

# SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

## CONSULTATION RESPONSE

### FROM SUSTRANS SCOTLAND



## **Sustrans**

Sustrans is the leading sustainable transport charity in the UK. Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We are the charity behind a series of practical and innovative solutions to some of the UK's biggest transport challenges, such as the National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to School, Bike It and Active Travel.

## **Comment**

Sustrans Scotland welcomes this opportunity to comment on the National Transport Strategy. We commend the Scottish Executive for producing the strategy, the first ever for Scotland. We pay a warm tribute to the staff of the Executive who have worked diligently and co-operatively throughout the process that began in Autumn 2005 and has led to the publishing of this consultative document.

## **Summary**

In its current draft, the strategy raises four fundamental concerns, which we would encourage the Executive to tackle:

1. It is clear that the Executive wants to tackle Scotland's poor health record and create a healthier more active population. We contend that Scotland's population also shares this desire and are beginning to switch to healthier and more sustainable ways of getting around.<sup>1</sup> To do this, and to make easy and logical the choice of taking a healthier option when travelling, we encourage the Executive through this strategy to display leadership and inspiration and ensure a measured mix of encouragement and compulsion to get people out of their cars and onto their feet.
2. We therefore encourage the Executive to take what we see as the sensible step of linking the need to take regular, moderate exercise with the inactivity resulting from the majority of car trips<sup>2</sup>, which are short<sup>3</sup>.
3. We have every confidence that the Executive is serious about creating the conditions for modal shift. We see the role of the new Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP's) as pivotal in delivering such change. We are therefore mindful of the recent guidance given to the RTP's by the Executive as they develop their Regional Transport Strategies<sup>4</sup>, particularly the advice on integrated land use given in Scottish

---

<sup>1</sup> Use of the National Cycle Network throughout the UK rose by 15% in 2005 to 223M trips. Between 2000 and 2005, overall use of a section of NCN75 in North Edinburgh increased by 54%; cycling trips increased by 63%, pedestrian trips on the same stretch increased by 61% and shopping trips by 50%.

<sup>2</sup> Chief Medical Officer (England). 'At least five a week: evidence of physical activity and its relationship to health'. Dept of Health. 2004.

<sup>3</sup> 23% of car driver trips are under 2 miles, 56% of car driver trips are under 5 miles, whilst of bicycle trips are under two miles. National Travel Survey 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Executive. Scotland's transport future: guidance on regional transport strategies. March 2006.

Planning Policy 17 Planning for Transport (SPP17)<sup>5</sup>. We therefore stress to the Executive the need to use its mandate to ensure that each RTP heeds this guidance.

4. In its current form, this draft strategy is not really a strategy for transport in Scotland; instead it is a strategy that ignores the two most sustainable modes of transport, namely walking and cycling, whilst focusing on the four most unsustainable modes: road, rail, air and ferry. We contend that there are six modes of transport and that walking and cycling should be placed at the top of a descending order of priority with the private motor car at the bottom, reflecting the hierarchy of SSP17. Particularly for short journeys, walking and cycling should be written into all transport planning as a matter of course, as the British Heart Foundation has stated: *cycling will not become popular whilst the Government and local authorities continue to facilitate the dominance of cars. Bike friendly routes and traffic restraint should be written into planning as a matter of course.*<sup>6</sup>

### **Our view**

We believe that Scotland wants to become a country much less dependent on car travel and that there is good evidence that the majority of us want to be healthier, more environmentally aware and a less carbon emitting population<sup>7</sup>. Concerns over climate change are an everyday topic of conversation, from the media to Sir David Attenborough to Monty Don and *Gardeners World*. Scotland is ready for change.

We do not claim to have all the answers. We appreciate that we need a vibrant economy in order to create wealth. We realise that goods must be transported domestically and beyond. We know that not every journey can be made on foot or by bike. Nevertheless, we also recognise that we live in a country with an increasingly inactive and unhealthy population that are unhappy about that and in an era of diminishing oil reserves, climate change and increasing congestion and pollution.

We therefore question the assumption that there are strong, unbreakable links between economic growth and spending on transport and we encourage the Executive to do so too.

Transport has a key place in creating wealth and combating climate change. It also has a place in assisting people to live healthy, safe, meaningful lives. We believe that this strategy must move Scotland away from the boom and bust mentality of growing the economy through transport expenditure and aim towards a more socially just Scotland with a healthy population emitting less carbon. Moving in ways that benefit their health and well being.

### **Questions**

The draft strategy poses sixty-five questions. Where we feel we can usefully add to the debate we do so on pages 3 to 10 as follows:

---

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Executive. Scottish Planning Policy 17 Planning for Transport 2005.

<sup>6</sup> British Heart Foundation. Policy Briefing: cycling and active travel. June 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Stradling. 'Persuading people out of their cars'. Napier University. 2002.

## Contents

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Q1	Priorities	4
Q2, 28, 29	Health	4
3	Standards	5
4, 14	Carbon	5
5	Oil	5
6, 20	Rural Scotland	6
7, 8, 9	Air & High Speed Rail	6
17	Accessibility planning	7
20, 22	Social exclusion	7
24, 25	Travel planning	7
26, 51	Modal shift	7
54	Living streets	9
58	Targets	9
	<b>Conclusion</b>	10

### **A question of priorities (Q1)**

Question 1 asks if the goals listed as bullet points on page 14 are the right goals for transport in Scotland. Yes, they are. Nevertheless, there are too many of them and they neglect to mention health and the need to reduce climate change emissions.

All of these goals should be placed in a hierarchy that makes sure that the NTS contributes to sustainable development. This should question the need for travel, in particular on long distance trips and promoting modal shift.

The analysis of transport trends, which precedes this question, is flawed. By focusing on distances travelled, it places a disproportionate emphasis at the outset on travel by car and air. Figures relating to average trip distances mask the fact that more than two-thirds of people's trips are less than five miles in length and only 2% are longer than 50 miles. Furthermore, nearly a quarter of car trips are less than two miles<sup>8</sup>. Focusing on car trips rather than distances would highlight the opportunities for change towards more sustainable travel patterns, rather than fuelling the increase in resource-hungry and environmentally damaging longer trips.

### **Health (Q's2, 28&29)**

Improving the health of the population should be at the heart of any transport strategy, says the WHO<sup>9</sup>. The Chief Medical Officer for England has stated that *'for most people, the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be incorporated into everyday life. Examples include walking or cycling instead of driving'*<sup>10</sup>. The Executive through this strategy should be creating the conditions for a gradual shift in how we transport ourselves, particularly for short journeys. Away from the 56% of car journeys that are less than 5 miles and the 23% of journeys that are under 2 towards walking and cycling such journeys, see footnote six.

To do this, the Executive needs to get people on their feet and bikes. This will involve creating new path networks and improving those already built. Promoting activity through travel plans, better maps and signing.

Above all, the Executive must state categorically that for a short journey, walking and cycling will be genuine travel choices for Scots in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scotland.

This will not just include raising activity levels among all age groups and sectors of the population, but also reducing the harmful effects of congestion, particularly emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

As a first measure, the Executive should increase the support it gives to walking and cycling initiatives, particularly the creation and maintenance of infrastructure and cycle training. Every school in Scotland should be part of the Safe Routes to School programme. Every child should receive on-road

---

<sup>8</sup> National Travel Survey 2004.

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organisation. 'A physically active life through everyday transport'. 2002

<sup>10</sup> CMO (England). 'At least five a week: evidence of physical activity and its relationship to health'. Dept of Health. 2004.

cycle training in Primary 6. The Executive should fund the completion of the National Cycle Network to its 1995 targets<sup>11</sup>.

Physical health improves through exercise. The Chief Medical Officer for England has recognised that by recommending that all adults take a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five times a week. We contend that this target would be judged modest if the short journeys currently made by car were instead made by people using their own steam.

### **Setting standards (Q3)**

In Scotland, Sustrans should be setting engineering standards and excellence; Cycling Scotland should deliver on-road cycle training to every child at P6 and both organisations and others should play a full part in delivering a wide variety of projects and programmes aimed at increasing modal shift.

### **Carbon emissions (Q4 & Q14)**

This NTS must require the Strategic Projects Review to address cutting carbon emissions and challenge the link between spending on transport and increasing economic growth, which is an unholy alliance of the unsustainable and the short term.

Recent research by UCL/Halcrow for the DfT suggests that to achieve 60% reduction in emissions from transport, two thirds of that reduction will have to come from behavioural change<sup>12</sup>.

### **An economy without oil (Q5)**

Without a vibrant and healthy economy, Scotland will struggle to generate jobs and wealth. Sustrans recognises the role that business and industry has to play in creating wealth. We also, however, recognise current opinion that all major oil discoveries have been made<sup>13</sup> and that the world will soon face 'peak oil': the moment when demand for oil outstrips the ability of the world's oil producers to meet demand. Indeed, many commentators predict peak oil occurring in the next five years. To prepare for the harsh impact diminishing oil supply will have on Western lifestyles,<sup>14</sup> particularly for a country such as Scotland on the far, western, margins of the Eurozone; we must begin planning for an economy much less dependent on oil<sup>15</sup>.

We contend that a shift in transport planning away from aiming to increase economic growth by creating new infrastructure will better facilitate the difficult business environment that peak oil will create. Such a move now will

---

<sup>11</sup> Sustrans Scotland estimates the cost of completing the NCN in Scotland to its 1995 target of 1,884 miles at £33M for the remaining 311 miles. The cost of the Aberdeen western peripheral by-pass is currently estimated at £430M for 10 miles.

<sup>12</sup> Hickman & Banister, Bartlett School of Planning & Halcrow 'Visioning and backcasting for UK transport policy.

<sup>13</sup> Campbell. The assessment and importance of oil depletion in McKillop & Newman 'The final energy crisis'. Pluto Press. 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Elliott. The black stuff has the world over a barrel. Guardian. 27/06/05.

<sup>15</sup> EC. 'Doing more with less, the European Commissions Green Paper on Energy Efficiency'. COM (2005) 265final.

place Scotland at the forefront of thinking for a world with much less oil. Moreover, in so doing, we can create business and economic opportunities. We therefore wish to see the Executive take a strong lead to separate the growth of the economy from expenditure on transport. We do not accept the tired and failed thesis that only by spending enormous sums of money on transport can an economy grow. This entire view is discredited and unsustainable<sup>16</sup>. The Executive has to take due recognition of this and work with business to create a much more sustainable economic model<sup>17</sup>.

### **Rural Scotland (Q6&Q20)**

For the past forty years we have abandoned rural Scotland to the car. We do, however, recognise that for the moment, in communities that are separated by distance from the central belt and largely dependent on tourism, the car remains a vital lifeline.

It is therefore harder at first glance to see where modal shift fits into the rural landscape compared to urban Scotland. Look more closely, however, and simple solutions to small problems can reduce car dependency and increase quality of life. Many rural communities in the Highlands, Galloway and the Borders are separated by busy trunk roads with no off-road alternatives to allow safe and pleasant journeys to schools and work. Simple, cheap, off-road alternatives can be created.

Scotland has to begin preparing for a society where people will travel less and more holidays will be taken 'at home' rather than abroad. Those concerned with the vibrancy of rural Scotland therefore need to ask what will people do when they visit? Rather than picking up passing trade, centres of activity such as the Seven Stanes Mountain bike developments of Forestry Commission Scotland should be seen as models of sustainability. The Executive should therefore be asking how would people move about in rural Scotland in the future in an economy with increasing oil prices.

### **Air and High Speed Trains (Q7, Q8 & Q9)**

There is an argument that the growth in cheap air travel is resulting in a boost to the economic fortunes and tourist potential of Scotland and we do recognise that air travel, particularly in the Highlands and Islands is both an important economic and social mode of transport.

Cheap airfares are, however, major contributors to the enormous carbon emissions made by the air sector. In 2000, aviation contributed 5.5% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions but had double the environmental impact because of the effect of jet emissions in the upper atmosphere. The infrastructure required for air travel also makes an enormous cost on green space and on communities<sup>18</sup>.

Taken with the predicted fallout from peak oil, Scotland should begin planning now for a reduction in flights and should assist the business community to prepare for a Scotland with much less oil and less travel.

---

<sup>16</sup> European Federation for Transport & Environment. 'Less oil, more welfare'. EC March 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Institute for Transport Studies. 'Separating the intensity of transport from economic growth'. University of Leeds. February 2002.

<sup>18</sup> FoE. 'Why Airport Expansion is bad for Regional Economies'. Friends of the Earth. 2005

### **Accessibility planning (Q17)**

Accessibility Planning is fundamental to assisting a shift in how we travel and should be compulsory in regional and local transport strategies. In addition, measuring the success of RTP's and local authorities in delivering accessibility planning should also be a priority with meaningful and sophisticated targets set.

### **Social exclusion (Q20&Q22)**

Transport planning can play a major part in tackling social exclusion. One-third of households in Scotland does not have access to a car and are therefore dependent on public transport, walking and cycling for their transport needs. Such groups predominate in urban Scotland, but as we have already argued, those living in rural areas are also socially excluded because of the almost mandatory nature of car ownership, the absence of public transport and because busy roads exclude people from travelling in ways that would benefit their health<sup>19</sup>.

Our view is that provision for walking and cycling needs to be given the same thought and care as motorised transport. This particularly refers to the planning, design, construction and maintenance of paths. Poorly lit, icy and badly maintained paths are dangerous for those who use them and a disincentive to those who would use them. It should be unacceptable for those who do not travel by car to have to use paths that if they were roads, car drivers would find unacceptable.

### **Travel planning (Q24&Q25)**

The 'Making Travel Plans Work' study for the DfT in 2002 suggested that encouraging staff to travel by modes other than car reduced the amount of driving to work by 18%<sup>20</sup>. More rounded figures can be found from Lynn Sloman's work 'Less Traffic Where People Live'<sup>21</sup>. She concludes that in an 'enlightened business as usual' scenario, car travel demand in peak hours could be reduced by 15%. Under an 'ambitious change' scenario, using all available measures, a 33% cut could be achieved.

It should be mandatory for all major employers, cultural centres, sports stadia and tourist attractions, including hotels, to have travel plans that provide details of all transport modes.

In addition, signing of walking and cycling alternatives to and from major transport generators should be mandatory and follow the continental model of highlighting the minutes required walking or cycling to a destination.

### **Creating and assisting modal shift (Q26&Q51)**

We welcome the focus on modal shift in this consultative document. Walking and cycling have a huge role to play in a shift away from car use, particularly for short journeys, i.e. under five miles.

---

<sup>19</sup> Sustrans Scotland. Rural minor road traffic calming. 2003.

<sup>20</sup> DfT. 'The future of Transport: a network for 2030'. July 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Sloman. 'Less Traffic Where People Live'. Transport 2000 Trust & University of Westminster. 2003

To do this, we believe that transport policy must be driven by reducing the need to travel and reducing journey distance, focusing instead on increasing levels of accessibility through high quality local transport with walking, cycling and public transport at its core.

In addition, and as discussed above, both walking and cycling require to be given equal treatment with other modes of transport to make sure that transport providers, particularly the regional transport partnerships, take them seriously. Without the authority of the Executive ensuring that walking and cycling are fed into mainstream transport decisions it is difficult to see how both modes can be viewed in time as everyday transport options.

Studies show that bodies such as the executive have to show leadership before modal shift can occur<sup>22</sup>. The leadership that has been shown by some local authorities, e.g. Nottingham for Transport and Cambridgeshire for Integration all show that strong leadership can work<sup>23</sup>.

According to Stradling, one third of the public would like to reduce their car use<sup>24</sup>. Of the 'Pull' measures for change, cheaper and more reliable public transport scored best. For the 'Push', 'the closure of city centres to cars' and 'fewer places to park the car' came highest, suggesting that removal of car access and road space is very effective. Therefore, when people want to change, they need to be given the means to change.

In addition, Brög<sup>25</sup> has noted that across Europe 60% of city car trips can be replaced by sustainable modes, yet decision-makers and opinion formers believe the actual figure is only 30%. Therefore, informing the informers clearly needs to be achieved before public information campaigns can be successful. Here, clearly, the Executive and this strategy must lead the RTP's.

The Executive can radically alter the balance of transport in Scotland by making it easier for people to walk and cycle to work, school, and shops and in their neighbourhoods. Thus allowing people to move about in ways that benefit their health and general well being in addition to combating congestion, carbon emissions, etc. One tested method of achieving this is through Individualised Travel Marketing (ITM), which Brög reports as reducing car travel by 10%<sup>26</sup>. This is reinforced by Sustrans own experience with Individualised Travel Marketing through our own TravelSmart initiative, which has achieved reductions in car use averaging 10% in 12 pilot and large scale ITM projects conducted in locations across England since 2001. The Department for Transport's Smarter Choices research, which included six Sustrans projects among its case studies, amply demonstrated the cost effectiveness of this approach in reducing car use.

We argue that this, and other methods, should be tested throughout Scotland. In addition, Scotland should follow the example of England, which selected 12 towns to be beacon and demonstration towns as examples of modal shift at work. Sustrans work in three of these towns with Socialdata has provided research findings, which show that people make a quarter of

---

<sup>22</sup> EC. 'INPHORM project: Sustainable travel'. DG VII. European Commission. Brussels. 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Cambs. CC. 'Tackling Climate Change in Cambridgeshire'. 2005

<sup>24</sup> Stradling. 'Persuading people out of their cars'. Napier University. 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Brög. Socialdata. 'Reducing car use!? Just do it!' 27 Nottingham Transport Lecture. 2003

<sup>26</sup> Sustrans. 'Greater Manchester travel behaviour change strategy'. 2006

their day to day trips on foot but on average spend as much time walking as they do driving. Further research showed that more than three-quarters of peoples trips are local, i.e. within their own city, and the same proportion of car trips are no longer than 10Km. That leisure, shopping and personal business generates more car trips than the journey to work and as many as 38% of inter-urban car trips could be replaced under existing conditions by walking and/or cycling, compared to 21% by public transport<sup>27</sup>. Further studies by Sustrans points to the localised nature of many shopping trips<sup>28</sup>. Assisting modal shift therefore involves increasing the amount of infrastructure available, improving existing path networks, properly maintaining those already there and helping make people aware of the alternatives that exist. It also involves personalised; employment and leisure based travel plans. This should be a multi-agency approach involving not just the transport department but also health and education.

### **Living streets (Q54)**

The re-allocation of road space, away from the private car towards public transport, walking and cycling is the most vital element in making streets good places to be, to shop and to work. Measures that cut highway capacity also cut traffic<sup>29</sup>. In 1994 the UK's Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment confirmed that creating extra road capacity encourages traffic growth<sup>30</sup>.

We return to our view that only when walking and cycling are given equal treatment with motorised transport will we see better design of streets, better integration between modes of transport and an acceptance on the part of the public that walking and cycling are easy, logical travel options.

### **Targets (Q58)**

We are strongly opposed to the abandonment of targets for walking and cycling and we wish to see the published strategy aiming at much more sophisticated targets for walking and cycling than has been the case to date. These targets should be discreet to a regional area and set by a strategic body such as the Scottish Executive's Transport Group. Each RTP should have set targets and an independent body should measure success or failure and act as an independent arbiter.

If the Executive exerts real leadership, we can achieve modal shift and a move away from motorised transport for short journeys.

This is particularly the case in the forty-mile corridor that is the urban, central belt, of Scotland, where three-quarters of the population live and work. In addition, busy trunk or A roads bisect many rural towns and villages. These are physical obstacles that can be overcome through good planning, design and construction and, above all, the will on the part of the Executive to see

---

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/stdt>

<sup>28</sup> Sustrans. 'Shoppers and how they travel'. Liveable neighbourhoods, Information Sheet LN02. [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

<sup>29</sup> Cairns, Atkins, Goodwin. 'Disappearing traffic? The story so far'. Municipal Engineer. March 2002

<sup>30</sup> SACTRA. 'Trunk Roads and the generation of traffic'. December 1994.

those responsible for transport taking walking and cycling seriously as modes of transport.

To take account of these complex issues Sustrans wishes to see new figures that are more meaningful for increasing walking and cycling than a single, blanket target, which in England and Wales has been abandoned.

We are not alone in our view: *the BHF would support specific targets for increasing the number of journeys undertaken by bicycle, involving employers and schools in promoting cycling among their staff and pupils through the provision of secure facilities and showers.*<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

- The National Transport Strategy for Scotland represents a real opportunity to integrate sustainable transport into every facet of strategic thinking in Scotland over the next twenty years.
- To walk and to cycle, particularly for journeys that are short, has to become a realistic choice for Scots. This is an opportunity to improve health, tackle climate change, reduce carbon emissions and bring about a more cohesive Scotland.
- Only the Executive has the power to bring about such change and to do so it must demonstrate leadership, inspiration and compulsion to get Scotland to change its travel habits: away from unhealthy and unsustainable travel towards a more sustainable and measured transport strategy.
- Walking and cycling must be seen and treated as the equals of mechanised forms of transport. The Regional Transport Partnerships will be the tools that implement this equality; the RTP's must reflect the priorities set out on SPP17. Only the Executive has the power to lead the RTP's on this.
- The Executive should start an avalanche of modal shift by changing how young people travel to school. Every child of P6 age should be given on-road cycle training; every school should be a Safe Route to School establishment; and, wherever possible, school age children should travel to and from their centre of learning using their own steam. Children of today are the travellers of tomorrow; let's begin to educate a generation of independent, thoughtful travellers, who do not reach for the car keys on impulse now.

---

<sup>31</sup> British Heart Foundation: Policy briefing: cycling and active travel: June 2006.