



Local Authority & Combined Authority

Expressions of Interest

Background

The Bikeability Trust is seeking expressions of interest from Local Authorities and Combined Authorities to partner in the delivery of two linked development projects pilots running between 2026 and 2029: **Smart School Routes** and **Making Riders Ready**.

Evidence Base

Smart School Routes and **Making Riders Ready** pilot development projects have been designed with recent research in mind and incorporates key elements of the third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The pilots also support the Trust's 10-year strategic objectives. Key research, strategies and evidence considered that have informed these pilots include:

The Bikeability Trust -Bikeability Strategy 2025-2035

The success of the digitisation process and recent research now provide us with more reliable data and the ability to engage with the ultimate decision makers: parents. Our research shows that **4 out of 5 children want to travel actively to school**, and after taking Level 2, **93% of riders feel more confident cycling on roads, 92% feel safer**, and trainees' **intention to cycle is nearly six times higher than before the training**. Yet the gatekeepers who enable children to cycle are adults, and only **15% of parents/carers feel confident enough to cycle themselves**.

Download the Strategy [HERE](#)

The Bikeability Trust -Re-engaging a Lost Generation: The Role of Confidence and Training in Adult Cycling Participation -2026

Cycling delivers well-established benefits for health, wellbeing, the environment and the economy, yet participation among adults in England remains low. A YouGov survey of more than **2,000 UK adults found that 75% had not cycled at all in the past year**, with only a small minority cycling regularly. Among those who do cycle, activity is largely concentrated in leisure rather than everyday travel, indicating that cycling is not yet embedded as a routine mode of transport. This **research identifies confidence as a critical factor shaping whether adults cycle, acting as a key link between infrastructure and behaviour**.



Download the report [HERE](#)

The Bikeability Trust -Bikeability Level 2 and Level 3 evaluations/research carried out by TRL- 2025–2026

Bikeability Level 2 and Level 3 play a meaningful role in helping people develop competence, awareness and motivation for cycling, especially when linked to other initiatives, such as good infrastructure.

TRL identified a **clear gap between intention and action: 83% intend to cycle more, yet 24% of learners (Preparation/Contemplation stages) struggle to turn motivation into routine behaviour** because of confidence, route safety or access barriers.

Key recommendations from this research included:

- **Activate the willing-but-inactive** with simple, social rides on safe routes that build confidence through short, practical journeys.
- **Use peer support and inclusive leadership** to normalise cycling, with visible female and global-majority representation.
- **Prioritise safer everyday routes** by improving maintenance, visibility, low-speed zones, child-friendly junctions and quiet networks.
- **Boost skills and safety awareness** through targeted training (Level 2/3) and campaigns on overtaking, positioning, and riding in real conditions.
- **Support families, schools, and communities** with group rides, clear guidance, accessible programmes, and links to local routes, cycle loans, and maintenance.
- **Adopt an integrated investment approach:** local authorities should align cycle training programmes with infrastructure planning to maximise the impact of both interventions on cycling participation.

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 3 (CWIS3) & Delivery Plan -2026-2030

Several recommendations from the Trust's research are reflected in ATE's strategic aims as part of the recently published CWIS3 and Worth Every Step – ATE's Delivery Plan. In particular, the "Safe Routes to School" programme has a primary focus on getting millions more children to walk, wheel or cycle to school. The strategy sets a target for **60% of children aged 5–16 to walk or cycle to school by 2035**.

Download the Level 2 evaluation report [HERE](#) and the Level 3 report [HERE](#)

Pilot Project Overview

Themes 1 & 2: Smart School Routes and Making Riders Ready

This programme will test a scalable, evidence-led approach to increasing cycling and walking to school by combining infrastructure, behaviour change and family engagement. The two themed projects will be run in tandem with the same sample of parents.

Theme 1: Smart School Routes will establish partnership between The Bikeability Trust, and school travel charities and a pilot Combined or Local Authority. Using shared data insights, we will identify schools and communities with the greatest potential to increase active travel. This will enable targeted investment in "smart routes to school", ensuring behaviour change programmes are focused where infrastructure already exists or is planned. A digital platform will support parents and carers by providing personalised route options, connecting families making similar journeys and using behavioural incentives to encourage regular active travel.

Theme 2: Making Riders Ready addresses a key gap in the active travel journey. While Bikeability Level 2 and 3 training equips children with cycling skills, many lack opportunities to practise them, limiting confidence and long-term behaviour change. Building on the schools identified through Theme 1, this project will review and pilot Bikeability Plus modules, co-designing interventions with parents, carers and partners to increase confidence in children's and parents cycling ability and promote cycling as a practical transport choice rather than solely a leisure activity.

Pilot Objectives

The pilots aim to increase family cycling, support independent journeys following Bikeability training, improve cycling uptake during transition to secondary school, increase bike bus participation and encourage more short local trips by cycle. A test-and-learn approach will generate evidence for wider adoption, contributing to CWIS3 targets while creating sustainable delivery models that can be funded and delivered beyond the pilot phase. The development aim is to create an evidence base to inform future investments.

We are therefore looking to work with proactive Local Authorities and Combined Authorities that are committed to creating safer school journeys and are willing to play an active role in shaping and evaluating innovative approaches that could be scaled elsewhere.

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered as a pilot partner, Local Authorities or Combined Authorities should be able to demonstrate the following:

1. School Infrastructure Commitment

The authority should identify five or more schools that meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Have recently benefited from cycling, walking or road safety improvements within the school catchment area.
- Have strong existing cycling connections to surrounding residential communities through high-quality cycling infrastructure, traffic-calmed routes or off-road paths.
- Are due to receive active travel, cycle infrastructure, school street improvements within the next 12-24 months.
- Have an existing school street in place or are in the process of implementing one
- Are identified within LCWIPs, active travel strategies or capital investment programmes as priority locations for increasing active travel to school.

Preference will be given to authorities that can demonstrate a clear link between infrastructure investment and opportunities to increase cycling participation amongst school-aged children.

2. Behaviour Change Support

The authority must be able to identify shortlisted schools:

- Those that receive Level 2 Bikeability Training for year 5 or year 6 as a minimum but ideally receive other Bikeability Levels including Get Cycling In Schools. (we can support with this element)
- Take part in Living Streets WOW programme AND have a Modeshift Stars Travel Plan
- Have current low levels of cycling, but the school are proactive and interested in increasing cycling levels and reducing car trips.
- Modal share for active modes in less than 60%.
- The schools have good levels of parent engagement and a proactive PTA group
- There are an existing number of community-based organisations who could act as a locally trusted convener of project participants (funded).



3. Officer Commitment

Authorities must commit staff time throughout the pilot period, however we are not expecting a high level of staff time, as the trust will provide project management, M&E and funding for all other elements of the pilots. Our ask would include:

- A nominated project lead.
- Attendance at steering group online meetings (1 hr a week in the first month and then monthly after mobilisation period).
- Participation in co-design activities with schools, parents and community stakeholders. (Approx 3-4 sessions for 2 hrs over the 2 years).
- Sharing of contacts and promoting of opportunities in communities.
- Feedback into the evaluation process.

4. Data Support

Authorities must be willing to work collaboratively on data sharing to help identify schools. You may need internal officer support to consider the following data sources to:

- Infrastructure improvements around shortlisted schools
- School locations by type.
- Crossing, speed limits and traffic calming around schools.
- Stats 19 data.
- School Streets and related programme data.
- Other relevant datasets that support route planning and pilot evaluation.

Support from the authority's data and analytical teams will be essential to maximise the effectiveness of the Smart School Routes approach.

5. School Engagement

Authorities should be able to facilitate relationships and introductions with:

- School Leadership.
- Travel champions or active travel leads.
- Local groups providing Walk/Wheel/Cycle activities (that we can fund separately).
- Local community networks to promote offer.



6. Community Engagement Support

Authorities must be willing to help identify, promote and engage a trusted local delivery partner or community organisation capable of supporting:

- Parent and family engagement.
- Community outreach.
- Local communications.
- Participant support – What's App group comms, monitoring activity and reaching out if engagement drops with friendly check ins.
- Ongoing behaviour change initiatives.
- Provide indoor space for workshops and outdoor space for cycling activities.

7. Commitment to Innovation and Learning

Participating authorities must be willing to:

- Test new approaches.
- Share learning and best practice.
- Contribute to monitoring and evaluation activities.

What the Bikeability Trust Will Provide

The Bikeability Trust will provide:

- Project design and coordination.
- Funding for each external element of the pilot
- Co-design support with schools, parents and children.
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- Technology partner procurement and management.
- Community engagement support.
- National learning and dissemination.

Desired Outcomes

Through this partnership we aim to:



- Increase participation in Bikeability Level 1 and Level 2 training (helps towards capability ratings).
- Increase the number of children cycling to school.
- Improve parent and carer confidence.
- Support the development of bike buses and group travel initiatives.
- Increase cycling participation beyond the school journey.
- Demonstrate how cycle training, digital and physical support alongside infrastructure investment can work together to deliver sustained behaviour change.

How to Express Interest

Successful authorities will become early partners in shaping an evidence-led approach that has the potential to influence future national delivery models for both active travel and cycle training.

To register your expression of interest, please send an overview of how you will be able to meet the criteria – in no more than 2 pages in a word doc format to beccy@bikeabilitytrust.org by **5:00pm on the 13th of October 2026.**

Please note – we can only take expressions from a local authority or combined authority due to the nature of our grant funding agreement. Please do not apply if you are a charity, CIC, company or other type of organisation. However, we welcome partnership opportunities.

Applications will be reviewed and successful applicants will be notified late October for initial discussions to start. Projects will be mobilised from Oct-March, with 12-month Pilots starting in April 2027.