

15 February 2013

Dear Karen

CYCLING ACTION PLAN FOR SCOTLAND – RE-FRESH EXERCISE

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the re-fresh of this document. Paths for All (PFA) has been involved with CAPS since its inception. We believe it has an important role to play in delivering on a range of policy agendas e.g. health, climate change, economic development, as well as assisting PFA to deliver its charitable outcomes. We also believe that now is a good time to refresh the document and so we welcome this process.

As you are aware, PFA has already contributed verbally to the consultation process through our attendance at the CAPS Refresh workshop at the Cycling Scotland conference on 13 November and the Parliamentary Cross Party Group on Cycling on 15 January and through facilitating the meeting of the National Cycling Interests Group (NCIG) on 31 January. We are also aware that a number of organisations involved in the Active Travel Alliance of third sector organisations have submitted detailed responses, which we support.

For the above reasons, PFA's response focuses on a small number of strategic points, which we have already raised, as follows.

Purpose of CAPS

PFA strongly recommend that the purpose of CAPS is clearly defined in the refreshed version. This was a major discussion point at the NCIG meeting. We are aware that there have been different perceptions of the purpose of CAPS and in particular whether or not the Plan related to all forms of cycle development or it more specifically relates to functional cycling and modal shift.

In this regard, PFA believes the NCIG discussion was helpful in that there was a clear consensus that CAPS should focus on the target of delivering 20% modal shift in cycling by 2020. This should be explicitly expressed in the purpose of the document and its title and should eliminate any misconceptions.

Contribution of recreational and sport cycling to CAPS

This point is linked to the point above and again PFA believes that the NCIG discussion was helpful. The consensus at NCIG was that recreational and sport cycling should be included in CAPS, but within the context of how these forms of cycling (and their associated monitoring processes) can contribute to the target of 10% by 2020, rather than attempting to cover all aspects of recreational and sport cycling development.

Beware of 'Mamils'! (Middle aged men in lycra)

PFA believes there is a growing sense that there is danger of a high speed and sometimes aggressive cycling culture developing in Scotland, which is dominated by high 'vis', lycra clad and helmet wearing cyclists. This is at complete odds with the cycling culture in many parts of Europe that has developed where modal shift is very high and which Scotland is trying to emulate. In these situations the cycling culture is relatively low speed and dominated by 'ordinary people' on everyday journeys (see the photos below). High 'vis', lycra and helmets are minority attire and people are using the bicycle as it's the easiest, safest and most convenient means of getting from A to B for short journeys. Whilst PFA appreciates that much of Scotland's current cycling environment necessitates wearing high 'vis' and helmets from a safety perspective, we nevertheless recommend that CAPS proactively promotes the latter culture above and uses its prevalence as an indicator of success. We believe the modal shift target for CAPS will only be achieved by this means.

The rural dimension

Whilst PFA accepts that main focus of CAPS should be in urban and semi-urban areas as this is where most people live and work, we recommend that CAPS also covers the rural dimension. As stated at a recent Cross Party Group on Cycling meeting, recent evidence shows that urban cycling is increasing at the same time that rural cycling is decreasing. We believe that safety relating to the increased volumes of traffic and speed on rural roads is a major factor here.

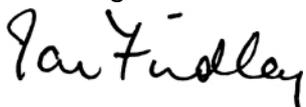
Links to other policy drivers

CAPS obviously does not stand in isolation and contributes to many other policy drivers and vice versa. As discussed at the NCIG meeting, it would be useful for there to be some form of flow diagram in CAPS that highlights these links and opportunities for synergy. There are also important new drivers that should be considered such as the proposed national walking strategy and physical activity implementation plan.

PFA hopes the above comments are helpful. Please get in touch with either Rona Gibb or me if you require more information or wish to discuss our comments.

We wish you well the CAPS refresh process and offer PFA's and our role as facilitators of NCIG assistance in the process.

Kind regards



Ian Findlay
Chief Officer

