

SUSTRANS SCOTLAND

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Headlines

- Realising the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) vision of 10% of everyday trips by bike by 2020 is challenging but not impossible with will at all levels underpinned by financial commitment. Last year saw a significant increase in the level of funding for active travel and an accompanying increase in appetite from partners to deliver more projects. We need to see similar increases this year, to give a realistic prospect of meeting the CAPS vision.
- The draft budget does not contain a clear line about funding for active travel despite repeated calls for this to be the case in previous years. This is essential in order to accurately ascertain differences in the budget for active travel from one year to the next. In the interests of transparency we strongly encourage the Scottish Government to make this change to the budget.
- Investment in active travel represents exceedingly good value for money for the Scottish Government in terms of the multiple benefits that accrue – including health, environmental and economic benefits. This investment is being increasingly well used by the public, with a 7% increase in patronage of the National Cycle Network between 2012 - 13. Enabling and encouraging more people to travel actively helps to contribute positively towards a number of National Indicators.

Context and policy interventions

Sustrans Scotland welcomes the opportunity to provide written evidence to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment (ICI) Committee on the draft budget 2015-16. Sustrans is Scotland's leading sustainable transport charity working to enable people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of their everyday journeys. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in. It is in this context that we provide our comments on the draft budget to the Committee.

In 2013, 1% of trips in Scotland were made by bicycle and 23.3% were made on foot. This is despite the fact that 50% of all trips were less than 3km and 25% were less than 1km (Transport Scotland, 2013a) – distances easily manageable by active travel. We, along with everyone interested in transport from central and local government to civic society, want to see more people being able to choose to walk and cycle for their short everyday journeys and enjoy the many associated benefits – health, improved urban amenity, environmental and economic.

The policy environment in Scotland for active travel is very positive, with a number of key interventions already in place including:

- Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2013b): this was refreshed in 2013 and partners now have a sense of energy and direction about its delivery.
- National Walking Strategy (Scottish Government, 2014a): this was published with an action to set up a delivery forum to translate the strategic vision into implementation.
- National Planning Framework 3 (Scottish Government, 2014b): this contains a national long distance walking and cycling network as a national development. This network will link key outdoor tourism locations across the country and will be an important tourism asset in its own right.
- Designing Streets: A policy statement for Scotland (Scottish Government 2010): this policy statement for Scotland contains positive rhetoric but its implementation has not been terribly successful to date.
- A more active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games (Scottish Government, 2013a): overarching vision that “the people of Scotland will enjoy more active and healthier lives”.
- Town Centre Action Plan – the Scottish Government response (Scottish Government, 2013b): this document could do more for walking and cycling.

Despite all of these positive policy interventions, success in terms of on the ground increases in active travel has been limited, due in part to insufficient resourcing, a position only recently improved. As well as delivering the current policy environment we also would like to see additional measures put in place such as a shift to zero road fatalities, 20mph zones in all residential and shopping streets, greater emphasis on improved interchange facilities and increased resource funding for smarter choices.

Current Progress on National Indicators

- **Reduce Scotland’s carbon footprint:** performance worsening. Scotland’s carbon footprint in 2010 was 82.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, 4% more than 78.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2009.
- **Reduce traffic congestion:** performance maintaining. The 2013 figure (9.7%) is the lowest recorded and is below the 2006 baseline figure of 12.7%.
- **Increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active travel:** performance maintaining. The 2013 figure of 30.7% is 0.5 percentage points below the baseline in 2006 of 31.2%. This figure has stayed relatively constant over recent years at around 30%.

Draft budget for active travel

The 3 main funding sources for active travel are controlled by Transport Scotland and are:

- Cycling Walking Safer Routes: 14/15 £8.2m, 15/16 £8m
- Sustainable and Active Travel: 14/15 £29m, 15/16 £25m
- Future Transport Fund: 14/15 £18.7m, 15/16 £20.3m
- Total: 14/15 £55.9m, 15/16 £53.3m – decrease of £2.6m from 14/15 to 15/16

To put these figures in context, the total transport budget is £2.1bn, the sustainable and active travel budget is £53.3m, therefore only 2.5% of the total transport budget is going on sustainable and active travel. This compares unfavourably to many other Northern European countries.

Active travel funding in 14/15 and the proposed funding for 15/16 is noticeably higher than in previous years. However, we had hoped that 14/15 marked the start of an ongoing rise and drive to reach the CAPS vision for 10% of trips to be by bike by 2020. It now looks like 14/15 was a peak or, at best, the start of a plateau in investment.

It is important to note that there is a huge appetite amongst local authorities and other partners to provide match funding for projects. 31 local authorities and 10 other partners are now delivering Sustrans' Community Links partnership projects. This programme is a grant scheme run by Sustrans Scotland which provides funding for the creation of walking and cycling infrastructure for everyday journeys, with 50:50 match funding coming from partners. In 14/15 Transport Scotland invested £19m into the programme and this was matched by £23m from partners, resulting in 41 partners delivering 180 Community Links schemes right across Scotland. It should be noted that applications for Community Links funding still outstripped the available budget. Therefore, we consider that it is important to not merely maintain the current budget for such programmes, but to in actual fact increase it to allow more excellent cycling and walking projects to come on board.

Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint

Sustrans considers that work in this area has been insufficient to date given that Scotland has missed its climate change annual targets for three consecutive years. Increasing the number of people travelling actively or on public transport would significantly help to reduce emissions from the transport sector. This is particularly pertinent given that the transport sector is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Scotland. Sustrans has calculated that the potential carbon dioxide saving of journeys on the NCN has increased from 54,586 tonnes in 2012 to 64,121 tonnes in 2013

(Sustrans, 2014a). Therefore, we strongly advise that more investment is put into active travel options in order to help reduce Scotland's carbon footprint.

Reduce traffic congestion

Scotland's main towns, cities and roads all experience varying levels of traffic congestion problems, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. This is despite the Scottish Government pursuing a comprehensive programme of road building. Therefore, it is clear that alternative modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport need to be made more appealing and better advertised to people in order to encourage them out of their cars and consequently reduce congestion. This is particularly important given that Glasgow is not expected to comply with air pollution safety limits until 2025, while Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and other conurbations won't meet the limits until 2020.

The school run is a major cause of congestion with one in five cars on the road during morning peak traffic taking children to school. This is despite the fact that the average primary school journey is less than 1.5 miles, which is a distance easily manageable on foot or by bike by many pupils. Results from the 2013 Hands Up Scotland Survey show that 50.4% of pupils in Scotland said that they normally travel to school actively (compared with 49.7% in 2012) (Sustrans, 2014b). This figure needs to be significantly increased if we are to seriously tackle traffic congestion on our roads.

Results from the I Bike schools survey 2012-13 show increases in 'everyday' cycling and decreases in 'never' cycling amongst school pupils surveyed. This corresponded to a 3.9 percentage point decrease in pupils being regularly driven to school pre and post I Bike intervention, and a 2.2 percentage point increase of pupils 'never' being driven to school.

Increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active travel

Figures have remained fairly static in recent years therefore pointing to the need for more action to be taken in this area. Building exercise into our daily commute, in the form of walking or cycling all or part of the journey, brings significant health benefits, saves us money, decreases congestion and helps to improve air quality. Despite these benefits, only 13% of employees travelled to work on foot, 11% by bus, 4% by train and 2.5% by bicycle in 2013, while the majority (67%) travelled by car/van (Transport Scotland, 2013a). In instances where the daily commute is too long to be realistically made actively, we should be aiming to make public transport the obvious choice, and it is important to note that most of these journeys also incorporate elements of walking or cycling.

In 2013, 29.5% of cyclists surveyed on the National Cycle Network were commuting (compared with 24% in 2012) and 10.9% of pedestrians were commuting (compared with 9% in 2012) (Sustrans, 2014a). Therefore, it is

clear that positive changes are taking place, but we need to see significantly larger increases than at present. This is particularly important for the City of Edinburgh Council as they have set a target for 15% of journeys to work to be by bike by 2020 and 22% to be on foot (City of Edinburgh Council, 2010).

Investment levels in other small Northern European countries

It is imperative that current investment levels in walking and cycling continue to increase in order to ensure the successful realisation of the CAPS vision and National Walking Strategy vision. Denmark spends 30 euros per person per year on cycling. 18% of all trips are made by bike and in Copenhagen 37% of all citizens ride their bike on a daily basis. Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, authorities spend €470 million (£401 million) a year on cycle lanes and facilities. 27% of all trips and 25% of trips to work are made by bike.

At current levels of funding, it is highly unlikely that the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland vision of 10% of trips by bike by 2020 will be realised. Furthermore, resource funding for behaviour change projects is much less than capital funding for infrastructure projects. This situation should be addressed because behaviour change measures need to go hand in hand with infrastructure projects.

The draft budget does not contain a clear line about funding for active travel despite repeated calls for this to be the case in previous years. This is essential in order to accurately ascertain differences in the budget for active travel from one year to the next. In the interests of transparency we strongly encourage the Scottish Government to make this change to the budget.

Additional benefits of investing in active travel

Evidence clearly demonstrates that our work managing funds on behalf of Transport Scotland results in multiple benefits to communities across Scotland and consequently represents excellent value for money. Sustrans has always monitored its work in detail, and indeed we were encouraged to do so in 2013 by the I&CI Committee. Some of the key examples from our most recent Key Performance Indicator report (Sustrans, 2014a) are highlighted below:

- Benefit to cost ratios for Community Links Projects ranged all the way up to 16.3:1 for a project in West Barns, East Lothian.
- 20.8 FTE jobs were sustained through Community Links Projects in SMEs across Scotland.
- The indicative value of leisure cycling and cycle tourism on the National Cycle Network was £298 million.
- The estimated health benefits of walking and cycling on the National Cycle Network were £66 million and £44 million respectively (estimated using the

World Health Organisation's Health Economic Assessment Tool). It is much more cost effective to spend money encouraging and enabling people to travel more actively on a daily basis and enjoy the associated health benefits, than it is to treat some of Scotland's most common health issues such as obesity and diabetes which are caused to a greater or lesser extent by a lack of physical activity.

Conclusion

Sustrans Scotland considers that realising the vision of CAPs for 10% of everyday trips to be by bike by 2020 is not impossible with will at all levels, underpinned by financial commitment. We and our partners, particularly in local authorities, need to see a more consistent and long term approach to funding active travel in order to be able to coherently plan and resource future projects. Furthermore, we must stress the importance of inserting a clear line in the budget for active travel. At present, it is well-nigh impossible to accurately ascertain how much money will be directed towards active travel as the figure is so buried away within other funding pots. This situation must be resolved imminently. If Scotland wants to be on a par with our Scandinavian neighbours in terms of levels of cycling and walking, we must be able to see the budget for active travel transparently increasing year on year.

Sustrans Scotland
31 October 2014

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