

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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26 September 2012

To: Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

Dear Committee Members

September 26 Evidence Session on Active Travel funding

I listened with interest today to the above evidence session, and on behalf of Spokes would like to confirm and elaborate on three of the points which came up in discussion...

1. Recommendations on draft budget - role of ICI Committee
2. CWSS funding levels
3. What level of funding is needed to reach the 2020 cycle-use target?

Further detail on points 1 and 3 can be found in the written evidence we have submitted to the Committee on the draft budget, and which can also be found here...

www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1209-ICI-Cttee-Spokes-submission.pdf

1. Role of the ICI Committee

It was encouraging to hear the Committee asking questions about where funding should be found if active travel was to rise as a proportion of the total transport budget. Several suggestions were made by the panel, and two suggestions are also in our above submission.

In our view it is imperative that in its report on the draft budget, the Committee addresses this matter and makes recommendations.

Over the last several years the Committee and its predecessors have consistently recommended increased active travel funding in their reports on draft budgets. Equally consistently these recommendations have been rejected, understandably, by the Finance Secretary, on the grounds that he will listen only to recommendations for increased funding if accompanied by suggestions for how money can be reallocated to meet this. Thus if the Committee remains minded that active travel should have an increased proportion of the overall transport budget, it must recommend how this should be done, or risk its views again being sidelined.

2. CWSS Funding Level

The annual Spokes survey of cycling investment in Scotland [which SPICe calls "*the most detailed and comprehensive overview of annual public sector cycle expenditure available*"] confirms the absolute centrality of CWSS funding for current cycling investment activity by local authorities, as witnesses indicated.

Members of the panel asked for CWSS to be at least returned to its previous level - and the figure of £7.5m was mentioned. **In fact, for several years, up to 10/11 inclusive, CWSS funding was £9m.** The figure of £7.5m was for 11/12, the first year of cuts under the new government, with further cuts to £6.1m in 12/13, and down yet again to £5.6m in the draft 13/14 budget. [It is in fact due to rise to £8.2m, but not until 14/15].

3. What funding is needed to achieve the 2020 target of 10% of journeys by bike?

The Committee rightly asked this crucial question. The target is very demanding, especially given that we are already nearing year 2013. The panel referred to the *Association of Directors of Public Health* which recommends 10% of all transport budgets be allocated to active travel. However, neither that report, nor CAPS, attempts any calculation of what funding might achieve what result, and they do not therefore answer the Committee's question. In our long-expressed view this has always been the fundamental flaw in CAPS – it sets a very ambitious target, but with no evidence-based and costed path to achieve that target.

Although any such estimate must involve many assumptions, Spokes has provided a rough calculation, which concludes that for any realistic hope of meeting the target by 2020 around **£20 per head (£100m yearly, or 5% of the transport budget) is necessary**. [A smaller sum might be unavoidable in the first year, in order to ramp up the necessary expertise, planning, etc in local authorities across Scotland and in Transport Scotland].

If the government does not accept our calculations we challenge the government – for the umpteenth time - to provide a convincing alternative assessment.

Calculation of our estimate

Our calculation is based on research and experience from former **Cycling England** [CE was scrapped by the new UK Coalition Government] whose Chief Executive **Philip Darnton** in 2010 gave evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee. CE had 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. The evidence from the English towns suggested that **£10 per head per annum, invested consistently over the years, could hope to double cycle use every 3-4 years**.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110407094607/http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns>

On optimistic assumptions, therefore, £10 per head of cycling investment across Scotland from 2013 could perhaps raise cycle use from its present roughly 1% of all trips to 10% by around **2023** – certainly not by 2020. In order to meet the target by 2020, a much more rapid growth rate will be required. Given also that there is a lag from funding allocation to actual investment, and then to its impact on users, and also that investment, expertise and planning would need to be ramped up during the first couple of years, **it seems likely that £20 per head would be necessary to give a realistic hope of approaching the target by 2020 rather than 2023**.

We trust these points are of use

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Spokes