

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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Scottish Draft Budget 2012-13

Submission to the Scottish Parliament ICI and RACCE committees

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Note – to keep this submission to 3 pages we have...

- a. Covered budget 12-13 only, although much will also be relevant to the whole spending review period
- b. Included some detailed evidence as appendices. Wider evidence is in our 2011-12 submission¹ to TICC.
- c. Used combined active travel (walk/cycle) figures rather than trying to separate out cycling - although in fact most active travel investment benefits both cycling and walking.

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, public health, resilient communities, local accessibility, and reduced congestion and pollution – much evidence on such issues is available from Sustrans and other sources. Furthermore, in setting its ambitious **target that 10% of trips should be by bike in 2020**, the Scottish Government has in effect accepted such arguments. The 10% 2020 target is included in CAPS, the government's *Cycling Action Plan for Scotland*², it is a milestone in RPP, the *Report on Proposals and Policies*³ [RPP section 2.6, p29] approved by Parliament as a pathway to meeting statutory emissions targets, and it is often referred to by Ministers.

1.2 In our budget submission last year⁴, Spokes showed convincingly that the 10% target/milestone could not be met under current funding levels. We repeat that evidence here in Appendix 1. Yet Ministers blithely continue, without giving any justification, to repeat a target which the evidence shows cannot be met under current funding levels. Whilst CAPS is called a plan, it is in fact a collection of worthy initiatives - not an evidence-based, costed and funded path to meeting the government's own target. **We recommend that the Committee calls on Ministers to produce an evidence-based, costed – and funded – plan to achieve the CAPS target/ RPP milestone.**

1.3 In its 2011 manifesto, the now-majority SNP promised to “*increase the proportion of transport spending on ... active and sustainable travel.*” This commitment is shattered by the draft budget, as shown in section 2 below.

1 Spokes response to 11-12 budget www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/1011-budget-submission.pdf

2 Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, CAPS www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/316212/0100657.pdf

3 Low Carbon Scotland: Report on Proposals and Policies [RPP] www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/344868/0114766.pdf

4 As footnote 1

2. Draft Budget 2012-13

Note: Cycle/walk investment is not specified in the budget, being at a too low level, so the figures below are our best estimate based on relevant budget lines. See Appendix 2 for our calculations and assumptions. Very briefly, our £14m estimate (2.1 below) for active travel investment in the draft 12-13 budget comprises £5m from the SAT budget line, £1m from the Future Transport Fund, £6m CWSS and £2m trunk-road cycling facilities.

2.1 Our estimates (as above and in appendix 2) suggest that **the draft budget cuts active travel investment from around £17.5m in 11-12 to some £14m in 12-13, and as a proportion of total transport spend from an already meagre 0.97% to around 0.74%**. Given the policy background in (1) above, and the rising overall transport budget, any cut in active travel, and specifically cycling investment, is astonishing. *Moreover our estimate may be highly optimistic* since in the worst case the CWSS fund could be scrapped in the December Local Government settlement, and we have recently heard that the longstanding trunk-road cycling initiative is also under threat.

2.2 This drastic cut in active travel investment comes in a budget which *increases* total transport spending from £1804m in 11-12 to £1884m in 12-13 and, within that, increases **motorway and trunk road spending** by a staggering 17% from £558m to £655m. It is notable that, under the draft 12-13 budget, **total active travel investment**, around £14m at best, would be **less than one-fifth the increase in trunk road spending**. Yet government supposedly intends the cycling mode to provide 10% of all journeys in just a few years time.

2.3 **The government argues that capital projects are crucial to jobs and to infrastructure to serve the economy** – yet small scale capital investment, specifically cycle projects, is likely to be more labour-intensive and to provide infrastructure for greater populations than large-scale, localised, capital-intensive schemes like trunk road widening. 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 local authority*, creating more jobs during construction and maintenance^{5,6} including jobs suitable for unemployed young people, and providing safe and welcoming transport infrastructure for tens of thousands of people on everyday trips to work, shops, leisure and school⁷. **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.**

3. Spokes annual cycle funding survey

3.1 For 15 years Spokes has conducted an annual survey of all mainland local authorities and other bodies which provide significant funds for cycle infrastructure/projects. SPICe, the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, call our survey “*the most comprehensive analysis of funding for Scottish cycling projects from all sources*”⁸.

3.2 Our 10-11 survey will be published shortly. Whilst cycling investment levels are still well below European levels, or the levels needed to achieve the government's cycle use target, 10-11 was, in the context of previous years, very encouraging. First, after being cut badly during the early years of the SNP minority government, total cycle project investment (from all sources including local authority) recovered in 10-11 to the levels when the SNP first took office, 1.2% of total transport spend, and somewhat over £4 per head of population.

3.3 Even more encouraging for 10-11 (and, we suspect, 11-12), however, is that two new rules introduced by the Scottish Government (thanks to their excellent Sustainable Transport Team) and Sustrans appear to be generating a growing network of awareness and initiative by local authorities across the country. *The first rule* is that a minimum % of the CWSS fund should be invested in cycle projects (many of which are shared cycle/walk). In 10-11, for the first time ever, every Scottish authority thus took steps to encourage and cater

⁵ Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts, Garrett-Peltier, Heidi. www.peri.umass.edu

⁶ Sustrans confirms that *all* its projects are delivered by local authority DLO's or local civil-engineering contractors. Much of the maintenance of the National Cycle Network is also delivered by small contractors, including small farmers in remote areas.

⁷ 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

⁸ SPICe briefings SB09-48, *Cycling in Scotland*; SB10-62, *Cycling in Scotland: Update 2010* at www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research

for cycling as a form of transport. Perhaps even more important *the second rule* was that grants from Sustrans to local authorities would require 50% cash match-funding. Our survey suggests that this encouraged and enabled councils to become more pro-active in seeking additional funds, such as from ERDF, trusts, lottery projects, developers, other council budgets such as planning, and even some one-off Scottish Government grants as contributions to specific major schemes (major in cycling terms!) funded from multiple sources.

3.4 Any cut in basic cycle project funding, particularly Sustrans and CWSS funds, will impact seriously on this growing network of skills, experience and effort, and on the multiplied-up match-funding.

3.5 Finally the less costly Smarter Choices⁹ approach, largely through Cycling Scotland, also funded from the SAT budget line, is also sharing in the picture of growing skills and networks. Of course, long term cycle use is only likely to grow through Smarter Choices where infrastructure allows cyclists to feel safe and welcome.

4. Spokes proposals for the Scottish budget

4.1 **As a very minimum, and in the context of a rising total transport budget**, we urge that cycle-project funding, including the SAT budget line and the CWSS fund¹⁰, is maintained at its current proportion of total transport funding. We stress strongly [see Appendix 1] that this will absolutely *not* be sufficient for the government to achieve its CAPS cycle-use target and its RPP cycle-use milestone. Furthermore, it will not quite meet the SNP manifesto commitment [1.3 above]. Nonetheless, it will at least maintain the above network of skills, experience, enthusiasm and success, and the growing ability of councils to increase basic funding by finding partners for match-funded cycle projects.

4.2 **However, if government is serious about the CAPS target, the RPP milestone and its own manifesto commitment**, then the transport budget needs restructured to give proper attention to active travel. Appendix 1 shows that to have *any* hope of meeting these aims, an *absolute minimum* of £50m a year investment is required – compared to investment now likely to fall in 12-13 to £14m or maybe much less [see 2 above and appendix 2 below].

4.3 **We stress that £50m a year is far from an outrageous sum – indeed, it is less than half what the government itself proposed for active travel in the RPP document approved by Parliament last year!** The RPP proposed £1.32bn for '*cycling and walking infrastructure*' over an 11 year period [RPP tables 10 and A2] – averaging £120m per year. Our suggested £50m cycling investment is less than half that, and could be accompanied by similar walking investment. Furthermore, the RPP proposed that the £1.32bn investment be weighted towards the early years – presumably to allow usage to build up before the 2020 target/milestone year.

4.4 How would £50m be used and administered? We suggest that the bulk is through the government's Sustainable and Active Travel team, who have so effectively worked on the improvements mentioned in (3) above. We propose the following for the first two years, pending future changes in the light of experience...

- ◆ **£10m p.a. CWSS fund** [renamed *Cycle/Walk* only¹¹] ensuring basic active travel work in every council.
- ◆ **£10m p.a. allocated to Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Bike Station**, etc.
- ◆ **A new £30m p.a. fund**, quality-assured and open to bids over a certain level by any relevant body, such as local authorities, Transport Partnerships, ScotRail, BWB, business bodies, multi-partner projects and so on. This would enable enthusiastic councils and others with ideas, plans and expertise, to progress rapidly with substantial projects to raise cycle use – projects which currently have no realistic funding source.

Dave du Feu
for Spokes, 17 October 2011

9 The DfT defines Smarter Choices as: “techniques for influencing people’s travel behaviour towards more sustainable options, such as encouraging school, workplace and individualised travel planning; ... public transport and marketing services such as travel awareness campaigns, websites for car share schemes, supporting car clubs and encouraging teleworking.”

10 We do of course appreciate that CWSS comes from the Local Government Settlement, but since it is critical to achieving government cycle-use targets its level should be considered in the context of government transport spending levels.

11 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.

Appendix 1: The government CAPS target & RPP milestone of 10% of trips by bike in 2020 cannot be met under current funding levels (let alone those in the draft 2012-13 budget)

The biggest weakness of the government's CAPS document is that **it does not discuss the level of funding necessary to reach its target** – a truly remarkable omission!! CAPS does however include a 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 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, and concluded that **the minimum requirement is £10 per head per annum – ongoing over the years**. Evidence from the English towns (which invested around £10 per head for a number of years) suggests this could double cycle use every 3-4 years. At the most optimistic assumptions this could perhaps raise cycle use at a sufficient rate to reach the 2020 target, and so we conclude that ...

For Scotland to have any real 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.

Finally, the £50m is required to meet the *cycling target*. Although much of this investment would substantially benefit walking 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*¹² 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.

Appendix 2: The likely impact of the draft budget on total cycling investment - calculations

The **Sustainable and Active Travel (SAT)** budget line [table 13.07] is cut from £25.1m in 11-12 to just £16.0m in 12-13. In 11-12 approximately £8m (32%) of this goes to active travel, the rest to park & ride, low carbon motor transport, etc. On that 32% basis, SAT cycle/walk investment would fall from ~£8m in 11-12 to **~£5m in 12-13**. This cut will impact dreadfully on **Sustrans** and on **Cycling Scotland**, both of whom get the bulk of their funding (for work with councils and others across Scotland) from SAT. The impact on cycling investment of the Sustrans cut will be worse than the raw figures suggest, given that Sustrans requires its project partners to provide 50% match-funds.

The new **Scottish Futures Fund** allocates £6.5m for Warm Homes and Future Transport funds (let us assume 50% each) in 2012-13, the latter covering public transport, low carbon vehicles and active travel. **Perhaps active travel therefore will receive 1/3 of the transport fund, i.e. £1m.**

The **Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Fund** [CWSS] is allocated to councils on a population basis - without it some councils would invest zero in cycling, as our survey and comments from council cycle officers make very clear. From £9m in 10/11, CWSS was cut to £7.5m in 11-12. The draft 12-13 budget [table 16.03] leaves its future to be announced in the December Local Government Finance 2012-13 Circular, depending on discussions with COSLA. However local authority capital allocations are being cut 19% from £691.8m in 11-12 to £563m in 12-13, so let us assume CWSS will be retained but cut in line with that – i.e. from £7.5m in 11-12 to **~£6m in 12-13**.

Some £2m p.a. is invested in cycle facilities from the **trunk roads budget**. Although we include this in total cycle project investment, we note much is for long-distance tourist routes [e.g. the A9 cycleroute] rather than the local utility trips vital to government aims and targets. **We assume investment remains at £2m in 12-13**. However, that is very optimistic given rumours that the trunk-road cycle initiative (which provides this £2m) may be scrapped; and that the big rise in trunk road spend is due to the new Forth Road Bridge which has no cycle/walk facilities.

Adding up the above contributions, our best estimate for total active travel investment in the 2012-13 draft budget is £5m+£1m+£6m+£2m=£14m (far less if CWSS and the trunk road cycling initiative are both scrapped). This compares to approximately £8m+£7.5m+£2m=**£17.5m in the 2011-12 budget**.

Note 1 – Our figures can only be a best estimate – the budget documents do not contain enough detail to give a certain figure. We could be £2m-3m too low or £2m-£3m too high (far worse if CWSS is scrapped). However the overall picture of a significant cut in the proportion of transport spending going to active travel is clear.

Note 2 – There are also minor contributions to cycling and walking investment from other budget headings (such as the Climate Challenge Fund). These provide well under £1m cycling investment and have not changed much between 11-12 and 12-13, so make little difference to the overall picture above. **It is the allocation of funds within the overall transport budget which is the overwhelming issue, followed closely by the future of CWSS.**

¹² *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