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From:
Sent: 15 April 2008 19:36
To:
Cc: NPF Team
Subject: NPF2 - reponse from CTC Scotland

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National Planning Framework 2: Response from CTC Right-to-Ride Scotland

CTC is the membership organisation for cyclists. We have around 2500 members in Scotland. CTC Right-to-Ride is the campaigning arm of CTC and has its own organisation for Scotland.

We welcome much of the Framework, including the principles outlined in the section on 'Sustainable Transport and Land Use', but we have grave reservations about the national projects, all of which promote unsustainable transport modes. Not one of them focuses on public transport or road traffic reduction, and they do not reflect the need for a modal shift towards more sustainable modes. In so doing, the projects are in conflict with the National Transport Strategy and a number of other Government policies.

The priorities should be public transport, and integrated transport, whereby travel into and between our towns and cities is achieved by a mix of modes including walking and cycling for the connections to and from the public transport. The reliance on the car, which the national projects clearly envisage, is not just extremely bad for the environment but also for health, both from air pollution and the sedentary lifestyles which engender stress and obesity. All the other developed countries in Europe are now concentrating their transport development on better public transport and better integration of modes, and we find it hard to understand why Scotland, following the lead from Westminster, continues to promote outdated and very damaging policies.

A Second Forth Road Bridge is a project which should be given no priority. Not only is it unsustainable since it will lead to even greater car use, but it is hugely expensive and will divert funding from more sustainable transport projects. The recent FETA report is fairly optimistic that the existing bridge can be retained, either by halting the corrosion in the cables or by replacing them, at a cost of around £100m, a fraction of the cost of a new bridge.

Among more sustainable projects, the rail network within Scotland, for example, needs big improvements, including electrification of the main routes but also faster and more direct journeys between the main centres. The route from Edinburgh to Perth, for example, is woefully inadequate and can scarcely offer an alternative to the car. Other projects might include road pricing as a means of reducing traffic levels and encouraging a shift from the car towards public transport.

The expansion of Edinburgh and Glasgow airports is equally unsustainable, and incompatible with any policies to halt climate change. Even current levels of air travel are not sustainable and we should be making every effort, by a variety of policies, to replace internal air journeys with rail.

21/04/2008

We should be questioning the whole issue of whether it is wise to spend on these mega projects, rather than on more ecologically friendly modes such as cycling, where for relatively modest amounts of funding, big increases in cycle use can be achieved. This has already been shown to some extent in Edinburgh, where pro-cycling policies over the years have produced spectacular increases in cycle use. Recent Spokes surveys for example have shown cycles forming up to 20% of all traffic at peak times, and that most of these cyclists are commuters. This is still far short of what is achieved in many European cities.

We should also be questioning who, or what, is driving the demand for the unsustainable projects proposed. A recent You-Gov poll showed there is little public support for new roads, but strong support for better public transport. Politicians claim the demand comes from the business sector. If that is the case, then every project should be submitted to a sustainability audit, and in addition, the business sector should be challenged to produce hard evidence, based on previous schemes rather than the fanciful projections of Transport Scotland, that road building either benefits the economy or reduces traffic congestion. They will find it hard to come up with real evidence for either.

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CTC Right-to-Ride Scotland

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