WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM LIVING STREETS

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. Our arguments and evidence led to such milestones as the introduction of 30mph speed limits and the driving test in the 1930s, the green cross code in the 1970s, and 20 mph zones in the 1990s.

Our evidence focuses on how the Draft Budget supports the delivery of existing Government policies and objectives, including Low Carbon Scotland, the National Performance Framework and Obesity Routemap. It is divided into 5 sections:

- Walking and Health: Obesity, Physical Activity, Air Quality and Road Safety
- Walking and the Low Carbon Economy: Policy, Evidence and improving our towns and cities
- Mechanism for delivery: Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets funding
- Road Maintenance
- Strategic Transport Projects Review

Key messages

- Scottish Government policies aim to tackle two key challenges- an aging, increasingly overweight/obese population, and need/desirability to shift to a low carbon economy.
- Walking[i] is a vital transport mode: one in four journeys that we make are on foot, it is the most inclusive form of transport and the most common travel mode for under 20s and over 80s.
- Investing in sustainable transport is preventative spend. Investing in walking helps tackle the key public health challenges and the transition to a low carbon economy.
- Our four key calls for the Draft Budget are:
    - Maintain Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets as additional funding for local authorities
    - Maintain funding for tackling Vacant and Derelict Land and Air Quality issues
    - Maintain the sustainable and active travel budget in 2012/13 and, over the Spending Review, start to fund the Low Carbon Scotland measures
    - Support implementation of Designing Streets- a low cost solution

1. Sustainable Transport and Health: Obesity

Scotland has the highest levels of obesity and lowest life expectancy in Western Europe. The latest statistics, published last month, are stark:

- In 2010, 65% of all adults were overweight or obese.
- The proportion of overweight/obese adults (16-64) has increased from 52% in 1995 to 63%.
- The proportion of obese adults has increased from 17% in 1995 to 27% in 2010.
- Mean BMI has also increased over time from 25.8 in 1995 to 27.4 in 2010- it has become average to be overweight. [ii]

Current costs to the NHS are estimated at over £300m while total costs to society, including sickness absence, loss of productivity and infrastructure planning are projected to rise to £3bn by 2030. [iii] The scale of the challenge is also illustrated with figures from England: In 2005, almost 871,000 prescriptions were dispensed for the treatment of obesity, a 600% increase on 1999.[iv]

It is therefore essential for financial as well as health reasons for the Draft Budget to aim to achieve the key National Performance Framework indicator "*reduce the rate of increase in the proportion of children with their Body Mass Index outwith a healthy range by 2018".*

While the causes and solutions are complex and multi-faceted, diet and physical activity are the crucial variables in tackling this obesity epidemic. Walking is the most common physical activity, at any age, income or gender [v] The Draft Budget should therefore be aiming to increase walking and physical activity levels to help achieve the obesity-related NPF indicators:

- Increase healthy life expectancy at birth in the most deprived areas
- Reduce mortality from coronary heart disease among the under 75s in deprived areas
- Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live
- Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport

– Increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week

In addition, the Indicators to Monitor Progress of the Obesity Route Map includes the Proportion of children engaging in active travel to school [vi] Unfortunately, the number of children walking to school is declining. In a Living Streets survey, 92% of pensioners said that they walked to primary school when they were children[vii], yet today this has fallen to under half (47%) and the number of children travelling by car has doubled in 20 years. There is also a worrying decline in physical activity with age amongst, predominantly, female children, storing up health problems for adult life. [viii]

For all these reasons, the budget should be supporting measures to increase walking levels, especially walking to school, as a low cost solution to a high cost problem.

2. Sustainable Transport and Health: Physical Activity

Preventative measures targeted at increasing physical activity reduce costs to the NHS. (It's worth noting that according to the Marmot Review of the NHS in England, only 4% of NHS expenditure was spent on preventative measures). Physically active lifestyles are associated with a 40% reduction in the genetic predisposition to obesity[ix]. Walking has been proven to reduce the severity of dementia (reduces risk by 50%), retain bone density and stability, as well as to reduce the risks of some cancers, cardiovascular diseases (reduced by up to 30%[x]), obesity, depression[xi] and high blood pressure; and has even been shown to reduce overall mortality rates by up to 20%[xii].

Walking also has an important role in secondary preventative health, the management of long-term conditions such as diabetes and in reintroducing physical activity during recovery from serious illnesses such as cancer. In his 2009 report, the Chief Medical Officer for England and Wales stated that *'The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge. If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a "wonder drug" or "miracle cure"*.'[xiii]

The Draft Budget "*provides support for the development of physical activity and sport within Scotland in order to increase Scotland's level of participation and improve our national sporting performance. We will use the Commonwealth Games as a catalyst to encourage Scotland to become a healthier, fitter and more active nation*."

This is a welcome commitment that must be followed by transport investment: active travel has a key role to play in creating a healthier nation and is the best preventative spend in transport.

3. Sustainable Transport and Health: Air quality

Air quality is a significant problem for many people, especially those suffering respiratory diseases and those living in areas of deprivation. Environment Agency studies from London, also applicable to Scotland, conclusively found that: *"The most deprived areas suffer from the poorest air quality. They have the highest concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, airborne dust (fine particulates), sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and benzene. People in the most deprived areas are exposed to 41% higher concentrations of nitrogen dioxide than people living in areas of average deprivation*"[xiv].

The 2010 Audit Commission report, *Protecting and improving Scotland's environment,* points out that: *"Despite action plans, no council with an AQMA has improved local air quality sufficiently to be able to revoke an AQMA*". With 19 places across 12 Council areas having Air Quality Management Areas in place, due to transport emissions damaging health, the Audit Commission understandably recommended national coordination of air quality and road transport policies and actions. [xv]

In the Draft Budget, an unspecified amount of money from within the Sustainable Action Fund (£15.3m in 2012/13-14/15) is to be aimed at "*air quality support measures which are designed to improve air quality in hot spot areas in relevant local authorities*."

This Air Quality fund should be targeted to where it will have the best impact, especially on tackling health inequalities, with national coordination involving Transport Scotland, delivering on the recommendations in the 2010 Audit Commission report.

4. Sustainable Transport and Health: Road Safety

The Draft Budget points out that "*Scotland currently has the third lowest rate of road fatalities in Europe*". Unfortunately, we also have a poor record of pedestrian road safety: in 2010, the pedestrian killed and serious injury rates per capita were 39% and 1% higher in Scotland than England & Wales, and child pedestrian casualty rates in Scotland were 15% higher (seriously injured). [xvi]

Living Streets advocates 20mph as the key measure to keep pedestrians safe. A recent longitudinal study found that 20mph areas experienced a reduction in casualties of over 40%, as well as a reduction in the severity of those casualties[xvii]. Local authorities like Edinburgh are seeking to implement area-wide 20mph speed limits (rather than just the more expensive 20mph 'zones') to improve local road safety.

With the average road traffic collision carrying an estimated cost of £75,000 – and a fatal incident costed at nearly £2m[xviii] – the direct economic value of pragmatic, high-quality people-focused design, combined with the potential to safeguard human life and perceptions of safety, is clear. 20mph speed limits can also contribute to broader social, environmental and health-related goals, improving quality of life. [xix]

In order to save money as well as lives, efforts on road safety should continue to target pedestrian safety, with a focus on expanding 20mph to deliver on Government social, environmental and health objectives.

5. Sustainable Transport and the Low Carbon Economy: Government Policies

Key Scottish Government policies and objectives identify significant benefits of investing in walking and the built environment for the local economy and developing a low carbon economy:

Scottish Planning Policy: *"Vacant and derelict land … can act as a constraint on the economic growth of towns and cities."* [xx]

Low Carbon Economic Strategy Objectives: [xxi] *Objective 9: Promoting low carbon building design at all scales from neighbourhood upwards, To encourage development of walkable, well-connected places.*
Objective 10: Reducing the need for travel. Promoting development which … provides safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling and invest in the necessary infrastructure to do so.
Objective 11: Widening travel choices. Encouraging lower carbon options, like public transport, car clubs, car sharing and cycling and walking…Cyclists and pedestrians are more likely to support neighbourhood shops and, with users of public transport, contribute to higher 'footfall', which can benefit smaller retailers and businesses.

Conserve and Save: Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2010 [xxii] *Action 6.1 We will actively promote design solutions that support energy-efficient development forms by:*
… implementing the Designing Streets policy, which aims to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over vehicle movement in new or retrofitted streets.

Investing in walking and sustainable transport meets two of the six Government Strategic Priorities for driving sustainable economic growth and therefore should be supported.

6. Sustainable Transport and the Economic benefits: Evidence

Improvements to the walking environment increase economic value and economic activity in the local area, as suggested in Living Streets' report '*Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment*':

- The value of flats was significantly greater in areas with higher quality pedestrian environments (all other factors being considered). The elements that were most strongly prized were personal security, lighting, maintenance, and quality of environment
- Improvements to the public realm in Exeter City Centre resulted in an increase in retail zone rental prices of £5/sq foot between 2006 and 2008, maintained despite falling prices in the region. The increase in retail rental prices corresponded with an increase in footfall of almost 20%.[xxiii]
- The Eddington Transport Study, a major UK Government-funded study into links between transport and the economy, concluded that: "*Some of the best projects are small scale, such as walking and cycling schemes*." [xxiv]

Investment in public realm infrastructure delivers wider economic benefits and encourages walking and sustainable transport, which will in turn increase business footfall and attract more people to an area, in a virtuous circle.

7. Sustainable Transport and Low Carbon Economy

To achieve the Low Carbon economy and decarbonised transport sector- key Scottish Government objectives- a key element is creating walkable neighbourhoods. People will walk more when it is the most logical travel choice to reach their destination and will prefer to walk when other people are around. It is proven that the number of trips and distance travelled by car falls with increasing population density, reducing the distance, hence cost to individuals and carbon emissions of their transport requirements.[xxv] Scottish Government policy on Designing Streets agrees:

"Density is also an important consideration in reducing reliance on the private car. Scottish Planning Policy encourages a flexible approach to density, reflecting the desirability of using land efficiently and the need to promote higher density development in places well served by public transport. Residential densities should be planned to take advantage of proximity to activities, or to good public transport linking those activities."

Residential densities can be increased with the redevelopment of vacant and derelict land (this was a key conclusion of a Future Glasgow working group in July 2011). [xxvi] This can remove the blight from the communities (often in areas of deprivation) who have to live next to such sites. Indirectly, it will improve the conditions for walking as it will create a higher quality environment for doing so. To achieve this, investment is required to prepare land for development. The Draft Budget highlights preparation for "*the first investments through the £50 million JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) Fund, managed by the European Investment Bank and jointly funded by EU and Scottish Government money*". However, the future of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund which received £10m in 2011/12 but is *tbc* for 2012 onwards is not clear.

Finally, we would seek clarification of how the Government's town centre regeneration manifesto commitment will be met: "*We will also look to bring together the various existing funding streams to create a simpler, more easily accessible Town Centre Regeneration Fund, which will focus on important improvements to the built environment and heritage of our town centres, contributing in this way to making our town centres more attractive places to do business*." [xxvii]

There should be continued investment in Vacant and Derelict Land to enable future development opportunities, temporary uses of land should be encouraged to reduce the blight on communities from derelict land, there must be investment in our town centres and strict enforcement of the requirements of *Designing Streets* on new and existing streets should be required, delivering higher quality, lower carbon new development.

8. Sustainable Transport Mechanism for funding: Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets (CWSS)

Preceding sections have highlighted some of the many reasons for investing in walking and sustainable transport. This section lays out the simplest mechanism for doing so.

The Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS) Grant is paid to local authorities annually as a ring fenced grant through S70 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. The grant was not rolled up into the General Settlement during Concordat in 2007 and was preserved for 2011/12, but with a 17% cut in budget from £9m to £7.5m. [xxviii]

While improvements could be made, we believe this mechanism should continue to be funded, and increased during the Spending Review period, for the following reasons:

- £7.5m is a relatively tiny sum of money- 0.35% of the overall transport budget- but with important implications for investment in active travel across Scotland

- The money invested predominantly goes directly to local contractors to carry out the work, keeping the money within the local economy. (Just one local authority has estimated that sixty local jobs outwith the council directly depend on footway and path construction/maintenance work)
- It is used to match and lever in additional funding, for example from European funding.
- CWSS is a proven mechanism for delivering the small scale but important improvements local communities are demanding, to improve walking or cycling conditions.
- The Scottish Government has already streamlined the reporting process, reducing bureaucracy around the fund being ring-fenced.
- Improving crossings, lighting and footway surfaces are essential, preventative spend as the population ages and becomes generally less mobile
- Without this money, local authority officers express severe scepticism that any budget would be available for delivering initiatives improving safety for the most vulnerable road users.
- Funding for CWSS should be additional funding for local authorities. The Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee's Report on its Inquiry into Active Travel, published in 2010 called for increased investment in active travel but highlighted concerns that local authorities would not give active travel "*sufficiently high priority*" in times of economic constraint. [xxix]
- To provide examples from just 3 areas of the local projects delivered thanks to CWSS:
    - Over 10 years, East Lothian Council has used CWSS funding to deliver 63 projects over 11 years, investing £1,542million in crossings, refuges, paths and footways.
    - In 2010/11, Falkirk Council used CWSS funding to provide a new footway/cycleway to Falkirk High station, footway upgrades in Larbert, including to the new Forth Valley Royal Hospital, safer routes to school in Denny, linking to the town centre and leisure facilities
    - In 2010/11, Aberdeenshire Council provided new and improved cycleways and lighting in Peterhead, new footways in Portlethen and crossings in Stonehaven.

We call for CWSS to be maintained at £7.5m or more for 2012/13, as additional resources for local authorities to use for local needs, and increased from 2013 to deliver on the Scottish Parliament's Transport Committee recommendation in 2010 for increased resources on active travel.

9. Sustainable Transport and Road Maintenance:

Living Streets participated during Summer 2011 in the Transport Scotland working group identifying the wider economic impact of changes in maintenance spend on roads. This group's work highlighted that the costs to both the economy and individuals of cutting maintenance investment on local roads was significantly higher than cutting it on trunk roads and that vulnerable road users were the most affected by such cuts.

The importance of local road maintenance as preventative spend is illustrated in Edinburgh. Over 10 years, Edinburgh council had to pay out £2.3m in claims resulting from injuries caused by defective pavements but only £250,000 for claims relating to damage to cars from defective roads. The Council estimated the cost of necessary maintenance as £45m on roads and £41m on pavements. As Transport Minister, Keith Brown said "*we need to remember that the road asset is not confined to the part used by motorised vehicles - how we maintain our footways and cycleways is also crucia*l"

In this light, we note that the routine and winter maintenance budget for trunk roads increases from £61.5m this year to £72.5m in 2014/15, an 18% increase. In contrast, many authorities anticipate cuts in their road maintenance budget and we know of one local authority where it is anticipated the cut will be up to 40% in 2012/13, on top of a 5% cut in 2011/12.

We are concerned that vulnerable road users are facing a double-whammy with both local authority budgets (and therefore maintenance budgets) and CWSS funding being cut while trunk road maintenance spend increases. Cuts to Local Authority maintenance budgets appears to take no account of the Road Maintenance Working Group conclusions and should be re-considered.

10. Sustainable Transport and STPR:

The Committee have asked for comments on the Strategic Transport Projects Review. Living Streets has previously expressed concern over the lack of consideration given to the health impact of the transport

interventions. Given the Government's objectives on tackling health inequalities and climate change, we believe that the impacts, particularly around air quality and climate change must be properly assessed. [xxx]

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[i] References to walking encompass people with mobility impairments and people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters. National Travel Survey figures, which have historically under-reported walking levels

[ii] Scottish Health Survey 2010; overweight (BMI of 25 kg/m 2 and over) obesity (BMI of 30 kg/m 2 and over). Adults aged 16-64

[iii] Scottish Government 2010. Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland: A Route Map Towards Healthy Weight

[iv] NHS. 2006. Statistics on obesity, physical activity and diet, England 2006. Available at: http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/health-and-lifestyles/obesity/statistics-on-obesity-physical-activity-and-diet-england-2006

[v] Scottish Household Survey 2010. Published August 2011.

[vi] Scottish Government 2010. Indicators to Monitor Progress of the Obesity Route Map.

[vii] 'No Ball Games', Living Streets, 2009

[viii] Scottish Health Survey 2010. In 2010, between 70% and 84% of children aged 2-12 were active at the recommended level (including school based activity), compared with 62% of those aged 13-15. This decline with age was only apparent in girls (48% of those aged 13-15

[ix] Li S, Zhao JH, Luan J, Ekelund U, Luben RN, et al. 2010. Physical Activity Attenuates the Genetic Predisposition to Obesity in 20,000 Men and Women from EPIC-Norfolk Prospective Population Study. *PLoS Med* 7(8). Available at: http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000332

[x] Hamer, M., Chida, Y. 2008. Walking and primary prevention: a meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. British Journal of Sports Medicine 42: 238-243.

[xi] Department of Health. 2004. *At least five a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health*. Available at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

[xii] Hamer, M., Chida, Y. 2008. Walking and primary prevention: a meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. British Journal of Sports Medicine 42: 238-243.

[xiii] Department of Health, 2009. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer. Available at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/AnnualReports/DH_113912

[xiv] Environment Agency. 2008. *A scoping report: Understanding the relationship between health, deprivation and environmental quality in Greater London*. Available at: http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GETH0308BNSV-e-e.pdf

[xv] Protecting and improving Scotland's environment - Audit Scotland. "*The Scottish Government should improve the coordination of policies on air quality and road transport at a national level. In councils with poor air quality caused by pollution from road transport, air quality teams should work with transport and planning colleagues to identify and implement actions to reduce emissions from road transport. Councils with AQMAs should review their action plans, identify funding to implement actions to tackle poor air quality, and set timescales for when they expect to be able to revoke their AQMAs*."

[xvi] Transport Scotland; Key 2010 Reported Road Casualty Statistics; October 2011

[xvii] Grundy, C. et al. 2009. Effect of 20 mph traffic speed zones on road injuries in London, 1986-2006: controlled interrupted time series analysis. *British Medical Journal*339:b4469; available at http://www.bmj.com/content/339/bmj.b4469.full?sid=b75e1329-2e51-450f-9b07-9b0a42a3c143

[xviii] Department for Transport. 2009. *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2008 Annual Report*. London: DfT. Available at www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/162469/221412/221549/227755/rrcgb2008.pdf , accessed 7 September 2010.

[xix] See National Heart Forum. 2010. *Reducing the default speed limit in built-up areas: Highlighting the health benefits of 20mph*. Available at http://www.adph.org.uk/downloads/policies/NHF_PositionStatement20mph_2010.pdf

[xx] Scottish Planning Policy: A statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters. Feb 2010

[xxi] Low Carbon Economic Strategy. Scottish Government 2010

[xxii] Scottish Government. Conserve and Save: Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2010: "*Supporting More Active Travel A higher proportion of walking and cycling instead of car driving can substantially reduce our use of energy resources. Our focus on active travel will require ambitious changes, including to infrastructure in order to enhance the safety and driver awareness of cyclists and pedestrians. All drivers and cyclists should respect an appropriate hierarchy of all other road users' needs in towns and cities. Traffic volumes and speeds should be considered where they represent a detrimental effect on active travel opportunities. Road space reallocation for active travel will be essential if Scotland is to change how it uses its road network*."

[xxiii] Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment. University of the West of England and Cavill Associates 2011 for Living Streets

[xxiv] HMSO (2006) The Eddington Transport Study

[xxv] Source of graph: Cabinet Office/DfT presentation, Nick Bisson, 2 March 2010, TRL 2004

[xxvi] Future Glasgow Working group, 15th July 2011 Organised by Glasgow City Council.

[xxvii] SNP Manifesto. Also with reference to Town Centre Regeneration: How Does it Work & What can be Achieved? Scottish Government Social Research 2011

[xxviii] Local authorities are allocated proportions of the total on a population basis. The grant ranges from £1,021,000 for Glasgow City Council to £34,000 for Orkney Islands Council. In the Draft Budget, the amount is '*tbc'* for a renamed Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes fund

[xxix] The Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee's Report on its Inquiry into Active Travel, published in 2010 recommended that: "*the decline in the funding of sustainable transport and active travel line needs not only to be reversed, but significantly increased*."

[The Committee] "*was concerned that active travel may not be given a sufficiently high priority by local authorities, particularly during…a period of economic constraint*." Importantly it said that: *"It is not enough simply to increase the size of budget allocations and assume that results will naturally flow from this increased spending. Available funding must be used to provide infrastructure*

and other measures that have been proven to have a high benefit to cost ratio and deliver tangible outcomes including health benefits, savings on road maintenance and reductions in CO2 and air pollution."

[xxx] STPR says: "*The effects of the STPR interventions tend to be relatively marginal in respect of the [Health] Objective, but some schemes are assessed as having a small beneficial effect*." The lack of consideration given to measuring the health impact of the interventions is illustrated by the inconsistencies in the assessments of effect: while rail enhancements for Aberdeen to Inverness services and in the East and are said to benefit health, enhancements to Aberdeen-Central Belt services have a neutral impact and the health impact of rail enhancements in the West is not even mentioned.