



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 1 June 2010

Session 3

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TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE
16th Meeting 2010, Session 3

CONVENER

*Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)

DEPUTY CONVENER

Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Jackson Carlaw (West of Scotland) (Con)
Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
*Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab)
*Charlie Gordon (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
*Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD)
*Shirley-Anne Somerville (Lothians) (SNP)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

*Alasdair Allan (Western Isles) (SNP)
Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Jim Tolson (Dunfermline West) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Dr Margaret Bochel (Heads of Planning Scotland)
Tony Curran (Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board)
Keith Irving (Living Streets Scotland)
John Lauder (Sustrans)
Stuart McMillan (South Lanarkshire Council)
Vance Sinclair (South Lanarkshire Council)
Paul Tetlaw (Transform Scotland)
Ewan Wallace (Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Steve Farrell

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee

Tuesday 1 June 2010

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 14:00*]

Interests

The Convener (Patrick Harvie): Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to the 16th meeting this year of the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee. I remind members, witnesses and everyone else present to switch off any mobile devices.

I record apologies from Cathy Peattie and Rob Gibson. At some point during the meeting we expect to welcome Alasdair Allan as a committee substitute.

We have two items on the agenda today, the first of which is a declaration of interests. I welcome Jackson Carlaw MSP, and invite him to declare any relevant interests .

Jackson Carlaw (West of Scotland) (Con): Convener, I draw members' attention to my entry in the register of members' interests. Beyond that, as I am convener of the Forth Crossing Bill Committee, I might be circumscribed in participating in certain matters arising from the project.

The Convener: Understood. Thank you. I record the committee's thanks to Jackson Carlaw's predecessor, Alex Johnstone from the Conservative party, for his contribution to the committee's work over the past few years.

Transport and Land Use Planning Policies Inquiry

The Convener: Item 2 continues our inquiry into transport and land use planning policies. This is our last but one evidence session in the inquiry.

We will hear first from local authority and health board representatives, then from transport and travel campaign groups and finally from witnesses on behalf of transport and planning officers.

I welcome our first panel of witnesses. We are joined by: Vance Sinclair, partnership development manager at South Lanarkshire Council; Stuart McMillan, team leader for planning and building standards at South Lanarkshire Council; and Tony Curran, head of capital planning and procurement at Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board. Thank you all for joining us today. As none of the witnesses wishes to make any opening remarks, we shall press on.

The committee has heard from pretty much any witness who was asked to comment in the inquiry about the importance of and high status given to the transport aspects of development. However, it is also clear that, in practice, transport is just one of a number of factors that are taken into account when deciding on a new service, service redesign or other developments. I am looking for a discussion of the balance between the different factors in deciding where to site a new development. What is the status of transport within the decision-making process? How does it compare with other factors?

Stuart McMillan (South Lanarkshire Council): I can certainly start that conversation. Transportation planning and connections to the network are fundamental. Within the council that I and Vance Sinclair work for, they were critical in determining planning applications in relation to education provision, and we were very clear that we needed to have strong direction from the outset. I am a practising planner and I am here alongside a colleague from education because the council's approach was to tackle the many issues that had to be tackled early on, through the procurement and planning application processes. We tried to get clear decisions made at the outset that would mean that the procurement and application processes would go much more smoothly towards the end. Therefore, transportation planning became a key aspect of delivery of the projects. We took the opportunity to consider all the issues in the round and to bed them into our local plan and land use plans to deliver the context for procurement of the school modernisation programme.

Vance Sinclair (South Lanarkshire Council): Primarily, we look to locate our new schools in the

heart of their communities. The more local they can be to those communities, the better—that is one of our objectives. The education resources service in South Lanarkshire has worked closely with planning services to ensure that the local plan that was approved in 2009 identified additional need for new schools in community growth areas. Transportation is only one element of that, but planning and education have looked to identify locations in new community growth areas to ensure that schools form part of their communities, are not distant from them and are centrally located to ensure that we minimise the distances that pupils have to travel. That is the strategic side of things. On the local side, planning and education services continue to work closely to ensure that those new sites have good transportation links, are on public transport thoroughfares and, probably more important, have obvious, safe and efficient walking and cycling routes attached to the new schools.

By way of background, we in South Lanarkshire are doing a comprehensive school modernisation programme. We are modernising 124 primary schools and 17 secondaries. At the heart of decisions about all of those has been the desire to locate schools in the best location in the catchment area that they serve. We hope that building schools close to where the pupils are works closely with a sustainable transport policy.

The Convener: Is that local community emphasis typical of the public sector when making decisions about where services are located?

Stuart McMillan: There is quite a strong ethos of that in our council, and across our council border with North Lanarkshire. There is a strong desire to connect services to communities and our council feels that acutely in relation to education. The programme has been about modernisation and is driven by a desire to retain schools, in particular primary schools, in the localities that they serve. Based on that commitment, we have looked closely at school catchments, how they change and how new development around new communities is changing the need for different types of educational provision. Demography is a driver that we have studied carefully and it has informed decision making on the scale of new or modernised schools, planning decisions to expand certain communities, as well as our thinking about and justification of the need for new primaries in particular, their size and where they should sit. We have been conscious of that at all times.

Tony Curran (Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board): When we have any major service or service delivery change, we always consider where best services should be located from a demographic point of view. Through the public partnership forum, we engage on the options

available to us for any scheme. There is a strong ethos of consulting locally on what we intend to do, where we intend to deliver it from and some of the key issues that come out of that. There is a well-developed scheme in place, regardless of whether in relation to acute hospitals or on the community partnership side.

The Convener: To return to my earlier question about the process of balancing the transport factors against other factors, where would you say transport lies in the scheme of things?

Tony Curran: It is certainly one of the key issues, but it is not the only one. To be fair, it is probably not the main issue that we consider when deciding where to deliver our services; that is about where the service is needed. At the moment, we are trying to make best use of our existing estate and where we think we can deliver best value in the health service in these relatively constrained times.

The Convener: A bit of a difference in approach is coming out already. Vance Sinclair said that the transport aspects are fundamental to decisions, whereas you seem to recognise a slightly different pecking order.

Tony Curran: No. Transport is fundamental and is a key issue, but it is not the only issue and, from our perspective, is probably not the most important one. The main issue for us is where the services need to be delivered in part of the city or a part of the system.

Charlie Gordon (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): Mr Curran has suggested that we must get as much value as possible out of the existing health service estate. My question is for the gentlemen from South Lanarkshire. You said that you are locating new schools in the heart of their communities and catchment areas. Does that imply some land acquisition? I presume that you are not in the happy position of owning all the sites that would be indicated by such an exercise. Best value sometimes drives local authorities in the direction of using sites that they own although their location may not be optimal. How have you dealt with that trade-off?

Vance Sinclair: Five community growth areas in South Lanarkshire are identified in the local plan and we have looked at each of those areas individually. In two of the areas, we have determined that new, non-denominational primary schools are required and, as part of the master planning process, the developers of those residential areas must identify where the schools will be. Part of the planning process involves a section 75 agreement, under which the developers will then release that land, enabling us to build the new schools there. The developers will also fund the new school developments, so we will achieve

best value for the council by making the developers pay for the required provision, because their developments are generating the number of pupils. As a planner, Stuart McMillan can probably say more about that.

Stuart McMillan: I have been working alongside Vance for a long time, so he knew exactly what I would say. In essence, that is the model that we have followed for many of the larger-scale developments that are driving the requirement for new schools. We are able to show developers the impact of all the new houses on the primary school sector, for example. That requirement cannot be met through adaptation or taking up slack in the system—the places are not there—so we are justified in seeking not only contributions from the developers for building the new schools, but the land to do it. That is a fundamental part of their going ahead with the development and master planning it.

Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD): Are you saying that you hand over the master planning to the developer? In my experience, developers do not often give over prime sites to social need; they choose them for housing. Therefore, there is a danger that you will get the leftover pieces and that any new school will not be in the most appropriate place. How do you balance that?

Stuart McMillan: We have done two things. First, within our local plan, we have defined the council's requirements for the site. There are tables in our local plan that say that a particular site of so many houses requires a new primary school, however many new pitches, a local centre and so on. That is set out in the adopted plan and is the statutory requirement. Secondly, we have prepared a development brief for the master planning process, which we call a master plan development framework. It sets out the requirements, but in a spatial context. That is us doing some analysis of the site and giving the broad locations for certain land uses. A range of reasons can drive us in defining the optimal locations for sites, for example an existing school catchment area—it could seem sensible to grow that area—the transport network, the access network or the green space network around particular areas. We then pass that on to the various development consortia, which can prepare the master plans and submit applications for planning permission in principle in due course.

14:15

Alison McInnes: So you have set quite strict parameters around each of the developments, and you explicitly refer in the development briefs to the need for active travel routes.

Stuart McMillan: Yes, absolutely. It is in the development briefs.

Shirley-Anne Somerville (Lothians) (SNP): I want to ask about some of the other developments that you may consider that do not fall entirely within an area of new growth. For example, you may recognise the need for a new school or a building in the health sector, but you have to try to fit that into an already urbanised area in which there is not the space. Charlie Gordon made a point about that. How do you ensure that you take active travel, and transport in general, into account when you have to try to fit in with what is already there rather than start with a grand master plan?

Tony Curran: Certainly for any sizeable development, whether it is a refurbishment or a new scheme, we develop a green travel plan for each facility. We try to establish the hierarchy for travel to and from work: from walking and cycling, to public transport, to car sharing and taxis up to single-car journeys. We work out individual travel plans with individual members of staff. If their workplace is being shifted to a new or reconfigured area, we work with them on how best to get to and from work and give them some incentives to move from single-car journeys to public transport. For instance, we help by offering assisted bus passes or zone cards—

Shirley-Anne Somerville: That is really when the location has been decided. I am trying to find out how you decide where that location is going to be, when you are trying to fit it into an already established community. We were talking about schools in new developments under section 75 agreements. That seems to be the easy part. We are still trying to get to grips with the issues.

To go back to the point that the convener made at the start of the meeting, how do you take transport into account when you are trying to fit a development into an already established community, rather than find the location and then produce an active travel plan? I am still not sure how transport fits into your decision-making agenda.

Tony Curran: We consider the service change that is required, we look at the size of the development that is needed and we identify a range of available sites. We carry out a site option appraisal for those, whether they are available on the market or in our estate and work closely with our local authority partners. Transport comes into that consideration, along with the location and service needs of patients and visitors.

Vance Sinclair: From an education perspective, South Lanarkshire Council has constructed 41 primary schools since 2005. When we replace an existing school, the presumption is always that the new school will be built on the existing site. Where

it has been identified for whatever reason that the current site is not big enough or is in the wrong location, we have moved the school.

We have moved two schools; I will give you one example. The school was in the southern end of its catchment area, so it was not close to the main population in terms of walking and cycling access. Through other avenues in the council, another site came up in a more central location in the catchment area. We carried out a statutory consultation on moving the school to that site, which happened to be right next to the new Larkhall rail station, and we were successful in getting that through. We are currently going through the design process and at the tail end of this year will be ready to start on building a new school on that site, which is more centrally located with good public transport links.

However, in the majority of cases the presumption is that we will build on the existing site, because that is where we have the land and where people are used to having their school. It is only when we identify issues with the existing site, either through public consultation or based on technical issues such as the land not being big enough to contain the new school building, that we would look elsewhere.

The Convener: How much emphasis is put on transport in the site option appraisal process, which Tony Curran mentioned? I do not know whether you can say more about that now. Can you provide information about how transport was taken into account, for example in relation to the major developments that are happening in Glasgow?

Tony Curran: Sure. We have evidence on that, because it is done through a stakeholder partnership forum event. I can also tell you about a couple of new developments: the new health and social care centre in Barrhead, which is under way, and the new Renfrew health and social work centre. For each of those, we considered a range of options that were available at the time. We considered service delivery need, location, accessibility and closeness to public transport—trains, buses and so on. That is a well-established approach. We can certainly provide evidence to the committee on how the appraisal was carried out.

The Convener: That would be helpful.

Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab): I would have thought that a primary school would be a special case when it came to choosing a site. We are talking about little children—six-year-olds and older—whom we would want to walk to school. People who buy houses in new developments want to know whether their children will be able to walk to and from school. It is almost

too easy to talk about primary schools as examples of good practice. Secondary schools have a bigger catchment area, so there are more demands to consider. What about secondary schools?

Vance Sinclair: I am sorry, I am not sure—

Marlyn Glen: What you said about primary schools sounded good, but I would be astonished if anyone bought a house that was so far from the primary school that their child could not get there themselves when they were seven, eight or nine. If that was not possible, that would be it; the new development would bomb. When it comes to secondary schools, people face the same difficulties, but the issue is much more challenging. Does the issue receive the same consideration?

Vance Sinclair: We have 17 secondary schools in South Lanarkshire and we have fully modernised them all—Lanark grammar school was the final school in the process, at the end of 2009. I was not personally involved, but I know that strategic transportation policies and proposals were looked into when site locations were considered. The majority of developments happened on existing sites, but a number of schools moved. The majority of the new schools are close to if not on main public transportation routes, such as bus and rail routes. Transportation links were a key issue in determining the sites as part of the detailed planning process with my colleagues in planning services.

You are right to say that the issue is more difficult with secondary schools, because of the size of the catchment area. In some respects the issue is significantly more difficult in rural areas. South Lanarkshire has an urban population and a rural population. The issue is more difficult in the secondary sector, but we have modernised our secondary sector.

Stuart McMillan: In my role as a planner, I and a colleague from transportation were brought into the process of considering modernisation of the 17 secondaries to advise the team that was procuring the projects through public-private partnership on the impact of changes or variations to school sites on pupils' ability to go to school independently.

I understand exactly what Marlyn Glen means. I am sure that the ideal for parents of secondary school pupils is to be able to wave their children goodbye in the morning and let them walk, cycle or get the bus to school. We were acutely aware of that. Where we had to move schools, we accessed land that happened already to be within the council estate and which was next to public transport routes, so that that sort of thing could be accommodated. Bussing arrangements are quite expensive for local authorities.

Vance Sinclair: I was going to mention that. It is in our interest to ensure that the pupil population is as close as possible to the school. South Lanarkshire Council operates a policy whereby if a primary school pupil lives in the catchment area but is more than a mile from the school—by the identified walking route—they will be bussed at the local authority's expense. The threshold for secondary school pupils is 2 miles. There is a financial incentive for all local authorities in ensuring that their pupils live as close as possible to their schools and have safe walking routes to them.

Jackson Carlaw: We have been skirting around the point that I want to ask about. I understand the situation with primary schools, so this probably applies more to secondary schools. Can pupils gain a broader life experience from independently planning, negotiating and executing journeys to and from school? As a policy, would you think it desirable if pupils did not have to make a journey to school and could fall into it from adjacent accommodation, or is there a broader educational experience for younger people at secondary school to gain from having to make independent choices about how they travel to and from school?

Vance Sinclair: I apologise but, because I am not an educationist, I would not like to comment on that.

Jackson Carlaw: So you do not take that into account at all. From your point of view, is the consideration simply to have the school as near to as many people as possible, so that they do not have to travel to it?

Vance Sinclair: Certainly that is a key consideration. Are you saying that having secondary pupils travel to and from school and overcome barriers is a way of helping them grow up?

Jackson Carlaw: Yes.

Vance Sinclair: But we are under an obligation to provide them with a safe route to school. If we cannot do that, we have to transport them to school.

Jackson Carlaw: So, if they gain that experience, it is really an incidental consideration. Your consideration would be to place the school as near to as many people as you can, so that they can have as short and uncomplicated a journey as possible.

Vance Sinclair: Yes.

Stuart McMillan: Many schools will also take the opportunity to prepare green travel programmes, perhaps through their eco-schools programme, to further facilitate safe journeys to school, which will involve walking buses, cycle

trains and other ways by which kids can move to school actively on their own.

The Convener: I have a couple of final questions on the decisions about where services are delivered from. We have talked a bit about how the local plan feeds into those decisions and where the demand is. What about public transport provision? At what point do the views or capacities of public transport operators affect decisions about where services will be delivered from or where a development might take place?

14:30

Stuart McMillan: There is a distinction to be made between public transport policy makers and operators. In preparing a local plan or a master plan for new development or regeneration, an accessibility analysis will be carried out as a matter of course to look at how people can move around their area by public transport. That is reasonably straightforward when you are dealing with fixed infrastructure, particularly rail, from which South Lanarkshire benefits particularly in its urban area, because it is on the Glasgow suburban network. In many instances we have taken the opportunity to locate new development close to that network.

The difficulty often arises in locations where we have to deal with the private sector bus operators. We find it difficult to engage with them because they typically plan their services a year to 18 months ahead, whereas we might be trying to talk to them about something that is five or six years away. We continually face difficulties with that, as do those in the private sector who are trying to deliver schemes. We ask them to come in with their transport consultants and tell us about the public transport services that they might cross-fund for a period of time. They tell us that they find it difficult to engage with the bus operators to enable that to happen. As I said, there is a difference between, on the one hand, public transport policy making and people who think about those issues and, on the other, the delivery.

However, we have a lot of engagement with the organisations that we work with on public transport provision in the west of Scotland, such as Strathclyde partnership for transport. We engage with them all the way through the plan-making process. They are always good at informing us of their plans, and the accessibility analysis and modelling work that is done as a matter of course in preparing our forward plans is often done by them in tandem with our in-house people and expertise.

Tony Curran: We have employed a transport manager who engages with the private sector bus operators, in the main, on the continuing

developments within the sector. If we are looking at providing new health centres or acute hospitals, we work with the operators well in advance to consider the bus penetration and delivery to and from the site. That is part of the continuing debate that takes place about not just new developments, but our existing sites. We also have continuing debates with SPT on that basis. The transport manager whom we have employed is a link between all those parties, capital planning, and the developments that we are taking forward. We are having a measure of success in getting new or refreshed services to some of our sites.

The Convener: Can any of you suggest examples of bad practice in planning where developments will be sited, in terms of transport? Can you think of any examples where a mistake was made and an element of structure or policy could have been changed that would have prevented it from happening?

Tony Curran: I cannot think of anything offhand.

Vance Sinclair: Same here, convener.

The Convener: Okay.

Stuart McMillan: I am thinking about my council's area, but I cannot think of anything off the top of my head.

I was going to add a point in response to your previous question. In many of the agendas for service delivery and in the integration of transport with education and health, community planning partnerships have been useful umbrella organisations to tap into and to talk to early on about some of the issues. As planners, we have worked not just with our education colleagues but with our colleagues in NHS Lanarkshire on the planning of more primary health care provision so that they get a heads-up on how the demography is moving and where new populations are growing. That approach is an asset because we give other public sector organisations a flavour of what we are doing and we get information from them about what they are doing.

I cannot think of any examples of bad practice.

The Convener: Okay. We will leave that for now and move on.

Marlyn Glen: What are the key factors that influence decisions on public transport, active travel routes, and facilities that serve new developments? How are such routes and facilities balanced with other priorities for expenditure or the use of land? What weighting do you give them? Is that how you do it—do you weight things?

Stuart McMillan: First, we try to identify the most practical site—how that happens was

covered in previous questions. We are also driving forward the active travel agenda, as every local authority must. Given the problems associated with dropping off children, congestion and so on on the network outside schools, which will be evident to everyone, active travel is becoming increasingly important in the operation of not only schools, but hospitals, health facilities and other such facilities. The more people can access those facilities by foot or public transport, the better, not only for themselves but for the sake of safety in and around sites.

Tony Curran: In the site option appraisal process that we go through for each project—I will provide written evidence on that—we set up a stakeholder group comprising patients, visitors, the local community, staff and so on to agree the key issues that need to be highlighted in the evaluation matrix and their weighting. Obviously we try to lead to ensure that all the issues are covered, but the group, the local service providers, the local community and others are all part of the process.

Marlyn Glen: And the group agree the weighting.

Tony Curran: Yes.

Vance Sinclair: As far as I can recollect, we do not give specific weighting to various factors; instead, we look at each design and school rebuild on its own merits. However, as with our existing portfolio, we are constrained by the land that we have and cannot really alter surrounding urban developments too much. That said, we have undertaken work with our roads department colleagues to identify areas outwith the school site where safer routes are required so that we can put up twenty's plenty signs, put in speed bumps and improve footpath networks around the school to encourage walking and cycling. We have also looked at opportunities to maximise the number of entrances to a school site and ensure that the population has the shortest route for walking to the school.

Sometimes, however, such an approach can lead to ambiguity. For example, it goes against other council priorities, such as the achievement of secure by design measures for our primary schools. While we are trying to ensure that schools have three or four entrances in order to encourage pupils to walk, our police liaison colleagues are wanting schools to have only one entrance that can be supervised with a camera. Such pros and cons need to be balanced in each design, which is not easy if you want to achieve both ends.

Marlyn Glen: How, then, do you achieve that balance and ensure that any development follows best practice? As someone who was a teacher, I

understand that security is a major issue. In seeking to ensure that a school has lots of entrances, which might mean that anyone can get in and leave at any time, you have to bear in mind that you are trying to look after not only property but children.

Vance Sinclair: On a practical level, we try to increase the number of access points but ensure that they are locked at 9 o'clock. I am not sure whether that is the response you are after.

Marlyn Glen: And what if pupils are late?

Vance Sinclair: They have to come to the main entrance and report to the school office.

Marlyn Glen: You have already talked about the involvement of public transport providers and experts in decisions about new developments—I believe that a secondary school was mentioned in that respect. Do you have any other examples of that?

Tony Curran: When we take forward any sizeable development, we bring in our consultants to do a traffic impact analysis of the site that we have chosen to develop. That considers all types of access to and from the site. As I said, we have a hierarchy to promote active travel to work. If the development is on a site that is already used, we identify the baseline there and consider the potential impact on the site of increased activity. We try to achieve a modal shift away from single car journeys to public transport and we employ measures to achieve that. For each of our key developments, a consultant does the base analysis for us.

The Convener: Once a location decision has been made, subsequent design decisions can have a huge impact on how, in practice, people access the services that are run from the site. Is there a standard way of working with architects, contractors and consultants? Should the committee be aware of and encourage the wider use of a single approach that could be described as good practice? Is the approach that you described being used adequately everywhere?

Tony Curran: No one single approach exists. We engage regularly with as many people as we can. We work with several local authorities and we have regular liaison meetings with planners—sometimes bimonthly or quarterly—at which we take them through the key proposals for the next 12 months, 18 months and five years. We consider key decisions that are likely to be made and planning assumptions that we need to build into them. While we work with our design teams early in the process, we take the planners into that. As we go through the draft outline designs, we ensure that planners have input not just when we submit the planning application but throughout the process, so that we can take on their advice.

Regular, continuing and focused engagement means that there are no surprises.

The Convener: How have decisions about car parking, bike racks and access points—doors in and out—at the hospital developments that are happening in Glasgow been affected by transport considerations feeding into design decisions?

Tony Curran: As part of the section 75 planning agreement, we are contributing more than £5 million to transport for access to and from the south Glasgow site. We are providing for fastlink to go into the site. To ensure that everything is in place for that, we have been in constant dialogue with SPT about how best to get buses into and out of the site, because the number of staff at and visitors to the site will increase sizeably. We will spend £750,000 on car park management and car park control, which we will still have, although car parking is no longer charged for.

Those issues have evolved over months and years that have been spent on developing the south Glasgow site. On a much smaller scale, that is mirrored at other sites.

Jackson Carlaw: I will ask about large infrastructure projects—the new Southern general in Glasgow is quite a good example for a couple of points that I will ask about. In an area of relative affluence—such as East Renfrewshire, from where people will use the new hospital—new bus routes are often not commercially viable, because of the high level of car ownership. That can prejudice people in such communities who do not have cars. As an MSP for the region, I have discussed that with people who are planning the hospital. It is easy to see how some new routes can be established more easily and more viably than others can. How will you address that?

Does scope exist to use park and ride more for developments such as the Southern general? We have many park-and-ride facilities that commuters use during the day and which largely lie empty at night. To what extent could existing park-and-ride facilities be used to provide link points for visitors and a fast-track shuttle bus service from various communities in the evening? That would use those otherwise underutilised facilities at night.

14:45

Tony Curran: We are considering that for the Southern general. We have had active discussions about using Braehead, which is the local shopping centre, as a park-and-ride facility in the evening. The centre is quite keen on that. Cars would be parked there and a shuttle bus would go to and from the hospital. It is obvious that Braehead's managers hope that, before or after a visit to the hospital, people will do some shopping at Braehead.

As far as bus routes to and from the site are concerned, we have had regular discussions, through the transport manager, with the local bus providers. They are trying to identify where the key bus routes should be and we are working with them to develop services or provide new services. The one thing that we have not done yet is look at subsidies for any of the new routes. That can be quite difficult for us, because sometimes they are not viable.

Jackson Carlaw: That is what I wanted to establish. East Renfrewshire must be one area where that is the case—I know from conversations that it is difficult because of the high degree of car ownership. Are you prioritising bus routes to communities if the routes will be viable and accepting that the hospital is most likely to be accessed from most communities by car?

Tony Curran: I do not think that that is the case for the South Glasgow hospital. There are good motorway links to it, but the local underground station is four minutes away from the new South Glasgow hospital and the Southern general as a whole. It also has park-and-ride facilities. We have agreed with the bus providers that 50 buses per hour will come into the site. The main transport mode will be public. There will be the fastlink, if it goes ahead, bus transport and the underground—because of the proximity of the underground station. There is also a train station not too far away at Cardonald, although it is not an overly frequent service. There are good transport network routes round about the hospital.

The Convener: We have touched on some of the location and design decisions. As there are no further supplementaries on those issues, we will move on.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Some of your previous answers touched on how you go about trying to influence people's transport choices once a new development is up and running. I will try to tease out more detail about how that happens. For example, green travel plans were mentioned. Will you provide more detail on how green travel plans are developed and the importance that is placed on them for a new development? Are they obligatory, or are they sometimes piecemeal? I am not necessarily referring to your own locations, where I am sure that the practice is very good, but when you talk to other colleagues, do you get the feeling that such plans are not necessarily dealt with well?

Vance Sinclair: Green travel plans are not always brilliant. We have 41 such plans. The ethos is for parents and pupils to develop a plan, in association with one of our colleagues from the roads and transportation department who is specifically employed to assist school communities to do that, so that they take ownership of it, rather

than it being imposed from above. Although some of the numerous plans work very well, others do not. That is because, no matter what the parent councils and the pupils have tried to encourage, parents still want to bring their car to school.

In our whole design process, the biggest issue that we have is requests, if not demands, from parents for more car parking because they have a specific reason for needing a car parking space. They are all up for as much sustainable transportation as possible, but they need a car parking space for a specific reason—whether because they are driving on to work or for X, Y and Z reasons. That is the biggest issue that we face in a school design programme. Our consultations show that people love our school designs. They might have questions about this and that, but when people are unhappy with our designs it is generally because there are not adequate car parking spaces. We try to encourage green travel plans through the parents and sometimes the parent councils have been very good at taking up green travel plans. We have also ensured that our green travel plans will be renewed when the school building programme comes to each school. I hope that that will encourage progress, because we can take elements from the green travel plan and incorporate them within the design. However, if a parent wants to take their car to school, we cannot stop them.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Does the design take into account—sorry, I am going backwards slightly—the need to try to discourage parents from doing that?

Vance Sinclair: We deal with those issues on an individual basis. Basically, our roads and transportation colleagues have a formula for establishing the quota of car parking spaces. Occasionally, they will come back to us to say that more car parking spaces are required to avoid causing problems to the rest of the roads network or because of complaints from residents. For example, people might park in front of, or even drive up, a resident's driveway. We have had instances of that. Indeed, people have been given into trouble when they have come out of their house to ask what is happening. Each case is looked at on its own merits. Generally, we try to keep to the South Lanarkshire roads formula, but we have occasionally, when requested to do so by the roads department, increased the amount of car parking.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Is developing successful green travel plans down to local leadership, or will local leadership—let us use that example of parent councils—always come up against wider societal decisions that particular people need their car? Will even the best parent

council in the world find that it cannot develop the green travel plan as much as it might like?

Vance Sinclair: In my experience, South Lanarkshire has some fantastic parent councils that are really devoted to their school and to all its policies. However, in some instances, no matter how good those parents councils are, they cannot persuade the wider parent body to take up the green travel plan.

Tony Curran: From our perspective, the green travel plan tends to be a mixture of carrot and stick. The stick is provided by reducing the number of car parking spaces that are available to staff. Under our permits system for on-site parking, staff need to demonstrate that they meet fairly strict criteria before they can get a car parking permit. The carrot is provided by trying to promote public transport. For example, we have engaged with local providers to provide staff with a reduced rate for annual, quarterly and monthly zone cards for travelling to and from the site.

We also promote cycle ownership through the cycle to work scheme, which allows staff to purchase a bike and then pay it off over one or two years through their salary. We provide showering and changing facilities for staff. We also provide cycle routes through the site, given that people need to be able to get not just to and from the site but through the site as well.

We use a mixture of emphasis, trying to dissuade people by not providing a car parking permit for the site, and trying to promote good practice by encouraging people to use public transport or walk or cycle to and from the site.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: What about patients and visitors? When people receive confirmation of an appointment, does it encourage them to think about taking public transport?

Tony Curran: More recently, the appointment cards that we send out have included details on the back about public transport routes, such as the bus numbers and train services that come to the site. As car parking is restricted on the site, car parking spaces might not be available at key times, so we try to encourage visitors to use public transport as well.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Is there any research on whether that has been successful? The idea sounds good, but I am not entirely sure whether that is enough to get people out of their cars. Do we need to do more—and not just within the greater Glasgow and Clyde area—than just sticking a bus number on the appointment card?

Tony Curran: That is the key issue for green travel plans. A green travel plan cannot be a line in the sand in a one-off document. It needs to be an active document that includes a monitoring

process. We carry out that kind of monitoring on a regular basis. For example, for the Gartnavel development four to five years ago, we carried out a traffic impact assessment on the mode of transport that people would use to and from that site. We are now revisiting that by working with the local transport providers to re-evaluate what changes and shifts have taken place.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: We need to look at where things work and where things do not, and we need to get that information back. Has research been done in either sector about what has made a big difference, how people have used the new developments and what, with the best will in the world, just has not worked? Can we tease out why those things do not work?

Tony Curran: The evidence that we have is from revisiting and monitoring the plans and the usage figures that we have. I do not think that there is a system-wide approach—we tend to work on each individual project, scheme or master plan—but that is certainly something that we can look at and take forward.

Vance Sinclair: From an education point of view, when parents feel that they have a safe environment in which to drop off their children outwith the school, they are more likely to do so. However, when they feel that there is not a safe environment, they will not. It is as simple as that.

Alison McInnes: I have a final point. A safe environment is one that has fewer cars in it—fewer cars stopping, manoeuvring and doing three-point-turns to get away from the school. The onus should be on school designers and architects to make the car parking—if it needs to be provided—a little more remote from the school. Have you had any consideration of that? In some places it is called park and stride: children are dropped off in a safe environment a little way away from the school, so that those who want to walk to school do not have to fight either the environmental pollution from cars or the congestion around schools.

Vance Sinclair: As a group in the council, we have worked with our colleagues in roads and transportation and other resources. We have not specifically built car parks remote from the schools, but we have worked in the council's capital programme, for instance, to light footpaths from existing car parking areas and to make them safe. We have cut down hedging and done other things to make safe routes to school. That has been done, not specifically through the education budget but through other budgets in the council as part of a co-ordinated approach.

The Convener: I will close questions to this panel with one final question. From several of our witness panels there has been a sense that the

people who are responsible for some of the decision making are saying that things were terribly bad a number of years ago—lots of mistakes were made and we did not join the dots between transport and planning—but that we are much better at it now. Is it your view that people whose focus is planning, people whose focus is transport and, in your case, people whose focus is how to deliver public services actually understand one another's agenda? Do they understand one another's work and how to join the dots, or is there still work to do and more progress that needs to be made? Many of the people who are not involved in those decisions but are affected by them seem to be saying that there is still a problem.

Stuart McMillan: As the planner on this panel, I will go first. My experience in the past few years has been of the delivery of a corporate project and a particular drive to ensure that the different services in the council that were involved did not just operate in silos and instead got to know everybody else's requirements. That is essential, and the integration of planning with education, land use and transport planning has improved at that level.

Obviously, there is a way to go in some areas. Things may be happening strategically and thinking may be happening in a policy sense, but the delivery is perhaps not matched up quite as well as it could be. That has possibly come out in the responses to the questions in the past few minutes. A lot of what we are doing is creating opportunities for active travel and giving people a choice so that they do not have to continue the habits that they have developed over the past few years and so that they know that there are different ways of travelling to and accessing services. We are at the point of providing opportunities; we have to carry on with the follow-through, continue the monitoring and revisit the strategy to see what needs to happen next to keep the impetus going. That is where we need to take a longer view and keep working through the issues.

Tony Curran: My final comments are much the same as Stuart McMillan's. Over the years, the amount of on-going dialogue with key providers has increased greatly. We are a major service provider in the area and work closely with our local authority colleagues, SPT and public sector providers. I am sure that we can do things better—we always strive for improvement—but we understand one another's agenda much better and try to take that on board. That is now a much more influential consideration during the early stages of any project. Active transport and other key delivery areas come into the process, which is better but could still be improved.

Vance Sinclair: The school building programme in South Lanarkshire is seen not as an education project but as a corporate project that involves every resource in the authority. Stuart McMillan alluded to that point.

The Convener: Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. We will continue to take evidence in the inquiry for a small number of weeks and will report shortly after that.

15:01

Meeting suspended.

15:03

On resuming—

The Convener: We are joined by our second panel of witnesses. I welcome Paul Tetlaw, the chair of Transform Scotland; John Lauder, national director for Scotland at Sustrans; and Keith Irving, the manager of Living Streets Scotland. Thank you for joining us today and for the written evidence that you have submitted. I invite you to make some brief opening remarks before we begin formal questioning.

Paul Tetlaw (Transform Scotland): I will say some things that may seem obvious but are worth saying. Of all the policy areas that the committee has considered and which shape our lives, this is the key area that shapes the type of society in which we live now and in which we will live for generations to come. This is about where we live, where we work and where our facilities are. It is about essential and leisure facilities. Critically, it extends right across government, from the lead that national Government takes to regional transport partnerships and local authorities. Of particular concern is how local authorities implement existing policies.

I wanted to emphasise how fundamental this is. I feel quite passionate about it and suspect that, by the end of the session, I will have said one or two things that might upset people, but I am afraid that they need to be said. We have spent my lifetime following the American example of planning policy and we all see the results of that now. A very different model has been followed in Europe, which we all admire, and we wonder why we do not have a society like that. It is quite simple: it is for the reasons that I have just outlined. Now, with the Scottish Parliament, we have an opportunity to make our own way. We do not have to follow the United Kingdom or Westminster model and can make our own model for Scotland. That is what I would like us to do.

The Convener: Thank you. I hope that we will have the chance to explore those issues during

questioning. Does anyone else want to make a brief opening statement?

Keith Irving (Living Streets Scotland): I will be very brief. Transport and land use can be quite a dry subject. I emphasise at the start that a strong issue of social justice is involved. When we are aged under 20 or over 80, we rely on walking more than any other mode to get around, so, in making land use decisions, it is important to bear in mind that we will all be old or have a disability and that many people cannot afford to own a car. There is a strong issue of social justice involved in ensuring that people have access to the goods and services that they need.

Jackson Carlaw: Thank you all for the written submissions with which you have provided us. Life would be very dull if we all agreed, so I begin by saying that I choked on my cornflakes more than once over some of the conclusions that you reach and the points that you advocate in your papers. I do not agree with them. However, that is neither here nor there in establishing a dialogue. In their written submissions, both Living Streets Scotland and Transform Scotland highlight the fact that Scotland already has a well-developed set of national, regional and local transport and land use plans. All of those are designed to encourage sustainable, as defined, patterns of development and travel choices, yet unsustainable, as defined, developments continue to be given approval. Why? You support the conclusions of some of those plans. What are your thoughts on that?

Paul Tetlaw: I return to what I said in my introduction. It goes right across government at all levels, but the final decisions on developments are made at the local government level. There are myriad guidance notes and policies that set out how we should do things but, at a local level, developers in particular place such pressure on politicians and officials that they bend the rules for the developers' short-term benefit. In Edinburgh, the Royal Bank of Scotland clearly held City of Edinburgh Council to ransom over the building of its new headquarters on a site that is out on the edge of Edinburgh. Now, a new tram system is being built to serve that site yet, bizarrely, the tramline will be on the other side of a main road from the site. Even if we conceded that that was an appropriate place for the bank to build its headquarters, it should have at least been provided with the appropriate public transport infrastructure and the tram should have been routed right through the site so that it could stop within the site, as buses are routed within it.

Another development has now been given planning permission on the site of the St James shopping centre in Edinburgh. There could not be a more central location—it is adjacent to Waverley station; the tram will pass by and many major bus

routes pass by—and we know that the bulk of people who go and shop there go there on foot. However, the council has conceded 1,800 parking spaces at that site as a result of pressure from the developer, although the council's own officials tell us that across the road from the site is a car park that invariably has vacant spaces.

Developers in particular have brought short-term pressure to bear on councils. There are many other examples. I do not criticise the City of Edinburgh Council in particular by any means; I chose it as an example. There are many other examples in which, for their own perceived short-term interests, which are often misguided, developers put pressure on councils and councils concede to them for a variety of reasons.

Jackson Carlaw: Do you therefore conclude that there is a lack of effective leadership?

Paul Tetlaw: Yes, I do.

Jackson Carlaw: You mentioned the St James centre. Do you anticipate that the 1,800 car parking spaces will not be used?

Paul Tetlaw: It seems reasonable to conclude that, if there is already a car park with just over 1,000 spaces across the road that, much of the time, is not fully used—those are the council officials' own words—a new one with 1,800 spaces will not be used.

Jackson Carlaw: What, to your mind, is the thought process that leads developers to be misguided?

Paul Tetlaw: I think that they perceive out-of-town shopping developments as great competition and they are right. Such developments are great competition, but they are previous planning policy failures. The developers also believe that the only way to attract people to their developments in the city from the ones outside the city is by providing parking spaces so that customers can drive to the city centre shopping facilities as they would to the out-of-town ones. However, that is a flawed perception because the reality is that most people now access the city centre shopping facilities on foot having travelled there by train or bus or because they live within walking distance.

Jackson Carlaw: Are there successful major city centre retail developments of the kind that we are talking about for which no parking provision has been made?

Paul Tetlaw: I do not speak with experience about this, but I will give it as an example. Last week, I had an appointment and had to change trains in Ayr, so I walked into the centre of the town just to have a look. I noticed a new shopping development that has been built in the heart of the town adjacent to the High Street, which houses major retail chains. I had just a cursory walk-

through but it looked to me to be a high-quality development and I saw no specific car parking provision. The development clearly adds to the town centre. It is a quality build and it has pleasant walking facilities through its heart that link to the town centre. Ayr itself seems to have good walking routes into the town from major housing developments on the other side of the river; I noted three footbridges.

I do not know the background to that development at all, but it seemed to me to be an example of good planning.

Jackson Carlaw: That is an interesting illustration. I live down that way myself and have to fight past all the cars that are heading towards Silverburn on the south side of Glasgow.

Are the other witnesses also of the view that a lack of political leadership leads to the disconnect between the establishment of plans and their effective implementation later on? If that is the case, how would the witnesses address it?

15:15

Keith Irving: Yes, lack of leadership is undoubtedly a major issue and possibly the major issue. I will quote an example from the north-east. I apologise to committee members who do not live and breathe football, because it is about the proposed new Aberdeen football stadium.

The feasibility study into two potential sites said that the site on King's Links, which is far closer to the city centre and to where Pittodrie is, would be the more sustainable and accessible location. The site at the south of the city, Loirston Loch, would be the most deliverable in terms of land assembly, finance and risk mitigation.

When the decision makers—in this case, the football club and people within the council—balance up those factors, they say that it is far easier to build on the green belt than on common good land close to the city centre. It is far easier to get finance, because the risk is lower, and to lay out a very clear construction process. The fact that the King's Links site is more sustainable and more accessible comes further down the list of priorities.

So, they say that they will take the green-belt site. The guidance all says that they should go to King's Links—there are very clear reasons why they should locate there. However, when the decision makers balance it all up, they say that the guidance is one factor that they take into account but that they do not think that it is the most important factor and they want to build their stadium in a particular area. Football fans will be inconvenienced and might be unable to attend games at the stadium, given that Aberdeen fans come from the north of the city or the city itself.

They will either have to drive or take a convoluted bus journey, which will put a lot of people off. That is without taking into account the issue of alcohol—the fact that many football fans drink before or after a game. The issue is that it is easiest to build on the green belt, which is currently what the council is aiming for.

Jackson Carlaw: I have to say that I think that a lot of fans go to the existing stadium by car, too. My son is at university in Aberdeen. When I went to visit, I did not quite understand why I was in a paralysing traffic jam until it was explained to me that it was caused by cars trying to get to the existing football stadium.

Is the logical extension of what you are saying that that discretion should be removed?

Keith Irving: The priority should be to consider how people are going to access the new development.

Jackson Carlaw: I am trying not to be specific about any development. The stadium development is illustrative of the type of thing that you are talking about, whereby political leadership asserts other considerations over the one that you believe should be paramount. Is your solution to remove the discretion of political leaders to assert other things over the things that you believe to be most important?

Keith Irving: If you removed discretion, who would make the decisions? The guidance is correct by and large. If it is followed, you will have a rational decision-making process.

John Lauder (Sustrans): You have asked a really good question. Since the inquiry was launched and we submitted our evidence, I have been considering as often as I can the question that you asked: given all the policy that we have in place and the acknowledgement of all the policy makers and a lot of planners that we are not getting things right, why are we still getting things wrong today? I was casting around for views on that issue, and I mentioned it to a few members of the Scottish Parliament at our conference last week. It is difficult to pin down why there is a drift between policy, what one sees when one looks at the outline plans for a development and what ends up on the ground when the work is completed.

Developers of all hues—in housing, commerce and industry—will have great plans; you look at them and think, "That is actually very good, and it will work." You then come to use the facility, or see it once it has been constructed, and it does not appear as it did in the plans. It does not work in the way that was proposed.

Why is there such a drift? One element is the lack of political leadership in being willing to drive the policy forward. There is also a lack of

awareness at planning officer level of everything that is out there. There is a lack of coherence even within local authorities.

I feel a bit sorry for the City of Edinburgh Council today, as it is getting a bit of a bashing. However, one example—which is not specifically on land use planning—is that one department in the council has signed up to the Brussels charter for cycling. It has said that, by 2020, cycling will have a 15 per cent modal share in Edinburgh—15 per cent of journeys will be made by bike.

Every piece of evidence from any other city of a similar size to Edinburgh says that to reach that position, one thing that we must do—among a whole raft of other things—is take away parking from the city centre. However, right now, there are plans for 500 parking spaces on George Street, so that provision is growing. The parking spaces in the St James centre will grow too. That made me wonder whether the planning department was aware of what the transport team had signed up to, and whether the 2020 target had permeated other departments.

Even when there is no drift in a development, and it is constructed pretty much to the original plan and works quite well as a campus, or a hospital—and hospitals are increasingly like campuses to get round, as we heard from the previous panel—one finds that the surrounding urban realm has not changed at all. One might end up with a good and convenient facility that people can get round quite easily on foot or by bike, but it is still surrounded by mayhem that is difficult for people who want to walk and cycle to get through. A wider strategic approach is needed.

To answer the second question, we have perhaps not reached the same stage as places such as Peterborough, Worcester, Darlington, Northampton and Exeter. I am reluctant to use examples from other countries, but I might add to that list Odense, a medium-sized town in Denmark, and Copenhagen, a big city that has changed radically.

Copenhagen has not experienced a drop in footfall in the town centre and the shopping areas even though car parking has been taken away and walking and cycling have been introduced as the modes of transport. It has done that by undertaking a citywide assessment and bringing everyone together. Someone needs to be the catalyst to bring everything together in a local authority or a national health service board. They need to say, “This is what we’re going to do—I’ll be the focus and put a team together to deliver it, and we will bring everyone together.”

We heard from the members of the previous panel that they are adopting a more corporate style. That might follow through in the coming

years, but the problem with planning is that the decisions that are made now will filter through for the next 20 years. That is where we have got to with housing. We have a lot of cul-de-sac estates that are difficult to get around by any method other than a car; they do not encourage people to walk or cycle. Those and other developments have led us to the current position, which is a sort of crisis point.

Jackson Carlaw: I find that quite encouraging. In a sense, you define leadership as something that should be proactive and evangelical in the development process, rather than involving the prescriptive approach of saying, “This is how it must be.” Is it possible that politicians and others have signed up to much of the agenda without understanding what it meant or being terribly committed to it in reality, so that, when they are confronted with the reality, they find ways to subvert it? That was a heretical thought.

John Lauder: Heaven forbid, Mr Carlaw—although I think that there is a bit of that in it. There is nothing wrong with setting an ambitious target but, as Sir Humphrey might have said, it is quite brave to set a target and not to put in place the infrastructure to deliver it. That is an issue.

The point about leadership was good. In London, Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson were prepared to lead and to take unpopular decisions. Their decisions gained popularity as time went on; I think that very few people in London still question the congestion charge. Cycling levels are growing all the time and the city is more walkable and more pleasant. That is about local leadership.

The Convener: Keith Irving talked about short-term economic considerations in decisions that are taken about development locations. There are also considerations to do with sustainable transport and sustainable communities. This is an important time to be thinking about the matter. Given that budgets are tight and the economy is still not fully into recovery, developers might be saying to the public sector, “You need to build the transport infrastructure, or we won’t develop,” whereas the public sector might be saying to developers, “We can’t afford to do it either; you need to build it into your development.” The situation could lead people to conclude that smaller, sustainable, demand-reduction interventions are more affordable, or it could lead to more appetite for economic considerations to outweigh transport considerations. Are you optimistic or pessimistic?

Keith Irving: There will be good and bad examples around the country.

Economic and transport considerations do not necessarily have to compete. The new train line between Bathgate and Airdrie passes through Armadale and many housing developments are

proposed for Armadale, which will generate economic activity. That is excellent and I hope that the local community will benefit. However, there are plans for low-density developments that are car oriented, although they will be within a mile of the new station—easy walking distance. The plans pay no attention to how people will get to the station; they just show a road on the map. It will not cost much money, if any, to put routes in place so that people can make a logical choice. People will think, “I am getting an excellent new train service to my job in Glasgow, Edinburgh or wherever, and it will be most logical for me to walk to the station, because it is handy and convenient.”

When the lines are drawn on the map, all that is shown is a distributor road. We know from bitter experience what happens when people design a road but do not think about whether people will feel safe walking along it after dark. When the road is built, we suddenly find that people do not feel safe walking to the station. There is no economic cost to ensuring that there is an element of natural surveillance along the new route and that people will feel safe using it. I am optimistic and pessimistic.

The Convener: Members will ask about examples of good and bad practice, but do other witnesses want to say whether, in general, they think that the current climate presents more opportunities for or threats to the agenda?

Paul Tetlaw: The current climate provides the perfect opportunity, if we are prepared to take it. The Government commissioned work to find out the most cost-effective way of meeting climate change targets in the context of transport. Atkins produced an excellent study for the Government, which clearly shows that all the softer measures, such as behaviour change, smarter choices and walking and cycling, offer best value for money when it comes to delivering on climate change targets. Those are just one set of Government targets. The Government also has targets on health, which involve getting people more active, and on regeneration of our town and city centres. We are spending millions of pounds on that, and the Government and MSPs would like to see it happening. We want to reduce our dependency on oil supplies. There are many areas of policy that delivering on climate change would fit well with. I would like to think that we will take the opportunity to rethink what our priorities ought to be for transport investment and transport and land use planning.

15:30

John Lauder: I agree entirely. As Paul Tetlaw said, policies in many areas, not just land use planning, are coming together. We have a really

great designing streets policy in Scotland. Everyone else in the UK admires it and thinks that it is just excellent. We have policies on health. “A Route Map Towards Healthy Weight” has just come out. All those policies advocate improving the quality of the urban realm and making it easier to walk and cycle around for the bulk of journeys, which are short. As far as policy is concerned, the policy makers in Government and local government agree. They see the clear need for such change.

We all know that money will be extremely tight but, as Paul Tetlaw said, the evidence is growing all the time, as the cost benefit ratios show. There is good evidence from some of the cycling development towns in England, which shows a great return on investment. We perhaps just lack confidence that the policy will transform itself into real change on the ground and that we will see progress as we move forward. I am quite optimistic. Everything is lined up. It just needs to be galvanised, brought together and delivered.

Charlie Gordon: I was going to ask you to give examples of bad practice in development management, but you anticipated that question by naming and shaming quite a few culprits.

John Lauder: We have not even started.

Charlie Gordon: I was going to do so not only because so much of the focus has been on Edinburgh—good luck to Edinburgh, possibly.

You also anticipated the question about why developers might continue to propose unsustainable developments. In the example that was given of the new football stadium, it was suggested that the proponents of development might feel that their deal would not stack up if they went for the more sustainable option, although that is not a planning consideration when it comes to the quasi-judicial stage of decision making.

Let us get right down to the nitty-gritty of why local government sometimes approves unsustainable developments. I know that all the members of the panel were present during the previous panel's evidence. We heard evidence from South Lanarkshire Council that in building new schools because of population increases, it could use planning gain and section 75 agreements to make land available, and the schools could be built on the most rational sites for travelling to, all at developers' expense.

With such situations, the usual scenario is regeneration. It was made clear by the same officials that, in general, they do not go out and buy land. I think that the gentleman from Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board made the same point—that for reasons of best value, public bodies often have to look at their existing estate to see

whether regenerated services could be provided on any of their sites.

I wonder whether we are contrasting planning gain in the private sector with financial constraints. In all my years in public life, I have never known a public sector body with spare cash simply to acquire land in case it needs it. What other policy pressures militate against the land use planning and transportation policies that you want to be put in place? I am thinking of best value. In the current financial situation, best value is, of course, further up the agenda than ever before.

John Lauder: That is a really good question. I do not know what policies could influence such decisions other than the policies that I referred to earlier. In listening to the previous panel, I picked up the view that we have to have lots of parking at schools because that is what parents want, but that is about a lack of leadership. It is about somebody somewhere in a council not being prepared to say, "Do you know what? Let's site the school in the new housing development." Indeed, new schools are often sited in such new developments. As I said earlier, given the convoluted way in which developments are built, lots of cul-de-sac developments do not encourage people to walk, because they have to walk half a mile for a journey of only 100m.

The schools that we work with to encourage walking and cycling were built without any thought of how they could be accessed sustainably—by walking, cycling or even by bus. Those schools do not work. They quickly become flooded with cars, which makes even short journeys difficult. Generally speaking, most primary school catchments in urban areas are eminently walkable and cyclable. Without knocking local government, the elected members who have to make the decisions have the opportunity to say, "We're going to do things differently," and yet they do not opt to do that. Instead, they say, "Everybody is going to drive. We'll just have to accept that." We are talking about a lack of leadership.

I am not best placed to comment on major schemes such as new hospitals. I have not considered whether best value has an effect on how people access such new facilities once they are constructed.

Keith Irving: The policy pressure that I am keen to highlight is regeneration, particularly of brownfield and derelict sites. We know that the acreage of such sites remains stubbornly high, particularly in the west of the country. Communities in areas of deprivation bear the brunt of such dereliction. Not only is the deprived land on their doorstep, but it leads to feelings of lack of safety. People are missing out on the benefits and opportunities that developing the land or turning it into quality green space can bring.

I fully applaud the efforts that councils make to develop brownfield and derelict sites, which is the most difficult land to develop. Again, there is not necessarily any competition between economic and transport objectives: if brownfield land is redeveloped, the population density of the area increases and more people not only live but work in the area. As the committee heard in the previous session, other outcomes, such as an improved market for public transport, are achieved. It also increases the likelihood of people being around during the day and night, which is important for community safety—I will continue to return to that issue—and furthers the economic regeneration of the area. I agree that there are a lot of other pressures, but they are not necessarily competing pressures.

Paul Tetlaw: There is an issue about the potential for policies to work against each other rather than as part of an holistic approach to achieving the objectives that we all share. Certain organisations are working in a vacuum.

I did not hear all of the evidence on hospitals, so I will not talk about specific examples, but it is true to say that some hospitals have been developed in places without a thought being given to transport access, on the assumption that most people will drive there. Not only is that completely counter to the interests of the poorest parts of society, it is counter to another objective that hospitals should be concerned with, which is the general health of society. Ensuring that people take more exercise will mean that they need less hospital treatment. Even within the narrow area of the health service, there does not seem to be an overview of wider objectives, which is a problem.

Charlie Gordon: Having established that there might be tensions with other policies, what changes to the development management process could help to prevent the approval of unsustainable developments?

Paul Tetlaw: As my colleagues have already said, the critical issue is leadership and the ability to be bold and to say no to certain things because they do not fit in with the overall policy objectives. I am not necessarily critical of developers. If developers understand fully the rules within which they are working, and further understand that those rules are there not to be bent but to be followed for the good of society, they will produce the kind of developments that we would like to see and which will be beneficial in terms of regeneration, climate change emissions, reduced oil depletion, improved public health and so on. However, developers need to understand that we are serious about the guidelines. Their only objective as companies is to make money, and they really do not care how they do it. They will as readily make money in a way that is sustainable

as they will in a way that is unsustainable. Developers in continental Europe who build the type of developments that we see there are just as profitable as ones in the UK.

When I was in Hong Kong—yes, I flew there, but it was quite a few years ago—I saw a huge Ikea development with no car parking. That was at the same time as Ikea was putting pressure on us here by saying, “Unless you allow us to develop big, out-of-town sites with massive car parks, the business model will not work and we will go somewhere else.” Clearly, the business model works in Hong Kong, because it has to, as it does not have the space for massive car parks. If you are clear to the developer about what the rules are, the model will work.

John Lauder: The question is a good one. We have lots of policies that should influence land use planning but do not quite seem to. That involves the drift that I mentioned earlier between having policies that seem certain to deliver good, sustainable and accessible developments throughout the country, whether small housing estates in rural towns or much bigger developments, and the reality, which is that that does not seem to be happening. There might be an opportunity to make that happen and ensure that land use planning and the Scottish planning policy reflect other Government policies such as the cycling action plan and the other policies that are about to be published or have just been published.

Another solution might involve setting targets for land use planning. For example, for new developments, we could set an acceptable level of carbon emissions from transport, and reject planning applications that were over that level. It might also be possible to review the Scottish transport appraisal guidance. At the moment, STAG affects only big schemes, but it might be time to review it, especially given the fact that we are in a recession and facing major cutbacks. Best value might need to be reviewed within STAG and a cost benefit analysis added to it. I think that STAG is being revised at the moment, and what we are discussing today may need to be brought into it. Also, we simply cannot escape the issue of leadership. Someone somewhere will have to make a decision that will be unpopular in the beginning but will, in time, prove popular. We need some brave decisions to be made.

15:45

Keith Irving: I am not in a position to offer explicit changes to the development management process, nor am I sure that we know which developments are approved or how many are rejected because they do not agree with particular policies and guidance. My impression from

anecdotal evidence is that a number of developments are refused by councils because they do not agree with the guidance. It is important not to concentrate on the few bad examples. There would definitely be benefit in greater monitoring of development management. That would enable government—local and national—to know where the development pressure is, where the guidance is and is not working, where it needs to be changed or improved, and where it is working best, so that good practice could be spread around the country.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Let me take you back to some of the policies that contradict each other. I am not sure whether you were in the room when we took evidence on that from the previous panel, but there was a discussion about secured by design. From my previous occupation as a housing officer and from dealing now with constituency cases, I know that what people in the active travel sector may see as a line of desire for people to walk to the station may be seen by a local community and by the architectural liaison officer as an escape route, so we tend to design out exactly what you want to design in. How much linkage is there between transport and the police, for example, and between transport and other agencies to make such advice available? At some point, somebody must adjudicate on the matter and weigh it all up, and that is the planners. Do we all feed the information into the planners so that they can then spit out their own priorities, or are there linkages with other sectors that will enable us to sit down and discuss how we can have active transport and secured by design at the same time?

John Lauder: We work closely with Lothian and Borders Police and Strathclyde Police on exactly that, with the architectural liaison officers. That has been really good. I admit that we have built some paths really badly without giving a thought to antisocial behaviour or to being overlooked. We have not always done a good job with sight lines and lighting, and we have not always done a good job with our local authority partners in cutting back vegetation and tackling vandalism to make paths attractive and well used. However, in the past three years we have really turned that around and we have worked closely with the police to establish an understanding with them. The police like paths that are well lit, well maintained and swept for glass and where any graffiti is removed quickly, so that people are encouraged to use them, and they do use them. A busy path is a very safe place to be. That work has been great for us. A chief superintendent in Edinburgh once called Sustrans paths corridors of crime. That was not great, but we have never had that again. In the past few years, we have improved a lot.

Last year, we worked with a housing developer who wanted to build a housing scheme on land that is crossed by one of our paths. His initial idea was to put the path right to the back of the scheme with a wall between it and the houses. We all know what would have happened—you hear about it all the time as MSPs. We would have had complaints about people carrying on at night-time on the path. When we sat down to talk to the developer, we thought, “This is going to be a confrontation,” but it was agreed that the path would go right through the estate and that it would be overlooked, well designed, well built and well maintained, and in that way we would not see the levels of antisocial behaviour that we have seen elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the crash came almost on the day when we made that decision, and the estate has not been built, but the decision was indicative of the transformation that has taken place among developers. We have agreed that we are not going to shunt active travel away to where it cannot be seen, which is exactly what the people who want to misbehave are looking for. We have moved to an acceptance that provision for active travel is a positive thing and a selling point for housing developments. The architectural liaison officers have been really positive people to work with from that point of view. Their awards are good and their advice is practical and sensible.

Keith Irving: It is a good question. Not so long ago, some youths chucked eggs at me in my house and I chased them down a path for at least a mile, so I am well aware of the debate. That was, of course, extremely good for my physical activity levels and my sense of ownership of the neighbourhood.

Such paths can become escape routes or centres for taking drugs or drinking alcohol at night, so they are a big issue. We are aware of examples of gates being put in during problem times. That approach has been taken recently in the Hilltown area of Dundee, and as far as I can tell it is entirely sensible. By day the route is a short-cut for people who have legitimate reasons for using it, but by night it was becoming a problem.

People feel safest in areas where other people are around. There are many examples of poorly planned paths, as John Lauder said. If they are not overlooked by houses, they are more likely to become problem areas. However, that raises some more philosophical questions. People prefer living in cul-de-sacs because they feel safe there. Are our children safer playing out in the street in a cul-de-sac or on the path? Are our kids, in particular, and the rest of us better off if we remain in our cars even for short distances because that is the only way to get around, or is our health

improved if we are able to walk, cycle and take physical activity for short distances? That is a difficult balancing act. We have had good discussions with the secured by design initiative about that, but I stress again that the issue is not black and white.

Alison McInnes: I turn to good practice. Both Sustrans and Living Streets give detailed information in their written submissions about what they believe will encourage sustainable travel choices, including higher density housing, mixed use and the local access to services that you have discussed. We have talked about the barriers to the inclusion of those things. We know that they are what we need to do, but we are not doing them. Will you explore a bit further the cultural changes that we need to see among architects, planners and, indeed, house buyers and tenants if we are to favour such developments? Have we done enough to promote the social benefits of communities that encourage active travel?

Keith Irving: We are moving in that direction. Many of the new housing developments are being built according to the principles of “Designing Streets”—that was the case even in advance of the document coming out. I have an example from England. In Rugby, two developments were finished in the past five years. One was a traditional cul-de-sac development and the other was a “Designing Streets”-style development, or something that we on the panel might appreciate more. The houses in the new-style development are outselling those in the old-style development by approximately three to one, so there is demand for those new forms of development.

Again, I stress that the picture is not black and white. There are good developments and bad, or less progressive, developments. Of course, the issue is the cumulative effect. When someone lives in an area in which taking the car is the only realistic choice for going to work or to the local shops or services, that has a cumulative effect across the town or city, because it means that there is more traffic on the road, which affects other people. We are really talking about a change that will take a generation.

Paul Tetlaw: I have lived more than half of my life in Scotland, so in spite of my accent I have a lot of experience of living here. I visit England regularly because I have relatives there, so I know how life goes on there. We have a head start, but we are in danger of talking ourselves down. Scots love living in cities. Scottish cities are much more European than are English cities, which are much more suburban. The suburbanisation of Scotland is still relatively recent and, in terms of the overall housing stock, still represents the minority. We have a head start here, because people like to live in cities. They like the community feel and going

into cities and enjoying everything that they have to offer, but we have just spent the past 20, 30 or 40 years with a set of planning policies that have effectively tried to destroy that by nibbling away at it. We need to build on our great advantage and reverse that.

We have much better opportunities here. It must be much more difficult in England than it is in Scotland. I have picked on Edinburgh a lot, so I am going to mention Glasgow. It is a great city with a great centre. It shows that if people are provided with a quality environment, they will love it and flock there throughout the day and into the evening. However, there is an awful lot of derelict land just around Glasgow city centre, and it is crying out to be developed sustainably to build that community instead of having ever more dispersal. We should build on what we have got here.

Alison McInnes: When someone walks purposefully with their family or children to go to school, the shops, the brownies or whatever, rather than walking as a leisure activity, it is very sociable, because people meet each other on the way. Do you agree that we have overlooked the social cohesion that we might get if our communities were better connected in that way and people felt more able to go out and walk and talk? We have focused on the health benefits, but would you like to talk about the social cohesion benefits for a moment?

John Lauder: Sustrans could provide lots of evidence to show that greater sense of social cohesion. People can sit and chat with their kiddies. I do it every morning. For a while, I took my daughter to school on a bike that was fixed to the back of mine, which was fine, but she asked if we could not do that because she did not get to talk to me. That was great, and that is what we do. I push the bike and we have a chat, which is brilliant. She was absolutely right, as all eight-year-olds are. We get to have a chat now, which is good.

There is plenty of evidence of social cohesion benefits. Greenspace Scotland is about to produce a measurement that will help to quantify the social benefits of having a traffic-free path in an area. Last year, it produced a measurement of the economic benefits; we were involved in a couple of pilots for that. We are trying to emphasise the positive, but for quite a few years it has been acknowledged that we are failing to do the things that we should be doing. Perhaps we are approaching the end of that period and getting into a position to implement such measures. I do not disagree with what has been said on the issue.

16:00

Keith Irving: Inevitably, Living Streets agrees 100 per cent with Alison McInnes's suggestion. I acknowledge that it is difficult to measure social wellbeing and the cohesion that comes from having more people in an area. Everyone around the table instinctively understands the point, but it is difficult to put a value on it. Many decisions require or look for statistical analyses of that kind. However, as Paul Tetlaw said, people gather where other people are around. We are all logical beings, so we would not do that if we hated other people's company. That is what attracts people and supports the local economy in many areas.

Alison McInnes: I move on to a more difficult issue. There are reasons to be optimistic, and this afternoon we have heard about many good ideas. It sounds as though some of those ideas are becoming much more mainstream in new developments, but I am concerned that we may face a much greater divide between new and existing developments. How can we retrofit some of the ideas into existing developments?

John Lauder: We are getting better at that. For quite a few years, we have been fiddling around to put paths into places where they should have been in the first place. We realise that we made errors when we sited some of our paths, because we did not put them where people wanted to go and we did not link them in. We acknowledge that the Scottish Government has given us funding to improve the national cycle network and to make it more permeable. We are getting there.

"Designing Streets" is a good policy that should be applied to every retrofit. The sad thing is that, at this moment, developments are being built that we will have to retrofit and fiddle around with in a few years. I have a good example for the committee. We have been working in two new high schools in Edinburgh and their feeder primaries on a project called I bike, using funding from the Scottish Government. We have been there for only four months and are building momentum among children, parents and the school community for the provision of cycling access to the schools. In one of them, Firrhill high school, we are installing a 40-bike storage unit, but that should have been there from day 1. The school is really new—it has been open for less than a year. It is critical that we stop developments being built without such facilities. We are good at retrofitting—we are innovative and come up with all kinds of clever ideas—but that should not be necessary in new developments that are being built now.

In older developments, one of the best ways of encouraging active travel is to reduce the speed of cars, to make roads less hostile. That is not a land use planning issue. However, from the cycling

action plan evidence that we took over a long period from members of the public who do not cycle, we know that they do not and will not cycle because the roads are hostile, scary places that they will not venture on to with a bike. Lowering the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph is a simple way of retrofitting areas to free up space for cycling. That has been done in many towns in Scotland such as Kirkcaldy, almost all of which now has a speed limit of 20mph.

Another method of retrofitting is road space reallocation. That requires leadership and decisions need to be made, but there is a great example in Glasgow in which parking is being taken away from one side of the street between Kelvingrove park and Anderston and a two-way Copenhagen-style cycle path is being introduced—one with a kerb between the cycle path and the road. There has been very little public opposition, and the path is already popular. In fact, people are on it all the time. That is another good example of retrofitting to allow people to move about a bit better, and it is cost effective, because it is not expensive. Tackling parking and reducing road space are two very good approaches.

Perhaps we should not always build what we have built over the past few years—discrete, traffic-free paths on their own. We know that people like such paths, but we often have very wide roads in our urban areas that can be narrowed by the introduction of shared space. Again, that approach is often overlooked although such streets would be busy, popular and safe.

The Convener: I encourage people to keep their answers reasonably short if possible—we have to fit in another panel of witnesses after this one.

Paul Tetlaw: If you look at some of the older housing stock and the many tenemented streets in our cities, you see dreary, dull, uninviting views. All you see is a sea of parked cars. It is not that difficult to redesign the street, broaden the pavement, plant a few trees and make it look more pleasant. That is done all over Europe, and we could transform the environment for the people who step outside their front door. That is a case of retrofitting older properties, and we should do that to make the places more attractive to live in.

Keith Irving: There is a very big challenge with retrofitting. “Designing Streets”, which is official Scottish Government policy, states that its principles apply to retrofitting for all existing streets, which is brilliant and terrific and answers Alison McInnes’s point about not discriminating between older and newer developments. The challenge is getting the planners and transport people to speak to one another. Right now, simply organising seminars for those staff to attend is

proving extremely difficult for Living Streets and the consultancy that wrote “Designing Streets”. Even by providing incentives, it is difficult simply to get the planners and transport people to be in the same room for a seminar to increase awareness.

The challenge in the first instance is to increase awareness. Secondly, there is a challenge around public finance, although retrofitting is often very cheap in comparison with larger scale transport projects. There is also a role for national Government in implementation—having some sort of task force, which is a low to no-cost solution to monitor what is happening with the great policy of “Designing Streets”. Are people using it? Are they using it for new developments or retrofits? It will be helpful to monitor that data so that, in 10 years’ time when a subsequent committee holds a similar inquiry, a better database will be available.

Alison McInnes: We have focused almost exclusively this afternoon on urban and town areas. Will you each identify some of the issues and provide an example of good practice in rural or island communities?

John Lauder: Using Scottish Government funding and working with Transport Scotland, Sustrans is creating a path running north from Oban to Ballachulish and then on to Glencoe. It is linking up lots of small communities that are bisected by the A828, which is a very busy trunk road that in many places does not have footway. That is part of the Transport Scotland trunk road initiatives and it is really good. The path is now very popular with local people, but it was not at the beginning—people questioned why we were doing it when many other issues in that rural area need to be addressed, not least the maintenance of minor roads. However, I have been up there a lot this year and at the tail-end of last year and I have met many local people—and not many tourists—on the path who were making short journeys, such as popping to the village hall or their dance class and going to school. People use the route just for recreation in the middle of the day and do a myriad of other activities that they could not do before.

The route is being built to a high standard. We are consulting the community, which we have not always done. We are asking people where they want paths to go and what we need to link in. I would be happy if the committee looked at that good example.

Keith Irving: It is often thought that walking levels are low in remote and rural areas, where cars are needed for many journeys. However, 40 per cent of people in Kirkwall and 38 per cent of people in Stromness walk to work. Throughout Orkney, 33 per cent of kids walk to school. Land use decisions that have been made to keep towns compact, even though they are remote, mean that

people can make more social travel choices that have less effect on greenhouse gases, as we have discussed.

Paul Tetlaw: The same principles apply to rural areas as to cities. Most people in rural areas live in small and discrete communities, in places such as Dingwall, Thurso, Helmsdale or whatever. The principles that we are discussing for making lively and vibrant communities that have a heart and in which people can easily walk and cycle apply equally to rural areas and to more urban areas, on which we have probably focused.

Alasdair Allan (Western Isles) (SNP): I apologise for being late—my plane did not show up this morning on the Isle of Lewis. Perhaps the Scottish Parliament should have been built somewhere else.

Some of the written evidence refers repeatedly to places such as Groningen in the Netherlands. How applicable is all that stuff? What does Scotland have to learn from such international examples?

John Lauder: There is a risk that the committee will think that I am fascinated by Denmark, but it provides a good example because it is not far away, has a similar population size to Scotland and has the same weather as us. We could learn many lessons from Denmark. Small towns there where transport was the dominant feature of the town centre have been transformed in the past 30 years. The catalyst for that was the view in Denmark, after the 1973 oil crisis, that the country should not be so dependent on oil again. A big decision was made. It is interesting that nobody disagrees politically with that decision—it has almost become a quality-of-life issue that how our urban realm works needs to change.

The lessons that are to be learned concern bringing together all departments of a council, such as planning and transport departments; galvanising people; providing leadership and incentives; and taking unpopular decisions at the beginning, such as removing car parking and prioritising walking and cycling, and following them through. Funding is an issue—much more funding has been available in Denmark and it has been consistent. Another lesson is to provide high quality—to make people feel good about using cycling and walking facilities and to elevate them and make them feel valued.

We became familiar with the town of Frederiksberg because we are doing a project in Kirkcaldy this year and the towns are of a similar size. The team that brought the modal share for cycling in Odense—another Danish town—up to about 40 per cent has been brought into Frederiksberg, because it has had a crisis in which its modal share for cycling has dropped to the

terrible figure of 18 per cent—that is still 8 percentage points higher than the figure that we are aiming for. The Danes have viewed that as a real problem and have brought in a team to change how the town functions. The big lesson is that they carried out a whole-town analysis and strategised neighbourhood by neighbourhood how things would be changed. There was no big splash or big announcement; instead, backed by funding, they started off small, began to develop things in consultation with the community and let the plan develop over a number of years. As a result, they produced the infrastructure that people wanted.

16:15

Alasdair Allan: Who do you mean by “they”? Did the initiative come from a national level or from what I presume would be the much smaller local authorities that these countries have?

John Lauder: It tended to come from the mayor’s office. The mayor would say, “We’re going to emulate Odense,” which was the first town really to do that type of thing. Copenhagen was the first city. As has been shown, increasing footfall in the town centre has not led to a loss in income. In fact, the approach has become popular with people, who like the more cosmopolitan, laid-back atmosphere in the town and the improvement in quality of life. Other mayors have simply said, “We want the same as Odense.”

The other thing that the people in Denmark have highlighted is that people from other places, both domestic and international, now want to visit the town to see what is happening there. As a result, the feeling, corporately, is that the town is now in the lead; it is popular and people are interested in it, and its approach has become a feature and selling point. Although the issue has been driven forward by the mayor’s office in each town, which is crucial, the catalyst was national in that the Danes wanted to change how transport for short journeys was fuelled.

Paul Tetlaw: Actually, we have just carried out research on a number of northern European countries, including the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Germany and Austria, to find out whether these higher levels of cycle use are a result of some cultural difference or of deliberate policy decisions that they made and have stuck with. The answer is the latter. As John Lauder says, the decisions go back 30 or 40 years; in fact, in the Netherlands, the decision was taken at a national level shortly after the second world war. In all cases, the Governments took deliberate policy decisions—mostly in the 1960s and 1970s—to deal with the current scenario that we are in of declining levels of walking and cycling, ever-increasing levels of car use and the domination of towns and cities by cars. Clearly they have gone a

long way in the other direction; for example, in Copenhagen, which is comparable to our cities, the modal share for cycling to work is 35 per cent. That is almost unbelievable: the share here is 2 per cent, rising perhaps to 5 per cent in parts of Edinburgh. However, the Danes are not satisfied with that; they want 50 per cent. That is ambitious, but there are good reasons for such ambition: they see that it is good for the country in a variety of policy areas.

Keith Irving: Coming back to football, I point out—as some members turn away—that in 2005 FC Groningen had to move from Oosterpark to Euroborg stadium, both of which are in the city within walking distance of the major transport interchanges. Because of the council's active policy for the town to be as compact as possible, more than three quarters of the population live within 3km—or walking and cycling distance—of the town centre.

Another more serious example, this time with regard to public transport, can be found in the Rieselfeld and Vauban suburbs of Freiburg. They were deliberately built along public transport spines, which meant that when people moved in public transport was already in place to allow them to travel to work. There are some examples of that happening in Scotland. However, there are also poor examples in which major housing developments have been built on the assumption that the public transport will follow but, for many reasons, if it happens at all, it takes a long time to come through. By that time, people have already made their transport choices and the car is the logical choice for them.

A lot can be learned from our past mistakes and I get the impression that there are developments that are learning from them. If the transport facilities are in place, people will make the logical choice and use public transport.

Alasdair Allan: Do equivalent pressures exist in Denmark, the Netherlands or Germany with housing developers—I will not name names—attempting to put together unsustainable housing developments? You suggest that local authorities exert a bit more muscle in restraining them, but do similar pressures exist?

Keith Irving: Do you mean in Scotland?

Alasdair Allan: No, in Denmark or the Netherlands. Everyone has talked about how those pressures exist in Scotland but I am asking whether they exist in those other countries.

Keith Irving: I cannot tell you for sure, but I would be happy to come back to the committee on that point. I suspect that there are pressures but, from everything that we have discussed, I think that the level of leadership is such that they are turned down.

This may not answer your point exactly but, in the 1970s, Groningen was faced with the decision to rebuild its hospital. The pressure from the people who were building it was for an out-of-town location but the town council wished it be in an area where people could access it easily by walking, cycling and public transport, so the development happened in another city centre location. I will not name names, but there are probably examples in Scotland where developers have taken that approach, it has not been ignored and the consequences have been inaccessible health services for much of the population.

John Lauder: One of the tricky things about talking to people in Denmark, Holland or Switzerland is that they have come so far that putting in the kind of infrastructure that we are discussing now is simply what they do. It has become accepted, so it is not even a conscious decision. People simply accept that that is what will happen because they have come through the difficult period of having to push it and drive it forward.

I do not think that there were necessarily easy decisions to be made at the beginning as towns changed. Measures had to be driven through and I am sure that people were unhappy at not being able to park in the city centre, for example. However, those countries have reached a position where, when we ask them what policy directives they have, they say, "Oh, we don't have one of those," because such approaches are now common practice.

The local authorities in those countries must be confident that they can do things that we would think quite radical. When we talked to the person from the Frederiksberg local authority, he showed us slides of what he would be doing in the next few years and talked confidently about removing car parking. To us, that would be a really controversial decision, but he said, "We will remove the parking here and move it there and make a cycle lane there. It will just happen because that is what will happen."

I suggest that those countries have come through the curve that we are entering.

Alasdair Allan: A number of people have talked about cultural change and differences in cultural attitudes towards such matters. One thing that interests me is the cultural assumption that people in Scotland will drive their kids to school. I will try to phrase this carefully. Is that assumption driven to some extent by understandable fears that parents have because of a type of media that exists here but perhaps does not exist in Denmark? It is a question to which I do not know the answer.

Paul Tetlaw: I agree. The media have a lot to answer for in many aspects of life. The media have created the fear factor among parents that makes them cocoon their children and take them everywhere in cars. As we all understand, that is detrimental to the children's long-term development and health.

There is a great danger that we allow our society to be shaped by the media. We need to be bigger than that and say no, we will not do that. Every analysis of risk shows that the greatest risk to people is in their own home. That is the place where children are most likely to be harmed.

Keith Irving: As part of our walk to school campaign, we carried out surveys about parents' fears and the reality. Abduction and road safety are the biggest fears. The fear of a child suffering poor health as a result of physical inactivity barely registers by comparison.

The important point is that there is a stubborn spike in accident levels as kids move from primary to secondary school and, potentially, move from a much easier journey to a longer-distance one. Part of the reason is that, if kids are cocooned in cars, they do not learn proper road safety sense. As difficult as it is, the best way for us as parents to keep our kids safe is to ensure that they are aware of the dangers. Although they may be superficially safer in the back of the car, being there does not teach the life skills that will keep them safe through their teenage years at secondary school.

The Convener: There are no further questions, so I thank all the witnesses for their time answering questions. We will report over the next few weeks, so our report will be available on the Parliament's website in due course.

I suspend the meeting for the changeover of witnesses.

16:26

Meeting suspended.

16:28

On resuming—

The Convener: We continue agenda item 2 with our third and final panel of witnesses: Dr Margaret Bochel, who is chair of Heads of Planning Scotland; and Ewan Wallace, who is the vice-chair of the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland. I thank them both for joining us and welcome them to the committee. Does either of them want to make any brief opening remarks?

Ewan Wallace (Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland): Thank you very much for rescheduling us for today's evidence

session. We were due to appear jointly before the committee on a previous occasion, but the SCOTS representative was taken ill on the day. Thank you for fitting us in.

The Convener: No problem. I am grateful that we have the opportunity to hear from both organisations. I am sorry that we are starting this session some minutes later than we had intended.

Charlie Gordon will begin the questioning.

Charlie Gordon: At national level, we have the national transport strategy and the national planning framework for Scotland 2, which are the responsibility of the Scottish Government. We have regional transport strategies covering the whole of Scotland, for which the seven regional transport partnerships are responsible. We have strategic development plans in the four main city regions. Finally, we have development plans and local transport plans across the 32 local authorities. To what extent is there integration between the two disciplines that Dr Bochel and Ewan Wallace represent?

16:30

Dr Margaret Bochel (Heads of Planning Scotland): Integration between the two disciplines has actually improved significantly over the past few years. That has perhaps been facilitated by having that policy framework from the national level right down to the local level. Indeed, on the train on the way down, Ewan Wallace and I were discussing how, within the next year or so, the north-east will for the first time—I think this also applies in other parts of Scotland—have an up-to-date and integrated policy framework all the way from the national level through to the new local development plans. I think that good progress has been made.

Ewan Wallace: I certainly agree with that. An awful lot of work has been put in by engineers, transport planners and planning professionals on the ground to pull those documents together and to try to ensure that there is as much commonality as possible in them. They try to ensure that the documents are not working against one another in terms of the outcomes that they are trying to achieve. Wrapping up a lot of that is the work that authorities are doing on single outcome agreements, on which they are working with the community planning partnerships that previous witnesses have mentioned. There is a lot going on. The members of HOPS and SCOTS try to ensure that there is consistency. They try to take an overview of that within each individual authority.

Charlie Gordon: To what extent might structures be changed to ensure improved planning outcomes? For example, the Chartered

Institution of Highways and Transportation has suggested that the regional transport partnerships and the strategic development plan areas for the city regions should be merged. The Scottish Chambers of Commerce has suggested the development of a suite of generic transport standards that should be adopted by local authorities for their local transport plans. Should further such changes be made?

Dr Bochel: On the question whether strategic development plan authorities and regional transport partnerships should be joined together, obviously it is still early days, in particular for the strategic development plan authorities, but I think that we have some very good examples in the north-east and in the Tayside and central Scotland transport partnership area of both types of authority working very co-operatively. Inevitably, there will be some room for improvement, particularly in the early days, but in many areas the authorities are co-located, which makes a big difference. In the north-east, the authorities are also co-located with the Aberdeen city and shire economic forum. Therefore, I am not sure that there is a need for the authorities to be merged.

It would be more important that the authorities covered the same geographical area—that would make a significant difference—and that the timescales for preparing the two suites of plans and the timescales that the plans cover were brought as close together as possible. At the moment, strategic development plans cover a period of 25 to 30 years ahead, whereas the period covered by regional transport strategies is more like 10 to 15 years ahead. If we could bring about that sort of integration, there would not necessarily be a need to integrate the two types of body.

Ewan Wallace: On the relationships between the regional transport partnerships and the strategic development plan authorities—and their relationship with any economic development forum that might exist in the different local authority areas—part of the issue is ensuring that the separate boards or committees have a commonality in terms of the members who serve on them. The two boards can perhaps come together to discuss major issues at key points in the planning process so that, in considering the strategic development plan for a given area of Scotland, they can consider the transport implications as early as possible. That would allow all those issues to be considered at the same time and allow other public sector agencies to be involved as well.

From our discussions with SCOTS members, we believe that, rather than a physical conjoining or a change in governance, the key element should be to ensure that the decision-making

processes are as clear and joined up as possible. Decisions should be taken following clear evidence and advice from different parties such as transport and planning.

Charlie Gordon: Coterminous boundaries and timescales would help, but you are not suggesting that it is necessary to integrate governance.

Ewan Wallace: The issue of full governance and everything that is involved with it arises whenever one tries to bring together any formally constituted partnerships that already exist. Both the elements that I mentioned are already covered by legislation and have been formally established. It is likely to take time and effort, and some cost, to move towards such integration, whereas we can probably achieve the same result by working together as openly as possible.

I will quote one example from the north-east of Scotland, in which the strategic development planning authority and the regional transport partnership have members in common. People can sit as members of both bodies. The bodies do not work together in their entirety, but at the very least they can be brought together when major issues need to be considered, so that each body is aware of the background to the different areas. That was mentioned in one of the earlier evidence sessions. The best advice is needed so that good decisions are taken.

Charlie Gordon: Those suggestions aside, are you confident that the existing arrangements are, in the majority of cases, best placed to ensure improved planning outcomes?

Ewan Wallace: Certainly, given the way in which the seven transport partnerships work. They are members of SCOTS, and they play a key role in working with local authority officers to try to ensure that we are not working in ways that take us in different directions at the regional and local levels with regard to improving transport provision.

Matters sometimes come to a head when budget discussions become part of the process and we start to examine the allocations in the different parts of the organisations. However, with regard to planning transport so that it fits with strategic and local development plans, we are finding through SCOTS and HOPS that that is increasingly working better than it has done in the past. We are at a stage where we can see some real results.

Charlie Gordon: That is really about the process. My question was about the planning outcomes. There has been a degree of criticism around whether the desired planning outcomes are currently being achieved through the existing structures.

Ewan Wallace: Does that relate to the transport outcomes or the overall planning outcomes in the strategic and local plans?

Charlie Gordon: This inquiry is about the integration of one into the other. We have evidence of a number of examples in which the words are on the paper and the structures are there, but transport has not been integrated into planning decisions.

Ewan Wallace: One example of where we are managing to link in is in the monitoring that is undertaken, whether it relates to cycling levels, the use of new or existing railway stations or walking levels on key routes in town centres. A number of those things were referred to in the previous evidence session. There is a requirement at regional level to monitor them, and a local authority might include them as part of its outcomes. The work is carried out in conjunction with colleagues in planning services who have particular responsibilities for things such as cycling and walking in rural areas and access strategies.

Those issues are being dealt with in a conjoined way in local authorities. For example, we can say, "That is the policy position, and here is the outcome in increased cycling to school or to the workplace." We can also point to the outcomes in relation to the increased use of public transport and rail to access city regions from the hinterland. There is evidence in the monitoring reports that shows how the joint work is having an impact.

Dr Bochel: There is perhaps a distinction between integration at planning and policy levels and the outcomes that are seen in development on the ground. We are perhaps particularly good at the planning side of things—we have got better at that in the past few years—and the committee's examples are of where integration does not appear to be happening on the ground. That is partly because planning will take account of all the transport issues, but it also has to take account of a range of economic and environmental considerations. The policies may be there, but when we make decisions on planning applications, transport might not, in all circumstances, be the primary consideration. Therefore, it may appear that there is some disintegration of that integration. Sorry, that was not very good English—the official report staff do not have to record that. [*Laughter.*]

Charlie Gordon: A lack of integration, anyway.

That takes us back to something that emerged in the previous evidence session. Sometimes there are tensions between policies. You mentioned economic policies and environmental policies. In the previous evidence session, we heard about tensions between policies on regeneration and community safety to name but two. Do you think that those tensions are the

explanation for some of the so-called bad examples that have been highlighted in evidence?

Dr Bochel: I think that they will be part of the explanation. Without being able to talk about specific examples, it is difficult to tell. It is very difficult to have a suite of policy documents that are totally integrated, with no tensions between the different policy areas. If you pick up any planning strategy you will see bits that appear to be working against other bits. The role of planning is to balance those different considerations.

Charlie Gordon: Thank you.

The Convener: I want to build on some of those questions. Let us take as read your assertion that the integration at policy level between transport and planning has come a long way and that the suite of policies at national, regional and local level are more coherent and joined up than they used to be. What more needs to be done to create stronger coherence with decisions on the ground? We cannot brainwash every planner and replace their mind with a set of policies; they will make decisions based on a heap of other factors. Part of the argument that we have heard from some witnesses is that getting the sustainable transport elements right is the same—or needs to be seen as the same—as getting the economic and environmental factors right. What more needs to be done to create that link?

Dr Bochel: In the previous evidence session you talked a bit about culture change, which has to come from all sectors. It is not just the planners and engineers whom you need to brainwash; we need to brainwash some of the clients and developers. It is very difficult to persuade a large business that it really does not need all that car parking. Such businesses tell us that they cannot attract people to work in their company if they do not have a parking space. Brainwashing has to be done at a series of levels to make it easier for the planners, the transport planners and, in particular, the politicians to make some of the difficult decisions that have to be made to make integration happen at a more practical level.

Ewan Wallace: On the engineering and transportation side of the advice that we give our colleagues in planning and other services, we have included within the basic training schemes a much higher requirement for awareness of planning, social and environmental issues. X number of years ago, when I started as a graduate engineer, I really did not need a great deal of awareness of some of the issues surrounding planning policies and the detailed issues associated with planning a development right from start to finish, other than the purely engineering aspects.

16:45

Among SCOTS membership we have tried to encourage more awareness in constituent local authorities and to ensure that people find out what colleagues are up to in other parts of the authority, particularly planning. That approach broadens out the trainees' experience and enables them to become better engineers or transport planners. It also enables trainees to talk to colleagues in other parts of the authority about what we do. There is often a lack of awareness in different parts of a local authority about the extent and range of the services that are delivered.

The Convener: During our inquiry people who have a sustainable transport remit have told us that there is still a fundamental disconnect and that hugely bad decisions are being made. We might come on to specific examples. We have been told that decisions are being made that will be regarded as mistakes in years to come and will require retrofitting.

However, when we asked other witnesses, who are developers or local decision makers, about the bad examples and the things that we are getting wrong, they simply could not think of anything. Are we looking at the world through different lenses? Are we measuring success by different criteria? Are we living on different planets? Why is there such a disparity in the evidence that we have heard? Why do some people think that there is still a huge problem, while others do not?

Dr Bochel: There are good and bad examples, but whether someone regards an example as good or bad will depend very much on where they are coming from. Someone who represents a sustainable transport organisation will regard some developments as poor from a sustainable development point of view, although they might be good and positive from the perspective of employment creation or regeneration of an area. That brings me back to my point about how planning involves balancing a range of considerations and, ultimately, making a decision about what is in the best interests of a community or place at the time.

Those considerations might change over time. I found it interesting that a witness on a previous panel said that we are building things that we will have to retrofit almost immediately. That is partly to do with the length of time that it takes from thinking up an idea about a new development to getting the development on the ground. The process can take five or 10 years, during which time factors might change and there will be different priorities and needs. Until we can speed up the process it is inevitable that we will have to go back and retrofit developments to whatever is the new standard.

The Convener: I am bearing in mind your point about the need to balance different priorities. The previous panel talked about what is happening in different countries. People have decided at national level that they want to do things differently and provide leadership, and the decision has turned out to be very much in the economic interest, in the context of creating sustainable, vibrant communities, high streets and shopping centres. Even if the political will is there to make such decisions, is the power there? Can that transformational agenda be created?

Dr Bochel: It probably can, but it requires difficult political decisions, and not just politicians but everyone who is involved in development must be signed up to the agenda. A culture shift is needed. It is possible, but we would have to decide that that is where our priority lies.

We must also be able to demonstrate the benefits. In the context of evidence-based decision making, if we cannot prove to developers that putting in sustainable transport options will bring economic benefits, through improvements in health, a reduction in congestion and so on, it will be difficult to convince people to change.

The Convener: It is clear that we have not yet attempted to take that step.

Ewan Wallace: I agree with everything that Maggie Bochel said. An issue that has particular resonance in transport is the time lag after policy documents, guidance and so on are altered. Officers on the ground can be asked to apply the new policy and guidance as developments come through, but it can take a long time to develop policies in the first instance.

Keith Irving from Living Streets cited the designing streets approach, which has probably taken two or three years to come about. SCOTS members are heavily involved in working that through along with HOPS. We are working closely with others in introducing the new policy position and bringing together the new guidance document.

I think that Keith Irving also said that we are getting to the stage of rolling out the policy through seminars. We are putting that in place, but it is proving difficult given the scale of the undertaking. There are many individuals out there who are involved in dealing with the hundreds of thousands of individual planning applications that come through the planning process in Scotland every year. A big element of what we are doing is to move to the next stage. There is a lag in the process, but by feeding things down and through the process and ensuring that we train the people on the front line to apply the policy and new guidance document, we should, over a period of time, get the right designs in the right locations.

Jackson Carlaw: It has been a long afternoon and you sat through most of the discussion with the previous panels, so I will not invite you to rehearse everything that we have heard, some of which was on examples of bad practice. Do you sympathise with the analysis that you heard earlier? Are there other examples that the committee should consider as being greater sins in that regard? Do you have fresh insights to share, or do you concur with what the previous panel members said on why unsustainable—as defined—developments continue to be progressed?

Ewan Wallace: I found myself relating to a number of instances of mistakes that were made in the past and types of development that may continue to cause difficulty in the future. There are areas where we have not yet delivered on policies that were put in place a number of years ago—the one that comes to mind is the desire to put in place more home zones. Money was allocated at national level to local authorities for them to undertake that work, but delivery has been patchy, at best. There must be reasons for that. The home zone policy fed into the “Designing Streets” process. Let us look at whether we can put in place something that meets the aspirations of individual planners, engineers, architects, urban designers and so on—perhaps something that has a chance of being realised over a longer period. Home zones did not work out as envisaged when the policy position was established.

In terms of individual instances across Scotland, I revert to Maggie Bochel’s point that the instance depends on one’s viewpoint. Both of us sit at committee regularly, as do many members of our associations, when the difficult decisions that elected members have to take are taken. Different factors have to be balanced and we endeavour to give the best possible advice to elected members in that regard but, at times, what comes across to us is that a decision is patently wrong and should not have been taken under any circumstance, so we wonder why it has happened. We know that it happens, but I cannot say what such decisions amount to as a proportion of overall decision-making at Scotland level. Our two associations would have to do joint work before we could answer that question.

From a personal perspective, the number of controversial planning applications that come through my council that require a lot of debate at our policy committee is relatively small. We are not having to say, “That’s ridiculous. That doesn’t comply with any of the policies that we have set in place. We recommend refusal. Go away.” That is the view of only one authority, however. Such applications exist and it is of concern when they are referred to us. Clearly, SCOTS and HOPS should have a little look at that.

Dr Bochel: I was not here for most of the previous evidence, but Ewan Wallace has told me of one or two examples of poor practice that were cited earlier, one of which was in my area. On that, I have to come back to what Ewan Wallace and I said about how the decision was based on a range of factors, with transport being just one, although it was obviously decided that it was not the primary consideration. The developer had other reasons for going ahead with the development at that location. The development has not been through the planning process yet, so I do not want to comment on it in any more detail.

I would like us to focus on examples of good practice. Through the Scottish Government and the Improvement Service, Heads of Planning Scotland has been collating information on good practice generally. The tendency so far has been to focus on the planning process rather than on the outcomes, so we are encouraging people to offer examples of best practice that are about outcomes. As Ewan Wallace said, we could look at that jointly with SCOTS to see where the best transport examples are and try to promote them through both organisations.

Jackson Carlaw: Thank you. I think that that leads neatly into your final thread, convener.

The Convener: I have a supplementary from Alison McInnes.

Alison McInnes: I understand what Dr Bochel is saying about looking at good practice, but sometimes we need to identify what goes wrong. You said that some of the examples of bad practice that have been given have been where transport has not been a top priority.

I will use a local example. In our region, we have a new bus station that has no pick-up and drop-off points, and the buses have to queue to get in. There should have been a focus on transport there, instead of which more attention was paid to the shopping centre and car parking next to the station. What went wrong there, and how do we avoid such things happening again, so that we can have much more integrated transport links?

Dr Bochel: That particular example happened long before my time. It is a very good example of a development being planned but not implemented until probably 10 years afterwards. Issues such as access to parking for disabled people were probably not so much on the radar when that development was being planned.

We have done quite a lot of work with our transport colleagues in the city of Aberdeen as well as with the north east of Scotland transport partnership on how we can improve the situation. Alison McInnes is absolutely right that we should

be learning from bad developments as well as promoting good practice.

Alison McInnes: Are there processes that we should change? Should we be able to implement 10-year-old planning permissions without revisiting the transport impact assessments and so on? We are trying to identify interventions that can be recommended that will stop bad developments.

Dr Bochel: The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 has made some improvement in that regard. When Union Square was built, the developer had five years to implement the permission. A permission can be implemented and kept live by demolishing a building that is on the site, which is what happened in that case. The 2006 act gives three years to implement planning permission, so there is a bit more of an incentive to develop. I presume, however, that the same thing could happen—someone could start a development and then leave it lying.

It is possible to require a development to be completed within a certain timescale. I would have to ask my HOPS colleagues whether there are cases in which that has been enforced or in which the developer has been requested to do that. I will get back to the committee if there are such examples.

The Convener: From memory, when the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill was under discussion at committee during the previous parliamentary session, enforcement came up pretty much every week because it was recognised that it needed further attention.

Marlyn Glen: I will give you the opportunity to give us some examples of good practice as we are near to the conclusion of the meeting. Could you give specific examples in rural and island communities?

Ewan Wallace: I would like to draw attention to a couple of things about delivery of transport solutions to assist with the development plan process. The first one could apply to an urban, rural or island community, and might relate back to the discussion about the particular location in Aberdeen city centre.

In the north-east, we were very concerned that we were spending an awful lot of time and energy attending planning inquiries to debate with the development industry quite detailed aspects of the transport and wider infrastructure requirements of developments. Therefore, as part of the process for our local development plan that is currently under consideration, we put together a cross-sector group that includes private sector contacts, utilities companies and all parts of the local authority in order to identify the future wider infrastructure requirements from all the services. Indeed, South Lanarkshire Council's evidence

earlier today on the need to put in place education establishments sounded very familiar to me when I was sitting at the back of the room, because we try to take a similar pan-public-sector approach. The team sits around the table to consider potential development plan scenarios over a 15 or 20-year horizon and to ask what the requirements will be for transport, education, water, drainage, power and so on. The aim is to ensure that we achieve our ultimate goal of having a sustainable economy and of bringing jobs into the area.

17:00

Since starting on that—about three years ago, as I recall—we have been working that approach into the local development plan process to provide the best possible advice and to assist the members of Aberdeenshire Council in coming to their decisions, both now and in the coming months, about the pros and cons of different development proposals. We have also taken the idea back to the SCOTS membership and discussed it with the Scottish Government agency Transport Scotland, which has been party to those discussions. Increasingly, we have been looking to involve Network Rail and HOPS representatives in that process, as we seek to discover whether that type of approach might be rolled out to other areas of Scotland. From the SCOTS perspective, that type of high-level approach that looks towards the horizon and to the long-term aspirations for the area is the sort of thing that could be done.

More detailed aspects of public transport delivery considerations might include a decision on whether to put in place demand-responsive transport services instead of trying to encourage a local bus company to run a scheduled service into a particular location. As regards the rural dimension, if we are building rural settlements incrementally by permitting developments of five, 10, 15 or 20 houses, there comes a stage when we need additional primary school provision as well as improved water and sewerage services and access to transport. However, as the health board witness said earlier, it is not always viable to provide those services, given the cost of doing so on a traditional basis. Nevertheless, if we put in place demand-responsive transport, we can still provide a level of transport to individual developments and, as those grow incrementally, we can try to develop the patronage levels so that at some future point the service might become more commercial or at least involve lower running costs for the local authority.

Those are two examples from different ends of the spectrum, but others could be given from in between. SCOTS would be happy to pull that together for the committee.

Marlyn Glen: The process seems to be distressingly slow because of time lags. Sometimes, people are told, "We know we could do something better, but the relevant decision was made a long time ago." We seem to be waiting for a culture change, but it is a big worry if we are just waiting for it. Do you have ideas on how we could speed up the whole process so that architects, planners, house buyers and all concerned can move towards favouring sustainable development?

Dr Bochel: I do not think that we are merely waiting for the culture change to happen. If we did that, we would indeed be here for a very long time. Both HOPS and SCOTS have been proactive in trying to promote that culture change through sharing good practice, through the work that both organisations have done on "Designing Streets" and the joint events that we have held on those kinds of things. The planning development programme has introduced training sessions on "Designing Streets".

A lot of the work that we are doing as councils on master planning, including with developers, is very much about bringing in the transport teams at the same time as we bring in the planning teams in order to get the bigger awareness that Ewan Wallace talked about. There is also the work that we are doing with trainees in both planning and transport parts of councils. Some of the bringing together of services under single directors and heads of service is also helping. For example, I am responsible for both planning and transport policy. A number of heads of service these days are responsible for more than one service.

We are not just waiting for culture change to happen. Ewan Wallace referred to the advance work on infrastructure requirements that involves people from a wide range of organisations and services and gets everyone to think up front. Given the time that it takes for developments to happen, for the time being we will have to wait to see what difference that will make on the ground. That said, we are not just sitting back and waiting for culture change to happen.

Marlyn Glen: That is a bit reassuring.

The Convener: Let us think about the good examples such as the developer who is ahead of the curve, gets the sustainable development agenda and is keen to see their proposal put forward in the best possible way, including by working with an architect who is similarly minded. Are barriers put in the way of such developers? Will anything make it more problematic for them to get their new ideas taken on board and understood? I am thinking of their work with both transport professionals and planners.

Ewan Wallace: As Maggie Bochel is still writing, I will go first.

If we sit down with our planning colleagues and the developer at the pre-application discussion stage and the developer comes forward with something that is new or innovative, we are very open to that. I can think of examples in which a developer has said, "We are looking to put a set of timetables for all the public transport that runs within 400 metres of the development into each of our new houses. We will also try to persuade the local public transport company to give a number of free season tickets—monthly passes or whatever—to occupants once they are in their houses." Proposals such as that have come forward and—

The Convener: Perhaps developers could go further. There are very few car-free developments and some local authorities place a requirement on developers to provide minimum car parking provision. Should that kind of barrier be removed?

Ewan Wallace: The SPP reinforces the maximum parking standard.

The Convener: In practice, however, it is often seen as a minimum or default provision.

Ewan Wallace: Yes—in practice. I cannot think of many instances in which it is not. The development management group in SCOTS is looking at these issues, including parking, guideline documents and so on. Having discussed the matter with group members, I cannot think of an example in which a developer has said that it will provide no parking at all. I can think of examples in which a developer has said that it will not provide parking at that level, but at 50 per cent of it. They usually say that because of the limited footprint of the development. Developers are usually quite up front in saying how much parking they will provide because they do not have the space and the development is, in any case, in the town centre and is served by six bus routes. There are examples of limited parking, but not because the developer has wished to reduce a development's carbon footprint.

Dr Bochel: One barrier to supporting sustainable travel is the challenge of ensuring that we have the right infrastructure in place to facilitate such developments. It is all very well to say that a developer should minimise parking, but we should say that only if we have the correct public transport infrastructure in place, including footpaths and cycleways. We need to put in place all the things that allow a development to operate as efficiently and effectively as it would if it had the car parking and car access. It will always be a difficult battle to persuade people that that is the right thing to do. Investment is also required. Where will it come from, particularly in the current

economic climate? It is very difficult to persuade developers to put in place that infrastructure. Councils no longer have the budgets to do so.

Alison McInnes: My question is on green travel plans. A number of witnesses have said that everything is hunky-dory because of the green travel plans that they have put in place for the new commercial or industrial developments that they have built. How well are such plans monitored? Are we checking five years down the line that the developer is still doing what it said it would do at the time? We should be encouraging developers to go further. I get the impression that the plans are very discrete—for example, when a new industrial estate is built, each company has its own travel plan rather than companies being encouraged to link their plans together, which might produce benefits. I would like to know about monitoring of travel plans once they are in place.

Ewan Wallace: That is an area in which we have not done an awful lot. None of the local authorities in Scotland has picked up on that in any detail over a number of years. Some work has started in the past two or three years, with the use of software and databases to monitor the number of plans and the requirements in order to try and bring them together as you suggested.

When an industrial estate, a business park or—as in the example that was given earlier—a number of new health facilities are developed, 10 facilities might be built at the same time, and they will all have green travel plans. We need to ensure that we bring those plans together rather than having people say, “We can’t do this,” but there are not many examples of that happening.

There is one example in the north-east—which Alison McInnes and I are both aware of—in which a transport management system was implemented in the Dyce area. It was very much in the court of the private businesses to try to deliver that as far as possible, but it has not been as successful as we would have liked.

If anything, we have moved more towards trying to facilitate and work with the individual businesses. We ask them whether they realise that the other five businesses in the location all have the same requirements and we tell them that if they pool their resources they can put in a dedicated bus service to and from the railway station or the park-and-ride sites. By doing that—although we cannot necessarily provide any money—the businesses can get better results, and serve their development by using the available infrastructure.

I can relate to the comments from witnesses on the earlier panels that the plans are in place but have not achieved as much as we might have hoped.

Alison McInnes: For clarification, the travel plans are in general a planning condition, so they would be enforceable.

Dr Bochel: Travel plans are a planning condition but—to add to what Ewan Wallace said—it is very difficult to enforce them, especially when the development is already there. First we need to monitor the plans so that we know whether they are being put in place and, secondly, we need the resources to enforce them. It is difficult to know exactly what powers we would use to ensure that they were enforced. It is a valid point.

Alison McInnes: We could seek further development of enforcement powers.

Dr Bochel: Yes.

Ewan Wallace: One aspect that we have discussed previously involves the carbon reduction commitments that must be made and the carbon footprinting of individual developments and buildings. As those come forward through the building standards regulations, there is the potential to ensure that individual buildings and groups of buildings must show what they have been doing to reduce their energy usage and to become more sustainable. Because transport to and from locations is such a big element of that, it might be an area in which we can make the policy connections so that the issue comes on to the radar of individual businesses. The multinational elements are perhaps even more important, in terms of how big companies deal with the issue.

The Convener: There are no further questions for the witnesses. I thank both of you for your time in answering questions. As I said to the witnesses on the other panels, the committee will report later this month at the end of our inquiry, and we will make the report available on the website.

Meeting closed at 17:14.

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