

Active travel and the NCN

Improving safety on major roads

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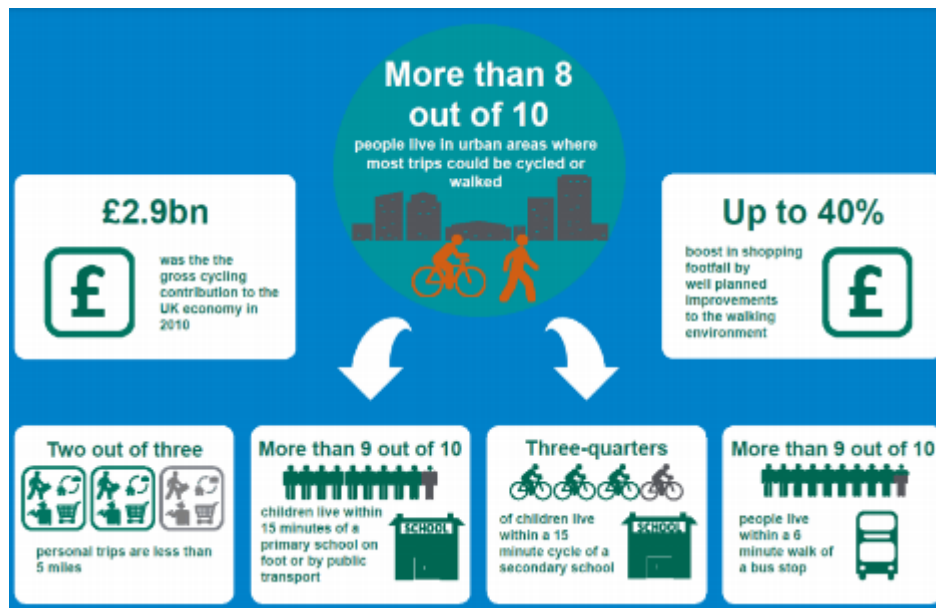
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Why active travel?

- If more people travelled more actively we would realise huge benefits (environmental, health, economic, societal).



Source: Department of Health, 2011



The National Cycle Network

- The National Cycle Network is a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes connecting our cities, towns and countryside.
 - Approximately 12,500 miles.
 - 40% traffic-free (off-road).
 - 60% on-road.
- Our priorities are to make the network safer and more accessible for everyone.
- This will involve increasing the length of traffic-free mileage.



UK total	
12,545 miles	
On-road	Traffic-free
7,314 miles	5,230 miles

The NCN crossing major roads



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Design guidance

- Recent design guidance is broadly the same across the UK.
- Where speed limit (or 85th percentile speed) \geq 60mph crossings should be grade-separated.
- This recognises the barrier that an uncontrolled at-grade crossing of a high speed road poses to people walking, cycling and riding.

Table 10-2: Crossing design suitability

Speed Limit	Total traffic flow to be crossed (pcu)	Maximum number of lanes to be crossed in one movement	Uncontrolled	Cycle Priority	Parallel	Signal	Grade separated
\geq 60mph	Any	Any	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
40 mph and >40 mph	> 10000	Any	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	6000 to 10000	2 or more	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	0-6000	2	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	0-10000	1	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
\leq 40mph	> 8000	> 2	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	> 4000	2	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	4000-8000	2	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	0-4000	2	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people
	0-4000	1	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Provision suitable for most people

- Provision suitable for most people
- Provision not suitable for all people and will exclude some potential users and/or have safety concerns
- Provision suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns

Notes:

1. If the actual 85th percentile speed is more than 10% above the speed limit, the next highest speed limit should be applied
2. The recommended provision assumes that the peak hour motor traffic flow

Overcoming severance by major roads

- What are the solutions?
 - Can a grade-separated crossing be provided?
 - Can the speed limit on the major road be reduced to facilitate an easier crossing?
 - Is there an opportunity to divert the active travel route to a suitable crossing point (noting directness is important)?

Challenges

- Retrofitting grade separated crossings likely to be prohibitively expensive.
- Some of the challenges to improving crossing provision include:
 - There are low levels of use...
 - There is no KSI problem here...
 - We can't reduce the speed limit here (to facilitate a signal controlled crossing)...
- Refer to guidance in Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 6 on how to assess the need for a crossing.

The NCN following major road corridors

- Where there are gaps in a network or traffic-free paths or minor roads.
- Most commonly an issue in more remote areas where there is a lower density of roads.
- We have recently 'removed' approximately 3,500 miles of network that were on roads that are too busy or fast.



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So what are we doing?

- Major roads are not suitable routes for walking, cycling and horse riding for most people.
- Paths alongside major roads have a role to play but these are rarely attractive places to be.
- Ideally the NCN would be entirely traffic-free such as this new section of NCN 78 opened in 2020 bypassing 2 miles of A828.
- Unlikely to be realistic everywhere.



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Minor roads

- Minor roads will have a key role to play in providing a safer and more attractive network.
- Currently priority is given to motor traffic on (virtually) all roads.
- Could this imbalance be redressed on some minor roads?
 - Usually low traffic flow.
 - But speeds may be too high.



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DfT Circular 01/2013

- ‘Setting local speed limits’ (DfT guidance for England)
- Recognises the need to make provision for people walking, cycling or riding and that these road users perceive the hazards of speed differently.
- However also somewhat ‘chicken and egg’ as it includes reliance on collision history and the presence of people walking, cycling and riding to justify lower speed limits.
 - People walking, cycling and riding are fearful of fast traffic...
 - and so there will be few people doing this on fast roads...
 - and there are likely to be very few recorded collisions.

Minor roads vs major roads

- Often rural major roads will be more controlled than minor roads – speed limit increases when turning into the minor road.
- This seems slightly ironic?
- How is the Diagram 671 sign perceived by different users?
- DfT 01/2013 para 128 suggests a speed limit of 40 mph may be considered for roads with a predominantly local, access or recreational function...; or if they form part of a recommended route for vulnerable road users?



Quiet Lanes

- Minor rural roads which are appropriate for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and motorised users.
- They should have low motorised traffic flows travelling at low speeds before designation.
- The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006 (DfT Circular 02/2006).
- Referenced in LTN 1/20.
- Traffic calming measures and speed limit reductions and local community support.



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