

Edinburgh Local Transport Strategy

Consultation Response

October 2013

About Sustrans

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today.
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Sustrans Scotland is broadly supportive of the general approach the City of Edinburgh Council is taking in the draft Local Transport Strategy (LTS) to maximise the use of sustainable transport, namely walking, cycling and public transport, for journeys in Edinburgh. We support the 2020 mode share targets the Council has set to increase the level of cycling to 10% and reduce journeys by car from 43% to 31% of all trips.

We are pleased that since the last LTS was issued in 2007 the Council has developed an Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP) that has led to increased focus on and resources being directed towards encouraging cycling and walking. We will continue to work in partnership with the Council to help them deliver their commitment to active travel. The Council has also signed the Charter of Brussels committing them to a target of 15% of journeys being made by bicycle by 2020. As an important high-level commitment we would like to see reference to the Charter of Brussels in the LTS both in the Introduction and the Active Travel chapters of the LTS. In addition we would like to see a further step change in funding for active travel in Edinburgh. While we welcome the 5% budget commitment the Council has made to cycling, we believe that more resources are still needed to make it easy to walk and cycle throughout Edinburgh. We believe even that at current levels of funding progress is still being limited by available funding and staff resources and we propose that 15% of the Council's transport budget now needs to be allocated to cycling in order to meet the targets it has set. Given that the Scottish Government has announced a large increase in Sustrans Scotland's capital budget for 2014/15 we believe now is the time for the Council to further increase funding for active travel to maximise the amount of external funding it can bring in to assist with the delivery of ATAP.

We are pleased the Council has adopted many of the proposals which we supported in the LTS "Issues for Review" consultation earlier this year. We strongly support the approach being taken to introduce 20mph speed limits to many more streets across Edinburgh namely in the city centre, main shopping streets, streets with high pedestrian activity and residential streets. Similarly we support the policy to reduce the speed limit of urban 40mph roads to 30mph. Under this action we would like the wording of policy Safe5 clarified to reflect the fact that cycle lanes will not be introduced solely as a traffic speed reduction measure but that they are also an important behaviour change tool, i.e. they encourage people to cycle.

We also support the introduction of innovative measures such as School Streets to help encourage cycling and walking to school. Given we have introduced innovation in this area through our I-Bike scheme we would like to see this reflected in the LTS. We ask that you change the text on pg 39, section 9.3 to the following to include I-Bike "encouraging walking and cycling to school through the Safer Routes to School programme, School Travel Plans and I-Bike (the latter delivered in partnership with Sustrans Scotland)".

Finally while we are happy with the overall approach taken in the LTS we believe that some more radical policies are likely to be needed to achieve the Council's aspiration to reduce car journeys to 31% of all trips by 2020. For instance we think the Council should be more proactive in reducing on-street parking and reallocating the carriageway space for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians. This is particularly important in the Council's plans for the City Centre as laid out in section 4.1. We doubt if the 5 bullet point objectives stated on page 12 can be met without a significant reduction in on-street parking, which is often a barrier to creating high-quality cycle facilities in urban areas. As such we believe that policy Park9 (pg 56) does not go far enough and that the Council should commit to a policy to reduce on-street parking in the city centre rather than just to "consider less on-street parking" at the same time as improving cycling and walking facilities. This is necessary to make it easy to cycle both to and through the City Centre as the Council proposes in its plans for the Family Cycle Network set out in the ATAP.