

Department for Transport consultation: Cycling Delivery Plan

Response from Brake, the road safety charity

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About Brake

[Brake](#) is a road safety charity that exists to stop the needless deaths and serious injuries that happen on roads every day, make streets and communities safer for everyone, and care for families bereaved and injured in road crashes. Brake promotes road safety awareness, safe and sustainable road use, and effective road safety policies. We do this through national [campaigns](#), [community education](#), [services for road safety professionals and employers](#), and by coordinating the UK's flagship road safety event every November, [Road Safety Week](#). Brake is a national, government-funded provider of [support](#) to families and individuals devastated by road death and serious injury, including through a helpline and support packs.

Brake was founded in the UK in 1995, and now has domestic operations in the UK and [New Zealand](#), and works globally to promote action on road safety.

Response

1. **Theme 1: Vision, leadership and ambition**

- a. Brake welcomes the government's ambition to achieve cycling levels comparable with those of our European peers such as Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, and its recognition of the huge social, environmental and economic [benefits](#) that result. It should be noted that significantly increased cycling levels can also have a positive effect on road safety by reducing the number of cars on the road – [the 'safety in numbers' effect](#). However, Brake believes the government should give equal importance to boosting walking levels, and argues that more concrete aims and actions should be included in the action plan to achieve both increased cycling and walking.
- b. While Brake welcomes a specific target for increasing cycling levels, it believes these are not ambitious enough. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) *Get Britain Cycling* report proposed we should aim to increase cycle use from less than 2% of trips to 10% (nearing German levels) by 2025, and to 25% (a little short of Dutch levels) by 2050. This is more than a quintupling of cycling's modal share – compared to the suggested 'doubling' contained in the draft action plan. Brake supports [CTC, the national cycling charity's](#) view that this aim of 'doubling' is misleading and lacking in ambition, as it can partly be achieved simply through a continuation of present trends with no further action. CTC says: *"...doubling is less than it appears, for two reasons. Firstly, it includes the predicted growth of cycling trips in London – which is set to roughly quintuple by 2026. So the assumed growth of cycle use for the rest of England is therefore less than a doubling. Secondly, the proposed 'ambition' is a doubling in the absolute number of trips, not the proportion of trips. So some of this growth will be achieved simply due to population growth."* Brake urges the government to adopt the APPG's recommended aims for growing cycling, which would be more helpful in driving progress in this field.
- c. The target to increase walking to school among 5-10 year olds from 48% to 55% is welcome. Brake would additionally like to see targets for increasing walking levels overall, which is also of critical importance to public health, reducing emissions, and mobility.
- d. Brake welcomes the extension of commitment to delivering increased walking as well as cycling, however we think that the government should make clearer within this document that increasing walking is also of huge importance. It is critical that the provision of safe walking is integrated with that of cycling at every stage and is not left behind or seen as an afterthought. Brake therefore recommends that walking should be recognised in the name of this action plan and given greater prominence throughout.
- e. Brake acknowledges that the government is keen to work in partnership with local authorities and other partners to deliver these targets, and agrees this is important.

However, it is critical that national government provides strong leadership, and does not abdicate responsibility. It is stated that the government would expect local partners to develop their own walking and cycling delivery plans. This is welcome, but it is Brake's view that all local authorities should be required to deliver such a plan. Brake believes it would have a greater impact, and deliver the stated aims more swiftly and effectively, were local authorities required to deliver improvements to safe walking and cycling infrastructure in their area, and provided ring-fenced funding to do so. This is of particular importance in the present economic climate given the range of demands and priorities local authorities must juggle with limited budgets. This would ensure progress is made as rapidly as possible while still enabling flexibility for authorities to be responsive to local needs.

2. **Theme 2: Funding**

- a. It is stated that the government 'aspires' to achieve a minimum funding packet of £10 per head for cycling, as [recommended by the APPCG](#), by 2020-21, and will 'explore' avenues to achieve this. Brake supports the allocation of £10 per head for cycling infrastructure, but recommends a stronger and sooner commitment to this minimum funding level. As above, Brake recommends ring-fenced funding is provided to local authorities to develop safe walking and cycling, which would have a swifter and surer effect than simply encouraging local authorities to source funding from different funds over time. Brake would argue that if the government intends that £10 per head be found from existing funding pots anyway, it would make more sense for the government to allocate and ring-fence that funding itself, as quickly as possible, which would make sure appropriate levels of investment were committed to this vital issue. Brake also believes it is vital that appropriate funding is allocated, and preferably ring-fenced, to ensuring all parts of the country have a good level of safe cycling *and walking* facilities – hence minimum funding levels should be committed to safe walking infrastructure too.

3. **Theme 3: Infrastructure and Planning**

- a. It is stated that the government 'expects' local authorities to take steps to cycle proof their local roads, building cycling provision in at the design stage of new and improved road infrastructure. Brake would welcome stronger clarification of how the government will ensure that local authorities meet their expectations in this regard. As above, Brake would support a stronger approach throughout the plan, with clear requirements placed on local to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, and funding clearly allocated to enable this. Brake recommend these requirements specifically include measures evidenced to be effective in improving safety for walking and cycling, particularly traffic-free or segregated walking and cycling routes, 20mph speed limits in towns, cities and villages, lower traffic speeds across different road types, and engineering improvements to junctions and other high-risk locations to ensure safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists.
- b. Brake welcomes the actions set out for the Cycle Proofing Working Group, including promoting best practice through training and support for design professionals. However, Brake believes the government needs to go further in reviewing planning regulations to ensure that vital cycle and pedestrian safety features are required, rather than merely recommended.

4. **Theme 4: Safety and Perceptions of Safety**

- a. Brake concurs that fears over safety are a major factor in preventing many people from cycling or walking, a problem Brake has highlighted repeatedly as part of its [GO 20 campaign](#). Our most recent survey of 5,000 school children, released to coincide with Road Safety Week in November 2014, [revealed that two thirds \(67%\) think roads in their community can be dangerous for walking and cycling](#). In September 2014, another Brake survey found that [three in five \(62%\) of the driving public worry about being hit by traffic while on foot in their area](#). Another Brake survey of [1,500 commuters found a third \(35%\) would be persuaded to take up cycling if local routes were made safer](#). These concerns are understandable, given that cyclists and pedestrians are at much [higher risk of being killed or seriously injured on roads, per mile travelled, than vehicle occupants](#). Cycling campaign

groups such as CTC often point out that the amount of [life years gained through the health benefits of cycling outweighs those lost through road crashes](#) involving cyclists. This is true, however, fear of sudden and violent death is an extremely powerful de-motivational factor, which is why reducing road danger and cycling casualties remains absolutely critical to encouraging its uptake as well as reducing needless loss of life and acute human suffering and the resulting costs to society.

- b. Brake welcomes the development of a programme of work to address cycle safety issues. However, Brake would also welcome stronger clarity on what this programme will involve. Brake strongly believes that one of the most important steps the government must take to make roads safer for vulnerable road users including cyclists and pedestrians, is to change the national default urban speed limit from 30mph to 20mph, in line with the [growing consensus](#) that 20mph limits both cut casualties, make people feel safer, and encourage active travel. While Brake has welcomed government moves to encourage more 20mph schemes on the part of local authorities, Brake believes the time has come to make the change more efficiently at national level and to work to promote the message to drivers (as Brake has been doing for many years) that 20mph is the most appropriate top speed in built-up areas for protecting people. Brake is working with a [GO 20 coalition of 17 major charities](#) that support this goal. *Find out more at www.brake.org.uk/go20.*