



# Living Streets Briefing: Economics of Active Travel

Briefing for: **Enter name of official**

Purpose: To outline the economic case for active travel under a new government.

Contact: **Enter contact**

## About Living Streets

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and to inspire people of all generations to enjoy the benefits of walking. Our campaigning led to the UK's first zebra crossings and speed limits.

**Short paragraph on your Local Group (e.g. when it was formed, what your key aims or achievements have been to date)**

## Next Steps

We ask that you:

- 1) Write to the Secretary of State for Transport and Chief Secretary to the Treasury and ask them to ensure that active travel remains a core priority for the government.
- 2) Raise the importance of active travel in the House of Commons through parliamentary questions or a written question.
- 3) Meet with Living Streets to discuss how you can make the case for active travel.

**You will need to tailor these asks to the official – the above is an example of the kind**

## Overview

Active travel can help us address some of the country's biggest crises. Walking local, everyday journeys helps get us more active, supports mental health, reduces carbon emissions from motor vehicles and boosts local economies.

Streets that support walking, wheeling and cycling are better places to live, work and learn, and can support community cohesion. We are writing to ask you to take action to make sure walking continues to be prioritised by the government.

## The Economic Case

Pound for pound, investing in active travel makes sense. Shifting investment from cars to more sustainable modes of transport delivers a high return on investment, the Department for Transport estimate this to be at least £4.50 for every £1 invested.<sup>1</sup> Investing in better walking environments increases high street footfall and can boost retail sales by 30% or more.<sup>2</sup>

Congestion costs the economy. In 2019, British people wasted 115 hours in congestion, costing the country £6.9 billion, an average of £894 per driver. Investing in more roads is not the answer.<sup>3</sup> As the cost of living increases, walking remains free.

According to modelling used in Public Health England's air pollution project, the total cost of PM2.5 and NO2 combined between 2017 and 2025 is estimated to be £1.6 billion and total health costs resulting from air pollution range between £8.5 billion and £20.2 billion a year. It has already been calculated that the health benefits of increased walking and cycling could save the NHS £17 billion over a 20 year period (2012-31).<sup>4</sup>

If new housing developments are to support local economic growth, they will need to be supported by strong walking, cycling and public transport provision. This will help to rejuvenate town and city centres. It is vital that the place of walking and cycling in enhancing such developments is recognised and promoted.

With more people working from home, walking to local shops and services is more important too. Almost 80% of journeys under a mile are walked.<sup>5</sup> Fitter and healthier people feel better and are more productive.

### Further information:

Insert name, contact email, phone number

<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport, Investing in Cycling and Walking, <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/877511/cycling-and-walking-business-case-summary.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877511/cycling-and-walking-business-case-summary.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Living Streets, Pedestrian Pound, p.23.

<sup>3</sup> [INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard: Congestion cost UK economy £6.9 billion in 2019 - INRIX](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Health Matters: Air pollution – sources, impacts and actions - Public health matters \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> National travel survey table NTS308