

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Case for Change report – stakeholder survey

Cycling Scotland submission April 2020

Introduction

Cycling Scotland welcomes the opportunity to submit comments on the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) Case for Change report.

The overwhelming challenges presented by the climate emergency are the top priority for STPR2 decisions.

In addition, in response to the current Covid-19 pandemic, there is a need to ensure that transport infrastructure decision-making and spending takes into account the need to support physical distancing for active travel and public transport, both now and in response to future pandemics. This includes space allocation decisions and ensuring sufficient footway and cycle path width.

Questions 1-4 are respondent information questions.

Question 5 – How effectively have the strategic transport problems and opportunities been captured in the report?

Well

Question 6 – Are there any strategic problems you feel have not been effectively captured in the report?

Yes

If yes:

Question 7 – Please describe the strategic problems which you feel are not effectively captured.

Whilst the importance of active travel is mentioned and acknowledged throughout the report, with clear linkages to the sustainable transport and sustainable investment hierarchies outlined, greater emphasis is required on the need for cycling (and active travel) infrastructure, in particular coherent networks of segregated cycle paths, that are safe and easily accessible. Such infrastructure is crucial to achieve desired levels of modal shift and to help deliver on the aforementioned hierarchies. We welcome recognition in the report that current walking and cycling infrastructure must be maintained to encourage use.

In this regard, we highlight a recommendation from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland which states:

“For such roads investment... a presumption in favour of investment to future proof existing road infrastructure and to make it safer, resilient and more reliable rather than increase road capacity”¹.

We support this recommendation and feel that STPR2 has to take it into account. Limiting investment in expanding road capacity is crucial for climate change, air pollution, road safety and social inclusion objectives and is required if desired levels of modal shift to active travel and public transport are to be achieved. Understanding of this is currently lacking and needs to be strengthened.

A further strategic problem not yet effectively captured is the requirement for an investment guidance framework to inform long-term strategic investment decision making. We support the recommendation of the Infrastructure Commission to develop a new investment appraisal and decision-making process, by the end of 2021, taking into account necessary changes to current STAG and Investment Decision Making guidance. Strategic investment decisions should be focused on substantially increasing the proportion of journeys by active travel and providing an enhanced role for public transport. This requires stronger emphasis.

With regards to freight and ensuring that the negative impacts generated from the movement of goods are tackled, the use of e-cargo and cargo bikes as options for short (and last mile) deliveries should be explored and are currently not captured in the report. These bikes can potentially help to remove a significant number of, particularly light goods, vehicles from urban roads, helping to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

We note the report acknowledges the link between household income and access to bikes which is welcome. We also welcome the recognition that one of the most effective ways to secure the required 30 minutes of moderate activity per day is to reduce reliance on motorised transport, by changing to walking and cycling for everyday journeys. However, the report does not detail how increased access to bikes can be achieved for lower income households/individuals, and why this is important. Increasing access to bikes is key to addressing inequality and reducing transport poverty, a key focus of the recently published refreshed National Transport Strategy.

In relation to above, the importance of cycle training is not effectively captured. Increasing availability of cycle training, while outside the scope of STPR2, is a key activity in addition to, not as a substitute to, physical infrastructure changes for cycling.

Question 8 – Are there any strategic opportunities you feel have not been effectively captured in the report?

Yes

If yes:

Question 9 – Please describe the strategic opportunities which you feel have not been effectively capture in the report.

As with question 7, the report has not effectively captured strategic opportunities for and the importance of cycling network development, in particular the need for coherent networks of segregated cycling infrastructure.

¹ Infrastructure Commission for Scotland (2020) Phase 1: Key findings report. A blueprint for Scotland https://infrastructurecommission.scot/storage/238/ExecutiveSummary_160120.pdf

Recognition in the report that changing behaviour is required and that individual travel behaviour decisions are complex is welcome; however, the report needs to effectively capture what can or should be done to deliver required levels of behaviour change, and recognise current successful behaviour change initiatives which already exist, and how these can be utilised and further extended where appropriate.

Opportunities for public transport integration with active travel, to improve connectivity and facilitate sustainable door-to-door journeys, are not effectively captured. Opportunities should be focused on improvements to both walking and cycling access to railway stations and key bus/other public transport interchanges, and also providing proper space for carrying bikes on public transport. Currently, where cycle space does exist on public transport, this is often insufficient and there is inconsistency with how bike users are dealt with. Government should prioritise promoting integrated transport options. Public transport has positive impacts on the whole transport system. It takes vehicles off the roads, reducing congestion, and can make it easier to remove space from vehicles for wider pavements and cycling infrastructure.

Question 10a – How well do the five Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) capture what needs to be done to improve strategic transport across the country?

Well

Question 11 – Please provide any other comments that you wish to make on the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) in this survey.

The Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) are aligned to the priorities and outcomes outlined in the refreshed National Transport Strategy and are focused on delivering the sustainable transport and investment hierarchies, which is welcome.

With regards to the fifth TPO - 'A reliable and resilient strategic transport system that is safe and secure for users' - we note a key focus of this is to reduce transport related casualties in line with reduction targets. This is welcome; however, the TPO would benefit from specifically recognising the need to improve safety for vulnerable road users, including people cycling. Concern about personal safety is the main barrier to modal shift to cycling² and needs to be addressed to deliver desired levels of modal shift and to align with the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.

The Sustainable Transport Hierarchy needs to play a defining role in major planning decisions otherwise land use planning decisions will continue to undermine sustainable transport objectives, (further) entrench car dependency and negatively impact on the safety of vulnerable road users. This would broadly be in line with the following recommendation from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland:

“To support the implementation of National Planning Framework 4 and the new system of development plans, a co-ordinated and appropriately resourced Infrastructure First approach to the planning system should be introduced by the Scottish Government by 2021. This should be undertaken with infrastructure providers, developers and other public bodies, to ensure the effective delivery of a Scotland wide, integrated and coherent outcome based approach to planning spatial

² Cycling Scotland (2019) Annual Cycling Monitoring Report
<https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/6353.pdf>

land use; with implementation to be undertaken at the appropriate regional, local and community level.”³

This should be considered in all strategic transport planning and decision making, to support achievement of the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy and aligned objectives/priorities. Important linkages between planning and transport decision making are not effectively captured in the TPOs.

Question 12 – Are there any other comments you wish to make on the report?

The report and future STPR2 publications should explicitly acknowledge the need for long-term, planned funding for pedestrian and toucan crossings, footway and cycleway maintenance to improve access for across the country. Long-term sustained funding is required to ensure such projects can be delivered and crucially maintained to deliver sustained modal shift away from private cars.

The Infrastructure Commission recommends that guidance should be prepared to support a whole-life approach to infrastructure maintenance and prioritisation, including both costs and resources. This approach should include active travel infrastructure while recognising the maintenance costs are significantly lower. We also welcome the Commission’s recommendation that this should include guidance on assessing wider contributions to achieving net-zero and inclusive growth priorities/outcomes. Active travel has a central role to play in delivering on these priorities and should be considered in this regard.

³ Infrastructure Commission for Scotland (2020) Phase 1: Key findings report. A blueprint for Scotland https://infrastructurecommission.scot/storage/238/ExecutiveSummary_160120.pdf