

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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Contents of this submission

1. Cycling policy background
 2. Cycling investment during this parliament
 3. Funding requirements 2011/12 and beyond, to reach the CAPS target
 4. Cycling investment in the draft budget
 5. Spokes proposals for the budget
 6. Future budgets / spending review
 7. Questions for the minister
- Appendix: Examples of possible bids to the fund proposed in 5.3

1. Cycling Policy Background

1.1 In this document we take as read **the arguments for increasing cycle use for everyday journeys**. These include sustainable economic growth, energy security, resilient communities, public health, local accessibility, congestion and pollution. In setting its highly ambitious target that 10% of trips should be by bike in 2020, the Scottish Government has in effect accepted most or all of these arguments, and therefore they do not require further debate (our budget submission last year did discuss some of them). *Rather, we must now ask what funding is required to meet this target which the government has set.*

Indeed, the above arguments have generally been accepted by the present government since its earliest days, as is shown by the quotations below from year 2008. But despite those brave words, and the recent CAPS report, we have not yet seen a properly funded path which has any hope of reaching the 10% target.

“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].

“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, Infrastructure and Climate Change Minister **Stewart Stevenson** [Herald 14.5.08].

1.2 We also emphasise that we are concerned, as is the government target, with **using bikes for everyday journeys - to the shops, work, cinema, friends, etc.** This does include **leisure and family cycling** where it might replace car leisure drives; and mass participation events aimed clearly at the general public, which may encourage future cycle use. However **cycle sport** (e.g. racing and much of mountain biking) is a quite separate issue which should be funded under sport budget headings. Indeed it is highly debatable whether cycle sport is a positive or a negative in respect of the arguments in 1.1, involving as it often does lengthy motor journeys to sporting or mountain destinations.

1.3 It is the government which set the hugely ambitious target for cycle use. **Therefore the government must take responsibility for setting a realistic and funded path towards its achievement.** Of course there are many partners who will enthusiastically work on this, but they can only do so effectively if the *lead*, the *requisite funding*, and the *appropriate funding mechanisms*, are in place.

2. Cycling Investment during this Parliament

2.1 Total cycling investment each year during this Parliament

Spokes has for the last 14 years conducted an annual survey of Scottish cycling investment from all main sources. Our survey is commended by the **Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe)** as “*the most detailed and comprehensive overview of annual public sector cycle expenditure available.*”¹ In summary our figures show total cycling investment falling annually during the term of the present government, but with a recovery this year, probably roughly returning to the starting position when the SNP came to power.

Very briefly, total cycling investment from all main sources fell (in cash terms) from £21.7m in 2007/08 (itself a mere 0.93% of the Scottish transport budget) to £16.4m (0.66%) in 2009/10.² Our highly provisional estimate for 2010/11 is that total cycling investment will recover to a total of £21.8m (0.89%). This is as a result of *two* significant factors: the one-year CAPS funding boost and important changes to the CWSS guidance (2.2a below). These figures are in cash terms, but in real terms would show a slight decline, as also do the % figures.

2.2 Funding mechanism alterations during this Parliament

This Parliament has seen some significant changes in funding mechanisms for cycling investment – some intended and some not! (a) and (b) below were positive and well thought-out initiatives, but regrettably the cuts in cycling investment in (c) and (d) below were side-effects of other decisions, taken in our view without proper consideration of their impact on cycling investment or how this could (and should) have been ameliorated.³

- a) For 2010/11, **CWSS guidance** was changed to request councils to invest a minimum % of CWSS in cycling projects - several councils had previously put zero into cycling. We strongly support this change and we commend COSLA and the government's Sustainable Transport Team for negotiating the new guidance. In support of this we note that most cycling investment also benefits walking, whereas the reverse is not true; and indeed some 'safer streets' measures are implemented in a way negative to cycling safety and cycling encouragement (e.g. installing central-island pinch points rather than alternative more cycle-friendly options).
- b) For 2010/11 **Sustrans has required match-funding** from its local authority and other partners. This too has been a welcome development, likely to raise total cycling investment somewhat, although it is not a revolutionary change as match-funding with Sustrans has been fairly common in the past.
- c) Since 2008/09 the **Smarter Choices Smarter Places** project has been running. Whilst Spokes welcomes the project, we were extremely unhappy with its method of funding, which primarily came from a 50% cut to Sustrans. Thus SCSP was in effect a transfer of funds from walking/cycling to walking/cycling/bus/car-share.
- d) The government removed RTP capital funding (except Strathclyde) as from 2008/09. This was a major blow to cycling investment, as most RTPs (with some exceptions, such as SPT) invested in cycling infrastructure at a praiseworthy level, totalling £3.7m in 06/07 and £4.9m in 07/08 – the second largest single source of Scottish cycling investment in both those years. Transfer to local authorities brought a net annual loss to cycling investment of very roughly £1.5m in 08/09, £2.5m in 09/10, and we expect even worse in 10/11. Not only has this reduced total Scottish cycling investment, but it has removed the only real funding source for major and inter-urban schemes. For example a phased £5m SESTRAN program to connect Edinburgh to surrounding areas by high quality cyclistoutes has been lost, albeit that a few stretches are still planned by individual councils on a local basis.

1 SPICe briefing paper 10/62 - *Cycling in Scotland: Update 2010*. Note that the Spokes data included in the SPICe paper are now superseded by the table on page 7 of Spokes Bulletin 108, which includes our most recent data.

2 For a breakdown of total cycling investment into main sources, see the table on page 7 of Spokes Bulletin 108.

3 This is not the first time that cycling investment has been drastically cut as a side-effect of other decisions. A previous example was abolition by Labour of the **Public Transport Fund** (also created by Labour!) *which at that time (05/06) was the greatest single source of Scottish cycling investment*. In this case, as in 2.2c and 2.2d above, Spokes highlighted in advance the likely impact on cycling investment of these decisions, but again our comments were either not taken seriously or not acted on.

3. Funding 2011/12 and beyond, to reach the CAPS target

Probably the biggest weakness of the CAPS document is that **it does not discuss the level of funding necessary to reach the target which the government has set in CAPS** – a truly remarkable omission!! This is discussed below. CAPS does however include a welcome government promise of “*continued funding support to communities, local authorities and key delivery bodies in order to achieve our vision of a 10% modal share by 2020*” [CAPS p31].

Cycling England, whose Chief Executive **Philip Darnton** gave evidence to TICC, conducted extensive research (based not only on European experience but also on the English cycle demonstration towns) into the minimum funding levels required to achieve significant and ongoing increases in everyday cycle use, and concluded that **the minimum requirement is £10 per head per annum – on an ongoing basis over the years**. On the evidence of the English towns (which have invested around £10 per head for a number of years) this could bring a doubling of cycle use every 3-4 years. At the most optimistic assumptions this could probably just raise cycle use at a sufficient rate to reach the Scottish Government's 2020 target, and so we conclude...

For Scotland to have a realistic hope of reaching its 2020 target, the Cycling England £10 per head figure implies a minimum ongoing annual investment of around £50m per year – compared to the current ~£20m.

We note that £50m represents ~2.5% of the total transport budget, a % far below that of the 10% modal share target!

Finally, the £50m is required to meet the *cycling target*. Although much of this investment would substantially benefit walking (2.2a and 5.2) a higher sum would be needed to take account of full active travel. We note that active travel should be allocated not 2.5% but *10%* of total transport spend according to the report *Action on Active Travel*⁴ by the Association of Directors of Public Health, and supported by over 100 transport, medical and other professional, expert and interested bodies. For the future, Spokes supports the 10%, but it is not politically realistic in this budget.

4. Cycling Investment in the Draft Budget 2011/12

4.1 Sustainable and Active Travel

The most substantial commitment to cycling investment in the draft budget is the *Sustainable and Active Travel* budget line, used by the government's Sustainable Transport Team, which sees a welcome rise of roughly £4m from £21.2m in 10/11 to £25.1m for 11/12. However this budget line supports not just active travel but also infrastructure for electric and other LCVs, and the LCV Procurement Support Scheme. For 10/11 our early estimate is that only perhaps 50% of the £21.2m, around £10m-£12m, will be invested in active travel. Our understanding also is that only £1m of the £4m budget increase will go to active travel.

In terms of active travel, the budget is used to support Sustrans (and their excellent work with local authorities and other partners), Cycling Scotland, Smarter Choices, and a few small initiatives such as the Bike Station. *In recent years this budget line has made the largest contribution to total Scottish cycling investment* (primarily through its funding of Sustrans's work with local authority and other partners – 5.1 below).

4.2 Cycling Walking and Safer Streets [CWSS]

A sum of £9m, almost equal to the above active travel component, currently goes annually to *CWSS*, the *Cycling Walking and Safer Streets* scheme. *CWSS* is allocated to local authorities on a population basis. In previous years there were problems with a few authorities consistently allocating little or no *CWSS* funding to cycling investment, but the new guidance (2.2a) should rectify that, and we anticipate that around 50% of *CWSS* can now be considered as cycling investment (including shared cycle/walk), with much of the remainder supporting walk only. *For the last 3 years CWSS has comprised the second largest component of total Scottish cycling investment.*

But - this year, for the first time, ***CWSS is not mentioned in the draft budget***. Following enquiries it appears that no final decision has been taken, and the future of *CWSS* may involve discussions between the Scottish Government and COSLA, given the desire under the Concordat to remove all ring-fenced funding. ***Removal of CWSS with no replacement would be an utter disaster for total cycling (and walking) investment – see 5.2 below.***

4 *Action on Active Travel*, Association of Directors of Public Health, April 2008, and March 2009 update, at http://adph.org.uk/policies_and_publications.php#publications

4.3 Local authority capital

The third largest component of Scottish cycling investment since 2008/09 has been *local authorities' own capital*. This only totalled £1m or so across Scotland for a good number of years, but it received a probably temporary boost in 08/09 with the transfer of RTP capital (albeit with a big net loss to cycling – see 2.2d above). With the present squeeze on local authority funding, it seems likely that cycling investment from this source will decline.

4.4 Other sources of cycling investment in Scotland

Other cycling investment sources (e.g. cycling-related CCF projects) are minor in comparison to the above or are likely to remain fairly static (e.g. the ongoing 1995 trunk roads cycling initiative).

4.5 In summary...

If CWSS is retained, and at its present level, then the overall impact of the budget on total Scottish cycling (and active travel) investment is likely to be roughly similar to this year (with a small increase thanks to 4.1, but probably offset by a decline under 4.3).

If CWSS is scrapped, net cycling investment is likely to fall around £3m-£4m, and total active travel investment by perhaps £8m. Furthermore scrapping of CWSS would bring additional negative consequences: loss of match-funding opportunities and a very probable return to zero cycling investment in some local authorities.

5. Spokes Proposals for the Budget

Our proposals below total the £50m identified in (3) above as the necessary minimum to reach the CAPS cycling target – this sum represents a mere 2.5% of the total transport budget. Ideally the total would be higher (see 3 above) to assist those active travel objectives which are not cycling and not shared cycle/walk. The funding mechanisms suggested below are intended to work as effectively as possible towards the CAPS target by ensuring a basic minimum of cycling investment in all local authorities, whilst also providing for larger initiatives by the more forward-looking authorities as well as initiatives by other relevant bodies ranging from small voluntary groups, employer organisations, etc., through to major organisations like British Waterways or ScotRail.

The money needed for our proposal could be found by a re-allocation of current priorities – for example, a £30m reduction in the still-rising motorway and trunk road allocation.

Our proposal for the 2011/12 budget has 3 elements, as follows...

5.1 Sustainable and Active Travel budget line

The *Sustainable and Active Travel* budget line (4.1 above) should remain, as in the draft budget, with continued funding for its existing active travel purposes. Note that although this budget line is £25.1m, only £10-£12m seems likely to go to active travel (4.1) and so we only count that sum towards the above £50m requirement.

If however our proposal in 5.3 below is not accepted, then this budget line should be increased substantially, to work towards the above £50m objective – and this entire increase should be devoted to active travel purposes, not LCVs.

The work in particular of Sustrans (funded from this budget line) with its local authority and other partners was described by a former Transport Minister as “*high standard, on budget and in tight timescales.*” This is a truly remarkable compliment given the funding switchback under which Sustrans has to operate. Funding to Sustrans has varied crazily – most recently from £7.8m in 07/08 to £5.0m then £3.9m and then back up to £7.7m this year 10/11. In many years the sum was not even known until well into the financial year – bad enough for any organisation, but especially difficult for Sustrans who work with a wide range of partners who themselves need time to consult on schemes, prepare road orders, acquire land, etc. We strongly urge a more planned approach to funding in future years. This is one of the areas of most consistent complaint by council cycle officers in our annual funding survey.

We support the policy developed between Sustrans and the Scottish Government (2.2b above) that they should require 50% match funding for all work with partners (possibly a few exceptional cases should be allowed).

Finally, some other transport NGOs are arguing that a higher proportion of this budget line should go to active travel, with less to LCVs. That is an argument with which we have a lot of sympathy. For the future, the budget should be made more transparent and explicit with respect to the active travel / LCVs distinction - see (6) below.

5.2 CWSS – Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets

It is critically important that CWSS is retained. CWSS provides the **only** certain source of cycling and active travel investment for local authorities, and so ensure a basic level of investment. If retained at its present level, and with certain changes (below), this will contribute £9m p.a. to total Scottish active travel investment.

Second, whilst other cycle funding sources have varied like the wind (e.g. Sustrans funding above) CWSS has for many years provided the **only** consistent funding source, allowing local authority cycling officers to know well in advance that funding will be available, and the sum concerned. This is an absolutely basic requirement for efficient planning and scheme preparation.

Third, and particularly as CWSS is known well in advance, cycle officers are often able to use CWSS money to obtain match funding from other agencies (e.g. Europe, British Waterways, Sustrans, etc) and so double up (or increase even further) their cycling investment.

Fourth, in CAPS the government promises “*continued funding support to ... local authorities ... in order to achieve our vision of a 10% modal share by 2020.*” Without CWSS it is hard to see how this promise can be met.

Suggested changes to CWSS

We propose that CWSS be renamed the **Local Authorities Cycling/Walking Fund** and thus be used only for active travel. The Scottish Government is aware that CWSS has in the past not always been used wholly as intended. Removal of the term 'Safer Streets' would of course still allow schemes which make streets safer and more attractive for cyclists and walkers, but would mean that the fund was more directly targeted towards their needs. For example in the past CWSS has been used for some one-way streets - which may ease traffic flow but can speed traffic up, to the detriment of residents and walkers, and which may create detours and difficult turnings for cyclists (see also 2.2a).

Secondly, the **CWSS guidance** has already been revised this year (2.2a) such that a minimum percentage should be invested in cycling provision. We strongly support this advice. Whilst that might appear at first sight unfair to the walking element, that is not the case. Prior to the new guidance some authorities invested zero in cycling, whereas all invested in walking (assuming we include 'safer street' walking features such as pedestrian crossing points). Furthermore, whilst investment in walking infrastructure rarely benefits cyclists, investment in cycling infrastructure frequently benefits walkers. This is obvious in provision of shared-use paths, but is to a lesser extent also true for onroad cycle lanes, which protect pavements from splashing, excessive fumes, noise and reduced ambience.⁵

5.3 New £30m cycling bidding fund

Finally, we propose a new £30m cycling bidding fund (or >£30m if for full active travel) administered by the government's existing Sustainable Transport Team, and open to bids over a certain level (perhaps £0.5m) by any relevant body – for example, local authorities, Transport Partnerships, Sustrans, ScotRail, BWB, business organisations – though we would expect the bulk of the funding to go to councils and RTPs. Note that the lower limit for bids would not preclude organisations obtaining small amounts of funding, but this would be done in a way such as to minimise government administration as explained in (h) below. Bids would normally be match-funded.

Examples of the types of bids we envisage - to support both large and small projects - are in the Appendix.

Our proposal is realistic and workable. In late 2008 Spokes was invited to a 2-hour meeting with the Scottish Government's then Head of Transport Strategy [Diane McLafferty] and other officials to discuss a near identical proposal. The meeting was very constructive and we left feeling our proposal was eminently workable should funding be made available through the budget.

⁵ We recall being told years ago by Edinburgh's then cycle officer that the first comment he received about one of Edinburgh's early onroad cycle lanes was from a pedestrian who was delighted at the increased separation from traffic as she walked along the pavement with her pushchair on a pavement which had suffered periodic splashing.

The purposes of this proposal are...

- a) **Lifting total cycling investment** to a level (3 above) at which the government 2020 modal share target has a realistic hope of achievement.
- b) **Enabling enthusiastic authorities** who have the ideas, plans and expertise to progress rapidly with substantial projects to raise cycle use – projects which now have no straightforward or realistic funding source, following the transfer of RTP capital to councils and the ending some years ago of the Public Transport Fund. CWSS and Sustrans funding, except in the most exceptional cases, only allow for small and medium scale projects, generally in the range of the £10k's up to the low £100k's.
- c) **Enabling between-authority cycling infrastructure**, provision of which has slowed drastically following removal of RTP capital [one local example being the unending delays in the costly work needed on the high-profile but in parts appalling tourist and commuting route north from Edinburgh to the Forth Bridge and Fife].
- d) Providing a significant source of funding for major cycling initiatives by **bodies such as Scotrail and British Waterways**. We note that the resurgence in bike/rail integration, and the change in attitude on this from negative to positive by ScotRail, came as a direct result of a one-year Cycle Challenge bidding fund some years ago⁶, under which ScotRail obtained (and match-funded) £0.5m to convert its mainline fleet to start carrying bicycles.
- e) Providing funding opportunities for **larger-scale innovative and community projects** than are possible under the current small-projects bidding fund run by Cycling Scotland.

Further detail on how the proposal would work ...

- f) **Administration by the Scottish Government Sustainable Transport Team** would ensure public accountability whilst avoiding new administrative structures. Clearly some extra staffing would be required within that team – perhaps similar to the part-time post which administers the Smarter Choices scheme.
- g) **Limiting bids to over (say) £0.5m or £1m** would minimise administration by the team, but would not prevent small and innovative projects [see (h) below].
- h) Clearly the scheme would support **large projects** However, our proposal would also enable bodies such as Sustrans, Cycling Scotland or Regional Transport Partnerships to put forward **packages of smaller related projects** in particular regional or topic areas. Alternatively some of the fund could be top-sliced to increase Cycling Scotland's existing small-grants bidding fund. Such arrangements could unleash a wide range of innovatory ideas and voluntary effort, as exemplified by the existing very small *Cycling Scotland fund*, and as also happened under the 98/99 *Scottish Cycle Challenge Initiative*⁷.
- i) **Cycling investment should not be for councils only**. Ambition and innovation are central to our proposal, with all sectors and stakeholders needing the opportunity and incentive to start promoting cycle use in a substantial way – a clear statement of Scotland's over-arching commitment to sustainable development. Because of this wide application of the fund, we do not see conflict with the Concordat – the Appendix examples show this clearly.
- j) The expectation of **match-funding**, although it should probably not be an absolute requirement for a successful bid, would increase the effective value of the government investment.

6. Note for Future Budgets and Spending Review

For the sake of clarity and transparency, budget lines should be revised so that there is a single budget line named *Active Travel*. This line would incorporate...

- The active travel element of the existing *Sustainable and Active Travel* budget line [5.1]
- The CWSS funding [5.2] [we note that this is already administered by the same government Sustainable Transport Team which administers the Active Travel funding in the previous bullet point]
- Our proposed cycling bidding fund, should that be accepted [5.3]

Funding for Low Carbon Vehicles would then be included in some other more appropriate budget line.

⁶ This was a Scottish Executive scheme with a one-off £2m lump sum, to which any organisation in Scotland could bid for funding to raise cycle use. The Evaluation Report was published by the Scottish Executive Central Research Unit in 2001, and pointed particularly to the huge level of community initiative and input released and prompted by the fund.

⁷ See footnote 6

7. Questions for the Minister

We suggest the following questions, particularly (a) and (b) ...

- a. [Ref 3 above] CAPS does not discuss the minimum level of annual investment necessary for the government to achieve the cycle modal share target it has itself set for 2020. Presumably this was considered when setting the target, so can Mr Swinney advise what he considers this minimum investment level to be?
- b. [Ref 5.2 and 2.2d] Does Mr Swinney accept that, despite the modest rise in the Sustainable and Active Travel budget line, net investment in walking and cycling will fall substantially if CWSS is scrapped without any replacement? [*Background* – there is little chance of local authorities voluntarily replacing such investment from their own capital in the current funding climate. Even in more favourable times the transfer of capital from RTPs to local authorities resulted in a substantial net loss to cycling investment (2.2d above)].
- c. [Ref 4.1] What proportion of the budget line for Sustainable and Active Travel will be used for walking and cycling, and what proportion for reduced-carbon motor traffic, in 10/11 and in 11/12?
- d. [Ref 4.1 and 6] Does Mr Swinney accept that, for the sake of transparency, it would be better to separate out the budget lines for active travel and for making motor vehicles run on lower carbon fuels? ... and to consolidate CWSS funding into the active travel budget line.

Note: In response to questions on cycling investment, Mr Swinney often avoids the point of the question by saying that since cycling investment comes from a variety of sources the total is hard to ascertain. Whilst strictly speaking that is very true, it should not be used as a way of evading other questions on funding. It is clear both from the Spokes survey [endorsed by SPICe⁸] and from CAPS that total cycling investment in Scotland from all main sources is of the order of £20m. Whether it is actually £20m, or £18m, or £22m is not too relevant to most questions, and is not dissimilar to the debate about angels dancing on the end of a pin. The important points are (a) is it rising or falling substantially (and it will fall substantially next year if CWSS is scrapped) and (b) is the total at roughly the £50m necessary to achieve the government's own 2020 modal share target (as in 3 above).

Appendix: Examples of possible bids to the new fund in 5.3

- **Local authority large-project bids**, such as upgrading the highly substandard A90 commuter/tourist trunk National Cycleroad from Edinburgh to the Forth Bridge. The government and Edinburgh council have now been in negotiations for over 3 years on a special one-off deal for this possibly £1m-£2m project *because, with the loss of RTP capital, there is no longer any standard funding mechanism under which it can be built.*
- **British Waterways** could bid to surface and light all urban sections of the Edinburgh-Glasgow towpath, these also forming spines for future local town cycle networks. Surfacing of the Edinburgh section has greatly increased usage.
- **Sustrans** could bid 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.
- **ScotRail** could bid for matched funding to improve cycle carriage on the Edinburgh/Glasgow to Inverness routes, a cause of many complaints by tourists and by locals.
- A **Regional Transport Partnership** could bid (on behalf of its constituent local authorities) to create cycle-friendly conditions in one town in each area.
- **Cycling Scotland** could bid to set up a *Cycle Challenge Fund* (or expand its current very small scheme) to unleash the enthusiasm and expertise of local voluntary groups. Such funding was an explicit recommendation of the Evaluation Report on the 1998/9 Scottish Executive's Cycle Challenge Initiative⁹. The success of that scheme in fostering community involvement and skilled voluntary effort is similar to that of the current Climate Challenge Fund.
- A whole range of **exciting ideas and opportunities** was revealed in the 2009 Spokes summer competition '*How would you spend £1m to get more people using bikes for everyday journeys.*' Some of these could take off if a fund such as we propose were available. The prizewinning top 8 entries were listed in our budget submission last year.

8 See footnote 1 to 2.1 above

9 See footnote 6 to 5.3d above