

### Glasgow's Healthier Future Forum 16 Exploring perspectives on active travel



# Can we change the priority...











### Tuesday 31st March 2015 St Andrew's in the Square

This report is a summary of the presentations and discussions from the GHFF16 event and does not necessarily represent the views of the GCPH

#### Introduction

**The 16th Healthier Future Forum** focused on active travel and physical activity within an urban environment. Active travel is an important cross-cutting issue which is relevant to policy on health improvement, air quality, sustainability and climate change, and also to how our cities develop in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Alasdair MacDonald, Sustrans, chaired the event, which opened with an address from Maureen Watt, Minister for Public Health at the Scottish Government. A keynote address followed from John Lauder, Director, Sustrans and a presentation from Bruce Whyte, Glasgow Centre for Population Health. The latter part of the morning included pop-up presentations, round table discussion and feedback to allow the opportunity for further comment and more in-depth discussion. Duncan Booker, Sustainable Glasgow, gave a concluding speech at the end of the morning.

#### Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the plenary speakers (see above) and to all those who gave pop-up presentations – Graham Baker, Edinburgh University; Suzanne Forup, Play on Pedals; Alex Bottrill & Anna Ronayne, Sustrans; Joanna Smith, The Bike Station; Deborah Shipton, NHS Health Scotland (formerly Glasgow Centre for Population Health); Gregor Yates, Glasgow Centre for Population Health and Victoria Leiper, The Bike Station.

Thank you also to Carol Frame for her work in organising this event, to Sheena Fletcher who was in charge of social media activity and Kelda Mclean for taking photos throughout the morning.

Finally, a very big thank you to Alasdair MacDonald for his entertaining (and bilingual) stewardship and for keeping the discussion flowing over the morning.



Alasdair MacDonald, our Chair, welcomed and introduced Maureen Watt, the Minister for Public Health, in Doric and English.

# The Scottish Government's support for active travel - Maureen Watt, Minister for Public Health, Scottish Government

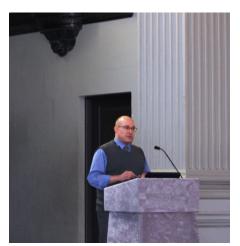
The minister set out the case for the importance of active travel citing that a third of adults are not exercising to the recommended level and noting also the rising burden of obesity. She pointed to the Scottish Government's commitment to active travel as outlined in the National Walking Strategy, the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and the government's vision for active travel to 2030. She noted the increasing levels of funding going towards active travel: £36 million, overall in the budget for 2015/16, which includes £25 million devoted to Sustrans' Community Links projects and £5 million of funding for the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places work.

The minister noted there was a range of programmes of work currently being supported, covering infrastructure development, behaviour change campaigns, cycle training and integration with public transport, referring directly to Abellio's new Scotrail contract.

She responded to a number of questions on integrated travel cards, the need for a step change in funding and approaches to reduce road speed, such as 20 mph zones.

#### Sustrans' role in delivering active travel in Scotland - John Lauder, Director, Sustrans

John began his talk by outlining Sustrans' vision of 'a world in which people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.' Sustrans objectives are: to make local environments safe and more attractive for walking and cycling; to support and encourage individuals to make more sustainable and healthy travel choices, through motivational and information programmes; and to influence policy and practice by communicating the outcomes of our own work,



and the benefits of sustainable and healthy travel, to a wide audience.

John briefly summarised the organisation's history and its current set-up in Scotland, including funding streams, staff numbers and supporters. He then highlighted some of the schemes Sustrans supports, such as I Bike, and noted the role of active travel champions and volunteers. John mentioned their monitoring role, their work mapping routes and producing signage and the development of the national cycle network. He noted that half of Scotland's local authorities should have active travel strategies by March 2015.

John pointed to the expansion of Community Links<sup>1</sup> (to 180 projects, worth £42M in 2014/15), giving examples of projects in Tarbert (ArgyII), Menstrie (Clackmannanshire), from Oban to Fort William and the Anderston-Kelvingrove route (Glasgow). He highlighted Street Design projects in Dumfries, on Leith Walk in Edinburgh, in Kirkintilloch town centre and at Dunblane Station.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Sustrans Scotland</u>'s Community Links Programme provides grant funding to local authorities, statutory bodies and educational institutions for the creation of cycle network infrastructure for everyday journeys.

John also emphasised the problems and challenges associated with the current predominance of unsustainable forms of transport, which include congestion costs, rising levels of obesity, increasing carbon emissions and air pollution fines. In contrast, he noted there were many positives to accrue from changing the network, including: income generation, jobs (growth and retention), positive benefit-cost ratios (Community Links projects ranging from 2:1 to 9.5:1).

John concluded by saying that creating a sustainable network for local trips is achievable, but funding must match rhetoric and policy. This type of investment should be seen as preventative spend, given the positive impacts on health, environment, quality of life. John again reiterated that active travel projects made good business sense, returning impressive benefit to cost ratios.

#### View the presentation

# Active travel in an urban Scottish context - Bruce Whyte, Public Health Programme Manager, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

In his talk, Bruce noted the multiple benefits accruing from active travel including better physical and mental health, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and better social

connectedness. He outlined the long term trends in travel to work for different modes of travel, highlighting the increasing dominance of the car, reducing levels of walking and low levels of cycling in Scotland. He also pointed out the very positive modal share trends<sup>2</sup> for commuting journeys in Edinburgh, which signal a shift to higher levels of walking, cycling and public transport use. Bruce highlighted rising cyclist casualties and that pedestrian casualty rates are two to threefold higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived communities.



Bruce talked about how progress can be made, pointing to what can be learned from other places that have achieved higher levels of active travel support for investment, committed leadership and sustained effort over

years/decades. He noted the positive impacts on casualty rates of speed restrictions (e.g. 20 mph zones), the evidence that congestion charging has reduced casualties in London and the positive impact on feelings of safety where good quality dedicated infrastructure has been introduced in Glasgow. Bruce also highlighted the need for proper road and path maintenance and repair programmes and the need to keep pavements and cycle paths useable throughout the year.

Bruce concluded with a quote from a WHO publication:

"The solid facts are that walking and cycling benefit health while motor vehicles damage health. Walking and cycling need to be prioritised in transport planning; compact cities that minimise vehicle journeys need to be prioritised in economic and land-use planning; public transport must be significantly improved, while car travel is reduced; and leadership is needed from politicians, industry and 'civil society." The Solid Facts - Social Determinants of Health, 1999

#### View the presentation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 'Modal share' refers to the proportion of travel journeys (in this case to work or study) undertaken by different means e.g. on foot, by car, by bus, on a bike, by train.

Following questions and a refreshment break, the next 45 minutes were taken up with a series of *pop-up presentations*, covering the following topics:

**Exploring findings from the iConnect project; a natural experiment evaluation of the Sustrans' Connect2 programme** (Graham Baker, Edinburgh University)

Play on Pedals – getting Glasgow's pre-school children cycling (Suzanne Forup, Play on Pedals)

Community Street Design (Alex Bottrill & Anna Ronayne, Sustrans)

Nextbike: Glasgow's Bicycle Hire Scheme (Joanna Smith, The Bike Station)



A physically active Glasgow: is this achieved through walking? (Deborah Shipton, Glasgow Centre for Population Health)

**Pedestrian and cyclist views of the Kelvingrove to Anderston route** (Gregor Yates, Glasgow Centre for Population Health)

**Travel behaviour change in action....a closer look at the Bike Station's Better Way to Work project** (Victoria Leiper, The Bike Station)



Further details of each of these presentations/discussion topics are contained in Appendix 3. The presenters' emails are included in Appendix 2 (Delegate List) if you would like to follow-up with them on their work.

#### Discussion questions - responses

In table discussion groups, delegates were asked to think about and respond to three questions:

what had they found out that really interested them or they felt was important; what were the challenges and opportunities for increasing cycling and walking; and, what should we be doing and thinking about in the future in relation to active travel.

After discussion at tables, Alasdair invited responses to each question in plenary.



#### Interesting/important insights

The poor quality of pavements was noted. Good **pavements** make 'a very big difference in terms of safety, pleasure, quality and allowing people to actually walk in their local areas' but repairs need to be made far more speedily. There was debate as to whether this was an issue that should be tackled by devolving decision-making power and money to local groups, or whether maintenance of our public realm should happen at a city level. A related issue of unrestricted kerbside parking,



restricting people's ability to walk safely was also raised.

It was felt that the **benefit/cost ratio** of spend and return on investment for cycle infrastructure compared to roads infrastructure should be highlighted more, particularly to the public.

There was a suggestion of **dropping speed limits** on rural roads to a maximum of 30 mph rather than 60 mph to encourage people to slow down and reducing the speed limit when vehicles come off motorways to try and make for a better shared use between all road users.

Another group queried whether infrastructure is being designed that fits in with the way that people live and the journeys that they have to make. There are *'particular issues for those with caring responsibilities* 

who are maybe making multiple trips and multiple journeys to drop people off and then go somewhere else and none of our infrastructure, whether that's about public transport or some of our active travel, really helps to support that'. Their plea was for connecting much more in to the types of journeys that people need to make rather than just having routes in to the city centre and back out again. To achieve this approach would require the 'resource intensive and hard work of actually talking to people and understanding what their needs are'.

For another group it was **political leadership** that had caught their attention, particularly in Edinburgh, where this has led to substantial changes and increases in active travel and significantly an increase in the budget. Can this be replicated in other places in Scotland?

The fact that **a 1/3 of Scotland's population doesn't actually own a car** was felt to be significant, given the prioritisation of car travel. In Glasgow, the deregulation of buses was believed to be a significant barrier to encouraging different multi-modal active transport options; a comparison was made with the system in Edinburgh, with Lothian buses being still a regulated set up.



The **culture** related to cycling was focused on by another group. The point was made that in different countries they (cyclists) 'do not feel the need to dress in lycra and have a shower'. Perhaps we need different role models for women around cycling, not just cycling as a sport, but cycling as part of everyday life. It is important, particularly for women, to have other people in the workplace that are cycling to and from work. Also **adequate secure storage facilities** for bikes designed within a workplace was seen as important and publicised routes to workplaces because often there will be cycle routes that people just don't know about.

There was dissension from the minister's view that active travel networks

are well-connected in Glasgow. It was felt that most cyclists would disagree with this. This was seen to highlight that a large disconnect remains *'between what the politicians think is happening on the ground and what the reality actually is'.* 

#### Challenges and opportunities for increasing cycling and walking

**Safety** and perception of safety are important barriers to more people walking and cycling. For example, the state of some of the roads is an issue as is the safety aspect of having to merge with the traffic if you are cycling. When it comes to cycling to work people who don't cycle or are infrequent cyclists do not feel comfortable on the grounds of safety and lack confidence for the route that they would have to take.

Another group felt there was an opportunity to focus on the elderly and electric bikes could have a

role. There was support for having more seating on routes so you 'could have a wee seat, look at the view, get back on your bike and cycle a wee bit more up the road'. Related to this was the idea that pensioners might be given a tax break on their pensions - or something added to pension credit for people who don't have occupational pensions - to buy either a good quality pedal bike or an electric bike. It was felt that this might encourage people who are past working age to either take up cycling or to continue cycling.

**Reducing car speeds** was discussed, particularly following Edinburgh's example. It was felt that this would make a big

Ching with Grani' what a great idea! Convenient Healthy: Convenien

Let's get intergenerational!

difference to safety and how pleasant walking felt in the city. There was a suggestion that more **zebra crossings** should be brought back – 'they are a lot more civilised because if people do actually stop, you make eye contact with the driver and there is usually a wee nod and you cross over'.

There was support for an **integrated travel card** 'because Glasgow's got a subway, a railway and a really good bus system and it would mean it would be much easier to use that.'

Norman Armstrong (Freewheel North) made the case for **shared space** pointing out that pedestrian crossings are a kind of microcosm of shared space because they reprioritise a vulnerable road user over the motorised road user. He observed that the overwhelming priority given to motor vehicles



in Glasgow's West End could be so easily converted into a kind of general shared space permeable zone. There has been talk of this but nothing has been implemented. He offered the following advice: 'a good step forward would be just to make one-way streets, two-way for cyclists and that would increase the permeability through the entire West End region and that needs to be combined with making the schools 'car free zones', even if it's just around the times when people are dropping off the kids and picking up the kids at the start of day, end of day'. He advocated redesigning space to remove the obstacles to permeable travel in a two dimensional zone rather than thinking about linear routes between the West End and the city centre.

He gave the example of New York where 'they achieved living zones, living streets, around Broadway Boulevard, just by using bits of street furniture and temporary structures and these can be traffic cones, they can be deck chairs, you just encroach upon the motorists space and signal that that space is now for human beings and for communities'.

Another group noted the opportunities presented by the new Scotrail operator, Abellio, to **integrate** rail travel with active travel.

#### Future thinking and actions

A recurring theme was that there are many good policies and strategies but they need to be **implemented and resourced**. Investment in active travel needs to be taken seriously, because although polices are in place, 'at the moment we feel that active travel investment is somewhat tokenistic'.

A hypothetical comparison was made with Glasgow's City Deal about what would happen if £1billion was spent on active travel. This would absolutely transform the region and could turn £1billion potentially into £13billion worth of benefit. So the point was that a much stronger case needs to be made to persuade local politicians and senior strategic planners about the **economic benefit** of investing in active travel.

There were questions about why do politicians and planners not invest more in active travel - are we failing to get that argument across? Part of the answer was thought to be that '*people just do what they have always done, so change is difficult*'. It was put



forward that a move to greater investment in active travel should be seen as a change management process, needed to be thought through strategically and that the evidence that exists needs to be brought to bear to persuade people that this is a better course of action than the current course of action.

Another focus was on **integrating public transport use**, including the regulation of buses in Glasgow and incentives for bus travel. The linkage between active travel and public transport has to work better and more smoothly.

There was support for providing **more benches** to allow people to sit down, helping make the streets more liveable for people. This is quite a low cost approach and it was felt that some quite practical things could be achieved now without much expense.

**Turning policies into reality** was a recurring theme. A long term and sustained implementation plan is needed that turns some of the policies into reality rather than looking at it on a project basis.



There was a suggestion to make **20 mph a default** across the country. Another suggestion was to explore the opportunities to **change public spaces even on a temporary basis**, to demonstrate how the public realm and streets could be different. Examples were cited from during the Commonwealth Games when cars were restricted from particular areas and the benefits that people felt from that.

Given the **economic benefits of active travel investment**, commitment is needed, not just at political level, but at a company level to encourage big businesses to buy into active travel and promote it.

The point was made that active travel has got to be convenient for

people and they have to enjoy doing it. To encourage people to walk and cycle more the environment for doing so needs to be pleasant .

In terms of people **commuting to work**, it might take them longer, so can employers be a bit more flexible about starting and end times, to allow people to drop their children off and then cycle for example. Can schemes like **Healthy Working Lives** help support people to incorporate walking and/or cycling into their daily activity?

We need to make sure that we are **lobbying** our MPs, MSPs, Councillors to provide more support for active travel; Pedal on Parliament (on the 25 April) was mentioned as a good opportunity to do this.

#### Summing up - Duncan Booker, Glasgow City Council

In summing up and thinking of how progress can be made, Duncan encouraged us to draw on people's level of commitment and enthusiasm, describing this as part of the meta-policy to see things taken forward. He emphasised the importance of leadership, infrastructure and investment. In terms of investment, he reiterated the powerful economic arguments – in terms of cost to benefit ratio - that can be made for investing in active living. He noted the mantra that automobile industries have known for decades that *"if you build it they will come"*, is equally true for active living. If you create a place with a pleasant, safe and well-lit environment, with decent public rail and infrastructure, people use it. Direct evidence from Glasgow shows that infrastructure is important, as is a consistent



We need investment m

level of investment, shifting percentages from spending on the traditional traffic based solutions to ones supportive of active living.

Duncan encouraged people in the room to be the leaders and exercise leadership and to connect with the people who, in a formal sense, have the badge of leadership put upon them. Council leaders and politicians need to have the confidence and to have the sense of being supported to make the right decisions.

He also talked about the simple pleasure of walking and that perhaps at times there is an overconcentration on cycling. Active transport can be just about wandering about and it is also about

owning spaces – having the democratic right to space in the city. Our cities belong to the people who live, work in and enjoy them and that's an important part of where our cities are going in terms of who gets to use public space and who owns it.

Duncan sensed a real call for greater forms of municipal activism. He also noted how many debates are coming together: the decarbonising of our power supplies, particularly for vehicles, is coming, but alongside this is a sense in which the democratic right to space, the ability to walk and the right to cycle, are vitally important.



Drawing upon what John had said earlier, Duncan reiterated that

if we have policies, we need to get on and implement them. He encouraged people to connect with politicians and decision makers and to give people, planners and politicians the confidence that they can do things differently.

# 'When the sustainable transport revolution comes, it must come for everyone, it must come for walkers and cyclists, it must come for men and women, for disabled and elderly and everybody else.'

Alasdair MacDonald closed proceedings by thanking the speakers, organisers and delegates. In concluding, he encouraged people be more active, more engaged and to do what they can to move the active travel revolution forward.

#### Next steps

GCPH's Healthier Future Forums are not explicitly part of any decision making processes, but a chance for a wide audience to explore issues, in this case in relation to active travel. We would encourage people to draw on the thoughts and ideas brought out in this report in future discussions and planning related to active travel. The collective thinking generated from this event is already feeding into a future GCPH synthesis report focused on active travel, which is likely to be published in the autumn of 2015.

This report will be emailed out to all participants and is available on the GCPH web site <u>www.gcph.co.uk/events/154</u> alongside the speakers' presentation slides. For more information about the event or about GCPH's work programme on active travel please contact <u>gcphmail@drs.glasgow.gov.uk</u>

### Appendices

- Appendix 1 Programme
- Appendix 2 Attendees list (with emails)
- Appendix 3 Workshop summaries



Appendix 1

#### **Glasgow's Healthier Future Forum 16**

#### **Exploring perspectives on active travel**

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 St Andrews in the Square, Glasgow

Programme	
9.00 - 9.30	

9.30 – 9.35	Welcome and introduction by the Chair
	Alasdair MacDonald, Sustrans

**Coffee and registration** 

9.35 – 10.00 Active Travel Maureen Watt, Minister for Public Health

- 10.00 10.30Keynote address: Sustrans' role in delivering active travel in Scotland<br/>John Lauder, Director, Sustrans
- 10.30 10.45Active travel in an urban Scottish contextBruce Whyte, Glasgow Centre for Population Health
- 10.45 11.00 **Questions and feedback**
- 11.00 11.15 Tea/Coffee
- 11.15 12.00Pop-up presentations on aspects of active travelDelegates can choose to visit three stands during the session
- 12.00 12.45 Round table discussion and feedback
- 12.45 1.00Summing upDuncan Booker, Glasgow City Council
- 1.00 Close and lunch



Appendix 2

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#### Exploring findings from the iConnect project; a natural experiment evaluation of the Sustrans' Connect2 programme (Graham Baker, Edinburgh University)

The presentation focused on the iConnect project and included the main findings, discussion around ongoing work in Glasgow about individual and environmental work, and what is needed for larger effects and targeting specific groups.

#### Play on Pedals – getting Glasgow's pre-school children cycling (Suzanne Forup, Play on Pedals)

Play on Pedals is a project funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery and winner of the 2014 Dream Fund, and is only possible thanks to the support of players of People's Postcode Lottery. Play on Pedals is a partnership between CTC, the national cycling charity, Cycling Scotland, The Bike Station Glasgow and Play Scotland and is recognised as a Commonwealth Games legacy for Glasgow. Working with local 'hero organisations', Play on Pedals gives the opportunity for pre-school children across Glasgow to learn to ride a bike before they start school. This happens through providing free training for volunteers to become instructors, instructor trainers and maintenance volunteers; the recognition of local 'Hero Organisations' supporting the project; as well as the distribution of bikes and resources to those who cannot access them.

#### Community Street Design (Alex Bottrill & Anna Ronayne, Sustrans)

Sustrans are helping people to redesign their streets to make them healthier and happier places to live. Sustrans staff lead workshops, help with events and work with the community to shape designs for their street.



#### Nextbike: Glasgow's Bicycle Hire Scheme (Joanna Smith, The Bike Station)

The presentation included a brief look at the beginning and growth of hire schemes globally, as well as information on Glasgow's scheme, it's usage to date and its potential benefits.

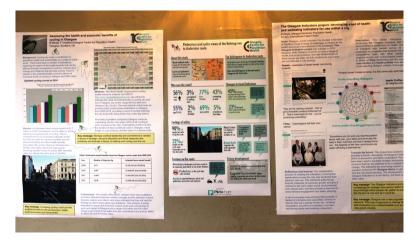
#### A physically active Glasgow: is this achieved through walking? (Deborah Shipton, NHS Health Scotland – formerly Glasgow Centre for Population Health)

Physically active people in Scotland proportionally do more walking than less physically active people suggesting that one of the ways they manage to maintain high levels of physical activity is through

walking rather than through formal sports. If we are to get more people walking in Glasgow what should the public debate focus on? Should we be talking about the design of our streets and roads, transferring space from the car to the pedestrian or the influence of the car lobby on transport policy?

# Pedestrian and cyclist views of the Kelvingrove to Anderston route (Gregor Yates, Glasgow Centre for Population Health)

This pop up stall focused on findings from a study of cyclist and pedestrians using the recently completed Kelvingrove to Anderston active travel route. The short talk included details of who uses the route, what travel behaviour changes have occurred, challenges encountered and how safe people feel on the route. Following this there was an opportunity to discuss the report findings and consider what actions might be required to increase active travel levels across the city.



### Travel behaviour change in action....a closer look at the Bike Station's Better Way to Work project (Victoria Leiper, The Bike Station)

Back in June 2012, the Bike Station's Better Way to Work team embarked on a three year journey to transform the travel habits of Glasgow's commuters. With support from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge fund and armed with a commitment to make a real difference, our small but highly effective team designed an engaging and informative package of events and services intended for delivery directly in communities and to employees via their workplaces. Our mission: to encourage greater levels of active and sustainable travel. Since then we have worked with over 200 employers, reached over 7000 individuals and recoded a 33% behaviour change from single car occupancy towards active and sustainable travel. Importantly, this behaviour change has saved over 700 tonnes of harmful carbon dioxide emissions from entering the environment. This talk looked at how we achieved this and what our plans are for the next few years.