



Active and sustainable travel in the 21st century: seminar report

Wednesday 22nd March 2017
The Lighthouse, Glasgow

Introduction

This seminar was the latest in a series of events held as part of GCPH's active travel research programme over the last seven years. The event began with a look back at how people got to work in Glasgow 80 years ago via a film, [Glasgow Gets to Work 1935](#).

Bruce Whyte (Chair) welcomed people to the event. In introducing the programme, Bruce explained that the seminar was being held to present new findings on cycling trends in Glasgow, to reflect on the findings and recommendations from the GCPH synthesis of active travel in Glasgow and to focus on the wider sustainability agenda, including air pollution and environmental justice. Commenting on how active travel relates to wider inequalities, Bruce noted that how much we invest in active travel, improving air quality and related areas might be useful metrics for assessing how inclusive our society is.

Bruce encouraged attendees to discuss not only what priorities we should be pursuing to encourage active and sustainable travel in our towns and cities, but what else we should be seeking to change, and also to make the connections with related issues such as improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions, increasing physical activity, reducing obesity, challenging car dependency, and addressing health inequality. He stressed that the seminar was a way of influencing the next phase of our sustainable travel research programme and that the GCPH was keen to gather views at the event.

Presentation 1: New analyses of cycling in Glasgow

Karen Macpherson, NHS Health Improvement Scotland

Karen described the findings of four different analytical studies:

1. Cycle journeys on the Anderston-Argyle Street footbridge (part of the West City Way)
2. Cycle journeys on the South West City Way
3. Glasgow's public cycle hire scheme – usage between July 2014 and July 2016
4. Travel to school in Glasgow – results of the 'Hands Up' survey

These analyses suggest that cycle use is increasing on the new city cycle ways and that usage of Glasgow's bike hire scheme continues to increase. In terms of school children cycling, there has been a growth in primary school children cycling to school but further work is required to increase the numbers of secondary school pupils cycling to school.

Karen recommended that monitoring use of the cycle ways should be continued over a longer period of time. In addition, qualitative research conducted with users and non-users of the bike hire scheme would be useful to gather views and perspectives of the scheme, and to find out more about the reasons for journeys being made and the routes taken. Karen also suggested that working with individual schools might help to better understand what is influencing higher levels of cycling in specific schools and that such learning could be helpful for other schools.

The slides from Karen's talk can be accessed here: [New analyses of cycling in Glasgow](#).

The studies that Karen reported on can be accessed through the [active travel pages of the GCPH website](#).

Presentation 2: Reflections on our learning: transport, active travel and inequalities

Jill Muirie, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Jill began by presenting key transport trends in a Scottish and local context, pointing out the growing dominance of car use and illustrating inequalities relating to transport; showing, for example, that car commuting is strongly associated with household income, while pedestrian casualty rates are highest in the most deprived communities.

Safety, traffic speed, infrastructure and urban design, convenience, time efficiency and cost, and culture and social norms all influence transport choices. Jill also focused on the transport needs of more disadvantaged communities and discussed how people in financial difficulties maybe being increasingly forced into owning a car to keep or find a job in the face of limited public transport options.

How might levels of active travel be increased? Jill highlighted the need for: strong leadership, improved co-ordination and a shift in investment; innovative and progressive urban planning; integrated infrastructure; and changes in culture and behaviour. In conclusion, Jill outlined possible future research, including research to better understand changes in bus use and in car ownership, learning from other UK cities where promising developments have been seen, and thinking about how we can encourage more children to walk to school in Glasgow.

The slides from Jill's talk can be accessed here: [Reflections on our learning: transport, active travel and inequalities](#)

The synthesis report on which Jill's talk was based can be accessed through [the active travel pages of the GCPH website](#).

Presentation 3: Clean air as environmental justice

Emilia Hanna, Friends of the Earth Scotland

Emilia began by highlighting Article 13 of the European Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC which states that in respect of nitrogen dioxide emissions, the annual mean limit of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ should not have been exceeded since January 2010. Nine streets across Scotland were identified where this limit had been breached in 2016, with the highest recorded level of NO_2 being in Hope Street in Glasgow. Air pollution plays a role in many of the major health challenges of our day, and has been linked to: cancer; asthma; stroke and heart disease; diabetes; obesity; and changes linked to dementia.

Turning to public transport, Emilia noted that congestion caused by cars was having a detrimental effect on bus services and that concerns about too many cars, traffic speed and pollution levels were putting people off walking and cycling. Car use has an instrumental role in contributing to health and excess inequalities.

Emilia gave examples of positive action being taken. In Nottingham, a parking levy was being reinvested in public transport, while in London, congestion charging has reduced congestion and boosted bus use. Examples of positive action from other cities were cited, such as Copenhagen, Seville and Edinburgh and the operation of Jersey's bus franchise model was highlighted, which has cut costs and led to increased bus use.

The slides from Emilia's talk can be accessed here: [Clean Air as Environmental Justice](#)

Table discussions and plenary feedback

Following the break, there were table discussions and feedback was given in a plenary. These discussions were structured around four questions (see below). Delegates also provided written feedback on these questions. The main points that were made are summarised under each question.



(Please note that these questions were posed as generic questions and were not aimed at defining GCPH's role in finding solutions or taking things forward. An exception to this is the final question which did ask for suggestions for future topics to focus on as part of GCPH's sustainable travel research programme.)

From what you've heard today, what developments are you pleased to see happening?

People were positive about the success (and affordability) of the cycle hire scheme and increasing use of the 'city ways', including segregated cycle routes. People were pleased that inequalities were being recognised and that the social benefits of active travel were being recognised. Current and future investment in infrastructure was mentioned, and the need for infrastructure in schools to increase cycling. More holistic planning and place-making, partnership working and collaboration and 'agreement on what needs to change' were all cited.

What are the priorities to encourage active and sustainable travel in our towns and cities?

There was support for reduced speed limits, and 20mph in particular.

Support for cycling was evident in terms of building / expanding cycle hire schemes, providing budget allocation to provide separated cycle lanes on main radial routes into towns and cities and better cycle storage provision at train stations and bus stations.

Connecting and integrating infrastructure, and showing the impact of infrastructure.

There was support for controlling parking through a range of approaches.

Children and schools were seen as an important focus. How do we encourage more independent and active travel by secondary pupils? There was the suggestion that

there should be 'exclusion' zones around all primary and nursery schools in the periods before the schools open and after they close.

Strong leadership and maintaining consistent political will was mentioned, as was integrating issues, policies and players into a blueprint and holding elected members to account. Decision-makers need to be fully aware of official government priorities on active travel and Transport Scotland should help make this happen.

Sustained financial commitment is needed. While all local authorities have active travel plans and (probably) schemes identified, funding is the issue. There needs to be influence on transport budgets in order that an adequate share is devoted to active travel e.g. 10% of transport budget or equivalent.

Other ideas included:

- Changing HMRC rules on mileage to stop encouraging car use at work.
- Improving bus services to provide much better access for all and emphasising multi-modal transport.
- A holistic approach across Scotland to develop active travel infrastructure in towns and cities with an identified funding stream to procure the resources.

What should we be seeking to change?

There was a strong focus on changing spending decisions and budgets. It was suggested that the financial investment target for active travel should be £10 per person instead of a percentage of the transport budget. The process of budget allocation needs to change and the budget allocation needs to shift away from trunk roads to public transport and active travel. There was recognition that these changes would require shifts not just in money, but in staff mix and skills. Linked to this, it was suggested that a re-think of the allocation of resources at a national level was needed in order to analyse the Scottish transport budget on the basis of how each element of it does or does not contribute to public health, emissions, equalities, sustainable economic development, etc.

Transport policy areas need to be better integrated. A whole system approach is needed that recognises the importance of active travel to social cohesion and inequality. Transport options need to be included in high level development plans and planning legislation should ensure that new developments consider active travel.

Opinions and attitudes have to shift also. There is a need to change the perception of 'cyclists' as 'other' and that cycling is not a normal everyday travel option. Attitudes towards active travel need to become more positive as do attitudes to driving and car use. In this regard, the influence of the media is important and it would help to have more positive reports (on active travel).

We need to make it more difficult and more expensive to use a car. Suggestions of

how to achieve this included increasing the cost to drivers to park, improving the comfort, frequency and network of public transport options, reducing mileage payments and making travelling by public transport more appealing both in convenience and in cost. There was a specific recommendation about applying a levy on all providers of large parking areas – leisure centres, supermarkets, etc.

Other changes suggested included:

- taking brave decisions in Glasgow city centre.
- making it obviously safer for children to walk, scoot and cycle to schools.
- better cycle storage / changing places / lockers for general public to use
- corporate analysis – comparing Glasgow in relation to other UK cities / European cities.
- regulating buses.

What should the future focus of GCPH's sustainable travel research programme be?

There was a great diversity of topics for further research that were put forward. A brief summary of the topics suggested follows.

Issues related to parking, including parking in uncontrolled areas of the city, parking spaces at supermarkets, leisure centres, gap sites.

Investigating subsidies that help support the use of the private car for work and alternative models.

Identifying potential emissions and financial savings accruing from the use of sustainable travel modes for business use rather than the current model of reimbursement of mileage and car costs.

Cost and price analysis of different types of journeys.

Forecasting future travel trends.

Factors relating to car ownership and why having a car is seen as being 'essential'.

Research on bus use.

Making links with Sustrans research programme to better integrate our research efforts.

Research from elsewhere on implementation of safe routes to schools.

Qualitative work to find out why people are making the travel choices they are. What will make them change behaviour?

Contribution of cycle to work schemes and see what national insurance contribution savings are made from these schemes.

Less of a focus on cycling.

Concluding remarks

In rounding up, Bruce noted that there will always be a need to bring together evidence to make the case for active and sustainable travel, and data and experience from Glasgow can help to influence change in active travel across Scotland. An inclusive transport system that supports *active and sustainable travel* and accessible public transport is a crucial part of building better places.

Bruce finished by thanking all the speakers for presenting and the delegates for their contributions, particularly in the table discussions and plenary. Noting that the event had aimed to not only showcase new active travel-related research but had also been about gathering ideas for future research areas, Bruce emphasised that the event had been really useful from that point of view.

Finally, Bruce thanked those involved from GCPH in organising the event and supporting it on the day, including Carol Frame, Joe Crossland, Sheena Fletcher, Jennie Coyle, Ricky Fleming and Rebecca Lenagh Snow.

[View a Storify of the event's Twitter activity](#)

Appendix 1. Programme.

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Programme

9.30 – 9.50	Registration and refreshments
9:50 – 10.00	Film Show: Glasgow Gets to Work 1935
10.00 – 10.10	Welcome and introduction by the Chair Bruce Whyte, Glasgow Centre for Population Health
10.10 – 10.35	New analyses of cycling in Glasgow Karen Macpherson, NHS Health Improvement Scotland
10:35 – 11.00	Reflections on our learning: transport, active travel and inequalities Jill Muirie, Glasgow Centre for Population Health
11.00 – 11.25	Clean air as environmental justice Emilia Hanna, Friends of the Earth Scotland
11.25 – 11.40	Questions for the Panel
11.40 – 12.00	Tea/Coffee
12.00 – 12.55	Table discussions and plenary feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From what you've heard today, what developments are you pleased to see happening?• What are the priorities to encourage active and sustainable travel in our towns and cities?• What should we be seeking to change?• What should the future focus of GCPH's sustainable travel research programme be?
12.55 – 1.00	Closing remarks from the Chair
1.00	Lunch

[#GCPHactivetravel](https://twitter.com/GCPHactivetravel)

Appendix 2. List of attendees.

Barbara	Allan	Living Streets
Gillian	Armour	Knowledge Services Health Scotland
Norman	Armstrong	Free Wheel North
Kenny	Auld	Loch Lomond National Park
Baillie Eva	Bolander	Glasgow City Council
Lucinda	Broadbent	Media Co-op
Katharine	Brough	NHS GG&C
Joe	Crossland	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Kieran	Daly	Cycling Scotland
Dave	Du Feu	Lothian Cycle Campaigner
Kimberley	Ewan	NHS GG&C
Jennifer	Fingland	Cycling Scotland
Joyce	Finnigan	North Lanarkshire Council
Eamon	Fitzgerald	Ramblers Scotland
Lawrence	Fitzgerald	Glasgow Life / Glasgow Museums
Patricia	Fort	GoBike
Suzanne	Forup	Cycling UK
Karen	Fury	Transport Scotland
Isla	Hamilton	East Dunbartonshire Council
Caroline	Hammond	Cycling Scotland
Emilia	Hanna	Friends of the Earth
Robbie	Hawthorne	Glasgow Life / Glasgow Sport
Peter	Hayman	CTC Scotland
Sue	Hilder	Glasgow City Council
Russell	Jones	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Chris	Kelly	NHS GG&C
Victoria	Leiper	The Bike Station
Collin	Little	Glasgow City Council
Alasdair	Macdonald	Sustrans
Duncan	MacIntyre	East Renfrewshire Sustrans Group
Allan	MacLean	Glasgow City Council
Karen	Macpherson	Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Jacqui	McDove	North Lanarkshire Council
Rory	Morrison	Transport Scotland
Suzanne	Motherwell	Sustrans
Jill	Muirie	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Craig	O'Holleran	Sustrans
Daniel	Patterson	Glasgow Bike Station
Kirsty	Rankin	Sustrans
John	Redshaw	SEPA
Louise	Rennick	NHS Health Scotland
Anna	Richardson	Glasgow City Council
Pete	Seaman	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Claire	Strain	SPT
Emma	Thomson	Glasgow City Council
Irene	Thorburn	North Lanarkshire Council
Maddy	Tse-Laurence	Sustrans
Kieran	Turner	University of Edinburgh
David	Waite	University of Glasgow
Kerry	Wallace	Scottish Natural Heritage
David	Walsh	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Christopher	Watson	The Bike Station
Bruce	Whyte	Glasgow Centre for Population Health

