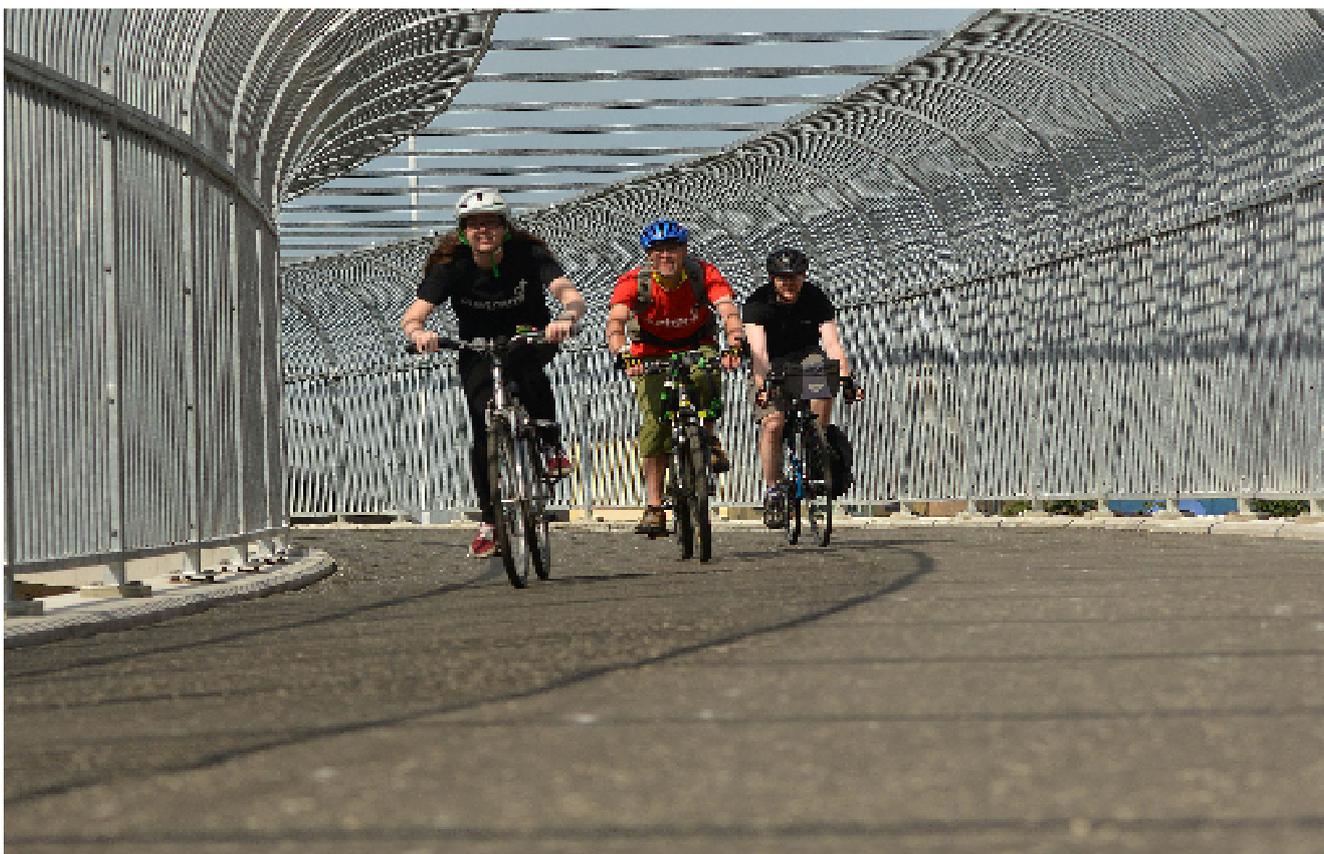


# Scotland's Third National Planning Framework

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Main Issues Report and Draft Framework

July 2013



## **About Sustrans**

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today.  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Sustrans Scotland  
Rosebery House  
9 Haymarket Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5EZ

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Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)  
VAT Registration No. 416740656

## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	What are the key national assets which should be developed to support recreation and tourism? 1	
3	Should a national network of long distance routes be designated as a national development? What new links should be prioritised? .....	1
4	How can we ensure that best use is made of existing supporting infrastructure in order to increase the cross-sectoral use of these routes, and enhance the quality of the visitor experience?..	2
5	How can NPF3 help to decarbonise our transport networks? .....	2
6	Is our emerging spatial strategy consistent with the aim of decarbonising transport? .....	2
7	Should NPF3 go further in promoting cycling and walking networks for everyday use, and if so, what form could this take at a national scale?.....	2
8	Where are the priorities for targeted improvements to our transport networks?.....	3
9	Are there other nationally significant priorities for investment in transport within and between cities? .....	3
10	Should the proposed High Speed Rail connection to London be retained as a national development? Should it be expanded to include a high-speed rail line between Edinburgh and Glasgow? .....	3
11	Alternatively, should High Speed rail be removed as a national development and instead supported as a part of the longer-term spatial strategy?.....	4

# 1 Introduction

Sustrans welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's Third National Planning Framework consultation. Sustrans is a leading UK charity that enables people to travel by foot, bicycle or public transport for more of the journeys we make everyday. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better place and spaces to move through and live in. In this consultation response we specifically focus on responding to questions 9, 14, 15 and 16 as these are of the most direct relevance to our work.

At the outset, Sustrans would like to emphasise the important role we believe the planning system has to play in influencing people's travel choices. We consider that architecturally well designed buildings and places fail to achieve their full potential if consideration is not given to the provision of safe, clear active travel links and public transport facilities. Therefore, it is imperative that the planning system in Scotland considers active travel and public transport in all new developments from the outset, rather than retrospectively.

## 2 What are the key national assets which should be developed to support recreation and tourism?

Long distance routes for cycling and walking should be developed to support recreation and tourism. Sustrans Scotland commissioned Transform Scotland to investigate the important role of leisure cycling to Scotland plc. The resulting report "The Value of Cycle Tourism: Opportunities for the Scottish economy"<sup>1</sup> found that leisure cycle tourism provides between £106 and £228 million in direct expenditure and £58.5 million in gross value added to the Scottish economy. Combined with other economic contributors such as health benefits, employment from leisure cycle related infrastructure, and cycle events, the total value is estimated to be between £117.2 million and £239 million. Therefore, it is clear that the current long distance network is already delivering significant financial benefits to Scotland and with continued development these benefits will only keep increasing.

## 3 Should a national network of long distance routes be designated as a national development? What new links should be prioritised?

Sustrans strongly supports giving national development status to long-distance routes for walking and cycling. While we acknowledge that the current network of long distance routes is good, we consider that it has the potential to be more linked up and coherent. We want to see a world class network of long distance routes covering all parts of Scotland which are used by locals and visitors alike.

Sustrans has worked with SNH and Scottish Canals to develop a list of strategic links / routes for development within the next 5 years and for development in the longer term (5-20 years). This list is being submitted separately from this consultation response.

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<sup>1</sup> The Value of Cycle Tourism: Opportunities for the Scottish economy <http://www.transformscotland.org.uk/value-of-cycle-tourism-report.aspx>

## **4 How can we ensure that best use is made of existing supporting infrastructure in order to increase the cross-sectoral use of these routes, and enhance the quality of the visitor experience?**

Existing routes should be improved to ensure that they are fit for purpose and are linked to any new developments. It is also important that they are well connected with public transport hubs. By implementing these measures visitors will be given a high quality experience of cycling in Scotland.

## **5 How can NPF3 help to decarbonise our transport networks?**

Sustrans considers that NPF3 has the potential to significantly decarbonise our transport networks, but not as it currently stands. The development of long distance routes for walking and cycling will be popular with visitors and recreational users but they are likely to bring limited benefits to people wanting to cycle for short everyday purposeful journeys, for example to their local shops, school or workplace. More work needs to be carried out to ensure that people view cycling as an everyday mode of transport rather than merely as a recreational activity reserved for weekends. Therefore, Sustrans would like to see greater emphasis being placed on the provision of suitable infrastructure to accommodate active travel for day to day journeys within NPF3.

## **6 Is our emerging spatial strategy consistent with the aim of decarbonising transport?**

Sustrans considers that more could be done by the Scottish Government to achieve the aim of decarbonising transport. Paragraph 5.12 is positive in that it recognises the importance of cycling and walking for short journeys. However, Sustrans considers that too much emphasis is still being placed on the development of the road network, for example 5.18 states that road (and rail) links from the Central Belt to Aberdeen and Inverness will be particularly important in strengthening the economic corridor as a whole. Furthermore, in 5.19 it is proposed that intelligent transport systems and targeted road congestion relief are put in place on the Edinburgh bypass rather than trying to address the number of cars on the bypass.

## **7 Should NPF3 go further in promoting cycling and walking networks for everyday use, and if so, what form could this take at a national scale?**

It is good to see the inclusion of long distance paths as a national priority in NPF3 but the Scottish Government could go further to promote walking and cycling as viable modes of transport given the multiple benefits that they deliver – health, economic and environmental. Enabling and encouraging people to walk or cycle instead of taking the car increases their levels of physical activity and reduces the chances of developing health problems. Sustrans considers that it is important to spend more on preventing health issues such as obesity and diabetes from escalating further, therefore leading to the need for less to be spent on treatment in years to come. Furthermore, Scotland has failed to meet its climate change targets for two years in a row. Since transport is the

second largest single source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Scotland, it is clear that significant action must be taken to reduce emissions from this sector and increasing levels of walking and cycling is an obvious solution. 64% of all trips in Scotland are made by car, yet half of all journeys undertaken are less than 2 miles long. Many of these journeys could be made by foot or bicycle, therefore significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressing transport poverty is another significant reason why NPF3 should go further in promoting cycling and walking networks. Transport poverty affects people who cannot afford or do not have access to a car and those for whom public transport may be costly or inadequate. It is a real issue for many people at present and can lead to those affected being cut off from healthcare, education, employment, shops and family. This situation needs to be addressed to ensure that all citizens in Scotland can travel to and from where they need to get to. In many cases these short journeys would be accessible by bicycle or on foot but people do not choose these travel methods for a number of reasons such as a lack of suitable infrastructure or a lack of awareness about suitable routes. We consider that NPF3 as it currently stands fails to put in place appropriate measures to address the issue of transport poverty.

## **8 Where are the priorities for targeted improvements to our transport networks?**

The main priorities should be an improvement in cycling and walking facilities and in public transport provision. Half of all journeys in Scotland are less than 2 miles long – a distance that is eminently achievable on foot or by bicycle. Coupled with this is the fact that the majority of people in Scotland either do not drive or do not have access to a car. Therefore, it is essential that active travel and public transport modes are improved and people are encouraged to use these modes of transport.

## **9 Are there other nationally significant priorities for investment in transport within and between cities?**

Investment should focus on improving public transport links between cities. Bus and rail services must be frequent, reliable and reasonably priced.

## **10 Should the proposed High Speed Rail connection to London be retained as a national development? Should it be expanded to include a high-speed rail line between Edinburgh and Glasgow?**

High Speed Rail should not be kept in as a national development and should not be expanded to include a line between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Sustrans thinks that resources would be better spent in improving local travel choices, walking and cycling networks, bus services and the local rail network.

## **11 Alternatively, should High Speed rail be removed as a national development and instead supported as a part of the longer-term spatial strategy?**

High Speed Rail should be removed as a national development and should not be supported as part of the longer-term spatial strategy. Sustrans thinks that resources would be better spent in improving local travel choices, walking and cycling networks, bus services and the local rail network.