

Dear Sir/Madam,

I regret that I missed the closing date for response to the consultation but I hope that my comments can still be taken account of in the development of NPF4. My comments primarily reflect my perspective as a cyclist but also have associated implications for mobility modes and the built environment. Having lived in other parts of the world I consider that there is considerable scope for improvement in Scotland.

I have just read the Transform Scotland's joint response (with Ramblers Scotland, and Cycling UK Scotland) to the NPF4 consultation. I welcome its key messages. I also concur with views emerging that covid-19 responses should seize the opportunity for realising a paradigm shift in transport modes.

However, I would like to suggest additional points or items that I feel deserve greater prominence in shaping plans for the future. To achieve the desired improvements regarding climate change, health/wellbeing and quality of life I consider that bold and ambitious targets should be set. Intermediate strategic milestones for realising the vision should be integrated in plans to support progress. Building upon the abovementioned NPF4 response I suggest:

1. Immediate and short-term actions capitalising on the current (covid-19) situation.

- Expand and continue the current initiative to reallocate road space for pedestrians and cyclists. Sustain this change by making permanent changes.
 - Note the initiatives being taken in Paris, Milan and elsewhere.
 - Change bus lane restrictions to a 24/7 exclusion of motor vehicles other than buses.
- Restrict the influx of motor vehicles into cities by promoting/expanding park+ride facilities with good public transport links in the outer boundaries.
- Place (higher) levies on motorists parking in city centres and cross subsidise preferred forms of transport.
- Extend and enforce the 20 mph speed limit.
 - In Edinburgh there continues to be widespread disregard of the limit.
- Outlaw the practice of cars parked on pavements and cycle lanes.
- Pursue supportive changes to The Highway Codes and laws and regulations.
- Adopt Cycling UK's 2018 recommendations to the UK government, including
 - At junctions: a requirement for drivers to give way to pedestrians and cyclists going straight ahead, whether on the carriageway, in a cycle lane, using a cycle track or when crossing the mouth of a junction on foot.
 - Advice on safely opening motor vehicle doors.
 - Advice on leaving a safe space when overtaking cyclists.

2. NPF4 inputs.

- Incorporate targets to illustrate the vision, e.g.
 - Zero traffic-related fatalities in built-up areas by 2030. This is feasible if a coherent set of measures and infrastructure changes are forcefully enacted with sufficient cross party political will.
 - Climate change – pollution reduction levels
- Stress the importance of enabling people of all ages to travel safely.

- Include aim of getting schoolchildren to walk or cycle to and from school safely - backed up by creation of safe routes and measures to deter the school run.
- Invest in state of the art facilities for secure enclosed cycle hub parking at train stations and strategic locations in city/town centres.
 - For Edinburgh, this could be cycle parking in the Waverley re-development and the new St James Centre.
 - It is not good enough to merely expand the current provisions. These are ‘3rd class’ compared to the state of the art internationally. Site placement should be advantageous and ‘cloakroom service’ should be introduced for added security as theft of parked bikes is a significant risk and factor inhibiting bicycle use.
- Re-design city/town centres to prevent or deter through traffic by motor vehicles.
 - Streets could be sealed off with some having retractable bollards to allow passage for emergency vehicles.
- Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists in towns and cities.
 - Do not make pedestrians have to wait too long at crossing points.
 - Put motorists at a disadvantage to support behavioural change.
- Pursue supportive changes to The Highway Codes and laws and regulations.
- Draw on best practices from other countries, notably The Netherlands and Denmark.
- Use carrot and stick approach in support of behavioural change:
 - Incentives for use of preferred modes of transport.
 - Disincentives and penalties (fines etc) to curb/reduce undesired actions.

3. Other remarks

As a resident of Edinburgh, with good public transport connections I rarely use the car for journeys within the city. I also cycle although this is predominately for recreational activity. The cycleways are excellent but almost every time I travel on the roads in and around the city I encounter reckless, careless and inconsiderate driving from a significant percentage of car and van drivers. This also applies to me as a pedestrian when crossing roads. Most drivers exceed the 20 mph limit and many speed through rat run streets in residential areas. I had the unfortunate experience of being ‘doored’ by a careless driver recently causing me to crash onto the other side of the road where I was lucky that there was no oncoming traffic. I find that I need to be constantly vigilant and assertive when cycling to be safe – beyond the level that would be expected of children and the occasional cyclist.

It has been pleasing to see many families with young children out cycling during the present lockdown but a return to the pre-covid-19 habits will render such cycling too high risk. I contrast this with my time living in the Netherlands where cycling is a natural activity for people of all ages and respected. The biggest personal change I made as a motorist was to give way to pedestrians and cyclists when turning right or left because of their priority system with highly visible signage including ‘sharks teeth’. I find it appalling that the UK still tolerates so many deaths and life changing injuries by favouring vehicles turning at junctions.

Apart from the safety factor in infrastructure, I consider that secure bicycle parking is another necessary ingredient to enable more people to use the bike for commuting and shopping/social purposes. Even with the planned improvement of cycle routes for Edinburgh I will be unlikely to use my bike for shopping/social trips etc. if I fear for its theft.

I sincerely hope that Scotland can transition to become one of the best places in the World for an infrastructure that puts people and planet first. I trust that best practices and experiences internationally are being assessed and utilised. As an example, I hope that we can emulate the infrastructure and societal norms that Utrecht is delivering.

Utrecht exemplar: *Planning for People & Bikes, Not for Cars*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Boi0XEm9-4E&feature=youtu.be>