

## **RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

### **SUBMISSION FROM CHRISTOPHER PEARSON**

#### **THE DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN (RPP3)**

1. RPP3 refers several times to the Scottish Government's aim for 10% of all journeys in Scotland to be by bike in 2020. The Transport Minister, in the recent Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, CAPS3, repeats the government's "unshakable commitment to the 2020 vision."
2. However, it is clear that RPP3 does not take this commitment seriously – it does not expect that 10% of all trips will be by bike in 2020, and it does not know when they will be - and hence this is not built into emissions targets.
3. Pedal on Parliament has calculated that were the government to achieve 10% cycle use, transport emissions would be cut by 5%. Were RPP3 to believe that cycle use would be thus increased, then the 5% would certainly be in the draft report as a proposed reduction – but it is not.
4. It's clear too that the Scottish government does not take this commitment seriously, as the money allocated for it is insignificant within the transport budget, and the pitiful amounts allocated have so far had almost no effect on the rates of active travel across Scotland. Proposed future amounts are not significantly different, and will therefore continue to have little effect. There is no possibility that the 10% target can be met by 2020.
5. If the government started now to invest consistently at the level of cycle-friendly European countries (around £20 per person annually) it could, with effort, hope to achieve 10% of trips by bike by 2027 – and indeed it could achieve 15% within the period of RPP3.
6. In fact, since funding for trunk road expansion is at far higher levels, Government policy towards motor traffic is encouraging more use of motor traffic, easier long-distance car and van travel, and hence, in a vicious circle, further dispersion of facilities and jobs. The RPP3 report fails to take this into account.
7. The only place in Scotland where cycle use has significantly increased is Edinburgh. And this is a result of political commitment and substantial investment. But as national government commitment and investment has been almost insignificant, there has been almost no effect on cycling elsewhere in Scotland.
8. Of all transport policies and proposals, the most robust evidence for positive health outcomes and positive social equity outcomes is investment in active travel. And these are low-cost interventions, far cheaper than proposals such as new rail lines or subsidies to electric cars.

Christopher Pearson  
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