

SPOKES

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

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1 The Draft Budget

1.1 The government's objectives on cycling

The government has set **a target for 10% of all journeys to be by bike by 2020**, compared to 1% at present¹ This target is now incorporated as a milestone in the Scottish Government's **Climate Change strategy, Low Carbon Scotland**² [section 7.2.1], and it is also integrated into the **obesity strategy**³. 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 the Climate Change and Obesity strategies. Failure to meet the target will also impact on the **National Performance Framework** indicators [section 2 below].

Our organisation is centred in Edinburgh where, thanks largely to consistent local authority investment and political leadership, cycle use has risen consistently, over a long period, albeit from an extremely low base, but **the evidence points firmly to cycle use being static across Scotland as a whole**. See Scottish Transport Statistics No.30, table 11.1⁴ and the Scottish Household Survey⁵. Very clearly, we are nowhere like on track to meeting the government's 2020 10% cycle use target.

There has been some debate as to whether *10% by 2020* is an ambition, a vision or a target. Giving evidence to your Committee on 7 November 2012, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Capital Investment and Cities, **Nicola Sturgeon MSP**, stated clearly, "*we are*

committed to the 10 per cent target ... targets are not easy to meet ... but we have commitment and determination. We have a lot of work to do ...

1.2 New and existing cycle funding in the draft budget

It is now widely accepted, not least by the Committee, that the structure of the budget in relation to active travel and specifically cycling is confusing⁶. Nonetheless it is clear from Spokes analysis [*“the most accurate and comprehensive guide to investment in cycling in Scotland,”* according to SPICe⁷] that Scottish Government annual cycling investment has consistently been under £20m, representing under £4 per head, or 1% of the total transport budget. This year, however, the subsequent letter⁸ from Finance Secretary John Swinney to Patrick Harvie provides a very helpful breakdown of budget active travel support and a big improvement in clarity.

For 14/15 it is clear that there is £10m additional to all previously announced sums, which we greatly welcome, albeit we argue below it is insufficient if the 2020 target is to be taken seriously.

For 15/16 despite the £10m of 'new' money [a strange term, given that no 15/16 cycling budget had yet been announced] total cycling investment is nonetheless due to fall back again from the 14/15 level, since £5.2m of Consequentials money allocated for 14/15 will no longer be there in 15/16.

Thus in rough terms we expect cycling investment to be £20m in 13/14, £30m in 14/15 and £25m in 15/16. These approximations are slightly lower than the totals in John Swinney's letter to Patrick Harvie, given that he includes the entire CWSS fund, not all of which goes to active travel investment⁹.

1.3 What is needed to achieve the 2020 10% cycle use target

Active travel should receive 10% of total transport spend according to the report *Action on Active Travel*¹⁰ by the **Association of Directors of Public Health**, and supported by 110 transport, medical and other professional, expert and interested bodies¹¹ 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*¹². In our recent *Towards 2020* discussion paper we suggest briefly how such a sum might be used¹³.

In our long-expressed view the fundamental flaw of the *Cycling Action Plan for Scotland* has always been that whilst it sets a very ambitious and desirable aim for 2020, it does not contain an evidence-based and costed path to achieve that target. The recently 'refreshed' CAPS¹⁴ moves somewhat in that direction, but far from convincingly. CAPS is a basically collection of useful initiatives, not a costed and researched path to the 2020 target.

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 evidence¹⁵ 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.

On very optimistic assumptions, therefore, £10 per head of investment across Scotland (i.e. £50m yearly) from 2014 could perhaps raise cycle use from its present roughly 1% of all trips [reference in 1.1 above] to 10% by around 2023. In order to instead meet the target by the intended 2020, a much more rapid growth rate is 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 total transport spending) is necessary from 2014 on. However, local authorities and other relevant agencies are not geared up and experienced sufficiently to handle such a rise in 2014/15, so the obvious answer would be to **build up from say £40m (2% of total transport) in 14/15 to around 10% in 2020**, as recommended by ADPH and others in the first para above.

Thus the funding requirements to reach the 2020 ambition are totally out of kilter with what has been allocated (1.3 above). The starting point of £30m in 14/15 is too low, and then instead of a progressive rise in investment towards 2020 we actually see funding starting to fall back again in 15/16!!

1.4 Role of ICI Committee

For several years the Parliamentary Committees (in various incarnations) dealing with transport have strongly recommended a bigger share of the transport budget for active travel^{16,17}. These Committees, however, never had the courage to state *from where within transport this rise should come*. As a result the Finance Secretary and Finance Committee have been unwilling to consider the recommendation, and have made clear that this was why.

Exactly the same pattern happened last year, after which Spokes wrote a strongly worded opinion article¹⁸, **Scottish Budget Process Fails – Again!!** The Committee excused itself on the understandable grounds that the budget was too opaque to propose any amendments, but in our view that is not good enough. In any case, John Swinney's letter to Patrick Harvie, referenced above, now provides much of the missing clarity. Our ICI budget submission last year¹⁹ suggested options for funding sources from within the transport budget. This year we add that if £3000m is available to dual the A96, plus £3000m for the A9, then a slight postponement of some elements (ideally while average-speed-cameras are being tested) would easily find the sums needed for active travel.

In conclusion, if the Committee remains persuaded of the case to raise the active travel % of transport spend, then it must seize this nettle and indicate how the budget can be modified to achieve this. If the Committee does not do so, then government will assuredly again dismiss any ICI recommendations on matching its transport investment priorities with its active travel ambitions and its 2020 cycling target.

2 National Performance Framework indicators

2.1 Match the growth rate of the small independent EU countries by 2017

Many would question traditional measures of economic growth which, for example, rise when there is a road traffic collision. However, for infrastructure projects (both construction and maintenance) cycling investment tends to be much more effective in terms of jobs, local procurement and cost-benefit than big road projects. We covered this in some detail in our ICI budget submission last year²⁰ [section D].

2.2 Reduce deaths on Scotland's roads

Road deaths as a whole are falling, but cycling deaths have ceased their long-term downward trend and started to rise again. *The reasons why the cycling and car-occupant trends have diverged are unclear and research is vital. We cover this question in our Towards 2020 paper²¹, and in more detail in forthcoming Spokes Bulletin 117.*

2.3 Reduce traffic congestion

The contribution of cycling to reducing congestion can be imagined by the reverse picture of the impact on a city such as Edinburgh if say half of existing cycle commuters were to shift to car instead!

2.4 Increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active transport

The indicator “*increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport.*” is not improving and, within this, cycle commuting across Scotland is also static, according to the Scottish Household Survey [1.1 above]. Since cycle commuting is rising in some areas, such as Edinburgh, it must therefore be falling in others. This again points to the need for a step change in cycling investment as in 1.3 above.

2.5 Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint

As mentioned in 1.1, the 2020 10% cycle-use target is a milestone in Low Carbon Scotland. With emissions targets already breached, a bad miss of the cycle-use target would further threaten Scotland's climate change aims.

2.6 Increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors

It is tragic that this indicator is on a significant downward trend. Yet there is plenty evidence [examples here²²] that high quality cycling infrastructure, particularly when combined with car-reduction measures, will encourage more people to use bikes, thus bringing more people outdoors, both for utility and recreational activities.

2.7/2.8 Percentage of children with healthy weight *and* adults who are physically active

It is remarkable that these two indicators are not shown as relevant to ICI Committee and we suggest this be corrected for future years. In particular, as mentioned in 1.1 above, the 2020 cycle use target is incorporated into Scotland's obesity strategy, so the need for the link is very clear. Several studies [example²³] have indicated an inverse relationship between obesity levels and levels of walking and cycling in countries across the world.

ENDNOTES

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- 1 *Scottish Transport Statistics No.30, 2011 [table 11.1]*
<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j205779-00.htm>
 - 2 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets>
 - 3 *Scotland's Obesity Strategy: Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland - A Route Map To Healthy Weight*
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/17140721/0>
 - 4 <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j205779-161.htm>
 - 5 <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j281378-08.htm#tableS3>
 - 6 *Budget confusion ... see appendix 1 of this article*
<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2012/12/scottish-budget-process-fails-again-2/>
 - 7 SPICe SB 12-24 *Cycling*
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/49045.aspx>
 - 8 Letter from Finance Secretary John Swinney MSP to Patrick Harvie MSP
<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/1309-JS-to-PH-12-Sep-13.pdf>
 - 9 Spokes has suggested that the *Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets* fund be renamed *Cycling, Walking*. Some supposedly 'safer streets' schemes have been detrimental to cycling (e.g. one-ways); whereas if the fund was renamed "cycling/walking" then those street schemes which genuinely benefit cycling and walking would still be covered.
 - 10 *Action on Active Travel*, Association of Directors of Public Health, April 2008, and 2012 update
<http://www.adph.org.uk/category/atpa/>
 - 11 http://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Take_Action_on_Active_Travel_sigs_June_2010.pdf
 - 12 *Active Travel, Active Scotland*
<http://www.transformscotland.org.uk/GetFile.aspx?ItemId=563>
 - 13 *Towards 2020*, Spokes discussion paper
<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1309-Ideas-moving-to-2020+1.pdf>
 - 14 <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/cycling-action-plan-2013>
 - 15 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110407094607/http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns/>
 - 16 Former TICC Committee
<http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/finance/reports-09/fir09-07-vol2-06.htm#annk>
 - 17 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/45089.aspx#anni>

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- 18 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2012/12/scottish-budget-process-fails-again-2/>
- 19 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1209-ICI-Cttee-Spokes-submission.pdf>
- 20 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1209-ICI-Cttee-Spokes-submission.pdf>
- 21 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2013/09/towards-2020/>
- 22 Click *Publications* at <http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/pucher/>
- 23 <http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/pucher/JPAH08.pdf>

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