

New executive agency Active Travel England launches

I am pleased to inform the House that the Department for Transport is to create a new executive agency, Active Travel England (ATE), with its headquarters in York. This builds on the government's commitment to level up the country and locate more Civil Service roles outside of London and the South East, as well as its commitment to boosting cycling and walking.

This government is investing a record amount in active travel to help deliver our priorities for a healthy, safe and carbon-neutral transport system. ATE will work to ensure that this, and wider transport investment, is well spent, and will help raise the standard of cycling and walking infrastructure.

ATE will manage the national active travel budget, awarding funding for projects which meet the new national standards set out in 2020. It will inspect finished schemes and ask for funds to be returned for any which have not been completed as promised, or which have not started or finished by the stipulated times.

ATE will also begin to inspect, and publish reports on, highway authorities for their performance on active travel and identify particularly dangerous failings in their highways for cyclists and pedestrians.

In these regards, the commissioner and inspectorate will perform a similar role to Ofsted from the 1990s onwards in raising standards and challenging failure.

As well as approving and inspecting schemes, ATE will help local authorities, training staff and spreading good practice in design, implementation and public engagement. It will be a statutory consultee on major planning applications to ensure that the largest new developments properly cater for pedestrians and cyclists.

ATE's establishment follows the government's unprecedented commitment of £2 billion for cycling and walking over this parliament and comes in the wake of our ambitious [Gear Change](#) strategy to transform active travel.

The agency will become fully operational later in 2022.

I am also pleased to confirm the appointment of Chris Boardman MBE as the first Active Travel Commissioner for England. He will take the helm on an interim basis to spearhead the establishment of ATE.

This underlines this government's ongoing commitment to boosting cycling and walking and to building back greener from the pandemic.