**CYCLE ALTON**

**EVIDENCE BASE FOR HIGH STREET RECOVERY, COVID SAFETY, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CLIMATE BENEFITS OF WALKING AND CYCLING FRIENDLY TOWN CENTRES JUNE/JULY 2020**

During June and July 2020, Cycle Alton sourced evidence for reducing/removing cars from town centres and developing a ‘living streets’ strategy. This document is taken from our evidence base, sourced by Cycle Alton Core Group, and summarised into a referenced document by Carol Palmer in July 2020. I have used the most relevant findings for this report on evidence, for the local government meeting on 26th August 2020. All summaries are referenced and the references, with links, are on the last page of this document.

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**HIGH STREET RECOVERY AND VIABILITY**

Bushell et al (2013:6) summarize the findings of other studies of the economic benefits of walking and cycling infrastructure: Developing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure has economic benefits. Studies have found that bicycle infrastructure improvements can have a positive overall impact on business, and that people who walk or bike to a commercial area spend more money per month than those who accessed the area by automobile. The removal of on-street parking is often thought to negatively impact business, but reports show adding facilities such as bicycle racks and bicycle lanes can actually increase economic activity, and also help create a buffer from moving traffic that aids both pedestrian and bicyclist activity. [VoCDtp]

When a bike lane was added along Valencia Street in San Francisco’s Mission district, nearby businesses saw **sales increase by 60 percent**. [VoCDtp]

**Cycle Parking Provision > increase spend by cyclists**

Cycle parking outside shops gives the impression of popularity or acts as a buffer between traffic and customers (Flusche 2012; UCD, 2015). Numerous studies have shown that while cyclists spend less per visit, they tend to visit shops more regularly resulting in higher weekly spends (e.g. Clifton, 2012; TfL, 2011; O’Connor et al, 2011) [VoCDtp]

Cycle Parking delivers 5 times retail spend / sq m than car parking. (Raje & Saffrey 2016) [tfl]

BIDS – (Business Investment Districts) 9/10 say walking/cycling creates **vibrant** areas; 83% say it attracts more customers (Aldred & Sharkey 2017) [tfl ]

Over a month ppl who walk/cycle to High Street spend up to 40% more (tfl 2013).

High Street walking cycling and public realm improvements can increase retail sales by up to 30% (Lawlor 2013)[tfl]

The Pedestrian Pound provides both academic research and case studies showing those safe and pleasant places, where people walk to and stay longer, meet together, shop together and have coffee and are safer and more attractive are economically vibrant. [pp]

[pp] presents evidence that **investment** in better streets and places delivers **quantifiable commercial returns**. Businesses, residents, developers and visitors all benefit from investment in the public realm and walkability. Studies have linked the **quality of public spaces** to people’s perceptions of attractiveness of an area, contributing towards their quality of life and influencing where they shop.

**Increased footfall**. Turner et al. (2011) conducted a before and after study in eight New Zealand cities. (including provision of kerb extensions and refuge islands and controlled crossings). Pedestrian use increased in seven of the eight sites, ranging from 7% to 90%.

Example: a 96% boost in static and 93% boost in active street behaviours. [SD]

There is a general acceptance that investment in streets and public spaces enables town centres to improve their offer (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011) helping to stimulate the local economy, improve perceptions of the area (especially for visitors) and help attract and retain workers (Ecotec, 2007).

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011 found case study evidence of significant benefits to consumers, such as more enjoyable visits, feelings of safety, more frequent visits, longer visits and a higher propensity to spend. Found that public realm improvements exerted some level of influence over decisions about whether to live or work in the centre of towns and cities. [pp]

Well-planned improvements to public spaces within town centres can boost commercial trading by up to 40% and generate significant private sector investment (CABE Space 2004). [pp]

Data from Living Streets suggests where the pedestrian experience has been improved footfall has increased between 20 and 35%. This is against a [22% decline in footfall across the UK](https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf) between 2007 and 2017. [S]

**Importance to local community**

Lee and March (2010): cyclists more likely to be from a smaller local catchment than car drivers, the role of local cyclists in their own community is central to the neighbourhood’s businesses thriving, its vitality and general amenity – its liveability. The role of these individuals in their communities needs to be monetized if realistic decisions about infrastructure for cycling are to be made. [VoCDtp]

Bll Grimsey's "[Build, Back, Better](https://civicvoice.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5128291c803f66657704671f8&id=14d7267402&e=ad57ed6b65)" (June 2020) argues that "only localism on steroids" could turn around many failing high streets. It also revealed that almost 50% of retailers are at risk of failure, further emphasising the need to switch to a model of local empowerment. [CV]

Research shows a notable move towards more holistic and people-centred approaches to measuring the health of high streets and urban centres (Biggar, 2015) [pp]

**Retailers have been shown to over-estimate the importance of the car for customer travel** in 2015 a survey of local businesses in Waltham found that business believed 63% of their customers arrived by car and only 49% walked. A survey of visitors to the street revealed that only 20% had arrived by car and 64% had walked. [pp]

**EXAMPLES**

**Ebbw Vale:** Close partnership working with residents, businesses and third sector organisations was essential to the project’s success. Research suggests that retail alone cannot reinvigorate high streets and town centres (Dobson, 2016, Distressed Retail Property Taskforce, 2013 and Quercia et al., 2015). The place economy is increasingly being shaped by community-led regeneration and cross-sector partnership working and this is likely to strengthen over the coming years. [pp]

Future of the high street and the place economy eg **Bird St, London**

Pedestrian friendly environment, business diversity; activation of public spaces are key to regenerating high streets and town centres in an increasingly post-retail physical environment (not just retail). [pp] Augmented reality to increase walkability and navigation supporting wayfinding projects. In future business will compete on consumer experience not just price. Walkable, accessible high streets and town centres likely to grow in importance (Quercia et al., 2015). Bird St, London > Improving the pedestrian environment + technology to improve shopping experiences. Airlite’s clean air bench; air purifying paint neutralises pollutants (nitrogen oxide and nitrogen dioxide). A Pavegen surface converted the footfall of visitors into electricity to power bird sounds during the day and lighting in the evening. The technology can be used to link with consumer apps.

**Piccadilly, Stoke-on-Trent**, a £10 million investment to make the area more pedestrian-friendly led to 30% more footfall.

Traffic management and public realm improvements in **Kelso** increased town centre footfall by 28%. [pp]

**Railton Road, Herne Hill**

The evaluation highlighted the increased footfall and economic activity created by rebalancing the area for pedestrians: 66% of pedestrians surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they now shopped more; – 90% of local businesses surveyed agreed (31%) or strongly agreed (59%) that the changes to the street had resulted in an overall improvement; – 38% of people agreed or strongly agreed that people were spending moremoney in the area; (Social Research Associates Ltd., 2012) [pp]

See also 5 more examples on the 2 attached document ‘Examples taken from the Pedestrian Pound” Living Street, 2018 and ‘Two examples of temporary pedestrianisation’

**COVID SAFETY AND SOCIAL DISTANCE**

COVID Need more space for ppl to **move** **safely** around & encourage ppl to go back to shopping [S]. [A recent survey suggested](https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/three-in-five-consumers-have-used-more-local-stores-and-services-to-support-them-during-lockdown.html) 59% of consumers in Britain used more local stores and services to help support them during lockdown because of working from home. High Streets Task Force [HSTF] has highlighted this > opportunities for local high streets. Recommend removing on-street parking to provide more space for people, except for disabled access. Re-establishing the role of a high street as a hub for social connection and reinforcing and celebrating its roots and unique character could go a long way to encourage people to stay local and spend their money where they live. [S]

<https://www.didobi.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GrimseyReview2.pdf> 2018 says:

"Local authorities should appoint high-quality design teams to create and enhance spaces for civic and social use. "Design should celebrate the historic character and local identity with high-quality streets and public realm." Instil a sense of pride and belonging in the local area, [S]

Reliability of public transport – enhanced by reduced congestion in High Street.

Make High Street a destination – make ppl feel safe, more room for people, re-shaping spaces, remembering the value of ‘place’. [S]

Safety flows from how ppl get to and around high streets etc. [S] temporary cycle lanes, wider footpaths, barriers to close streets to motor traffic, and reduced speed limits. [S]

Use of mobile wallets, growth in ‘social’ shopping or pop-up vendors, make High Street a ‘brand’.

**IMPORTANCE OF TOWN CENTRE AS A SOCIAL DESTINATION**

**Bromley**: re-routing of some local buses and the introduction of new paving, street furniture and improved pedestrian crossings in three main areas.

First, East Street was repaved as a shared street surface, for the most part without kerbs, and with a single-lane allowance for traffic. Bus routes were transferred out of the street to free up space - outdoor seating - new greening & lighting elements introduced. The continuity of materials ... works to give pedestrians priority over traffic. 7.2/10 respondents felt strongly the various street interventions had led to noticeable & tangible changes for the better; notably improved street character, walkability, ease of crossing, good seating and enhanced vibrancy. [SAPP]

Reducing the fundamental traffic problems impacting on streets seemed to be more important than some of the more intangible factors associated with the street re-designs. [SAPP]

2nd change: enhancement of social space, notably the creation of attractive and comfortable space for sitting, observing, socialising and so forth. Physical and/or social character of the street.

Final change: creation of environmentally unpolluted (noise and air); more adaptable spaces. Adaptability = spaces that can be used in multiple ways with good interplay between public street & private ground floor frontages. [SAPP]

Social Outcomes: fewer accidents, better social integration, lower rates of crime better educational outcomes, enhanced street level vitality and sociability, stronger civic pride, greater inclusiveness, more enabling (rather than disabling) environments: for those in older age and for those with disabilities. [PWiki]

**High Street as Hub**

By becoming gathering points for whole communities, which also offer a great experience facilitated by technology and incorporating health, entertainment, education, leisure, business/office space and shops at the heart of a thriving community hub, every high street and town centre can have a positive future. [Gr2018]

The curating of a place based on its distinct heritage is multi-dimensional and complex but should feature strongly when developing the “offer”: Why would people want to live, work, play, visit and invest in the “place”? What does it stand for? . [Gr2018]

Consider replacing BIDs [Business Investment Districts] (or introducing) with Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) embracing all the stakeholders, occupiers, owners and service providers in an area including the local authority. [Gr2018]

To thrive in the digital age, high streets need to be walkable, accessible, diverse and vibrant offering a mix of residential accommodation, workplaces, services and shop (Distressed Retail Property Taskforce, 2013). It is this multiplicity of uses that define successful high streets and town centres and which, crucially, are enabled and boosted by investment in the public realm and walkability. [pp]

Making places better for walking puts people at the forefront of this reinvention of our high streets opens new opportunities. [pp]

**Car-dominated places less attractive/popular places in which to spend time.** Highway design can help reclaim streets for people, with the provision of cycle infrastructure or public transport supporting more humane and popular places. This now needs to become the norm, not the exception. [LwB] Large numbers of motor vehicles can put people off wanting to spend time and relax in high streets.[S]

The **Scottish Government’s** **Town Centre Toolkit (2015)** considers the pedestrian experience central to reinvigorate high streets. Created to help implement its Town Centre Action Plan (2013) and Creating Places policy statement (2013). Interventions - priority given to pedestrian footfall as the ‘lifeblood of town centre businesses’.

EXAMPLE: Kirkintiloch Town Centre Population 19,700: 20 mph; removing traffic signals, removing clutter, widening footpaths; improving cycling infrastructure (£1.5 million). A new public square with seating overlooking the canal was created and the town hall has been repurposed as a centre for heritage, arts, culture and community use (£5.5 million). Elements of the design were controversial, so the council sought advice from Living Streets Scotland for final design confirmation re the principles advocated in the Town Centre Toolkit. Sustrans also involved. Shared space elements of the scheme proved particularly controversial... [pp]

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CLIMATE BENEFITS**

SQW (2007:82) go on to conclude that …cycling investment that targets new cyclists in particular would generate substantial economic benefit. Where this can be shown to reduce car travel, the combination of health benefits and reduced congestion and pollution would in most cases justify investment. [VoCDtp]

The bicycle can help to reduce the negative impact of motorised traffic on the urban quality of life. This can lead to a more attractive climate for retailers, cafes and even companies to locate a new business. Cycle infrastructure provision is cost effective (VNG, 2000): [VoCDtp]

Aldred (2015, 1-2) argues that although it is possible to monetize and model many benefits associated with cycling, these values are rarely included within conventional transport models. [VoCDtp]

Connor (2014): ‘One review set the cost benefit ratio of the economic benefits of cycling interventions, including health impacts from more physical activity, at 5:1’. This is comparable to DfT’s own estimates of the value for money of cycling investments (2014:2), which average at 5.5:1. [VoCDtp]

“Based on the Benefit Cost Ratios reported... one can confidently conclude that sustainable travel and cycling and walking in particular regularly offer high and very high value for money” (Dept Transport 2015) [tfl] “13:1” £1 spent returns £13. [tfl]

The European Cyclists Federation has found that if a street is transformed in a way that gives more space to cyclists and pedestrians and less to cars, the **absence of customers that came by car is more than compensated for by the customers that come by foot or by bike afterward** (ECF, 2015).

Kelly et al. (2011) the general attributes of a good pedestrian environment were found to include: pavement cleanliness, safe crossing places, good connectivity and a sense of security. [pp]

**Investment in Cycling Infrastructure/Quality of Life/Cost Savings/Investment Return**

Walking and cycling infrastructure requires less comparative investment. [pp]

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The bicycle can help to **reduce the negative impact of motorised traffic** on the urban quality of life leading to a more attractive climate for retailers, cafes, companies to locate a new business.

Cycle infrastructure provision is cost effective (VNG, 2000): [VoCDtp]

**Reducing Exclusion and Inequality – Increasing Inclusion**

Public realm improvements which support walking have a role to play in increasing inclusion and reducing inequality. A third of households do not have access to a car in the UK, rising to two thirds for the poorest households. Public realm improvements which support walking have a wide role to play in increasing inclusion and reducing inequality. [pp]

**Health** ppl who walk/cycle regularly take 27% fewer sick days than their colleagues (Nation Institute for Health & Care Excellence 2012). Plus **Productivity increase.** [tfl].

The evidence on the importance of place quality for health outcomes is overwhelming.

Better: physical health, mental health, general fitness, daily comfort, enhanced quality of life. [PWiki] The Grous (2011) report: almost 25% of the UK population are cyclists. Regular cyclists take one sick-day less per year, saving the economy £128 million per year in absenteeism. [VoCDtp]

Aldred (2015) suggests that **such environments result in more physical activity in later years**. Zander et al (2013) found an overwhelming response that taking up cycling in older age was a liberating and fun experience with spinoff social benefits. **This was linked to cycling providing a sense of pride and empowerment. Respondents felt that fear of cars was the main reason they did not cycle.** [VoCDtp]

10 Healthy Streets Indicators – Clean air; everyone feels welcome; easy to cross; shade and shelter; people feel relaxed, things to see and do, people feel safe, people choose to walk and cycle, not too noisy, places to stop and rest. Also: air quality; reducing the noise; visually appealing to people, walking and cycling, reasons for people to use them e.g. local shops and services, opportunities to interact with art, nature, people. [HS] **Test: do children, older ppl and disabled enjoy using the space?** Walking & cycling will be part of people’s daily routine if it’s the most attractive option and more appealing than car use. [HS]

Re-design of the urban realm benefits include more space to socialise and enjoy the environment, greater encouragement to walk, with associated health benefits, or the impacts on private investment in an area. To secure a better balance between the ‘movement’ and ‘place’ based functions of streets. [SAPP] TfL journey, moving from a network efficiency model of street management to a movement and place-based one. In this, streets are seen as places of complex social and economic exchange as well as channels for movement. [SAPP]

Thus more space for pedestrians and bicycles and less space (and slower speeds) for cars will open up the opportunity to deliver on the other factors that make for the highest quality street experience for all. [SAPP]

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