

FINANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT BUDGET 2014-15

SUBMISSION FROM PATHS FOR ALL

1. Paths for All is the national charity promoting walking for health and the development of multi-use path networks. Paths for All's vision is to create a ***happier, healthier, greener, more active Scotland***.

2. Paths for All's (PFA) strategic direction is to increase the proportion of the population who are physically active and ensure that there are conducive environments where people live to encourage and sustain this behaviour change. Our work in 2012 – 2013 has achieved:

Community and workplace health walking

3. £456,580 offered in health walking grants, which leveraged a further £167,000 for the walking projects.

Estimate of 5,510 new community health walkers across Scotland.

130 active health walking projects supported by or connected to PFA.

685 community volunteer walk leaders trained at 55 courses (6,139 trained since 200).

More than 496 different walking locations for health walks.

Estimate of 29,060 health walks took place across Scotland.

Estimate 297,435 community health walking attendances.

42 active workplace walking projects supported by or connected to PFA.

Path network development

4. PFA has supported 9 community groups through its Local People: Local Paths programme and 17 community groups through its Path Promotion programme. 2 regional networking events held.

294 enquiries to the Local People: Local Paths 'One-stop-shop.'

39 enquiries for technical advice and information.

PFA's online course "Managing Path Construction CDM regs 2007" was completed by a wide cross-section of people from students to professional construction staff.

This submission from Paths for All sets out the evidence for delivering real benefits from a more preventative approach to public spending

5. Paths for All's specific areas of interest relate to increasing physical activity (particularly through walking for everyday short trips and recreation) and the creation of environments that will encourage more people to walk more often and to be physically active in other ways in Scotland's outdoors. Our comments in this submission will therefore be restricted to these aspects of Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF), specifically:

National Indicator	Scotland's Performance
Increase physical activity	No improvement
Increase mental wellbeing	No improvement
Increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors	Performance worsening
Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport	No improvement
Reduce traffic congestion	No improvement

Walking and cycling, as active travel and for recreation, delivers cross-cutting, significant public benefits

Health benefit

6. Physical activity is often referred to as ‘the best buy in public health¹’ – the ‘magic bullet’ proven to prevent disease, improve health and promote independence and quality of life. However, physical inactivity remains one of Scotland’s major public health challenges, with at least 61% of Scottish adults and 27% of Scottish children failing to meet the minimum recommendations for physical activity². Primary and secondary care costs attributable to physical inactivity amount to £94m/year, or approximately £18 per Scottish resident per year³.

7. Physical activity is any movement of the body that uses energy and includes: exercise; sport; play; dance; and active living such as walking, housework, gardening and active travel. Walking and cycling for everyday short journeys is acknowledged to be the easiest and cheapest way to build habitual physical activity into busy lives⁴.

8. There is considerable evidence that higher rates of walking and cycling can result in lower rates of obesity and mental and physical illness⁵. There is evidence that countries which have invested in walking and cycling infrastructure over a period of time have obesity rates which are less than half of Scotland’s⁶. An ageing population⁷ in particular – has serious consequences for spending. Encouraging healthy habits such as walking and cycling throughout the population will lead to people leading longer, healthier lives. Without this action, the government will be spending ever greater amounts on healthcare for the long-term sick.

9. The Scottish Household Survey 2012 covered participation of adults in sport. A broad definition of sport was used and includes, for example, recreational walking for more than 30 minutes. Adults were asked about participation in the previous four weeks. It highlights that by far the most prevalent activity was walking for 30 minutes (for recreational purposes). Fifty-seven percent of adults had participated in this activity in the last four weeks compared with fewer than one-in-five undertaking any other individual activity.

10. The evidence supporting the benefits of physical activity is incontestable. Scotland has an evidence-informed national physical activity policy, ‘Let’s Make Scotland More Active’. With levels of physical inactivity and obesity in Scotland increasing² now is the time to act on this existing knowledge and evidence to make it happen and create a more physically active Scotland.

This document recommends that policies should be aligned so that physical activity is embedded with real commitment in related strategies and associated budgetary arrangements.

11. It identifies six main target areas to ensure an overall increase in population-wide physical activity participation levels. These are:

- Built and natural environments
- Education
- NHS Scotland
- Active recreation
- Transport and planning
- Workplace

Environmental benefit

12. Transport emissions accounted for 21.5% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2011, second only to energy supply. Emissions from road transport dominated (88.5%) with 49.5% of transport emissions from cars alone⁸. With 26% of all driver journeys being less than 2km and over 50% less than 5km⁹ there is considerable scope to encourage a shift in travel mode to walking and cycling.

13. Designing Streets, the Scottish Government's policy document which puts people and place before the movement of motor vehicles, recognises walking as the most sustainable form of transport and sets out a street user hierarchy where our villages, towns and cities prioritise pedestrian needs above those of cyclists, public transport and car users respectively.

14. There is, therefore, a compelling case for a sufficient level of investment in active travel infrastructure and behaviour change initiatives such that increased physical activity, improved health, reduced traffic congestion and reduced transport emissions would be realised.

15. Active travel makes a positive and significant contribution to delivering on a range of public policies and national indicators including transport, health and well-being, economy, climate change and the environment and community development.

16. The provision, management and maintenance of adequate infrastructure that encourages more people to walk and cycle safely, efficiently and enjoyably, and connect easily to other transport modes is an essential foundation for active travel. However, adequate infrastructure on its own is insufficient. Greater uptake of active travel will require society-wide culture change.

17. Awareness raising, promotion and marketing, education, training and incentives are required to encourage the necessary individual behaviour change. The results of the Scottish Government's recent Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme has demonstrated that initiatives that combine infrastructure provision and "softer" behaviour change measures can result in significant increases in everyday walking and cycling¹⁰.

18. In general and with the exception of walking¹¹, specific policies and strategies to support active travel are in place. Robust implementation of these policies is now the priority. This will require strong leadership and vision, adequate, long-term investment, co-ordination and partnership working. If Scotland is to deliver the policies to reduce carbon emissions, improve public health and improve the quality of life of its citizens, it has to recognise that active travel has a vital contribution to make.

Economic benefit

19. The World Health Organisation(WHO) has developed **Health Economic Assessment Tools (HEAT)** for both cycling and walking. These HEAT tools are an online resource to estimate the economic savings resulting from reductions in mortality from regular cycling and/or walking. It is based on best available evidence, with parameters that can be adapted to fit specific situations.

Using the WHO HEAT tool for cycling the Glasgow Centre for Population Health¹² found that the annual health economic benefit accruing from cycle trips into and out of Glasgow city centre in 2012 was over £4 million. This is likely to underestimate benefits as the analysis only accounts for reduced mortality and not for reduced illness and other health benefits conferred by cycling

20. The new HEAT tool for walking will expand the opportunities of including this universal mode of transport into the calculation of the benefits of active transport and regular walking for health/leisure/recreation. HEAT for walking and cycling has been used to quantify the health benefits of the canal system in a report for British Waterways Scotland and The Waterways Trust Scotland, ['Positively Affecting Lives – The Health Benefits of the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals'](#) (June 2011):

A survey of canal users identified that the Forth & Clyde and Union canals generate almost 3.9 million additional person kilometers of travel per annum, equating to a physical health benefit of £6.4m (walking - £2.818m, cycling - £2.348m and running - £1.205m).

21. Paths for All commissioned a Social Return On Investment (SROI) study to analyse the impact of the Glasgow Health Walk¹³ programme between April 2011 and March 2012. The headline finding is powerful, revealing that for every £1 invested in Health Walks in Glasgow, there were £8 of benefits generated for society. The SROI analysis looked at the impact of the Health Walk programme and assigned a monetary value to the changes it created. The findings are compelling, not only proving that investment in the programme is sound, but also giving a rich picture of the multiple social benefits experienced by walkers and volunteers. Health Walks are proven to make people fitter, healthier and happier.

22. Similarly, greenspace scotland's SROI analysis of a 7km Greenlink¹⁴ cycle path between Strathclyde Country Park and Motherwell town centre found that for £1 invested there was a return of social, environmental and economic impacts to the value of £7.

23. In his economic assessment of investment in walking and cycling interventions¹⁵, from both peer reviewed and grey literature both in the UK and beyond, Dr Adrian Davis found that **the average benefit-cost ratio (BCR) is 13:1.**

For UK interventions only, the average BCR is 19:1. In comparison, road transport schemes that return a BCR of 2:1 are considered high value for money. The Davis report noted that *‘walking and cycling have been identified as a key means by which people can build physical activity into their lifestyles. Yet the volume of literature on Cost Benefit Analysis of interventions to promote routine walking and cycling has grown in the past decade or so and reveals that the economic justification for investments to facilitate cycling and walking has been undervalued or rarely considered in public policy decision-making. Investment in infrastructure and to facilitate increased activity levels amongst local communities through cycling and walking is likely to be a ‘best buy’ for our health, the NHS at large in terms of cost savings, as well as for the road transport sector.’*

A preventative approach to public spending

24. The 2011 Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services¹⁶ in Scotland made a number of recommendations, including:

- Maximising scarce resources by utilising all available resources from the public, private and third sectors, individuals, groups and communities.
- Working closely with individuals and communities to understand their needs, maximise talents and resources, support self-reliance and build resilience.
- Concentrating the efforts of all services on delivering integrated services that deliver results.
- Prioritising preventative measures to reduce demand and lessen inequalities.
- Identifying and targeting the underlying causes of inter-generational deprivation and low aspiration.

25. Active travel is that rare phenomenon that can deliver multiple cross-cutting benefits that will help to achieve numerous targets and outcomes in the National Performance Framework, Scottish Government policies and in single outcome agreements. By investing in active travel the Scottish Government will meet the recommendations of the Christie Commission. Active travel is not just about walking and cycling as modes of transport for everyday short journeys, it is about:

- getting more people more active more often - and in so doing helping to improve physical and mental health and helping to tackle the obesity epidemic facing Scotland today;
- reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality;
- reducing our energy use;
- vibrant, robust local economies;
- resilient communities where people feel connected to each other.

26. Double the allocation for active travel – ensure that pedestrian and cycling needs are addressed equitably.

Conclusions

27. Scotland Performs tells us that progress is not being made towards - Increasing physical activity; Increasing mental wellbeing; Increasing people’s use of Scotland’s outdoors; Increasing the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport; and Reducing traffic congestion.

28. It is clear, therefore, that a different approach is needed if we are to enjoy the higher quality of life that improvement in these areas would undoubtedly bring. Scottish Government expenditure should focus on those schemes and initiatives that can deliver multiple benefits that will prevent future risks and disadvantage for the people of Scotland; and which will result in preventable burdens on the state and the taxpayer. Priority should be given to:

- Spending on active travel should be doubled to £40 million in the 2014-15 budget compared to the current year. While this will help to deliver on the Scottish Government vision of 10% of all trips by bicycle by 2020 it should be remembered that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are not necessarily the same. A distinct allocation for improving the walking environment, e.g. pavement surfaces, lighting, signage etc. will be needed.
- The ring-fenced funding stream for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets should be protected and increased to enable a much wider and intensive uptake of Smarter Choices measures. Smarter Choices measures can deliver varied interventions based on area or population needs and are not restricted to single issue delivery, e.g. a path or a promotional campaign, thus achieving more holistic and effective solutions.
- Delivery of actions emanating from the forthcoming National Walking Strategy should be adequately funded in its own right.
- Delivery of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland should be adequately funded.
- Enhanced support for the third sector to deliver very effective workplace and community based interventions that are beyond the reach of the public sector.
- Rather than embarking on new road projects that will inevitably result in more traffic, more congestion and poorer air quality resources should be concentrated on maintaining existing pavements and paths – to the highest possible standards.
- The implementation of Core Paths Plans, (under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003) should be prioritised and resourced;
- Adequate funding to deliver the National Planning Framework 3 proposed national developments of a national walking and cycling network; and Central Scotland Green Network priorities of developing active travel and bringing vacant and derelict land back into use.

References and notes

- 1 Cited by JN Morris, Professor of Public Health; Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer, Department for Health and others.
- 2 Scottish Health Survey 2011.
- 3 Costing the burden of ill health related to physical inactivity for Scotland, August 2012, C Foster et al, British Heart Foundation Research group for the Scottish Physical Activity Research Collaboration.
- 4 Preventing Overweight & Obesity in Scotland: a route map towards healthy weight, Scottish Government.
- 5 National Institute for Clinical Excellence, Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel, or recreation, November 2012.
- 6 Bassett et al, Journal Physical Activity & Health, 2008
- 7 By 2035 23% of Scotland's population will be of pensionable age, 13% will be over 75, Projected Population of Scotland (2010 based), National Records of Scotland 2011.
- 8 Greenhouse Gas Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: 1990 – 2011, National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, June 2013.
- 9 Scottish Household Survey Travel Diary 2007 – 2008, Scottish Government 2009.
- 10 Results from the Smarter Choices Smarter Places programme include – more trips on foot in all pilot areas; increased cycling in 5 out of 7 pilot areas; car driver journeys decreased in all pilot areas.
- 11 A National Walking Strategy for Scotland is currently in development.
- 12 Glasgow Centre for Population Health Briefing Paper 37: Cycling is good for health and the economy, 2013.
- 13 Paths for All, Making an Impact: Glasgow Health Walks Social Return on Investment Analysis, July 2013.
- 14 Greenspace Scotland, Social Return on Investment Analysis of the Greenlink, a partnership project managed by the Central Scotland Forest Trust, October 2009.
- 15 Value for Money: An Economic Assessment of Investment in Walking and Cycling, Dr Adrian Davis, March 2010, Government Office for the South West and Department of Health.
- 16 Report on the Future Delivery of Public Services, 2011, Chaired by Dr Campbell Christie CBE, Commissioned by the Scottish government.