



Glasgow's Strategic Plan for Cycling (Draft) Phase 2 Consultation

Submission from Transform Scotland

Wednesday 14th July 2010

As submitted by email:

Dear Jake

I have been asked to respond to the Strategic Plan for Cycling on behalf of Transform Scotland, the campaign for sustainable transport. I represent Transform Scotland on the 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' partner group in Glasgow as well as SPT's Sustainable Travel Group, and also have on-going input into the development of the Connect 2 route. We received the Plan via GoBike, so could I ask that future drafts and/or the final document are sent directly to info@transformscotland.org.uk as we are keen to contribute to the Plan.

Turning to the Plan itself, first of all, Transform Scotland welcomes any initiative to boost the role of sustainable transport in Glasgow and increased participation in cycling is a key element of that. The aims and aspirations of the Plan are to be applauded and even the production of such a document indicates both the rising profile of cycling within the city and the increasing importance with which the Council regards cycling as a means to achieving various objectives.

I do, however, have a number of general – hopefully constructive – criticisms. These concentrate on a lack of focus on the health benefits of cycling, the role of sport cycling, and commitment of resources from the Council.

First of all, whilst I appreciate that the Plan does include health issues, I feel that, given Glasgow's health problems, they could have a far higher profile. From a policy perspective, the health benefits of cycling are enormous. In December 2008, Transform Scotland Trust published a report by Jolin Warren, 'Towards a Healthier Economy' (available at <http://www.transformscotland.org.uk/publications-searchresults.aspx?&af=1f-2f-4f33-3f9>), which demonstrated the economic impact of raising cycling levels, using the WHO tool 'HEAT for Cycling'. There is also excellent work on this area by Glasgow Centre for Population Health, in particular the report 'How Can Transport Contribute to Public Health' (available at http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/0403/CS5_web.pdf) which cites research indicating that increasing participation in active travel contributes to both mental and physical health and can reduce health inequalities. If we don't investing in cycling and walking, our additional health spend is in the billions.

Secondly, I am concerned about the role given to sport cycling within the Plan. I realise that this is partly within the context of the Commonwealth Games legacy of the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome and Cathkin Braes Mountain Biking Circuit – and I am pleased to see the commitment to allowing access to these facilities at all levels. There is also, clearly, a 'championing' effect that success in sport can have for an activity such as cycling. In the debate about how to increase levels of physical activity, the role of sport has often been mentioned, and yet the evidence indicates that the best way to do this is for people to incorporate the activity into their everyday lives. Transform Scotland would never wish to discourage sport cycling, but there is a risk that raising its profile may simply increase the sorry spectacle of people transporting their bike by car to a facility for exercise. Sport cycling has a role to play but it is very much a secondary one. With scarce resources, Transform Scotland feels that they are better directed at increasing participation in cycling as a healthy, sustainable, everyday activity.

Finally, and possibly most importantly, I am disappointed to see that there is no specific commitment of resources to developing the cycling network within the Plan. Glasgow City Council has had a Cycling Officer for a number of years now and formerly had a dedicated sustainable transport team, but a perennial problem was the lack of sufficient funds to carry out work on the ground. At present, we are seeing a lot of activity because Glasgow has been fortunate to win slices of both 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' and 'Connect 2' funds but longer term the situation is uncertain. Jolin Warren's report 'Civilising the Streets', published last month by Transform Scotland Trust (available at <http://www.transformscotland.org.uk/publications-searchresults.aspx?&af=1f-2f-4f29-3f9>) looks at relevant European experience and finds that, as well as political leadership, on-going commitment of

expenditure is required if cycling levels are to be raised. The recent report by the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change committee of the Scottish Parliament drew similar conclusions. Sadly, without additional funds, the Plan's aspirations are likely to remain on paper only.

In spite of these criticisms, I want to emphasise that I (and Transform Scotland) feel that the Strategic Plan for Cycling is a very positive development and we very much look forward to seeing the desired outcomes achieved.

I have also appended below a list of comments relating to particular parts of the Plan as well as noting any typos I came across, which I hope is useful. Please feel free to contact me directly if you wish to discuss any of the points I have raised.

With very best regards

Calum McCallum, Research and Campaigns, Glasgow

Section 1, Introduction

Para 4 – 'health' should be mentioned as a specific outcome of increasing rates of cycling.

Section 3

P9, 2nd Para – what cycle facilities are planned for the Southside Games Cluster?

Section 5

P12, section beginning, 'Cycling will contribute to the reduction of Glasgow's carbon footprint'. The importance of cycling as an everyday, healthy and sustainable activity has to be paramount, and I would move this point further up the list.

Section 6

P13, subsection 'Sport and Participation,' 2nd para – "breakdown" should be "break down".

P14, 1st full para, final line – should be "in *and* around the City".

Section 7

P19, 2nd bullet point – should be "for the future use *of* schools".

Section 9 - Appendices

P26 & 27 – National Outcomes have not been specified.

P28 – Strategic Outcome 3 has been duplicated.

P33 – Table needs to be completed with details of Lead Responsibility and Partnership, Anticipated Outcome(s) and Source of Evidence for all items other than Connect 2.

Pp 34-39 Details required.

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Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. Transform Scotland Limited is a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

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