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The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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To: Members of the Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

Dear Members of ICI Committee

ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING IN THE DRAFT BUDGET 2012/13 - UPDATE

I am writing, first, to thank you for the seriousness with which you took the cuts to active travel funding in your report on the draft budget 2012/13 and spending review. However we are puzzled and disappointed that Finance Committee made no comment at all on the relevant sections of your report.

Second, much of the uncertainty in how the draft budget affects cycling/walking investment has now been clarified, so I would like to outline the position as we now understand it. This is in **appendix A**.

Finally, we wish to comment on the letter of 15 December from the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment to the Committee's Convener. Our comments are in **appendix B**.

In summary, astonishingly, the outcome for total active travel from the draft budget now looks significantly worse than we predicted in our submission to your Committee when the draft budget was published. On CWSS, our prediction proved to be uncannily accurate, but sadly we were much too optimistic on how the SAT budget line would be allocated.

As a result, total active travel investment (i.e. cycling + walking) looks set to fall from the equivalent of 1.21% of transport spending in 10-11 and 1.03% in 11-12 to just 0.67% in 12-13; this against an SNP manifesto promise to raise the proportion of the transport budget invested in sustainable and active travel. Furthermore the 0.67% becomes a mere 0.56% if we exclude trunk road cycling projects which, although welcome, obviously contribute much less to government CAPS targets than does investment in urban cycle/walk infrastructure.

What particularly outrages our members is that **these incredible cuts are happening at the same time as total transport spending is rising substantially** (due to £100m extra for trunk roads); and secondly that the sums involved really are peanuts in that context. See graphic here...

<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2011/12/budget-msps-support-spokes/>

Sadly, the cuts are also set to devastate a growing and increasingly successful network of skills, project-planning, cooperation and local jobs in cycling development across Scotland; which will take time to re-instate if and when funding returns. The local-jobs impact can be seen plainly in the Sustrans evidence appendices.

We hope it is not yet too late for the government to have a rethink before the final budget is published, and we urge Committee members to take any possible steps to achieve this.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu
for Spokes

Appendix A – Estimated cycling/walking investment in 2012/13 (and beyond)

The bulk of cycle/walk investment from the budget currently comes from the CWSS and SAT lines, with possible additions from the Future Transport Fund (FTF). Arguably **trunk road cycle projects** should be added in, but these are often tourism/leisure-related and so are unlikely to impact much on the government's cycle-use targets, and in any case it seems probable that trunk road cycle projects will retain roughly their current funding levels. No **other budget-related sources** (e.g. the Climate Challenge Fund) make a significant impact on total annual cycling investment.

On CWSS, the 2012/13 figures have just been announced [Annex O of the Local Government settlement]. On top of the cut of around 17% from 10/11 to 11/12 there is to be a further cut of nearly 20% on the 11/12 figures. The total for Scotland is thus down £9.09 (10/11) ->£7.458 (11/12) ->£6.069 (12/13).

On SAT, Annex A of Alex Neil's letter provides useful but shocking clarification. Funding for Sustainable and Active Travel, excluding Fastlink and Halbeath P&R, is cut by an incredible 62% from £13.1m in 11/12 to £5m in 12/13 and later years. This £5m is to support a wide range of initiatives including Low Carbon Vehicles, Smarter Choices, Sustrans, etc. Our understanding is that in 11/12 some £9m, roughly 70% of the £13.1m, went to active travel (this includes Smarter Choices, not all of which is active travel). On that optimistic basis, we could hope £3.5m of this year's £5m would go to active travel, down from ~£9m in 11/12. Sustrans funding, in particular, which comes from this money, will be cut from £7.67m in 10/11 and £5.384m in 11/12 to probably £1m/£2m at very best.

On FTF, this is £3.25m in 12/13, and is to cover a wider range of headings even than SAT (including low carbon vehicles, freight facilities, etc as well as active travel). Let us assume that 33%, roughly £1m, goes to active travel investment.

SUMMARY TABLE OF ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING BASED ON DRAFT BUDGET, AND WITH ABOVE ASSUMPTIONS.

Note these figures include **walk, cycle and shared cycle-walk**, not just cycling investment.

(£million)	10-11	11-12	12-13
CWSS	9.0	7.5	6.1
Active travel from SAT*	~11.5	~9.0	~3.5
Active travel from FTF	0.0	0.0	~1.0
Active travel total, excluding trunk road cycling	20.5	16.5	10.6
Total incl. trunk-road cycling#	22.5	18.5	12.6
Total transport	1855.0	1804.0	1884.0
Active-travel as % of transport	1.21	1.03	0.67

* Including Smarter Choices, which includes promotion of bus, eco-drive etc, not just active travel.

Assuming trunk road cycle project funding remains at approx £2m annually – not specified in budget.

We freely accept that some elements in the table necessarily make assumptions, mainly explained in the text above, but none of the assumptions are likely to be out by more than say +/- £1m. Thus the drastic absolute and percentage overall cut is very clear. We emphasise the % figure, as the SNP manifesto commitment is in % rather than absolute terms.

Estimates for future years would be much less certain, given the uncertainty over FTF allocation; but on the basis of Annex A in Alex Neil's letter the SAT line will remain unchanged, making it unlikely that total active travel will return to 11-12 levels (let alone 10-11 levels) except just possibly in the final year of the Spending Review.

Appendix B - Letter of 15 December to ICI Committee Convener from Alex Neil MSP

We here discuss only the section of the letter which is relevant to active travel.

Whilst the Minister promises a full response later, the points he makes offer very little of substance, and no indication that he is concerned about the cuts being imposed on active travel.

In summary ...

Most of the Minister's figures refer to varied periods of multiple years, not to annual figures. They are therefore of little use in making any realistic assessment of annual investment, or in comparing different periods of time.

Despite this, it is clear from the letter that the main thrust of Appendix A above is valid. There is no sign that the Minister is taking seriously the CAPS target, the RPP proposals or your Committee's recommendations.

Comments on individual paragraphs ...

First para [and Annex A] Confirms the massive cut in active travel funding in the **SAT** budget line

Second para Confirms that **FTF** will have a wide range of responsibilities (some very costly) including freight facilities, hybrid buses, LCVs, etc and thus active travel may be lucky if it receives say 1/3 of the total, especially in future years once bids come in for its more costly objectives, such as freight facility grants. [Note - this is a perfect example of the need to adopt your recommendation of a separate budget line for active travel and/or cycling – these purposes should not be competing at this level with road/rail projects].

Third para/ Bullet 1 Predicts a significant cut in **CWSS** (now confirmed in Local Govt Settlement)

Bullet 2 CCF total £1.3m over several years, so no major impact on active travel investment, albeit we very much support CCF and the individual local projects concerned. Also note that the £1.3m is for projects which *include* cycling/walking – many of these projects have other objectives. For example Edinburgh Bike Station *Better Way to Work* project also heavily encouraged bus travel, yet is counted as cycle spending alone.

Bullet 3 £200k **health funding** to walking. Welcome but insignificant in terms of total active travel. It is unclear why the Minister mentions this item, since presumably similar small sums could be identified in other budgets (e.g tourism) but with little impact on the overall total of active travel investment. Indeed doubtless other budgets contribute similar relatively small sums to inactive-travel projects, yet these are not added in to the totals for inactive-travel.

Bullet 4 Forestry Commission/ SNH The totals given are quite irrelevant in calculating annual investment in active travel, as they appear to be total funding for the entirety of these organisations! Again sensible investments in active travel are welcome, but such recreational and often remotely-located funding is unlikely to make much impact on the 2020 CAPS targets or the climate targets. Indeed remote mountain biking often results in long car trips with bikes on top, and should be counted as sport/recreation rather than as active travel.