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Reports that have been submitted to Council can be downloaded from www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny.

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.





Summary of Recommendations

I

Recommendation

Responsibility

Completion Date

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R03	<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"> Existing blue and green corridors within the city as highlighted in the Green Living Spaces Plan; Regeneration ambitions, particularly around the Enterprise Zone and economic areas; Existing partnerships in the city. <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 & Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	March 2014
R04	<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
R05	<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

R06 That the terms of references for the Cycling and Pedestrian Task Force and Cycling Forum are examined, giving users a new consultative



Recommendation

Responsibility

Completion Date

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R11	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
R12	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
R13	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
R14	That there is a single, simplified, instantly recognisable map of cycle routes for the city.		

Glossary

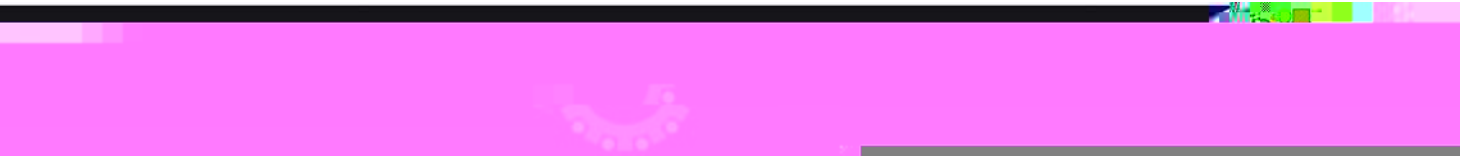
Organisation / Programme	Description
Birmingham City Council	<p>The City Council is the Planning Authority, Highway Authority, Traffic Authority, Street Works Authority, Technical Approval Authority and Land Drainage Authority for Birmingham.</p> <p>The last year has seen Districts given greater powers under devolution arrangements, with constitutional and structural changes.</p>
Bikeability	<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>http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/</p>
Birmingham Development Plan	<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>www.birmingham.gov.uk/plan2031</p>
Canal and River Trust	<p>The Canal & 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>http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/</p>

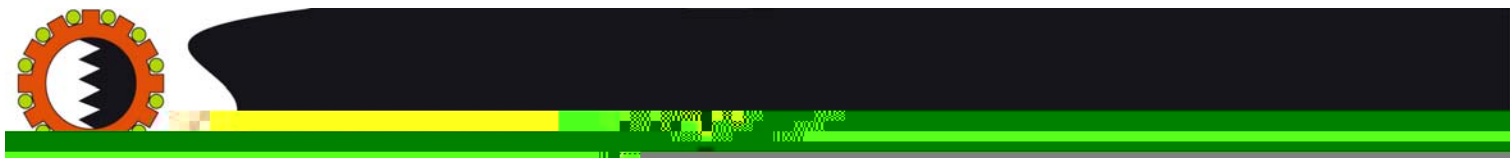
Centro

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



Organisation / Programme	Description
CTC, the national cycling charity	<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>http://www.ctc.org.uk/</p>
Cycle Chain	<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>http://www.cyclechain.org/</p>
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)	<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>centreofenterprise.com</p>





1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Review


Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) has been asked to review the effectiveness of the current framework for the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the RCMP. The review will focus on the reporting process, the support provided to victims, and the actions taken to prevent future incidents. The review will also consider the role of the RCMP in promoting a culture of respect and integrity.



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 ci



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 evn3Tuons Dili.en T knte



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).

2 Cycling, Walking and Canals

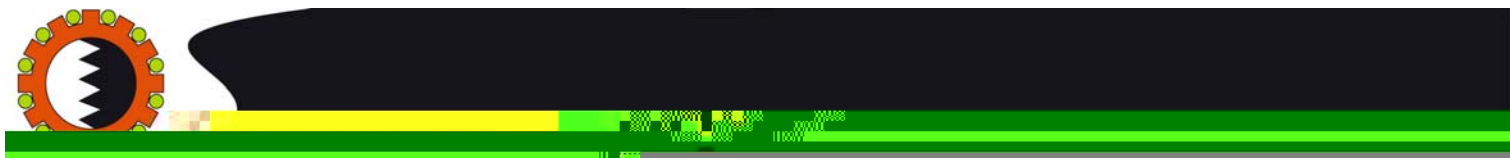
2.1 Introduction

- 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



more journeys were taken by bicycle than in 2011.² Other indicators demonstrating the rise in





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.⁹

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 dataha-..Te

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



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.¹¹

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



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

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




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.¹⁵ 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 for open6(roa1:20)-casca

- 
- 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



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



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.²³
- 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

²³ 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

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. ²⁵

- 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 household²⁶. 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 residentrm



... 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.²⁸
- 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.²⁹

2.6.2

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 2040.³⁰

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.”*³¹

2.6.5 Nationally the health benefits of cycling and walking have been recognised by the National Institute for Health and Clinical



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.³³

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 average³⁴ and the latest surveys show only 20% of the adult population participate in sport or any form of active recreation.³⁵ The city's health situation is low and the latest surveys show only 20% of the adult population participate in sport or any form of active recreation.³⁵





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.

- 
- 3.2.11 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.

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



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:

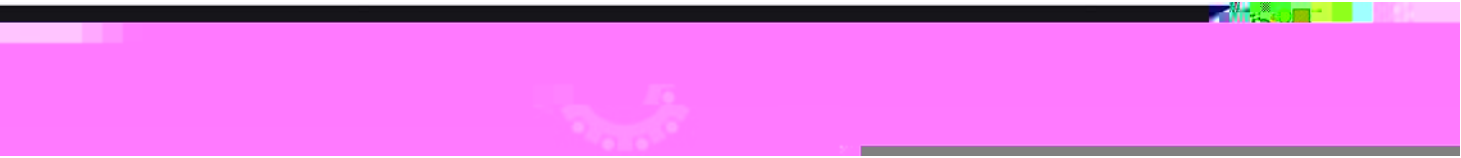
This fear has many roots: none more so than through the way cycling is presented in the media which confirms bias and really influences the way in cycling is perceived in terms of road conditions not being safe enough and this affects the decisions that potential cyclists and pedestrians make, not to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

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.⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵

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 ,c-5(level ,4Tsubj4o)-2(nab,ct)-[w cyclin





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 (CO₂) 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;
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3.2.30

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.⁴⁸

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

⁴⁸ 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 2013.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰ 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.

⁴⁹ Evidence presented by Centro – see evidence pack E11

⁵⁰ 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,



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


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.⁵⁴

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,



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



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.⁶⁰

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,(sti) Tc g6(an)0.0226

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 u J04 T-4(o)-4(r)wnu ‡(n)8(tany)-5(cor)




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

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.⁶⁴ 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



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



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



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 popularity⁶⁵ 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*"^{e9(n)7250 Tw -3.874 -1.957}.

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- 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 2017.⁶⁷
- 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 basio(Birmingham n)-5(edsn t)-4(o)2(buicl)-7 e modernc and sustaiW*able t(ansy)-5(or)-



- 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.⁶⁸ Birmingham could and should make a cross-party commitment to doing the same. This level of

⁶⁸ <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

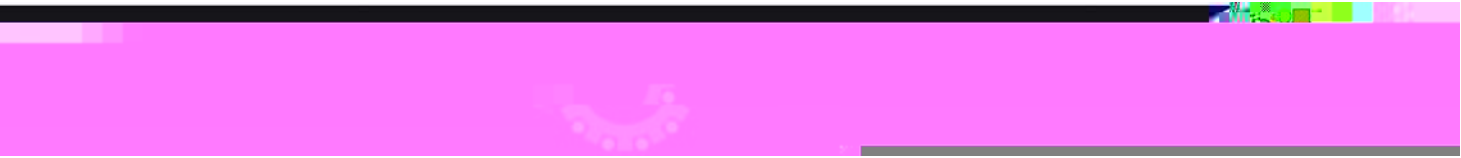


City Council has access to is piecemeal and directly linked to certain stretches of the canal. There development is rarely predictable as it depends on developers coming forward, and relies upon the potential of section 106 funds.

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.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R01	<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"> • Lines of co-responsibility across directorates, portfolios and partners; • Milestones against which progress can be clearly measured and improvements driven; • Mechanisms to facilitate behaviour change; • Targets which are as, or more, ambitious than other core cities. <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 & Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Green, Safe and Smart City</p>	<p>March 2014</p>



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
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</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



- 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.

	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"> • Building in local representation on current strategic partnerships such as the West Midlands Regional Board, Canal and River Trust; • Ensuring local planning and democratic structures are made best use of. 	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.⁶⁹

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”*.⁷⁰ 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

⁶⁹




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 it⁷¹

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



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 4th 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. Fesp Tc 071mple,ee Ser

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	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R09	<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 & Family Services</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Health & Wellbeing</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Development, Jobs & 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”.

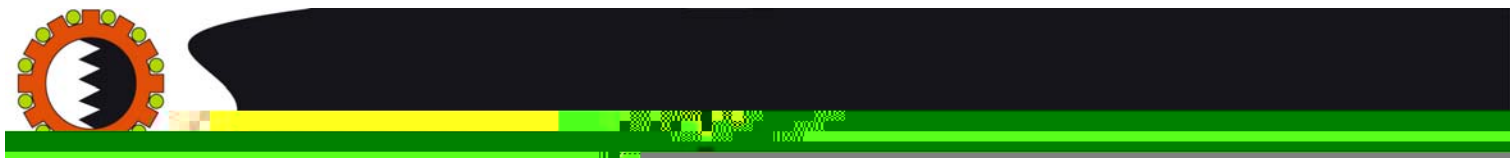
Physical Infrastructure

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(d)1(3-841.86 rv



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R12	<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 & Sustainability O&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 unab



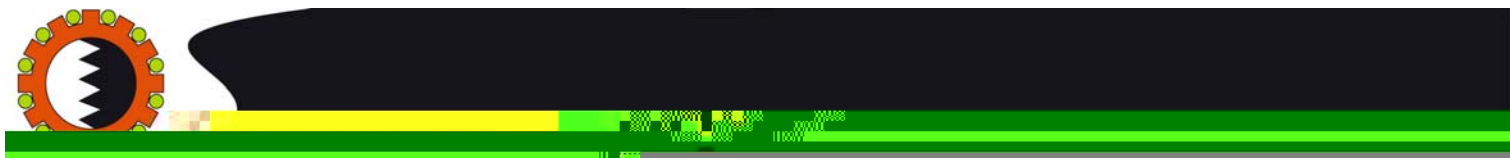
implications of such a programme, and the Department for Transport emphasis upon self-enforcement.⁷⁶

5.3.17


	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R13	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



5.3.25 Beyond the City Centre, the Committee recognises the need to assess wider wayfinding needs for



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.⁷⁸

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.⁷⁹

- 5.3.30 This may require ensuring that cycling, and confidence building is specifically addressed within



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R15	<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 & Skills</p> <p>Cabinet Member, Social Cohesion & Equalities</p>	December 2013



6 Conclusions


6.1 Summary

6.1.1



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



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.


Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
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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
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