

SEStran

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Introduction

This note sets out SEStran's views on how the transport-related components of the draft budget relate to the national indicators identified by the Committee:

- Reduce Scotland's Carbon Footprint
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active travel and to the national purpose target on reducing Scotland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The first section provides brief comments on some of the budget headings related to transport; the second sets out more general views on priorities in relation to the indicators above.

Impact of budget on indicators

The sums within the draft budget document as published that are identifiable as relating to transport are summarised in the table below.

<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Level 2/3 headings</i>	<i>budget</i>	2014-15		Change 2014-15 to 2015-16		
			Final	2015-16 Draft	2014-15 prices	2014-15 prices	
			£m	cash £m	2014-15 prices £m	cash £m	2014-15 prices £m
<i>Infrastructure, Investment & Cities</i>	Air Services		50.4	63.4	62.4	13.0	12.0
	Concessionary Fares and Bus Services		253.6	260.6	256.5	7.0	2.9
	Ferry Services		146.8	1	184.2	40.3	37.4
	Motorways and Trunk Roads		639.0	694.8	683.9	55.8	44.9
	Other Transport Policy, Projects and Agency Administration		69.9	65.9	64.9	-4.0	-5.0
	Rail Services		832.8	808.3	795.6	-24.5	-
	Scottish Futures Fund (Future Transport Fund only)		18.7	20.3	20.0	1.6	1.3

<i>Local Govt</i>	Regional Transport Partnership	22.5	21.9	21.6	-0.6	-0.9
	Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes	8.2	8.0	7.9	-0.2	-0.3
		2041.	2130	2096.		
	TOTAL	9	.3	9	88.4	55.0

SEStran welcomes the real terms increase in the overall transport budget, given the importance of transport as a key economic driver. The extent to which this contributes towards improving performance in relation to the identified national indicators, however, will depend on how the budget is spent. SEStran offers the following comments in relation to selected budget headings:

Concessionary Fares and Bus Services.

While the primary purpose of much of this expenditure may be related to social policy, bus services provide the primary and most used form of public transport and therefore contribute significantly to all the indicators and purposes of this inquiry. The small increase in this budget is therefore to be welcomed. However, this heading does not include the support to bus services provided by local authorities. The pressures on local authority finance and resultant reduction in spending on supported bus services is of much greater concern, with potential impacts on the ability to maintain the comprehensive public transport system necessary to meet the targets and indicators.

Motorways and Trunk Roads.

This represents the largest area of budget increase. While good road (as well as rail, sea and air) connectivity is essential to achieving Scotland's economic goals, spending in this area is unlikely to contribute to reducing GHG emissions.

Other Transport Policy etc.

This incorporates Support for Sustainable and Active Travel (SSAT) at £25m – a welcome £10m more than the indicative amount indicated in last year's budget but still £4m less than 2014-15. SEStran believes this to be a key budget heading requiring more than the 1.2% it receives of the total transport budget (see further comments below) if there is to be significant progress towards sustainability aims.

Rail Services

The budget reflects an overall reduction in the overall cost in providing Scotland's rail services. However, the opportunity appears not to have been taken to accelerate the rail improvement programme, with a reduction of £3.1m (11%) in the Major Public Transport Projects budget that funds the major rail schemes.

Focusing expenditure on indicators

Looking at the relationship between transport and each of the indicators:

Carbon footprint/Greenhouse gas emissions

Scotland's carbon footprint has reduced from a peak in 2007¹, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transport in Scotland have also reduced from a 2007 peak. As a proportion of the total carbon footprint, transport's contribution has remained at around 25% during the period 2007-2011 (the latest for which figures are available)². For road transport, by contrast, GHG emissions appear not to be reducing at the same rate. As a result, the proportional contribution of road transport to overall Scottish GHG emissions has shown an increasing trend over a ten year period with a peak of 18% in 2011².

SEStran is of the view that tackling vehicle GHG emissions should be a high priority, and would be most effective if focused on buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles. In 2012 these made up under 2% of the vehicle fleet, yet contributed 29% of road transport GHG emissions.

Traffic congestion

Again, the traffic congestion indicator shows reductions from a peak in 2007³. Traffic levels have declined slightly in this period, and in urban areas especially this would be expected to lead to a disproportionate reduction in congestion. However, this indicator shows the number of journeys which sampled users *perceived* to be affected by congestion. It does not measure the severity or economic impact of congestion. SEStran is of the view that a more objective indicator for congestion is required.

In South East Scotland, it is crucial that future development and growth potential is not prejudiced by perceived current or forecast future congestion problems on the strategic road network. Large scale road construction is clearly unaffordable and impractical in the more urbanised areas of the country, and a much more strategic and holistic approach that considers all transport modes is needed.

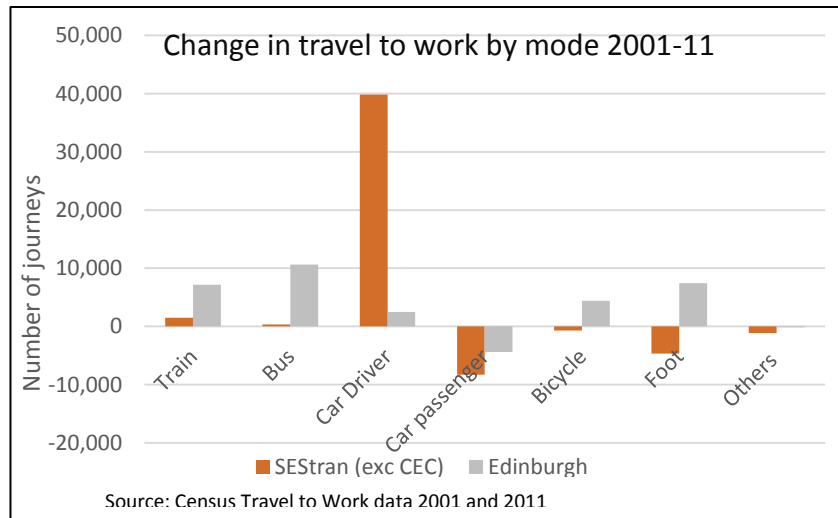
¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/carbon>

² Scottish Transport Statistics No 32, Table 13.2 and SEStran calculation

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/congestion>

Journeys to work by public or active travel

The overall indicator shows that this has remained fairly constant at around 30% since 1999⁴. However, in the SEStran area at least this masks a



significant difference in trends between the core city area and the rest of the region. An analysis of 2001-2011 census data by SEStran (see figure below) shows significant increases in use of sustainable transport modes in the City of Edinburgh, but small increases or even reductions in the other SEStran Council areas.

In spite of the attention given to cycling and the Government's target of achieving 10% of all trips by bicycle, the proportion of journeys to work and study by bicycle for the whole of Scotland remains low at 1.5% in 2011⁵, having changed marginally if at all since 2001.

The table below summarises the budgets available for sustainable transport (with the major exception of rail spending). In spite of the welcome increase in SSAT of £10m compared to the indicative figure in the 2014-15 budget, the overall total is reduced by 6% in real terms.

Sustainable transport budgets	2014-15 Final	2015-16 Draft		Change 2014-15 to 2015-16	
		cash £m	2014-15 prices £m	cash £m	2014-15 prices £m
Support for Sustainable and Active Travel (SSAT)	29.0	25.0	24.6	-4.0	-4.4
Future Transport Fund	18.7	20.3	20.0	1.6	1.3
Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes	8.2	8.0	7.9	-0.2	-0.3
	55.9	53.3	52.5	-2.6	-3.4

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/transport>

⁵ Scotland's Census 2011 - National Records of Scotland Table QS702SC

Conclusion

SEStran's key conclusion is that considerably more focus needs to be given in the budget to the promotion and support of public transport and active travel if positive impacts are to be made on the indicators and targets of this inquiry. This needs to be supported by a much clearer delivery focus, particularly on behaviour change methodologies such as travel planning (as discussed in the Committee's report on the 2014-15 budget). The measures (and hence budget requirements) appropriate for different types of area need more detailed consideration – for example how sustainable transport can be promoted more effectively in suburban and outer areas of cities and in smaller towns so that these areas contribute positively to the indicators. Regional Transport Partnerships are in a particularly strong position to assist in delivering this wider focus if given appropriate funding and delivery responsibilities⁶.

SEStran

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⁶ Recommendation in 'Develop to Deliver': Scottish Govt/RTPs Working Group draft Report, June 2014