

WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM SPOKES

Call for Evidence:

<http://scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/54588.aspx>

“The Committee agreed to take evidence on the future funding for active travel”

CONTENTS

- A. Government targets and current investment in cycling and active travel
- B. Role of ICI Committee - re-prioritising the transport budget - a challenge!!
- C. How much should be invested in cycling and/or active travel?
- D. Economic and jobs impacts of cycling investment

The main theme of our response is that the Scottish Government invests a disproportionately low level of its transport budget in active travel - specifically in cycling infrastructure – and that this is incompatible with its overriding Purpose to increase sustainable economic growth, and with objectives on jobs, climate and public health.

A. Government targets and current investment in cycling and active travel

The government has set **a target that 10% of all journeys should be by bike by 2020**, compared to 1% at presentⁱ. This target is now incorporated as a milestone in the Scottish Government's **Climate Change strategy, Low Carbon Scotlandⁱⁱ**, and it is also integrated into the **obesity strategyⁱⁱⁱ**. In other words, if the 10% cycle use target is missed – and particularly if it is very badly missed - this will in turn impact on full delivery of Climate Change and Obesity strategies. Failure to meet the target will also impact on the **National Performance Framework**, specifically the indicator *“increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport.”* Currently^{iv} this indicator is not improving (or worsening) whilst the indicator *“increase the proportion of healthy-weight children”* is worsening.

In terms of active travel, whilst there has been good progress in some areas, notably Edinburgh [thanks largely to consistent local authority investment and political leadership] the overall Scottish picture remains very disappointing^v, with no indication that we are anywhere like on track to meeting the government's 2020 10% cycle use target.

Investment in Cycling and Active Travel

Despite the above hugely ambitious 10% target, which has now to be achieved within only 8 years, well under 1% of the transport budget is invested in cycling^{vi} and this has been the case ever since the target was set. Transport Minister Keith Brown MSP frequently quotes the figure of £83m^{vii} having been invested in active travel in the current and previous Parliaments. It should be noted that this covers both walking and cycling and a period of 4-5 years. Given total transport spend of around £2bn p.a., this confirms a figure of around 1% for active travel as a whole - and thus well under 1% for cycling investment.

Cycling investment is hard to pin down precisely, coming from several budget headings - and when it rises in some areas it is often cut by as much or more in others. For example, funding for the **Smarter Choices project** under the first SNP administration came largely from cutting Sustrans funding. Similarly, new **Future Transport Fund** cycle funding in last year's budget was largely counterbalanced by a reduced element of the Sustainable and Active Travel budget line going to cycling investment, and by reduced CWSS [Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets] money. In

fact, annual total cycling investment under the current and previous SNP administrations has been less (even in cash terms) than during the last 2 years of the previous Lab/Lib administration. The **£6m (over 2 years) announced for cycling in this year's budget** still leaves total cycling investment in 13/14 well under 1% of transport spending - but we strongly welcome the fact that it appears largely to be genuinely additional money – there is a further cut in CWSS, but this increase well exceeds that cut.

Finally, the government often wisely emphasises the importance of **preventative spend**. Yet cycling, despite its clear public health and environmental benefits, has not been seen as an area worthy of special consideration in terms of preventative spend. A continuing investment of around 1% of the transport budget in active travel is hardly the *decisive shift to preventative spend* in this area of service delivery which we were promised in all service areas by the government in its response^{viii} to the Finance Committee's report on the 2011 Spending Review.

B. Role of ICI Committee – a challenge!!

For several years the Parliamentary Committees (in various incarnations) dealing with transport have strongly recommended that the transport budget should allocate a bigger share to active travel^{ix,x}. In particular, the ICI Committee made a series of strong and welcome recommendations last year [paras 57-73 of ICI report in above footnote]. These Committees, however, never had the courage to state *from where within transport this increase should come*. As a result the Finance Secretary, and the Finance Committee, has been unwilling to consider the recommendation – and have made clear that this was the reason why.

Therefore if the Committee remains persuaded of the case to raise the % of the transport budget invested in active travel, we urge most strongly that the Committee now seize this nettle and indicate ways in which the transport budget could be modified to achieve this. If the Committee does not do this, we expect government again to dismiss any ICI recommendations on matching its transport investment priorities with its active travel ambitions and its 2020 cycling target.

Re-prioritising the Transport Budget

Although Spokes has little expertise in transport outside cycling, we suggest that an area where funding could be re-prioritised is that of **trunk road construction, widening and dualling**, where even a relatively small change in scheme programming could bring relatively large sums into cycling investment. We note that the motorways and trunk roads budget line has risen consistently and substantially in the present Parliament, including an increase from £655m in 12/13 to £690m in 13/14. **Our proposal is that, where the main objective of a road scheme is to reduce casualties, average-speed-cameras should first be trialled** – this would be at far lower cost than a costly engineering project. Only if this fails to reduce casualties sufficiently should the road scheme go ahead. A pilot average-speed-camera scheme on the A77 reduced killed and seriously injured by 50%, as reported by Transport Scotland^{xi}. Recently the A9 Safety Group, supported by ROSPA, has suggested they are installed on the A9 between Dunblane and Inverness^{xii}. In addition to this **main objective of saving money**, road schemes which raise traffic levels run counter to policies and targets on **climate change** and **public health** [A above]. Perhaps even more important at this time, there is evidence that cycling infrastructure construction and maintenance is **more cost-effective in terms of jobs** than is road construction and maintenance [see D below].

Another area for possible re-allocation would be **within the Sustainable and Active Travel**

budget line, and within the Future Transport Fund. Given the low public uptake of electric vehicles, for example, should some of this funding be re-allocated to cycling investment? Edinburgh's experience^{xiii} suggests that consistent substantial investment does bring big rewards in terms of increased cycle use, with its many benefits, not least reduced congestion and a healthier workforce^{xiv}.

We ask the Committee, with its fuller understanding of the Scottish transport budget as a whole, to carefully examine these and all other areas for possible re-prioritisation.

C. How much should be invested in cycling and/or active travel?

Active travel should be allocated 10% of total transport spend according to the report *Action on Active Travel*^{xv} by the **Association of Directors of Public Health**, and supported by over 100 transport, medical and other professional, expert and interested bodies^{xvi} ranging from the **Institute of Highway Engineers** to the **British Heart Foundation**. The 10% figure is also adopted by a range of Scottish national transport bodies in *Active Travel, Active Scotland*^{xvii}. [In our response to the Finance Committee's call for evidence, we discussed briefly how such a sum would be administered^{xviii}.]

The above 10% proposal for transport spending refers to *active travel as a whole*. For *cycling alone*, **Spokes has estimated^{xix} the amount required, starting in 2013, to give at least some hope of reaching the government's 2020 cycle-use target, as around £20 per head of population a year - in other words £100m p.a., or around 5% of total transport spending** – which ties in well with the above organisations' call for 10% for active travel as a whole.

Whilst our calculation is clearly very approximate, and is open to debate, we repeat our long-standing and oft-stated criticism that the government itself, despite having set the 2020 target, has never provided a researched and costed path to reaching it, let alone a funded path. Even at a cursory reading, it is quite clear that CAPS^{xx} the *Cycling Action Plan for Scotland* is a collection of useful initiatives, not a costed and researched path to the 2020 target. We await the promised 'refresh' of CAPS to see whether this fundamental flaw is rectified.

D. Economic and jobs impacts of cycling investment

Government consistently underestimates the economic benefits of cycling investment, and does not take sufficiently seriously reports which analyse these benefits. *Active Travel, Active Scotland* quotes several evidence sources, including...

- ◆ “*The Eddington Transport Study, a major UK Government-funded study into links between transport and the economy, concluded “Some of the best projects are small scale, such as walking and cycling schemes”^{xxi}. Active travel supports local economies by increasing and encouraging access to shops and services in our local centres.*”
- ◆ When health benefits are included, the economic benefits are even greater. For example... “*A recent review of investment in walking and cycling^{xxii} examined the costs and benefits, including health effects, from infrastructure and promotion projects in the UK and abroad. The review found a median benefit to cost ratio (BCR) for all data of 13:1; for UK data, the median BCR was 19:1. Even projects with very modest levels of investment yielded extremely good value for money.*”

In contrast, *Active Travel, Active Scotland* points out that “*the Forth Replacement Crossing scheme, which is due to cost an approximated £1.45 billion to £1.60 billion, is reported to have a*

maximum BCR of only 2.03 (which includes wider economic benefits).” This is not to say that projects such as the Forth Crossing should not be pursued [though we have serious doubts] but that there is a big disconnect within Transport Scotland in terms of the relative priorities between active travel and 'big' transport. Indeed, the Forth Crossing project provides a good example of this disconnect. The project costs many hundreds of millions, with huge sums too for approach roads, and yet the government rejects any suggestion that the bridge budget (or the trunk roads budget) should provide the mere £2m or so needed to complete a cycle route from Edinburgh to the Bridges at a standard at least acceptable to European visitors – yet this is possibly the most important **cycle tourist route** in Scotland – leading from the Capital to the Forth Bridge, for Fife, Perthshire and the Highlands. Its current appalling condition (in parts) was raised by no fewer than three MSPs in the Scottish Parliament cycling debate^{xxiii}.

Jobs impact of Cycling Investment

Finally, there is evidence^{xxiv,xxv} that investment in active travel creates more jobs, both during construction and maintenance, than does investment in 'big' transport, such as trunk road construction or widening, and that these jobs are more local. The government does not appear to have compared the impact on jobs and on infrastructural benefits of such alternative investment models: **we recommend that the Committee calls on Ministers to provide this evidence**, and to take it into account when making investment decisions.

In terms of regional equity, heavy concentration on 'big' investment/ infrastructure inevitably benefits some areas far more than others, both in terms of jobs and of new infrastructure – with the central belt often a clear gainer. In contrast, active travel investment distributes economic benefits across every part of Scotland, both in terms of jobs in construction and ongoing maintenance, and in terms of infrastructure provision for large numbers of people on their everyday local journeys. There is a remarkable table in Sustrans Scotland evidence^{xxvi} to the Scottish Parliament ICI Committee on the draft budget 2012-13, listing the civil engineering contractors who benefited from Sustrans investment during the previous 3 years [2008-11]. In just those 3 years, and despite the low investment total, contractors (including DLOs) were employed in 25 of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities, as follows:

Aberdeen – 3 contractors; Aberdeenshire – 1; Argyll & Bute – 8; Clackmannanshire -3; Dumfries & Galloway – 1; Dundee – 1; East Ayrshire – 1; Edinburgh – 3; Falkirk – 3; Fife – 1; Glasgow – 16; Highland – 8; Midlothian – 3; Moray – 2; North Ayrshire – 4; North Lanarkshire – 2; Perth & Kinross – 3; Renfrewshire – 14; Scottish Borders – 2; Shetland – 1; South Ayrshire – 1; South Lanarkshire – 1; Stirling – 6; West Dunbarton – 2; West Lothian – 2.

In summary, for the equivalent of one small/medium £20m trunk road scheme in one part of Scotland, there could literally be *multiple cycle projects in every Scottish local authority* - creating more jobs during construction and maintenance including jobs suitable for unemployed young people, as well as providing safe and welcoming transport infrastructure for tens of thousands of people on everyday trips to work, shops, leisure and school^{xxvii}.

i Scottish Transport Statistics No.30, 2011 [table 11.1] <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j205779-00.htm>

ii *Low Carbon Scotland: Report on Policies and Proposals* <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/21114235/0>

- iii Scotland's Obesity Strategy: Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland - A Route Map Towards Healthy Weight <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/17140721/0>
- iv SPICe Bulletin SB12-60 *Scotland Performs* <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/54882.aspx>
- v Scottish Household Survey, transport data for 2011, table S3 at www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/00925-11.htm
- vi *Cycling in Scotland*, SPICe briefing 12-24 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/49045.aspx>
- vii www.heraldscotland.com/mobile/news/transport/bid-to-boost-active-school-travel-failing.18073073
- viii www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_FinanceCommittee/Reports/Response_to_Finance_Committee_report_-_18_January_2012webversion.pdf
- ix Former TICC committee <http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/finance/reports-09/fir09-07-vol2-06.htm#annk>
- x ICI Committee report at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/45089.aspx#anni>
- xi *Average Speed Cameras* www.transportscotland.gov.uk/road/safety/average-speed-cameras
- xii Average Speed Cameras suggested by A9 Safety Group www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-19661485
- xiii Why bike use is growing in Edinburgh www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2011/11/more-bikes-and-less-cars-in-edinburgh-rush-hour/
- xiv Cycling means a healthier workforce e.g. see the stories of Andy Finlay of Lothian Buses and Orthopaedic Trauma Surgeon Chris Oliver at www.take30.co.uk/walking-stories
- xv *Action on Active Travel*, Association of Directors of Public Health, April 2008, March 2009 and 2010 update at <http://www.adph.org.uk/ourwork/policy/activ/>
- xvi Signatories to *Action on Active Travel* http://www.adph.org.uk/files/ourwork/policies/Take_Action_on_Active_Travel_sigs_June_2010.pdf
- xvii *Active Travel, Active Scotland* <http://www.transformscotland.org.uk/GetFile.aspx?ItemId=563>
- xviii www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/1208-Finance-Cttee-Spokes-submission-final.pdf
- xix **Cycling England**, whose Chief Executive **Philip Darnton** gave evidence to Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee in 2010, conducted extensive research (based on the English cycle demonstration towns and on European experience) into the minimum funding required to achieve significant and ongoing growth in everyday cycle use. The evidence from the English towns suggested that **a minimum of £10 per head per annum, invested consistently over the years**, could hope to double cycle use every 3-4 years.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110407094607/http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns/>
On the most optimistic assumptions, therefore, £10 per head of investment across Scotland (i.e. £50m yearly, or 2.5% of total transport spending) from 2013 could perhaps raise cycle use from its present roughly 1% of all trips to 10% by around 2023. In order to instead meet the target by the intended 2020, a much more rapid growth rate will be required. Given also that there is a lag from funding allocation to actual investment, and then to its impact on users, it would seem likely that around £20 per head (£100m yearly, 5% of the transport budget) is necessary from 2013 on.
- xx *Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, CAPS* www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/316212/0100657.pdf
- xxi The Eddington Transport Study webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090104005813/http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/transportstrategy/eddingtontudy/
- xxii Davis, A. (2010) *Value for Money: an economic assessment of investment in walking and cycling* — <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=91553>
- xxiii SP Debate on Cycling, 29 March 2012 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6941>
- xxiv Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts, Garrett-Peltier, Heidi. www.peri.umass.edu
- xxv Sustrans confirms that *all* its projects are delivered by local civil-engineering contractors or local authority DLO's. Much National Cycle Network maintenance is also delivered by small contractors, including small farmers in remote areas.
- xxvi Sustrans evidence to SP ICI Committee on draft 2012-13 budget http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_InfrastructureandCapitalInvestmentCommittee/General%20Documents/Written_evidence_from_Sustrans.pdf
- xxvii In their 2008-2011 performance analysis Sustrans estimate that 27.2m trips on the Scottish National Cycle

Network were on short links (under 1.5 miles) to and from the Network. Sustrans also estimates that 35% of Network trips are commuting trips: this equates to 14m trips in 2010.
www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/rmu/Scotland%20KPI%20report%202011.pdf

ANNEXE

WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM SPOKES FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING ON 26
SEPTEMBER 2012

Dear Committee Members

September 26 Evidence Session on Active Travel funding

I listened with interest today to the above evidence session, and on behalf of Spokes would like to confirm and elaborate on three of the points which came up in discussion...

1. Recommendations on draft budget - role of ICI Committee
2. CWSS funding levels
3. What level of funding is needed to reach the 2020 cycle-use target?

Further detail on points 1 and 3 can be found in the written evidence we have submitted to the Committee on the draft budget, and which can also be found here...

www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1209-ICI-Cttee-Spokes-submission.pdf

1. Role of the ICI Committee

It was encouraging to hear the Committee asking questions about where funding should be found if active travel was to rise as a proportion of the total transport budget. Several suggestions were made by the panel, and two suggestions are also in our above submission.

In our view it is imperative that in its report on the draft budget, the Committee addresses this matter and makes recommendations.

Over the last several years the Committee and its predecessors have consistently recommended increased active travel funding in their reports on draft budgets. Equally consistently these recommendations have been rejected, understandably, by the Finance Secretary, on the grounds that he will listen only to recommendations for increased funding if accompanied by suggestions for how money can be reallocated to meet this. Thus if the Committee remains minded that active travel should have an increased proportion of the overall transport budget, it must recommend how this should be done, or risk its views again being sidelined.

2. CWSS Funding Level

The annual Spokes survey of cycling investment in Scotland [which SPICe calls "*the most detailed and comprehensive overview of annual public sector cycle expenditure available*"] confirms the absolute centrality of CWSS funding for current cycling investment activity by local authorities, as witnesses indicated.

Members of the panel asked for CWSS to be at least returned to its previous level - and the figure of £7.5m was mentioned. **In fact, for several years, up to 10/11 inclusive, CWSS funding was £9m.** The figure of £7.5m was for 11/12, the first year of cuts under the new government, with further cuts to £6.1m in 12/13, and down yet again to £5.6m in the draft 13/14 budget. [It is in fact due to rise to £8.2m, but not until 14/15].

3. What funding is needed to achieve the 2020 target of 10% of journeys by bike?

The Committee rightly asked this crucial question. The target is very demanding, especially given that we are already nearing year 2013. The panel referred to the *Association of Directors of Public Health* which recommends 10% of all transport budgets be allocated to active travel. However, neither that report, nor CAPS, attempts any calculation of what funding might achieve what result, and they do not therefore answer the Committee's question. In our long-expressed view this has always been the fundamental flaw in CAPS – it sets a very ambitious target, but with no evidence-based and costed path to achieve that target.

Although any such estimate must involve many assumptions, Spokes has provided a rough calculation, which concludes that for any realistic hope of meeting the target by 2020 around **£20 per head (£100m yearly, or 5% of the transport budget) is necessary**. [A smaller sum might be unavoidable in the first year, in order to ramp up the necessary expertise, planning, etc in local authorities across Scotland and in Transport Scotland].

If the government does not accept our calculations we challenge the government – for the umpteenth time - to provide a convincing alternative assessment.

Calculation of our estimate

Our calculation is based on research and experience from former **Cycling England** [CE was scrapped by the new UK Coalition Government] whose Chief Executive **Philip Darnton** in 2010 gave evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee. CE had conducted extensive research (based on the English cycle demonstration towns and on European experience) into the minimum funding required to achieve significant and ongoing growth in everyday cycle use. The evidence from the English towns suggested that **£10 per head per annum, invested consistently over the years, could hope to double cycle use every 3-4 years**.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110407094607/http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns>

On optimistic assumptions, therefore, £10 per head of cycling investment across Scotland from 2013 could perhaps raise cycle use from its present roughly 1% of all trips to 10% by around **2023** – certainly not by 2020. In order to meet the target by 2020, a much more rapid growth rate will be required. Given also that there is a lag from funding allocation to actual investment, and then to its impact on users, and also that investment, expertise and planning would need to be ramped up during the first couple of years, **it seems likely that £20 per head would be necessary to give a realistic hope of approaching the target by 2020 rather than 2023**.

We trust these points are of use

Dave du Feu
Spokes