

PE1653/A

WWF Scotland submission of 2 August 2017

INTRODUCTION

WWF is the world's leading independent conservation organisation. We're determined to ensure that people and nature can thrive together, for generations to come. We're acting now to make this happen. WWF Scotland welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Petitions Committee in regard to Petition number PE1653 on active travel infrastructure.

SUMMARY

- We support the petitioners' call to urge the Scottish Government to develop an active travel infrastructure strategy that will require active travel provision to be incorporated into all new major infrastructure projects for Scottish cities.
- Transport is now the single biggest emitter of greenhouse gases (27% of all emissions), with almost no reduction since 1990. If Scotland is to meet its ambitious climate change targets, urgent action must be taken to reduce transport emissions.
- With road traffic accounting for almost three quarters of transport emissions, and cars accounting for 77% of all road traffic, action should be focused on reducing private car use. This should be achieved through a range of measures including investment in active travel and public transport as well as greater support for uptake of electric vehicles.
- As a key member of the Low Carbon Infrastructure Task Force, WWF Scotland advocated for investment in active travel infrastructure combined with other measures to promote non-motorised transport in Scotland's cities.
- Infrastructure that encourages people to walk or cycle rather than take the car is likely to reduce the rate of multiple health problems: obesity, chronic diseases caused by physical inactivity, and the effects of air pollution. It could also reduce casualties by improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE IS POPULAR

In 2015 the Low Carbon Infrastructure Task Force was established to examine ways in which infrastructure investment in Scotland could support the multiple aims of economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, behaviour change, wider co-benefits such as improved health, and additionality. The Task Force membership ranged from NGOs such as WWF and Oxfam to legal firm Pincent Masons and from the Scottish Council for Development and Industry to the UK Green Investment Bank.

The Low Carbon Infrastructure Task Force developed a long list of possible infrastructure projects and created an assessment tool to measure each project's potential to help reach the multiple aims outlined above. The projects were then narrowed down to ten and members of the public were asked to vote for their favourite.

Investment in active travel infrastructure was by far the most popular project with the public, gaining nearly 20% of all the votes. The project also scored very highly on every measure, including additionality, prosperity, co-benefits, environment and

behaviours. The detailed case study can be found at www.scotlandswayahead.org.ukⁱ

The goal of this project is to create more 'liveable' cities with lower dependence on private car ownership, reduced air pollution and increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists. This would be achieved through re-engineering areas of city centres to be predominantly car-free, with well-designed and connected infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to connect these areas to surrounding populations and a systems level approach to public transport.

Measures could include;

- Improved cycle infrastructure such as segregated cycle lanes and more bike parking spaces
- Restrictions on motorised vehicles in cities through, for example, low emissions zones
- Increasing the number of pedestrian walkways uninterrupted by road traffic
- A systems approach to urban travel, integrating transport modes such as rail to bike

Case study – Finnish cycling

The city of Oulu is situated on the coast of northern Finland and is home to just under 200,000 people. Despite winter temperatures which can drop as low as -40°C, over 12% of the population cycles in winter, rising to an average of 22% across the year. The rate of cycling in the city is significantly higher than in Scotland (where currently just 1.4% of journeys are made by bike) and 44 times greater than Aberdeen, a city of comparable size.

The 613km long cycle network serves cyclists and pedestrians and connects homes with workplaces, schools, shopping and other destinations, often providing the quickest and most convenient way to travel short distances. The network is separate from the road network, well maintained throughout the seasons and includes 300 safe places to cross roads

KEY FIGURES

- **Transport is now the single biggest emitting sector** of the Scottish economy, accounting for over **27% of all emissions**. In addition, emissions from this sector have barely reduced since 1990. Indeed they increased by 0.4% in 2015 due to an increase in road traffic.
- **Road transport accounts for 72% of transport emissions** and cars account for 77% of all vehicles on Scotland's roads.ⁱⁱ
- Every year an estimated **2500 people in Scotland die early because of air pollution**. There are 38 pollution zones in Scotland where air quality safety standards are regularly broken.
- **Increasing the number of people of who cycle** in Scotland to match the levels seen in other European countries could **save Scotland £1-4bn in health costs**.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Scottish Government funding for active travel makes up just 2% of the overall transport budget. Increasing that proportion to 10% would significantly improve the chances of achieving a shift to active travel.

ⁱ <https://scotlands-way-ahead.s3.amazonaws.com/sites/55816da1126f04bc0100002/assets/560e7e91126f0421160000f2/ReengineeringCitiesToFavourNonMotorisedTransport.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Transport Scotland, Scottish Transport Statistics: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-no-35-2016-edition/SCT01171871341-08/#tb2>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://transformscotland.org.uk/what-we-want/healthy-travel/>