

Draft Infrastructure Plan for Scotland¹ 2021-22 to 2025-26

Response by Spokes – the Lothian Cycle Campaign

Spokes is very disappointed in the Draft Infrastructure Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26. It contains a lot of warm words on the need to address climate change through infrastructure investment, including active travel, but delivers nothing on switching investment in transport infrastructure. The entire national investment on active travel, at £500m pa for 5 years, remains far less than that on a single trunk road scheme (the dualling of the A9, which last year was costed at £3billion) and represents no increase on the £100m budget for 20/21.

The Draft Plan amounts to ‘greenwashing’ and needs to be rewritten.

The Draft Plan introduces an investment hierarchy and then ignores it. It includes, for instance, a commitment to “consider appropriate infrastructure provision [...] in light of population and climate change forecasts” at the top of investment hierarchy, but then does not deliver this through a change in transport spending priorities.

The Plan has another major flaw in that it appears to seek to disguise the extent of expenditure on trunk roads; it does not consistently include costings on trunk roads, so that it is impossible to assess the balance of expenditure overall on low carbon transport and high carbon transport. This was not the case in previous infrastructure plans. Trunk road expansion continues but is hidden away, unlike the fulsome presentation of active travel schemes. The A9 dualling, for example, merits one line, with no costing given - for the largest scheme in the Plan. It is hard to believe that this is not a deliberate tactic to obscure the balance of expenditure on transport.

The Plan indicates that it is responding to the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Commission report², but in practice it does not. In principle the Infrastructure Plan accepts the Infrastructure Commission's recommendation to reprioritise the Plan against inclusive net zero carbon economy outcomes, but then ignores it in practice.

The Infrastructure Commission's Key Findings recommend that:

“The Scottish Government should ensure that its new National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, which are due to be published during 2020, fully reflect the need to deliver an inclusive net zero carbon economy and consider the infrastructure and the use of it as a holistic system. This should include:

- > Aligning strategic investment decisions to address fully the requirement for demand management, a substantial increase in the proportion of journeys made by active travel, and opportunities for shared mobility as well as a much greater role for public transport.
- > For such roads investment that is made as part of the above, a presumption in favour of investment to future proof existing road infrastructure and to make it safer, resilient and more reliable rather than increase road capacity.”

The Draft Infrastructure Plan does none of these things. There is also no change in the balance of transport expenditure.

1 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-draft-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-202122-202526/>

2 <https://infrastructurecommission.scot/>

If the Draft Infrastructure Plan was genuinely responding to the Infrastructure Commission's recommendations one would not expect:

- No additional funding for low carbon transport, aside from what has already been announced
- The road building programme to continue as before

The draft Plan also goes against the spirit and the recommendations of the independent review into the government's *Cleaner Air For Scotland Strategy*³ including the following statements...

7.20 Additions to the existing Trunk Road and Motorway network should be significantly de-prioritised and ideally end within the next five or so years

7.19 Scrappage of older and more polluting vehicles does not have to mean replacement with new motor vehicles. The Transport Working Group noted the particularly important role that e-bikes could have

7.9 The current funding level for active travel is insufficient to meet the need for transformative change

Spokes believes that this Plan needs to be redrafted to be consistent with:

- a) the proposed investment hierarchy**
- b) the Infrastructure Commission's recommendations**
- c) the Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy review**

Spokes
23 October 2020

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cleaner-air-scotland-strategy-independent-review/pages/4/>