

## **National Planning Framework 4 – Transforming Planning consultation – Call for Ideas**

**Cycle Stirling** is a network of organisations and volunteers who meet to promote cycling through improved infrastructure, training, events and input into consultations such as this.

We have only just become aware of this consultation, but these comments reflect past discussions and are approved by the chair to be put forward on behalf of Cycle Stirling.

### **1. Idea - Need for local and regional masterplans to create effective cycling networks**

There is a gradual awareness of cycling as a major form of transport as demonstrated in Europe, but planning an effective cycle network is not working here.

We need to see local and regional cycle masterplans which can evolve and improve with new major developments.

### **2. An effective cycling infrastructure contributes to all your 5 questions; climate change, health, inclusive economy, enhance blue, green infrastructure and heritage, with cycle infrastructure.**

### **3. Cultural, political, organisational and individual barriers**

Whilst recognising the cultural and political problems associated with encouraging model change from a car dependence culture, there are also many organisational barriers to cycling infrastructure.

Many national and local organisations have policies and remits to promote 'active travel,' but they often don't coordinate or link into any overall plans effectively. The current Covid-19 situation exacerbates and emphasises the need for improved infrastructure that places cyclists at the heart of journeys.

### **4. Cycling planned as mainstream functional travel**

There is some confusion between a leisure walk or cycle, and **functional travel** to everyday destinations, and the distance that cycles can comfortably cover, particularly with e-bikes. So cycling to local key destinations becomes excluded or somewhat tokenistic in transport assessments, and falls between departments dealing with roads and paths.

### **5. Align with Green and Blue corridors**

It is also important to align cycle networks within green and blue corridors to mutual enhancement and community benefit, and reduce fragmentation and viability which often happens, through both major and incremental developments.

### **6. Early master planning of key urban and rural network – local and regional cross boundary**

Cycling tends to be missed out as a significant form of transport. It is not taken seriously at the right stage in infrastructure planning. An effective network needs to be planned to connect urban key destinations and neighbouring rural villages. Crossing boundaries – connecting urban with rural, adjacent local authorities is crucial for cycling journeys, but often not within remit or priority for relevant organisations. No-one appears to have a sufficient oversight role or power to make planning and delivery of cycling infrastructure happen. There are many obstacles put in the way which continue to prevent effective progress, which are overcome when building roads; eg landowner veto, complex ownerships, funding and maintenance.

### **7. Fragmented Planning Process creates more problems**

Planners tend to focus on individual applications, without taking adjacent developments into account, and rely on developers and consultants to come up with plans often in a vacuum of cycle network plans. This is a wasted opportunity to improve the basic cycle infrastructure, at minimal cost, but which needs to happen at the start of the planning process, not a retrofit which doesn't work.

Again no-one seems to have that oversight role or power to make it happen.

## **8. Cycling knowledge and experience**

A lack of personal experience in cycling is a major problem for effective planning by planners, consultants and decision makers; and councillors and MSPs experience strong lobbies to protect vehicle dominance. So we have e-cars promoted as a solution to climate change, with no mention of e-bikes – more affordable, healthy, environmentally friendly, inclusive, door to door journeys. The Scottish government rejected the well-researched 20 mph default Bill, affected by lobby.

## **9. Space for Cycling**

Covid-19 lockdown has shown many more people cycling, though we don't know if that will translate into a longer term choice for functional journeys. People are also able to cycle on quiet roads again, whilst shared use paths are very busy with pedestrians. Cyclists often can't depend on safe space, and need to negotiate with motorists or dog walkers who enjoy improved 'cycle' paths. There are many more e-bikes in evidence – which could be a game changer in extending cycling to a wider population; for the less fit, older people, and limited walkers who can cycle door to door.

## **10. Recent local examples of lack of effective planning for Cycle Infrastructure.**

- Durieshill – new town south of Stirling has been approved with no cycle infrastructure plans into Stirling or south to Larbert, FVRH, both just 4 commuting miles away. Cycle paths end at Pirnhall motorway junction and Plean village on A9.
- Kildean petrol service station and takeaway has been approved on top of the cycle path which links Stirling with its rural communities to the west.

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