significant differences between the concepts of 20 mph *zones* and *limits* (*zones* are enforced by traffic calming whilst 20mph limits are just signed) but introduction and best practice of implementation is not just about the infrastructure either. The Committee is therefore very keen to see that the City Council's policy includes sufficient balance with affordable, softer measures for enforcement in order to ensure the eventual success of the policy since there was clear evidence that demonstrates that building the infrastructure alone will not achieve the desired result of speed reduction.

5.3.20 Champions of 20mph who gave evidence to the Committee also emphasised the potential enhancements to liveability and community in neighbourhoods whenever such policies are effectively introduced. It was underlined how this leads to feelings that residents regain their streets as a community asset which again, could go some way in helping to support physical infrastructural change in other means identified above.

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<sup>76</sup> Motion to City Council, November 2012

<sup>77</sup> Liverpool City Council Cabinet Report, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R13</b>	That the Council's commitment to roll-out 20mph zones is linked to those areas highlighted in Recommendation 12 and their feeder routes, and that the city's 20mph zones are explicitly linked to our cycling and walking ambitions.	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	October 2013

## Signage and Wayfinding

- 5.3.21 Another thread that binds cycling, walking and canals is signage and wayfinding. It again brings us back to our key themes of accessibility and inclusion. Furthermore, it is critical for our tourism offer.
- 5.3.22 Current provision is fragmented, and of variable quality. This came through particularly during our work on canals, where we received evidence that some of the most important information needed by cyclists and pedestrians is knowing where the next, or best exit from the system is, and whether this is via a ramp (for cyclist / wheelchair user / buggy) or steps. It is not enough to just signpost an exit. It is necessary to show a geographical area beyond this – as it is only then that people can start to join up the urban realm and understand how the canal network weaves through the city and connects different areas.
- 5.3.23 There is strong support for journey information that is integrated and that the user, whether arriving by bus and then walking via the canal, or cycling in and then walking to the shops, is presented with a common map base, with a Birmingham specific iconology and design, so that they can quickly link up their route and destination. To achieve this, the Committee stressed the importance of empowering users and facilitating their coming together across different organisations and interests in order to ensure the most optimum join up and pooling of resources to achieve this objective.
- 5.3.24 Again there is good work being done, most notably in respect of the Interconnect Birmingham programme. On-street totems are currently being installed and by autumn 2013 Marketing Birmingham, Centro and the City Council have announced their aim to have in place a network of over 80 pedestrian totems and more than 100 onward journey information totems linked into the public transport network, creating an integrated wayfinding system through the ERDF co financed 'Investing in the City Region' project. The Interconnect Birmingham map base that has been developed is royalty-free and its copyright is owned outright by the Interconnect Birmingham Partners who have funded its development (Marketing Birmingham, Birmingham City Council, Centro, Colmore Business District & Retail Birmingham). Interconnect has been guided by the same people who produced Manhattan's wayfinding and the 2012 Olympic Park's wayfinding. The Committee would seek to ensure that this work is at the heart of standardising the mapping and wayfinding work which remains.



5.3.25 Beyond the City Centre, the Committee recognises the need to assess wider wayfinding needs for cyclists and pedestrians, including providing wayfinding and mapping information as appropriate which connects Birmingham with its wider area. The Committee feels this must be consistent and of a very high design quality which helps mark out a Unique Selling Point for the city and its commitment to mobility. Marketing Birmingham are undertaking work to address this, including:

- Looking at an existing cycle tourism website highlighting the routes and tourism product around the canal network and how this could be best integrated within VisitBirmingham.com (Birmingham's official tourism website);
- Carrying out a map audit so we understand who is currently producing maps and how we can move towards one base map, with this unique and ideally iconic look and feel that is the visible sign of our transformational mobility ambition

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R14</b>	<p>That there is a single, simplified, instantly recognisable map of cycle routes for the city.</p> <p>This must use the knowledge of all partners. This should be developed and expanded in its level of detail using "app" technology.</p> <p>This map should be consistent and of a very high design quality which helps mark out a Unique Selling Point for the city and its commitment to mobility.</p>	Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & Skills	April 2014

### **"Smarter Choices"**

5.3.26 A lot of the work the City Council and partners are involved in relates to what is termed "smarter choices" i.e. the softer measures which need to go alongside physical infrastructure changes to facilitate behaviour change. We have already stated that a serious attempt to increase cycling would address physical measures. Equally important to achieving this is how we commit to addressing attitudinal and behavioural shift in terms of road safety, changing road culture, investment in training, participation events and improved communication of information.

5.3.27 This report has already touched on two aspects of this – 20 mph zones/limits and signage and wayfinding. However, the Committee also wants to emphasise the importance of increasing participation.

5.3.28 We have already noted the importance of improving accessibility to bikes and cycling at schools. In Chapter 3 we talked about the work done in schools and the importance of school travel plans. However, earlier reports to Scrutiny on school travel plans have highlighted the difficulties in maintaining and enforcing these plans. We believe that the school travel plan process needs re-invigorating, with specific support for cycling and walking. Ideally, this would go further by making national standards cycle training (Bikeability) available to people of all ages; supporting school and



workplace travel plans and incentives; and encouraging cycling with promotional material, campaigns and personal advice. But we are committed to the need to explore as a natural starting place the opportunity the Local Authority has in terms of its school network and the new Birmingham Co-Operative ambition for all schools in making available, cycles and cycle training (see Recommendation 09).

- 5.3.29 Another element in improving the accessibility of cycling is encouraging active awareness of the potential for promoting and encouraging cycling amongst the city's diverse ethnic communities.

It is our contention that the kind of revival in cycling we so desperately need will have far less to do with the infrastructure changes of large organisations and much more to do with how the city engages those organisations capable of nurturing a ground swell of new cyclists. This must include particular attentiveness to BME communities.<sup>78</sup>

Cycling has for too long been seen as a minority activity for people who are quite committed to the activity on a lifestyle basis. We need to take cycling out of the ghetto and find lateral routes into mainstream life rather than simply exhort people to cycle for environmental or health reasons.<sup>79</sup>

- 5.3.30 This may require ensuring that cycling, and confidence building is specifically addressed within many of our inner city areas and the Committee endorses the use of community anchor organisations as one proposal submitted as a way forward for broadening opportunities for specific communities to cycle.

Community anchor organisations such as New Heights act as a resource for the community and increase the number and type of entry points to engage people in cycling compared to simply offering them cycling as a stand-alone activity. We need to build more partnerships like this between cycling organisations and non-cycling organisations.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Urban Cycles in evidence this Inquiry

<sup>79</sup> Cycle Chain in evidence to this Inquiry

<sup>80</sup> Cycle Chain in evidence to this Inquiry





	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R15</b>	<p>That access to cycling is improved through working with third sector and social enterprise organisations.</p> <p>That local councillors actively facilitate these links.</p> <p>That opportunities are explored to encourage start up manufacturing enterprise linked to cycling in Birmingham.</p> <p>This should be reported back through the revitalised Cycling and Walking Task Force.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs &amp; Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Social Cohesion &amp; Equalities</p>	December 2013



## 6 Conclusions

### 6.1 Summary

6.1.1 This Inquiry sought to focus on what many might consider to be the “softer” under-belly of transportation and as such, one which requires some of the most significant consideration and protection in order to achieve transformational change in urban mobility. These areas of transportation: cycling, walking and canals, are all too often not regarded as high impact in transport agendas or planning, are nonetheless critical if we are to deliver a modern connected city.

6.1.2 We have found that considering these agendas take us way beyond transport. Cycling, walking and canals are about linking communities and neighbourhoods, and delivering real environmental, economic and social benefits. There is also a real opportunity to deliver public health outcomes through an improved commitment to walking and cycling.

6.1.3 The timing is also extremely apposite. At the same time as this Inquiry, there was an All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group looking at how to get Britain cycling. And as we closed our evidence gathering, an application process for grants for the City Cycle Ambition Fund opened. This is significant not just because of the amount of money Government has allocated for this, but because of its alignment with City Deals. Furthermore, as we were completing this report, the Mayor of London’s £913m plan for cycling over the next decade was announced, setting the standard of ambition high for all other UK cities.

6.1.4 We have heard a lot in this report about where Birmingham can improve, although it is fair to point out that it is not just Birmingham. The UK generally lags behind European countries:

While Britain is littered with bike lanes they are almost universally piecemeal and substandard, often just a narrow strip of paint inches from speeding traffic.<sup>81</sup>

6.1.5 However, there is an opportunity here to put Birmingham at the fore front of cycling as part of Urban Mobility Planning. And even given our poor starting point, success in Birmingham could set a benchmark for the UK as a whole. Many witnesses giving evidence shared the conviction that if we can do it in Birmingham, it can be done anywhere.

6.1.6 This reports sets out a way forward but we are conscious that, whilst there has been a lot of enthusiasm and dedication, with some notable successes to show for it, there have also been missed opportunities. A salutary warning is contained in an Audit of the Cycling Policy of Birmingham conducted in 2001:

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<sup>81</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/jan/20/cycling-in-britain-government-inquiry>



Over a long period, transport policy has prioritised driving. Priority for the car in transport policy was based on attitudes that were car-minded and has strengthened these attitudes among decision makers, opinion leaders and citizens. For an effective promotion of cycle use, barriers need to be crossed – in the minds and in reality, where wide roads and big junctions need to be re-constructed in a way that speeds are reduced and that they are easier to cross, so that they encourage cycle use and improve accessibility by bicycle essentially.

Since 1997, Birmingham has a comprehensive and sophisticated cycling strategy with a wide, multidisciplinary approach. .... It is obvious that this strategy can not yet have led to a complete change of the traffic in Birmingham after a few years only. The cycling strategy will surely show positive results in the mid and long term, **provided the decision makers involved in cycling policy and cycling affairs strive consequently and continuously to achieve the targets set in the local cycling policy, made up with the necessary endurance, the readiness even for unpopular decisions.**<sup>82</sup>

## 6.2 The Way Forward

6.2.1 What we have attempted to do in this report is to recognise the value of cycling, walking and canals to our city, and identify some of the logjams and opportunities. After all, the main complaint about strategies around cycling and walking has not been their quality but the lack of implementation and funding. We have found that there are committed and dedicated officers working in these areas but there are ways in which the City Council can do better. In practice, many dealings with the Council left people feeling that *“cycling is the lowest priority”* in transport and *“a problem for someone else, not me”*.

If there is not acceptance by the whole of BCC that cycling is their responsibility, then the rest of the recommendations in [our] report may as well be ignored as well.<sup>83</sup>

6.2.2 We have recognised that there has been a lot of work and some notable successes, but that there are inherent conflicting drivers that sometime frustrate attempts. This is largely due to cycling and walking not being a visible, prominent part of council policy. Equally, canals are recognised as major asset to Birmingham, but are suffering from a lack of investment and prominence within the

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<sup>82</sup> BYPAD Bicycle Policy Audit 1999-2001, Langzaam Verkeer vzw, Belgium; European Cyclists' Federation ECF; Austrian Mobility Research FGM-AMOR, Austria. Birmingham is one of the seven cities from seven European countries, whose cycling policy has been audited. We have added the bold.

<sup>83</sup> Push Bikes in evidence to this Inquiry – see evidence pack E03



transport agenda. The role of this Committee – with its title Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability – has been to make those connections where officers and Cabinet Members may not.

- 6.2.3 To keep the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability O&S Committee informed of progress in implementing the recommendations within this report, the Executive is recommended to report back on progress periodically. This will be carried out through the established tracking process.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>R16</b>	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee no later than November 2013. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Leader Cabinet Member Development, Jobs & Skills	November 2013



## Appendix 1: Contributors

The Committee would like to thank all those individuals, organisations and enterprises who gave their time, ideas, creativity and enthusiasm to support us in this Inquiry. In particular we had on-going support from:

- Yvonne Gilligan, Regional Director, Sustrans
- Professor David Cox, Chair of the Cyclists Touring Club
- Graham Lennard, Richard Leonard, Mike Cooper and Ann Osola, Transportation Strategy, Birmingham City Council
- Karen Creavin, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Birmingham City Council
- Chris Lowe, John Bennett and Graham Hankins, Push Bikes

The following contributors attended inquiry sessions and/or provided written evidence:

Access Committee for Birmingham	Graham Mitchell
Amey plc	Alan Bailes, Head of Transport Planning Zac Dixon, Birmingham Highways Maintenance and Management Service - Business Development Eddie Fellows, Network Manager, Birmingham Highways Maintenance and Management
Aston University	Dr Peter Quaife, Sociology Tutor Coordinator
Bike2Life	Jim Everett
Birmingham City Council	Dr Adrian Phillips, Director of Public Health Kevin Hicks, Assistant Traffic Manager, Andrea Johnson, Lead Officer, Road Safety Education Hayley Anderson, Principal Contributions Co-ordinator Richard Cowell, Senior Development Planning Officer
Birmingham Canals & Navigation Society	Ivor Caplan and Brenda Ward
Birmingham City University	Beverley Nielson, Director of Employer Engagement
Breeze Network	Val Woodward
British Cycling (West Midlands)	Paul Barber, Dave Ellis
Canal & River Trust	Dean Davies, John Harris and Tony Harvey



Centro	Alison Pickett, Sustainable Travel Manager and Conrad Jones, Head of Sustainability
Colmore Business Improvement District	Michele Wilby, Executive Director
Cycle Chains Ltd	Mark Duce, Julian Cleaver and Phil Beardmore
Cyclists Touring Club (CTC)	Roger Geffen, Campaigns & Policy Director
Friends of the Earth	Ben Mabbett, Julien Pritchard and Adam McCusker
Guide Dogs for the Blind	David Thompson
Kings Heath Residents Forum	Cllr. Lisa Trickett
Liveinhope Campaign	Marcus Parsons and Nazan Fennell
Living Streets	Ray LeGallais, J Davison
Marketing Birmingham	Hannah Sparrey
Red Kite Cycles	Adrian Passmore
Royal Haskoning DHV	Paul Stephens and Steven Bibb
Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Rospa)	Duncan Vernon, Road Safety Manager
Royal National Institute for the Blind	Rebecca Swift
Sustrans	Edward Healy, Hugh Davies, Sarah Toy, Dene Stevens
Still Walking	Ben Waddington
Urban Cycles	Andi Smith
University of Birmingham	Jane Harris, Sustainable Travel Coordinator
Walkit.com	Martin Parretti
And our supporting and supportive cyclists:	John Kirk, Roy Watson, Robert Latham, Karl Macnaughton

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