

# ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FORUM

c/o Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management

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Rt. Hon. Patrick McLoughlin MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

14th May 2013

Dear Secretary of State,

## **Active transport: the fast track to better living**

The Environmental Policy Forum (EPF) is a network of UK environmental professional bodies promoting environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit. The EPF's member bodies have a collective membership of around 40,000 environmental professionals – many of whom are individually chartered in environmental practice, science and engineering disciplines.

We have a vision of natural and built environments that benefit both people and diverse ecosystems as a result of switching to active transport – cycling and walking. We urge the Government to share that vision by taking a number of strategic actions.

Cycling and walking are everyday activities that enhance and complement the built and living environments. They are good for the environment, good for the economy and significantly improve people's health and wellbeing, helping to reduce the tax-payers' investment required in public health through the actions of individuals. Physical activity reduces the risk of developing major chronic diseases (e.g. coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes) by up to 50% and the risk of premature death by about 20-30%. Furthermore, it results in productivity gains by reducing absenteeism relating to preventive illness. Cycling and walking also provide a wide range of social, tourism and community engagement benefits, and can contribute towards meeting climate change targets.

Yet current infrastructure, facilities, motoring laws and protocols do not always support routine cycling and walking for the everyday person. In fact they frequently discourage them and often make them difficult and dangerous. So cycling and walking remain a "specialist pursuit" for the minority, rather than a norm for the majority. This results in the UK being the most car dependent country in Europe.

In view of the economic, public health, life-enhancing and quality of life opportunities that 'active transport' brings we, the undersigned, call on the Government to commit to the following actions. Firstly, create a high profile 'Centre for Active Transport' dedicated to

integrating safe cycling and walking into the everyday life of the nation. Secondly, promote a safe roads initiative that puts pedestrians and cyclists first. Thirdly, allocate greater levels of funding and resource to active transport with cross-departmental cooperation to maximise the environmental and health benefits from this investment.

Currently, planning policy does not explicitly encourage walking or cycling. Given the expected increase in levels of urban living (60% of the world's population by 2030), investment and commitment are urgently required to secure towns, cities and other urban settlements where walking and cycling are primary transport options.

We believe that every local authority should have a road safety plan and a director-level ambassador or chief officer with responsibility for embedding safe cycling and walking in their communities, promoting the environmental and health benefits of active transport. We, therefore, urge you and your Cabinet colleagues the Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government and for Health to incentivise local authorities to implement these policy proposals. We also urge the Government to adopt the recommendations of the report of the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group (<http://allpartycycling.org/inquiry/>) following its recent Inquiry into cycling in the UK and the opportunities and benefits that cycling and other forms of active transport bring to people's lives and to the economy.

We all know that motorised transport is a main contributor to pollution; walking and cycling are not. We encourage the Government to work harder to make active transport options fully accessible and more democratic. Walking and cycling contribute to a number of policy agendas and the benefits are substantial when brought together; the health, environmental and economic benefits would be significant and could transform people's lives. Strong policy and leadership and more investment in cycling and walking infrastructure are essential to sustainable and resilient economies. We would be very pleased to meet you to discuss how the environment professions can assist you in these endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Reeves OBE, CEnv  
Executive Director  
Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management

For and on behalf of:

Professor William Pope CEnv  
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President  
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