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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 11th February 2009

TITLE: Everyday walking and cycling at the heart of new Physical Activity Plan

MAIN TEXT:

1. Today the Government launched a new Physical Activity Strategy for England and committed to working with Walk England, and Cycling England, to ensure there are more opportunities for more people to walk and cycle.
2. Jim Walker, CEO of Walk England, said 'I'm delighted that the Health Minister has taken the initiative to coordinate government and ensure people's health is a priority in policy decisions'. Nearly a third of us are now not active enough to benefit our health and we know that the most likely and quickest way of improving the situation for the most number of people is to encourage more people to walk and cycle as part of their daily lives'.
3. Phillip Darnton, Chair of Cycling England, added 'We have a history of piloting projects and demonstrating the potential of what could be done to encourage more cycling and walking but there has never been such a visible policy behind it driving decisions and budgets. We look forward to working with our colleagues in health to add value to the work many local authorities are already choosing to do and continue to deliver the changes on the ground that we know lots of people are looking for.

END

Issued on behalf of Walk England in parallel with Cycling England

For further information on walking and physical activity please contact Veronica Reynolds at Walk England on 077748 965 090

For further information on cycling and physical activity please contact Philip Darnton at Cycle England on 07778 555 387

Notes to Editors:

1. Walk England is a social enterprise currently funded by The Department for Transport with the support of the Big Lottery Fund aiming to inspire people who want to walk more, and bring them together with professionals from transport, health and the environment who are responsible for supporting that choice.
2. Walk England will coordinate the delivery of 2012 new Active Challenge Routes across England as part of the delivery planned around the new national strategy. An innovative initiative, inspired by the Games, the idea has been designed to let more people be more active specifically in their local area and to be able to record just how much more active they are online. Walk England plan to work with colleagues in Natural England, local authorities, County Sport Partnerships, health walk leaders and other walking ambassadors to develop labelled routes that can provide walkable connections for local people to use as part of their everyday journeys. Participants will be able to upload their own routes, share their favourites with friends and annotate them with their own images and comments.
3. The new feature will be added to the existing Walk England website (www.walkengland.org.uk) as the first of a series of public facing tools that are planned to engage the huge numbers of people who are currently frustrated at the lack of coordinated information explaining where they can walk, how long it's going to take them and what sort of welcome they are going to get when they try it.
4. Cycling England is funded by the Department for Transport and leads on the coordination of government spend on projects set to deliver more people choosing to cycle.
5. Cycling England will coordinate the expansion of the successful Bike It scheme as part of the delivery planned around the new national strategy. A nationwide project which is getting literally thousands of people back in the saddle with a range of cycle surgeries, safety training, environmental improvements and promotion schemes.