

2019/20/21

ACTIVE NATION COMMISSIONER REPORT

Helping to make Scotland a healthier, happier,
fairer and more sustainable nation

// BY LEE CRAIGIE

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LEE CRAIGIE

I didn't think there was a job in the world I could be offered that would make me give up the lifestyle I had. I was traveling the world self-supported by bike, unbound by everyday pressures and enthusiastic about waking each day to experience new things and meet inspiring people.

My background in outdoor education, followed by a training in child and adolescent psychotherapy, had helped me realise that most people I worked with seemed happiest and most content when they had the opportunity to be active every day and connected to nature and other people.

This was certainly true for me.

When I gave up my career as a mountain bike racer after the Commonwealth Games in 2014, it was with an ambition to live in a way that would never allow me to lose sight of the health and environmental gains to be found in being active and outdoors.

When I first learned of the new post of Active Nation Commissioner, I realised that living my everyday active lifestyle had been a privilege that not everyone in Scotland either saw the value in, or had the opportunity to experience and that this was particularly true for women and those disadvantaged socio-economically. In recognising this I had no choice but to accept this exciting opportunity to work alongside policy makers and behaviour change experts all striving to make a positive difference to the ways the Scottish population feel about themselves and the world they live in.

“ A quarter of adults globally are considered inactive, not engaging in 150 minutes of activity a week. ”

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

The Scottish Government has made a bold commitment to the health and wellbeing of our nation by signing up to the WHO global activity plan which sets a target for a 15% global reduction in inactivity by 2030.

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

This confirms to me that the political will to create a healthier, happier, more sustainable Scotland is firmly in place. Political will has already been converted to progressive policies which look to normalise increased levels of everyday physical activity by focusing on encouraging active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday short journeys) and embedding physical activity incentives and initiatives in our schools and workplaces.

However Scotland needs cultural change in order to embrace active travel. Our built up areas have morphed over the years to prioritise the movement and storage of motor vehicles to the detriment of safe, pleasant places to walk, cycle, wheel and socialise. Getting from A to B as quickly as possible appears to be valued over making active and enjoyable journeys. Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown of our movements has forced behaviour change in a way we could never have imagined. It has opened our eyes to the ways in which we share space in our built up areas and the value we place on being everyday active while dramatically highlighting the health inequalities present in our society.

In order to limit the spread of this virus, local authorities across Scotland currently have the opportunity to trial the reallocation of road space in favour of people walking, wheeling and cycling . At the same time, the population is being asked to consider whether journeys are essential thus encouraging localised shopping, socialising and exercising. However, as with any change there is resistance from some who would rather continue to exercise their perceived right to drive

short, everyday journeys whatever the negative impact on others. It feels an important part of my role to help amplify the voices of those who would not otherwise be heard in our society; those without the means to access a car, those who have no choice but to drive on gridlocked roads due to mobility restrictions or those who have no direct access to any green space in their immediate neighbourhoods.

Encouraging walking, wheeling or cycling instead of private car use for everyday short journeys is not the only way to get the Scottish population to move more on a daily basis but it is generally considered to be the way we are most likely to instigate a sustained shift in our collective behaviour. In addition, walking, wheeling or cycling instead of driving makes sense on an economic and environmental level and is therefore more likely to appeal to members of our society for whom cars are unaffordable or for whom sport or physical activity has never featured in their lives. My focus on active travel as Active Nation Commissioner is based on the assumption that by changing the ways we travel for our everyday short journeys, we will create not only a healthier, happier population but a fairer, safer and more environmentally sustainable Scotland.

It is the purpose of this report to describe the barriers I've witnessed to our population being more active in my first half of term in post as Active Nation Commissioner and to set out my intentions and objectives to help reduce or remove them in the year ahead.



Scotland is doing well with policy and action for physical activity with a 4% increase in the percentage of adults achieving the recommended minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week. But there is no space for complacency. We still have a gender difference, with more men being active than women. There is a big drop off in activity levels from middle age onwards and overall the more socio-economically advantaged are more active than the less advantaged. The good news is that all activity, every step and every minute, counts. With this message we can start reducing inequalities because ten minutes of walking to school with the kids, cycling to the shops instead of taking the car or taking a lunchtime walk could help more people get the activity that we all need for good physical and mental health.

PROF NANETTE MUTRIE MBE

This Report in Context



The emergence of Covid-19 has had significant and immediate impacts on all of our lives, across all sectors of our economy and society yet while the majority of this report was written pre-Covid, my strategic objectives remain the same. Scotland’s health, social justice and environmental sustainability have always been the lenses through which I’ve sought to encourage everyday active behaviours. Recent events have not changed this but they have served to emphasise the importance of equal access to local, safe, pleasant places in which we might all be active.

It’s an exciting time to be living in Scotland, with transformational, progressive policies in place aimed at increasing the physical activity levels of our nation. In doubling the active travel budget from £40 million to £80 million over the last 2 years*, the Scottish Government has committed to funding large scale multi-million, multi-year segregated active travel routes in major towns and cities across the country as part of the Places for Everyone programme. Also, during lockdown, funding has been re-purposed to deliver a Spaces for People programme which provides local authorities with 100% funding to quickly provide temporary infrastructure measures to enable people to walk, wheel or cycle, while recognising the need for social distancing.

“Scotland is redefining what it means to be a successful nation by focusing on the broader wellbeing of the population as well as the Gross Domestic Product of the country. Putting wellbeing at the heart of our approach means we can focus on a wider set of measures which reflect on things like the health and happiness of citizens as well as economic wealth to create a world that considers the quality of a person’s life to be as precious an asset as financial success.”

NICOLA STURGEON,
FIRST MINISTER FOR SCOTLAND

** Since I have been in post the funding for active travel has further increased to £100.5m per year and the Scottish Government has committed this amount of funding for 2020-21 and the next 5 years, recently announced in the Programme for Government on 1st Sep-tember 2020.*

Looking Back: January 2019 to Present



The two-day-a-week, independent-of-government Active Nation Commissioner post is funded by Transport Scotland as part of a Programme for Government commitment made at the same time that the Active Travel budget was doubled. I began the role in January 2019 and since then I have established relationships within Transport Scotland, Active Scotland, public health, academia, active travel delivery partners (such as Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Cycling UK, Living Streets Scotland, Paths for All), the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, local authorities, local communities and campaigning groups in order to understand how best I might use my time to make maximum impact to increase Scotland’s levels of physical activity. It feels a unique privilege to be sitting between communities and national government and to have the space and impartiality to challenge and offer the support required to make progressive, democratic change.

Much of my first year in post was spent chairing events, presenting at conferences, visiting community projects, researching best active travel practices from elsewhere in the UK and abroad, speaking to ministers, the Chief Medical Officer, school children and groups of varying physical ability all in an effort to understand what barriers, both real and perceived, restrict our current levels of physical activity in Scotland today.

In doing this I have heard from a variety of experts, from academics to members of our more deprived communities, that in order to be more active in Scotland today people need two things:

1. REASONS

- a. An increase in physical or emotional health
- b. Making a contribution to carbon reduction or social equality
- c. Saving money and time by not using a private car.

2. OPPORTUNITIES

- a. Access to safe, pleasant environments where the wellbeing of people who choose to walk, wheel or cycle is prioritised over the ease of private car use.
- b. A cultural shift throughout society, particularly in workplaces and classrooms, in order to value the time taken to travel actively or exercise frequently.

We need REASONS to be more active

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

By increasing our levels of physical activity, particularly outdoors and as part of our daily lives, we gain in strength, fitness, social connection, connection with nature, emotion regulation and life expectancy.

“The walks soon became very important to our family. Chatting and joking around when out on our walks felt like we got to know our kids all over again which was really special.”

NEAL, PATHS FOR ALL

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

More than half of the journeys made in Scotland under 5km are undertaken by private car, and 65% of all car journeys in Scotland are in single-occupancy vehicles.¹ This, as well as contributing to our carbon emissions and pollution, acts as a deterrent to people wishing to travel actively in our built-up areas.

By adopting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport or a combination of these more active travel measures instead of using a single-occupancy private car, we make a valuable contribution to carbon reduction at the same time as benefiting our physical and mental health and reducing inequalities.



“I look at people sitting in their cars and they look so bored sitting in traffic. Now I get such a sense of achievement when I arrive to work on my bike. I can’t drive to work now, cycling is too good. It’s like freedom!”

REZA, BIKE FOR GOOD - GLASGOW

But in order to help people make this shift there must be safe, viable, affordable and accessible alternatives to driving, including active travel and public transport. The transport sector is now the largest contributor to Scotland’s greenhouse gas emissions and a key focus in the coming years must be on reducing transport emissions as far as possible.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Nationally, our most polluted areas are our most deprived ones. Internationally, our carbon emissions are affecting communities on the other side of the world. By re-prioritising our transport budget spend away from roads and cars towards walking and bus travel in particular, we can use transport and planning to help rebalance the scales of social inequality.

People from low-income households are already travelling more actively than the average population with walking, cycling and bus use at higher levels than for households with higher income or who own one or more private vehicles.

¹ Transport Scotland – TATIS 2019



“Cycling in the north east of Glasgow you come across many problems. I’ve never been on a segregated cycle lane, there aren’t any in the north east. It would be so nice because I’d feel safer in a separate area from the vehicles like cars and lorries. I’ve not seen any Nextbikes up here, I think the nearest one is Alexandra Parade.”

SAUL ON BIKES, GLASGOW

The people who these issues affect the most are currently not being heard by those making decisions. There is a pressing need for their opinions to be considered in the way we shape our more active society and it is my opinion that our decision makers in local and national government should be influenced by the people with lived experience of health inequalities, for example through Citizens Assemblies.



We need OPPORTUNITIES to be more active

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ROAD SAFETY

It is now globally accepted that high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure must be in place before behaviour change will take place on a significant scale. Despite this, there exists significant resistance in Scotland across all sectors to get behind this change to our public places.²

Safe, segregated and pleasant active travel infrastructure is required, especially in our towns and cities, to ensure that it makes practical sense to everyone to undertake their everyday short journeys actively. Our transport and town planning policies³ in Scotland already state that they prioritise people and place, walking, wheeling and cycling as sources of travel but it is my opinion that these policies are not yet reflected in practice across all local authorities. Despite Scottish Government commitment to funding the Places for Everyone and Spaces for People programmes as well as the National Cycle Network and the Programme for Government commitment to Greenways, driving single occupancy vehicles remains the most viable way to travel.

“The science as to the value of active travel is absolutely clear in that it protects against illness and premature death. It is the routine of daily active travel that provides this powerful protection for both physical and mental health.”

DR ADRIAN DAVIS
PROFESSOR OF TRANSPORT AND HEALTH
EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

There has been a significant change in the levels of financial investment to encourage active travel lately but we must simultaneously make it less convenient to drive single-occupancy vehicles for those who have a choice. We also need to educate drivers and enforce penalties for driving infringements that undermine the safety of cyclists and pedestrians.

Ensuring our local authorities feel confident that this is the way our towns and cities must be structured in future, will free up our streets of unnecessary traffic and make our shared spaces more pleasant to walk, wheel and cycle, take the bus in or to drive through for those members of our society who have no choice. Supporting local authorities bold enough to implement default 20 mph speed limits and working with the business sector to prove the economic benefits to more accessible high streets⁴ will be key elements in advocating the gains to be had in the reprioritising of our road space. This is not anti-car or anti-economy, it is pro-people and we need to be encouraging cross-party endorsement of these ideals. We all stand to gain if there is less traffic on our roads and this includes people who drive cars and own high street businesses. Lockdown has been difficult but it has allowed everyone to see the possibilities of this reprioritisation of road space and has increased our understanding that if streets feel safe and pleasant to walk along, high street revenue and quality of life increases.



“Research has shown that if we are to seriously focus on creating fair and inclusive places where we live, work and play, it is imperative that we take bold steps to make our streets inviting places for people to be. The Avenues Project on Sauchiehall Street is the opening statement of a longer-term dialogue through which we can all learn to work together to build truly inclusive and exciting places for Scotland’s communities.”

DR BECKI COX, RESEARCHER
PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Reliable and affordable train travel integrated with cycling, and bus travel integrated with walking and wheeling, provide a realistic alternative to single-occupancy vehicles for everyday short journeys but in my experience there is cultural resistance to accommodating cyclists on some rail services with much of the newly-renovated rolling stock providing the bare minimum for bike carriage. This is particularly evident on the main Highland line to Inverness which could serve countless communities. Although it is welcome that the specially designed 153 adventure carriages will be operational on the Oban line by summer 2021, a cultural shift is still required within rail to make people travelling with bikes, either on trains or to and from stations, feel more welcome.

Bus travel is a lifeline for many of our rural communities and for people who don’t have access to private transport. Furthermore, travelling by bus inevitably involves some level of physical activity in order to access it. Yet Scottish bus patronage has seen a steady decline⁵ over the years with cost and unreliability cited as barriers to its resurrection. A lack of transparent timetables and paucity of safe, pleasant walking routes to and from bus stops are contributing factors that put yet more people off travelling by bus. The Scottish Government’s £500m investment in the bus network and its commitment to make bus travel free for people under 19 is very welcome indeed. With the 2023 UCI World Cycling Championships to be hosted in Glasgow there exists a real possibility of showcasing what affordable, accessible, reliable and sustainable bus travel in Scotland might look like.

² Scottish Government - *Safer Public Spaces Guidance*

³ Scottish Government - *Sustainable Travel Hierarchy*

⁴ Living Streets - *The Pedestrian Pound*

⁵ Transport Scotland - *TATIS 2019 Chapter 2: Bus and Coach Travel*

Looking Forward: Now to January 2022

Covid changed Scots’ behaviours towards being outdoors and active more dramatically than ever before. We must now respond to the world we are living in and the new benefits and challenges we subsequently face in being everyday active.

My focus will be the promotion of the concept of the 20 Minute Neighbourhoods for health, the economy and the environment but, as before, these three aspects will be considered first and foremost through a social justice lens.

With equal amounts of support and challenge I will focus my objectives in a way that I hope encourages better partnership working both strategically and in project delivery to encourage the joining up of the health, environmental and economic agendas. It is my opinion that in order to stand the best chance of making the communities where we live places in which people want to be active, we must share the vision and work together with each other in order to achieve it.

SUPPORT

Inspire and motivate the population, in particular women, young people, school children and disabled people and those considered socio-economically disadvantaged, to increase their levels of everyday activity through joined up working with active travel delivery partners and local authorities.

CHALLENGE

Highlight and help address the practical barriers to being active in Scotland today. Ensure that any decisions on transport or planning are fair for everyone i.e. made while considering social justice and climate change issues.



My Objectives For a More Active Nation

PRIORITIES

1. Considering community infrastructure
2. Travelling to school
3. Supporting our workplaces and the economy
4. The importance of play

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUES

We have allowed our shared spaces to become dominated by motorised vehicles to the detriment of our health and safety. This is particularly true in our most deprived communities where busy roads tend to bisect residential areas and green spaces are fewer and harder to access.

OPPORTUNITY

Covid-19 has revealed the need for people to have safe, traffic free or traffic calmed spaces in which they might travel actively. The Spaces for People programme⁶ has allowed local authorities to be bold and trial changes to our streets that would ordinarily have been arrested by the Transport Regulation Order (TRO) process. The rescheduled COP26 and 2023 World Cycling Championships that will be hosted in Glasgow offer a unique opportunity for the sport, tourism, environment, economy and transport sectors to join forces to ensure communities across Scotland benefit from their legacies.

ACTION

1. Advocate equal, fair and safe access to green spaces and the promotion of green corridors out of population centres to places of interest. Support calls for a strategic active travel network based on the National Cycling Network is included in Transport Scotland’s Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 so that it has the same legal standing and financial investment as the trunk road network.
2. Help establish and monitor a road sign pilot project in one local authority that educates drivers on giving cyclists space.
3. While the Spaces for People programme already allows for temporary 20 mph limits on some roads, advocating the increased enforcement of speeding restrictions in built up areas and support 20 mph bill as the default across Scotland.
4. Encourage a simplification of the TRO process so that these trial changes to our infrastructure can continue beyond Spaces for People.
5. Work with expert facilitators to establish a citizens jury that will include young and marginalised voices to give our local authorities confidence that the changes they make to our shared spaces are for the greater good and not disproportionate, individual gain.
6. Hold Transport Scotland to account in the publication of the 4th iteration of the Cycling Action Plan document.
7. Sit on the board of 2023 World Cycling Championships policy team to ensure joined up political thinking around health, transport, social justice and environmental agendas.

Project focus - Greenways programme and National Cycling Network. Road signage project encouraging safe passing distances.

Partners - Sustrans, Visit Scotland and Cycling World Championships Policy Team, Active Scotland, Cycling Scotland and Police Scotland

TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL

ISSUES

Although there have been small increases in the numbers of children cycling and scooting to school, the numbers of children walking to school are falling⁷ and yet when asked how pupils would choose to get to school, the vast majority of them say they would prefer to walk so they can enjoy the autonomy of travel with their peers. However parents still report that dropping their children at school by car is the fastest, most convenient way for them to begin their day.

OPPORTUNITY

Spaces for People projects have introduced temporary infrastructure around schools, such as 20 mph zones, road closures during pick up and drop off times and also during the whole school day. We need to encourage more of these types of interventions to keep our young people safe and active. With more people now working from home, parents/carers might be encouraged to travel actively to school with younger children. With safer routes to schools, older children can be given the respect and trust they deserve to travel autonomously with their peers.



ACTION

- 8. Encourage local authorities to close streets to cars around schools (at the start and end of the school day) and promote alternatives to driving children to school.
- 9. Start a conversation with schoolchildren about walking and cycling and the relationships with health and climate change then elevate these young people’s voices to Parent Councils, School Boards and local authorities.
- 10. Support the rollout of Bikeability Scotland⁸ cycle training across Scotland and advocate cycling as part of the curriculum and encourage the evolution of the training by ensuring pupil feedback is listened to.

Project Focus - The Daily Mile, Safer Routes to School and Bikeability Scotland cycle training

Partners - Active Scotland, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland and Police Scotland



⁷ Sustrans Scotland – *Hands Up Survey 2019*
⁸ Cycling Scotland – *Bikeability Scotland*

THE WORK PLACE AND THE ECONOMY

ISSUES

With limitations to public transport, those who have the option may turn to travelling by private car when they return to work. Footfall on the UKs streets fell 22.2% between 2007 and 2017⁹ and online shopping has increased threefold in the past decade even before Covid-19¹⁰. It is now estimated that 25% of all motorised city trips are being undertaken by delivery and service companies¹¹ meaning many more of these vehicles will sit idling on our high streets and our residential areas as well as taking up road space¹².

OPPORTUNITIES

If more people work from home more often and our urban areas are redesigned to give priority to pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists, people will adopt more active travel methods for personal and commercial use. Research suggests that well-planned improvements to public spaces can boost footfall and trading by up to 40%¹³. It is estimated that 51% of all motorised trips involving goods transport could be switched to bike or e-cargo bike.



ACTION

- 11. Businesses and workplaces should consider the ways they support their staff to travel actively and, where applicable, distribute their products. Employers should incentivise their staff to continue travelling as actively as possible as they did during lockdown as a means of getting to work.
- 12. Investigate the use of e-cargo bikes to promote first and last mile deliveries to support low emission zones, low traffic neighbourhoods and 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- 13. Work with delivery partners to increase take up of Bikeability cycle training for adults.
- 14. Celebrate the free access to Nextbike hire bikes in city centres and continue to establish better access to bikes for all abilities via bike share, bike libraries, e-bike loans and cycle schemes.
- 15. Advocate for adequate provision for people wishing to travel in Scotland on trains with bikes and affect cultural change within rail around integrated active travel.

Project Focus - Cycle Friendly Employer Award, The Daily Mile and Cargo Bike Freight Logistics

Partners - Cycling Scotland, Active Scotland, COMOUK and Cargo Bike Movement

⁹ Living Streets – *The Pedestrian Pound*
¹⁰ Office for National Statistics – *How Internet Activity Has Changed the Way We Shop*
¹¹ Bicycle Association - *Potential for E-Cargo Bikes to Reduce Congestion and Pollution From Vans In Cities*
¹² The European Cycle Logistics Project
¹³ Living Streets – *The Pedestrian Pound*

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

ISSUES

Research has shown that where you engage in physical activity from an early age, there is a proven link between children who are physically active being more physically active as adults¹⁴.

The Play on Pedals programme¹⁵ in nurseries in Glasgow aims to have a transformational effect on future generations. Play on Pedals partners recognise how cycling can provide a means of independence, an opportunity to develop new skills and a low-cost way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. It has both physical activity and mental health benefits, is sustainable, inclusive and fun. Yet we tend to forget the importance of playing as we get older and, as a consequence, we lose our flexibility, our creativity and curiosity as well as our connectedness with others and our natural environment.

We must instill the joy of being active in our children from their earliest years so they can remind us in turn of what we stand to lose if we stop moving our bodies. If we reclaim the streets for play through programmes that limit vehicle movements in favour of the movement of people, we all stand to gain.

By focusing on physical activity for sport or transport alone, we risk not capturing the imaginations of people who might otherwise be active for pleasure alone.



OPPORTUNITIES

During lockdown the reduction of cars and other motor vehicles on the roads contributed to more families walking and cycling together. I will encourage local and national governments to do all they can to continue this by making access to the outdoors for everyone (regardless of age, ability or neighbourhood) as easy and safe as possible.

Adults also need the opportunity to express themselves physically and for those who have recently rediscovered the joys of cycling, there should be the opportunity to learn how to continue this daily pleasure with confidence.

ACTION

- 16. Support for nurseries so that new mums and dads have more opportunities to be active with their children by promoting the Play on Pedals project.
- 17. Advocate increased affordable access to Bikeability cycle training for adults.
- 18. Play myself. Hold active meetings wherever possible. Encourage others to move more and remember what is important.

Project Focus - Play on Pedals, Bikeability
Partners - Cycling UK, Cycling Scotland,

¹⁴ Physical Activity and Health Alliance - *Start active, stay active: a report on physical activity from the four home coun-tries* Chief Medical Officers
¹⁵ Cycling Scotland – *Play on Pedals*

Summary of objectives
between now and January 2022

I WILL

- ✓ Advocate for a strategic active travel network based on the National Cycling Network to be included in Transport Scotland’s Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 so that it has the same legal standing and financial investment as the trunk road network.
- ✓ Participate in the development and delivery of a national Daily Mile, Play on Pedals and Bikeability campaigns to promote the importance of movement for fun to more schools, nurseries, Scottish Government staff and the population as a whole.
- ✓ Work to ensure key active and sustainable travel routes out of Glasgow are approved for development pre 2023 World Championships with a particular focus on those that start near our more deprived communities.
- ✓ Advocate for adequate provision for people wishing to travel in Scotland on trains with bikes and affect cultural change within rail around integrated active travel.
- ✓ Establish a citizen’s assembly including young and marginalised voices to help ensure our decision makers are fully and fairly informed.
- ✓ Investigate a cargo bike freight delivery and community outreach / training / bike loan hub to promote first and last mile delivery.
- ✓ Help increase and improve access to bikes for everyone and extend cycle loan and hire schemes across Scotland.
- ✓ Pilot a road signage project with Cycling Scotland and Police Scotland to educate drivers of safe passing etiquette for cyclists.
- ✓ Hold Transport Scotland to account in the publication of the 4th iteration of the Cycling Action Plan document.
- ✓ Continue to support political enthusiasm for the 20 mph bill.
- ✓ Work with delivery partners and government to achieve a simplification of the current Traffic Regulation Order process for Local Authorities.
- ✓ Sit on the board of 2023 World Cycling Championships policy team to ensure joined up political thinking around health, transport, social justice and environmental agendas.



CONCLUSIONS

Being outdoors and active everyday benefits our health, our communities, our planet and the economy in immeasurable ways.

During lockdown, we had a unique glimpse of what life might feel like if we had more time to prioritise our levels of physical activity and could make use of streets that were more conducive to active travel. As a population we were surprised at how much we enjoyed being outside and more active and how little we found we needed to travel long distances to feel satisfied and productive.

As lockdown lifts, we now have the opportunity to restructure our transport and local economy systems in ways that mean we continue to prioritise our health, sense of community and the environment. But we must be bold. The political will in Scotland is such that these changes could be made permanent and allow us all a higher quality of life than before while ensuring a sustainable economy and transport system.

We must all take responsibility for vocalising our support for policies that stand to improve our public realm and make society fairer and healthier but, most importantly, we must remind ourselves on a daily basis how much we stand to gain personally from being everyday active.

Change can be unsettling but it is inevitable and each of us has our part to play in ensuring it happens for the greater good.

Lee Craigie

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Images courtesy of Paths for All, Living Streets, Doug Summers, James Robertson and The Adventure Syndicate

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