

Cycling and Walking Survey

Survey Results

May 2015



To view more research from the Local Government Association Research and Information team please visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-intelligence>

Contents

- Contents..... 3
- Introduction 4
- Methodology..... 4
- Active Travel: Cycling and Walking 5
 - Cycling and walking plans 5
 - Drivers for investment..... 5
 - Promotion of cycling and/or walking 6
 - Barriers to cycle-proofing existing carriage ways 7
 - Future funding 8
 - Sources of funding..... 9
 - Local Economic Partnerships (LEP's)..... 9
 - Barriers to continued investment in cycling and/or walking11
 - National Policy.....12
 - Additional Comments12

Introduction

The funding and policy landscape by which councils are able to promote active travel have changed significantly in recent years. Looking ahead, through the new Infrastructure Act the Government is already committed to producing an Active Travel Strategy and how they intend to fund that strategy over the next 5 years. It will be important that the LGA engages with the development of this strategy in order to ensure that it is done in a way that supports local action and maximises value-for-money. The LGA therefore wants to understand how councils are promoting active travel and identify key funding challenges and policy barriers that prevent them from doing more. By active travel, we mean cycling and walking.

The findings from this survey will enable the LGA to influence the new government in support of councils' ambitions on cycling and walking.

Methodology

An online survey comprising 17 questions was sent electronically to heads of transport in all 149 upper tier councils in England¹. It was in the field between 17 April 2015 and 16 May 2015; reminders were sent to non-responding councils during the data collection process.

The survey was fully completed by 57 councils, a response rate of 38 per cent; Table 1 shows the response rate by region.

Tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the number of respondents who answered the question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey. Throughout the report, percentages may not add up to exactly 100 per cent due to rounding. Where the response base is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small difference can seem magnified.

	Respondents	Authorities	Response rate
	Count	Count	%
East Midlands	6	9	67
East of England	5	11	45
London	10	31	32
North East	7	12	58
North West	5	23	22
South East	7	19	37
South West	6	16	38
West Midlands	4	14	29
Yorkshire and the Humber	7	14	50
Total	57	149	38

¹ Non-LGA members were not included in the sample base

Active Travel: Cycling and Walking

This section provides detailed aggregated results for each question contained within the survey.

Cycling and walking plans

Three quarters of the survey respondents had a cycling and/or walking plan (75 per cent). Twenty three per cent did not have a walking plan and one respondent did not know (2 per cent).

Authorities who had a cycling and/or walking plan were asked what type of plan they had and when it was last updated. Of the 43 authorities who had a plan, nearly half (47 per cent) had updated it within the last two years and just under a third (29 per cent) had updated it between two and five years ago. Twenty nine respondents had a cycle only plan, fourteen of these authorities also had a walking only plan.

Table 2: If your council has a cycling and/or walking plan when was it last updated?				
	Combined cycling and walking plan	Cycling only plan	Walking only plan	Total: All plans
	%	%	%	%
Within the last 2 years	39	66	26	47
Between 2 to 5 years ago	44	21	26	29
More than 5 years ago	11	10	42	20
Don't know	6	3	5	5

Q1

Base: all respondents with a cycling and/or walking plan (43)

Drivers for investment

Authorities were asked to what extent they considered a number of motivators to be drivers within their council to invest in cycling and/or walking (Table 3). Ninety eight per cent of authorities considered to a great or moderate extent, the improvement of public health to be a driver. The second greatest driver was to enhance travel choices for residents (93 per cent considered it to be a driver to a great or moderate extent).

Respondents were able to provide additional drivers, the main themes were wider transport strategies, road safety and environmental reasons (predominately the improvement of air quality). Some authorities also stated tourism and leisure amenities.

Table 3: To what extent do you consider the following to be drivers for your council to invest in cycling and/or walking?

	To improve public health	To reduce traffic congestion	For regeneration / economic growth purposes	To enhance travel choices for residents	Other
	%	%	%	%	%
To a great extent	72	54	42	56	21
To a moderate extent	26	33	35	37	14
To a small extent	2	12	21	7	9
Not at all	0	0	2	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0

Q2

Base: all respondents (57)

Promotion of cycling and/or walking

Authorities were asked what their authority had done in the past, is doing now, or plans to do in the future to promote cycling and/or walking in the local area (Table 4). Councils were 'currently doing' the majority of activities. Three quarters (75 per cent) were currently promoting cycling and/or walking through schools, 65 per cent were currently implementing a cycle investment programme, 63 per cent were currently providing secure cycle parking and/or changing facilities and 60 per cent were cycle proofing new transport infrastructure.

The percentage of authorities who currently had a programme of cycle proofing existing main carriage ways was only 32 per cent, however an additional 26 per cent 'planned to use' this activity.

Forty two per cent of respondents had not used, or did not plan to use activities to encourage cycling and/or walking amongst black and minority ethnic groups; this is compared to nearly one in five authorities who were currently doing this.

Respondents were able to provide additional activities, these included cycle hire schemes, interactive websites and digital mapping tools as well as producing an infrastructure design guide and working with international design experts. The majority of additional activities were either done in the past two years or was currently being done.

Table 4: What has your authority done in the past, is doing now, or plans to do in the future to promote cycling and/or walking in the local area?

	Done over 2 years ago	Done in the past 2 years	Currently doing	Plan to use (again or for the first time)	Not used / do not plan to use	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A high level council champion and/or council-backed active travel champion	16	4	35	19	25	2
Cycle proofing new transport infrastructure (e.g. the design of new roads and junctions)	12	12	60	9	4	4
Programme of cycle proofing existing main carriageways	5	4	32	26	18	16
Provision of secure cycle parking and/or changing facilities	16	14	63	5	2	0
20 mph zones	12	23	44	9	7	5
Door-to-door journey planning	18	12	44	9	18	0
A cycling investment programme	14	14	65	5	0	2
A walking investment programme	16	11	46	9	14	5
Activities to encourage cycling and/or walking amongst black and minority ethnic groups	7	2	18	12	42	19
Promoting cycling and/or walking through schools	18	5	75	0	0	2
Employed a cycling and/or walking officer	26	5	42	2	23	2
Other	5	12	19	4	0	2

Q3

Base: all respondents (57)

Barriers to cycle-proofing existing carriage ways

Authorities were asked whether they considered there to be barriers to their council cycle-proofing more of their existing main carriage ways. Eighty six per cent of respondents considered that they have barriers (a count of 49), 9 per cent did not consider there to be barriers and five per cent did not know.

The respondents who considered there to be barriers to the cycle-proofing of more existing carriage ways were asked to what extent they considered a number of issues to be barriers (Table 5). Sixty five per cent of respondents considered insufficient funding to be a barrier to a great extent, followed by space – conflicts with moving traffic, which 57 per cent considered to be a barrier to a great extent.

Other barriers included pedestrian conflicts, physicality of the area and not having full control over all roads in the city i.e. trunk roads.

Table 5: To what extent do you consider the following to be barriers to your council cycle-proofing more of its existing main carriageways?

	Space – conflicts with bus stops and/or parking	Space – conflicts with moving traffic	Insufficient funding	Competing council priorities	Other
	%	%	%	%	%
To a great extent	47	57	65	35	12
To a moderate extent	39	29	21	37	5
To a small extent	12	14	15	27	0
Not at all	2	0	0	2	0
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0

Q4

Base: all respondents who considered there to be barriers to cycle-proofing more of their existing main carriage ways (49)

Future funding

Authorities were asked how, for their council, the estimated level of spending specifically dedicated to cycling in the financial year 2015/16 was expected to compare with 2014/15 (Table 6). Thirty two per cent expected that level of spending would remain broadly the same, over a quarter of respondents (28 per cent) expected there to be an increase and 20 per cent expected a decrease in spending.

Table 6: For your council, how is the estimated level of spending specifically dedicated to cycling in in the financial year 2015/16, expected to compare with 2014/15?

	%
Decrease by more than 20%	14
Decrease by between 11-20%	4
Decrease by between 5-10%	2
Remain broadly the same	32
Increase by between 5-10%	7
Increase by between 11-20%	2
Increase by more than 20%	19
Not applicable: we do not have spending specifically dedicated to cycling	12
Don't know	9

Q5

Base: all respondents who expected a decrease in spending (11)

Respondents who expected a decrease in spending levels were asked what the main reason were (Table 7). Over half expected a decrease in spending because there was a reduction in capital funding (55 per cent), the same percentage (55 per cent) also expected a decrease in spending because of the transfer of the capital element of Local Sustainability Transport Fund to the Local Growth Fund.

Other reasons for a decrease in spending included a drop following external grant funding, an end to one off funding and bid funding.

Table 7: If you expect a decrease in spending, please indicate the main reasons for this

	Per cent
Reductions in capital funding	55
Transfer of capital element of the Local Sustainability Transport Fund (LSTF) to the Local Growth Fund	55
Other	27
Reductions in core (revenue) funding	9
Changing council priorities	9
Through adopting more efficient methods of providing cycling and walking services	0
Don't know	0

Q5i

Base: all respondents (57)

Sources of funding

Authorities were asked to indicate the main sources of funding for their council's spending on cycling for 2015/16. Table 8 shows the key sources as well as the 'other government grants' and 'other sources' that were most frequently cited.

Table 8: Please indicate the main sources of funding for your council's spending on cycling for 2015/16

	%
Council core funding	35
Funding via the LEP	33
Public Health funding	21
Highways Maintenance funding	25
City Deals	14
Cycle city ambition grants	21
Other government grants:	56
LSTF	25
Transport for London	18
Integrated Transport Block	5
Other sources:	44
Section 106	17
Local Transport Plan	9
Sustrans	4
Not applicable: no sources of funding	0
Don't know	2

Q6

Base: all respondents (57)

Authorities were also asked whether they were aware of any European Union (EU) funding opportunities to promote cycling. Thirty nine per cent were aware of funding opportunities, whilst over half were not (51 per cent did not know of any funding opportunities); 11 per cent didn't know.

Local Economic Partnerships (LEP's)

Authorities were asked to what extent their council had been able to influence the Local Economic Partnership's (LEP's) strategic economic plan with reference to cycling and/or walking (Table 9). Less than two in five (38 per cent) felt that their council had been able to

influence the LEP's strategic economic plan to a great or moderate extent. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) however, felt that they had only been able to influence it to a small extent. Only one in 10 (11 per cent) thought that they had not been able to influence it at all.

Table 9: To what extent has your council been able to influence the LEP's strategic economic plan with reference to cycling and/or walking?

	%
To a great extent	5
To a moderate extent	33
To a small extent	26
Not at all	11
Don't know	25

Q8

Base: all respondents (57)

Authorities were then asked whether any cycling and/or walking measures proposed were considered by the LEP in the drafting of the current Strategic Economic Plan. Over half (53 per cent, 30 respondents) responded yes, cycling and/or walking measures proposed by their authority were considered by the LEP. Nineteen per cent said no, and 28 per cent said they didn't know.

Authorities who had proposed cycling and/or walking measures that were considered by the LEP in drafting the Strategic Economic Plan, were asked whether any of the measures feature in the final submission of the Strategic Economic Plan. Of the 30 respondents who had proposed measures, 90 per cent (27 authorities) said that their measures did feature in the final submission.

The same 30 respondents were asked whether the measures proposed by their authority with regards to cycling and/or walking were agreed in the final growth deal for funding. Sixty per cent said their councils proposals were agreed in the final growth deal (18 authorities) whilst 33 per cent (10 authorities) said they were not; two authorities did not know.

All authorities were asked with regard to the promotion of cycling and/or walking how satisfied or dissatisfied their authority was with its relationship with the LEP. Under a quarter (23 per cent) were satisfied with the council's relationship with the LEP, however nearly half (44 per cent) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; only one in 10 were dissatisfied (six authorities).

With the regard to the promotion of cycling and/or walking how satisfied or dissatisfied is your authority with its relationship with the LEP?

	Per cent
Satisfied	23%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	44%
Dissatisfied	11%
Don't know	23%

Q9

Base: all respondents (57)

Barriers to continued investment in cycling and/or walking

Authorities were asked if they would like to do more to promote cycling and/or walking now or in the future, the over whelming majority (96 per cent) said they would like to do more. No authorities said that they would not like to do more to promote cycling and/or walking; four per cent said they didn't know (count of two).

Authorities were then asked to what extent they considered a number of issues to be barriers to their authority doing more to invest in cycling and/or walking. The main issues were, to a great extent, a lack of revenue funding, 65 per cent; a lack of capital funding, 61 per cent; and uncertainty over continued levels of funding.

Competing council priorities was a barrier to a great and moderate extent for 71 per cent of authorities and complexity of accessing funding streams was a to a great and moderate extent a barrier for 63 per cent of authorities.

Over half considered that a lack of support from partner organisations was not a barrier at all (56 per cent), similarly a lack of technical expertise within the council was also not a barrier at all (54 per cent). Nearly half of respondents considered that inadequate powers and responsibilities within the council was also not a barrier at all (47 per cent).

Table 10: To what extent are the following considered to be barriers in stopping your authority from doing more to invest in cycling and/or walking?

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of capital funding	61	28	9	2	0
Lack of revenue funding	65	30	4	0	2
Uncertainty over continued levels of funding	58	26	9	5	2
Complexity of accessing funding streams	21	42	26	11	0
Inadequate powers and responsibilities within the council	2	14	37	47	0
Competing council priorities	25	46	21	9	0
Lack of technical expertise within the council	4	14	28	54	0
Physical characteristics of the area	14	26	28	32	0
Lack of support from partner organisations	0	7	32	56	5
Other	14	12	0	0	0

Authorities were asked to briefly describe some of the ways their council is overcoming, or seeking to overcome some of the barriers that stop their authority from doing more to invest in cycling and/or walking. As well as provide any best practice examples where their council had made efficiency improvements in the provision and delivery of cycling and/or walking services.

Key themes were as follows:

- Partnership working within the council and authority area, including community groups and public health as well as externally including charities, the business community, schools, Active Travel Consortium (Sustrans), cycling and walking organisations and Transport for London.

- Early incorporation of cycle schemes and projects and working directly with developers, as well as using section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.
- Bid funding and sourcing alternative funding, including from the European Union, National Lottery and bidding through the LEP

National Policy

Authorities were asked, other than increased funding, what changes if any, to national policy on local transport would make it easier for their council to invest more in cycling and/or walking. There were a number of suggestions from over 40 authorities. The approach most cited was that of a national approach to cycling and/or walking:

“Clarity on long term national strategies is valuable to provide certainty of commitment..... Planning and development policies nationally which attach value to sustainability and more prominence in the low carbon agenda.”

Metropolitan district, Yorkshire and Humber

Funding was also a key theme, although beyond increased funding, suggestions were more concerned with streamlining funding, reducing the number of funding streams and receiving funding from LEP's:

“Consolidation of various funding streams to simplify processes and less reliance on competitive bidding processes to give certainty of future funding levels”

County Council, East Midlands

Other suggestions were concerned with the role of traffic regulations, design of provision of difficulty of working within existing infrastructure legislation.

Additional Comments

At the end of the survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments in regards to cycling and/or walking that were not covered in the survey. There were a number of comments provided and whilst there were no dominant themes, respondents took the opportunity to comment on funding uncertainty, the need for dedicated funding, an inequality in funding for rural areas and the need for a more holistic approach to the promotion of cycling and/or walking.



Local Government Association

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk
www.local.gov.uk

© Local Government Association, July 2014

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio, please contact us on 020 7664 3000.

We consider requests on an individual basis.