



Growing the evidence base that cycling is good for health and the economy

Seminar report

Tuesday May 21st, 2013
St Andrew's in the Square, Glasgow

Glasgow Centre for Population Health
July 2013

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to:

- Glasgow City Council (Land and Environmental Services) colleagues for help with planning the seminar.
- GCPH staff, in particular Carol Frame and Ricky Fleming, for organisation and delivery of the event.
- All the speakers for their insightful and stimulating presentations.
- Facilitators for co-ordinating table discussions and taking notes.
- Delegates for their attendance and participation.

Introduction

It almost seems too obvious to state that physical activity is good for our physical and mental wellbeing, but many Scottish adults and children are still not active enough to benefit their health. Walking or cycling rather than using the car for short, regular day-to-day journeys is a very good way to incorporate physical activity into daily routines and is not only good for individual and community health, but is also good for the environment.

The Scottish government has set a national target that by 2020, 10% of all journeys should be by bicycle. Efforts to increase numbers of cycling journeys are being made by many groups and organisations across Scotland through improving physical infrastructure and through promotional campaigns. However, in comparison with other European countries where cycling is much more prevalent, the proportion of journeys made by bicycle in Scotland remains low, at less than 2% of all journeys. As part of its programme of research and data analysis on transport and travel, the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) conducted a health economic analysis of cycling data in Glasgow. This analysis estimated the health economic benefits of cycling related to reduced mortality using annual cycle cordon count data collected by Glasgow City Council, and revealed the estimated health benefit to be over £4 million.

Research seminar

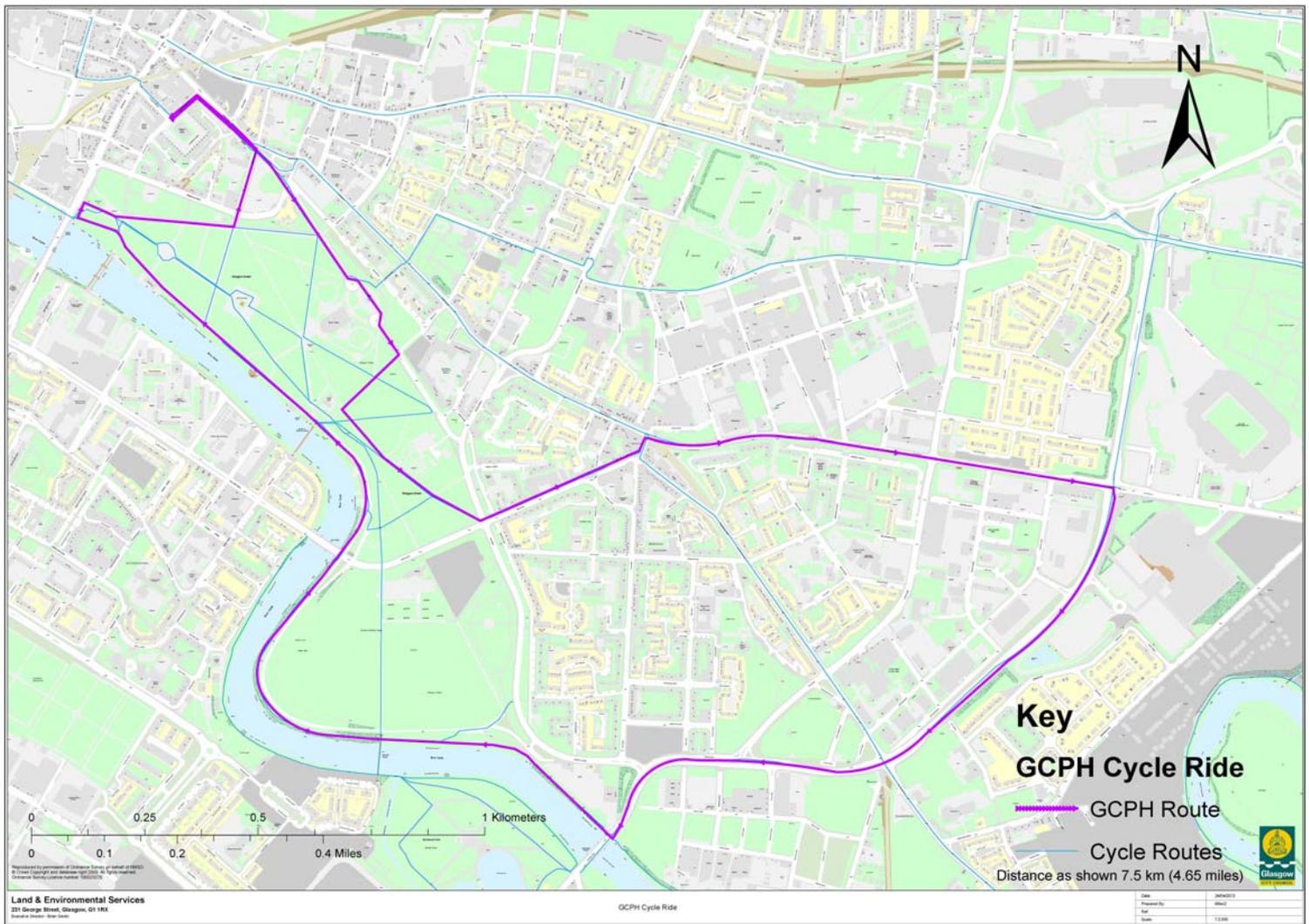
On the morning of Tuesday 21st May 2013, the GCPH, in collaboration with Glasgow City Council's Land and Environment Services (LES), held a research seminar to present results from the health economic analysis and to discuss the potential for greater use of health economics in making the case for investment and leadership around active travel measures. The seminar programme can be found in Appendix 1.

The seminar was attended by approximately 60 delegates from a range of backgrounds (see Appendix 2 for delegate list). Fiona Crawford, a Public Health Programme Manager at the GCPH, chaired the event and guided plenary discussions and feedback with the help of a number of facilitators. All of the speakers' presentations are available on the GCPH website [here](#).

Cycle ride

Prior to the start of the seminar, a guided 7.5km cycle ride around the local area took place. Fifteen delegates joined this short tour and were able to experience first-hand the cycle infrastructure in the East End of Glasgow and around some of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games venues. Delegates were encouraged to provide feedback on the cycle route by placing notes onto a map of the route.

A list of comments provided by those who participated can be found in Appendix 3 and a short accompanying film can be viewed on the GCPH website [here](#).



Top: The cycle route (shown in purple) taken by the participants of the seminar.

Above: Notes on the cycle route (see Appendix 3 for more details).

Right: Delegates listen to the presentations.

Presentations

The keynote presentation, ‘Promoting cycling and walking – is it worth it?’, was delivered by Dr Nick Cavill who was a member of the core team that created the World Health Organization’s health economic assessment tool (HEAT). Nick began by outlining various methods for estimating the value and cost-effectiveness of measures to promote physical activity. He then explained how the HEAT tool was developed, how it works and how it is being utilised across Europe. Nick concluded his presentation by highlighting other tools and approaches that can be used to estimate the cost of physical inactivity as well as the economic value of weight loss interventions.

Bruce Whyte, a Public Health Programme Manager at the GCPH, then presented the GCPH’s health economic analysis of Glasgow cycling data (the summary briefing paper¹ can be downloaded from the GCPH website [here](#)). In his presentation, Bruce reminded the audience of the growing consensus regarding the potential of cycling to contribute to a wide range of public health goals and the need for greater commitment to this agenda from decision-makers. He highlighted a recent All Party Parliamentary Enquiry² which concluded that there was a need for greater vision, ambition and strong political leadership if higher levels of cycling were to be realised amongst people from all ages and backgrounds.

The main finding of the HEAT analysis was that the annual estimated benefit from current levels of cycling commuting into and out of Glasgow city centre was over £4 million.



Nick Cavill (left) presents his keynote lecture. Bruce Whyte (right) explains the recent findings of the HEAT analysis.

A short period of plenary discussion followed Nick and Bruce’s presentations. There was debate regarding whether there was evidence that active children grow into active adults and the consensus that, although there is a lack of robust quantitative evidence regarding tracking of this behaviour throughout the life-course, promotion of physical activity in childhood was still vital.

Nick was asked by one delegate if the HEAT analysis had influenced policy decisions – he responded that a range of case studies are due to be published online by the World Health Organization illustrating where and how HEAT analyses have been used, but he acknowledged that it was still difficult to influence political decision-making.

The issue of where health economic benefits accrue was raised by another delegate who suggested that the benefits were realised by health services but most of the costs were borne by local authority transport departments. Increases in funding for cycling come from national and local government transport budgets earmarked for transport purposes rather than for health purposes. The delegate felt that asking politicians to invest in transport measures which will benefit health services was difficult, politically. Fiona responded to this point, highlighting examples of integrated joint health and local authority budgets in operation in England, which allow benefits such as these to be more explicitly shared. In addition, the forthcoming Scottish Health & Social Care legislation will streamline the use of resources in Scotland – this is an opportunity to make arguments now in relation to where costs are borne and where benefits are felt to ensure a more enlightened approach to the use of resources. Finally, greater numbers of cycling journeys will directly benefit local authority spending through fewer cars on the road, resulting in reduced need for road maintenance, less traffic congestion and cleaner air. Bruce added that there are signs of investment in cycling infrastructure around the new Southern General Hospital site in Glasgow, funded by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, in recognition of the importance of the provision of good quality, safe cycling infrastructure for staff and visitors.

Two further presentations followed after coffee:

- a) Chris Paterson from MVA Consultancy provided an overview of MVA's work on monitoring cycle usage across Scotland and a health economic analysis of the health benefits of the Forth and Clyde Union Canals.
- b) Collin Little from Glasgow City Council's Land and Environment Services presented GCC's progress in relation to the development of cycling and cycling infrastructure in Glasgow.

Following Collin's presentation, one delegate commented that there seemed to be a clear contrast between the strategic corridors for cars and buses from the periphery of the city into the centre and the tortuous cycle routes which were much less direct. The delegate asked whether there was the potential to redistribute some of the road space (dual carriageway in places) from motorised vehicular travel to more active travel in the form of cycle routes. Collin Little responded agreeing that redistribution of road space was important. He referred to initiatives such as *Smarter Choices* and *Connect 2* which have involved the development of cycling corridors through using existing road space and expressed a hope to see further developments of this type in the city.

Table discussions and feedback

Following the presentations, delegates were asked to engage in discussion at their tables. Three questions for discussion (shown below) were provided but it was stressed that these were not obligatory and that views and recommendations for action on other questions would be most welcome.

- 1. What practical actions need to be taken to achieve the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland's vision for 2020 of 10% of all journeys to be made by bicycle?**
- 2. How can issues of vehicle speed and safety be addressed to encourage more cycling?**
- 3. What can we learn from other places, here or abroad?**

Feedback provided during the plenary session and through facilitators' notes is summarised below:

1. What practical actions need to be taken to achieve the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland's vision for 2020 of 10% of all journeys to be made by bicycle?

- The development of a more cohesive approach to new infrastructure and public transport (the present approach is regarded as fragmented). This includes better alignment of agendas and policy in relation to cycling, transport, health and planning.
- Low-cost initiatives to create better conditions for cyclists could be introduced as interim measures but more controversial measures such as the introduction of congestion charging and increases in car parking charges are also important.
- More prominent leadership, finance and action on the ground. As one delegate said: "We know what we need to do. We just need to get on and do it now."
- Mainstreaming active travel and changing culture through a number of approaches such as: normalising cycling and making it 'fashionable'; encouraging children to cycle while young; increasing the diversity of cycling; and creating better provision for deprived groups/communities.

2. How can issues of vehicle speed and safety be addressed to encourage more cycling?

- Introduce extensive 20mph zones around Glasgow to reduce the traffic speed using a range of measures (including traffic calming where appropriate).
- Extend and promote park and ride schemes.
- Use technology to enforce 20mph speed limits through installing speed caps on public sector vehicles and installing sensors on large vehicles which alert drivers to nearby cyclists.
- Promote the pedestrian agenda and use enforcement to discourage cyclists from flouting the law such as jumping red lights.
- Improve the 'permeability' of urban areas for pedestrians and cyclists through removing unnecessary street furniture and paraphernalia and making streets people-friendly.

3. What can we learn from other places, here or abroad?

- Closing the city centre to cars on selected days to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to move freely about the streets. This initiative was first introduced in Bogota in 1974 where it is known as a 'Ciclovía' – a weekly, city-wide, car-free day that renders 76 miles of roads, including the city's main commercial centre, off-limits to cars. 'Ciclovias' have proved very popular and have been introduced in a number of other Latin American cities.
- Cycle training sessions such as those delivered in Austin, Texas, where adults who would like to cycle but who lack confidence are provided with training and support delivered by university students.

- Use of legislation, such as in Wales where the Welsh Assembly has introduced an [Active Travel Bill](#). The Bill places a requirement on local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for walkers and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Bill will also require new road schemes to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the design stage.
- Shared space initiatives such as that of Poynton, Cheshire, where a number of infrastructural changes have been made to the urban environment to generate a shared space between pedestrians and motor traffic. Measures include the creation of a sequence of informal crossings highlighting pedestrian desire lines, a central reservation to assist pedestrians to cross, narrow traffic lanes to keep vehicular speeds low, and repaved footways, including the re-paving of the private shop forecourts to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Consideration of measures introduced in other cities of similar size and urban design such as congestion charging which was introduced in Gothenburg, Sweden, in January 2013 and which led to a 20% reduction in the volume of car traffic in the city centre.

Final presentation

Councillor Frank McAveety provided delegates with a closing address in his capacity as Lead Councillor for cycling in the city. He agreed that increased levels of cycling in Glasgow would be enormously beneficial to the city not only in terms of improved individual health and wellbeing, but also in relation to a better quality, cleaner urban environment and greater economic vibrancy. However, for the rhetoric to be translated into reality he considered that a different dynamic was needed involving greater integration across Council departments, better dialogue and enhanced joint learning.

Councillor McAveety felt that it was important to redesign infrastructure that had been created in the past for motor vehicles rather than for pedestrians and cyclists. He referred to the Sighthill area as a neighbourhood with great potential for redevelopment and indicated that he would like to bring proposals to fellow councillors regarding possibilities for action to progress cycling in the area.

He acknowledged that further debates were needed regarding the availability of resources to redesign streetscapes that could support safe, pleasant, active travel, particularly for children and young people. Councillor McAveety concluded by stating that he believed that increased cycling will contribute to a better future for Glasgow.

References

1. Glasgow Centre for Population Health. Briefing Paper Findings Series 37: Cycling is good for health and the economy. Glasgow: GCPH; 2013. Available at: http://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/431_findings_series_37-cycling_is_good_for_health_and_the_economy
2. All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group. Get Britain Cycling: summary and recommendations. London: All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group, House of Commons; 2013. Available at: <http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling1.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme

Appendix 2: Delegate list

Appendix 3: Comments on cycle route

Appendix 1: Programme



Growing the evidence base that cycling is good for health and the economy

Tuesday 21st May 2013, 10am – 1pm
St Andrew's in the Square, Glasgow

Programme

9 00 – 9.30	Bike ride
9.30 – 10.00	Coffee and registration
10.00 – 10.10	<i>Introduction</i> Fiona Crawford, Glasgow Centre for Population Health
10.10 – 10.30	<i>Keynote address:</i> <i>Promoting cycling and walking – is it worth it?</i> Nick Cavill, Cavill Associates
10.30 – 10.45	<i>Health economic benefits of cycling in Glasgow</i> Bruce Whyte, Glasgow Centre for Population Health
10.45 – 11.10	Table/plenary discussion
11.10 – 11.30	Coffee and networking
11.30 – 11.45	<i>Measuring and evaluating cycling levels in Scotland - why and how?</i> Chris Paterson, MVA Consultancy
11.45 – 12.00	<i>Cycling in Glasgow – previous work and future strategy</i> Collin Little, Glasgow City Council
12.00 – 12.30	<i>Table discussions</i>
12.30 – 12.50	<i>Facilitated feedback session</i>
12.50 – 1.00	<i>Closing comments</i>
1.00	Lunch and networking

Appendix 2: Delegate list



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Delegate list

Forename	Surname	Organisation
Norman	Armstrong	Free Wheel North & Cycling Centre
Adam	Beattie	South Lanarkshire Council
Iain	Beverland	University of Strathclyde
Lucinda	Broadbent	Media Co-op
Fiona	Cameron	North Ayrshire Council
Fiona	Campbell	Glasgow City Council
Isla	Campbell	Scottish Natural Heritage
Nick	Cavill	Cavill Associates Ltd
Gregory	Chauvet	The Bike Station
Fiona	Crawford	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Gilbert	Davidson	Glasgow City Council
Dave	du Feu	SPOKES
Alan	Duff	Glasgow City Council
Patricia	Fort	GoBike
John	Galilee	Transport Scotland
Scott	Gibson	East Renfrewshire Council
Iris	Gibson	Glasgow City Council
Philip	Glennie	Sustrans
Steve	Gray	Glasgow City Council – LES
Peter	Hayman	CTC Scotland
David	Hazle	Glasgow City Council
Martin	Higgins	NHS Lothian
Michele	Hilton Boon	Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Dave	Holladay	Independent Specialist Integrated Transport
Colin	Howden	Transform Scotland
Mark	Irwin	Glasgow City Council
Nathan	Kaczmarek	Cycling Scotland
Maureen	Kidd	University of Glasgow
Martyn	Lings	City of Edinburgh Council
Collin	Little	Glasgow City Council – LES
Matthew	Lowther	NHS Health Scotland
Alasdair	Macdonald	Sustrans

Gail	Macfarlane	East Dunbartonshire Council
Allan	MacLean	Glasgow City Council – LES
Frank	McAveety	Glasgow City Council
Calum	McCallum	Transform Scotland
Gerry	McCartney	NHS Health Scotland
Talia	McCray	Glasgow Urban Lab
Mark	McDowall	Glasgow City Council
Marjorie	Marshall	Scottish Government
Niamh	Martin	NHS Health Scotland
Gerry	Mitchell	The Bike Station
Laura	Mullen	Renfrewshire CHP Health Improvement Team
Chris	Paterson	MVA Consultancy
Roz	Pollock	Freelance Development Officer in Mountain Biking
Louise	Rennick	NHS Health Scotland
Simon	Rennie	Central Scotland Forest Trust
Callum	Robertson	South Ayrshire Council
Pete	Seaman	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Scott	Sherwood	TSB Future Cities Demonstrator Programme
Deborah	Shipton	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Allan	Stewart	Glasgow City Council
Clare	Strain	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
Vicki	Trim	Health Improvement Consultant
Sean	Webster	City of Edinburgh Council
Bruce	Whyte	Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Appendix 3: Comments on cycle route

General comments

- It would be interesting to know why more people didn't take up the opportunity?
- Great cycle, enjoyed the chance to chat with a colleague that I haven't seen for a while ...a cycle conference, cycle communication, bike 'n' blether, wheels 'n' words... (Vicki Trim)

Right hand turn from A728 onto Clydeside cycle path

- Signage poles – could be hard to see and possible chance of collision

Glasgow Green

- Glasgow Green is wonderful for cycling!

London Road at Moir Street

- Very poor round the bus stop

London Road at Bridgeton Cross

- Terrible here – cycle lane stops (?) – market stalls – busy junction – buses, cars – urgh!

London Road – section between Summer Street and Kirkpatrick Street

- Segregated cycle way – fine for part of the into town journey, not convenient for going out of town

London Road

- Two-way cycle track on London Road should continue, not join the footway as shared use

Clyde Gateway at the Commonwealth Arena

- Poor – on and off the footway and out into the traffic at the traffic lights! How dangerous is that?



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