

## ***Appendix 3 – The health case for cycling***

### **E The health case for cycling**

1.1 Whilst it is broadly accepted that cycling is good for your health it is worth reiterating all the advantages cycling brings. British Cycling have carried out extensive research on this subject and have provided the following observations;

- a) People who cycle regularly in mid-adulthood typically enjoy a level of fitness equivalent to someone 10 years younger and their life expectancy is two years above the average.
- b) On average, regular cycle commuters take more than one day per year less off sick than colleagues who do not cycle to work, saving UK businesses around £83m annually. Also, people who do not cycle-commute regularly have a 39% higher mortality rate than those who do.
- c) The health benefits of cycling outweigh the injury risks by between 13:1 and 415:1, according to studies. The figure that is most often quoted - and endorsed by the Government - is 20:1 (life years gained due to the benefits of cycling v the life-years lost through injuries).
- d) Boys aged 10-16 who cycle regularly to school are 30% more likely to meet recommended fitness levels, while girls who cycle are 7 times more likely to do so.
- e) In England, physical inactivity causes around 37,000 preventable premature deaths amongst people aged 40-79 per year.
- f) In 2013, almost a third of children aged 2-15 were classed as either overweight or obese.
- g) Without action, 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children will be obese by 2050 in the UK – and cost the NHS £10 billion p.a.
- h) Lack of exercise can make people ill. It can lead to obesity, coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke, cancers, type 2 diabetes and other life-threatening conditions.
- i) Cycling fits into daily routines better than many other forms of exercise, because it doubles up as transport to work, school or the shops etc. It's easier than finding extra time to visit the gym and far less costly.
- j) Unlike driving, cycling causes negligible harm to others, either through road injuries or pollution, so it's a healthy option not just for cyclists, but for everyone else too.
- k) Many cyclists report that cycling regularly reduces their perceived levels of stress and promotes relaxation.

1.2 The promotion and development of cycling in Hartlepool will result in many health advantages, however, a key focus will be in efforts to reduce obesity rates in the Borough which are some of the highest in the region. Recent data demonstrates this issue;

<b>Children (Reception)</b>	<i>Overweight</i>	<i>Obese</i>	<i>Combined</i>
England	12.8	9.1	21.9
North East	13.7	10.0	23.7
Hartlepool	13.7	11.6 (joint highest in region)	25.3

<b>Children (Yr6)</b>	<i>Overweight</i>	<i>Obese</i>	<i>Combined</i>
England	14.2	19.1	33.2
North East	14.5	21.5	35.9
Hartlepool	15.7	25.9 (highest in region)	41.6 (highest in region)

<b>Adults</b>	<i>Overweight</i>	<i>Obese</i>	<i>Combined</i>
England	40.6	24.0	64.6
North East	41.9	26.7	68.6
Hartlepool	40.5	32.7 (highest in region)	73.2 (highest in region)