CWIS consultation

Question 1: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed national vision for active travel?

Disagree

Question 2: If you disagree, why do you disagree with the proposed national vision for active travel and what potential alternatives do you suggest?

Whilst we broadly support the ambition and intent of the national vision, we have concerns regarding certain aspects of its wording and deliverability.

We would question the use of the term *"allowing"*, as we believe it is more appropriate to focus on "*enabling"* people to do something rather than "*allowing"* it.

We also have reservations as to whether all areas can achieve the vision by 2035. This is particularly relevant for cycling, where it seems unlikely that everyone will have access to safe cycling infrastructure within the timeframe. Even in cities with the most advanced cycling infrastructure, we are a long way from having the whole population within easy reach of high-quality cycling infrastructure. There are also barriers to achieving this for walking and wheeling, with accessibility and quality issues remaining with the infrastructure.

While we recognise and support the aspiration behind the vision, we believe the CWIS vision must remain realistic and achievable. As currently framed, it feels more like a long-term aspiration rather than a target that can be fully realised by 2035. Therefore, we suggest that the 2035 vision should be positioned as a significant milestone towards achieving this outcome.

Question 3: Do you agree or disagree with the objective: 'Ensure people are safe to travel actively'?

Disagree

Question 4: If you disagree, why do you disagree with the objective: 'Ensure people are safe to travel actively' and what potential alternatives do you suggest?

We have concerns about the use of the term "ensure" in relation to people being safe to travel actively. Whilst we are all working to improve safety and deliver world class infrastructure, we are not currently in a place, and may never be able to, categorically ensure that everyone is safe. Whether this be a pedestrian on an icy footpath, or a cyclist mixing with sections of traffic, ensuring someone is safe is very difficult to achieve.

What we can do is improve the design and quality of infrastructure to ensure that people are as safe as possible and that they feel safe and are confident to go about their everyday walking, wheeling or cycling journeys.

This perception of safety and confidence to use the network may be a more relevant objective, as it is more likely to determine whether or not someone will choose to travel actively.

Question 5: Do you agree or disagree with the objective: 'Ensure people feel it is an easy choice'?

Agree

Question 6: If you disagree, why do you disagree with the objective: 'Ensure people feel it is an easy choice' and what potential alternatives do you suggest?

We agree that active travel should be seen as the easiest, obvious choice for everyday trips.

As part of this, it should encompass trips being accessible, attractive, and people feeling confident to travel by active means.

If any of these components are missing, people will not feel that it is an easy or accessible option, even if there is infrastructure in place. Therefore, the objective should reflect the importance of creating conditions that make active travel feel practical, safe and appealing.

Question 7: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed key performance indicators?

Disagree

Question 8: If you disagree, explain why.

We have concerns with a number of the proposed key performance indicators, as well as how they link to the other performance indicators within the CWIS.

The first KPI has a strong link to health, and trying to understand activity levels through active travel. However, we have concerns as to whether the measure can achieve this aim. Firstly, if another activity or sport is swapped for more walking, this may not be a positive health outcome. This means that we could see a reported increase in people undertaking 150 minutes of active travel, but actually see lower health outcomes being achieved. Secondly, this measure will miss a lot of people converting trips to active travel, including some of the most valuable health benefits – those who go from doing nothing to doing something.

A number of UTG members have now switched to targeting the least physically active, with South Yorkshire MCA trying to get people to go from zero activity to undertaking

some activity through active travel. This has the potential to deliver larger health benefits than an already active person doing a bit more, but would not be captured by this measure.

We welcome the inclusion of KPIs on safety, and a focus on decreasing the rate of KSIs We feel that focusing on the rate of KSIs is more appropriate than focusing on absolute numbers, as we are trying to increase the number of people walking and cycling across our city regions. A relative measure will help show whether these journeys are becoming more or less safe for the individual, which is a key measure. Local indicators should also be set to measure the rate (rather than number) of KSIs, to ensure alignment. Reductions in the rate of KSIs should also help to improve people's perceptions of safety, vital in making active travel the first choice for everyday journeys.

The second safety focused KPI, looking at the percentage of people concerned about safety, is also focused on a relative measure rather than an absolute measure. This is again aligned with an objective of ensuring people 'feel safe' to travel, rather than ensuring that they are safe. Again, this supports the case for a change in the wording of that objective – we can never absolutely ensure people are safe, but we can do all we can to make the infrastructure as safe as it can be (measured through reductions in the rate of KSIs) and improve perceptions of safety (and likelihood of choosing active travel) as a result.

We would also like to understand whether targets will be added to these KPI, and if so at what level they will be set – nationally or locally, or will they remain as targets to increase or decrease the measure? Although these are national objectives they will be delivered through local interventions that will determine whether national rates increase or decrease. If a national target is being applied it needs to feed through into the local indicators to ensure that actions taken locally will help achieve the national indicator.

Question 9: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to performance monitoring of LTA outcomes frameworks using the performance indicators outlined?

Disagree

Question 10: If you disagree with the proposed approach to performance monitoring of LTA outcomes frameworks using the performance indicators outlined above, explain why.

We would like to ensure that the indicators proposed for LTAs match those that end up in the final outcomes frameworks. We understand that the proposed indicators match the original active travel indicators in the outcomes framework, but would welcome a comment to ensure that they remain aligned.

The local safety indicator of reducing the number of KSIs, is out of line with the national indicator of reducing the rate of KSIs. Both the national and local indicators should measure the rate, rather than the number, of KSIs. Where an area is successful in increasing participation in active travel it is possible that the number of KSIs increases in the short term, but with a reduced rate in the number of KSIs per billion miles.

Focusing on the third indicator, to "increase miles of compliant new/improved active travel network delivered", we would like to understand how network is defined. Does this refer to any intervention delivered as it would provide additional network, or does it need to be connected into wider schemes?

We feel that this measure could fail to capture some of the most valuable schemes, especially around walking or junction improvements. Many vital walking improvements involve narrowing junctions or improving crossings. These do not deliver miles of network, they consist of metres of interventions. Nor do important interventions such as destination and residential cycle parking. This is especially pertinent outside of urban areas, where there may be less of a focus on delivering lengthy cycle lanes and more of a focus on incremental improvements.

We would again like to understand whether targets will be set for LTAs to increase or reduce the indicators by specific levels, and how these targets would be calculated and applied.

Question 11: How can ATE support local authorities in delivering local targets?

ATE's position as a national agency means that it can play a supportive role in helping local authorities to develop best practice and deliver infrastructure more efficiently.

We have identified a number of areas that ATE can help local authorities, including:

Central tools - where there is a local need, ATE can help with the development of tools that can benefit a wide range of local authorities, creating efficiency savings.

Best practice – ATE can be a centre of best practice, helping to drive up standards across the country, improving outcomes.

Wider evidence base and case making . Whilst this exists across a range of documents, ATE can play an important role in bringing the evidence together, ensuring that local authorities have the evidence they need to make a compelling case for investment in cycling, walking and wheeling, understand the relative merits of different types of intervention, and can make informed and evidenced decisions. This evidence base can also be used in promoting active travel to communities and understanding the best engagement methods.

National education piece – ATE can play a supportive role where national education may be required, this could be, for example, around the positive benefits of e-bikes,

helping with understanding of what e-bikes are illegal, or around how to use infrastructure correctly where there are points of conflict (such as at bus stops). ATE has a wider reach than local authorities and can help to ensure that consistent positive messaging is provided.

ATE can continue to work with DfT and Treasury to ensure that the Green Book fully reflects the benefit of active travel schemes, helping to make the case for schemes where traffic flows might be disrupted. Equally, there is still work to ensure that the local strategic case can play its full role in decision making where the BCR alone is not enough to justify a scheme.

Question 12: Do you agree or disagree with the indicators relating to the work of ATE?

Disagree

Question 13: If you disagree, explain why.

We have some concern over the degree of control that ATE has over a number of the indicators.

We would like to know how the indicator looking to "increase the number of trained active travel professionals/local authority officers" is being defined and measured? Many staff work across a range of policy areas within local authorities, so may not spend all of their time working on active travel schemes, making their time difficult to measure. We would also question the level of influence ATE have over this, given that staff numbers will be dictated by local authority resource constraints.

Similarly, we would question the ability of ATE to see the number of capital projects completed on schedule. What control mechanism are we looking to have in place here, given that capital projects are delivered by local authorities and may become delayed due to a wide range of factors?

We also have a question over how the target to improve local authority active travel capacity ratings will be set and measured. The local authority indicator in the CWIS is to maintain or increase their rating. This creates a situation where all local authorities could meet the aim of maintaining capability ratings but ATE could miss their objective as they have not improved capability ratings.

Question 14: Do you have any other comments?

No