



Mr Robert Goodwill MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR  
10th December 2014

Dear Mr Goodwill

### **Feedback on the first phase of the Cycle City Ambition Grants**

We write to you as representatives of the local cycle campaign groups in the cities awarded the government's "Cycle City Ambition Grants". The Grants provide a valuable opportunity for these eight cities to begin the transformation into healthy, clean and economically vibrant places which are attractive to businesses and residential populations alike. While we welcome the grants and the opportunity to create a step-change in the level of cycling provision in UK cities, we would like to highlight some common issues across the projects.

#### **1. Stop-start grants**

Consistent, long term and specific investment in cycling is desperately needed to encourage authorities to design and build the high quality, coherent networks that will attract new people to cycling. The additional CCAG funding you announced on November 27th 2014 is welcomed, but this is a small fraction of the investment required and it is not a permanent commitment to allocate a fairer slice of the transport budget. The award of short-term grants for cycling creates a situation where local authorities cannot plan strategic and comprehensive cycle networks. Many influential bodies have called for sustained investment in cycling, including the APPCG through its Get Britain Cycling report which received cross-party support in the House of Commons on October 16th 2014.

**Recommendation:** A national commitment to cycling as an everyday mode of transport, with cross-departmental support and dedicated long term investment.

#### **2. Timescale**

The short timescale for designing and delivering the projects has presented a huge challenge to the local authorities, particularly as the intended level of ambition represents a step change from anything that has been delivered in the past. This problem is heightened by the lack of clear infrastructure standards. While ambitious timescales are useful in encouraging change, council processes can be complex, often resulting in a choice between delays or a less ambitious scheme. We would like to see the best possible standards and returns achieved through this injection of funding, even if this means slightly delayed implementation.

**Recommendation:** Relaxation, where appropriate, of the expected completion date for CCAG projects.



### 3. Consultation with local groups and community involvement

The original Cycle City Ambition Grant guidance stressed the need for involvement of local groups including the cycling community. The standard of this involvement across the projects has been mixed: in some authorities an open consultation and engagement process is ongoing; in others, cycling groups have been excluded from the decision-making process and have not been invited to comment on plans. More commitment to engage with user groups is required from many of the local authorities involved in delivering CCAG schemes. There is also an opportunity for DfT to engage directly with campaigners, to understand how effectively the grants are being used and to learn lessons for the future.

**Recommendation:** Ensure local authorities follow the original recommendations for local stakeholder involvement and create direct communication channels between DfT and local campaign groups, for example through involvement with the Cycle Proofing Working Group or Active Travel Consortium, to help advise on best practice.

### 4. Perceived necessity to maintain existing motor traffic levels

Even within the CCAG projects, that are specifically intended to benefit cycling without detriment to pedestrians, local authorities are reluctant to create dedicated space for cycling on main roads and at junctions because installation of effective cycling provision often leads to reduced capacity for motorised traffic. When investing to make our roads safe for walking and cycling we need to fully reconsider how we use our roads and streets, in order to maximise the return on investment and deliver the high-quality provision required to encourage more people to travel more actively.

Reliance on cars massively restricts the capacity of city transport networks to move *people*: research shows that even if every car had 5 occupants, bicycles are still more efficient at getting people through junctions. Cycling and walking, alongside improved public transport options, have huge potential to improve network capacity throughout the city by reducing reliance on the car for short journeys. Walking then cycling should always be prioritised first - as specified in the Hierarchy of Road Users in LTN 1/04 - but the contribution for optimising network capacity provided by modal shift to cycling is not yet integrated into transport modelling.

In your speech to the Cycle Cities Expo, on May 1st 2014, you emphasised the need to prioritise space for cycling in order to make more efficient use of available road space: "...one of the common complaints is that there simply isn't enough space available on our roads for cycling infrastructure. My response is that there simply isn't enough room not to put it into place."

A directive to confirm and reinforce this position is needed to free local authorities from their perceived duty to protect motor traffic flow at all costs.

**Recommendation:** A clear statement from DfT to confirm that capacity for private motor-traffic should not be prioritised at the expense of safe, direct and attractive opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport.



## 5. Department for Transport regulations and guidance

Under the current DfT regulations, some types of continental best-practice are impossible or cumbersome to implement in the UK. Guidance note LTN2/08 includes some design for protected cycleways, but falls well short of providing comprehensive guidance on the type of infrastructure we know to be successful in facilitating mass cycling.

If we are to narrow the gap between the UK and cycle-friendly nations, infrastructure with a proven record overseas needs to be adopted in the UK without delay. Several regional guidance documents are being drafted, but this risks different standards being adopted piecemeal throughout the UK. While fragmented local standards and guidance are better than nothing, to ensure consistency the DfT must take the lead and urgently produce a single national document of cycle infrastructure standards - not just guidance such as LTN 2/08 - to raise the quality of cycling infrastructure and give clear direction to designers and engineers. This could draw on the excellent documents recently produced by Transport for London and the Welsh Government, to extend high quality cycle infrastructure consistently throughout the UK.

**Recommendation:** DfT to urgently progress national standards for cycle infrastructure and publish standardised audits of all CCAG projects.

We welcome your response and the opportunity to discuss our experiences and recommendations further.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Booth - Bristol Cycling Campaign  
Hester Wells - Cambridge Cycling Campaign  
Jonathan Fingland - Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign  
Elizabeth Reather - Leeds Cycling Campaign  
Katja Leyendecker - Newcastle Cycling Campaign  
Margaret Todd - Norwich Cycling Campaign  
Simon Hunt - CyclOx, Oxford  
Chris Lowe - Push Bikes, Birmingham