

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

St. Martins Church, 232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG 0131.313.2114 [answerphone] spokes@spokes.org.uk www.spokes.org.uk

If replying by email, please use... davedufeu@gmail.com

MEETING WITH TRANSPORT MINISTER KEITH BROWN MSP, 1 FEB 2012

- A. Background on Spokes
- B. SNP Manifesto
- C. What should be invested annually in Active Travel?
- D. Possible additional Funding Sources, 2012-13
- E. Structure of the Budget – Need for transparency on Active Travel

A. BACKGROUND ON SPOKES

- **Voluntary organisation:** around 1100 members, founded 1977. Primary base is Lothian, but we have learned that lobbying at national (Scotland) level is also vital to local success, as well as helping boost the case for cycling as transport elsewhere in Scotland.
- **Area of concern:** We are interested in *cycling as transport* – commuting, shopping, school, simple family recreation etc. We are concerned about public health, the environment, and particularly about transport – people of all ages being able to get from A to B easily, safely and enjoyably by bike. We are *not* involved in cycling as sport - racing, mountain biking, etc.
- **Funding:** our routine activities are entirely self-funded from voluntary donations and profits on sales of our maps. We occasionally bid for grants for specific one-off projects.
- **Objective 1: Encourage more people to cycle.** We have run countless initiatives. Spokes *cycle maps* of Edinburgh, Lothians and Glasgow have in total sold over 100,000 copies. Recent projects include: *Living with a bike in a tenement/flat; Making work/school bike trips with children* - using factsheets, internet resources, community initiatives, work with council, Bike Station, etc.
- **Objective 2: Lobbying local and central government to take seriously cycling as a means of transport** - policies, funding, staffing, etc. *Government* understanding and support has varied hugely over the years, but no Scottish government has yet approached the subject in a manner likely to emulate the huge successes of European countries with 10%-50% of trips to work or school by bike in many towns and cities. At Scottish *local authority* level there has also been huge variation, but Edinburgh since 2009 has perhaps been the most pro-active council so far.

B. SNP MANIFESTO

The 2011 Holyrood SNP manifesto commitment is...

“to increase the proportion of transport spending that goes on low-carbon, active and sustainable travel.”

Clearly there is scope for arguing precisely what this means, but we contend that the average voter would believe the manifesto pledge had been broken were government investment in walking and cycling to be cut as a proportion of transport spending – let alone cut substantially – and this is also our stance.

Yet Spokes calculations suggest that the proportion is being cut, severely, year by year (see table) - and indeed will be roughly *halved* in just 4 years!! Furthermore, although some recovery is expected in 2014-15 there is clearly no chance even of attaining the manifesto commitment in terms of a 5-year total.

	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Active Travel total ¹ [£million]	22.5	18.5	13.1	12.4
Total transport spending [£million]	1855	1804	1887	1964
Active-travel as % of total transport	1.21%	1.03%	0.70%	0.63%

¹ AT annual totals comprise: CWSS + AT element of SAT + AT element of FTF + £2m assumed trunk road cycling.
For full calculations see www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/1201-Funding-update-v2.pdf

Obviously the figures in the above table are ballpark – for example active travel is *underestimated* because we have not include some small contributions such as from climate challenge funds. It is also *overestimated* because not all CWSS goes to active travel, because trunk road cycling investment is likely to fall as trunk road funding is to concentrate on the Forth Crossing from which cycling facilities have been scrapped, and for other reasons. Overall we believe our 12-13 and 13-14 estimates are generous and the outcome percentages may be even lower than in the table.

Cuts of the above level can no way be met by efficiency savings but will mean major **project scrappage** by Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, etc. As a local example the government is now unable to offer continued funds to deal with the remaining dreadful section of what should be the flagship A90 tourist/commuting route from the Capital to the Forth Bridge, for Fife and the North – despite indications by John Swinney at the time of bridge toll removal and, very specifically, by former Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson.

C. WHAT SHOULD BE INVESTED ANNUALLY IN ACTIVE TRAVEL?

There are many views on how much of the total transport budget (£1887m in 2012-13) should be invested in active travel by the government. Obviously some investment also comes from non-central sources, notably local authorities, but here we are discussing what comes directly from the government budget.

Amount	Who says?	Rationale / Comments
<i>To invest at the best European levels and have a real hope of boosting bike use rapidly...</i>		
£190m	Association of Directors of Public Health [+ signed by 100 other bodies]	The ADPH report, <i>Action on Active Travel</i> [endorsed by over 100 other specialist and professional bodies] recommends that 10% of all transport budgets should be invested in active travel - for multiple reasons, notably preventive spend for improved public health. 10% of £1887m is £190m.
£120m	Scottish Parliament/ Govt	<i>Low Carbon Scotland</i> , the RPP document, proposes £1.32bn over 11 years for active travel [av. £120m p.a.] towards Scotland's statutory climate targets . It proposes " <i>infrastructure of a level and quality found in Sweden and Germany.</i> "
<i>To invest at a level which gives at least some hope of approaching the 2020 government bike use target...</i>		
£60m+ [cycling only]	Cycling Action Plan for Scotland [Spokes estimate]	The biggest CAPS weakness is absence of a researched, costed path to meet the ambitious CAPS target , 10% of trips by bike in 2020 - a target also embedded in the RPP and in the Scottish obesity strategy . Spokes estimated ² in 2010 that £50m p.a. investment was required for <i>any</i> hope of meeting this government target. It is now 2012, so £50m is too low.
£47m [cycling only]	Based on SHS	The Scottish Household Survey reports that 2.5% of Scottish work trips in 2009 were by bike. Thus one could argue, for equity, that investment in cycling should be ~2.5% of transport spend, i.e. £47m. We don't have a recent % for all-trips but if it were, say, 1.5% that still represents £28m.
<i>The Scottish reality: recent investment levels and promises...</i>		
£23m+	SNP manifesto	The manifesto refers to the proportion of transport spending . We calculate active travel at roughly 1.2% of actual 2010-11 transport spend (table B above). For 2012-13, total budgeted transport is £1887, so the manifesto suggests active travel investment of 1.2%+ of this, i.e. £23m+.
£22.5m	Scottish Government [actual 2010-11]	This included £4m added to cycling investment during the year (from Barnett consequential?) for CAPS.
£13m	Scottish Government [budget 2012-13]	The budget 2012-13 and associated information, suggests CWSS £6.1m, FTF (AT element) £1.5m, SAT (optimistic estimate AT element £3.5m), trunk road cycle initiative £2m (optimistic estimate) - Total £13.1m.

Spokes says: Politically, achieving the SNP manifesto commitment in 2012-13 would reverse much of the present criticism. However, even at that level the government would still be well below what is needed to meet RPP proposals or to have a realistic hope of achieving the 2020 CAPS cycle-use target, and we would of course still lobby for budgets in future years to recognise and meet these objectives.

2 We used Cycling England evidence - see appendix 1 of Spokes budget submission
www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/1110-budget-2012-13-submission.pdf

D. POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES, 2012-13

We stress most strongly that **adequate planned investment through the budget** is the desirable solution, rather than funding arriving part way through the year in which it is to be spent. **Late funding** is nonetheless welcome and, due to the nature of many cycle projects, can be used effectively at relatively short notice by Sustrans who, working with its local authority and other partners, has a portfolio of suitable projects ready to go at relatively short notice. However this is no substitute for properly planned investment: late funding, along with total funding, are the greatest complaints received by Spokes from local authority cycle officers in our annual cycle project funding survey.

Spokes suggests: Whether or not the 2012-13 budget is amended in the near future, we urge the Minister to do all possible to find additional funding sufficient at the least to maintain the active travel proportion. Possible funding sources could include ...

- **Barnet consequentials** – as happened in at least one previous year
- **Capital underspend** on other transport projects as the year progresses – as happened in at least one previous year. *Specifically* the 2012-13 position should be assessed before the summer recess.
- **Health input** – given the ADPH report mentioned in the table above there is a strong case for a health budget contribution to active travel investment as preventive spending. We understand that the health budget did contribute £0.5m to the Smarter Choices Smarter Places project (which promotes active travel amongst other things) in some recent years. Copenhagen City identifies and quantifies huge health benefits³, which form part of the justification for its cycling investment.
- **Electric vehicles** – according to the press, take-up of electric vehicles is very slow and very low. In contrast there is enthusiasm amongst the public about making journeys by bike – if conditions are safe and welcoming. Some funding could be transferred between these two choices.

Finally, given the current urgent focus on **unemployment** the Minister will hopefully be aware that investment in cycling infrastructure has significantly greater **job potential** per £ invested⁴ than most major infrastructure projects – and moreover the jobs are more likely to be local.

E. BUDGET STRUCTURE: NEED FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL TRANSPARENCY

There is currently great difficulty in understanding how much the government is investing in active travel – for example, the press and even MSPs have quoted the Sustainable and Active Travel line total when they are talking about active travel investment!! The transparency problem has been exacerbated this year with the new Future Transport Fund, whose purposes appear very similar to SAT.

We urge the government to take seriously the recommendation by the ICI Committee in its report on the draft budget: “*creating a separate budget line for active travel.*” ICI also recommended, “*setting the active travel budget as a proportion of total transport spending*” - which ties in beautifully with the SNP active travel manifesto commitment, providing a high level of transparency!

Spokes suggests: although FTF is itself a manifesto commitment, surely it and SAT can somehow be presented together, or combined, in the budget, with **the active travel component of both added together and shown as a separate line**. [Ideally CWSS would also be included here, although that is more complex as it currently is in the local government settlement].

Dave du Feu

1 February 2012 [document slightly updated since submitted]

3 Copenhagen Bicycle Account 2010, www.sfbike.org/download/copenhagen/bicycle_account_2010.pdf

4 Evidence on comparative jobs potential available from Sustrans. Their budget submission* also includes a hugely impressive list of local contractors employed in every part of Scotland. *<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/1110-Sustrans-evidence-FINAL-to-the-ICI-committee-October-2011-Final.pdf>