

## FINANCE COMMITTEE CALL FOR EVIDENCE

### DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2013-14

#### SUBMISSION FROM CROSS PARTY GROUP ON CYCLING

1. It was agreed at the first meeting of the CPG on Cycling to submit a brief note in response to the call for evidence on the forthcoming draft budget. A number of key cycling organisations have submitted more detailed information in tandem.

2. The following comments are general in nature but are especially relevant to Questions 1,2,4,6 and 8.

**3. The strongly held view of our members is that increased spending by the Scottish Government on cycling, and in particular cycle infrastructure, would result in an abundance of economic rewards. It is also an essential requirement if the Government's target of 10% of journeys made by bike in 2020 is to be realised.**

4. Cycling organisations made very detailed submissions as part of last year's Spending Review, presenting clear evidence of the positive impacts of cycle spending on local economies. For instance, Sustrans included in their evidence a list of almost two hundred companies, mostly in Scotland, who had benefitted from their projects between 2008-11.

5. Every pound that is invested to make cycling a safer and more appealing activity is **high-impact preventative spend**, reducing multiple direct and indirect costs across areas such as health services and road maintenance, as well as tackling urban congestion and air quality.

6. Although there is not a single budget line for spending on cycling, the Committee may recall that spending on active travel was set to fall in the Spending Review, until a last minute allocation of £13m over three years by the Cabinet Secretary reduced the planned cut. This followed a considerable campaign in support of cycle investment by a wide range of groups and MSPs across the Parliament.

7. Total investment in active travel in the years 2010-15 will average around £20m each financial year, remaining steady at the same time as the Scottish Government wants to encourage many thousands more people onto their bike as it heads towards the 2020 target. There is a strong case that extra investment is both desirable and vital if barriers to increased cycling are to be overcome.

8. Three notable things have happened since last year's budget that help make the case for increasing cycling spend in 2013/4 and subsequent budgets.

9. In April, over 3000 cyclists from across Scotland rode en masse to Holyrood to demand greater action to make Scotland a cycle-friendly nation. It was one of the largest protests to date outside the Parliament and the huge turnout demonstrated the strong surge in interest there has been in all forms of cycling, whether for transport, leisure, sport or all three. Cycling's growing popularity is fuelling demands for more investment.

### **Climate change targets**

10. In July, the latest carbon figures showed that transport emissions remains stubbornly high. The first carbon target under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act was missed and emissions from the transport sector remain higher than the 1990 baseline, despite an overall target for a 42% reduction on 1990 levels by 2020. Persuading people to switch from cars to active travel for short journeys is key to reducing emissions. A step change in investment towards low-carbon travel is needed and further investment in cycling would be a logical response from the Scottish Government.

### **Olympic success**

11. There is a particularly unique opportunity to capture the enthusiasm generated by the Olympic Games and the success of Sir Chris Hoy in cycling. The high profile of competitive cycling is likely to inspire more people to consider using a bike for general transportation, and vice versa, if we want a larger pool of cyclists from which athletes will come forward, then we need to invest now for future success, notably in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. What better tribute could there be to Scottish athletes than to transform our streets, our cycle training and our sports facilities?

12. As the budget process moves forward, members of the Cross Party Group on Cycling would welcome any opportunity to present further evidence to the Committee on these issues.

**In conclusion, the considerable evidence presented last year is only strengthened further by the events of the last 12 months and we make a clear recommendation to increase funding.**

