

**Joint Meeting of the
Cross Party Group on Lung Health, Cross Party Group on Heart Disease & Stroke, and
Cross Party Group on Cycling, Walking and Buses**

19 March 2019 6pm-7.30pm
Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament

MINUTES

Attendance

MSPs

Colin Smyth (Chair)
Alexander Stewart)
Alison Johnstone

Secretariat

Katherine Byrne	Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS)
Frank Toner	British Lung Foundation (Scotland)
Mark James	Transform Scotland

Members and guests

Alison Sweeney	British Lung Foundation (Scotland)
Huw Cook	British Lung Foundation (Wales)
Gavin Thomson	Friends of the Earth Scotland
Daniel Jones	British Heart Foundation
Linda McLeod	Breatheasy, Clackmannanshire
Mostyn Tuckwell	Breathtakers
George Mair	CPT Scotland
Tom Fardon	NHS Tayside
Ian Findlay	Paths For All
Alex Quayle	Sustrans Scotland
Tom Bishop	Scottish Cycling
Damian Crombie	Astrazeneca
George Davidson	GlaxoSmithKline
Nina Sanders	Cycling Scotland & The Braveheart Association
Colin Howden	Transform Scotland
Michaela Jackson	Spokes
Dave de Feu	Spokes
Fergus Boden	Friends of the Earth Scotland
Elizabeth Reather	Cycling UK
John Donnelly	GoBike
Andrew Deans	NHS Lothian
Claire Daly	Sustrans Scotland
Luis Loria	Health Economics Research Unit, Aberdeen Univ.

1. Welcome from Convener

Colin Smyth, Co-Convener of the CPG Heart Disease & Stroke welcomed members of the 3 Cross Party Groups. He highlighted that the Stage 1 debate of the Transport Bill was due to take place in 2 weeks.

2. Transport (Scotland) Bill

Gavin Thomson from Friends of the Earth outlined the potential impact of the Bill on air pollution.

- Different sections of the Bill provide an opportunity to improve air quality, in particular providing the legislative basis for Low Emission Zones in city centres. LEZs allow the worst polluting vehicles to be moved away from people.
- Friends of the Earth's position on the LEZ section of the Bill includes concerns about how much is left to local authorities' discretion, rather than national standards which would ensure LEZs operate in the same way across locations. The Bill should also ensure local authorities tackle persistent air pollution problems, but it permits them to extend timescales and use exemptions if they wanted to delay taking action
- The section on pavement parking needs clarification that pedestrians are prioritised.
- Need to be powers for local authorities to better regulate bus services and run services. Bus patronage needs to be driven up as a priority.
- The detail of the controversial amendment to incorporate a workplace parking levy needs to be developed. Nottingham has successfully introduced a levy. Such methods can disincentivise car use, and bring investment in public transport (eg trams in Nottingham).
- Mark Ruskell's Private Members' Bill to introduce a 20mph speed limit is at Stage 1 of consideration by the Scottish Parliament. Together with the provisions in the Transport Bill this could help create conditions which prioritise pedestrians and reduce emissions.

Colin Smyth outlined the 4 different sections to the Bill, and invited questions and discussion by members. The following points were raised:

Pavement parking

- The Bill bans pavement parking, with some exemptions. The scrutinising committee considered exemptions for deliveries, but concluded they should be removed. There will be exemptions on certain streets in built-up areas, and for emergency vehicles. Not all local authorities yet have the power to enforce parking restrictions and the committee has urged the Scottish Government to make the process of decriminalising parking easier.
- Parents dropping children at school are some of the biggest culprits for leaving their cars idling, affecting the levels of air pollution. However they often aren't aware of the dangers of poor air quality, particularly for children.
- There are issues with parking in cycling lanes which need to be tackled, with some members believing it should be illegal. The committee had asked for clarification on the position with the legislation, and was assured the parking restrictions could be extended to cycle ways.

Members highlighted wider issues with fully integrated cycling infrastructure, how parking could be enforced, and the need for culture change.

Low Emission Zones (LEZs)

- The provisions in the Bill for LEZs were generally welcomed by members.
- There are issues however with the lack of national standards which will result in different systems being in place between cities – one vehicle might pass through 3 or more different cities within a day. There were also concerns raised with the powers of local authorities around when a LEZ is in operation.
- Alison Johnstone highlighted the need for both cultural change and robust legislation to ensure an intervention at the population level. It would be a dereliction of duty on local and national government's part not to prevent deaths from air pollution.
- Alexander Stewart raised the importance of personal, organisational and community responsibility to make culture change and to enforce requirements. A public campaign will be important.
- Measurement of success can include levels of local air pollution, and mortality rates (currently 2,500 excess deaths).
- The immediate impact of removing vehicles on air quality was highlighted by examples including the closure of Byers Road in Glasgow for the European Championships, and the London Marathon, which both led to an immediate drop in pollution.
- The key to air quality improvement is reduction of all vehicles on the road, including electric vehicles as 50% of particulates are produced by tyres and brakes, and a modal shift to active transport.
- Sustrans' YouGov poll in 2018 found 40% of school children are concerned about air pollution – but there is a lack of awareness amongst parents. This year their Big Pedal competition encourages schools to lead on local street closures, but uptake has been difficult with schools' concerns about a backlash from drivers.
- Edinburgh City's Transformation Plan includes some pedestrianisation and monthly car-free days. This could provide an example to other cities.
- Economic policies could also help tackle pollution – for example shifting jobs away from congested cities such as Edinburgh, and support economic growth outwith city centres. The example of HMRC's head office moving from Bathgate into Edinburgh city centre was given, with potentially 2,000 employees now needing to travel into Edinburgh to retain their jobs.

Buses

- Paths for All highlighted that increasing bus patronage should be a priority, in order to get people out of their cars. This should include behaviour change mechanisms which consider

the whole journey that people take, from their door to the bus-stop onwards, eg improving bus shelters and the walking journey.

- Alison Johnstone highlighted the importance of demand reduction. Congestion in Edinburgh has led to increased travel times and makes sticking to the timetable impossible, and removing cars from roads would create demand and reduce congestion.
- Phyllis Murphy highlighted the health impact of some public transport journeys for people with existing health conditions, which means they need to use a car. Stirling bus station for example has significant pollution due to being covered and being surrounded by congestion, and she has to avoid it.
- The Confederation of Public Transport highlighted the need for system change to tackle bus patronage and traffic congestion. The bus industry has to sustain businesses but also address environmental impact.
- City of Edinburgh Council will be holding a public consultation on extending bus lane hours to 7am-7pm, 7 days a week.
- Andrew Deans highlighted that many people working in Edinburgh have to live outside the city and travel in. But public transport between Edinburgh and outlying local authorities is not joined up, and new-build developments are not incorporating cycle ways or bus priority lanes. Cities cannot be looked at in isolation in planning LEZs and public transport.
- Examples were raised of lack of investment by authorities in cycling infrastructure, such as the A7 corridor and Midlothian Council.
- Public transport ticketing arrangements are not yet joined up through Smart Ticketing (as in London), which instead creates an incentive to drive. Journey experiences needs to be improved, in order to encourage use of public transport.
- The Bill does not fully address the tension between where responsibilities lie at local, regional, and national levels.
- LEZs will apply penalties, but they are not designed to bring in revenue.
- Colin Smyth highlighted that there will be significant opportunities to change the Bill through amendments.
- British Lung Foundation noted that Cardiff has just rejected plans for an LEZ, following a feasibility study which had limitations. It will instead be investing in improved buses. Rather than looking to have the cleanest air possible, the city is aiming instead to be compliant with standards.

3. Review of Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy

Daniel Jones from British Heart Foundation outlined the review of the Cleaner Air Strategy being undertaken by the Scottish Government.

- The purpose of the review is to consider whether the strategy is fit for purpose and needs updating. Professor Gemmell is leading the review.
- A Steering Group, has four Working Groups reporting to it which are taking evidence about the current position and identifying actions.
- A consultation will begin in May/June, with the revised strategy available by September, so the consultation period will be short.

The following points were then made in discussion:

Sustrans highlighted that the original Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy was reasonable, but most of the actions within it lie with local authorities, who weren't involved in its development. It's good that discussion is now focusing on what can be done at a national level.

It's welcome that the review is taking place simultaneously with the passage of the Transport Bill through Parliament.

4. Next steps

The key points about the Transport Bill raised during the meeting could be circulated to all MSPs in the name of the three CPGs, highlighting that the Bill needs to make a major contribution to tackling air pollution. Members are also encouraged to individually feed into Bill process.

Colin Smyth set out the Bill's timescales; Stage 2 will begin after recess and additional weeks will be allocated in order to take evidence on the Workplace Parking Levy.

5. Any other business

Mark Ruskell MSP has been successful in introducing his Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) Bill to Parliament, with the final evidence session at Stage 1 taking place the day following the joint CPG meeting. The Scottish Government's position seems to be that they support in principle, but perhaps don't see legislation as the best way forward.

Alison Johnstone highlighted the high level of public support for 20mph speed limits. This should be a public health measure, and it's unacceptable that variations exist in safety levels between cities. National leadership will be key.