

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **DRAFT BUDGET 2014-15**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM SUSTRANS SCOTLAND**

##### **About Sustrans**

1. 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.

##### **Introduction**

2. Sustrans welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Finance Committee's call for evidence on the draft budget 2014-15. Sustrans is a leading UK charity that enables people to travel by foot, bicycle or public transport for more of the journeys they make everyday. 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.

3. In this written evidence we focus on the progress being made in relation to specific National Indicators and Purpose Targets of most relevance to the work of Sustrans. We also provide a comment on the usefulness of the National Performance Framework and how it should be linked to policy development and spending priorities.

##### **Progress being made in relation to specific National Indicators**

###### **Reduce traffic congestion**

###### ***Performance maintaining***

4. Scotland's main towns, cities and roads all experience varying levels of traffic congestion problems, especially during the morning and evening rush hours, even though the Government has been pursuing a comprehensive programme of road building. Therefore, it is clear that alternative modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport need to be made more appealing to people in order to encourage people out of their cars and consequently reduce congestion.

5. In particular, the school run is a major cause of congestion with one in five cars on the road during morning peak traffic taking children to school. This is despite the fact that the average primary school journey is less than 1.5 miles, which is a distance easily manageable on foot or by bike by many pupils. In 2012, 49.7% of pupils in Scotland said they normally travelled to school actively, without using any form of motorised transport<sup>i</sup>. This figure needs to be significantly increased if we are to seriously tackle traffic congestion on our roads.

###### **Increase the proportion of healthy weight children**

###### ***Performance maintaining***

6. Scotland has one of the highest levels of obesity in OECD countries. In 2008, 15.1% of children were obese and 31.7% were overweight<sup>ii</sup>. A number of factors are contributing to this statistic but of particular relevance to Sustrans is inactivity. Children should accumulate (build up) at least one hour of moderate activity on most days of the week.<sup>iii</sup> In 1998, 65% of

children aged 2-15 were physically active at the recommended level (excluding school-based activity, which was not measured prior to 2008). This increased to 69% in 2003, but has been 64-65% since 2008<sup>iv</sup>.

7. Making lifestyle changes to increase the levels of habitual physical activity, for example by walking or cycling to school, can help to address weight gain and obesity amongst children. This is another reason why work must be undertaken to increase the current percentage of pupils travelling to school actively from the current figure of 49.7% as quoted above.

### **Increase physical activity**

#### ***Performance maintaining***

8. The Scottish Health Survey for 2011 reports that only 39% of adults aged 16 and over met the physical activity recommendations, with men more likely than women to meet them (45% compared with 33%). It also states that between 2008 and 2011, there was no significant change in the proportion meeting the recommendations<sup>v</sup>.

9. It is important that physical activity levels increase for both adults and children, not only for personal wellbeing but also to relieve pressure on the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland. Indeed, Transform Scotland estimates that moving to a modal share of 13% for cycle trips would save the NHS in Scotland around £2 billion a year by reducing deaths and illness by increasing physical activity<sup>vi</sup>. Therefore, it is clear that performance must be improved in this area and not simply maintained.

### **Improve mental wellbeing**

#### ***Performance maintaining***

10. It has been shown that physically active school travel can have a number of positive benefits on mental performance, cognitive development, self esteem, behaviour and relationship building<sup>vii</sup>. Therefore, by increasing the percentage of young people who walk or cycle to school, improvements will be seen in mental wellbeing.

### **Reduce deaths on Scotland's roads**

#### ***Performance improving***

11. Despite decreasing road casualties across the board in 2012, there were 898 cyclist fatalities (+9%); including 9 fatalities (2 more than 2011)<sup>viii</sup>. Part of this may be due to the increasing number of cyclists on the road, but it is also due to a host of other factors such as the inadequate provision of safe cycling routes. It is imperative that facilities for cyclists are improved as perceptions of safety are a key reason for people not cycling (at all or more often)<sup>ix</sup>.

### **Improve people's perceptions of their neighbourhood**

#### ***Performance improving***

12. It is positive to see that performance is improving in this area and Sustrans has been undertaking work in different parts of Scotland to help improve people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods in conjunction with relevant local authorities. To date, Sustrans has completed two community led pilot projects to redesign streets. Urban designers worked with residents and pupils at local schools over 18 months on new design proposals for Cockmuir Place in Elgin and Katrine Crescent in Kirkcaldy. In a survey of the residents in Elgin, 100% now think that the appearance of their street is good / attractive<sup>x</sup>. A neighbourhood scale Street Design Project in Sinclairtown, Kirkcaldy is nearing completion and a similar sized

project is underway in the Pathhead area of Kirkcaldy. Sustrans has also just commenced work on a neighbourhood scale project with the residents of Queen Street in Dumfries. We consider that in order to maintain the improving performance of this National Indicator, Sustrans' Street Design work should receive the full backing of Government.

### **Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint**

#### ***Performance improving***

13. Despite the status assigned to this National Indicator, Sustrans considers that work in this area has been insufficient to date given that Scotland has missed its climate change annual targets for two consecutive years. Increasing the number of people travelling actively or on public transport would significantly help to reduce emissions from the transport sector. This is particularly pertinent given that the transport sector is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Scotland.

### **Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport**

#### ***Performance maintaining***

14. Figures have remained fairly static in recent years therefore pointing to the need for more action to be taken in this area. Building in exercise to our everyday lives, in the form of walking or cycling to work, brings significant health benefits, saves us money, decreases congestion and helps to reduce air pollution. Given these considerable benefits, it is clear that increased effort and funding must be directed towards getting more people active on their daily commute.

15. Obviously, in some instances the daily commute can be too long to be realistically made on foot or by bike. We should be aiming to make public transport the obvious choice for these journeys. In order to do this the public transport network in Scotland needs to be fit for purpose; in other words it must be reliable, affordable and most of all convenient.

### **Progress being made in relation to specific Purpose Targets**

#### **Sustainability**

**To reduce emissions over the period to 2011**

**To reduce emissions by 80 per cent by 2050**

#### ***Performance improving***

16. Despite the status assigned to this Purpose Target, Sustrans considers that work in this area has been insufficient to date given that Scotland has missed its climate change annual targets for two consecutive years. Increasing the number of people travelling actively or on public transport would significantly help to reduce emissions from the transport sector. This is particularly pertinent given that the transport sector is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Scotland.

### ***Are the National Indicators and Purpose Targets an effective means of measuring the performance of Government?***

17. In theory, the National Indicators and Purpose Targets are an effective method of measuring performance; setting desired outcomes is a sensible way of focusing activity. However, it is important that targets, outcomes and indicators are clearly used in practice to guide investment decisions.

***Are there any additional indicators or targets which should be included to measure performance?***

18. Sustrans considers that the National Indicator “Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport” should be expanded. In the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland there is a vision that “by 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike”<sup>xi</sup>. While this takes commuting into consideration, it also incorporates travel for other purposes. Therefore, this National Indicator should consider all journeys, not exclusively commuting journeys. It should also make a distinction between the different forms of active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling, bus, train) when reporting progress.

***Should there be a linkage between performance information and the Scottish Government’s spending priorities?***

19. It is important that these are clearly linked and that performance information informs Government spending priorities. If performance is poor, further analysis should be conducted to investigate the reasons why this is the case and spending should be redirected accordingly.

***How should Scotland Performs be utilised to inform policy development and spending decisions?***

20. If indicators are not performing well, it indicates that relevant policies should be reassessed and changed. Spending should be redirected as appropriate. If they are performing well, it implies that the current policies are working effectively and their employment should continue.

***Should future spending decisions continue to be shaped by the NPF?***

21. This is a sensible approach for making future spending decisions.

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- <sup>i</sup> Sustrans (2013) Hands Up Scotland 2012
  - <sup>ii</sup> The Scottish Government (2010) Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland: A Route Map Towards Healthy Weight
  - <sup>iii</sup> Scottish Executive Physical Activity Task Force (2003) Let's Make Scotland More Active: A Strategy for Physical Activity
  - <sup>iv</sup> The Scottish Government (2011) The Scottish Health Survey Volume 2: Children
  - <sup>v</sup> The Scottish Government (2011) The Scottish Health Survey Volume 1: Adults
  - <sup>vi</sup> Transform Scotland (2008) Towards a Healthier Economy
  - <sup>vii</sup> Scottish Executive Central Research Unit (2002) Review of Research on School Travel
  - <sup>viii</sup> Transport Scotland (2013) Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2012
  - <sup>ix</sup> Cycling Scotland (2008) CAPS Public and Stakeholder Consultation Facilitation
  - <sup>x</sup> Sustrans and The Moray Council (2013) Street Design Project Report, Cockmuir Place, Elgin, Moray, 2011-2012
  - <sup>xi</sup> Transport Scotland (2013) Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013