

Holyrood Election 6 May 2021

Manifesto analysis re active-travel & related issues

Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign

Overall, it is truly remarkable that the Greens, Labour and Conservative parties at Holyrood all now promise 10% or more of the total transport budget for active travel, whilst SNP and Lib Dem promises equate to some 5%-7%, roughly double the current 3.5%. This is a huge credit to all who have campaigned for substantial investment. At the [previous election](#) in 2016 only the Greens called for 10%, with other parties promising relatively small or unspecified increases.

Our manifesto analysis below for the 2021 election suggests a clear gradation of manifestos in terms of active travel, within a sustainable transport context, as follows...

- **Green – best**
- **Labour - 2nd best**
- **SNP / Lib Dem – roughly equal 3rd**
- **Conservative – 5th** [it is arguable that this should be a little higher, in view of the investment commitment, which is better than LibDem or SNP. However the policies on traffic reduction are non-existent and indeed seriously negative].

Spokes does not suggest who to vote for. Voters have many priorities, and transport is only one of many issues to consider.

Key to table [NB – fuller details of manifestos are in our [elections article](#)]

- ++ Very good and/or best
- + good
- = mixed, unclear, or less good than other parties
- poor (or unrealistic)
- very disappointing
- N Not mentioned in manifesto [N is generally disappointing, but it depends on the issue, so think carefully]

Issue	Conservative	Green	Labour	LibDem	SNP
Investment : % of transport budget to be allocated to AT (3.5% now)	+ 10% by 2026	++ £320m immediately [approx 10%] rising further [1]	+ 10% [unclear if soon or by 2026]	= “aim” to double existing [this would be approx 7%]	= 10% of “capital” bgt by 2026 BUT this is less of the <i>total</i> transport bgt] [2]
Extent of cycle/AT routes/networks ambition [NB ask yourself how realistic is each of these promises given above cash commitments?]	+ Commuter network every city; bus/bike roads & school streets “where beneficial”	++ National network including urban/rural links & “rich” urban networks	++ Urban & rural safe routes funded through more cash to councils; Assess path network maintenance cash requirements	+ Speed up the Active Freeway policy for routes from town centres to suburbs	++ Scotland-wide network, including every town
Designing, creating & maintaining the AT infrastructure	++ Must suit buggies, elderly, wheeling; £200m fund for pothole repair over 5 years	++ Streamline legal rules for creating AT schemes; New design standards	++ “Gendered approach” to design; Fund for councils to repair roads & paths, so potholes “eliminated”	+ Change planning rules to get more segregation	++ Town AT routes “high quality and separated” for safe commuting; “create, repair, improve” network
Neighbourhoods	= “Encourage” more LTNs “where beneficial”	++ 15-min nbds;	++ 20-min nbds; All residential areas to be LTNs	+ 20-min nbds	+ 20-min nbds
Pavement parking laws [new law exists, but not implemented yet]	N	+ Close the loopholes	N	+ Implement the pavement parking law	N

20mph	N	++ Implement default 20mph	+ Consult on default 20mph policy	N	N
Transport integration	+ Smart travel card covering “all types of domestic transport” [we assume this includes bike]	++ Better rail & bus bike carriage; Smart ticketing for public transport, incl. bike hire	++ Mobility hubs across Scotland to promote active & green travel; Smart ticketing	+ Smart ticketing; Passes for public transport, bike hire, car club	N
Cash/voucher help for AT [no parties specify the amount or details]	+ Bike repair vouchers	N	N	+ “More support” for e-bikes; Fund for showers at workplaces etc;	+ Loans/grants for bike repair/ purchase
Air pollution including Low Emission Zones	= “Encourage” LEZs “where beneficial”	++ LEZs in all areas which breach standards; and for city centres	++ Expand LEZs; Consider minimum air standards near schools	N	+ “make progress on” city LEZs
Demand management/ disincentivise car use	N	++ Local demand management to disincentivise large & polluting vehicles	+ “National focus” to reduce car need; Use planning system to reduce car use	= “Encourage” drivers out of cars	+ Target to cut car-km 20% by 2030, <i>but</i> see [3]
Road building	-- Extensive road building/ widening	++ End road building that adds capacity	= “Key routes” e.g. A83” need enhancement	-- Continue projects such as A9, A96, A82, A83	-- “wide range of road building” incl A9, A96, A82, A83
Air travel taxation ADT= Air departure tax	- Follow UK on ADT	++ Frequent flyer levy	N	++ Frequent flyer levy	= Review ADT in line with climate plans
Other negative transport proposals	-- Give Councils cash to scrap fees in public car parks;	N	-- Abolish workplace parking levy	N	N
USP – unique selling points (good and bad!)	= Active Nation Commissioner role to go into law; Remove SfP schemes where not “effective”	++ Online uploading of dangerous-driving videos; Safe walk/wheel to every school if within 2 miles	++ Enforceable targets for AT levels; “Gendered” approach to AT scheme design	++ Fatal accident inquiry for every pedestrian death;	+ Free bike for school children who can't afford one;
LINKS to manifestos	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Green</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>LibDem</u>	<u>SNP</u>

[1] Greens promise to increase funding from an immediate roughly 10% to 20% by 2030; but the 20% will not be entirely for AT as it includes other goals such as “city centre transformation” and the 15-minute neighbourhoods

[2] The overall transport budget comprises capital + revenue. The SNP only promises 10% of the capital element of the transport budget whereas other parties promise a % of the entire transport budget. It is impossible from the budget document or the SNP manifesto to work out the exact split between capital and revenue, but the SNP commitment of 10% of capital probably equates only to between 5% and 7% of the entire transport budget, i.e. similar to the Lib Dems.

[3] The SNP target to reduce car-km by 20% by 2030 for an entire country is groundbreaking; but it cannot be met without demand management measures, which are *not* in the manifesto, and it will not be helped by the big road expansion plans which *are* in the manifesto. For further comment see also 2(b) [here](#). Hence a score of '+' rather than '++'