

Scottish Parliament, Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

Draft Budget 2017-18 ... pre-budget submission from Spokes, 1 December 2016

Whilst the Committee this year is specifically scrutinising Broadband and Forestry, it is vital also to keep track of active travel issues, which contribute to a wide range of Government objectives on climate, transport, congestion, air quality, public health, jobs and inequalities. **For such reasons, the government has a supremely ambitious aim for 10% of all trips to be by bike by 2020.** We no longer believe this possible by 2020, but policy and funding must be beefed up to meet it at the earliest possible date - hence this submission.

We have kept this document brief and without references, but a more detailed and fully referenced paper is available on request.

1. Existing level of cycle funding

- Annual Scottish Government active travel funding in 16/17 is £39m, just £7.25 per person, of which we estimate that some £4.50 goes to cycling.
- Additionally (i.e. excluding government contributions) local authorities invest roughly £1.50 per person in cycling so total annual public sector cycling investment is some £6 per person.
- In comparison, the government is this year spending £153 per person on motorways and trunk roads.

2. Recommended levels of cycle investment

- A wide range of professional, academic and voluntary bodies from the worlds of public health, transport and elsewhere, urge that £20 per person is invested annually in cycling (or that 10% of transport budgets should be allocated to active travel as a whole). £20 per person in Scotland represents £100m, or roughly 5% of the Scottish transport budget. Copenhagen and the Netherlands consistently invest at similar levels to achieve their high levels of everyday cycle use.

3. Cycling targets in Scotland

- The relatively low level of cycling investment seen in recent years means that the government's ambition of 10% of all trips by bike cannot now be reached by 2020. This is clear from SPICe Bulletin 16/33 and other documents.
- Any cycle-use target, if it is to be achievable, must be set in association with an expected level of investment. Evidence from the English Cycle Demonstration towns suggests that a tough but realistic target *based on £20 per person cycling investment starting in 2017* would be to achieve 10% of all trips by bike in 2027, or a more rounded target of 15% of all trips by bike in 2030.

4. Benefits of modal shift from car to cycling for local journeys

- The benefits of cycling for everyday local travel are well known in terms of congestion, air quality, climate emissions, public health and more. We are happy to provide references.
- Specifically, increased cycle use contributes to the Government's *National Performance Framework* indicators, including...
 - Increase the proportion of journeys to work by public or active travel
 - Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint
 - Reduce traffic congestion

5. Road and cycling casualties

- The health benefits of cycling in terms of extended healthy life outweigh road injury dangers by about 20-1. Nonetheless, road casualties, and fear of road danger, remain hugely concerning.
- During the last 10 years (2006-2015) cyclist injuries in Scotland rose slightly, whilst all other road user categories fell by 30%-40% [Car occupants 10,705->6,712; Motorcyclists 1068->734; Pedestrians 2853->1694; Cyclists 781->794]. The KSI (killed and seriously injured) figures are even worse, with cycling KSIs up 20% from 141 to 169. The need to tackle cycle casualty rates is therefore very obvious.
- The most effective way to reduce cycle casualty rates (and the fear of cycling) is by investment in safe infrastructure. Analysis of a wide range of US cities found that, very roughly, a 100% increase in the size of a cycle network resulted in a 200% rise in cycle use and a 70% cut in the rate of KSIs.

6. Role of the Parliamentary Committees responsible for transport

- We believe that cycling investment, and the share of the transport budget allocated to cycling, are not currently assessed in a sufficiently objective evidence-based fashion by the government in drawing up the budget.
- The Parliamentary Committees responsible for transport have year after year strongly advocated increased active travel investment – for example recommending that “*substantial additional funding should be considered*” in the draft 15/16 budget. Yet only in 14/15 did this happen, and even then rising from just 0.9% of transport spending to still only 1.9%.

7. Recommendations for the Committee in considering the 17/18 draft budget

- **Active travel investment should rise** each year of this Parliament, reaching 10% of transport spending by the end of the Parliament, with at least half of this invested in cycling - primarily in high quality cycling infrastructure.
- **The entire transport budget should be reassessed** and its various elements re-prioritised in relation to their impacts, positive and negative, on all relevant government objectives - including not just transport and congestion, but also public health, toxic and climate emissions, jobs and equalities.

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