



Planning  
Inspectorate



# Sustainable locations

Transport considerations in the light of the revised Framework

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# Outline of topics to be covered

- **The Framework's approach to transport vs highways**
- Safety and residual traffic effects – the para 116 tests
- Move to a new approach – vision based
- Prioritising walking cycling and public transport
- **Background, transport trends and drivers of change**
- Car ownership, income and house tenure
- Journey purposes and modal choice
- **Applying the transport hierarchy**
- Assessing proposals
- Questions and dilemmas

## Questions?

- Ask a question via the Q&A panel in Microsoft Teams.
- Upvote the questions you'd most like answered
- We will respond to questions during the Q&A session.





## The paragraph 116 tests

Don't stop at this paragraph – look at the chapter as whole!

- Refusing development on highway grounds should only come **AFTER** all other options have been considered
- Highway safety is not just about the safe movement of vehicles and the collision record. Will all users of the network feel safe?
- It will be exceptional for any development to have a **SEVERE** effect on the operation of the network. Has every way of reducing car-based trip generation been explored?





## The shift

### **Historically: predict and provide**

- Looked at past trends
- Plans based on these continuing
- This is not working!

### **Going forward: vision-led approach**

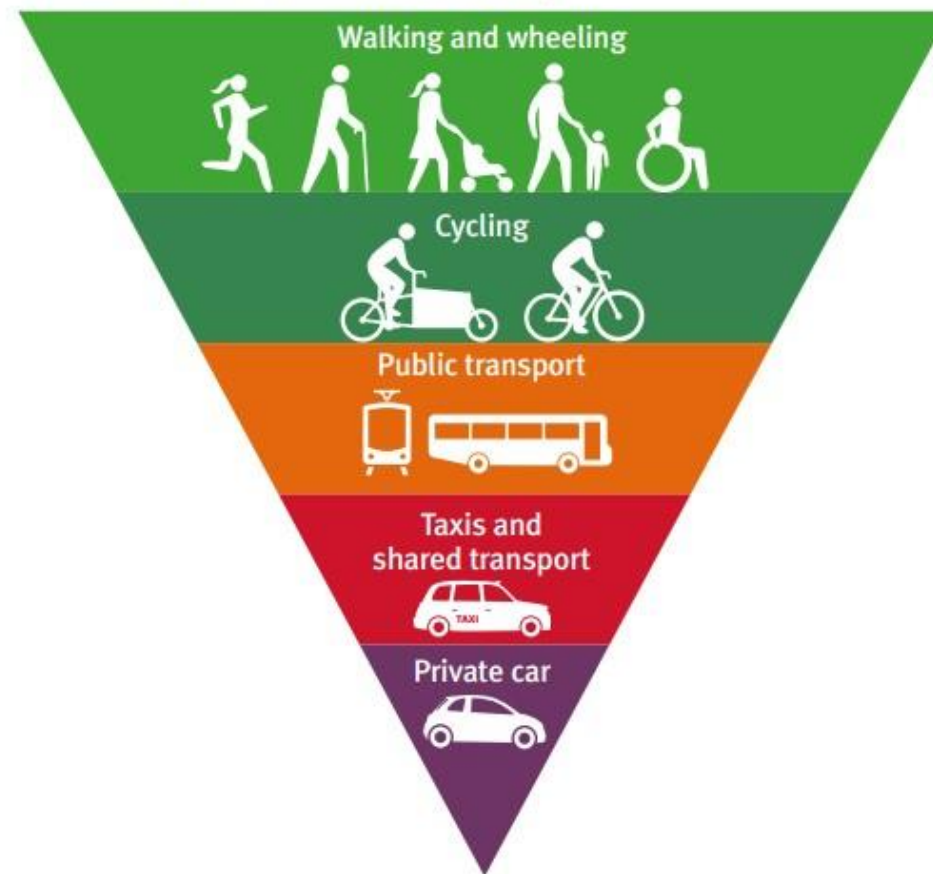
- This is now advocated in the Framework.

## Framework's approach

- Directing development to sustainable locations - para 11 d) ii
- Consider transport early using a vision-led approach – para 109
- Manage patterns of growth using locations that offer genuine travel choice – para 110
- Sustainable modes should be prioritised – para 115
- Priority to pedestrians and cyclists, then public transport – para 117



## The sustainable transport hierarchy







# Why is transport and accessibility important?

- Movement of people and goods is essential to the economy
- We need access to shopping (food), employment, education, health facilities, leisure and for social interaction
- Accessibility should be at reasonable **cost**, in reasonable **time** with reasonable **ease**







# Getting around depends on:

- Place  
City  
Town  
rural area)



- Us  
age,  
gender  
physical abilities  
income





# It's not all about cars!!

- Transport problems congestion, pollution, injuries
- Accessibility is linked to equalities and opportunities
- Travel has social/economic/environmental consequences







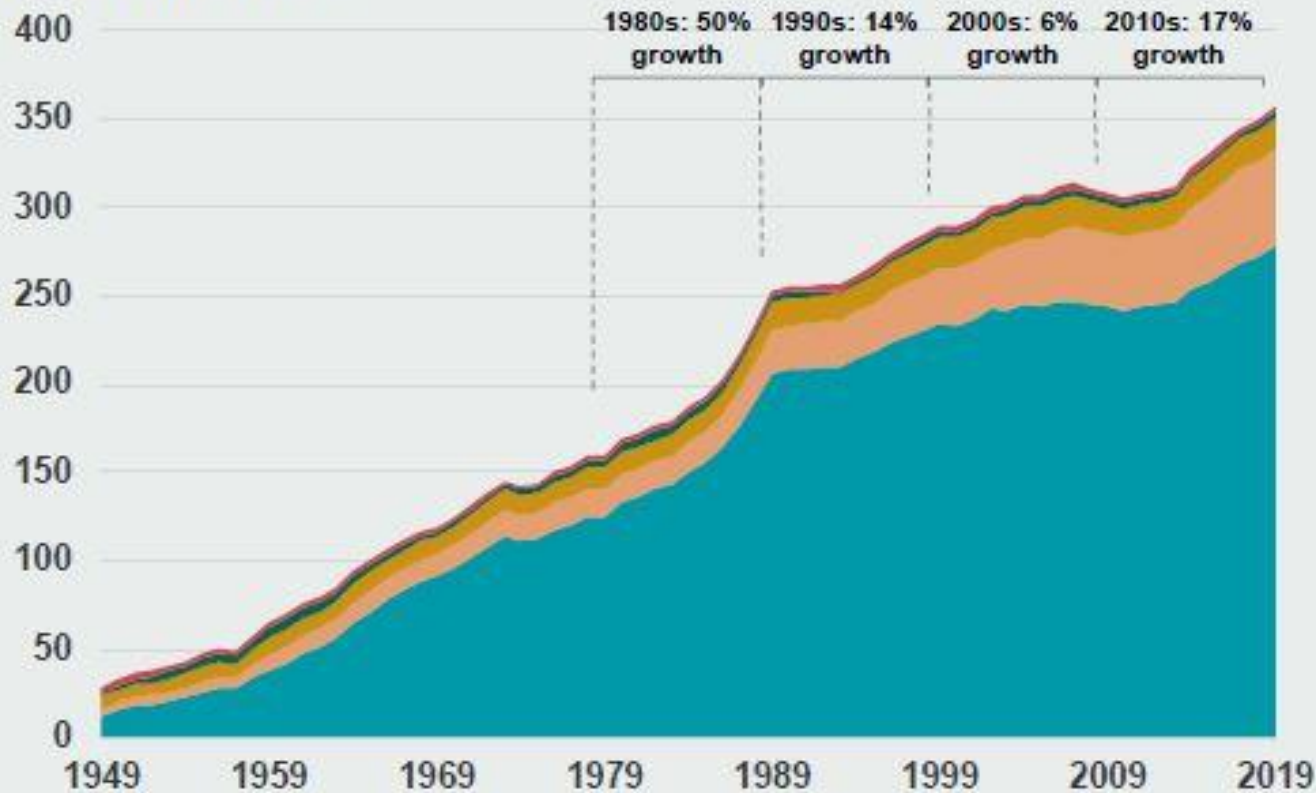
# Long-term traffic trends

Traffic and the link to economic growth

Since 1949 motor vehicle traffic has increased more than twelve-fold from 28.9 to 356.5 billion vehicle miles, largely driven by steady growth in car traffic.

## Motor vehicle traffic in Great Britain, since 1949

Billion vehicle miles



Change 1949 - 2019



Buses & coaches

-3%



Motorcycles & scooters

+57%



Lorries (Heavy Goods Vehicles)

+123%



Vans (Light Commercial Vehicles)

+1254%



Cars & Taxis

+2106%

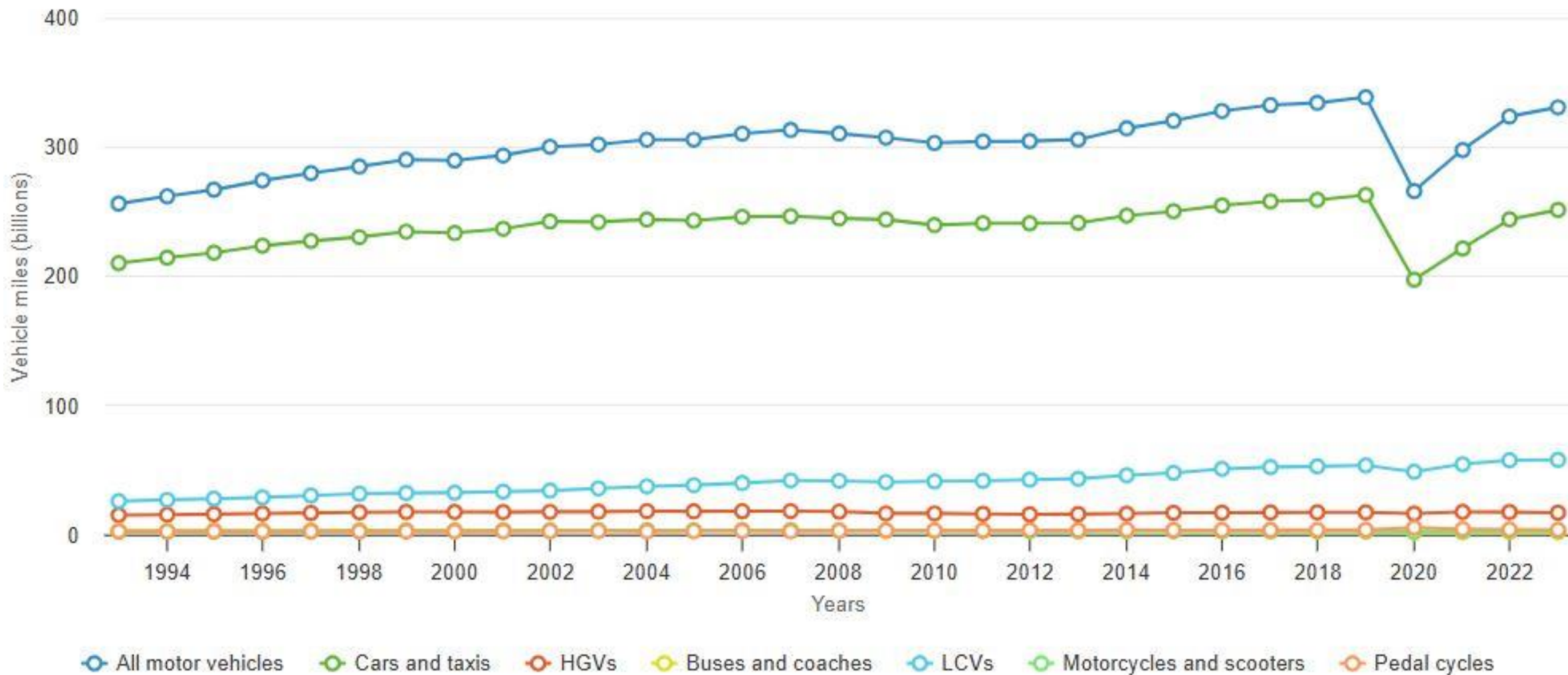
All motor vehicles

+1134%



# Traffic trends since 1990s

The Covid effects





# Why promote sustainable transport?

## Cannot build our way out of congestion

- Environmentally damaging
- Too costly

## Drivers for change

- Climate change – 25% of GHG
- Health - inactivity is bad for us
- Emissions/air quality
- Nature recovery



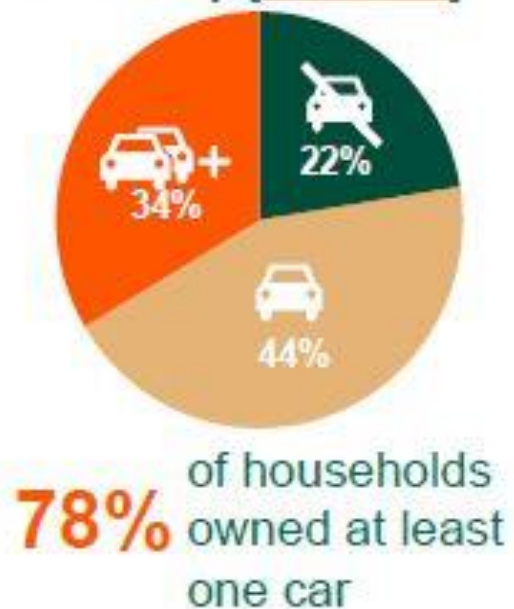




## Some basic facts and figures about ‘us’

- 41.2m road vehicles registered including 33.6m cars

Car ownership [[NTS0205](#)]



Licence holding [[NTS0201](#)]





# Income, car ownership and home ownership

## Lowest 10% of earners

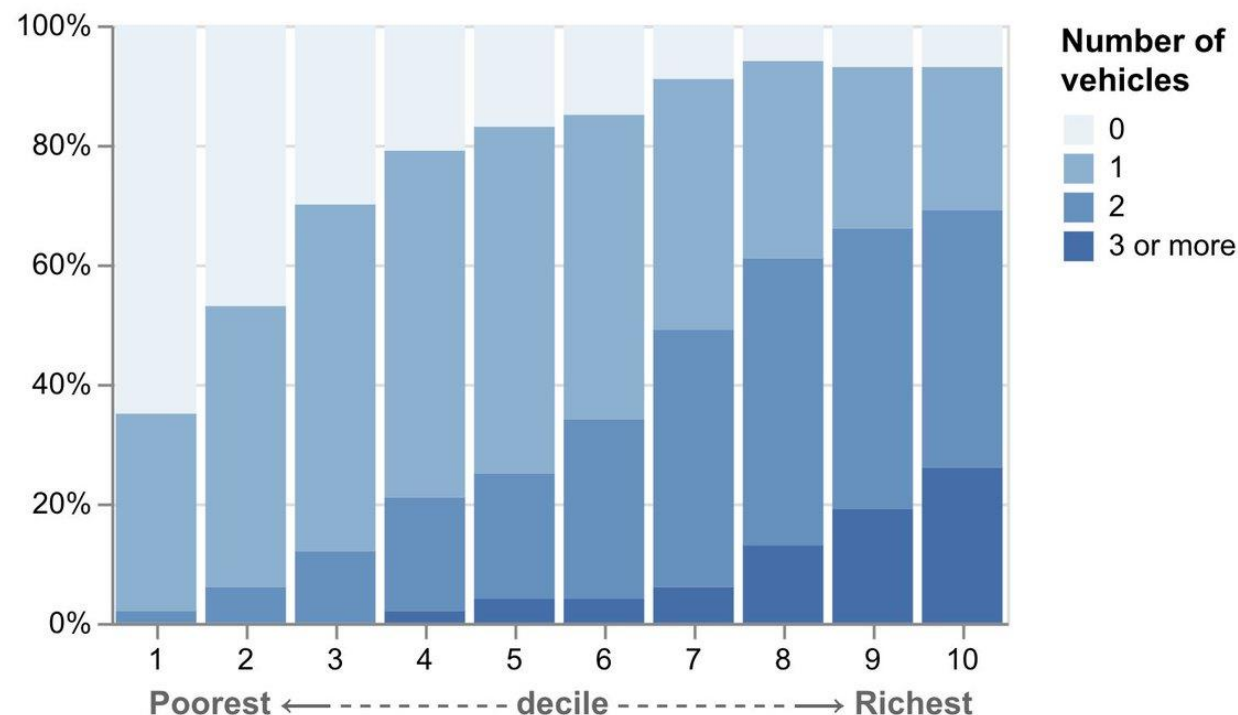
- 33% have a car

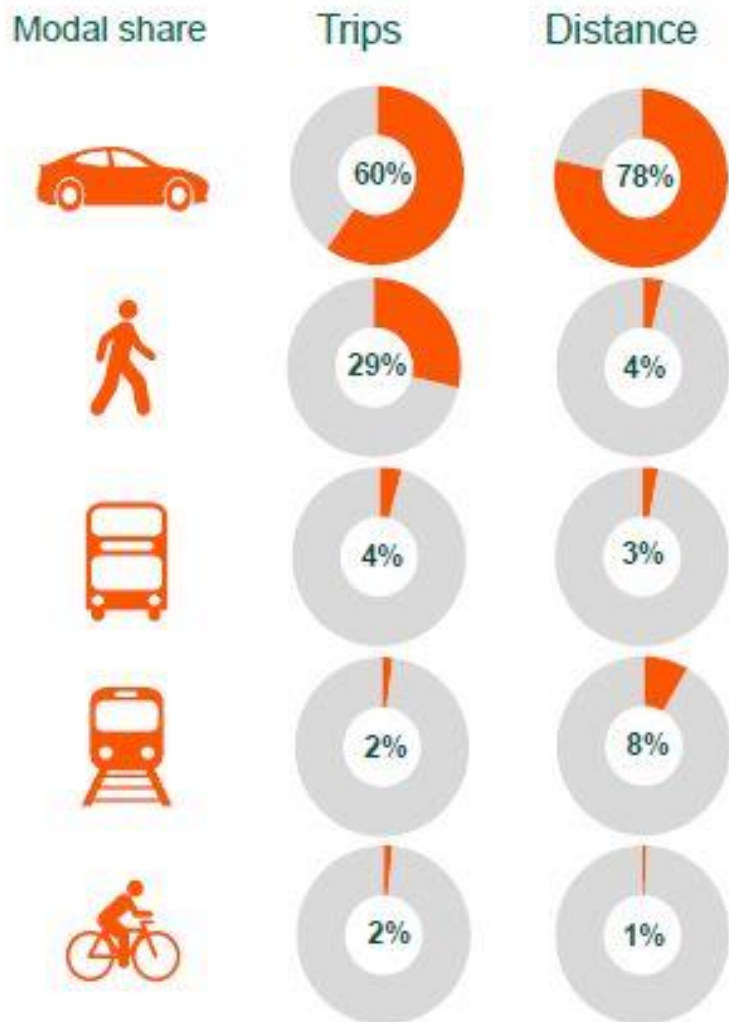
## Top 10% of earners

- 24% have 1 car
- 43% have 2 cars
- 26% have more than 2 cars

Nearly 90% of homeowners have a car compared to 65% who rent privately and 46% of those in the social rental sector

Proportion of households with cars by income group





- An average of 18 trips/person/week
- A reduction of 4% from pre-pandemic levels
- Distances have increased by 11% since 2022
- But are still 8% below those observed in 2019
- The proportion of trips walked has increased by 3% since 2019
- Proportion of trips made by car reduced by 1% since 2019

## In 2023

- 18% were shopping trips
- 13% were commuting
- 9% 'other' including just going for a walk. This is a shift since 2019 when other most common purposes were leisure and personal business.

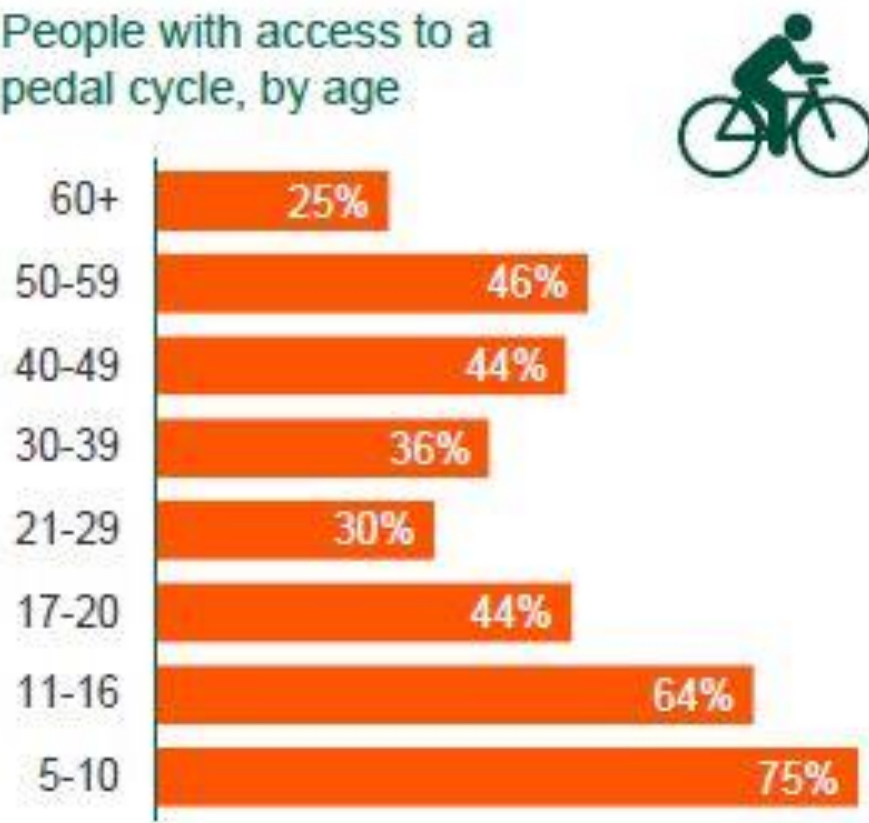




## The potential for bike use

- The majority of children have a bike
- This drops off in young adulthood
- Rises as we get older
- Falls away rapidly past age of 60

People with access to a pedal cycle, by age





# More about a vision-led approach

The role of planning

- Movement is integral to design of high-quality places
- Modal shift should be encouraged
- Identify and pursue opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport
- Avoid and mitigate effects of additional traffic
- Development in rural areas should need to be there

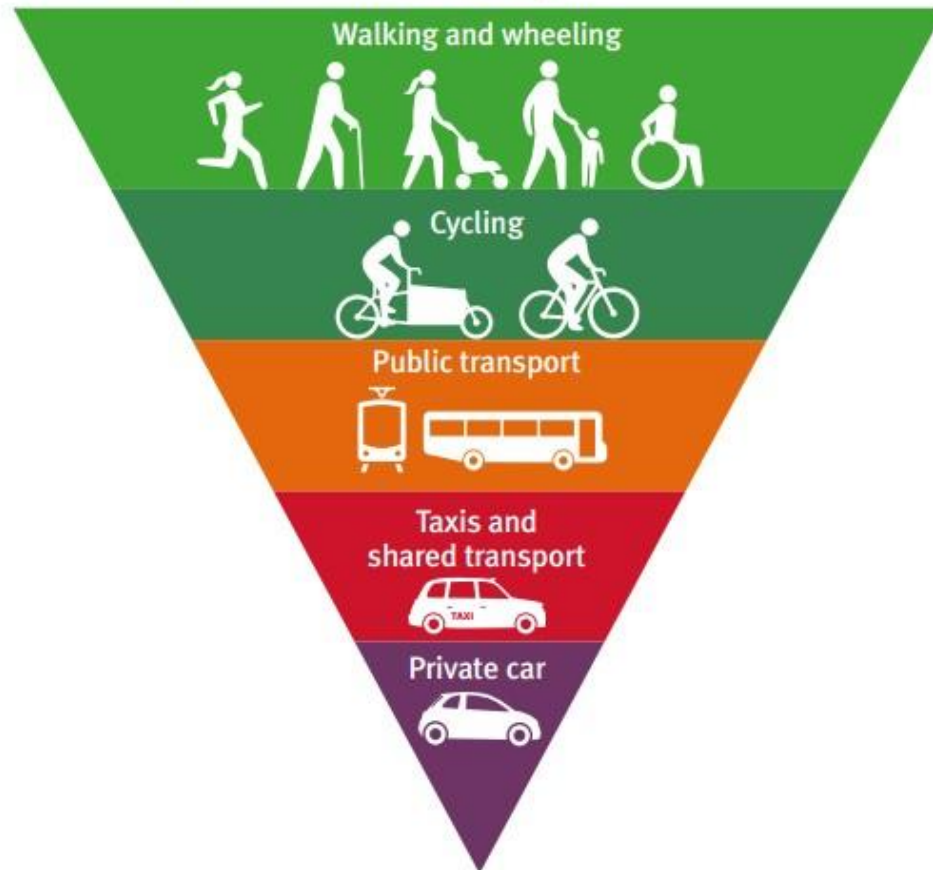




# Applying the hierarchy

Pedestrians first!

## The sustainable transport hierarchy



## Paragraphs 109, 110, 115 and 117

- People before vehicles
- Pedestrians come first: 10-minute walk/800m
  - Distances and quality of routes
- Cyclists: 20-minute ride/5km
  - Distance, gradients, parking, lockers/showers
- Public transport
  - Cost, frequency, distances to stops/stations
- **Questions to ask**
- Would it be possible?
- Would it be a realistic choice on a regular basis?
- Will it get people to where they need to go?





# What is a sustainable location?

Encouraging walking

- Services within a **10-minute walk**: 800m
- Routes need to be:
  - Convenient – direct routes
  - Clear and legible – well signed
  - Comfortable and safe
    - Adequate footways
    - Not traffic dominated
    - Lit
    - Well maintained
- Could a child walk safely to school?
- What could be done to encourage walking?





# What is a sustainable location?

Encouraging cycling

## Cycling – the 20minute-ride (5km)

- Direct, convenient routes
- Perception of safety
- Shared spaces
- Gradients
- Infrastructure
- Parking
- Showers/lockers

Deterrents: same as for walking

Success – London, Cambridge,  
Oxford, Brighton.

More challenging – elsewhere and in  
rural settings.





# What is a sustainable location?

Public transport use

## Bus services

- Distances to stop – 400m
- Quality of waiting area
- Service frequencies
- Routes and destinations
- Information
- Fares
- Routes cannot be retrofitted
- Competition with the car

## Trains

- Limited routes







# Making the assessment

## Context

- Location of site
  - City
  - Town
  - Village
  - Rural area
- Range of local facilities
  - Shops
  - School
  - Employment
  - Health facility

## Information

- Data
  - Scale of development
  - Numbers of journeys – not just cars
  - Options – not circles on a map
  - Existing modal share
- Qualitative information
  - Quality of routes
  - Realism of alternatives



- What is your vision for the site in terms of its accessibility?
- To what extent would any local facilities meet the needs for access to education, employment, food shopping, health services and leisure activities?
- Where would future residents from this site want to go beyond these local facilities?
- Do you have information about how many people walk to local facilities now?
- Have you made any qualitative assessment of the walking or cycling routes?
- Would a primary school child be able to walk to school safely (if <8 accompanied)?
- Would a secondary school pupil be able to walk to school?
- Could they cycle there safely?





## Questions to ask – continued

- Do you have information about car ownership in the area? How does that relate to the national average?
- Have you considered how you could encourage future residents/users to choose sustainable transport regularly?
- Having asked questions about walking – do the same for cycling.
- Are the routes direct?
- Would they be perceived as safe?
- Would the cost, time and ease of using alternative modes to the car be reasonable?
- How realistic is it that people will chose to walk/cycle?
- Will the access be safe for all users, not just vehicles?







# Structuring the decision

## Main issues

- Whether the site is **suitable** for residential development having regard to a) local and national policy for the **location** of housing and/or b) its **accessibility** to services and facilities.
- Whether suitable provision has been made for access to local services by a **variety of modes of transport**;
- Whether the access and proposed layout would be **safe and suitable for all users**;
- Whether the **residual cumulative impact** of the proposal on the operation of the highway network would be severe.

## Addressing the Framework tests

- **The transport hierarchy** – pedestrians first. Legibility needs to be within the development and the surrounding network.
- **Safety** – this is more than collisions and injuries. Would all users feel safe at the access, within the development and connecting to the surrounding area
- **Traffic** – only address residual effects after the above tests have been passed. It's not enough to prove that there will not be severe traffic congestion on the highway network



So - what is a sustainable location? It will be a matter of planning judgement

- Sites in sustainable locations - BUT is the development contributing to modal shift?
  - Insufficient attention given to pedestrians
  - Little or nothing to encourage cycling
  - No improvements to public transport
  - An ineffective travel plan
- Sites which are not sustainable locations and overly car dependent: BUT are there reasons why development might be acceptable?
  - It's a rural enterprise that needs a countryside location
  - It would support sustainability of village services
  - Housing land supply – consider carefully
- Remember retrofitting sustainable transport is difficult – if not impossible



# Questions





# Thank you for attending!



Please complete the webinar  
evaluation form

## Further learning:

- [Transport for Quality of Life](#): Latest reports

## Planning Inspectorate: new appeals service

Our new appeals service, currently being trialled by five LPAs, will be rolled out more widely from this month. Join our Show & Tell to find out more. Details will be shared with LPAs soon.

## Forthcoming webinar:

**Best practice in  
enforcement casework**

Wednesday 2 July

**WEBINAR**