

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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Submission to: The Independent Budget Review

1. Introduction

First, apologies for this late and hastily-written submission (hence the absence of web links) as we discovered this opportunity at a late stage. We hope the submission, which is only on one very specific area, will still be acceptable – we note that late submissions are acceptable in some circumstances.

Second, we have seen submissions by Transform Scotland and by the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) and we are pleased to support those submissions. Our comments below largely add to the evidence from those bodies.

We welcome the IBR remit, which recognises the need for policy to be aligned with Climate Change objectives and to maximise the contribution of the third sector.

2. Spokes Recommendation

We recommend a significant reduction in the trunk roads budget, postponement of any decision on a further Forth Road Bridge, and a transfer of a proportion of the savings to walking and cycling. If the trunk roads budget was reduced from its £1153.0m 10/11 figure even just back to the £929.6m of 08/09, that could provide £110m cycling/walking investment together with a £110m deficit reduction contribution.

3. Further Evidence, in addition to that supplied by Transform and CTC

3.1 Official Scottish Government advisory body, the **Sustainable Development Commission**, has in each of the last three years in its *Annual Assessment of Progress by the Scottish government* scored the government badly on transport policy. The failure of the Scottish Government to respond meaningfully has resulted in increasingly powerful calls by the SDC for a major shift in emphasis. The 3rd Annual Assessment (08/09) asks government to “*ensure better alignment between climate change targets and transport policy.*” **In very stark terms it states, “This will require a sustained movement of funding away from roads ... and particularly to active travel and demand reduction.”** It tells government “*to commit 10% of total transport expenditure to active travel.*”

3.2 Again for each of the last 3 years, the **Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee**, in its annual response to the government's draft budget, has in increasingly strong terms recommended greater funding for cycling and walking. And again there has been no meaningful response.

3.3 Every year Spokes conducts an annual survey of **total investment in cycling from all sources** (not just government). The main section of our latest survey was reprinted by the independent **Scottish Parliament Information Centre**, SPICe, in its report 09/48 *Cycling in Scotland*, and is noted there as "*the most comprehensive analysis of funding for Scottish cycling projects from all sources.*" In our estimation total cycling investment from all sources in Scotland during the period of the present government has **fallen** - from £21.7m in 07/08 to an estimated £17.4m in 09/10 (our most recent estimate).

3.4 Meanwhile, **trunk road spending** is rising substantially, from £929.6m in 08/09 to a budgeted £1153.0m in 10/11, up £223m, or over 20%, in that period.

3.5 What is the appropriate investment level for cycling, if it is to be increased to contribute to public health, social inclusion and climate change policies? Evidence from Europe and from the English Cycle Demonstration Towns suggests that to achieve significant cycling levels *consistent investment over the years of £10-£20 per head is required*. This would suggest £50m-£100m annually, compared to the current figure of under £20m (from all main sources). Were the government to adopt the SDC recommendation (3.1 above), then investment in cycling and walking would be 10% of the £2.5bn transport budget, i.e. £250m. Since that recommendation includes walking, it is of a similar order to £100m for cycling investment alone.

3.6 The IBR remit includes **maximising voluntary/ third sector input**. Already this is at a significant and growing level with respect to promoting cycle use, as exemplified in the two paragraphs below. However whilst such voluntary input provides great enthusiasm and much useful activity, there is a basic need for ongoing capital investment so that the conditions on the roads and offroad are such that members of the public feel confident to get about by bike for their everyday trips, and to allow their families to do so.

Although Spokes would prefer to see government have ultimate responsibility for a national cycle network, this has for many years been the role of **Sustrans**, a charity. The largest element of Scottish Government cycling investment is in the form of capital grant to Sustrans, which then works with local authorities and others to construct and maintain cycling infrastructure. Sustrans work was described by former Transport Minister Nicol Stephen MSP as "*high standard, on budget, and in short timescales.*" In terms of added value, Sustrans has a huge volunteer ranger network which monitors and helps maintain the network, a large base of contributing supporters, and it obtains significant additional outside funding – e.g. their recent successful Connect 2 Lottery bid.

More locally there are increasing and remarkable examples of initiatives in practical support of increased cycle use – the **Edinburgh Bike Station**, or the **Greener Leith** project being tremendous examples, each working with large segments of the general public. We ourselves, with virtually no public funding, produce the **Spokes Cycle maps** of Edinburgh, the Lothians and Glasgow which have now in total sold over 100,000 copies.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu
for Spokes