

Active Travel in South East of Scotland

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper is the first of potentially a series of policy area discussion papers. This comes from a suggestion from the Chair and Deputy Chairs that the meetings of the Partnership should have a greater focus on debating and discussing strategic issues, leaving procedural matters to be proposed by the Officer team of the Partnership. In light of the recent increase in active travel funding, this paper seeks to enable a Board level strategic discussion of possible actions for the Partnership in increasing the journeys made by active travel in the South East of Scotland.

2 Active Travel in South East of Scotland

- 2.1 The Scottish Household Survey 2016ⁱ, published in September 2017 revealed that active travel modes as the main mode of transport, have recorded 26.8% walking and 1.3% cycling rates for the South East of Scotland. Active travel rates to work were recorded as 16.9% walking and 2.7% cycling for the SEStran region, which sits higher than the national average of 12.3% and 2.6% respectively. It is also noteworthy that the percentage of journeys under 5km for the region was 63.5%, with a median journey length of 3km, suggesting a great potential for active travel journeys.

However, with the current Scottish Government target of one in ten journeys being made by bike by 2020, considerations must also be made towards ownership and access. To emphasise this, the recent Scottish Household survey shows that within the most deprived areas, 78.6% of households did not have access to a bicycle (see Appendix). Regionally, 66.4% of households within SEStran have no access to a bicycle, an increase of 2.1% on 2015. Facing the issue of ownership and access to alternative modes of transport, would not only help Scottish Government work towards its own ambitious targets, it could go a long way in addressing social mobility across the country.

The SEStran and Young Scot X-route report highlighted themes that are holding young people back from active travel, aside from the 79% surveyed that were unfamiliar with the term active travel, young people wanted to see more provision of safe routes, bike storage, clear route information, and greater incentives for the uptake of active travel.

The first question for the Board to consider is whether further regional data and bespoke surveys like that produced by Young Scot are helpful, in terms of economies of scale, identifying transport inequalities and actively targeting the views of under-represented groups in regard to Active Travel?

3 Current Policy Context

- 3.1 It is important to acknowledge that active travel plays a wider role than being a mere mode of transport. There is a growing wealth of knowledge touting the benefits of active travel to health, easing of congestion, air quality, and wider economic benefits. The Let's Make Scotland More Activeⁱⁱ strategy paper set out a target of 50% of all adults meeting the recommended guideline for physical activity by 2022, which is 30mins of moderate or vigorous on 5 days over a week. Continuing on this health theme, the latest report for the Prevention of Obesity Route Map records that 65% of the adult population of Scotland are overweight or obese. The Obesity Indicator Model, has multiple levels with timescale objectives that support the need for more active travel provision, culminating in the majority of the population being of a healthy weight.

The refreshed 2015 Regional Transport Strategy has currently only one direct target for Active Travel:

A 5% point increase in walking and cycling mode share for all trips, SEStran wide. Cycling Action Plan for Scotland has a vision of 10% of all journeys will be by bike by 2020.

There are other targets that are contingent upon an increase in active travel e.g., reduction in motorised mode journeys and this potentially reflects the lack of maturity of the walking and cycling agenda at the time of the 2005-2008 and the development of the Strategy.

As well as the local level, individually, a number of Local Transport Strategies, Public Health policy and emerging Local Outcome Improvement Plans target the greater uptake of active travel across the region.

From a Strategy or Policy prospective, is there something we feel we should be progressing further? Should the Partnership consider writing to all CPPs across the region advocating and offering support for Active Travel in the next round of Local Outcome Improvement Plans?

4. Potential Regional Actions

- 4.1 Under the current Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, all RTPs are obligated to produce Regional Transport Strategies. At present with the NTS2 and other reviews underway, the Minister has stated in writing that he doesn't wish us to produce a new RTS at this time. However, in our evidence to the Active Travel Task Force this year we have proposed developing Regional Active Travel Strategies. All RTPs in their evidence felt there could be greater consistency of approach in the methodology for developing local cycling strategies. These can often be consultant led with a variety of approaches employed making for inconsistency and lack of cohesiveness.

In the intermission between regional strategy review, a specific Active Travel document could be produced in conjunction with a Transport Audit as part of a

wider assessment of Transport Infrastructure and the upcoming renewal of the Strategic Transport Projects Review. This could provide the Region with a list of strategic active travel priorities, and create a platform for joint working across local authority boundaries?

Or the Board may feel that there should be a greater focus on active travel regional infrastructure? The Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development Study produced a compiled list of recommendations for investment in cross boundary cycling structure in the SEStran Region. A combination of site audits, consultations and stakeholder workshops were used to identify the main barriers and missing links in the Region's Cycling Network. With a particular focus on routes suitable for commuters, funding for infrastructure will be maximised and will deliver a greater return on investment. This could build on the previous studiesⁱⁱ. SEStran also contributed to the recommendation in SESplan's Strategic Development Planⁱⁱⁱ regarding the creation of a regional active travel network and has subsequently funded feasibility studies on identified strategic routes.

Another question would be, does the Board see merit in a separate Active Travel Strategy and a further iteration of the Cross Boundary Study for the Region?

- 4.2 Is there still a tendency to have a limited focus on walking, as a part of the active travel debate, in some discussions? There is, occasionally, a tendency to forget that a significant amount of bus users will have to walk to their stop. There is evidenceⁱⁱ that this provides a regular form of exercise for those that do and their fitness improves as a result. Walking can also be the sole part of an inter-urban commute or part of a multi-modal journey. Walking offers the same associated-benefits from reductions in noise and congestion. However, this does expose those walkers to significant levels of noise and pollution, which can be a perceived barrier. There is clear evidence that the adverse impacts of increased accidents or pollutant exposure faced by cyclists and walkers are outweighed by the benefits of physical activity and the resultant co-benefit of avoided/prevented costs on the NHS. There is also a continued co-benefit of an active lifestyle into later life, including health benefits not only of a physical nature but in terms of independence and well-being

Within SEStran, 53.2% of journeys to a place of work could be made by public transport. Walking needs to be seen as part of a wider modal shift debate, especially in the scheduled non-DRT bus network, as primary access will be by foot. We need to be aware of concerns over road safety and personal safety in accessing the stop, as well as walking time gradients to the nearest higher frequency routes and how we support people to walk further to bus stops to increase modal shift but also have mental health and public health benefits.

Are there initiatives to increase positive attitudes towards walking including walking to sustainable transport, especially bus that we could utilise across the South East of Scotland?

- 4.3** All constituent councils of the Partnership undertake promotion of attitudinal and behavioural change across their area. However, in terms of Active Travel, is there benefit in creating greater capacity at a regional level to undertake and co-ordinate these activities across the whole regional Travel to Work area?

SEStran is currently completing an application to the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund (LCTT) to expand its regional electric bicycle pilot. The aim is to create a series of community hubs across the region, particularly in areas of deprivation and transport poverty, to improve access to employment, amenities and services. SEStran would invite any of its partner local authorities who would be interested in supporting the bid to contact SEStran officers.

In relation to Travel Planning, all RTPs have worked collaboratively with Transport Scotland to develop the national Travel Planning online toolkit, www.travelknowhowscotland.co.uk, an online resource which supports public and private sector organisations to develop, implement, promote and monitor effective Travel Plans for employee/business and other travel demands. With limited promotional resource, the site has already acquired 133 registrations (98 unique organisations). Further investment in this resource would be an effective and low-cost way of addressing gaps in knowledge and enhance skills required to deliver travel planning measures.

Would the Board see value in recommending further investment to promote this resource?

The Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP) programme is another good example of funding sources being used to help the uptake of travel planning measures across the Region by all constituent councils. The majority of impacts were associated with cycle promotions, events linked to cycle and walking routes, Personalised Travel Planning and school travel. Feedback is that the 2015-16 SCSP programme was successful at enabling smarter travel work to be undertaken in many areas where it would not otherwise have been funded. 16 reported increased cycling, 13 reported increased walking, 12 reported increased awareness, 12 reported improved satisfaction, 10 projects reported corresponding impacts on car use and 9 reported increased willingness to change behaviour^{iv}. It could enable retention of key skills and expertise across a wider geographical area and enable the delivery of coherent, integrated regional programmes to promote active travel. This could build on the previous success of TravelSmart or IndiMark PSP schemes^v across other wider regional geographies

There would appear to be an opportunity here to deliver greater efficiencies from programmes such as SCSP, if these certain actions and funding were delivered regionally, rather being than split 32 ways between local authorities on issues such as social marketing. The supporting documentation for the recent Climate Change Plan also highlights the need to have further evaluation of real world active travel interventions. This dovetails with a proposed action in the 2015 RTS refresh which states that the Partnership should establish the likely value of personalised travel planning assistance in the South East of

Scotland context and if it's shown to be good value, implement it across the South East of Scotland. This could tie in with the new brand identity for the Partnership and offer a consistent and cost-efficient suite of interventions across the area.

Travel Planning initiatives like these could also be delivered in conjunction with Local Enterprise Partnerships. As an example of this, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority offers its 'Travel Plan Network'^{vi}, which currently supports over 300 Organisations in their Region. The aims of the network include the reduction of single occupancy car use, easing congestion and the improvement of air quality whilst promoting sustainable and active travel. The Travel Plan Network Team offer their support in business relocation, corporate travel discounts, car club memberships, car sharing, real-time passenger information and other various Travel Plan promotion measures.

The Travel Plan Team are now in the process of relocating from the Transport department (Metro) to the City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to improve their ties with businesses in the area further.

Should SEStran look to establish similar links with Scottish Enterprise and other Local Enterprise Partnerships to help deliver Travel Plans?

Would the Board consider lobbying the Minister for some of the additional Active Travel funding to develop and implement consistent regional social marketing and evaluation campaigns to actively seek to change behaviour and attitudes?

- 4.4** The recent Blueprint 2020 childcare consultation asks what actions could be taken to support increased access to outdoor learning, exercise and play. One suggestion to encourage more outdoor activity would be to set up walking buses for children to travel to and from childcare in the more temperate months or a region-wide uptake of Play on Pedals scheme? This would provide a safe and healthy way to travel and may help to encourage children and parents to try a healthy active lifestyle and embed, at an early age, long term antecedents of behaviour change and sustainable modal choice. This would potentially address some of the long-term funding pressures on Integrated Joint Boards and be the type of preventative/early intervention actions, highlighted by the 2011 Christie Commission?

Would the Board perhaps consider that these preventative actions could be developed on a regional basis?

- 4.5** The issue of Active Travel, could sometimes overly focus on a certain cohort of the population and a certain type of synthetic fibre. However, there isn't equal access to active travel opportunities or equal benefits/impacts for all groups. Scottish Government commissioned research highlights that there are challenges to achieving behavioural change in the groups that could benefit most, including ethnic minorities and those who identify with a gender that is not male. There is a reported gender disparity in reported cycling accidents. Women are currently under-represented amongst cyclists across Scotland.

Furthermore, whilst women have a higher propensity to walk, they are underrepresented in the number of cyclists in Scotland. Factors in this underrepresentation were not feeling safe, age, lack of fitness and concerns over appearance. However, whilst women have a greater tendency to walk, research has shown that women express much higher levels of fear for their personal security in public places, whether on or waiting for transport, or in the use of car parks, particularly at night. This fear can, in turn, place a constraint on the mobility of women and their participation in public life as they factor personal safety into routine decisions and activities. It not only constraints mobility, it constrains the choice of mode for women and access to more sustainable and healthier modes of transport at this time. The Partnership has been clear in its communications that a greater coverage and use of real-time passenger information could promote reduced perceptions of crime and increase mobility for certain groups.

We have sought to promote active travel and the Real-Time Passenger Information system as a mechanism for reducing the time people with higher levels of fear need to wait for transport in public places. Public transport can also serve as the scene for discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, so limiting the potential of walking to public transport presumably in the first instance. We are also actively seeking to pilot a regional Hate Crime charter to reduce fear and incidents of crime on the transport network, encouraging the widest possible number of people to consider commuting by more sustainable modes of transport. For example, the Diversity Trust in 2014 found that 36% of survey respondents had been discriminated against at some point, with 32% of incidents taking place on public transport. This has a clear potential to limit walking to/from public transport and a reinforce for valid personal security concerns to commuting by car. Overcoming such equity, equality and diversity barriers to increase active travel and walking to public transportation is key to reducing transport inequality.

The recent Sustrans Scotland Transport Poverty report^{vii} highlights that whilst a complex issue, there is a relationship between the impacts of current non-cycling and walking based travel and the impact on communities. There is a number of barriers to those who have lower income who cannot buy a car or struggle to pay public transport fares to access a wide range of opportunities. There is potential to walk and cycle to a large range of essential services but these may be limited for those in poverty because of cost of kit and/or lack of physical health to walk. There are many variables in play when discussing transport and poverty. However, the report concludes that there is no doubt active travel can provide a part of the solution to reducing inequalities. At present, Local Authorities and Transport Scotland are listed authorities for the socio-economic duty and should be considering how to address these.

There are also barriers to achieving the broader benefits of public transport and steps need to be taken to ensure those people with visible and invisible disabilities have their physical, psychological and economic barriers addressed. There does need to be a continuing awareness raising initiative and training on the needs of disabled people, which initiatives such as the Thistle Assistance Card can play a key part in addressing.

What more could the Partnership do to promote equality and safety of active travel? Do we need to undertake regionally focused co-design engagement to understand the key disadvantaged groups and their travel needs? How should responsible authorities for the new socio-economic duty, respond to inequalities of outcome surrounding active travel and could the Partnership be a mechanism for an efficient regional approach to this issue?

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The discussion paper seeks to generate debate on a number of issues facing active travel across the South East of Scotland.

South East of Scotland Transport Partnership Team

30th November 2017

Policy Implications	The implications will be dependent on the outcomes and actions agreed by the Board following discussion of the paper and any other matters raised at the meeting.
Financial Implications	The implications will be dependent on the outcomes and actions agreed by the Board following discussion of the paper and any other matters raised at the meeting.
Equalities Implications	The implications will be dependent on the outcomes and actions agreed by the Board following discussion of the paper and any other matters raised at the meeting.
Climate Change Implications	The implications will be dependent on the outcomes and actions agreed by the Board following discussion of the paper and any other matters raised at the meeting.

ⁱ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/9979>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/47032/0017726.pdf>

<http://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.sesplan.gov.uk/assets/publications/SDP2/Proposed%20Strategic%20Development%20Plan.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/scsp2015>

^v <http://www.ratransport.co.uk/images/MakingPTPworkResearch.pdf>

^{vi} <http://www.wymetro.com/wytpn/>

^{vii} https://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/file_content_type/transport_poverty_in_scotland_report.pdf

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