

this is cycling UK



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Cycleways and means

Active travel investment doesn't just improve health, road safety and the environment. It also benefits the economy, as **Sarah Mitchell** explains



As the spring days get gradually longer and the winter chill disappears, lots of us will have more cycling on our minds. I'm certainly looking forward to ditching my cold weather gear and enjoying some warmer days in the saddle.

At Cycling UK it's always a dynamic time of year as we prepare to relaunch our community-based programmes that enable more people to experience the wonders of cycling, and gear up for a busy summer of cycling activity. This year feels particularly significant as we work on some major priorities for the organisation, including getting ready for a general election and launching our new five-year strategy.

In February I joined MPs, parliamentary candidates, councillors and colleagues at the House of Commons for the launch of new research showing the benefits of investing in cycling and walking. Thanks to your support, we were able to commission a new independent report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (cyclinguk.org/ipprr-report). It sets out the cost of delivering world-class cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure, and the huge value this would bring for health, road safety, the environment and economy. It makes a strong case that if the next government wants a value-for-money solution that addresses lots of key issues, investing in cycling and walking is a no-brainer. This is part

of our work to ensure parties and candidates have cycling on their radar in the run-up to the general election. There's lots more to come, including ways that you can get involved.

I'm really excited that we're almost ready to share with you the full details of our new strategy, which will shape the focus and direction of our charity for the next five years. We'll be launching it publicly in June, but you'll hear about it first with a full feature in the next edition of Cycle. Look out too for an online event, which we'll advertise in CycleClips. An important element of the new strategy will be working to make every experience of cycling a positive one – which will encompass priority areas including making our roads safer, securing more high-quality cycling infrastructure and empowering people to overcome barriers to cycling. Whether you're a seasoned road cyclist, a family cycling to school or someone seeking off-road adventures, we want to make the UK a better place for you to ride your bike.

We will also be tackling public perceptions of cycling. It's a significant challenge but one we are determined to take on, as we know it will be crucial to winning the increased investment in cycling that will play a key role in enabling many more people to start cycling.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our members who have taken part in our surveys and focus groups over the past year. Your input has played an important role in shaping our new strategy.

Later in 2024 we will once again be showcasing extraordinary women in the cycling world with our annual 100 Women in Cycling list, which is now in its eighth year. By celebrating inspiring individuals, we aim to show that cycling can be for everyone – no matter your gender, background or ability. One of the most rewarding things about the awards is that the quality and number of nominations seems to be ever increasing. We're counting on your input to keep that trend going, so please nominate the remarkable women in your cycling life for recognition this year at cyclinguk.org/100women.

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Photo: Adrian Willis