

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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Spokes proposes that the draft budget be amended to create a new £20m Cycle Projects Fund. A possible source of funding would be a £20m reduction in the planned £134m *increase* over 2008/09 in the budget for motorways and trunk roads. Our proposal would not require any new administrative structures.

BACKGROUND

The reasons why cycle use should be increased are well known – particularly environment, public health, energy security and congestion. There are many relevant existing government policies and political commitments. Substantial modal shift from car to cycle would contribute to the government's Single National Purpose, Strategic Objectives, and National Outcomes [1]; would support manifesto commitments of nearly all parties at the last election [2]; would chime well with many of the Single Outcome Agreements with Scottish local authorities; would tie in with the spirit of the Climate Change Bill and associated consultations; and would give real meaning to recent statements by the First Minister and the Transport Minister [3]. Yet despite these policies, commitments and warm words, real action comparable to nearby European nations is sadly lacking.

European comparator countries show that consistent investment, to create conditions which are not only safe but welcoming for cyclists, results in major shifts to cycle use [5]. For example, Copenhagen, where 36% of commuting is by bike, and investment to raise this further is underway ... *“The city's bike culture was built almost from scratch. There was a political will to make it happen, funds were allocated and are still allocated ... We ride bicycles because of visionary political decisions”* [Guardian, 26.6.08, Wall Street Journal 4.5.07].

Over the years many relevant initiatives have been taken by the Scottish government and its predecessors (some knowingly, some unwitting! [8]) and worthwhile growth in cycle use achieved in limited areas where investment has been made. What has stayed constant, however, is that the proportion of government transport spending allocated to cycling has remained no higher than 1%. The result has been that, whilst Scotland as a whole has seen cycle use remain at miserable levels, around 1% of all journeys, comparator countries have seen it rising to 10%-30% of all journeys – even up to 50% in some towns and cities.

When this and past governments is/were tackled on cycle project spending we are told of all the initiatives underway – currently including cycle training, a few sustainable travel town experiments, the CWSS fund, a tourist/leisure Inverness-Oban route project (over quite a number of years), a Cycle Action Plan, and so on. All are welcome - but, adding up total cycling investment, we still remain at no more than 1% of transport spending – around £20m [4] from a total of well over £2000m.

Yet the need for action is recognised by Scottish government ministers, right up to the First Minister [3]. And in a recent report **Cycling Scotland**, the government-funded advisory/promotional body, quoted Spokes research showing cycle investment at around 1% of total Scottish transport spending, and concluded, *“If Scotland wishes to increase cycle use, this funding picture has to improve.”* Spokes urges that the 2009/10 Scottish budget is grasped as the opportunity to take a step change forward so that Scotland reaches for, and is seen by all to be reaching for, European-style cycling policies, conditions and levels.

THE SPOKES PROPOSAL – HOW IT WOULD WORK

For the reasons above, we propose that the 2009/10 budget takes a first real step towards increased cycle investment by creating a new, annual, £20m cycle projects fund, additional to current initiatives, thus raising cycle investment towards a still very small 2% of total transport spend. The fund would be administered by the government's existing Sustainable Transport Team, and would be open to bids over a certain level (say £1m) by any relevant body – for example, Sustrans, First ScotRail, BWB, local authorities and Transport Partnerships.

The reasons for suggesting this particular approach are...

- **Administration by the Scottish Government's Sustainable Transport Team** would avoid new bureaucracy but ensure public accountability.
- **Limiting bids to over (say) £1m** would minimise administration. Clearly the scheme would support large projects – and these have no current straightforward funding mechanism [example – A90 route, below]. However, our proposal would also enable bodies such as Sustrans, Cycling Scotland or Regional Transport Partnerships to put forward bids comprising packages of smaller related projects in particular regional or topic areas. A few examples of the types of bid we envisage are:
 - Upgrading the highly substandard A90 commuter/tourist trunk National Cycleroute from Edinburgh to the Forth Bridge. Currently the government and Edinburgh council are in lengthy negotiations on a special one-off deal for this £1m-£2m project, as there is no available standard funding mechanism under which it can be built.
 - First ScotRail could apply for funding (possibly matched funding) to improve cycle carriage on the Edinburgh and Glasgow to Inverness routes, a cause of many complaints by tourists and by locals.
 - British Waterways could apply to surface and light all urban sections of the Edinburgh-Glasgow towpath, these also forming spines for future local town cycle networks.
 - A Regional Transport Partnership could apply (on behalf of its constituent local authorities) to create cycle-friendly conditions in one town in each area.
 - Sustrans could apply to create safe routes to stations, improving bike/rail integration in a range of towns, and often also forming local spine routes to town centres, where the station is in or near the town centre.
- **In subsequent years, cycle expenditure needs to rise further**, to reach European levels. At present however, the skills and experience to spend such sums effectively are probably not yet widespread in all parts of Scotland. Through a new bidding fund, those bodies with existing experience and capabilities will identify themselves, expertise will grow, and Scotland can thus make a rapid start on developing a culture of proper provision for cyclists.
- **Cycling investment should not just be limited to local authorities**. Ambition and innovation are of the essence in our proposal, with all sectors and stakeholders needing the opportunity and incentive to start promoting cycle use in a substantial way – also making a tangible statement of Scotland's over-arching commitment to sustainable development.

We suggest the money is found by a re-allocation of current priorities. A small percentage reduction in trunk road funding [6] – indeed a relatively small reduction in the planned £134m increase in trunk road funding - would double the investment in growing cycle use [7]. Our proposal is in any case small in transport terms, representing under 1% of total transport spend.

Finally, we do appreciate that last year's Spending Review covered 3 years. **However, with rapidly growing concern over transport emissions, energy security and obesity, the position has changed hugely since last year, and is now far too urgent to wait a further 2-3 years for another full spending review.**

FOOTNOTES

[1] Government aspirations supported by our proposal

One single national purpose: including...

“... opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth”

Five strategic objectives:

Wealthier and fairer; Smarter; Healthier; Safer and stronger; Greener

Fifteen National Outcomes: including...

“We live longer, healthier lives”

“We live in well-designed sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need”

“We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe”

“We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production”

Forty-five Indicators and Targets: including...

No.4 *“Reduce the proportion of driver journeys delayed due to traffic congestion”*

No.14 *“Reduce rate of increase in proportion of children with body mass index outwith healthy range by 2018”*

No.32 *“Reduce overall ecological footprint”*

No.36 *“Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport”*

No.37 *“Increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week.”*

[2] Manifesto commitments [Holyrood 2007 elections]

SNP manifesto To *“promote walking and cycling.”* To make journeys *“greener, safer, easier.”*

Green manifesto *“We want cycle funding to quadruple by 2014 to at least 4% [of Scottish transport spending]”*

Labour manifesto *“Make cycling a more convenient, attractive and realistic choice for many more short journeys.”*

Lib Dem manifesto *“Double cycling rates in Scotland by 2012”* *“Require major towns and cities to develop a core network of routes from residential areas to town centres.”*

Conservative manifesto Cycling and walking, regrettably, were totally omitted from the manifesto.

[3] Recent statements by the First Minister and Transport Minister

“With a current modal share for cycling of just 1% we clearly have much more to do if we are to emulate our European neighbours who enjoy between 10% and 30% modal share” - Transport Minister **Stewart Stevenson** [Herald 14.5.08].

“We will step up our promotion of greener transport options, to encourage less fuel dependency” - First Minister **Alex Salmond** [Donald Dewar Memorial Lecture, August 2008].

[4] Cycle project investment in Scotland

For the last 11 years Spokes has conducted an annual survey of cycle project expenditure in Scotland, and has identified main sources and amounts of such expenditure. This is not an easy exercise, as there are a variety of sources, and within some of them the amount which can be considered as cycle investment is impossible fully to disentangle. Therefore our calculations should be seen as providing a ball-park figure.

The summary of our most recent survey [based on 07/08 government and local authority budgets] put cycle project expenditure across Scotland from all main sources at around £19m. [Spokes Bulletin 99 at www.spokes.org.uk - downloads]. This excludes one modestly significant source – expenditure by Transport Scotland in association with trunk roads. TS had told us, in response to a FOI request, that it was impossible to identify the cycling element of trunk road scheme costs, although subsequently the Minister has quoted an annual figure of £2m for this.

Finally a recent letter from the Minister to a Spokes member also attempted to calculate annual cycle investment in Scotland – the first time the government has done this, as far as we are aware! The letter came up with approximately 1% of the total transport budget, i.e. rather over £20m. As that is of the same order as our own £19m calculation, it would seem reasonable to assume that a figure of around £20m is in the correct ball-park.

[5] Comparisons with other European nations

The relationship between cycle use levels and safe and welcoming cycle infrastructure is widely accepted. For example, “*The key to high levels of cycling appears to be provision of separate cycling facilities* along heavily trafficked roads and at intersections, combined with traffic calming residential neighbourhoods*” Source: Puchler & Buehler, 2008, Making Cycling Irresistible – Lessons from Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.

* [Comment] In practice, in built up towns and cities where there is inadequate space for physically segregated facilities, 'separate cycling facilities' often include clearly defined onroad cycle lanes, e.g. with coloured surfacing.

Precise funding comparisons between countries are very difficult, as funding may come from local, regional or national level; and cycle investment may be substantially sourced from other more general transport or other budgets. However the following examples clearly indicate the extent of the disparity between Scotland and comparator European countries.

Cycle spending per head in **Amsterdam** is estimated at 27euro p.a. in 2006-10; compared to our 2006/7 Spokes estimates of £3.70 for Scotland and £3.60 for Edinburgh [Spokes 96]. In **Groningen** 13euro p.a. during 1989-99, as compared to our 1997 estimate of £0.55 for Scotland and £1.30 for Edinburgh [Spokes 63]. **Copenhagen** currently invests around DKK165 (£17.50) per resident in cycle provision, and this in a city with an already extensive cycle infrastructure. Sources: Cycling in Netherlands, Dutch Ministry of Transport, 2007; Copenhagen Bicycle Account 2006, City of Copenhagen.

Norway has a slightly smaller population (4.7m) than Scotland (5.1m) and climate/topography which might be considered less cycle-friendly. The government aims to raise cycle use from 5% of all journeys to 8%, and has allocated 1500m Krone (approx £150m) over 4 years 2006/09 (i.e. nearly £40m p.a.) as part of a longer-term strategy. Note that this special budget is additional to regular ongoing cycle investment [total unknown] from other sources such as toll-road income and through local authorities. Thus in total Norway is certainly investing in cycle use at very much more than double Scotland's rate. Source: Norwegian Cycling Strategy, Hege Tassell, Velo City Conference, Munich 2007.

Germany has a 2000m euro p.a. urban transport fund providing 75%-80% match funding for cycle facilities built by state and local government [the proportion of this fund going to cycle facilities is unknown]. This is in addition to several other regular forms of cycle funding, such as a 100m euro annual fund for routes beside national highways, national cycling research, etc. Source: Puchler & Buehler [above].

[6] Scottish Draft Budget 2009/10 proposals [Figures in £m]

Budget area	2008-09 budget	2009-10 draft budget	2010-11 Plans
Sustainable and active travel*	11.0	11.0 [static***]	11.0 [static***]
Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets*	9.0	9.0 [static***]	9.0 [static***]
Motorways and trunk roads	929.6	1063.7 [up £134m]	1181.4 [up £251m]
Total government transport**	2254.6	2487.5 [up £233m]	2565.8 [up £311m]

* The bulk of cycle project investment comes from these two budget lines [which also cover several other areas]

** This row is calculated by totalling the 8 transport-related budget lines under Finance and Sustainable Growth.

*** Whilst this allocation is static in cash terms, that of course represents a cut from 2008/09 in real terms.

[7] The impact on the 2009/10 budget of our proposal

Cycle investment would *double* from £20m to £40m. (approx figures - see [4] above)

Motorway/trunk road spending would reduce marginally, from £1064m to £1044m.

[8] The erratic, semi-random, nature of government decisions on cycle project expenditure

No Scottish administration has yet made a really serious attempt significantly to increase cycle use, through the necessary adequate and continuing investment. Indeed, many of the *most significant* decisions affecting cycle project expenditure are taken without a considered awareness of (and without concern for?) their cycle project consequences.

For example, for several years (until 05/06, when it provided £3.4m cycle project spend) the biggest single source of cycle investment was not a cycling allocation at all, but the Public Transport Fund. The main element of cycle spending from this huge fund comprised cycle facilities integrated into big public transport schemes. When PTF was abolished the government was quite uninterested in the fact that this would seriously damage Scottish cycle spending. Spokes many times over a 2-year period highlighted this looming major cut; and the then Scottish Executive was eventually compelled in writing to accept our argument - but did nothing about it.

Similarly, when RTP capital funding was introduced a few years ago there was little expectation or intention that this would bring the major boost to cycle investment which did in fact happen. Then, funding rules were again changed, by the new SNP government, and again with absolutely no thought to whether or how this would impact on investment in cycling infrastructure – and we expect the outcome to be severely negative. Already, for example, the £4.3m SESTRAN budget (over several years) for high quality cyclistroute connections between Edinburgh and surrounding local authority areas has been replaced by an Edinburgh Council budget for the same purpose of £0.5m in total to cover the 3 years 2008-2010.