

# Briefing



[More cycling will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions](https://www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/climate-change?maxWidth=80%25&maxHeight=80%25&inline=true#picture-colorbox-T59FhfEk82)

Tuesday, 18 July 2017

## Climate change

**“Cycling is part of the solution for a low-carbon future.”**

### Headline Message

- Climate change threatens the future of our way of life and economy, as well as our health and the natural environment that cyclists treasure. There is little doubt amongst informed scientists that greenhouse emissions from human activity are already contributing to an increase in extreme

weather events and loss of life around the world, and that dangerously high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are already being reached. To delay tackling climate change will be far more costly than acting now.

- Cycling provided highly efficient transport before carbon-intensive travel became widespread, and it is part of the solution for a low-carbon future. It is one of the simplest lifestyle choices that individuals can make to reduce their carbon footprint. It also has huge benefits for their health, their finances and their neighbourhoods.
- Government bodies and businesses should act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport by encouraging cycling as a zero-carbon option and by reducing the need to travel.

## Policy Key Facts

- It is generally accepted that climate change risks becoming critical if the world fails to limit temperature rises to 2°C over the pre-industrial average (although lower figures have been suggested).
- At the United Nations climate change conference in Paris 2015 ('COP21'), 195 nations agreed to keep global temperature rise well below 2°C this century, and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- The *Climate Change Act 2008* commits the UK to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 80% in 2050 (based on 1990 levels).
- In 2015, the transport sector emitted 24% of the UK's GHG emissions, and 29% of its CO<sub>2</sub>. Road transport (as opposed to air, rail etc.) accounted for 93% of CO<sub>2</sub>, most of this coming from passenger cars (62%).
- A dramatic, worldwide increase in cycling – from a current c.6% of all urban passenger miles to 11% in 2030 and 14% in 2050 – could cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from urban passenger transport by about 7% by 2030, and nearly 11% in 2050.
- If people in England became as likely to cycle as people in the Netherlands,

there would be around two million fewer car driving commuters. Consequently, English authorities could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> outputs by over 1,500 tonnes a year on average.

## Cycling UK View

- The imperative to halt and reverse the growth of greenhouse emissions should be the central aim of wider transport, planning and economic policies, locally, regionally and nationally.
- Cycling should be promoted as a zero-carbon transport option that can deliver worthwhile carbon savings, together with many other benefits, at very low cost.
- National and local policy frameworks should aim to reduce the need to travel and promote cycling and other low-carbon alternatives to the car. This should also be a central objective for all relevant development agencies and local authorities.
- Transport projects and development proposals that are predicted (or are likely) to increase greenhouse gas emissions should be rejected, and low-carbon alternatives developed instead.
- The Government should oblige local authorities to make their contribution towards meeting the targets set by the *Climate Change Act* and progress should be reported and monitored effectively. Voluntary action alone is not sufficient.

## Download the full detailed campaign briefing



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