



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Active Travel: Department for Infrastructure

12 June 2024

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr John Stewart (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Danny Baker
Mr Keith Buchanan
Mr Stephen Dunne
Mr Mark Durkan
Mr Andrew McMurray
Mr Peter McReynolds

Witnesses:

Mr Colin Hutchinson	Department for Infrastructure
Mr Peter McParland	Department for Infrastructure

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): We now welcome Colin Hutchinson, director of active travel for the Department for Infrastructure, and Peter McParland, deputy director of active travel. Colin and Peter, you are very welcome. Thank you for your patience. In typical fashion, we ran over time in our questioning, but that just shows the members' interest in the topic. As we have done before, I will ask you to start off. We have the information that you sent, but you may want to take five or 10 minutes to brief members on how it is going in the Department. As usual, we will then head into questions for as long as it takes — within reason. I will hand over to you.

Mr Colin Hutchinson (Department for Infrastructure): Good morning, Chair and members. Thanks for the opportunity to give you an update on where we are with active travel delivery in the Department. I am the director of the A5 western transport corridor and active travel in the Department, so I think that I will see you again next week. With me is Peter McParland, who is the head of active travel in the Department.

I would like to cover a few areas. Given what you just heard and in order to avoid any duplication, I can probably shorten what I was going to say. For clarity, active travel, as we define it, is travelling by physically active means such as walking, wheeling and cycling. It is a great opportunity for anybody, from a personal perspective, not only to increase their health and fitness levels but to save the money in their pocket and to contribute to improving the environment. It is definitely a very important aspect for us.

I thought that it would be useful to set a bit of context for the structure of active travel in the Department. It is only in recent years, with the introduction not that many years ago of the blue-green fund, that we set up dedicated teams in the divisions in order to deliver active travel. We still have our traffic teams, which are responsible for delivering all our local transport and safety measures, and there is a major overlap between the two teams. The active travel teams in the divisions tend to take

forward the larger active travel infrastructure schemes. We have an active travel headquarters team as well. To put it in context, this time last year, we had about 20 people in the whole active travel team, and the structure was not for many more than that. We now have an approved structure of 59 posts, and about 30 of those are filled. In promoting active travel, the Minister recently said publicly on social media that we are really at the start of the journey, and there are lots of opportunities ahead of us. There are a number of challenges for us. One of the key areas is getting properly experienced and qualified people into those posts, but we are making slow headway on that. You will have heard evidence from other officials in the Department that filling posts is a problem across the board.

I will touch briefly on the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. It has been stated clearly that the Climate Change Act requires the Department to spend at least 10% of the transport budget on active travel. That is a really big challenge. It was touched on that we have to ramp up from what we spend now, which we said in the paper to the Committee is £10 million to £12 million per year, to a considerably higher figure. Work is ongoing to identify exactly what that is. The Act does not define a number of things, and it does not define what the transport budget is and which elements of the Department's budget make up that transport budget. We have a paper almost ready to go to the Minister for his consideration, and that will tell us what our interpretation of that figure should be.

Regardless of what the figure is, it will be considerably more than what we are delivering at the moment. I came into post on the active travel front in November 2022 and Peter came into post in August last year, and since then, our task has been to transform how we deliver active travel. The work that we have been doing over the past year has been enabling work to ensure that we can move forward. We have the procedures and capacity to deliver and ramp up.

We have done a number of things to ramp up. You heard from the Sustrans representatives that we have an active travel delivery plan for Northern Ireland, which we commissioned almost a year ago. That will define what active travel should be provided in our larger towns and cities and how we can connect them. That will join up with the Belfast cycling network (BCN) delivery plan and the greenways plan in order to try to provide proper connectivity.

One of the problems with delivery that our divisional teams had in the past few years is that they were always looking at low-hanging fruit — the quick wins. We needed to have a much more strategic plan that would provide a really good connected network across Northern Ireland. Whilst that plan focuses on the 42 urban towns with a population that is greater than 5,000, we acknowledge completely that rural areas have to have connectivity as well. That will be done through greenways and by providing footway links and cycle links in those areas.

A very important part of the commission that we have in the active travel delivery plan is an update to the design guidance that we use. We are completely and fundamentally changing the design guidance and how we look at cycle infrastructure. That update takes account of best practice across the other three nations and the Republic, and we worked closely with them in developing it. We feel that we will have a very good design guidance that will allow high-quality active travel infrastructure that connects across the network.

We have also changed how we procure our supply chain. One barrier in recent years has been the capacity not just of staff internally but that of our consultant partners to deliver designs and supervision. There has been tension, or conflict, about what takes priority and whether that should be active travel, an accident remedial scheme, traffic calming scheme or whatever it happens to be. We have done something about that, and it is out for procurement. Currently, one partner consultant sits close to our internal consultancy team, but we are procuring two partners, so we will have one consultancy partner who can deliver designs and supervision for north and south and one for west and east. That doubles our capacity for schemes that cost less than £5 million. For schemes that cost more than £5 million, such as the bigger greenways, we have reproposed our major projects framework commission, with active travel very much at the forefront in order to help councils to deliver on the greenways.

We have worked closely with councils over the past year to try to understand how we, as a Department, can help them to deliver greenways more efficiently. I have to say that the outcome has been learning that one process does not fit all. They all have different ways of doing things and different strengths, but we are committed to ensuring that we help them to move forward. We contribute about 50% of the funding for greenways. Councils generally take the lead, but we have worked closely with them to understand their five-year outlook so that we have a proper delivery plan for greenways and not just aspirations or a strategy. Some councils are ahead of others on that, and

we want to bring them all up to the same level. Over the past five years, we have invested about £17 million in greenways.

I will talk very briefly about delivery. Over the past couple of years, we have completed schemes such as the Lagan Gateway, Strathfoyle greenway and Jane's Shore, Downpatrick. In the past two years, among the four divisions, we have had over 100 schemes on the go, whether in design or construction, and we have delivered roughly £20 million of work on that. We have worked with the city and growth deal teams. We have committed funding for the Lagan pedestrian and cycle bridge, which is key infrastructure for delivery on the Belfast cycling network. The Strabane pedestrian and cycle bridge is also part of that work. Whilst we have been behind on the delivery of the Belfast cycling network, we believe that what we have done in the past year should bring the majority of the short-term schemes to fruition in 2025, which is broadly in line with what the original plan set out.

Last but not least, behavioural change is key. We took a few people in the team over to the Netherlands last year, and we witnessed first-hand not just the quality of the infrastructure that is in place but how they have been doing active travel since the 1960s, meaning that they are generations ahead of us. Behavioural change is key. We need to make sure that we educate everybody. Starting in schools is really important so that, if you are brought up with cycling as what you do, you are more likely, as an adult, to continue to cycle and to promote cycling to your peers.

Some 50% of children live within 1 mile of their school, and 22% of car journeys are under 2 miles. We totally recognise that, and one of our focuses will be safer routes to school. That will involve a combination of behavioural change and infrastructure. Somebody mentioned that there are simple things that you can do on school streets, and that is absolutely right. We have identified three pilots, where we will do that combination. It may well be that we put in some traffic calming measures or reduce speed limits on the streets at the schools. Interestingly, in the Netherlands, cars are not banned from school streets, but there is a saying that "the car is the guest". Again, that is down to behavioural change. It would be great if we could be at that point and if, in any street, not just school streets, the pedestrian and the cyclist are given priority not just on paper but in people's minds.

We talked about three different programmes, and you talked about cycling proficiency. I will not say too much about that, but I am sure that you will cover it. There is also the practical child pedestrian safety training, which we provided you with some information on. There is the Active School Travel programme, which is the flagship programme. I would like that programme to be developed and expanded so that it is not just a behavioural change programme for schoolchildren but a much wider change programme for the whole of society.

That has given you a feel of the fact that we are doing an awful lot of work. We are at the start of the journey at this point, and there are so many things that we can positively do in order to change active travel in Northern Ireland.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Colin and Peter, thank you very much for that. I have a couple of questions, and I will then open up the floor to members. I will focus on funding and delivery plans, and then I will tease out some of the issues that we discussed in the previous evidence session, because quite a bit came out of that.

The paper that you submitted states that significantly more capital investment will be required than has historically been the case. What is the indicative allocation for active travel in 2024-25, and how does it compare to previous years?

Mr Hutchinson: As you said, that is indicative at the moment. Any budgets are subject to equality screening. The capital allocation for next year is going to be somewhere close to double what it is this year, which, again, is a clear indication from the Minister about the priority that he is placing on active travel.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): While that is a significant increase, how far short does it fall from where it needs to be in order to deliver the active travel target?

Mr Hutchinson: I do not want to get into what 10% is; it is —.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Is that still up for debate, basically? Is that, effectively, what you are saying?

Mr Hutchinson: It is. Again, it goes back to the Climate Change Act. There are quite a few things that it did not define, one of which was the transport budget. You could argue that certain things are in and certain things are out.

The key point about the 10% is that it is money that has to come from somewhere. If the Department gets no more money in the Budget and the 10% has to come out of the Department's budget, that means that another critical service is not going to be funded. Those are really tough decisions. Alternatively, if the money were to be top-sliced before Departments get it, again, there would be difficult decisions to be made, because that is money that other Departments would not get. It is great from an active travel perspective to say that we have 10% coming. If we received 10% year-on-year, it would give us much more certainty, but there are difficult questions and decisions about where that 10% will come from.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Absolutely. I think that everyone is really aware of just how big the pressures on public finances are across every Department, but the reality is that that is a statutory obligation, and, in that respect, the money has to be found once what it is for is properly defined.

We heard in the previous session about the amount that is spent per head in other areas of the UK and in these islands. What is that figure comparative to Northern Ireland? We know where it is now. Where does it need to get to per head in order to be in the same realm?

Mr Hutchinson: I do not have the figures in front of me today, but it depends on which nation you are looking at. Some are better than others, and if you look at the figures from two or three years ago, which are the last ones that I have seen, you will see that we were not that far behind Highways England, I think that it was. We do not have the figures in front of us now, but we can give them to you.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): That would be useful.

Mr Peter McParland (Department for Infrastructure): It is worth mentioning that you need to be careful about comparing apples with oranges when comparing our active travel expenditure with that in other regions, because some functions that the Department for Infrastructure carries out centrally are done at the local authority level in other nations. In all those calculations or analyses, we need to be sure that we are comparing apples with apples when we talk about spend per head of the population.

Mr Hutchinson: The South, for example, spends in the high €300 millions per year, and that figure has ramped up from the €150 million or €200 million that it was a few years ago. We have worked quite closely with them to look at the model that they have put in place to deliver the spend, and we have unapologetically copied a lot of the good things that have worked for them and avoided what has not.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): It is key to have the right people in the right places with the right skills. How big a pressure are vacancies in the Department, particularly in the active travel section?

Mr Hutchinson: That is very much the case. It is a new section, relatively speaking, and the structure for 59 staff was approved only last year. We have taken every opportunity that we can to fill the roles, but we do not want to steal from another part of the Department that is also under serious pressure. However, in saying that, we have made offers to an additional four people in the past week, and we hope to fill key roles, such as the behavioural change role and the greenways role. We have been focusing on active travel with a very small number of people. We have been allowing the divisions to continue doing what they are doing and delivering to the capacity that they can, and we have focused on putting in place the processes that I mentioned, such as procurement, so that we have a consultancy support framework that we can rely on.

It is key to mention that, five years ago, our consultant colleagues had limited experience in delivering active travel. It has moved from being a niche area of expertise to being a field where consultants who work in the global market have teams that can do that work. I want to make sure that we move to a point where every consultant that we have has a great pool of experienced people who can design and deliver active travel schemes and ensure that we in the Department have those similarly experienced people internally delivering the entire programme.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Following on from the point that I made about the Chair's concerns on regional balance and rural versus urban, the delivery plan paper states that it will focus primarily on urban areas. What will the Department's impact be on how rural areas are dealt with? Will rural impact assessments be undertaken as part of the public consultation?

Mr Hutchinson: They definitely will be. The reason why the approach to date has been taken is so that we can try to focus on where there is the most potential for modal shift. We have to recognise and prioritise that, but we cannot be in a position where we ignore the rural areas. We have 42 settlements of over 5,000 people and 500 of fewer than 5,000 people, according to the statistics. We have not finalised our position, and we need to speak to the Minister. Decisions need to be taken on that, but we will put options forward that continue with our current position. However, if there is a request for a rural footway or cycle linkage, we will assess and prioritise that as well. The rural communities will certainly not be forgotten, but we have not yet got to the point of knowing how the exact model will look.

Greenways are both urban and rural, but they are generally more rural, and that will provide good connectivity for rural environments. The safer routes to school will be not only urban based but across all schools, rural or urban.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): This is my final point, Colin, you will be glad to know. I will then bring in members to ask questions.

You spoke at the end of your presentation about behavioural change. I do not think that any of us underestimates the challenge of achieving that. We can throw as much money as we want at infrastructure networks, but if we cannot change mentalities, doing that will be a busted flush. To that end, the Active School Travel programme is massive. Again, we take our hat off to Sustrans and the work that it is doing, but we heard from it about the impacts as a result of its lack of core and recurrent funding and how the project has effectively been stifled through not having that additional funding. Is there a plan in the Department to look at core funding for the likes of Sustrans to expand the programme — you touched on this as well — outside of schools and into community groups and youth clubs, or wherever it can reach? The potential is endless.

Mr Hutchinson: There are a number of points in there. As I said before, we want to move away from being niche in our expertise on active travel. We need to make sure that everybody involved in delivering active travel knows it inside out. Sustrans has played a key role up until now and will continue to play a key role. It is heavily involved in the active travel delivery plan that we have, and there are behavioural change elements within that. We have encouraged Sustrans to partner with all the consultancy partners that will be delivering the less-than-£5 million commissions and the greater-than-£5 million commissions, because they bring with them an expertise. We also have to procure those commissions properly.

This time last year, we were going to have to cut the entire Active School Travel programme because of the position that we were in. I was a strong advocate in the Department for not cutting it. We had to slash it, however, and reduce by about 50% the latter part of the funding. I have therefore been a strong advocate of the programme. I totally get that it is key, and we did continue the programme last year.

Someone touched on the issue of single-year Budgets. They are not a sustainable way in which to be able to manage any programme or project.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): I do not believe that we have ever had a multi-year Budget here.

Mr Hutchinson: A multi-year budget is necessary not just for a programme such as the Active School Travel programme but for even just a simple project. To commit to a project that is going to take three years to complete is very difficult to do unless it is a flagship project that has funding set aside for it at that level. I totally advocate a move away from single-year to three-year Budgets.

It is important to point out that the behavioural change work is funded out of the resource budget, whereas all the infrastructure work is generally funded out of the capital budget. There is an extra pressure on the resource side. There is pressure on the capital side, there is no doubt about that, but the resource pressures are much more acute. The equality impact assessment (EQIA) for the

resource budget was published last night and is going out to consultation. It will hopefully allow for the programme to continue until, I think, the end of August.

Mr McParland: We are working on a modification to the current contract. I had discussions with Claire Pollock in the past week and with colleagues in Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) about making a small modification to the existing contract to ensure that there is no gap in provision into the next academic year. Moreover, we are actively working with CPD colleagues on the next Active School Travel programme contract.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): That is useful. Finally, I asked in the previous evidence session about the cycling proficiency scheme. It was remiss of me not to realise that it is funded by the Department. What is the level of uptake and the level of funding provided for it, and what plans are there to roll out the scheme? It seems, to me anyway, from what I have heard anecdotally, that it was much more prevalent a number of years ago than it is now, but perhaps that is not borne out by the statistics.

Mr Hutchinson: From my knowledge of it, there was drop-off in uptake in COVID times, but, pre-COVID, close to 300 schools were covered by the scheme, which amounts to 40% of P7s. It is a really important programme, and, this year, we are back up to pre-COVID levels. The scheme has been very popular. From a personal perspective, if we could double the uptake that we have had, that would be great. I am not quite sure what the delta is between uptake and affordability, but I am pretty sure that we are currently at an uptake limit as opposed to an affordability limit.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): There is scope there if schools want to get involved.

Mr McParland: The cycling proficiency scheme is extremely cost-effective, because we have a really small team in the Department that is dedicated to its delivery, along with child pedestrian safety training. The latter is so cost-effective because it is delivered by teachers themselves, either as part of their lessons or as an after-school project. There is additional capacity in the system should more schools wish to take up the scheme, but it is an extremely small team in the Department that delivers it.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): It sounds like more of that low-hanging fruit, in the sense that the money is there and the logistics are in place. It is just about getting the scheme rolled out to more schools that want to take it up.

Mr Hutchinson: I am not quite sure whether we have the capacity. The funding is from the resource budget, and we have a small team.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): You can come back to us with some information on that, Colin.

Mr McParland: The scheme is offered to all schools, so, if every primary school in Northern Ireland were to want to run it, we would have to see what that would mean for resource funding and the like. It is a very cost-effective programme to run, however.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): OK. That is all from me. I will hand over to Keith Buchanan.

Mr K Buchanan: Thanks, Chair, for the full title. I appreciate that. *[Laughter.]*

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Keith Buchanan MLA. I will refer to you as "Keith" now.

Mr K Buchanan: You threw me there completely. I am not used to that.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Who is that "Keith Buchanan" guy?

Mr K Buchanan: The capital budget for 2022-23 was roughly £12 million, while provisional expenditure for 2023-24 is £10 million. Obviously, that is capital money. What is it costing to spend that £12 million? Are your guys' wages and those of external people included, or is that money for work done on the ground?

Mr Hutchinson: That is for everything: our staff, the consultancy staff and any consultancy design work or supervision work that we have undertaken. It is our entire capital budget.

Mr K Buchanan: How much of it are you paying out to consultants? What percentage of the wage costs or procurement costs are for what you will be doing yourselves, and how much will you be paying out to external consultants?

Mr McParland: If we are talking about the design of individual projects, internal design capacity is quite small. We have one or two people in each division who are embedded in our internal consultancy partner teams. There are four divisions, so I am talking about somewhere between six and eight people who are funded internal staff. For our design programme, as Colin mentioned earlier, there are over 100 schemes that are at different stages of design. Those six to eight people do not have the capacity to design the 100 schemes, so we rely on our outsourced partners. As Colin said, we are doubling the design capacity through the contract, so that is one of the key steps that will allow us to ramp up design capacity over the next couple of years.

Mr K Buchanan: Are you doubling the contract for external consultants?

Mr Hutchinson: Yes.

Mr K Buchanan: Colin, you said that, next year, you will possibly double your spend. Will that mean more money being outsourced?

Mr Hutchinson: Yes.

Mr K Buchanan: Is that a good way in which to spend it?

Mr Hutchinson: That is a trend. It is not something that has happened just recently but something that has been happening over the past 10 or 15 years. I think that we put the first partnering contract in place in about 2005. At the time, it was recognised that we could not afford to pay internal staff to that degree and have design units in place to deliver everything that we do. For every internal scheme, the partner consultant will be assisting us with its delivery. It could be a resurfacing scheme, an accident improvement scheme or a traffic-calming scheme. It is right across the range of schemes, and, as I said, that has been happening for many years. I would love to be in a position to say that we can attract internal staff and increase our structure by 25% or 30% in order to be able to do the majority of the schemes internally. You have, however, previously heard witnesses give you the reasons for why we cannot do that. We are therefore left in a position in which we are actively trying to fill all the gaps that we have. We have about 30 people in post, and we have 59 posts in the structure. We want to fill those posts with the right people as quickly as we possibly can. We will, however, still be heavily reliant on the private sector to assist us with delivery.

Mr K Buchanan: You are wearing two hats, Colin, if you will excuse the term. You are wearing a 10% sustainable travel hat as well as an A5 hat. How are you going to do both? Fundamentally, if the budget for sustainable travel and active travel routes goes up — that is fine, and I have no issue with that — it has to come from somewhere. You heard me comment earlier about the grass. We will not go there again, but I use it as an example. We are going to have excellent cycleways, which is fair enough. That is great, but, as a result, our roads will be poorer. How are we going to balance the two? You are going to have to wear two hats.

Mr Durkan: Helmets. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Hutchinson: As I said earlier, the reality is that there are difficult decisions to be taken in the time ahead. In broad terms, about 95% of the functions that the Department carries out have a legislative requirement behind them. It is not just the Climate Change Act that has a legislative requirement behind it. There are therefore difficult decisions to be taken by the Department and the Executive to prioritise where the needs will be, with the A5 being a flagship scheme and active travel falling under the Climate Change Act.

Mr K Buchanan: I have one final question, if I may, Mr Chairperson, with respect to you. *[Laughter.]* How do you prioritise schemes? I will give you the example of a little village in my area with 150 houses where the children walk on the road to get to school. That road requires probably a 30-metre footpath. We have been lobbying for it for a year and a half. It is needed, but there are then schemes

that are nice to have. How do you prioritise schemes in each area? How do you score or weight them? Those children are walking around a blind corner to get to school and to the shops in the village.

Mr Hutchinson: I am sure that you have heard the line from the Department in the past that we will carry out an assessment and rank it. There is a mechanism in place for carrying out assessments of schemes. In the past, cycle and active travel schemes would have been competing against accident remedial measures schemes or traffic-calming schemes for funding. Although weighting was applied in order to give an active travel scheme a fair hearing, in a situation in which a large number of people have been killed or there have been a large number of accidents in a certain place, a scheme to address that is going to score more than one to create a footway link.

We have active travel funding, which is, to a degree, ring-fenced, so we are going to put in place a mechanism that will score an active travel scheme against other active travel schemes. The theory is that there should then be more chance of an active travel scheme being delivered. One active travel scheme will compete with another in the village beside you or with one on the other side of the country.

Mr K Buchanan: OK. Thanks. I appreciate that.

Mr Dunne: I have a couple of points to make. You talked about councils earlier and pointed out that all 11 councils have very different remits. What is your experience? Is there much variation in council approaches to active travel?

Mr Hutchinson: Without mentioning any specific councils, they definitely take different approaches. Some councils have been doing such work for much longer and have much more ambitious plans than others. Over a year ago now, we engaged an awful lot with the councils. We have been trying to get them to tell us their ambition for their five-year programmes to deliver greenways. We want the less-ambitious councils to know that more opportunities are available, and we want to encourage them to do more feasibility studies or early design work so that they can have a scheme in the pipeline.

I am going off on a slight tangent, but this is an important point to make about greenways. My history is, and has been for a long time, in delivering dual carriageway schemes. When it comes to process, greenways are considered small dual carriageway schemes. They take a long time to move from inception to completion and involve the same processes as a dual carriageway scheme: early design; route development; preferred route choice; statutory procedures that must be followed; a public inquiry; planning; and an environmental impact assessment. We have all of that to go through with councils.

We are trying to get the councils on board now so that we can do the work that is necessary in order to have a scheme that starts now, thus allowing for construction to begin in four or five years' time. That is the horizon at which we are looking. Some councils have not gone very far on that journey, while others have a pipeline of schemes that can be identified.

Mr Dunne: Do you have any update on greenways, particularly the Bangor to Newtownards section of greenway, which is perhaps better known as the Newtownards to Bangor section? Planning permission for it was granted just under a year ago. People are keen for that scheme, which would link Bangor and Newtownards, to get under way. At just over 2 kilometres in length, it is of fairly modest length compared with some other schemes. Is there an update available on that section of greenway?

Mr McParland: I do not want to steal the council's thunder, but I understand that it is at the final stage of being ready to appoint a contractor to begin work on it. We are working very closely with Ards and North Down Borough Council on the financial profiling of the project through to its completion. I am therefore extremely optimistic. The council has an extremely professional team that is delivering that project and the other projects in the council area. As I said, I do not want to steal the council's thunder — we are working really closely with it — but I think that the project is on the final couple of steps to awarding a contract.

Mr Dunne: Thanks. What is your percentage funding contribution towards that?

Mr McParland: We mentioned this earlier. For greenways, the Department generally funds up to 50% of the capital cost of approved projects. That 50% funding speaks to the additional benefits that come with greenways, such as their tourism potential and their benefit as a civic amenity, rather than to the

departmental focus on shorter, everyday journeys and the modal shift element of our active travel delivery. There is a balance to be struck in apportioning our overall budgets.

Mr Dunne: Sure. Thanks, gentlemen.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Arising out of that, Peter, given Sustrans's expertise and knowledge in the field, do you think that, in order to seek its views on where viable greenway network options could be developed, it would be worthwhile having it as a statutory or required consultee where abandonment orders are in place?

Mr McParland: I think that the list of statutory consultees is a matter for councils to determine. Is it correct? I would, however —.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Outside of the statutory responsibility, do you think that it would be advisable?

Mr McParland: Absolutely. Sustrans brings a lot of expertise to bear, and I believe that it has brought its expertise to a number of greenway projects over the years.

Mr Hutchinson: That goes back to one of the points that I made earlier. We want to see Sustrans partnering with every consultant that we have as a lead consultant in order to take forward greenways. The difficulty is that the consultants whom we need to deliver them are multidisciplinary consultants: geotechnical engineers, structural engineers and —. The last one has gone out of my head, but they deal with the environmental aspects. We absolutely see the benefit that Sustrans has brought and will continue to bring. Hopefully, through such partnerships, and also through partnerships with the councils, Sustrans can give advice on any of the projects.

Mr Baker: Before I get overly parochial about West Belfast, or even the Collin, I will follow on from what Stephen said about councils. I look with envy at the South's expenditure, given the constraints on budgets here. Can you elaborate on greenways in the border counties?

Mr Hutchinson: I can tell you a bit about the high-level position, and Peter can perhaps talk about some of the specific projects. We are co-funding a number of projects that councils in the North and South are taking forward in partnership. We sit on the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) senior officials group, and greenways is one of its agenda items. The Minister agreed very recently to a study being carried out between the North and the South on how we have delivered cross-border greenways and how we might better deliver them in future. There is a lot of good work going on there, and it is yet another strand to what we are doing. If you want any details on specific projects, Peter can talk about them.

Mr McParland: I was just writing down the name of the last one, because I keep forgetting it. There are four existing cross-border greenways for which we have partnered with border county councils over the years. They have received funding through INTERREG, and the Department contributed as well. The north-west greenway network is a major one, and a lot of work has been carried out over there. The Department has funded the delivery of that greenway network to something in the region of £3.5 million. There is also the Carlingford greenway, which is part of a cross-border greenway network. Linkages between Narrow Water bridge, Carlingford, Warrenpoint and Newry are massive future opportunities that we will be looking at as well. Then there is the Ulster canal greenway, which is a massive project. As Colin mentioned earlier, some of the greenway projects are long-term projects. The Ulster canal greenway is one such project, while another one is the greenway from Enniskillen to Sligo, which is an extremely exciting project. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is working with its colleagues on the other side of the border on the development of proposals.

There are therefore currently those four major greenway projects, and then, as Colin mentioned, over the next year, we are looking forward to working with our colleagues in the South, whom we work with closely anyway, on the feasibility study for extensions to those cross-border greenway networks.

Mr Baker: Thank you. I will now get parochial. May I have an update on where we are at with the Belfast cycling network? In West Belfast, Peter and I have a bit of history, having worked together on the Glider route. It was not without its challenges. At the time, Peter talked about changing behaviours and all of that, and I remember sitting with him in a couple of heated meetings. Are there any challenges that we could be facing in West Belfast? Are we now competing with the Glider for a safe

cycle route? I made the point earlier that a lot of my journeys are very short but that I cannot even let my 13-year-old daughter cycle to the leisure centre from my house, because she would be competing with the Glider on the route. Where are we at with that and with future-proofing and empowering our community?

Mr McParland: As Colin touched on earlier, we are progressing the short-term schemes for the BCN in general. The delivery plan for it was published in 2022. It is now 2024, so that demonstrates that it takes a couple of years to develop schemes. We are working on the majority of them through design, and a number of them are coming to the fore for construction this year. Phase 1 of the west Belfast greenway is one of the schemes. We held a very positively received public engagement event on it on 21 May. We have had over 100 responses to our proposals, and they have been overwhelmingly positive. Similarly, last month, we held a public engagement event for outline proposals for the Ravenhill Road, which is another of the short-term schemes. Again, it was extremely positively received, with over 160 responses. The feedback that we get from the community, particularly in the early stages of design, really helps inform our designs.

I will get extremely parochial with you, Danny. For Lagmore —

Mr Baker: *[Inaudible.]*

Mr McParland: — I am hopeful that the traffic regulation order for the cycle routes will be published later this month. If we can get through the statutory processes that they are subject to in a timely fashion, I hope that we can be constructing phase 1 of the Lagmore Avenue cycle routes in this financial year. The thing to say about that, Danny, which is exactly what you are saying, is that some of the schemes are to facilitate shorter, everyday journeys. They will be only one piece of a jigsaw that becomes a connected network, but each piece of that jigsaw can bring local benefits to people every day. For example, the cycle routes will connect people in some of the housing areas in Lagmore with the Stewartstown Road and the local school. That will begin the connection to the Brook Leisure Centre and then on to the Colin Connect transport hub on the Glider route. We spoke about the linkages between Translink and active travel. When we developed the Colin Connect transport hub for the Glider, we included secure cycle parking as part of the project. That creates the opportunity to connect 10,000 or 20,000 people to the Glider route through their first mile journey, with secure cycle parking available at the transport hub, from where they can continue onwards via public transport into Belfast. Opportunities are therefore there.

Mr Baker: Collin is leading the way. Brilliant. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Durkan: Which Colin? *[Laughter.]*

Mr Hutchinson: Thanks for that. *[Laughter.]*

Mr McMurray: Happy Bike Week. I will try to tease out some of the same points that I teased out with Sustrans, albeit not word for word. Before I go any further, I associate myself with the comments from Mr Durkan and Mr Buchanan. Mr Durkan, it is definitely very important to wear a helmet. Always wear a helmet, skid lid or brain bucket. Mr Buchanan raised a very good point about footpaths in rural areas. They are really important, because, in rural settlements — it may not be exactly the same in Dundrum, but very similar — children may have to walk more than 100 metres on very exposed roads. You have landowners who want, not even as a result of —. What is the term that I am looking for? You know where —?

Mr Hutchinson: Compulsory purchase.

Mr McMurray: That is the one. Landowners almost want to give over their land, but doing that is very difficult. Is an active travel avenue therefore a better way in which those communities can go about getting footpaths? It is such an important issue. That is my first question.

You talked about the low-hanging fruit. Again, we see that, but how do we build those short-term schemes into the bigger network? That is very important. The example of Holland is very important. It is a densely populated country. I am curious to know whether there was learning from there for rural areas. I have never been to Holland, but I know that there, in Belgium and in other places, cycling is a way of life. Anyone who follows cycling understands that. That is therefore something to tease out as well.

I come back to the point that, because of the perception of risk, only 1% of people cycle. That really has to change. How do we do that? It comes back to having quiet lanes. We talk about them, but, jeppers, I have never seen them be implemented. There are towns and villages in my constituency that want such solutions. They say, "Happy days, there is a solution, but, jeppers, we never get to see the solution". Those points are similar to ones that I made to Sustrans, but I have rounded them up into one big bundle for you. That is about the height of it from me.

Mr Hutchinson: There are quite a few points there, which, in itself, illustrates the challenge and task that we face. As I said, Holland started doing what it is doing in the 1960s, and that is now the culture. One school — the Dutch Cycling Embassy — hosted us and took us to a few different places, including a secondary school. We just happened to be passing when the school was finishing, and there was not a single car on the road: every child was on a bike. It was actually quite dangerous because of the number of bikes that were coming at you.

Mr McMurray: They were only being driven at 10 mph not 30 mph.

Mr Hutchinson: It was a different type of danger. We have only a certain amount of resource with which to deliver and we have to prioritise things to some degree. Quiet, rural roads are on our radar, but we have not got to them yet. If we can get greenways that link the key areas, that is a safer option than trusting a car to go slowly just because there is a sign on the road to say that it should do so. So, if we can separate —.

Mr McMurray: Sorry, I do not mean to interject — I really do not — but my understanding of the quiet lanes is that there is physical infrastructure, not to stop the traffic but to slow it down. The perception of danger comes from people flying past others at 40, 50 and 60 mph. I have a different perception of risk, but jeppers oh that scares me too.

Mr Hutchinson: That is fair enough, but the ideal scenario is that we segregate cyclists from motorists. The Netherlands has certain roads where half the road is painted red. Those roads are quite narrow: in fact, the ones that we saw had a red strip on both sides with very little space left for the cars in the middle. That works over there because their culture and mindset are different to ours, so it comes back to the issue of behavioural change. We need to prioritise what we do and take it step by step. It is going to take decades to get to where we really want to be. We can put individual linkages into the network, as Peter said earlier, which will be useful for some, but we will not have what we all want until there is a properly connected network. We are on a long journey and there are a lot of things to be done, but we all have the same vision.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Happy enough?

Mr McMurray: Yes, I guess. *[Laughter.]*

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): If you have any more issues, you can write to the Department.

Mr McReynolds: Thank you for coming in today. I have a couple of questions, so I will try to tie them together rather than ask them individually.

At the start of your presentation, you mentioned the traffic teams and active travel teams. You mentioned that we have about 20 active travel teams and are moving to 30. Maybe I am wrong and we have 30 now, but we are aiming to have 59. How many are in the traffic teams?

Mr Hutchinson: I do not have that figure today, but we can certainly get you it.

Mr McReynolds: Just out of curiosity, are there significantly more people in them than there are in the active travel teams?

Mr McParland: The traffic teams in the divisions are generally part of a network development team, which is a combined team that looks after traffic measures and larger local transport safety measure schemes and things like that. They are bigger overall teams. I am not sure about the breakdown with network development teams. Peter, you might know from your experience of working with eastern division, that it is the only division that has a separate traffic and network development team. In the

other three divisions, there are combined teams, so there is a much bigger cohort of people in them but they have a much wider remit.

Mr McReynolds: That is grand. You mentioned, Colin, that we are at the start of our journey on active travel. However, active travel has been looked at over the past 10 years. What is your assessment of that 10-year period? I hope that we are moving into happier times and moving forward, on bicycles, together. What is your assessment of that 10-year period?

Mr Hutchinson: I am reluctant to look back. I took on the active travel role in November 2022. I hope that I have clearly set out the ambitions and the things that we have put in place to ensure that we have high-quality infrastructure. Would it have been better to have had this discussion 10 years ago and put the plans in place back then? Absolutely. Active travel was an add-on to the traffic teams during the period that you mentioned. I know from the division that I was involved in that there are lots of good examples of schemes that they delivered that are missing linkages in rural areas. Lots of great schemes have been delivered, but we are moving into a completely different era. There are, hopefully, more people of influence on the same page as us. The vision is completely different to what we had 10 or 15 years ago. We had visions 10 or 15 years ago, but now we have delivery plans, which will get things done on the ground.

Mr McReynolds: To touch on Keith's point, in 2022-23, the funding was about £12 million, and, in 2023-24, it is £10 million. You said that there is the potential that you will double your spend. I am not putting a figure on that, but everything is contained in that amount of money. Sustrans said that it has no core funding. If we have more money, could core funding for groups such as Sustrans to deliver active travel through behavioural change be contained in that future figure?

Mr Hutchinson: That is the capital figure. The resource figure will, at best, stay equivalent to what it was last year, and that is where funding for the behavioural change stuff comes from. I am not sure that I agree with the term "core funding". In all the different jurisdictions, there are competitions to deliver certain services that could be wider than the programmes here. Sustrans will be invited to sit on the governance board, but it will partner with all our consultants, who will be key to the delivery of individual programmes and projects.

Mr McReynolds: So, despite the increased figure, we will, potentially, see no additional funding to groups such as Sustrans for the behavioural role that they play?

Mr Hutchinson: On the behavioural side, as I said, although the funding is subject to an equality impact assessment (EQIA) that went live yesterday, the money should be there to permit the Active School Travel programme to continue to the end of this financial year. We are putting in place measures with Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) to ensure that the procurement documentation and so on is in place to allow that to happen.

Behavioural change is a really important part of the work that we will bring to the Minister on the 10%, and it will be part of future decisions on how much money we have in our resource and capital budgets. Over the past number of years, our budget has largely been capital, with a very small pot of resource on the active travel front.

Mr McReynolds: The Netherlands, and the cultural change that took place over there, has been mentioned today quite a lot. I do not know whether any of you guys are on Twitter, but there is a Canadian planner called Brent Toderian, who always shows a photograph of streets in Holland in the 1970s and compares it with the streets there now. In the 1970s, there was carnage there with cars, and infrastructure and behavioural change played a really crucial role, together, to change mindsets.

Has the Department looked into the return on investment from implementing active travel measures? I say that as an East Belfast MLA who has seen the development of CS Lewis Square and the Comber and Connswater greenways and the role that active travel has played in bringing people together and delivering money to the local area. Have you guys conducted an assessment of that?

Mr McParland: No. I am aware that the benefit-cost ratio in active travel schemes is generally very high, but we do not carry out assessments on a project-by-project basis due to the resources that we have. One of the things that we are going to be looking at is our monitoring and evaluation of our investment. If we are going to increase investment in active travel, I am sure that the Committee will want us to increase our assessment of the value of that work to ensure that the money is well spent

and that we do not end up in a 'Brewster's Millions' situation. That is one of the key posts that we will be looking to fill in the future. At the minute, however, with the level of investment and delivery that we have had in the early years of this ramping-up period, I am relatively content that my focus is on the ramping up of the delivery of high-quality active travel infrastructure that benefits everybody who uses those streets. There is a tendency to fall into the trap of thinking that active travel is all about cycling, but it is about making our streets more welcoming, more accessible and safer for everybody who uses them, from children to the oldest in society, people with mobility issues, the visually impaired, people who want to cycle and people who are pushing a pram about. That is what active travel is really about.

Mr McReynolds: I see a lot of that on the Comber greenway. I walk, run and cycle there. I see older people using it, and children too. It is really important for that purpose.

Lastly, talking about the Comber greenway, has there been an assessment of things that went well and things that did not go well with that, so that, if we get more money and more greenways flow from that, we can introduce them faster? Would the vesting of land from local councils ever be explored as an option? I am not proposing that, but would it ever be explored?

Mr Hutchinson: Do you want to cover the —.

Mr McParland: Yes, I will cover the Comber greenway and then you can speak to the second part of the question. I agree, Peter: the Comber greenway has been extremely successful. I actually designed a small section of it, as a young engineer —

Mr McReynolds: Well done.

Mr McParland: — and I am glad to see it. In the past two years, various sections along the greenway have been widened. We have also put lighting on the urban section of the Comber greenway. As a pilot scheme, we have put in environmentally friendly red spectrum lighting. We will carry out assessments of the success of that. The point of it is to not have a detrimental impact on wildlife in the area, because, obviously, the greenway is traffic-free. We will carry out an assessment of the success of the scheme in that respect and assess whether it makes the greenway more attractive to users at night during the winter months. We gather that, over the first winter, there was an increase in the number of users during the hours of darkness. That is a very early assessment, but it is very encouraging. That is what I would say about the Comber greenway. Does that answer your question, Peter, or were you talking more widely?

Mr McReynolds: I suppose that it does in a lot of respects. One thing that maybe makes the Comber greenway less attractive is the lack of gritting. I have been banging on about that since I was on the council too.

Mr McParland: OK, Peter, I will deal with that one as well, having dealt with the previous one.

Mr McReynolds: You triggered that thought in my head. *[Laughter.]*

Mr McParland: Well, it triggers me sometimes as well. *[Laughter.]* I was speaking to colleagues in councils about that. For example, we talked about the Comber greenway being the poor relation of the Connswater greenway. Councillors were pressing me on the issue of the gritting of the Comber greenway, so I asked them how much of the Connswater greenway they grit. They do not grit it.

Mr McReynolds: Part of it is gritted, I think.

Mr McParland: I think that C S Lewis Square is gritted. Connswater greenway is not gritted, according to the councillors that I met. On the subject of gritting and the Department's winter service, we grit 20% of the entire road network. That is the busiest 20%. I am definitely going slightly off topic here, but, if I were to prioritise areas of the active travel network for gritting, I would grit town centres first. That is where the highest footfall and the highest potential for people slipping and tripping is. I have seen examples of greenways in mid-Ulster, where the council has put up information about temperatures and things like that. That is a very cheap and cost-effective way of informing people, where the council or the Department do not have the resources to carry out a winter service on the greenway, on when to use it and when not to use it, .

Mr McReynolds: This is absolutely my final question.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Sorry, Peter, but that is about seven questions now. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Durkan: That is not that many.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): I do not want to pull rank, but we have so much more to get through and the guys have been very understanding. Maybe you could engage directly with them on that. I pass over to Mark, who will be the final contributor.

Mr Durkan: I have seven to beat. *[Laughter.]*

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): It might have been eight.

Mr Durkan: Thank you, gents, for the presentation and your work. I refer to the 10% figure and the paper that will go up to the Minister. Obviously, you will not be able to divulge all the detail of that, but I imagine that it is an issue that has caused some confusion and consternation in the Department. I am sure that people will want to hold on to what they have, particularly when they did not have that much to begin with. Is it possible to tell us about some of the possible permutations and interpretations of what that 10% might look like and the disparity between those? What is 10% in the best-case scenario — that might mean the most amount of money for active travel — and what is the worst-case scenario or the lowest amount of money? In other words, what is the difference between those possible scenarios?

Mr Hutchinson: That is another way of asking me what the 10% figure is. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Durkan: No, no. It will be determined by how many different equations there are.

Mr Hutchinson: I understand. It is certainly much more than what we currently have and spend. Historically, we have spent a lot of money on active travel anyway, although we would not have been coming and saying, "This is the amount that we are spending on active travel". We do build footways and cycleways. We maintain footways and spend a significant amount of money annually on capital projects to resurface footways. We have street lighting, and a large part of its contribution is to provide safety for pedestrians. There are things in which we already invest that are not in that £10 million or £12 million figure. We are not really reporting the total investment at that point. We are looking at that type of work to see what is new investment, what is existing investment and where that takes us. All I can say is that, in most of our scenarios, 10% would be a multiple of what we are currently spending on active travel.

Mr Durkan: That work touches on the point that Mr Buchanan and Andrew raised. You spoke of there being, historically, almost competition between proposed active travel schemes and proposed and necessary, or deemed to be desired, safety improvements. It is about complementarity rather than competition. It is where you can say, "This work needs done. A footpath will increase the number of children walking to school, therefore there is an active travel benefit as well as, undoubtedly, a safety benefit". I imagine that there will be issues in the Department in other areas, because, of course, transport includes public transport. You spoke of the work on secure bike parking at transport hubs. If one leg of a journey is made by active travel — say someone walks or cycles to a bus station or bus stop — is the whole journey deemed to be active travel?

Mr Hutchinson: Again, go back to the definition. The Act does not define "active travel". Our current thinking is that active travel —

Mr McParland: It is walking, wheeling and cycling, essentially.

Mr Hutchinson: It is physical activity. It is being physically active by doing any of those. Whilst public transport has a massive role in pushing down carbon use in the future and complying with the Climate Change Act in that respect by moving many more people longer distances, when you are sitting on a bus or train it is hard to argue that you are being physically active. So, we are not putting that into the equation of active travel. It is part of a journey where part of that journey involves active travel but that element of it is not being defined as active travel.

Mr McParland: Active and sustainable travel is the point, and how those two things go hand in hand, and will go hand in hand in the future, to allow us to meet our Climate Change Act ambitions.

Mr Durkan: Members and yourselves touched on the value of the cycling proficiency scheme. How valued is it by the Department? What funding is allocated to it? How has that gone over the years? I remember that last year the funding was cut and then some of it was restored. Was all of it restored? I saw the reports, which you alluded to, about the effectiveness of that scheme.

Mr Hutchinson: You are right. Last year, there was a cut. I think that that programme was completely cut. This year, my understanding is that we are at the same levels we were at previous to that cut. I am fairly confident that, with the uptake that we currently have, we can deliver on the numbers that we talked about earlier. We do need to go away and look at how we take that 40% up to 50%, 60% or 70%, and what that might mean with regard to the budget that we talked about earlier.

Mr Durkan: It is budget rather than resource. You said that teachers deliver it. I missed last week's meeting — sorry, Chair — when the PSNI representatives were in and there was a focus and locus on road safety. However, when we are looking at record sums of money being generated through the issuing of record numbers of speeding fines, and now, finally, a move by the Road Safety Partnership to contribute to road safety advertising that the Department has not been able to fund of late, that money should also be filtering its way into education programmes and the likes of the cycling proficiency scheme. I am sure that you would concur.

You referred to three pilot schemes for safer routes to school? Where will those be?

Mr McParland: Where they are? I was afraid that somebody was going to ask that because one of them has changed. One is in and around Ballymena at Camphill Primary School, and one that I am looking at is at St Ita's Primary School on the outskirts of south Belfast. The third one escapes me but it was a relatively rural location.

Mr Hutchinson: Was it Macosquin?

Mr McParland: We looked at that originally, and then we changed. I am sorry: I will come back to you with the three exact locations but they were two relatively —.

Mr Durkan: I will not complain about them now. *[Laughter.]*

Mr McParland: We spoke about the active travel delivery plan and the development of network plans in larger towns. Once you develop a network plan, there is the prioritisation and delivery of that plan. Two areas that we will be prioritising will be to try to create safe routes to schools. Wherever schools are in a town, we would hope that those would be the earlier routes to be delivered because they have a good chance of causing a modal shift in the 50% of primary-school kids who live within one mile of their school or the 50% of secondary-school kids who live within three miles of their school. We want to make those journeys attractive and safe so that parents will allow their children to make them or will make the journeys with them. That is the aim of the safer routes to schools.

You are then talking about what can be done within the immediate vicinity of a school. Claire and Beth mentioned Park and Stride. That treatment of the immediate vicinity around school is what we are also looking for from the pilots. What can be done to encourage and enable more people to feel confident and safe enough to walk and cycle that last leg of the journey?

Mr Durkan: There is a tie-in from others in the Department, such as your street lighting people, footpath people and traffic calming people.

Mr Hutchinson: That is a good point. Everything that we do to deliver a project, should it be a greenway or any active travel scheme, will require additional people and resource throughout the Department, from our lands teams to our headquarter's teams to do vesting, our traffic people and our street-lighting people. You are absolutely right: it cuts across the whole piece, albeit one directorate is responsible for the policy and delivery of active travel.

Mr McParland: To give you some confidence, we are also doing a lot of work internally with our colleagues in the other teams to look for those complementary benefits. If we were going to put in additional cycling infrastructure on a road, and, at the same time, the maintenance team was looking

to resurface that road, there would be a synergy from doing both at the same time. Similarly, the street lighting teams might want to upgrade the street lighting in that area at the same time. It is about trying to tease out all those complementary benefits. Even wider than that, we are dealing with colleagues from our Living with Water programme on certain projects to see whether, for example, they are going to implement a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) scheme. If we were going to put a cycle lane in the same location as a SuDS scheme, we would obviously want to work in partnership with those colleagues. Interdepartmentally, we are working with colleagues in the Department for Communities who have their environmental improvement hats on, because active travel and making the pedestrian environment more attractive can be an enabler for the regeneration that the Department for Communities is doing. We are trying to tease out all the additional synergies and benefits that we can find so that the sum of what we deliver is greater than its parts.

Mr Durkan: Thank you. I have no more questions, Chair, but I make the point that the human resource challenges that all of that poses, and not just for one Department, add more weight to the argument for outsourcing some of the work at the other end of things, such as education and implementing or encouraging behavioural change. I would like to be associated with comments that other members made on there being core funding at some point for Sustrans or another organisation — I know that there has to be a competitive process — to drive that forward.

The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Stewart): Thanks, Mark.

Gents, you will be glad to hear that that concludes the session. You have given us a lot of time. We have had two excellent sessions, with over 25 questions in each, so nearly 50 overall. That is a testament to how high a priority the topic is for the Committee. We could probably have gone on for ever, but we have to get out of here at some stage. We would appreciate your following up on a number of issues. First, there is the outcome of the work to define what the transport budget includes. That will be key to teasing out some of the key aspects that we talked about, particularly the 10%. I also asked a couple of questions on the per capita funding, so it would be good if you could come back to us on those points as well. Other members will probably continue to be in touch with you via email and letter to follow up on their local issues. Thank you very much for your time today. We appreciate it, and we will see you again soon — actually, Colin, we will see you next week.

Mr Hutchinson: Thank you very much.