



Even experienced cyclists use segregated routes

can't be fixed by simply building more roads – something that's been proven time and again not to work. We'll be pushing for similar measures to reduce motor traffic in England.

We will be putting the case for more active travel investment and less motor traffic in context, focusing on the benefits. Chris Boardman, Active Travel Commissioner for England, has summed that up neatly: "Name any crisis: active travel helps."

The environmental, health and societal benefits of more people cycling are well established, but the economic case for investing in cycling is often overlooked. In an election year, where every party is going to be reluctant to make funding commitments, it's that economic case we particularly need to hammer home. For example, the Department for Transport's own figures show that investment in active

## “ AT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE, THE UK GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ITS NEW ‘PLAN FOR DRIVERS’ ”

travel yields a return on investment it describes as “very high”, bringing in nearly £6 for every £1 spent. Crucially, the return on investment comes back much quicker than from investment in other transport infrastructure, which often takes decades to deliver and longer still for the benefits to become reaped. The message to politicians wanting the best bang for their buck has to be that active travel investment reaps rewards – and quickly.

Politicians don't just want the dry cost-benefit numbers, however. They also want to see the evidence of where this has worked. So campaigners often point to examples – like the Netherlands as a whole and cities elsewhere, such as Copenhagen, Bogota and Seville – where sustained investment in active travel infrastructure has massively increased levels of cycling, with multiple benefits.

We don't even need to look abroad to see that long-term investment and building more cycle lanes gets more people cycling. We've seen this in London. Cycling levels continue to increase year by year in the capital, up 6.3 % last year and by 20% since before the pandemic as, year by year, the cycling network expands. It grew from 90km in 2016 to 352km last year. Now 24%



With the Lib Dem's Wera Hobhouse MP (centre)

of Londoners say they cycled last year. While there are other examples within the UK, London shows that well-built cycling infrastructure is and will be used, and will change travel behaviours over time.

### PEDALLING POLITICS

I've deliberately not gone into much detail about manifesto asks in this article. What really counts is the narrative explaining why these demands matter, and why getting more people cycling helps deliver politicians' other policy goals. Yet once Cycling UK's manifesto is published, expect to see asks around: road safety and changes to our road traffic laws; increased access to the countryside for people cycling and reform of our off-road access laws; and a strengthened planning system, so that new homes and other developments are required to be built around frequent public transport services, safe streets and walking and cycling



A majority of the public supports 20mph zones