

Local Government and Communities Committee

City Region Deals

Submission from Cycling Scotland

Cycling Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the City Region deals in Scotland. Our key points are:

- City Region Deals should contribute to the delivery of key Government aspirations, such as the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland.
- These Deals should support ongoing implementation of the Town Centre First principle in planning decisions.

Cycling Scotland is the nation's cycling organisation. Working with others, we help create and deliver opportunities and an environment so anyone anywhere in Scotland can cycle easily and safely. Our vision is for a sustainable, inclusive and healthy Scotland where anyone anywhere can enjoy all of the benefits of cycling.

Introduction

City Region Deals were introduced to provide a coherent and integrated approach that brings together planning, economic development, and transport (infrastructure) priorities. The City Region Deals offer the opportunity for economic growth and other associated benefits to local authorities and communities, enabling the creation of a bespoke package of measures that strategically meet the needs of the locality it was introduced to serve. However, there are challenges in establishing and cementing effective partnership working arrangements in areas where there are a large number of partners involved. The Deals must “deliver positive outcomes in line with Scottish Government policy”¹ and this may be challenging and put at risk when adapting to local needs and circumstances.

Prioritising investment in cycling infrastructure

As outlined above, investment under the City Region Deals must align to national Scottish Government policy. With regards to transport, Transport Scotland and others, within the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, outline a shared vision for 10% of everyday journeys in Scotland to be cycle journeys by 2020². We support and are committed to achieving this vision, and believe it should be emphasised and adhered to within the Deals. In this context, these Deals must prioritise cycle-accessible development and infrastructure.

Examples of this type of development and infrastructure include:

- Encouraging more people to make shorter journeys of up to 5km by bike whether commuting, shopping or for leisure.

¹ Scottish Government (2017) Cities <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Cities>

² Transport Scotland (2017) Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2017-2020 <http://www.cyclingscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Transport-Scotland-Policy-Cycling-Action-Plan-for-Scotland-January-2017.pdf>

- Encouraging better facilities at public transport interchanges to encourage greater rates of cycling and better integrated multi-modal transport systems.
- Where road investment is taking place, this should be seen in the context of providing facilities for people to cycle and not to create further barriers to cycling.
- Community regeneration should be planned around increasing local cycle journeys including: cycle training, led rides, bike parking, signage.
- Town Centre Action Plans should take into consideration the positive role of increasing cycling in terms of increased number of visits by people on bikes, improved environment and better urban design principles around fewer cars in town centres.

This is particularly important in the context of changing road use patterns. In Scotland, around a third of households do not have access to a private car. In urban areas and cities, such as Glasgow and Dundee, this can be as much as 50%. This is patterned by deprivation, with the most deprived least likely to own a car³. Continued prioritisation of road developments will not reflect the travel/transport situation in many urban areas. There is a risk that continuing to promote road development will lead to a growth in car ownership, which will further isolate those without access to a car, or force car use on low income households who can find themselves without any viable means of travelling around their local area and to their place of work for example. The City Region Deals should not assume that road and car-centric developments deliver better connectivity and economic growth. Evidence shows that road infrastructure encourages more car use and further promotes car ownership⁴.

Where developments for infrastructure and regeneration take place without encouraging active travel and enhancing placemaking there will be negative impacts and conflicts in terms of decreased activity levels, and increases in noise and levels of pollution and particles from higher volumes of traffic. Better integration across the transport network is a key measure of good physical connectivity⁵, and cycling makes a positive contribution to achieving this integration. For example, Glasgow residents and visitors to the city have benefitted from the city-wide bike sharing scheme, which has improved connectivity and improved capacity to move around the city easily. Analysis of the scheme shows that in two years following its introduction in June 2014, there were almost 200,000 hires which equates to an average of 262 hires per day⁶, demonstrating the widespread usage of the scheme and the improved connectivity and capacity opportunities to move around the city it offers.

³ Murie, J (2017) Active travel in Glasgow: what we've learned so far. A Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) report http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/6007/Active_travel_synthesis_final.pdf, page 38

⁴ http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/6101/Jill_Muirie_Active_Travel.pdf

⁵ Nesta (2016) CITIE: City Initiatives for Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, The Scotland Analysis, http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/citie_scotland_0.pdf, page 21

⁶ McPherson, Karen (2017) Glasgow's public cycle hire scheme: analysis of usage between July 2014 and June 2016. A Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) report http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/6010/Next_bike_hire_data.pdf, page 7

Economic benefits of cycling

Cycling has a positive impact on both the economy as a whole and in the area where the investment is concentrated. Places and spaces designed for cycling have strong economic benefits associated with them including increased retail activity, higher house prices, reduced health care costs and greater productivity⁷. Cycling is good for business. It creates greater footfall which is associated with an increase in trade. A recent report analysing the benefits of cycling in a number of countries found that the annual economic impact of people cycling is almost nine times as much as the one-off public investment required to construct cycling infrastructure. In the UK, in particular, cycling projects and infrastructure were shown to increase both employment and visitor numbers, each by 300%⁸. This could be achieved by ensuring that the City Region Deals invest sufficiently in cycling infrastructure.

Strengthening local decision-making and the evidence-base for investment

To ensure that local decision making is and continues to be strengthened, the Deals should consider and take into account the emerging Local Outcome Improvement Plans. These plans are clearly based on evidence and analysis of the area in question and its communities, variations in outcomes between communities, and the communities and outcomes where improvement is a priority, as well as being specific about the preventative work required and how resources will be used in new ways to support prevention⁹. Alongside the national-level Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, this will ensure that the City Region Deals are aligned to national policy whilst also considering and strategically incorporating local policy and effectively responding to local needs.

Cycling Scotland operates a Cycling Potential Tool which can model emissions savings for a defined/specified area from realising the cycling potential. Going forward, we offer to use this Tool to help contribute to further evidence gathering and in any discussions on how the Cycling Potential Tool (CPT) can be incorporated more into decision making and strategic thinking within City Region Deals. We believe the Tool is of particular relevance to City Region Deals in Scotland and emphasises the importance of integration with Transport and other strategies, ensuring that investment in cycling is prioritised where it will have the greatest impact. CPT uses a range of national datasets to provide an evidence-base for investing in cycling in Scotland. The tool uses Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to produce local 'heatmaps' based on the datasets to demonstrate the areas with the most potential for cycling. This Potential focuses on cycling as a regular form of everyday travel, and potential links to existing networks for improved usage. Within this tool, there are four modules which can be applied to any urban or rural local area across the country. The modules provide outputs on the study area's environment, schools and planning and development opportunities.

⁷ Designed to Move: Active Cities report - <http://e13c7a4144957cea5013-f2f5ab26d5e83af3ea377013dd602911.r77.cf5.rackcdn.com/resources/pdf/en/active-cities-full-report.pdf>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/local-outcomes-improvement-plans.html>

Further, with regards to local decision making power, research has argued that successful cities are those which engage their citizens through generating real-time insights into travel and transport behaviour. For example, use of an app to track and analyse how people move around a city, can allow cities to identify current transport use patterns and facilitate developments that respond to the needs and behaviours of people in the city, as well as empowering citizens to track and monitor their travel behaviours¹⁰.

Conclusion

It should be noted that around two-thirds of the population in Scotland do not live in cities^{11 12}, and this has important implications for accessing funding and investment opportunities under the City Region Deals programme. We welcome the inclusion of alternatives to the City Region Deals in the SPICe briefing document. It is important that these alternatives provide sufficient investment in cycling infrastructure to enable these areas to benefit from positive economic and growth outcomes, outlined above, that are associated with cycling, and are aligned to national policy to help achieve the shared 10% vision across the whole of Scotland.

Jennifer Fingland
Policy Officer
Cycling Scotland

¹⁰ Nesta (2016) CITIE: City Initiatives for Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, The Scotland Analysis, http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/citie_scotland_0.pdf, page 21

¹¹ <http://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/facts-about-scotland/population-of-scotland>

¹² Cities from above include – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling and Inverness