

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

DRAFT BUDGET 2017-18; ACTIVE TRAVEL

SUBMISSION FROM SPOKES, THE LOTHIAN CYCLE CAMPAIGN

Whilst the Committee this year is specifically scrutinising Broadband and Forestry, it is vital also to keep track of active travel issues, which contribute to a wide range of Government objectives on climate, transport, congestion, air quality, public health, jobs and inequalities. **For such reasons, the government has a supremely ambitious aim for 10% of all trips to be by bike by 2020.** We no longer believe this possible by 2020, but policy and funding must be beefed up to meet it at the earliest possible date - hence this submission.

We have kept this document brief and without references, but a more detailed and fully referenced paper is available on request.

Existing level of cycle funding

- Annual Scottish Government active travel funding in 16/17 is £39m, just £7.25 per person, of which we estimate that some £4.50 goes to cycling.
- Additionally (i.e. excluding government contributions) local authorities invest roughly £1.50 per person in cycling so total annual public sector cycling investment is some £6 per person.
- In comparison, the government is this year spending £153 per person on motorways and trunk roads.

Recommended levels of cycle investment

- A wide range of professional, academic and voluntary bodies from the worlds of public health, transport and elsewhere, urge that £20 per person is invested annually in cycling (or that 10% of transport budgets should be allocated to active travel as a whole). £20 per person in Scotland represents £100m, or roughly 5% of the Scottish transport budget. Copenhagen and the Netherlands consistently invest at similar levels to achieve their high levels of everyday cycle use.

Cycling targets in Scotland

- The relatively low level of cycling investment seen in recent years means that the government's ambition of 10% of all trips by bike cannot now be reached by 2020. This is clear from SPICe Bulletin 16/33 and other documents.
- Any cycle-use target, if it is to be achievable, must be set in association with an expected level of investment. Evidence from the English Cycle Demonstration towns suggests that a tough but realistic target *based on £20 per person cycling investment starting in 2017* would be to achieve 10% of all trips by bike in 2027, or a more rounded target of 15% of all trips by bike in 2030.

Benefits of modal shift from car to cycling for local journeys

- The benefits of cycling for everyday local travel are well known in terms of congestion, air quality, climate emissions, public health and more. We are happy to provide references.
- Specifically, increased cycle use contributes to the Government's *National Performance Framework* indicators, including...
 - Increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active travel
 - Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint
 - Reduce traffic congestion

Road and cycling casualties

- The health benefits of cycling in terms of extended healthy life outweigh road injury dangers by about 20-1. Nonetheless, road casualties, and fear of road danger, remain hugely concerning.
- During the last 10 years (2006-2015) cyclist injuries in Scotland rose slightly, whilst all other road user categories fell by 30%-40% [Car occupants 10,705->6,712; Motorcyclists 1068->734; Pedestrians 2853->1694; Cyclists 781->794]. The KSI (killed and seriously injured) figures are even worse, with cycling KSIs up 20% from 141 to 169. The need to tackle cycle casualty rates is therefore very obvious.
- The most effective way to reduce cycle casualty rates (and the fear of cycling) is by investment in safe infrastructure. Analysis of a wide range of US cities found that, very roughly, a 100% increase in the size of a cycle network resulted in a 200% rise in cycle use and a 70% cut in the rate of KSIs.

Role of the Parliamentary Committees responsible for transport

- We believe that cycling investment, and the share of the transport budget allocated to cycling, are not currently assessed in a sufficiently objective evidence-based fashion by the government in drawing up the budget.
- The Parliamentary Committees responsible for transport have year after year strongly advocated increased active travel investment – for example recommending that “*substantial additional funding should be considered*” in the draft 15/16 budget. Yet only in 14/15 did this happen, and even then rising from just 0.9% of transport spending to still only 1.9%.

Recommendations for the Committee in considering the 17/18 draft budget

- Active travel investment should rise each year of this Parliament, reaching 10% of transport spending by the end of the Parliament, with at least half of this invested in cycling - primarily in high quality cycling infrastructure.
- The entire transport budget should be reassessed and its various elements re-prioritised in relation to their impacts, positive and negative, on all relevant government objectives - including not just transport and congestion, but also public health, toxic and climate emissions, jobs and equalities.

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