



Active  
Travel  
England

# Active Travel England Corporate Plan

2023 - 2025



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## 1. Foreword by Jesse Norman



The Government's work to improve active travel will bring huge benefits to the nation's economy, health, and environment,

and I am excited about the progress that has been made.

Hundreds of schemes have been completed across England over the last few years, and these in turn have enabled thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people to walk, wheel or cycle to their destinations. As a result, they have got healthier, cut their fuel costs and lowered their carbon footprints, while many children have seen their school runs transformed.

The effectiveness of this approach can be clearly seen in the statistics: in part as a result of the pandemic, active travel accounted for 45% of short journeys in towns and cities in 2021, an increase from 41% in 2018/19. Now the Government's ambition is to build on this success, so that by 2030 50% of all short journeys are walked, wheeled or cycled.

This corporate plan is expected to play an important part in ensuring this target is met, as Active Travel England continues its work ensuring councils deliver well-designed schemes that make our roads safer and more accessible for all.

**Jesse Norman,  
Active Travel Minister,  
Department for Transport**

**// Active travel accounted for 45% of short journeys in towns and cities in 2021."**

## 2. Foreword by Chris Boardman

**// A transport vision favoured by the next generation."**



Over the past decade, I've had cause to visit schools up and down the country and whenever I find myself in front of

kids, I take the opportunity to ask them the same two questions: "Hands up who scooted or rode to school this morning?" and "Hands up who'd like scoot or ride to school?" The first question often gets a smattering of raised hands, the second almost always sees every arm in the room pointing skywards.

It's a powerful thing, when you see a generation, the ones we're currently making transport decisions for, tell you how they'd like to make their daily journeys, and it's hard to argue when their choice is healthy, sustainable and neighbourhood-enhancing.

Catalysed by the need to decarbonise, towns and cities across the world are now investing at pace in active travel to ensure their residents have the choice to make journeys under their own steam. Some have joined the movement for moving to reap the proven rewards. Many more have simply concluded that they can no longer afford the cost of the status quo.

Active travel is convenient, cheap, low carbon and health giving. It is community-enhancing, equitable and sustainable in every possible sense. Our job is to help local authorities across the country build that transport vision, the one favoured by the next generation, back into our lives. It is a task that Active Travel England is excited to help deliver.

**Chris Boardman,  
National Active Travel  
Commissioner**

## 3. Who we are

Active Travel England is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Transport.

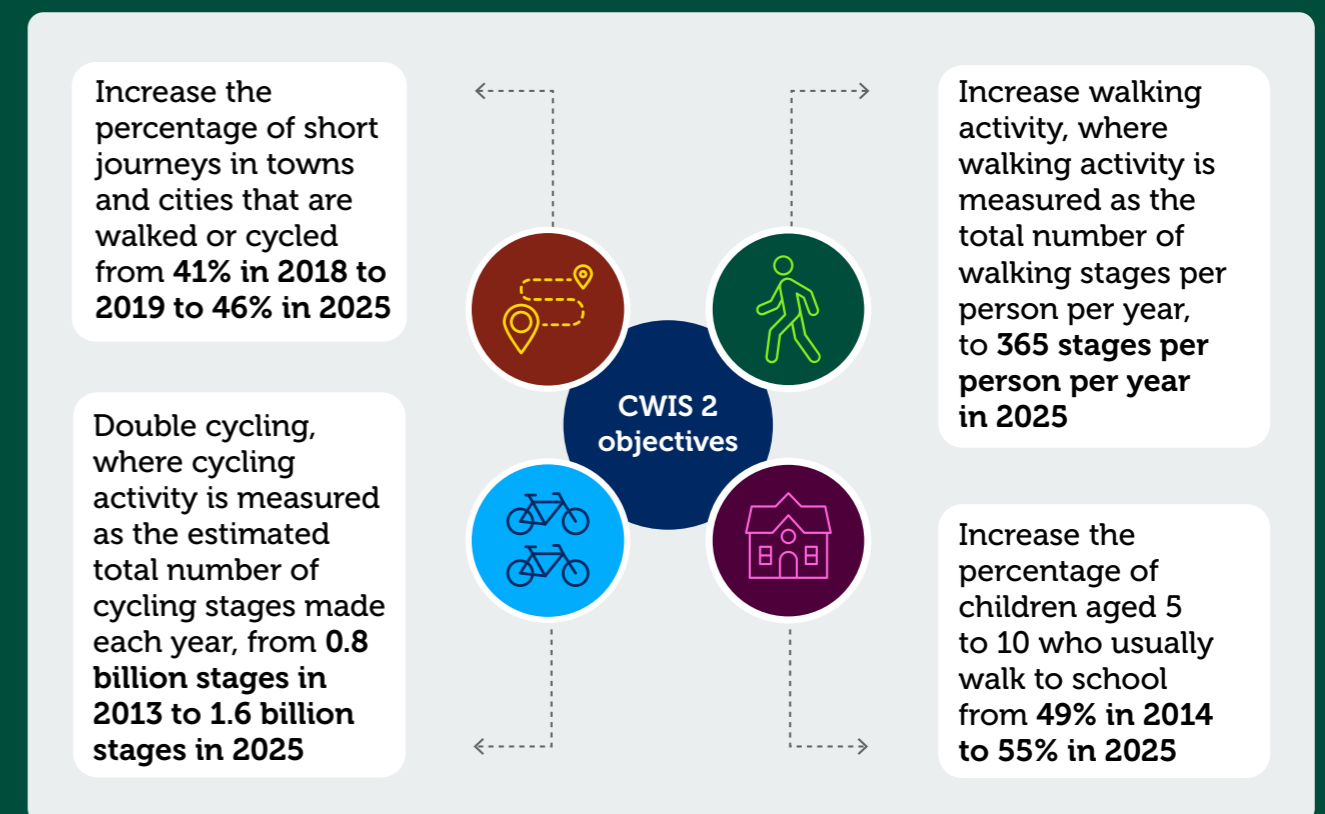
We were established in August 2022 to meet the vision set out in Gear Change, for half of short journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. The objectives in the first and second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) build on this vision to provide us with a longer-term strategy to deliver real change.

**Our vision is:  
For everyone in the country to have an attractive and safe choice to walk, wheel or ride**

We are delivering the government's mission to make walking, wheeling and cycling an attractive choice for everyday trips by:

- Investing in and improving standards for active travel schemes across England
- Integrating active travel in the planning and development system
- Focusing on inclusivity and accessibility and giving people from all walks of life the opportunity to try active travel
- Helping councils to access state-of-the-art data and analysis to use in active travel planning and design

### Objectives in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy





## Progress to date

We were formally established as an agency in August 2022. Since then, we have rapidly built our workforce and focused on creating the framework that will enable us to operate effectively.

Establishing our governance framework was a significant step that we finalised in March 2023 with the appointment and inaugural meeting of the Board and Audit and Risk Committee. Our governance structure is set out below and will ensure that the leadership of the agency is set up for success.

Another major step in building strong foundations was securing our statutory consultee status and building the capability internally to ensure we can be effective and support new developments in the most appropriate way.

This has been complemented by the establishment and publication of a baseline rating of local authority capability in delivering active travel schemes. This assessment was the first of its kind and has established the baseline needed to target support with the aim of increasing capability in delivering quality infrastructure.

Alongside our ongoing funding programme, we have taken some great steps into establishing the agency. This plan sets out our priorities and resources for our first full year of operation and beyond.

## 4. Our Governance

Active Travel England is headed up by National Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, who is also the appointed Chair of the Board.


**“If we want millions more people to walk, wheel and cycle to schools, shops and workplaces, we need to give them what they need to make the switch.”**

– Chris Boardman, National Active Travel Commissioner

Chris Boardman and our Chief Executive Officer, Danny Williams, are supported by our Senior Leadership Team.


## Our structure

Inspections



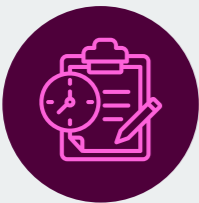
Our inspectorate is focused on increasing the capability of local authorities through the provision of support, training and technical expertise. We inspect final schemes, but our focus is on early intervention to ensure quality is designed into schemes.

Data & Analysis




The Data and Analysis team provides data analysis, modelling, insight, and tools to support wider ATE activities. The Analysis team focuses on collating, modelling, and visualising data to provide insight into national strategies and policies. The Data and Digital team uses data science and software development techniques to deliver the tools that transport authorities need to ensure cost effective investment in active travel.

Planning & Development



Our Statutory Consultee function is overseen by the Planning and Development directorate. Working closely with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), the Development Management Casework Team reviews and provides recommendations on planning applications. This is complemented by the Planning Policy & Strategy Team who work with LPAs, developers, DLUHC and others involved in the planning system to embed active travel in new developments at the earliest possible stage.

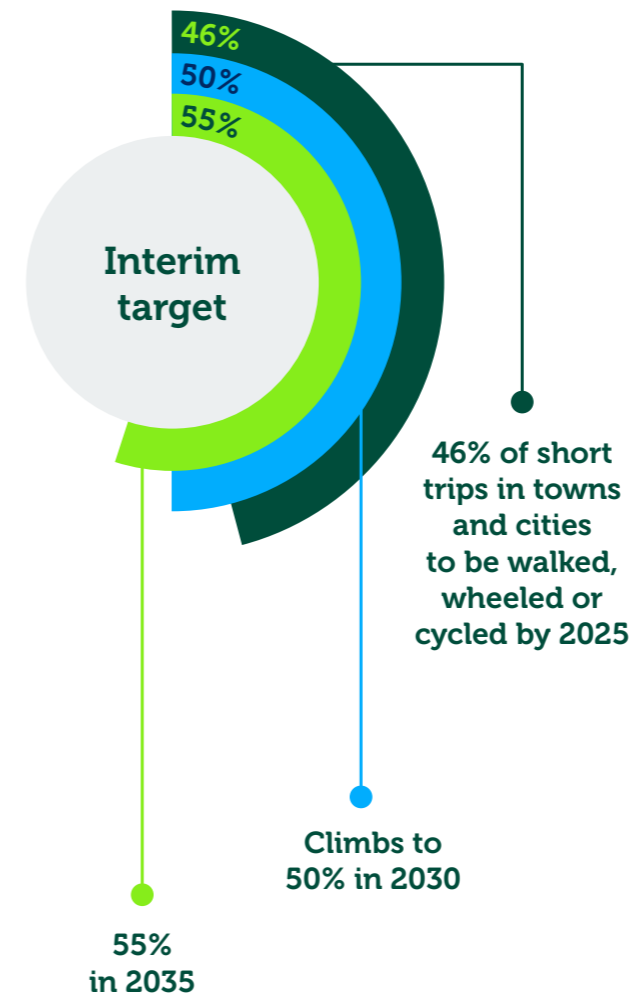
Operations



The operations directorate is led by the Chief Operating Officer and provides the strategic enablers that make the organisation a success. Providing all corporate support, including finance, programme management and HR, internal and external communications, secretariat and strategy and performance, we ensure that the organisation can run effectively and efficiently. Our investment team is part of the Operations directorate, managing the funding support to deliver active travel schemes.

## Powers

We have a function as a statutory consultee on planning applications for major new developments and on land used for highways. Active Travel England has a role in the planning system as a statutory consultee for development management via Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. ATE participates in consultations for planning applications for large scale developments, including housing developments.



## 5. Delivering the strategic priorities

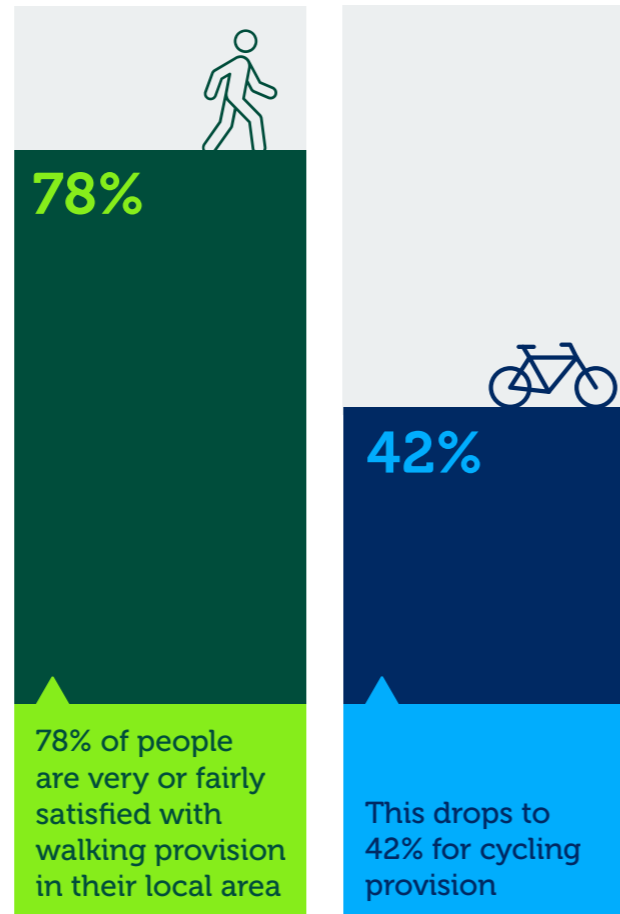
- 5.1 Considerable progress has been made to deliver the government's targets on active travel, with the proportion of short journeys in towns and cities increasing from 41% in 2018/19 to 45% in 2021. We will continue to lead on operational delivery while supporting the Department for Transport which will continue to lead on all aspects of active travel policy, such as setting the available funding and objectives to increasing levels of active travel.
- 5.2 Active travel has far-reaching benefits beyond our strategic objectives. It makes a considerable contribution to both local and national economies while improving people's quality of life, saving households money, and helping to address some of the key public health and environmental challenges of our time.
- 5.3 As a part of the Department for Transport family, we will directly support the Department's strategic priorities outlined in their Outcome Delivery Plan. This includes growing and levelling up our economy and addressing other regional disparities.
- 5.4 Inclusivity and accessibility will sit at the heart of our programmes. We will work with a range of bodies to make this happen including the Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and establish an inclusive advisory panel involving councils to help steer our outputs.

**// Exercise improves health, and Active Travel England's mission is shared by the health service".**

**- Sir Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer Expert Adviser for Active Travel England**



- 5.5** We will enable people to use our roads network for active travel by driving up standards of delivery and design, making low carbon and low-cost transport a real choice for everyone.
- 5.6** We will help give children back their transport independence, including through a commitment to give every child access to Bikeability cycle training to provide an understanding of safer road use.



<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts08-availability-and-distance-from-key-local-services>

## 6. Strategic Priorities for 2023/24

### 6.1 Invest in and improve standards of active travel delivery across the country

Our strategic priorities for 2023/2024 are:

1. Invest in and improve standards for active travel schemes across the country.
2. Integrate active travel in the planning system.
3. Give more people from all walks of life the opportunity to try active travel.
4. Transform how data and analysis is used in active travel planning.

**6.1.1** We will enable people to walk, wheel and cycle and protect them when they do so by creating safe accessible infrastructure. We will work with local authorities and other bodies such as National Highways, to deliver this.

**In 2020, only 45% of disabled people in England outside of London were satisfied with pavements compared to 54% of non-disabled people.**

**Disability, accessibility and blue badge statistics: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).**



- 6.1.2** As an inspectorate, Active Travel England will work to upskill and empower local transport authorities. This includes the provision of dedicated active travel funding, which totals more than £850 million since 2020 and at least a further £100m over the next two years. A robust, supportive assurance and inspection process will be used to ensure active travel schemes are safe and accessible and to take forward lessons learnt.
- 6.1.3** To drive up standards in schemes, we must identify capability. We published our first local authority capability ratings in March 2023. These ratings will be at the core of designing our support to local transport authorities. We will upskill local authorities and re-assess annually, with the next ratings assessment taking place in summer 2023. We have set an ambition of having no level zero authorities in England by 2024.
- 6.1.4** Our local authority capability ratings will be used to drive the effective allocation of funding and will also help drive up the standard of schemes funded by other government sources.
- 6.1.5** We will support local transport authorities to develop and improve their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans as part of their wider Local Transport Plans, including the development of a pipeline of active travel projects. We will use our Active Travel Infrastructure Platform to show the completion rate of these local network plans.
- 6.1.6** We will continue to build strategic partnerships with organisations that can support our work including National Highways and NHS England.

## 6.2 Integrate active travel in the planning system

- 6.2.1** Active Travel England will support developers and planning authorities to deliver new developments and ensure active travel is embedded at the outset. We will work with developers, local transport, highways and planning authorities to promote what good looks like and adopt consistent standards for the whole country.
- 6.2.2** This will help to free up developer funding for other necessary local infrastructure and will potentially reduce the impact of new developments on existing residents living nearby. Healthier neighbourhoods are good for families and businesses alike, and our work will seek to address the concerns of local people that major new developments will lock new residents into car dependency.



## 6.3 Give more people from all walks of life the opportunity to try active travel

- 6.3.1** Active Travel England will support local authorities to provide safe and accessible infrastructure that enables people to choose to walk, wheel or cycle to their destination. We will support them to deliver activities to help people make the most of new infrastructure to access everyday destinations such as schools, workplaces and local high streets.
- 6.3.2** We will form close partnerships with organisations that have a focus on inclusivity and accessibility such as the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee and we will create inclusive advisory councils to help guide our outputs. We will focus on issues such as women's personal safety and will work with partners such as the Home Office, local police forces and local authorities to gain a better understanding of how we can make sure scheme designs will help make more women feel safe.
- 6.3.3** We will help local authorities and other delivery partners to improve the skills, confidence and road awareness of both children and adults, making active travel a safe and real choice for everyone.
- 6.3.4** We will continue to focus on building capability and confidence in the next generation through the Bikeability cycle training programme, providing children with the skills they need to use the road safely.

## 6.4 Transform how data is used in active travel planning

- 6.4.1** Accessible and integrated data and analysis is key to effective travel planning and in designing longer-term transport plans, specifically local walking and cycling strategies. Not only this, but it allows local authorities to take a more strategic and value for money approach to travel options, focusing on where the most impact can be made.
- 6.4.2** We will utilise up-to-date techniques and software to monitor and track current infrastructure, transport plans and active travel schemes so that we can support local authorities, developers and delivery partners in delivering what is needed now and in preparing for the future. We will explore options to build bespoke tools, all under the principle of open data.
- 6.4.3** We have a strong ethos of monitoring, evaluation and data collection, and its application to decision making. We will build on existing research in the field of active travel and expand data collection, sharing it publicly so that transport delivery bodies can use data to help improve local decision making.



# 7. What we need to be successful

## 7.1 Work in partnership

**7.1.1.** We will work with delivery partners to integrate our assessment principles, guidance and planning advice. We will also work with colleagues across government to influence policy, where we can add value.

**7.1.2** As an executive agency and part of the Department for Transport family, our success is a joint endeavour. We will continue to work closely with our sponsor team, other areas of the Department and other government bodies to deliver our joint priorities. The Department leads on policy development and will set the priorities and outcomes for active travel. We will lead on delivery, reporting progress against key indicators.

**7.1.3** Non-government organisations are also key partners, helping us to deliver real benefits to communities across England. We will continue to work together with them to ensure that interventions are having a real impact.

**7.1.4** We will continue to build on the positive relationships we have developed with the private sector, including developers, to support the integration of active travel into new housing and developments through guidance and support.



## 7.2 Headline performance indicators

Key Performance Indicator	2023/2024 Target
Planning applications within our thresholds responded to within the statutory timescale (%)	<b>100%</b>
Local authority active travel capability ratings	<b>Increase on 22/23</b>
Completed inspected schemes with known critical issues (%)	<b>Establish a baseline</b>
ATE capital projects completed on schedule	<b>Increase on 22/23</b>
People actively engaged via activation programmes (including Bikeability)	<b>Increase on 22/23</b>
Employee engagement score as assessed by the annual people survey	<b>Increase on 22/23</b>
Official correspondence completed on time (%)	<b>100%</b>



## 7.3 People Strategy

- 7.3.1 To achieve our strategy, we need an engaged and energised workforce that is supported to be the absolute best. Our people are our biggest asset, and we recognise the value a diverse workforce can bring to how we approach our objectives and how we work every day. We will align our activities to three key themes: Leadership, Culture and Talent.
- 7.3.2 We have attracted some of the best talent across a range of professions and we will develop and deliver a people strategy that builds on this, creating a high performing, inclusive and talented workforce that is empowered to deliver.
- 7.3.3 We will build on our current people processes in alignment with wider Government HR strategy and in support of the Civil Service core values and the overarching Department for Transport strategic priority: Be an Excellent Department.
- 7.3.4 Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion will be the 'golden thread' underpinning our people plan, where we will aim to be an employer of choice. We want Active Travel England to be a great and inclusive place to work and to offer good quality, rewarding jobs for the talented people who want to work here.
- 7.3.5 We understand the opportunities that work experience, apprenticeships and internships can offer in creating opportunities for people from all walks of life. This is a core theme in our people strategy. We will make best use of different recruitment routes to develop our talent pipeline and will develop partnerships with charities and stakeholders to

understand how we can provide career opportunities for all. As part of this commitment, we will take the necessary steps to achieve Level 2: Disability Confident Employer status.

## 7.4 Corporate services

- 7.4.1 Our corporate services function provides the insight, planning and business support that we need to be successful and achieve the ambition that we have set.
- 7.4.2 We receive most of our back-office functions from the Department, and this allows us to benefit from economies of scale and provide significant efficiencies in delivering our essential services. Where appropriate, we have developed our own work streams to ensure that we have the most appropriate and dedicated support. Our retained services include:
  - 7.4.3 Programme management – We have a complex programme of work that crosses multiple themes and functions. Our PMO provides the coordination and programme management to ensure we can deliver our objectives and benefit from full integration and collaboration with partners



- 7.4.4 Finance and assurance – Effective management of our resources is of the upmost importance to us. Our finance and assurance colleagues provide financial leadership to the organisation and have developed our internal control environment, making sure we operate appropriately and compliantly with all legislation and guidance.
- 7.4.5 Strategy and secretariat – A strong governance framework underpins all that we do, from Board level to on the ground delivery. Our strategy and secretariat team provides the support needed to inform better decision making and leadership.
- 7.4.6 Communications and engagement – Communications is key to delivering our objectives through proactive announcements and campaigns that champion active travel. Our communications team also supports effective national and local stakeholder management and leads on internal communications, ensuring that our employees are engaged and informed.



## 7.5 Financial Plan 23/24

£000s	Resource	Capital
Pay costs	6,792	
Non-pay costs:	51,648	54,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,440</b>	<b>54,000</b>
<b>of which</b>		
Research		1,000
Digital	479	
Staff related costs	428	
Other	1,587	
Grants	49,154	53,000



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