

SP KES *the Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee Budget 2015-16 .. pre-budget evidence .. Submission from Spokes

We have read the written evidence¹ submitted in advance of the 25 November ICI Committee by the various organisations who will be appearing at the Committee.

We largely support the recommendations, made with remarkable consistency, by those organisations, on the need for higher priority for sustainable transport investment, in particular cycling, walking and (conventional) rail, and there is no need for us to repeat their arguments.

Specifically on cycling and walking, we strongly support the recommendation by Sustrans that a minimum 10% of the transport budget should be allocated to this purpose. This was originally proposed some years ago in *Action on Active Travel*² by the **Association of Directors of Public Health**, a document endorsed by 110 transport, medical and other professional, expert and interested bodies³ ranging from the **Institute of Highway Engineers** to the **British Heart Foundation**. The 10% figure was also adopted long ago by a range of Scottish national transport bodies in *Active Travel, Active Scotland*⁴ and subsequently by other newer bodies such as Pedal on Parliament.⁵

However, we are writing to make an additional point, which we have not seen in any of the submissions and which we consider absolutely critical if any future ICI Committee report on the budget is to be taken seriously by the Finance Secretary and the government.

For several years the Scottish Parliament ICI Committee (and its predecessor Committee) has recommended a higher share of the Scottish transport budget for active travel – examples^{6,7}. The Committees, however, have never had the courage to state *from where within transport this rise should come*. As a result the Finance Secretary and Finance Committee were, perhaps quite understandably, unwilling to consider the recommendation, and have repeatedly made painstakingly clear that this was the reason.

Spokes has also repeatedly made this point to the Committee and in other ways – for example our strongly worded article *Scottish Budget Process Fails – Again!*⁸ The Committee has excused itself on the equally understandable grounds that the budget is too opaque to propose any amendments. However, that is not good enough - it means **the Committee knows that its recommendations to raise active travel funding will not be considered.**

To raise cycling/walking investment to 10% of transport, and to prioritise greater conventional rail investment, would entail a major rejig and emphasis change within transport budgets as we have seen them, and we urge the Committee to recommend that.

However the Committee should also suggest at least some specific areas which can be reduced or postponed, in order to raise cycling/walking investment substantially *in the coming financial year*.

Our ICI 13/14 budget submission⁹ suggested options for funding sources within the transport budget, and such options remain today. For example, if £3bn is available to dual the A96, plus £3bn for the A9, then postponement of some construction could easily multiply current active travel investment. The arguments for such a shift have been further enhanced by the great success of the A9 average-speed-cameras (for which former Transport Minister Keith Brown MSP deserves credit for his tough defence against a strong anti-camera campaign).

In conclusion, if the Committee is again persuaded of the case to raise the cycling/walking % of transport spend, or to more radically rejig the transport budget, then it must seize this nettle and indicate *how the budget can be modified*. If the Committee does not do so, then government will assuredly again dismiss any ICI recommendations, and again fail to match its transport investment with its active travel ambitions, its 2020 cycle-use ambitions, its climate change ambitions and its public health ambitions.

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- 1 http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_InfrastructureandCapitalInvestmentCommittee/Meeting%20Papers/20151125MeetingPapersPublic.pdf
 - 2 *Action on Active Travel*, Association of Directors of Public Health, April 2008, and 2012 update <http://www.adph.org.uk/category/atpa/>
 - 3 http://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Take_Action_on_Active_Travel_sigs_June_2010.pdf
 - 4 *Active Travel, Active Scotland* http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,166/gid,784/task,doc_download/
 - 5 <http://pedalonparliament.org/the-manifesto/>
 - 6 Former TICC cttee <http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/finance/reports-09/fir09-07-vol2-06.htm#annk>
 - 7 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/45089.aspx#anni>
 - 8 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2012/12/scottish-budget-process-fails-again-2/>
 - 9 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1209-ICI-Cttee-Spokes-submission.pdf>