

# Scotland has 'no hope' of hitting cycle target with current spend

## ACTIVE TRAVEL

by Andrew Forster

THE SCOTTISH Government has no hope of achieving its target for 10% of everyday journeys to be made by bike by 2020 with spending at current levels, cycle groups have told MSPs.

"There is certainly no way that the current rate of progress, nor that the current *Cycling action plan for Scotland* (CAPS) approach will achieve anything like the growth required," campaign group Pedals on Parliament has told the Parliament's infrastructure and capital investment committee inquiry into the Scottish Government's budget. Sustrans says the mode share figure for cycling in Scotland in 2013 was about 1%.

Appearing before the committee this month, Keith Brown, the cabinet secretary for infrastructure, appeared to downplay the significance of the target.

"The target is a shared aspiration," he said. "Achieving it is not just down to the Government, but is between the local authorities and all the agencies."

Acknowledging that little progress in delivering increased cycle use had yet been seen, he said: "It is true to say that what we expected to happen has happened, in that the early investment in behavioural change needs time to work through. We are still aiming for the 10 per cent



**Cycling: no clarity on expenditure**

by 2020, but the early work is hard work. We want to see real progress towards that shared ambition soon."

Spokes, the Lothian cycling campaign group, estimates that active travel spending by the Government will fall from £40.3m in 2014/15 to £37m in 2015/16. It believes that spending on active travel infrastructure within this will fall from £36m to £28m.

Active travel groups have criticised the draft budget not only for the apparent decline in funding but for lacking transparency on active travel spending too.

"The draft budget does not contain a clear line about funding for active travel despite repeated calls for this to be the case," says Sustrans. "At present, it is well-nigh impossible to accurately ascertain how much money will

be directed towards active travel as the figure is so buried away within other funding pots."

The charity adds: "Active travel funding in 2014/15 and the proposed funding for 2015/16 is noticeably higher than in previous years. However, we had hoped that 2014/15 marked the start of an ongoing rise and drive to reach the CAPS vision for 10% of trips to be by bike by 2020. It now looks like 2014/15 was a peak or, at best, the start of a plateau in investment."

On the lack of transparency, Spoke says: "The most absurd example is that the 'sustainable & active travel' and the 'future transport fund' budget lines both cover very similar and overlapping expenditure types. Both include spending on active travel infrastructure, encouraging modal shift and other 'green transport' initiatives, yet the amounts going to these purposes from both budget lines are obscure.

"Since active travel expenditure probably accounts for (very roughly) 50% of the combined total of these two lines, far greater transparency would be achieved by replacing those two budget lines by one for active travel and another for other future/green transport," it says.

Iain Docherty, professor of public policy and governance at the University of Glasgow, has also criticised the Government's active travel spend.

"A figure of £25m out of a total budget for transport in the order of £2bn neither demonstrates sufficient commitment nor will make a significant difference in reality to the extent to which walking and cycling really become more important in the overall transport mix in Scotland.

"I regard the remarkable and consistent lack of investment in the pedestrian environment and wider public realm of our towns and cities as a national disgrace, and I continue to believe this and be highly disappointed by the lack of commitment to redressing the situation."

The City of Edinburgh Council suggests the Scottish Government should learn from the council's policies: "This council, in support of its ambitious targets for active travel, has set aside a percentage of its overall transport budget for investment in and promotion of cycling. The percentage stands at 7% in the current financial year.

"It's worth noting that Scotland's cities, Edinburgh in particular, have recently been making some significant progress in the share of journeys made by active travel and especially cycling," Edinburgh adds.

Sustrans is calling for legislation to make the speed limit on all Scotland's shopping and residential streets 20mph, with limits enforced by Police Scotland or local authorities.