

TRANSITION BLACK ISLE TRANSPORT PROJECT PROPOSAL - CYCLING

Project description and costs

This is just about the cycling part of what will ideally be a bigger project.

I propose we target two or three villages initially, with the aim of establishing cycling as a normal method of transport, something done by ordinary people as a matter of course rather than a special event that needs special clothes and expensive gear. In these villages we should identify some volunteers who are prepared to act as ambassadors for the scheme, and we should use their views to help decide which measures are particularly suited to their village.

We should aim for different types of village, so that lessons learnt can then be applied to other villages. There is already some interest in the project in North Kessock, which has a primary school, is in easy commuting distance from Inverness, and has a monthly community market which could provide a focus for events. A complementary village might be Fortrose/ Rosemarkie – too far for most people to cycle to Inverness regularly, but easy trips for shopping, and of course there's the Academy. There is also some interest in Muir of Ord, which has a different character again, so that might be good to follow up.

We will contract a project officer for a year for 2½ days per week to co-ordinate the work and liaise with schools, volunteers, Community Councils and THC. The cost of this will be £20,250, assuming 45 working weeks a year.

We will arrange training for a small number of volunteers to enable them to, in turn, offer training to adults. The training should take the form of a programme of sessions with specific topics, ranging from bike maintenance to cycling in towns, and would include routes of differing standards of difficulty. Trainers would be paid £150 for a 12 hour training course; we will run one course in each village. The training for the trainers costs £1,000 from Cycle Scotland.

The project officer will identify suitable cycling routes on the Black Isle. He/ she will endeavour to have the routes marked on internet-based maps. In the long term it would be good to produce a hard copy cycling map of the Black Isle, but this isn't feasible for a pilot study such as this.

The project officer will liaise with schools in the chosen villages to identify ways of increasing the number of students walking or cycling to school. This may connect with the selection of cycle routes, which may in turn lead to funding from Highland Council. Given the schemes available for schools (see below under policy support), it has been assumed that no extra costs will arise.

We should discuss with Highland Council the possibility of signage for the cycle routes identified. Cost unknown.

We will endeavour to install bike racks at three strategic bus stops/ railway stations. Assume cost of £1,000 including installation.

We will arrange 2 events in each of the villages. These could include bike maintenance workshops, film shows, sales of reconditioned bikes, demonstrations of accessories, and ideally something to appeal to women and girls, who are less likely to be cyclists. A cycling fashion show is one idea, on the basis that we need to show that folk can get to school/ work on a bike without compromising their image. Costs for each event are estimated at £210, made up of venue hire £60, promotion £100, guest costs £50.

There will also need to be a budget for postage, stationery, travel, and other miscellaneous costs. I suggest £1,000, which should be enough to give a bit of a contingency.

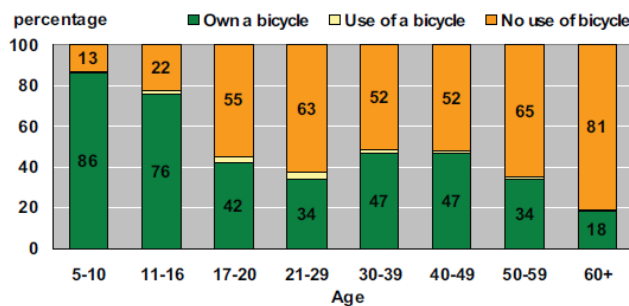
This gives a total project cost of £24,960 for working with three villages.

Background to the proposed activity

The measures proposed are intended to address barriers to cycling which have been identified in other studies.

These are:

- The availability of a bike – bike ownership is around 80% up to the age of 16, but falls steeply to around 40% for adults, and falls again for those aged over 60.



According to the Scottish Households Survey, in 2008 37% of households had access to a bike, compared with 70% which have access to a car. On the other hand, a small survey carried out by North Howe Transition Toun concluded that over 75% of households in their rural area had at least one bike, and 95% at least one car – so maybe, in rural areas, people are more likely to have bikes – or maybe the figures are distorted by kids' bikes.

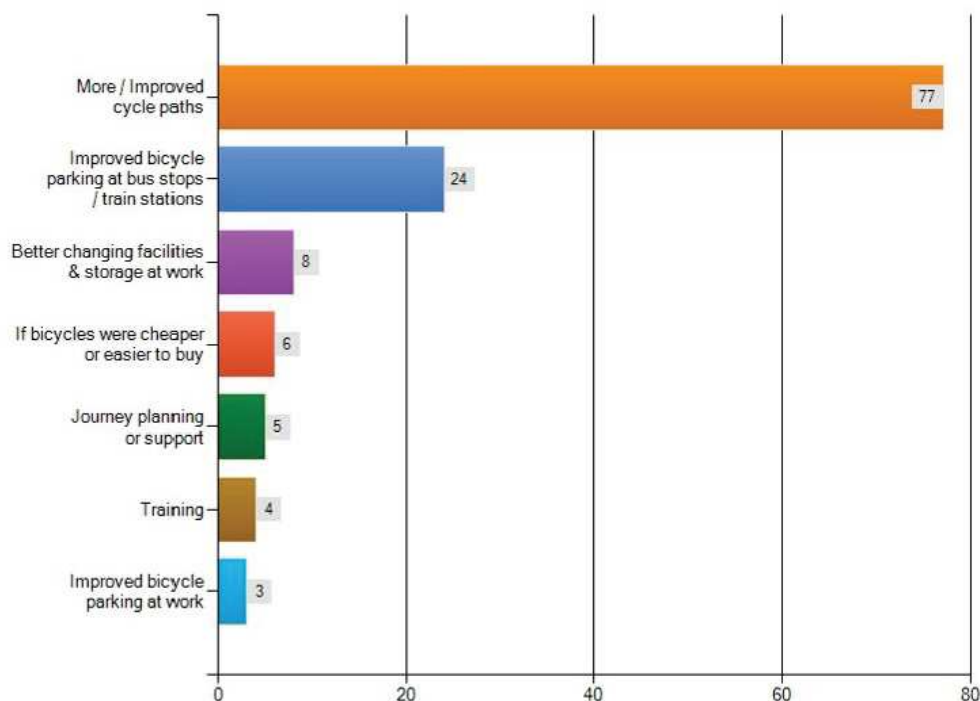
- Safety concerns – this was cited as a major issue both in the Fife Cycling Charter and in a research paper produced by NHS Scotland. According to the Fife document, women (85%) are more likely than men (61%) to raise safety as an issue.
- Road conditions.
- Risk of bike being stolen (but this was in an urban survey, maybe less relevant here).
- Hills/ physical effort.
- Weather.

There may also be other barriers which people are less likely to admit to:

- Cycling isn't "cool". There is a suggestion that, for schoolgirls in particular, bikes don't fit with their desired image. This may be because the most common bikes accentuate their rugged characteristics.
- People who haven't cycled for a while may be lacking in confidence (i.e. it may be that part of the concern about safety reflects a confidence issue rather than a real danger). This is probably not helped by a perception that cyclists have to wear specialist clothes, helmets, etc.

The North Howe Transition Toun survey found the following, focussing on projects that they were already planning to implement:

3.7 Would any of the following encourage people in your household to cycle more?



Removing the barriers

Worries about safety seem to be the main barrier to cycling. Cycle Scotland suggest that the concern about safety is more to do with perception than reality, and they also point out, pragmatically, that it's unlikely public money will be made available for major infrastructure works to build new cycle tracks.

The following measures are proposed to improve the safety of cycling, or improve novice cyclists' confidence:

- Investigate and publicise safe cycling routes;
- Upgrade existing footpaths to accommodate bikes;
- Training to emphasise safe cycling on roads;
- Arrange short, safe, "fun rides" to encourage the less fit/ confident. These could be incorporated into the training programme.

The availability of bikes can be addressed by:

- Offering bike workshops to get old bikes back on the road. (NB Sustaining Dunbar offer a £25 voucher to be spent on bike accessories (lights/ waterproofs/ panniers/ etc.) or maintenance. To get the voucher you have to make a pledge, saying how you'll use it to cycle more. This needs a bit more investigation, but on the face of it, £25 doesn't seem enough to make that much of a difference);
- Source unwanted bikes, service them and offer them to borrow or buy for a nominal sum;
- Alternatively we could work with Black Ridge Bikes, who hold a monthly sale of used, reconditioned bikes in Inverness, see <http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/33B1E75B-A8AA-4FB7-81D9-AFC349A61910/0/Usedbikessales.pdf>

In addition, given the distances typically involved in commuting from the Black Isle, we should identify a number of key interchanges with buses/ trains, and ensure there are bike racks available there. These should be publicised via timetables. This approach was supported by the North Howe Transition Town survey. This is how it works in rural Finland:



There are lots of other possible activities, which may not have such a significant direct impact, but would help to give "critical mass" to the project and help with the idea that cycling can be a mainstream activity:

- Demonstrations of tandems, electric bikes; bike trailers, kiddie cranks, and other accessories;
- Promote cycling to specific events (community markets, arts events, etc., maybe a discount on admission for folk arriving under their own steam);
- Village "Leave the Car at Home" days – as suggested at the North Kessock meeting;
- Actions to promote cycling to school. I think this could make a big impact, and this is supported by Mike Atkinson's comments, but have found little to support the idea in the literature;
- A bike fashion evening – there's quite a lot of evidence that women cycle considerably less than men, and this would be a way to take the message to a

new audience. It would be even better if we could get some of the teenagers at Fortrose Academy to organise it.

- “Cycle trains” – where an organised cycle is arranged at set times. For instance, a commuter run from North Kessock to Inverness, out in the morning, back in the evening, maybe a few days a week. In Stirling they’ve added in the loan of bike lights and made this an autumn affair to keep people cycling into the winter.

Policy Support for Cycling

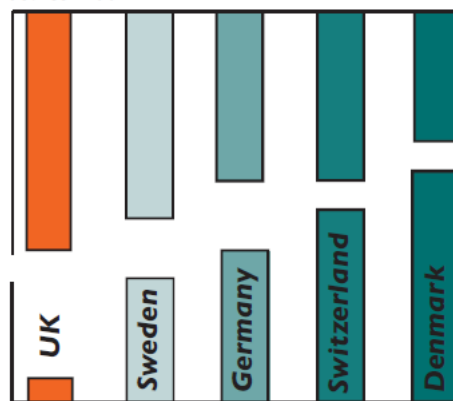
The Scottish Government target is that 10% of all journeys should be by bike by 2020, compared with 1.5% now.

Highland Council seems to put quite a low priority on cycling, although they have various schemes aimed at their own employees. The Council is, however, promoting a Scottish Government initiative to encouraging walking and cycling to school, and funds are available for schools to develop safe routes to school – up to a maximum of £30,000/ school/ year. The aims are more linked to health than to carbon reduction. As you’d imagine from the funding levels, some of the projects are quite ambitious – Munloch Primary School has a new path with a footbridge, see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/highlandcouncil/6048946069/in/set-72157627446840566/>, and on a slightly smaller scale Mulbuie Primary School has a footpath <http://www.flickr.com/photos/highlandcouncil/6048946179/in/set-72157627446840566/>. Lots of the pictures on THC website show new bike sheds.

Much of the policy support for cycling is based on health benefits, rather than carbon emissions. This graphic from the Cycling Charter for Fife is telling:

Obesity and Cycling Levels in Different Countries

Overweight children aged around 10 years
Source 2002



Levels of cycling in selected countries
Source 1996-2002

There may also be scope to link with the NHS, and in particular it would be disappointing if we didn’t get some support from local GP’s.

Justification of costs

The scale of the plan needs to be consistent with the anticipated carbon savings. If we assume the work focuses on Fortrose/ Rosemarkie and North Kessock and one other

village, the total population involved may be around 3,500 to 4,000. Assuming each of those makes an average of one journey a day of 4 km. by car, and on average there are 1.5 occupants of the car, that would indicate a total car distance of 10,000 km per day, or 3.65 million km per year. Given the current figure of 1.5% of all trips being undertaken by bike, and assuming twice that proportion for these short journeys, we might expect 109,500 km/ year to be undertaken by bike, and a reasonable target might be to double that, saving another 109,500 car-km per year. That corresponds to 26.5 tonnes of CO₂e, so the cost per tonne looks like £941 of cost per tonne of CO₂e saved. Our successful 2010-11 CCF bid anticipated a cost of £472/ tonne CO₂e, and our unsuccessful 2011-12 bid £971/ tonne (that may not have been the final figure) so this cost looks to be on the high side. However, it should be possible to build in additional savings from increased use of public transport (due to the bike racks) and from extending parts of the project (e.g. the work with schools) to apply to walking as well as cycling.

An extra factor which needs to be considered is that there is funding available for “Cycle Friendly Communities” from Cycle Scotland. Applications can be for up to £10,000. To be considered in the first batch, applications need to be submitted by 20th November but there will be further dates in January and March. The Cycle Scotland objectives are not so specifically linked to CO₂ reductions, they are interested in getting more of a cycling culture – in line with Government target of 10% of journeys by bike by 2020. From speaking to Cycle Scotland, our aspirations seem to be very much in line with the funding criteria.

We could also encourage schools to apply for funding for cycle routes to schools, see above re. Highland Council policy – but I don’t think we can count on this without more work to find out which schools are already active in this respect.

Legacy

One of CCF’s criteria for funding is that the project should leave a legacy. In this case we’ll have bike racks at bus stops/ railway stations, skilled trainers, increased skills in the community in terms of bike maintenance and cycling. We’ll also have a better understanding of how to improve the take-up of cycling in other Black Isle villages.

Action needed to complete the CCF bid

We need better information on the likely CO₂e reductions the programme can achieve.

We need to get support from Highland Council.

It would be good to identify the villages to be included in the pilot, and to get the support of the schools.

We should approach GPs’ surgeries to get their support, and explore whether there’s scope for additional support from NHS regionally.

Costings need to be sharpened up, and need to include a contribution to core TBI costs (insurance, website, audit, book-keeping, etc.). In particular, a more detailed analysis of the project officer’s time is required.