Active Travel in Barnsley

2019–2033

Contents

Executive Summary

It is recognised there are many reasons why people engage in active travel. It could be as a means of day to day transport, improves health, is a sport and leisure activity, or could be part of someone's job.

Delivering this vision will lead to more people walking and cycling and contribute to the following outcomes:

- **Improved health and reduced health inequalities by introducing active travel into everyday life;**
- **Increased economic growth and productivity leading to higher living standards;**
- **Reduced congestion on the highway network by providing better travel choices;**
- **Improved Air Quality;**
- **Safer active travel routes.**

These outcomes will be realised by delivering the following actions:

- **Action 1:** Integrate Active Travel into the Planning Process;
- **Action 2:** Maintain and Expand our Active Travel Routes;
- **Action 3:** Support Active Travel in the Community.

"Creating a borough where active travel is a preferred choice, supported by a connected network of high quality, safe and inviting cycle routes and footpaths for all people to use"

Increasing active travel for utility and leisure trips will help Barnsley tackle some of its key social and public health issues:

- Barnsley is one of the most deprived health authorities in the country;
- Nearly a third of its area is within the top 10% of the health deprivation rankings;
- Many areas are in the top 10% of the employment deprivation ranking.

In addition, air pollution is today a leading public health issue in the UK affecting children, people with lung conditions and the elderly hardest. Certain areas of Barnsley are designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's), with traffic congestion being a key contributor. AQMA's are locations where statutory air quality objectives are not likely to be achieved. Currently across the Barnsley borough there are six AQMA's, with most of these located within the Urban Barnsley area, and another at Langsett.

Sustrans Active Travel Study

In 2018, BMBC Public Health commissioned Sustrans to develop an Active Travel Study to provide an evidence base to feed directly into this Strategy. This consisted of survey data, route analysis, mapping and provision of an analysis as of the current levels of active travel in Barnsley today. It also provides a very thorough understanding as to the main barriers we face in increasing participation.

A snap shot of this evidence indicates the following:

- Nearly a third of commuters live within a 5km radius of Barnsley town centre;
- The area where most people live is also the same as where most people work;
- 60% use a car to commute although quite a few will combine this with other modes of transport such as walking;
- 61% of people travelling solely by car to work have a return journey distance of up to 10 miles.

In addition, the Study highlighted that cycling in Barnsley is increasing at workplaces where interventions have been made to improve trip end facilities and where incentives to encourage cycling have been offered. It also shows that cycling levels on the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) are highest where good traffic-free cycling infrastructure is provided for journeys that people want to make for work or leisure.

In addition to providing the underpinning evidence base, the Active Travel Study has also set out a number of key recommendations which will assist with the development of our Active Travel Implementation Plan.

Active Travel Implementation Plan

The Active Travel Implementation Plan, which will be developed after the adoption of this Strategy, will establish a rolling programme of interventions which will help to deliver our actions, and which will align with our stated outcomes. These interventions will be delivered between 2019 and 2024 and consist of hard and soft measures financed by internal and external sources. In 2024 the Implementation Plan will be refreshed with a new set of interventions proposed covering the period up to 2029.

This rolling programme will be set out and agreed via the Active Travel Group and Sustainable Travel in Barnsley board (STIB).

Targets

We have set the following targets to help us achieve our outcomes:

- The numbers travelling to work/study via active travel to increase to over 50% by 2033. (currently 36% - Active Travel Study 2018);
- Increase the proportion of primary school pupils traveling to school by active travel to 85% (currently 59%) and secondary school pupils to 65% (currently 31%) by 2033.
- All primary school pupils to receive Bikeability Level 2 training by 2033.

Introduction

Active Travel involves making journeys by physically active means. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC) Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys to enable and encourage people to walk and cycle as part of their daily lives. By developing and promoting accessible, safe and well-planned active travel opportunities, this Strategy will help to establish Barnsley as a pioneering borough for active travel.

Aligned to the BMBC Corporate Plan, it seeks to:

- Create a thriving and vibrant economy;
- Enable people to achieve their potential;
- Build strong and resilient communities.

It also aligns with the principles of the BMBC Public Health Strategy which aims to achieve four health outcomes:

- Our residents will start life and stay healthy;
- Our residents will live longer healthier lives;
- We will narrow the gap in life expectancy and health between the most and least healthy;
- We will protect our communities from harm, major incidents and other preventable health threats.

This Strategy will also align with and help feed into the active travel aspirations of the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region (SCR), who announced in July 2018 the vision of "getting more people walking, running or cycling on short journeys". The Mayor has taken inspiration from the Beelines project in Greater Manchester and has commissioned the Sheffield Hallam University's Advanced Wellness Research Centre (AWRC), to look at the best examples of active travel plans from around the world.

Success will be judged by implementing those interventions deemed the most cost-effective, increasing investment and ultimately increasing the distance people in Barnsley travel by active means whilst contributing to the delivery of wider economic, environmental, social and health outcomes.

Success will be achieved by:

- Establishing the case for Active Travel and linking this to wider aspirations such as promoting sustainable economic growth and reducing congestion and carbon emissions;
- Getting buy-in and support within BMBC, its partners and the wider community;
- Identifying potential actions and prioritising these in terms of importance, effectiveness, affordability and deliverability;
- Setting out how we will deliver these actions in terms of timescale and resources;
- Highlighting and obtaining the required resources to deliver our plans, including developer contributions through the planning process.

Progress to Date

The promotion of active travel will continue to build upon work already undertaken by BMBC. To give a flavour of progress to date, a number of achievements have been achieved, including

- Creation of the Barnsley Cycle Hub funded through the South Yorkshire Access Fund;
- Development and expansion of Community Active Travel Hubs working with Area Councils;
- Ongoing development of Walk Well programme;
- Recruitment of a Bike-It officer funding;
- Bikeability training in Schools;
- Accessibility mapping tool created;
- Hosting of the Criterium Cycle Race 2017 and 2018;
- Hosted start of a stage of 2018 Tour de Yorkshire and will also host a start in 2019;
- Development of a Sustainable Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- Ongoing development of a pipeline of walking and cycle routes;
- Attendance at the South Yorkshire Cycling and Active Travel Group (SYCAT);
- Nomination of a Council member as the Barnsley Active Travel Champion.

Why Active Travel?

Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth

BMBC is planning for substantial economic growth which will see a vast expansion of jobs and housing to benefit our economy and raise Barnsley's economic importance within the SCR to allow it to reap the full benefits of the Northern Powerhouse. Our Local Plan envisages just over 21,000 new homes and just short of 300 hectares of additional employment coming forward for development by 2033. Much of this employment growth will be located at J36 and J37 of the M1, locations which benefit from excellent links to the wider SCR and Yorkshire and Humber region and London. In addition, Barnsley town centre is also undergoing substantial redevelopment, with new retail, employment and entertainment facilities which will see the creation of a thriving night time economy. However, economic growth without productivity growth will not bring the expected improvements to living standards the public will expect. If our employment aspirations come forward but people are not able to access these opportunities or our roads become gridlocked, causing significant delays, then we will not reach our full economic potential.

One of the key drivers to maximising this economic potential therefore is via active travel, which will form part of a wholesale package of transport measures, including bus and rail, which will promote modal shift and provide a realistic alternative to the private motor car. We will work with our partners in the Barnsley Bus Partnership (BBP) to align the bus network to the demands of the future economy of Barnsley. For example, during 2017 and 2018, long distance services with limited stops have been successfully trialled and implemented to places such as Leeds and Meadowhall. Through the BBP, we will investigate other similar bus services where demand exists. The intention is that users will combine these longer journeys with active travel and put into action this wholesale package of transport measures.

The economic benefits of active travel are substantial and backed up with an ever expanding amount of literature (see Annex). These economic benefits are derived not only from productivity enhancements but also via indirect benefits from improvements to health. In addition, increasing evidence suggests increased levels of cycling mean less money needs to be spent on road construction, repair and maintenance costs. (i) (Cycling – The Way Ahead for Towns and Cities – European Commission).

As Barnsley is trying to build up its leisure and visitor attraction sector it's interesting to note that nationally, cycle tourists spend on average around 9% more per head per trip, or around £81 per head per trip than non-cycling tourists. (ii) (The Value of Cycling: Fiona Raje and Andrew Saffrey). With over 50 miles of route in Barnsley the TPT is one of our key strategic assets. It crosses the entire Barnsley borough and connects to the wider TPT network crossing the north of England from coast to coast. Our ambition will be to get more of Barnsley's residents using this network, and encouraging more people from outside the borough to visit Barnsley via the TPT.

It is recognised that BMBC may have to finance such schemes via external sources and therefore will have to sell the economic benefits to acquire funding to expand active travel infrastructure within the borough. The Department for Transport (DfT), values very highly any scheme which returns more than £4 for every £1 invested. The benefit-to-cost ratios (BCR) of cycling schemes are on average anywhere between £5: £1 to £19: £1 with some as high as £35.5: £1. (iii) (The Value of Cycling: Fiona Raje and Andrew Saffrey). In 2017, the Government announced the creation of the 'Transforming Cities Fund' (TCF), which aims to improve productivity and spread prosperity through investment in public transport. In mid –2018 the DfT sought to identify potential areas for investment. BMBC proactively engaged with this process via the SCR and submitted two potential areas of interest. In addition, in early 2019, a further bid was submitted to create an active travel link along the A635 from Ardsley to Goldthorpe.

Supporting a Healthy Lifestyle

The benefits of active travel aren't just restricted to the economic realm but also bring extensive benefits to people's health, which as early as 1992 were acknowledged by the British Medical Association (BMA). (iv) (Cycling towards Health and Safety – British Medical Association). Since then it has become widely accepted that regular, moderate physical activity is very good for health (both mental and physical). Policies and strategies at a national level place increasing emphasis on this importance, particularly given the inadequate levels of physical activity and increasing prevalence of obesity evident amongst children and adults.

Use of motorised vehicles such as cars and motorbikes do not involve any significant physical exercise, which when combined with a generally sedentary lifestyle significantly increase risk of obesity and ill health. Cycling is classified as a higher intensity activity that benefits individual health as well as contributing to other public health goals such as reduced car travel and associated carbon emissions and it is far easier to incorporate exercise into day-to-day routines than to take time out to exercise through sport or other activities. Even public transport users benefit from the walk at either end of the journey.

The chief medical officer of England advises that adults 19 - 64 years of age should aim to be active daily and achieve up to 150 mins (2 1/2 hours) of moderate intense activity over the week. (v) (UK Physical Activity Guidelines – Department for Health and Social Care). The Barnsley: Our Profile 2018 report states that 60.9% of over 19's currently achieve this level of physical activity in Barnsley compared with 64.6% in Yorkshire and Humber and 66% in England. Current physical activity guidelines for children (aged five to 18 years) are for moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity of at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day, and that 'vigorous intensity activities', including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.

Low Carbon Transport

The private motor car provides easy access to employment, education, retail, leisure and social facilities. Whilst this provides immense opportunities, there are significant costs and dis-benefits in terms of air pollution, congestion and noise which impact negatively on our economy and the health of the Barnsley population.

Air pollution is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, it particularly affects the most vulnerable in society such as, children, the elderly and those on low incomes, with victims tending to suffer from non-communicable conditions such as heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Barnsley's air quality issues are typical of a borough consisting of urban and rural areas, and although 27% of residents (vi) (2011 Census), do not have access to a private motor vehicle, emissions from road transport are a major source of air pollution, and the underlying reason for declaration of our Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). Although Barnsley's air quality issues are not as significant as other areas within the SCR, it is important to continue to protect and improve air quality standards.

In the long term the replacement of diesel and petrol vehicles with electric and hybrid models and the roll out of Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points will address some of these issues. However in the short term, many short journeys which are better suited to walking and cycling are still being made using private motor vehicles. Ensuring that these short journeys can be made via safe active travel routes as well as providing good access to public transport, will help us to meet our air quality targets and allow Barnsley to contribute to the UK's statutory commitments to mitigate climate change.

Barriers to Active Travel

As part of the Sustrans Active Travel Study an online survey was conducted to capture local people's attitudes, motivations and barriers to active travel. This was conducted as an open-ended question, and revealed the biggest barriers to be the cost of cycling and lack of access to a bicycle, closely followed by safety concerns and the lack of infrastructure. Other barriers raised were with regards to the weather and concerns regarding levels of personal fitness and disability. Also the time it takes to cover a set distance via cycling is not deemed competitive against the car.

Full information of this survey is provided in the Sustrans Active Travel Study in Appendix C.

What Works

People tend to walk more in places where there is a mix of residential and retail facilities and cycle more when there is dedicated cycling infrastructure which provides a separation from traffic. Town-centre streets that encourage safe cycling and pedestrian movements can provide economic benefits to local shops and restaurants. The 'Secure by Design' scheme, promoted by South Yorkshire Police can be used to influence the design of active travel routes to encourage use.

Promotion of active travel should be delivered through multiple organisations including schools, workplaces, health bodies and BMBC, as well as via social media. As investment in public transport can also lead to increases in active travel, this will be promoted via the Barnsley Bus Partnership.

We will encourage and enable people to make active travel choices by:

- Mitigation of the impacts of major transport routes (road or rail) by considering speed reductions, using low-noise surfacing or barriers, providing good safe crossing facilities and providing safe, attractive alternative routes to avoid the need to walk alongside major highways;
- Safe, attractive and direct walking routes and pedestrian facilities to public transport,
- Provision of safe and attractive off-road cycling facilities where appropriate;
- Well-positioned and maintained facilities such as cycle stands;
- Positive messages and promotions, emphasising the health benefits of active travel which are known to be more effective than 'environmental' messages;
- Effective complementary interventions such as residential and workplace/school travel plans.
- Making active travel achievable for all sections of the community, including by ensuring active travel routes are accessible and inclusive for all.

Evidence indicates that if levels of active, sustainable travel are to increase, clearer political leadership and commitment is needed in terms of strategic resource allocation, fiscal interventions and innovative design that positively discriminate in favour of walking, cycling and use of public transport use over the car (vii) (Aldred. R. – Transportation Research – Part A – 2018)

Policy Context

This Strategy supports the ambitions of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) and contributes to the delivery of the Barnsley Transport Strategy, which in turn links to the spatial vision set out in the Barnsley Local Plan and the vision for the City Region as set out in the SCR Transport Strategy 2018-2040.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the national planning policy for England. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced, with at its heart the principle of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This Strategy will also align with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)

This national strategy outlines the government's ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys by 2040 and sets out the aims/objectives and targets that the Government will work towards in the short term. It details the financial resources available and includes a number of indicators to judge performance. It also sets out the governance arrangements that will be put in place and outlines exiting actions and those planned for the future.

At a local level CWIS is realised by the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which uses a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local active travel networks, ideally over a 10 year period.

Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy (SCR) – 2018- 2040

This regional strategy aims to promote a forward-looking City Region with integrated transport connections that supports economic growth and improves quality of life. To realise this vision the Strategy states the goals to be achieved, the policies to be adopted, and the conditional outcomes by which we will measure our success. The four goals of the SCR Transport Strategy include:

1. Support Inclusive Economic Growth;
2. Create health streets where people feel safe;
3. Improve the quality of our outdoors;
4. Promote, enable and adopt different technologies.

Specific transport policies include:

- Making our streets healthy places where people feel safe;
- Enhancing our multi-modal transport system to encourage sustainable travel choices and is embedded in the assessment of transport requirements for new development, particularly for active travel;
- Improving sustainable and inclusive access to our green and recreational spaces.

South Yorkshire Cycling Action Plan (SYCAP)

The SYCAP will deliver the SCR Strategic Economic Plan and outlines the benefits of cycling to the South Yorkshire economy, health and environment, whilst examining the potential for change, funding and value for money. Its vision sets out the region's strategy for cycling in order to achieve four high level objectives:

1. Realising the economic potential of cycling;
2. Improving health and reducing health inequalities by introducing cycling into everyday life;
3. Improving cyclists' safety and feeling of safety;
4. Providing leadership and partnership.

Barnsley Transport Strategy

The Barnsley Transport Strategy sets out the transport priorities for the local area up to 2033. It aligns to the SCR Transport Strategy and aim to work towards building a brighter future and a better Barnsley. The strategy's four key priorities are as follows:

1. Promote Economic Growth and Strategic Connections;
2. Promote Inclusion, Accessibility, and Better Quality of Life;
3. Promote High Quality Natural Environment, Local Air Quality and Climate Change;
4. Promote Safety, Security and Health.

Barnsley Local Plan

This is the development plan for the Barnsley borough. It considers the future use of all land within the borough, and establishes policies and proposals up to the year 2033. The Local Plan is used to consider planning applications and to coordinate investment decisions that affect the towns, villages and countryside of Barnsley. It provides policy in many areas, including Transport.

Barnsley Sustainable Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

This SPD for Sustainable Travel is designed to provide specific guidance to developers of what transport infrastructure is expected when development is proposed. It facilities discussions through the pre-application process and provides guidance on S106 monies. It supports and expands on the transport policies listed in the Barnsley Local Plan.

Barnsley Public Health Strategy 2018-2021

The Barnsley Public Health Strategy 2018-2021 demonstrates the commitment of BMBC to work with partners to improve the health of all people living in Barnsley. This strategy contributes to achieving BMBC's vision of, 'a brighter future and a better Barnsley' through four long term public health outcomes:

- Our residents will start life healthy and stay healthy;
- Our residents will live longer healthier lives;
- We will narrow the gap in life expectancy and health between the most and least healthy;
- We will protect our communities from harm, major incidents and other preventable health threats.

Barnsley Parking Strategy

BMBC are currently developing a parking strategy for the borough, which will outline how parking in Barnsley will be delivered and how parking areas will be managed. The potential to establish cycle parking facilities at parking areas will be explored in the Implementation Plan and in the Sustainable Transport SPD.

Barnsley Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)

This AQAP has been produced as part of BMBC's statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management Framework. With a focus to improve air quality in Barnsley between 2016 and 2021 it contains a number of actions designed to improve air quality in our AQMA's and in the Borough as a whole.

Healthy Streets

Healthy Streets is a concept developed in partnership between the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL). It is a system of policies and strategies designed to encourage people to travel more sustainably.

It aims to improve people's experiences of our streets, helping people to be more active and enjoy the health benefits of being on our streets.

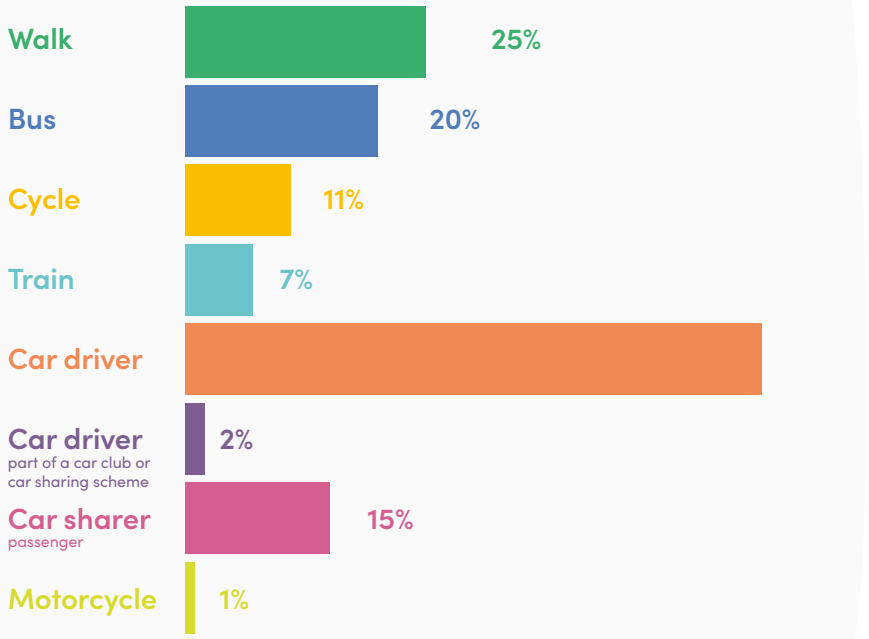
Current Position of Transport Use in Barnsley

Travelling to Work and Study

Currently 60% of respondents use a car to commute, although many combine this with other modes of transport such as walking. Nearly 25% walk and 11% cycle, whilst 15% commute as a car passenger, with 20% commuting via bus and 6% by train.

Although a direct comparison with England and the Yorkshire and Humber Region is not possible, the 2011 Census states that for England, 36.9% of commuters travel to work via private motor car, and in Yorkshire and Humber the figure is 38.4%.

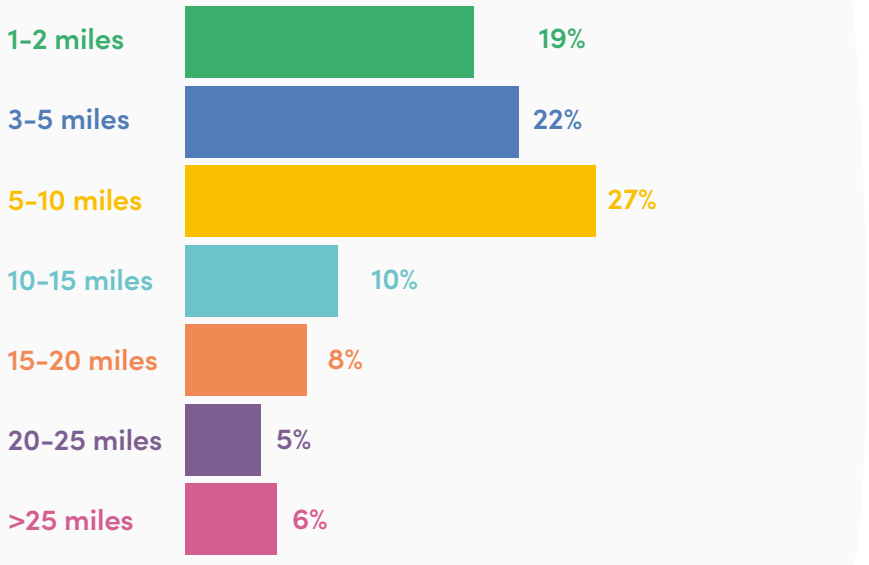
Figure 1



Average regular return journey commute distances in Barnsley

- 41% make a regular return commute of less than 5 miles;
- 27% commute between 5-10 miles;
- 68% of regular return journeys are less than 10 miles.

Figure 2



Average regular return journey commute times in Barnsley

The time used for regular return journeys is less than 20 minutes for 40% of people. The same percentage also takes double the time, averaging between 20 and 40 minutes.

Further information regarding travel patterns in Barnsley are to be found in the Sustrans Active Travel Study.

Figure 3

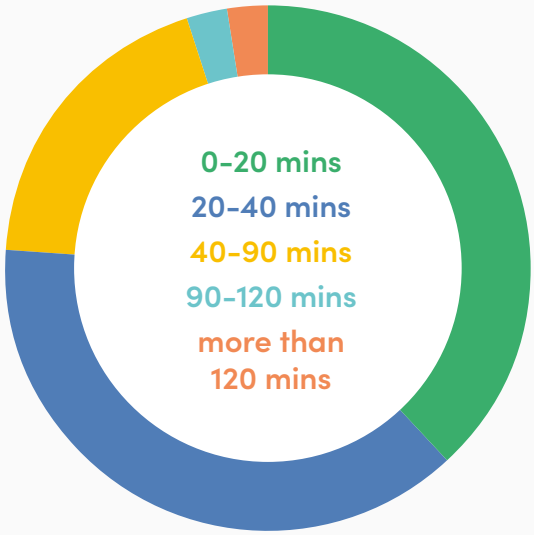
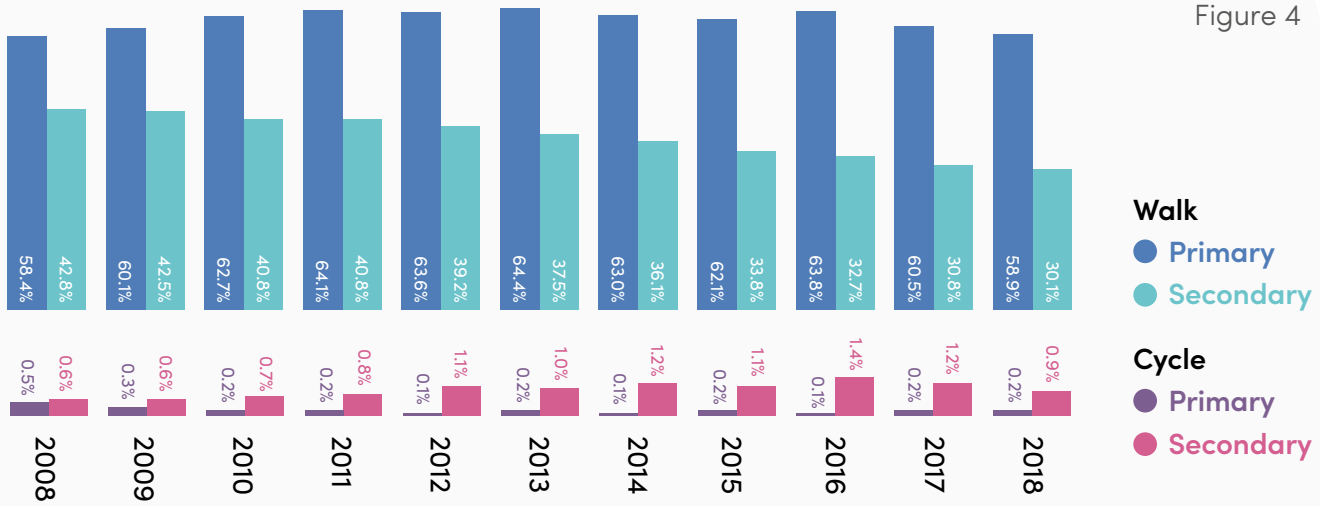


Figure 4



Percentage of Children actively travelling to school 2008-2018 in Barnsley

A comparison of 2008 with 2018 shows the proportion of primary school pupils walking to school has held steady over the last 10 years, at just under 60%. The main concern revolves around secondary school pupils with the numbers walking to school declining from 42.8% to just over 30%. Cycling levels for both primary and secondary school pupils have remained at low levels throughout the decade.

Public Rights of Way

At 450 miles (750 km), BMBC public rights of way (PROW), combined with the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) manages one of the longest public rights of way networks in England, providing routes to retail, education, employment facilities, as well as leisure routes for gaining access to the countryside.

Outcomes and Actions

This Strategy will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Improved health and reduced health inequalities by introducing active travel into everyday life;
- Increased economic growth and productivity leading to higher living standards;
- Reduced congestion on the highway network by providing better travel choices;
- Improved Air Quality;
- Safer active travel routes.

These outcomes will be realised by delivering the following actions:

Delivering our Outcomes

Action 1: Integrate Active Travel into the Planning Process

This Strategy will ensure active travel is prioritised in future planning processes. In addition, it will encourage active travel to be better integrated with other types of transport, e.g. walking to the bus stop or cycling to the train station. This Strategy will link with the BMBC Sustainable Transport SPD to provide a commitment to encourage active travel.

Action 2: Provide and Maintain Active Travel Routes

Barnsley needs purpose fit active travel routes that people want to use. Barnsley's existing walking and cycling routes have been developed over time as resources have allowed. They are not always continuous nor direct, and may not serve important areas of interest, which means that some people who would like to actively travel are unable to do so. It is important that these routes are well maintained and designed to be as inclusive as possible.

Action 3: Support Active Travel in the Community

There is a need to encourage and promote active travel in our community. People need the skills, confidence, correct information and most importantly the motivation to make active travel a preferred choice. Initiatives to support this change include pedestrian and cycle training, road safety campaigns, projects to encourage active travel to schools and employment and promotion and advertisement of available routes.

Achieving these actions will be assisted by undertaking the recommendations outlined in the Sustrans Active Travel Study.

Funding and Stakeholders

Funding

This Strategy will play a vital part in securing Government external funding to promote active travel and seek infrastructure improvements when new developments are built. The Active Travel Study identifies areas with the greatest potential for increases in commuter cycling, based on Census data/BMBC data via the Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT). This tool will be used to help ensure our investment is effective and targeted, and help support funding bids.

SYCAP already indicates it aims to spend a minimum of £10 per head of population every year and make a step change in cycling. It also expects to raise a substantial local contribution from the following sources and match any funding made available through the Government's 'Cycling Delivery Plan'.

Funding for investment will mainly come from the following sources:

- South Yorkshire Transport Plan;
- Sheffield City Region Growth Fund;
- Department for Transport;
- BMBC public health budgets;
- BMBC highway budgets;
- S106 contributions;
- European structural funding;
- Contributions from partners, for example universities and rail operators;
- Grants via third sector organisations, for example landfill tax and lottery awards.

Governance

Governance and management of this strategy will be provided by the Active Travel Group and STiB. The procedures for data collection, monitoring and evaluation to assess the success are briefly outlined below, but will also be determined in more detail by the Active Travel Group.

Communications

Publicity and Communications for the strategy will be conducted by BMBC Communications Team.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring will play an important part in making sure the Strategy is a success and the following will be monitored:

- Walking: average trips undertaken and distance travelled per person per year, and mode share of trips;
- Cycling: average trips undertaken and distance travelled per person per year, and mode share of trips;
- Travel to work (main mode) mode share of walking and cycling;
- Travel to school mode share;
- Cycle ownership;
- Public satisfaction with provision for walking and cycling;
- The proportion of the population walking or cycling for at least 30 minutes per month;
- Usage and spend on the TPT.

Annex

Economic Growth and Active Travel

A London School of Economics study showed that the gross cycling contribution to the UK economy in 2010 was £2.9bn. This takes into account factors such as bicycle manufacturing, retail and cycle related employment. This equates to £230 per cyclist per year.

Research commissioned by Cycling UK found that if cycle use increased from less than 2% of all journeys (current levels) to 10% by 2025, and 25% by 2050 (as recommended by the Parliamentary Cycling Group's 'Get Britain Cycling' report), the cumulative benefits would be worth £248bn between 2015 and 2050 for England – yielding annual benefits in 2050 worth £42bn in today's money. This calculation even takes into account the fact that long term benefits are worth less than those achieved in the shorter term. These benefits are generated chiefly through a physically fitter population, but also in terms of reduced congestion and absenteeism, improved air quality and other areas.

In May 2018, the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IfS) released the report, Securing the Future: Funding Health and Social care to the 2030s, which detailed the significant demand and spending pressures the NHS is expected to face up to the 2030's due to an aging population, which if not tackled will lead to a significant decline in health and social care standards and outcomes unless significant tax rises are made of over £2000 per household in the UK.

Illness as an outcome of physical inactivity has been conservatively calculated to directly cost the NHS up to £1bn per annum. Indirect costs have been estimated as £8.2bn per annum. There are seven conditions which currently inflict the biggest cost pressure and which are all associated with physical inactivity. These include: Type 2 diabetes, dementia, cerebrovascular disease, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, depression, and ischaemic heart disease. Within 20 years, reductions in the prevalence of these conditions due to increased physical activity would lead to savings of roughly £17 billion (in 2010 prices) for the NHS, after adjustments for an increased risk of road traffic injuries. It is also predicted that the cost-savings to the NHS would rise sharply towards the end of the period and beyond the 20 year period because of the long lag between reductions in prevalence of some cancers and dementia.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has attempted to quantify the economic impacts of cycling via developing a Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT). This produces an estimate of the health benefits of cycling in a local area. Evidence indicates it actually underestimates these benefits as it only considers reduced mortality and not reduced morbidity gained through regular physical activity. In addition, other monetary benefits such as reduced employee absenteeism are not included. Nevertheless, the tool provides a useful starting point for an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling.

The DfT has adopted HEAT for cycling as part of its comprehensive online guidance on the appraisal of transport projects and wider advice on scoping and carrying out transport studies.

At a local level the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) used the HEAT model in 2012 to analyse the economic benefits of cycling. Data used consisted of the 2001 census and cordon count data recorded from 2009 to 2012. Applying the HEAT model to the 2001 census alone yielded a mean annual benefit of nearly £1m, while assessments of cordon counts gave a cumulative benefit of over £14.5m. It should be remembered that the commercial benefits of increased cycling to the local economy were not included in this calculation.

Annex

Supporting a Healthy Lifestyle

Despite this guidance, levels of obesity and ill health are increasing. The 2016 Childhood Obesity Plan: A Plan for Action, advised that nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese and that younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer. In May 2018, the Local Government Association analysed Public Health England figures which showed 1 in 25 children are now severely obese. This is highly significant for the children of Barnsley which historically has high levels of obesity and striking health and life expectancy inequalities compared with other areas in England.

Air quality

A study by Bristol City Council on the subject of 'comparisons of air pollution exposures in active verses passive travel modes in European Cities' raised a key concern regarding the lack of awareness amongst the public and decision makers as to the potential high air pollution exposure levels for motor vehicle occupants. High pollutant exposure levels in urban areas, particularly under typical commute driving conditions, exposes vehicle occupants to health risks that are often significantly greater than that for those travelling by other modes, notably pedestrians and cycle users. There are false assumptions by motor vehicle occupants that air quality will be better inside a sealed vehicle than outside and that air conditioning may provide sufficient additional protection from poor air quality. This is not to negate concerns about air pollution exposure among other travel mode users but rather to highlight a lack of recognition as to serious health risks to motor vehicle occupants.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion and in 2015 8.39% of all deaths in the UK were due to poor air quality.