

Spokesworker is an occasional ("roughly monthly") news sheet, with stop-press news of forthcoming events, and of road, traffic and planning matters. It is not automatically sent to all members. A copy is enclosed if we are writing to you anyway, and copies are handed out at working group meetings. You can make sure to get a copy by sending us 10 or so stamped addressed envelopes. Spokesworker also appears on our Internet web site - to be notified of such updates by email, contact spokesATspokes.org.uk.

SPECIAL ISSUE: BUDGET 2012-13

The whole of this issue is devoted to developments on the draft Scottish budget. The draft budget is extremely bad for walking and cycling investment – it affects what every council in Scotland will be able to invest in active travel next year - and it drastically affects the future of Sustrans Scotland. In Edinburgh, it seriously affects progress on what major Active Travel Action Plan projects, if any, will follow on after the Quality Bike Corridor and the Leith-Portobello family-network cyclistroute. For the budget story so far, see recent news items at www.spokes.org.uk.

THANK YOU : to all Spokes members who have already contacted MSPs – please write if you've not done so, or if you're unhappy with replies received. www.writetothem.com. Remember to mention the SNP election manifesto promise. The budget process continues through December, with a probable final January vote. Let's not lose the momentum that is building up - it's really useful to keep up the flow of letters.

WEB LINK : see www.spokes.org.uk : documents : submissions : national for the budget submissions from Spokes, Sustrans and other organisations mentioned in this Spokesworker.

Our campaign highlights the manifesto on which the SNP was elected this May [see Bulletin 111] - the draft budget completely contradicts it. There is a lot of evidence that MSPs are hearing the message loud and clear; some of this is below. We are especially pleased that 2 Edinburgh SNP MSPs (Marco Biagi and Jim Eadie) seem to be taking this seriously, putting a lot of effort into it, and pressuring within their party for improvement [e.g. see their Parliamentary Questions below] – this clearly results from the continuing weight of emails from individual constituents.

We also thank Lothians Labour MSP Neil Findlay who seems to have written a short personal reply to everyone who emailed him [unlike many MSPs] and who we hear on the grapevine is doing great lobbying of decision-makers in Parliament.

There are hints we may have won one important battle - namely that the CWSS fund will probably not be scrapped (which is not to say it won't be cut). If CWSS is retained then at least the worst possible scenario is avoided, although there will still be very serious total cuts – especially to Sustrans, since their capital funding for work with councils across Scotland comes from the SAT budget line which is very badly affected.

ARGUMENTS FROM SNP MSPs

We are grateful to those SNP MSPs who are engaging with the argument - particularly Jim Eadie and Marco Biagi, as above. However, their arguments (as below) appear to us weak. If you are replying/ writing to MSPs you may find our thoughts useful...

SNP argument: The SNP manifesto promises to raise the proportion of the transport budget on "active and sustainable travel" - not on "active travel" alone.

Spokes answer: This argument implies that the promise would be kept even if zero was invested in active travel, as long as other aspects of sustainable travel were raised enough to balance that out (e.g. car parks for park-and-ride, or low carbon vehicles). We don't believe the manifesto is intended to be quite that devious!

SNP: The Forth Bridge is a special item, so should not be included in the 'trunk roads and motorways' budget heading

Ans: We have no problem with that, but the new bridge is surely a

transport project! - and so it must be included in total transport when the manifesto promise is calculated.

SNP: Anyone who wants active travel funding raised should say where the money is to come from

Ans: It was the SNP, not Spokes, who made the manifesto promise and so it is up to the government to decide where the funding comes from. Total transport spending in 12-13 is £1884m and to keep active travel at its 11-12 proportion requires only ~£20m of that, 1% or so. Considering that 2% of commuting is already by bike, and much more than that by walk, and that the government has set a 10% cycling target, it is patently ludicrous that under 1% of transport spending goes to active travel.

SNP: Funding will go into active travel from the Future Transport Fund (FTF) and lobbyists have not taken that into account [Marco Biagi in Parliament Climate debate]

Ans: Please note, the FTF is small in 12-13 but rises substantially towards the next election. Spokes did include it in our formal budget submission to Parliament [see weblink in col 1; calculations in appendix 2 of the submission]. Also, whilst FTF is not specifically mentioned in Bulletin 111 it is why we said on p1 that cycling investment might return to its previous level by the next election. But – the draft budget gives no hint how much FTF will go into active travel - it could be on a par with existing sources, or more, or it could be derisory. Like SAT, we expect FTF also to be used for low carbon vehicles, park-and-ride car parks, and so on.

SNP: Most active travel funding should come from councils

Ans: It is the Scottish government which has...

- set a target for 10% of trips to be by bike by 2020
- included this target as a 'milestone' in its RPP plan to reduce Scotland's carbon emissions
- included this target in its national strategy to combat obesity.

It seems completely unreasonable for government to set such an ambitious target, then cut funding and expect councils to pay whatever is needed to meet the target.

Moreover the Spokes financial survey suggests that councils (including the Regional Transport Partnerships of councils) put roughly as much into active travel investment from their own resources as they do from the government CWSS funding. Edinburgh, in particular, has just been praised by the Transport Minister for its work on cycling [Parliamentary Question below].

SNP: Money for active travel also comes from other government sources such as the Climate Challenge Fund

Ans: true, and very welcome. However the sums involved are nothing like enough to achieve the SNP manifesto promise – that requires a rejig of transport budget priorities (albeit a small rejig).

SNP: The SNP manifesto promise covers the whole period till the next election, not just the next year 2012-13

Ans: That is fair in principle, but it's hard to trust the promise when the very first budget cuts active travel funding badly whilst increasing total transport spending by nearly £100m. At the least, if the public is not to feel cheated, active travel investment should be kept at around its previous percentage this year.

An early and substantial cut will also severely damage the existing structures for cycling development. Sustrans has a long list of schemes planned jointly with councils across Scotland – but Sustrans looks set to suffer very badly from the budget. **Many of its staff could be laid off, and its network of skills and contacts have to be rebuilt in 2-3 years time if, as SNP MSPs think, active travel investment rises again. It's plain crazy at a time when total transport investment is rising substantially!**

In the annual Spokes funding survey, council cycle officers call desperately for consistency and continuity of funds, so they can plan properly. Yet we are now promised a big cut this year and (maybe) a big rise a year or two later: it makes no sense at all!

SNP: The money is needed for big transport projects so as to boost employment at this difficult economic time

Ans: Research shows that cycle projects generate roughly 50% more jobs per £1 spent than do road projects [www.peri.umass.edu publications : author Garrett-Peltier]. If one road-widening project of say £10m in one small part of Scotland was delayed for a year this would allow two £200k cyclerooute projects in every council in every part of Scotland. Which is best for jobs and local business?? **For the likely losses to small businesses throughout Scotland from Sustrans cuts see the remarkable lists in the Sustrans budget evidence to Parliament** [at web link overleaf].

ORGANISATIONS LOBBYING PARLIAMENT AND/OR MINISTERS ON ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING...

[see web address in col 1 overleaf for most of these documents]

Scottish Environment Link www.scotlink.org, representing 36 Scottish environmental organisations, total membership 500,000.

National Access Forum www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/access-forum Letter to Transport Minister [we've not seen this one]

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Coalition of over 60 organisations

Transform Scotland Representing many public and private sector transport-related bodies

Living Streets Scotland promoting the pedestrian environment

And more... **FOE(S), Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, WWF, ...**

NEWS OF THE MANIFESTO & CUTS IS SPREADING

- **Sunday Herald article** 27.11.11 ... <http://t.co/Xokm8xyY>
- A Spokes member who is in **West Lothian Labour** party tells us his MP included a xerox of the Spokes Bulletin *Manifest/No* article about the draft budget in a recent membership mailing.
- Tweets about the Scottish budget have appeared on respected cycling/transport websites in **Denmark, Netherlands & London.**
- Spokes members or members of other cycle campaign groups in **Dumfries, Perth, Highland, Glasgow, Stirling, East Lothian** and elsewhere have copied us emails to/ responses from MSPs – it is vital to spread the message to MSPs throughout Scotland.
- The **CTC Right-to-Ride** mailing list has circulated our request for letters to MSPs, and CTC HQ is including this in its 'Cycleclips' circular to 1000+ emailable Scottish members.
- **Sustrans members** in Scotland are asked to contact MSPs.

PARLIAMENT CLIMATE DEBATE

On 24 November the Scottish Parliament debated the UN Durban Climate Summit, which Climate Change Minister **Stewart Stevenson MSP** is attending. [For relevant extracts, a link to the full debate and the final motion, see document at web address on p1].

Much of the debate centred round how the government could achieve its statutory climate change targets. **The government accepted a Labour amendment stating the proposals in the RPP document need to be fully funded!!** The RPP is a costed programme for reaching Scotland's climate targets, and includes active travel funds much higher than anything so far – and far higher than in the draft budget [see Spokes 110, p1,p6]. The government say much RPP funding will be from non-government sources - but it's hard to see who other than government would provide anywhere near enough active travel funding for the RPP.

The motion approved at the end of the debate includes...

"The Parliament notes that Scotland will be participating in the 17th Conference of the Parties on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a member of the UK delegation; ... but realises that meeting the targets set in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 will be increasingly challenging, will require the statutory Report on Policies and Proposals to be fully funded to meet the 2022 emissions targets and that therefore there is no room for complacency ..."

In the debate, many MSPs raised the inadequate funding for active travel – doubtless thanks to the many letters they are receiving. MSPs raising this included...

Sarah Boyack (Lothians)(Lab) – she is Labour Environment spokesperson, and is a Spokes member

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab)

Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD)

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab)

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)

Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED

It is great to see MSPs asking about funding for cycling – with Spokes getting a big mention in one question, and the SNP manifesto promise mentioned in the other...

(S4O-00391) Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government when it will report on the outcome of the smarter choices, smarter places scheme and the impact that it has had on encouraging active travel. (S4O-00391)

The Minister for Housing and Transport (Keith Brown): Monitoring and evaluation of the smarter choices, smarter places programme are on-going. The impacts that the programme has had on encouraging active travel will be reported in the final evaluation by the end of 2012.

Jim Eadie: Has the minister had the opportunity to examine the research by cycling campaign group **Spokes**, which showed a 12% increase in the number of cyclists across Edinburgh? Does he agree that the Scottish Government must continue to invest in cycling and walking? Will he meet me and representatives of Spokes and the Bike Station at Causewayside in my constituency to discuss what more can be done to support active travel given the obvious environmental and health benefits?

Keith Brown: Yes, I am aware of the rising number of cyclists in Edinburgh. I take this opportunity to praise City of Edinburgh Council members and officers for their commitment and leadership in making the city such an active travel success story. I recently had the chance to cycle into the city on an excellent cycle route. To my mind, the other local authorities should look closely at what Edinburgh has done and try to follow suit.

Last week, I attended the Cycling Scotland conference and took questions on the draft budget from delegates, including one from a Spokes representative. However, I am happy to meet the member and the two constituency interests that he mentioned.

(S4W-03871) Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive how much it will spend on active and sustainable travel, as referred to in the 2011 SNP manifesto, in each year from 11-12 to 14-15 and what proportion this represents of (a) overall transport spend, (b) transport spend excluding the Forth Replacement Crossing and (c) overall spend as in the Scottish Spending Review 2011 and Draft Budget 2012-13.

Keith Brown: The Scottish Government's planned spend on active and sustainable travel, as reflected in the spending review and draft budget, is set out in the following table, together with the requested comparisons. The draft budget is still subject to parliamentary proceedings.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Sustainable and Active Travel (SAT)	£25m	£16m	£25m	£15m
Total Transport	£1,804m	£1,884m	£1,956m	£1,986m
SAT as % of above	1.39%	0.85%	1.28%	0.76%
Transport less Forth Br	£1,604m	£1,602m	£1,675m	£1,627m
SAT as % of above	1.56%	1.00%	1.49%	0.92%
Total Scottish Govt	£33,523m	£33,862m	£34,431m	£35,187m
SAT as % of above	0.07%	0.05%	0.07%	0.04%

Spokes comment on the above answer: The answer gives Marco little comfort, with a seriously declining % in all 3 areas he asked about, despite the promised SNP manifesto increase! But, to be fair, the answer does not tell us much, for several reasons.

On the negative side the SAT budget line covers much more than just active travel – and the proportion of it going to active travel is also being cut. We understand that, in 2012-13, only £5m or less of the £16m is likely to go to active travel; the rest to public transport and car parks for park-and-ride. *On the positive side*, the PQ answer only covers the SAT budget line, whereas active travel also gets money from other funding streams – mainly CWSS (though it may be cut or scrapped) and maybe the Future Transport Fund (providing little in 2012/13 but maybe more later). [See Spokesworker 11.11.11 for more on the main funding sources].

PUBLIC MTG REPORT

Our meeting was excellent, with around 80 people and thoughtful questions from all over the audience. A report should be on our website shortly – go to documents : odds&ends : public meetings.