

# Cross-Party Group on Sustainable Transport

12<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 18:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP (Convenor, chairing)  
Sarah Boyack MSP (Deputy Convenor)  
John Mason MSP (Deputy Convenor)  
Mark Ruskell MSP (Deputy Convenor)

Invited guests

Jenny Box (Cycling UK)  
Peter Eland (Bicycle Association)  
Alex Fitzhowie (Farr Out Deliveries)

Non-MSP Group Members

Ian Budd (Friends of the Far North Line)  
Jim Densham (Cycling UK)  
Sara Collier (Confederation of Passenger Transport)  
Rona Gibb (Paths for All)  
Patrick Miner (University of Edinburgh)  
Tom Flanagan (Socient)  
Naghat Ahmed (Glasgow City Council)  
Kim Harding (Edinburgh Festival of Cycling)  
Craig McGarrie (Intelligent Health)  
Colin Barnes (Lothian Bus)  
Suzanne Forup (Cycling UK)  
Iain Macdonald (Light Rail UK)  
Aaron McHale (University of Edinburgh)  
Corra Boushel (Cycling UK)  
Kate Samuels (Sustrans)  
Abigail Fletcher (Office of Graham Simpson MSP)  
Craig Horne (Office of John Mason MSP)  
Ken Haig (Fife College)  
Keith Irving (Cycling Scotland)  
Dave De Fue (Spokes)  
Lindsey Taylor (LNER)

David Winpenny (Heritage Railway Association)  
Craig Laws (Enterprise)  
Ros Browning (Transform Scotland)  
Colin Howden (Transform Scotland)  
Laura Hyde-White (Transform Scotland)  
Jenny Milne (SRITC)  
Ruxandra Cazan (Ore Valley Housing Association)  
Ralph Roberts (McGill's)

## Apologies

Claire Daly (Sustrans)  
Douglas Bryce (Disability Equality Scotland)  
Robert Samson (Transport Focus)  
Vick MacKinlay

## Agenda item 1 - Introductions

Graham Simpson MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes from the previous meeting were proposed by John Mason MSP and seconded by Sarah Boyack MSP.

Jim Densham (Cycling UK) offered a brief introduction into the micro-mobility topic. This is a transport mode growing in popularity that helps people to travel further distances more easily.

## Agenda item 2 – The Benefits of E-Bikes for People, Jenny Box (Cycling UK)

Jenny Box explained Cycling UK's programmes aimed at overcoming barriers to cycling, including the "Making Cycling Easier" project funded by the Department for Transport and Active Travel England. This includes skills and confidence training and loans through workplace and community hubs. One month e-cycle trials accelerating uptake.

"Rural Connections" programme across 5 local areas in Scotland reached 4000 people over the last year. Not purely an e-cycle programme but this is part of the offer. Transport Scotland funded "Cycle Share Fund" offers grants to community groups to purchase bikes – so far 29% of those have been awarded for e-cycle programmes.

These programmes seek to normalise e-cycling, making it more accessible and visible to people. 19% of those who availed of one-month loans went on to purchase an e-bike afterwards. Schemes have seen improvements in personal and road safety, increased feeling of parity with other road users.

Solutions are still required regarding financial responsibility and outlay, storage and security, maintenance, and batteries. Data-led approaches and better integration of e-cycles into broader programmes would be desirable, as would strategies to widen access to this mode.

## Agenda item 3 – The Economic Contribution and Potential for E-Bikes, Peter Eland (Bicycle Association)

Peter Eland outlined the economic contribution and potential for e-bikes. He explained that the technology for this mode has existed for 40 years, being first regulated in 1983 and then updated in 2015 to align with European regulations. These still apply and there is a high uptake for e-bikes in EU countries and indeed globally.

In the UK, there are 100 e-bike manufacturers and 300 distributors. E-bikes account for 23,000 direct jobs across the UK and the total value of sales is £2 billion annually. Technology is advancing as electrical assistance becomes lighter and more powerful.

Bicycle Association monthly data estimates that e-bikes make a value contribution of c.30% to the UK cycle industry. Affordability is a barrier – across Europe, there are 300 active e-bike subsidy schemes and in France there has been a rolling subsidy scheme since 2016.

Regulatory stability is needed to safeguard future of e-bikes. A national purchase subsidy would kickstart the market.

## Agenda item 4- E-Bikes for Deliveries and Other Businesses – Alex Fitzhowie (Farr Out Deliveries)

Alex Fitzhowie provided an oversight of Farr Out Deliveries, a sustainable cycle logistics company based in Edinburgh. Offers a solution to urban congestion and pollution especially for “last mile” journeys.

Estimates that 70% of inner-city deliveries could be made by cargo bike, cutting emissions by 90% compared to diesel vans and 33% compared to electric vans. Company uses practical and adaptable 2-6 wheel bikes.

Offer wholesale deliveries for c. 100 local businesses and a bookable service for individuals. Forthcoming study comparing Farr Out with traditional van journey found that this mode is less expensive and more efficient.

Cargo bike model more developed in London where there are c.20 providers. Funding to purchase bikes is an obstacle and more UK manufacturers are needed. Problems also with power – top speed is limiting (15mph).

Dave Du feu (Spokes) noted that Spokes have provided grants to local businesses including Farr Out.

## Agenda item 5- Discussion

Graham Simpson MSP opened the floor for discussion.

Mark Ruskell MSP asked about industry capacity to innovate and develop and problems with integration. Peter Eland responded that most e-bike supply comes from Europe and the Far East. Problems with excess stock after Covid.

Sarah Boyack MSP noted that cost of e-bikes can be prohibitive and shared her own positive experience of using e-bikes. She recommended that more employers signed up to the Bike to Work Scheme.

Jenny Milne asked about the use of cargo bikes in sub-urban and rural areas and noted an upcoming Royal Geographical Society event where rural examples will be shared.

Kim Harding made reference to European funding incentives. Peter Eland shared European Cyclists' Federation tax incentives and purchase premiums for cycling [Money for bikes: Tax incentives and purchase premiums for cycling in Europe | ECF](#)

Sara Collier shared UK Government guidance regarding fire risk of e-cycle and e-scooter batteries for public transport operators

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-cycle-and-e-scooter-batteries-managing-fire-risk-for-public-transport-operators/e-cycle-and-e-scooter-batteries-managing-fire-risk-for-public-transport-operators>

Kate Samuels raised affordability and accessibility barriers.

Jim Densham discussed e-bike potential for those who don't need cars in urban areas. Acknowledged this solution won't work for everyone but need to invest into infrastructure to help people feel like they can adopt this mode.

Mark Ruskell MSP raise the potential of hire bike fleets as a way to popularise e-bikes and offer an affordable, subscription-based way for people to use them.

Alex Fitzhowie highlighted problems with storage – cycle hoop hangers in Edinburgh have long waiting lists. Local government solutions are essential to address this. Ralph Roberts suggested that a higher percentage of on-street car parking spaces should be turned over to secure bike storage.

Corra Boushel noted that Cycling UK's access bikes scheme allows community organisations to purchase bikes, including e-bikes e.g. Climate Action Strathaven cargo bike delivery scheme.

Peter Eland made reference to a cargo bike rider training stander being developed by Bicycle Association <https://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk/cargo-bikes-cycle-logistics/?jump=consultation>

Graham Simpson MSP closed the meeting at 19:41. Made reference to appetite within the CPG to do more work on this area and come up with some proposals. Request made to those at the meeting to send top five recommendations for promoting e-bikes and e-cargo bikes.

**Action: Vice convenors and speakers to meet to discuss next steps.**

## **Minutes**

Draft minutes prepared by Abigail Fletcher on 14/03/24.